

Ostfront 1941/42

**Kampfhandlungen im Bereich der
Heeresgruppe Mitte
(22.6.41-1.5.42)**

Notebook 1:

„Die Wehrmacht“

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**Tehachapi CA
July 2009**

**“Die Stimme des Blutes deines Bruders
schreit zu mir von der Erde.“**

Genesis 4:10

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NOTEBOOK 1:

“Die Wehrmacht”

S.J. Lewis: “The German Army would die in Russia – die of neglect in those vast open spaces that had earlier devoured other famed invading armies. Unlike other armies, however, it would not disintegrate, but rather slowly bleed to death after winning a series of spectacular mobile victories that reached the very suburbs of Moscow, the Russian capital.” (*Forgotten Legions*, 128)

History of fighting Russians:

Germans had centuries of experience fighting the Russians:

- a. The *Teutonic Knights* invaded Russia when it was already decimated by the Mongol storm in the **13. Century**, and yet in a battle of Homeric dimensions on the frozen surface of *Lake Chud* had been broken by the Russians, the survivors falling through the breaking ice to their deaths.
- b. In **18. Century**, *Frederick the Great* had gone into his first battle w/ the Russians, contemptuously encouraging his grenadiers to slaughter those barbarians. He recoiled from this experience w/ a completely different attitude, announcing respectfully that *was not enough to kill a Russian – you had to knock him down, too*.
- c. Maj-Gen. Carl von *Clausewitz* had abandoned Prussian service in **1807** to serve Tsar *Alexander I* in the struggle against Napoleon. He had fought on *Katuzov’s* staff throughout the campaign of **1812** and was an eyewitness to the ferocity of Russia’s distances, climate, and people. He had witnessed the collapse of the most *thoroughly prepared invasion in modern history* to that time, preparations which proved pitifully inadequate, just as the German campaign of 1941 did. The horrific winter extremes that scythed through the *Grande Armee* had *left its mark on him* – in the reddish broken blood vessels on cheeks and nose, the scars of *frostbite* that his students later foolishly ascribed to too much affection for the bottle.
- d. World War I on the eastern front had given the Germans 4 years of extended operational experience in this theater. (*Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 4-5)

Note: In his dissertation, David Stahel offers an excellent overview of state of German Army armaments/manpower on eve of “Barbarossa.”¹ For example, he discusses each tank model – strengths and weaknesses of, production figures for, etc. – in copious detail. Several salient points emerge from his narrative:

1) While **2 PzGr** was mainly stocked w/ tanks and trucks of German origin, **3 PzGr** was a *far less homogenous force*, reflecting the spoils of past conquests. It comprised a core of Czech Pz 38 (t) tanks and its mot. infantry was dependent largely upon requisitioned French vehicles. The cdr of **3 Pz Gr**, Col-Gen Hoth, would later complain: “It seems the allocation of trucks was totally unsuitable for an eastern campaign.”

2) Stahel notes that the “qualitative advantage” of the new Soviet tank designs (**KV-1, T-34**) was “enormous.” In practical terms it meant that none of the German tanks regardless of armament could penetrate the armor on the **T-34** at ranges above 500 meters. Indeed, only the later models

¹ **Note:** Because this entry overlaps several of my section topics, I have placed it here in the Notebook.

of the **Pz III** equipped w/ **5cm L/42** main guns could effectively penetrate the armor of the **T-34** at less than **500** meters. The **KV-1** was simply impervious to all tank-mounted German firepower.

3) Stahel notes the comparatively small number of German guns (only **7146** artillery pieces along the entire eastern front), as well as an “*alarming shortfall in the production of ammunition*. German ammunition shortfalls were most starkly observed in the production of armor-piercing shells for the infantry AT guns, whose output was only **50%** of projected targets. Batteries of other calibers were likewise affected, although there were exceptions where production exceeded projections. At beginning of Barbarossa, the infantry also suffered from obsolescence in certain key areas. The standard **3.7cm** AT gun was to prove largely useless against the new medium and heavy Soviet tanks. . . To rectify the problem, captured French 4.7cm AT guns were pressed back into service and the army distributed its new **5cm** AT guns to units in ones and twos to offer a small, generalized boost.

4) After discussing the state of German infantry – its lack of mobility, etc. – Stahel asserts that “the tempo of the German advance progressed at two entirely different speeds, preventing the close mutual reliance of the two most basic arms of the army [i.e., infantry and armor] . . . in short, it meant that *two separate armies were invading the Soviet Union*. One army was highly mobile and armored, but relatively small in size and w/o depth in manpower or endurance for battles of long, grinding duration. The other army was large, slow and cumbersome, bearing the great bulk of the **3** million men invading the Soviet Union, and proving not greatly more maneuverable than the Kaiser’s army of 1914, or even that of Napoleon in 1812. . .” This distinction must be kept in mind. One easily gains a deceptive impression from countless maps produced in the secondary literature, as they almost always limit themselves to showing the furthestmost point of advance and thereby *disguise a critical structural deficiency* w/in the Army.

5) Manpower: By the summer of **1941**, some **85%** of German men aged between **20-30** were already in the Wehrmacht, those remaining judged too important to the war economy to be granted exemptions [they were granted exemptions?]. The Cdr of the Replacement Army, Col.-Gen. Fritz Fromm, outlined the [personnel] limitations to Halder in a discussion on **20 May 41**. With surprising candor, Halder noted that **275,000** casualties were expected in the initial border battles, w/ a further **200,000** expected in **Sep 41**. Going into Barbarossa the Replacement Army was left w/ just **385,000** men, after deducting a share for the Luftwaffe (**90,000**). Thus, by Halder’s own figures the Replacement Army would *not suffice for the demands of the campaign through the end of Sep 41* and nothing at all would remain if the war dragged on longer. The seriousness of being w/o trained reserves in the middle of a major campaign forced Halder to consider an early call up of the **1922** generation, but ultimately he decided the risk “could be borne.” Yet again, the *inability of Germany to sustain anything but a short, decisive campaign was strikingly clear*. (For many, many more details see, *D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 76-84)

1.1: German Army:

Note: The *Wehrmacht* was a *conscript army* that increasingly came to reflect contemporary German society, and most particularly the younger male cohorts of all classes and walks of life. These young men had undergone a thorough indoctrination – in school, in the HJ, and in the *Arbeitsdienst*. They had also been exposed during their most formative years to the *Reich’s*

propaganda efforts, manifested in radio programmes, newsreels, newspapers, mass rallies, and so forth. Thus, by the time these youngsters were conscripted they had already gone through an intensive preparatory system that stressed to a large degree precisely those values cherished by the army, such as *devotion to duty*, *willingness to sacrifice* their lives from *Volk, Reich* and *Fuehrer*, the necessity of expansion, and the need to subjugate, if not wipe out, other, inferior peoples. (Bartov, *A View from Below*, 333-34)²

Note: Das effiziente System [in der Wehrmacht] des Personalersatzes u. der Organisation wurde durch eine Ausbildung unterstuetzt, die sich trotz mancher Schwaechen u. Anachronismen waehrend des Krieges auf neue Herausforderungen einzustellen verstand. Der Erfolg zeigte sich vor allem in der taktischen u. operativen Ueberlegenheit, die von der Wehrmacht auch in unguenstigen Lagen gegenueber manchem Gegner erzielt worden ist. Ihr gelang „*eine einmalige Kombination von Disziplin, Geschlossenheit u. Flexibilitaet.*“ Mit den dramatischen Rueckzugen u. Niederlagen ab **1943** ging diese Faehigkeit freilich allmaehlich verloren. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 121-22; see also, M. van Creveld, to whom the preceding quote is credited.)

Note: If there has been any military organization subject to *myth-making*, it is the German Army of WWII. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 85)

Note: “The Soviet Union, the U.S., and Great Britain fielded so many more men, and produced so many more tanks and acft, guns and ships, that in the long run there was no way the *Reich* could hope to win the war. Indeed, it is *remarkable that the Wehrmacht went on fighting for as long as it did.*” (Omer Bartov, *A View from Below*, 326)

DiNardo: In many ways, the German Army of WWII was *more attuned to the 19th Century than to the 20th*. German Army approach to war and its broad warfighting doctrine were also **rooted in the 19th Century**. The great focus was on the *Battle of Annihilation*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 133)

DiNardo: Given the fact that the German Army of the 20th Century *derived so much from the 19th Century*, one can say that the *panzer arm* was the most modern element of what was in many ways a **pre-modern army**. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 138)

W. Murray: “By the end of **1941**, the Germans had *lost the sharp edge* on the ground as well as in the air.” (*Strategy for Defeat*, 316)

DiNardo: „...We must alter our perspective of the German Army. That the *mechanized juggernaut* was a myth has, I think, been convincingly demonstrated. How then can the German Army be defined? Perhaps the best way would be to say that it was a *more highly perfected version of the force that almost brought victory to General Erich Ludendorf in 1918*. In its outlook, operational doctrines, and tactics, the force was closely related to the German Army of World War I. It clearly espoused the notion of the “battle of annihilation” (*Vernichtungsschlacht*), the basis of **Alfred v. Schlieffen’s** ideas, which influenced Germany’s conduct in both world wars. The German Army’s tactics in WWII clearly were based on those

² B. also writes of the “distorted perception of reality prevalent among the [German] soldiers.” This based in part on a “remarkably widespread, quasi-religious belief in Hitler...The average German soldier retained throughout most of the war a *strong belief in the Fuehrer* as a great political and military leader. Moreover, Hitler was viewed both as the true embodiment of the ‘little man’ and the simple soldier, and...as the only human being – or at least the only German – capable of moulding history and fate.” (335-36)

developed in the latter stages of WWI. The only major difference was the fitting of tanks and supporting acft into the concept. These notable developments aside, the *bulk of the German Army that fought WWII was not far removed from its imperial predecessor of WWI, or even of the 19th Century.*” (DiNardo, 117-18)

While the German Army was capable of training and preparing soldiers for the sharp end of conflict in an extraordinary fashion, it did have *several substantial weaknesses*. Some of its difficulties were induced by the geographic and strategic weaknesses inherent in the Third Reich’s position on the Continent, but many of these were self induced and for the most part remained unrecognized by the German military structure. In effect, ***the German Army in 1939 and for the remainder of the war was one of the least modern engaged on the battlefields of Europe...*** The disparity between the armored, motorized elite and the regular, plodding infantry became more glaring as the war continued. No level of military competence could bridge that gap. (Williamson Murray, in: *Mechanized Juggernaut, Foreword*)

R.L. DiNardo: We have a ***distorted notion of the German Army***. This distortion is reinforced by the image of the German Army that has come down to us through war and newsreel footage; documentaries, such as the acclaimed BBC production, *The World at War*; post-war films; memoirs written by German generals; even historians have played a role in perpetuating the myth. Thus, one of the *great misconceptions of WWII is the notion that the German Army was some sort of mechanized juggernaut*—to use ***Frank Capra’s term***.³ To some degree this was true, of course. Yet important to remember that the German tank and motorized infantry (later redesignated panzer grenadier) divisions and their SS counterparts *generally composed well under 25 percent of the divisions deployed by the Wehrmacht*.⁴ Majority of the other divisions consisted of marching infantry. For transportation, these units depended largely on what commanders from *Alexander the Great* through *Moltke the Younger* had relied, namely the horse...German rearmament from 1933-39 led to creation of a force described by *Martin van Creveld* as “***semi-motorized***.” A slightly more accurate term might be ***semimodern***. Also writes of Germany Army’s ***lack of modernity***. (DiNardo, 2, 6, 16, 107-12)

DiNardo notes that shortcomings of German economy resulted in creation of *two very different German armies*—“one fast and mobile and the other slow and plodding” [dependent upon horses for transportation, etc.]. While this ***dual nature*** was not a large factor in Poland or France, it *did play a big part in the ultimate failure of Operation Barbarossa...* The German Army’s reliance on horses in this campaign also presented a number of problems strategically, tactically and logistically not encountered in previous campaigns. Strategically, the ***drastic dichotomy in the marching capabilities between panzer and mot. inf. divisions and the horse-dependent infantry led to problems almost immediately***. (DiNardo, 15, 43, 115-19)⁵

³ During WWII, Capra produced a series of 7 films under the general title, *Why We Fight*. These films used actual footage from *Wochenschauen* and other German propaganda films. Capra’s films presented same image of *Wehrmacht* that the *Wochenschauen* did. In his films such as *Battle of Russia*, one notices an overwhelming percentage of the military footage shows tanks, plane and motorized equipment. Horses are only shown in ceremonial occasions, such as parades. The term “*mechanized juggernaut*” frequently appears in Capra’s films. (109)

⁴ As late as 1944, when number of German Army, SS and *Luftwaffe* panzer and panzer grenadier (including parachute) divisions reached a high of **48**, they still comprised only about **16 percent of the total number of German divisions** or division-size equivalents. (3, f.n. 2)

⁵ **Note:** DiNardo does point out, however, that *German AT units were all motorized throughout the period under consideration*. (15)

Sep 39: Die im Aufbau befindliche Wehrmacht war am Vorabend des Zweiten Weltkrieges weit davon entfernt, einen groesseren europaeischen Krieg fuehren zu koennen. Auf allen personellen u. materiellen Gebieten gab es zwar beachtliche Fortschritte zu verzeichnen, doch verglichen mit den Potentialen der anderen Grossmaechte befand sich das Deutsche Reich in einer unterlegenen Position, insbesondere bei einem moeglichen Mehrfrontenkrieg. . . Die geringe Zahl gepanzerter Angriffsverbaende war mit leichten Fahrzeugen ausgeruestet, es mangelte an Munitionsvorraeten, Ausruestung u. anderem Kriegsmaterial zur Aufstellung einer „Kriegswehrmacht.“ Schon in ihrem Friedensumfang fehlte es an ausgebildetem Fuehrungspersonal u. Spezialisten. Fuer die Auffuellung im Kriegsfall konnte man auf lediglich drei [3] Jahrgaenge modern ausgebildeter Reservisten zurueckgreifen. . . In der Masse wuerde die Wehrmacht aus aelteren Reservisten mit dem Kenntnisstand des Ersten Weltkrieges bestehen. Ausruestung u. Waffentechnik waren nicht sehr viel juenger.

Auch die Luftwaeffe als modernste u. juengste Teilstreitkraeft musste noch vielfach aelteres Fluggeraet benutzen. . . aus der im Ausbau befindlichen Flugzeugindustrie kamen moderne Sturzkampfbomber („Stukas“), Jagdflugzeuge u. mittlere Kampfflugzeuge wie die Junkers **Ju 88** u. die Heinkel **He 111** erst in langsam steigenden Stueck-zahlen. Die kleine Zahl ausgebildeter Piloten verfuegte wenigstens ueber Einsatzerfahrungen im Spanischen Buergerkrieg. . . Die Marine befand sich ohnehin erst am Beginn eines intensiveren Flottenbaus. Die vorhandenen Kraefte reichten aus, die Aufgaben im Ostseebereich zu erfuellen. In einem moeglichen Kampf gegen die ueberlegene britische Flotte oder gar gegen das vereinte angelsaechsische Potential konnte die deutsche Marine bestenfalls „in Ehren“ untergehen. . .

Trotz aller Anstrengungen war die deutsche Abhaengigkeit von kriegswichtigen Einfuehren nicht wesentlich verringert worden. Es gab keine „Tiefenruestung“, die ein laengeres Durchhalten des Reiches ermoeeglichen konnte. Die geschaffene „Breitenruestung“ reichte allenfalls fuer einen kurzen Krieg, mit dem aber niemand ernsthaft rechnete. Die ehrgeizigen u. auf das Jahr **1944** terminierten Ruestungsplaene mussten wegen der zunehmenden wirtschaftlichen Schwierigkeiten im Fruhjahr **1939** durch eine Dringlichkeitsliste gedrosselt werden. In dieser Situation waren die Besetzung der „Rest-Tschechei“ im **Mar 39** u. die Uebernahme des Potentials der tschechischen Armee von grosser Bedeutung. Mit dem erbeuteten Ruestungsmaterial konnten mehrere neue Divisionen ausgestattet werden, die leistungsfaeheige Industrie wurde sofort fuer die deutschen Programmen eingespannt. Die beträchtlichen Gold- u. Devisenvorraete fuellten die leeren deutschen Kassen wieder auf u. erweiterten den aussenwirtschaftlichen Spielraum. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 25-28)

26.9.40: OKH issues order doubling the number of panzer divisions. Yet, the increasing of the number of PDs to an apparently impressive total of **21**, and of mot. infantry divisions to **14** (of which 4 were SS), *betrayed the German Army's lack of modernity*. A large number of vehicles were of *French manufacture*, and a large number of tanks were made in *Czechoslovakia*. This *large influx of foreign material*, plus the *German propensity to build a number of different versions of the same vehicle*, meant that the *German Army would invade the Soviet Union with over 2000 different types of vehicles*, which would make field maintenance a nightmare. (DiNardo, 37-38)

1.1.0: Campaigns in Poland and France (1939/40):

Polenfeldzug:

Der Krieg gegen Polen hatte eine Mythos geschaffen, an den die Deutschen wie auch ihre Gegner allzu rasch glaubten – dass die Wehrmacht eine kaum zu bezwingende, hochmoderne Kampfmaschine war. Allerdings darf der blitzartige Sieg gegen Polen nicht darueber hinwegtauschen, dass die Wehrmacht im Kampf gegen diesen Gegner *bereits an ihre Grenzen stiess*. Ueber **16 000** deutsche Soldaten waren gefallen – die entscheidende Schwachung lag indes auf einem anderen Gebiet: Die Divisionen hatten bis zu **50%** Ausfaelle an Fahrzeugen zu verzeichnen.

Es sollte bis zum Fruehjahr **1940** dauern, bis die Luecken wieder geschlossen waren. Ausserdem hatten die Deutschen einen Grossteil ihrer Munitionsvorraete verschossen – an eine schnelle Auffuellung der Depots war nicht zu denken, da die Kapazitaeten der deutschen Industrie angesichts der Beduerfnisse der Wehrmacht ueberfordert waren. So fehlten monatlich **600 000** Tonnen Stahl, auch die Pulverproduktion konnte vorlaeufig nicht gesteigert werden. Nur die Tatsache, dass nach dem **18 Sep 39** die Schlacht um Polen eigentlich schon gewonnen war, rettete die Deutschen vor ersten Engpaessen an der Front. Anfang **Okt 39** meldete der Generalquartiermeister, dass lediglich noch fuer ein Drittel der Divisionen Munition vorraetig sei – u. zwar fuer einen Kampfzeitraum von **14** Tagen. [!]

Auch die Luftwaffe . . . konnte nur fuer weitere zwei [2] Wochen mit Bomben versorgt werden – danach koennten die Piloten nur noch „Skat spielen,“ wie Generaloberst Milch, der Generalinspektor der Luftwaffe, warnte.

Hitler tobte, als er von diesen Engpaessen erfuhr. Er setzte einen speziellen Munitionsminister ein; der bis dahin zustaendige Chef des Heereswaffenamts, General der Artillerie Becker, sah sich zu Unrecht zum Suendenbock abgestempelt u. *nahm sich das Leben*. Nach aussen hin aber zaehlte nur der rasche Erfolg der Wehrmacht. Er beeindruckte das Volk in der Heimat u. schockierte die Welt – auch wenn dieser Feldzug *durchaus keine Revolutionierung der Kriegsfuehrung darstellte*. (G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 50-51)

Frankreichfeldzug:

Guido Knopp: Am **10 Mai 40** deinte Mansteins Plan – der erst spaeter von Winston Churchill als „Sichel-schnitt“ Operation bezeichnet wurde – als Grundlage fuer das Vorruecken der Wehrmacht im Westen. . . Die Spitze des Degens [der Heeresgruppe „A“] bildete die Pz.Gr. Kleist – **5** Pz.-Div. u. **1** mot. Inf.-Rgt. mit insgesamt **41 140** Fahrzeugen, dazu gehoerten **1222** Kampfpanzer. Der den Angriff fuehrende Panzerverband stand unter dem Kommando von Generaloberst Heinz Guderian.

Die Offensive startete chaotisch. Die Strassen, die von den deutschen Aufmarschgebieten . . . zu den Ardennen fuehrten, waren bald komplett verstopft – beim Vorstoss der Wehrmacht durch Luxemburg u. Belgien in Richtung Sedan bildete sich der *bislang wohl groesste Verkehrsstau in der Geschichte Europas*: Auf **250** Kilometern waren am **13 Mai 40** die Strassen bedeckt von wehrmachtgrauen Panzern u. Fahrzeugen. . .

Die ersten Erfolge schienen Guderian recht zu geben. Dennoch wurde die Chance nicht so konsequent ausgenutzt, wie er sich wuenschte. Schon am **17 Mai 40** erhielten seine Panzer den Befehl, bei Montcornet anzuhalten – u. zwar kam die Anweisung von Hitler persoendlich. „Der Fuehrer ist ungeheuer nervoes. Er hat Angst vor dem eigenen Erfolg,“ notierte General Halder am **17 Mai 40** in seinem KTB. . .

In Frankreich kaempften in der Uniform der Wehrmacht eigentlich *zwei Armeen*: zum einen die modernen, motorisierten u. gepanzerten Verbaende – doch die machten nur **10%** der Gesamtstaerke aus. Der groesste Teil des Heeres bewegte sich in einer Geschwindigkeit, die eher den napoleonischen Kriegen entsprach. Die endlosen Kolonnen der Infanterie marschierten zu Fuss, die Trosse u. die Artillerie waren auf Zugpferde angewiesen. Die Wehrmacht als Ganzes war also keineswegs eine „staehlerne Lawine,“ die unaufhaltsam durch Frankreich rollte. Sie war eher mit einer Lanze zu vergleichen – die gefaehrliche Spitze war aus Stahl, doch der lange Schaft bestand aus Holz.

Am **19 Mai 40** konnte Halder seinen „Fuehrer“ dazu bewegen, den Befehl, mit dem Vormarsch innezuhalten, aufzuheben, Guderians Panzer rollten wieder auf die Kanalkueste zu. Doch wenige Tage erfolgte erneut eine Weisung, die als beruehmtester „Halt-Befehl“ in die Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges eingehen sollte. Die deutschen Panzerspitzen hatten die Kanalkueste erreicht, sie standen **15 Kilometer** vor Duenkirchen. . .

Der Befehl zum Anhalten erging an Guderians Panzer – zuerst vom Chef der H.Gr. A, Generaloberst von Rundstedt: Er wollte am **23 Mai 40** die Panzer anhalten lassen, um den Umfassungsarm, der ihm noch schwach erschien, entscheidend zu staerken u. wiederum die Infanterie „aufschliessen“ zu lassen. Das **OKH** unter von Brauchitsch war allerdings dafuer, die Panzer weiterrollen zu lassen, um Duenkirchen zu erobern. Noch am selben Tag *entzog die Heeresfuehrung von Rundstedt das Kommando ueber die Pz.-Div.* Begruendung: Die Panzerspitze muesse H.Gr. B unterstellt werden, damit die bevorstehende Kesselschlacht einheitlich gefuehrt werden koenne.

Hitler besuchte am **24 Mai 40** von Rundstedts Hauptquartier in Charleville. Aufgebracht darueber, dass die „Entmachtung“ von Rundstedts ohne sein Wissen geschehen sei, erklarte er alle Anweisungen des **OKH** fuer „null u. nichtig“ u. bestaetigte Rundstedts Befehl zum Anhalten der Panzer. Am **24 Mai 40** erfolgte also jener „Fuehrer“-Befehl der als „Hitlers Halt-Befehl vor Duenkirchen“ Geschichte machte. . . Goering toente, dass seine Flieger allein die eingeschlossenen Gegner vernichten koennten – ein absurdes Versprechen, denn die Luftwaffe hatten in den ersten **14** Tagen des Westfeldzuges bereits **1000** Flugzeuge verloren. Sie haette Schonung gebraucht, nicht die Pz.-Truppe.

Auf fast allen Ebenen der Wehrmacht herrschten Empoerung u. Unverstaendnis ueber den absurden „Halt-Befehl.“ OKH-Chef von Brauchitsch wollte protestieren – er wurde von Hitler wuetend abgefertigt u. schwieg fortan resigniert. Wie schon an so vielen Wendepunkten im Verhaeltnis zwischen Wehrmacht u. Diktator zeigte sich, dass die Maenner an der Spitze des Heeres Hitler nicht gewachsen waren. . . Der Militaerhistoriker Karl-Heinz Frieser bilanziert:

Es war nicht erst bei Duenkirchen, sondern bereits bei Montcornet, wo der Politiker Hitler – ein Novum der deutschen Militaergeschichte – *massiv in den Verlauf einer militaerischen Operation eingriff*. Insofern stellt der **17 Mai 40** eine Zaesur dar: Der damals in aller Welt hoch angesehene deutsche Generalstab bildete eine intellektuelle Elite, seine Entscheidungen waren von nuechternem Professionalismus geleitet. Nun hatte in diese Institution ein Element des Unberechenbaren, ja Irrationalen Einzug gehalten. Das Problem bestand weniger in Hitlers mangelndem militaerischem Sachverstand, sondern in der Abhaengigkeit von seinen extremen Gefuehlsschwankungen. Der „Fuehrer“ pendelte immer wieder zwischen massloser Ueberschaetzung der eigenen Moeglichkeiten u. uebertriebener Katastrophenstimmung hin u. her.

In Deutschland feierte man das „Wunder von 1940.“ Und dieses Wunder schrieb man dem Genie Hitlers zu. . . Die Legendenbildung war nicht aufzuhalten. Auch weltweit wurde fassungslos nach einer Erklärung gesucht. Und die lautete: *Hitler habe die revolutionaere Strategie des Blitzkrieges erfunden.* . . Tatsaechlich aber beruhte der „Sichelschnitt“ Plan nicht auf einer durchdachten Doktrin, sonder war eine aus der Not geborene Improvisation General von Mansteins. Sie machte den Krieg in Frankreich zu einem Blitzkrieg, der allerdings eher aus Zufall siegreich beendet werden konnte.

Denn Hitler u. einige zoegerliche, konservativ denkende Generaele gefaehrden in entscheidenden Phasen den Erfolg. Und nur die Eigenmaechtigkeit eines einzelnen Mannes sicherte schliesslich den ueberraschend schnellen Sieg: der eigenmaechtige Entschluss Guderians, am **14 Mai 40** aus dem Brueckenkopf Sedan mit seiner gesamten gepanzerten Streitmacht ausbrechen. Nicht ein ausgereiftes Blitzkriegkonzept – schon gar nicht ein Hitler’scher Geniestreich – entschied den Krieg in Frankreich, sondern der kuehne Plan eines von Manstein u. die Insubordination des Pz.-Generals Guderian.

Guderians Einsatz der Pz.-Waffe u. der „Sichelschnitt“ stellen gewiss einen Meilenstein der Kriegsgeschichte dar. Wichtiger als diese militaerische Revolution war jedoch ein ganz anderer Aspekt: Die Duenkirchen-Entscheidung Hitlers markierte *den entscheidenden Wendepunkt in dessen Verhaeltnis zur Wehrmacht* u. besonders zur deutschen Generalitaet. Hatte der Diktator bislang die militaerischen Profis entscheiden lassen, wie Operationen zu fuehren waren, so riss er nun zusehends das Heft fester an sich. Karl-Heinz Frieser urteilt ueber die neue Qualitaet in der Beziehung zwischen dem Generalstab u. Hitler:

Da er sich selbst als militaerisches Genie betrachtete, sah er in den Generaelen, mit denen er sich umgab, schliesslich nur noch eine Kulisse fuer seine einsamen Entscheidungen. Insofern stellt Duenkirchen in der Tat eine Zaesur dar. . .

Aber im Sommer **1940** stand Hitler im Zenit seiner Macht. Doch Hitler selbst sah den Krieg im Westen nur als Vorstufe zu der epochalen Auseinandersetzung mit dem „Bolschewismus“ u. der Sowjetunion. Der „groesste Feldherr aller Zeiten“ hatten noch viel vor mit der Wehrmacht. Und so erklaerte er kurz nach dem Westfeldzug gegenueber dem Chef **OKW**: „Jetzt haben wir gezeigt, wozu wir faehig sind. Glauben Sie mir Keitel, ein Feldzug gegen Russland waere dagegen nur eine Sandkastenspiel.“

(G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 63-76)

R.-D.-Mueller: Die Generalitaet hatte nach den Erfahrungen des Ersten Weltkrieges grossen Respekt vor den Briten u. den Franzosen. Von einem schnellen Sieg waren sich nicht so leicht zu ueberzeugen. Hitler musste sich den Bedenken gegen ein Antreten noch im Herbst u. Winter beugen. Immer wieder wurden moegliche Angriffstermine fuer den Fall „Gelb“ verschoben, insegsamt **29mal**. In der schwelenden Vertrauenkrise war ein moeglicher militaerischer Staatsstreich nicht ausgeschlossen.

Manstein erhielt Gelegenheit, Hitler persoendlich den Plan vorzutragen. Dieser fand Gefallen daran, doch entgegen manchen alten Legenden wurden Mansteins Vorstellungen *nur teilweise umgesetzt*. Auch Halder, der sich nach **1945** ruehmte, der eigentliche Schoepfer des „Sichelschnitt“-Plans zu sein [!], war zunaechst ein strikter Gegner der Ideen Mansteins gewesen.

Als die Wehrmacht am **10 May 40** die Westoffensive eroeffnete, befand sie sich gegenueber den Westmaechten (einschliesslich Belgien u. den Niederlanden) in einer zahlenmaessigen Unterlegenheit. Die Westmaechte verfuegte ueber 151 Divisionen mit **3.5** Millionen Soldaten, das deutsche Heer setzte 135 Divisionen mit knapp **3** Millionen Soldaten ein; davon blieben 45 Divisionen in der Reserve zurueck. Bei der Artillerie war die alliierte Seite fast doppelt so stark wie die deutsche (**13 947** Rohre gegenueber **7378**). Sie verfuegte ueber **4204** Panzer, zu einem grossen Teil technisch ueberlegene Modelle. Die Deutschen konnten mit ihrer noch jungen Panzerwaffe lediglich **2439** Fahrzeuge einsetzen.

Die Legende von einer angeblichen deutschen Ueberlegenheit in der Luft als Erklaerung fuer die Niederlage der Franzosen hat sich hartnaeckig gehalten. Tatsaechlich standen **3578** einsatzbereiten deutschen Flugzeugen **4469** alliierte gegenueber, die allerdings aus berechtigter Sorge vor einem deutschen Ueberraschungsangriff meist weit ins Hinterland zurueckverlegt worden waren. Auf dem Schlachtfeld beherrschte Goerings Luftwaffe den Himmel, weil die deutsche Seite stets ruecksichtslos alle verfuegbaren Maschinen einsetzte, Franzosen u. Briten dagegen eine Strategie des sparsamen Einsatzes verfolgten, weil man sich auf eine laengere Auseinandersetzung eingestellt hatte. Die modernen deutschen Jaeger Messerschmitt **Bf 109** konnten auch deshalb die Luftherrschaft erringen, weil die gleichwertigen britischen Spitfire-Maschinen zur Verteidigung der britischen Insel zurueckgehalten wurden. So war das Verhaeltnis in der Luft **12:1** zugunsten der Deutschen.

Am **20 Mai 40** erreichten die deutschen Panzer den Kanal. Die alliierten Truppen zogen sich in den Raum Duenkirchen zurueck. Generaloberst Gerd von Rundstedt scheute als O.B. der H.Gr. „A“ den Kampf in dem schwierigen Gelaende u. *liess die Panzer sofort stoppen*. Sie sollten das Aufschliessen der Infanterie abwarten. Der nach dem Krieg vieldiskutierte Haltebefehl von Duenkirchen wurde von Hitler bestaetigt. Es blieb Rundstedt ueberlassen, wieder antreten zu lassen. Am **27 Mai 40** war es zu spaet, um das zur Festung ausgebaute Terrain zu ueberrennen.

Die Sensation [i.e., Sieg ueber Frankreich] war perfekt. *Was im Ersten Weltkrieg in vier [4] Jahren nicht gelungen war, hatte Hitlers Wehrmacht in vier [4] Wochen erreicht*. Frankreich, staerkste Militaermacht des Kontinents in den **20er** u. **30er** Jahren, lag am Boden. Wie ist dieses Ergebnis zu erklaren? Die Legende von der personellen, materiellen u. technischen Ueberlegenheit der deutschen Truppen ist laengst widerlegt. . .

Mit der Zerstoerung der „Blitzkrieg“-Legende durch die bahnbrechende Arbeit von Karl-Heinz Frieser ist deutlich geworden, dass die Entscheidung – wie **1870** – auf dem Schlachtfeld von Sedan gefallen ist. Hier war die „zufaellige“ Geburtsstunde der deutschen Blitzkriegstaktik, aus der Improvisation heraus entstanden u. hauptsaechlich von dem Panzergeneral Heinz Guderian forciert. Sie verschaffte der Wehrmacht fuer die naechsten zwei Kriegsjahre jenes Instrument, das Hitlers gepanzerte Stossarmeen scheinbar unschlagbar werden liess, zu „Wunderwaffen,“ die den deutschen Diktator zum Herrn Europas machten. Diese *Revolution in der Kriegskunst verleitete den deutschen Generalstab aber auch zu einer **Selbstueberschaetzung**, die vor den Toren Moskaus zum Scheitern fuehrte*. . .

Militaerisch bedeutete der „Blitzkrieg“ den „konzentrierten Einsatz“ von Panzerwaffe u. Luftwaffe, um den Gegner durch Ueberraschung u. Schnelligkeit zu verwirren u. ihn nach erfolgtem Durchbruch mit weitraeumigen Vorstoessen zu umfassen. Ziel ist die rasche Niederwerfung des Gegners in einer „entscheidungssuchenden Operation.“ Die Keimzelle dieser Idee ist bereits im Ersten Weltkrieg erkennbar, bei der das deutsche Heer **1918** eine spezielle „Stosstrupptaktik“ fuer den Durchbruch u. den Stoss in die Tiefe entwickelt hatte. Guderian hatte

gegen **massive Widerstaende** in der Generalitaet diese Taktik uebernommen u. mit der modernen Technik kombiniert.

Die atemberaubende Steigerung der Angriffsgeschwindigkeit rief einen psychologischen Schockeffekt beim Gegner hervor, von dem er sich nicht wieder erholte. Die Ueberraschungseffekt war allerdings niemals wieder so vollkommen wie im Westfeldzug **1940**. Er gilt deshalb als *der perfekte „Blitzkrieg.“* Doch *als solcher war er keineswegs geplant* u. konnte angesichts der begrenzten deutschen Ruestung gegen einen starken Gegner nur auf eine Distanz von **300** Kilometern, innerhalb eines Monats u. beguenstigt durch den Fruhsommer sowie die verkehrsgeographischen Verhaeltnisse in Westeuropa zum Sieg fuehren. Als vermeintliches Siegesrezept gegen die UdSSR fuehrte er die Wehrmacht ein Jahr spaeter zwar zu den gewaltigsten Schlachtensiegen, am Ende aber in die Niederlage.

(R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 44-55)

1.1.1: **Manpower & Personnel:**

Note: From **1939-45** roughly **18,000,000** men served in the *Wehrmacht* from all service branches – Feldheer, Ersatzheer, *Luftwaffe*, Kriegsmarine, Waffen-SS, fremdlaendische Kraefte u. Wehrmachtgefolge. (C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht in der NS Diktatur*, 3)

Note: During the Second World War, ca. **20,000,000** German men – that is, roughly **50%** of all male citizens – performed military service. Precise figures are hard to come by, but if one assumes that between **1** and **2** million of them were *volunteers*, that leaves between **18-19** million who were drafted, in other words, forced to serve. This means that the armed forces of the Third Reich were overwhelmingly an *army of conscripts*. (*The Wehrmacht*, W. Wetze, 158)

Note: According to R. Overmans, some **17,300,000** Germans drafted (*Einziehungen*) to serve in the *Wehrmacht*. The *Jahrgaenge* with the highest number of recruits – over **900,000** each year – were **1920/21**. The *Todesquote* for **1920** = **32%**; for **1921** = **27.3%**. (*Deutsche militaerische Verluste*, 244)

Conscript army: Though conscripts *Prueller* and his comrades *think like professionals*. More, they have a *purpose*. They believe in the glorious destiny of Germany and are willing to sacrifice for it. They even accept death as a fact of soldierly life...Military professionalism, when yoked to *romantic purpose*, however evil, is a most *formidable force*. (*Diary of a German Soldier*, Landon (ed.), *introduction*, 8-9)

1935: Service in the German armed forces (*Wehrmacht*) became compulsory. Majority of those who fought during WWII were conscripts. Germany was a militaristic society and its citizens *rarely viewed conscription as an onerous infringement of civil liberties*; rather, most Germans viewed it as an honorable and proud obligation to the state and the German people. Members of the armed forces invariably *received deference from civilians* and were usually *held in high social esteem*. It was unusual, for ex., to see a young German soldier on leave w/o a number of *female admirers*, for the state *officially defined military service as a duty of honor* rather than one of obligations. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 7)

Pre-military service: Many recruits had already completed a term, usually of *six months*, in the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*, where they performed *construction and laboring duties* in a quasi-military

environment. Here individuals learned drill, marching, discipline and unit camaraderie. Other recruits had served as *Luftwaffe anti-aircraft auxiliaries* assisting at *flak batteries* or received some preparatory military training in the *HJ*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 7-8)

The *rapid expansion of the army after 1933* considerably diluted the quality of the elite *Reichswehr*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 25)

Sep 39 – Jun 41: On mobilization for war in Sep 39, the *Feldheer* (field army) had included **106** divisions, of which **10** were armored and **6** motorized; by Jun 41, on eve of *Barbarossa*, the roll had increased to **180** inf., **12** mot., and **20** panzer divisions. (Keegan, *Second World War*, 174)

Staff elements involved in personnel management included:

a. **Army Personnel Office** (directly subordinate to C-in-C of Army): Worked on all other officer personnel matters (i.e., those not addressed by Central Branch), such as education, evaluations, promotions, assignments, discipline, honors and awards.

b. **Organization Branch** (General Staff agency): Worked out personnel requirements—officer and enlisted—for all new units, IAW guidance provided by the chief of the General Staff. It also allocated enlisted replacements to units of the Field Army, in collaboration w/ the General Army Office.

c. **Central Branch** (General Staff agency): Took care of General Staff officers.

d. **General Army Office** (under the Replacement Army Cdr): Had a broad role. First, it regulated distribution of replacement personnel to all the services, under the direction of the OKW. Within the army's sphere, it sent recruits to training units and worked w/ the Organization Branch to regulate the allocation of trained men, both to fill new units and to replace combat losses in established ones. (Megargee, 129-30)

German illusions applied not just to logistics but also to manpower. *Wehrmacht* suffered from a *shortage of manpower and especially of officers*. Both Halder and Brauchitsch paid close attention to the personnel situation. Halder's diary shows regular meetings w/ *Organization Branch* chief **Buhle** and Lt. Gen. **Bodewin Keitel**, chief of the *Army Personnel Office*. Appearances notwithstanding, however, Halder and Brauchitsch *found their influence shrinking*. On **11.9.39**, **Hitler had taken control of postings to division commander and above**, and to corresponding positions in the high commands of the services. He also monitored every promotion to lieutenant general and above. Halder's diary indicates that the Fuehrer was taking an *ever more active role in details of personnel policy*. (Megargee, 124-25)

ab Dez 41: Die notwendige Aufwuchs der Wehrmacht nach Kriegsbeginn wurde durch ein ausgefeiltes System von sogenannten "Unabkoemmlich-Stellungen" (uk-Stellungen) begrenzt. Rund **3 – 6** Millionen wehrfaehiger junger Maenner blieben bis kurz vor Kriegsende von Einberufungen verschont, weil sie nicht nur als Facharbeiter in der modernen Ruestungs-industire „unabkoemmlich“ waren, sondern auch von anderen zivilen Bereichen in Wirtschaft, Partei u. Staat reklamiert wurden, die ein beachtliches, friedensorientiertes Beharrungsvermoegen zeigten. Erst nach der Kriegswende vor Moskau Ende **1941** gelang es durch verschiedene Aktionen, diese Reserven fuer die Wehrmacht zu mobilisieren – niemals ausreichend, stets hart umkaempft u. erst mit der Verschlechterung der Kriegslage mit einigem Erfolg. Eine moderne

Industriegesellschaft mit hochentwickelter Buerokratie laesst sich offenbar nicht hemmungslos militarisieren. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 120)

Recruitment / Replacement Policies:

Note: German Army personnel policies designed much more for the *combat efficiency* they promoted than for managerial convenience. In this sense, *they were very successful*. The best manpower in Germany was *allocated to the Panzer arm*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 52, 54)

Once drafted into the service, a soldier would then be carefully examined by a physician and his *prospective regimental cdr*. The outcome of these interviews would ultimate determine the soldier's branch of service. The soldier would then be sent to the *replacement battalion of his division* that was part of the *Replacement Army [Ersatz Heer]*. He would then undergo training at the necessary schools required for his position, and then eventually be posted to a „**march battalion**,“ which would take the replacements *en masse* to the particular unit. There the battalion would be broken up and the men assigned to their proper units by the regimental or battalion cdrs. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 44)

German losses in Russia were *far higher than anticipated* from the early days of the invasion. The *Ostheer* expended manpower faster than it could be replenished by the *Wehrmacht's* replacement system, even during the victories of 1941. The reserve pool was depleted so quickly that *emergency measures* were implemented: a) exempt occupations were redefined, which released enough men for another **5** divisions; b) some internal security units were transferred from Germany to the front; and, c) one btn. was detached from each of the **23** divisions still in western Europe at the end of **1941**. Rather than reinforce the exhausted units at the front, the army created *new formations*, so while the total army strength in Russian increased in terms of numbers of divisions, overall *manpower totals declined*: In **1941** there were **3.2** million troops in **136** divisions; in **1942** there were **2.7** million men in **179** divisions. By early **1942** the Germans had lost **1,000,000** men in Russia. It was only by calling up the next classes of conscripts early, substituting slave laborers for German farm workers and other expedients – as well as demanding more divisions from Germany's allies – that the *Ostheer* found sufficient strength for the **1942** offensive. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 118)

ab Oct 41: By autumn **1941**, there were virtually no men in their **20s** who had not already been conscripted. Fresh cohorts of *teenagers* provided the *Wehrmacht* w/ less than **1,000,000** fresh recruits in **1942**, enough only to replace the losses inflicted by the Red Army. To achieve any kind of expansion, the recruiters needed to draw on middle-aged German men previously exempted from the draft, including large numbers of armaments workers. In the first half of **1942** the *Wehrmacht* draft included at least **200,000** men taken from the armaments factories. At a time when Germany desperately needed to increase its armaments output, this was a *disaster*. (Tooze, *Wages of Destruction*, 513)

ca. Jan 42: When it appeared that the Soviet counteroffensive might rip the heart out of the German line, *Fromm* seriously considers stripping all of the home army training units of their expert instructors so as to be able to provide a *final draft of 15 first-class inf. divisions*. This would have helped restore the situation of Hr.Gr.Mitte, but would also have halted the training of any new recruits. *Fromm*, therefore, decides to hold off until „Germany's final moment of peril“ (*Deutschlands letzte Not*). But the fact that *Fromm* was considering such extremes is indicative. (Tooze, *Wages of Destruction*, 508)

Recruitment of personnel for the *Waffen-SS units* quite different from that of the Army. The SS was a *volunteer organization*, although it did have access to about **1%** of the Army's annual draft. Unlike their Army counterparts, the SS divisions had *no territorial affiliation*. Rather, their *esprit de corps* was based on combination of ideological training and firm belief that they were the *elite of the Nazi movement*. Dinardo notes *high combat losses of the Waffen-SS*: **14,213** killed or missing and **35,576** wounded as of **1.3.42**. In view of the restrictions on SS recruiting in Germany, the SS relied heavily on the *Volksdeutsche*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 50-51)

1.1.2: Army General Staff:

General Staff: Army's expansion between **1933-39** had already put a significant strain on the General Staff; demands of war made situation worse. The Germans began the war w/ **415** fully qualified General Staff officers, plus **93** officers assigned for training and **303** w/ the *War Academy*, for a total of **811**. When war broke out, the academy closed so that officers there could fill slots in the active units. Even so, there was a *shortage of 33 General Staff officers*; the army filled the empty slots w/ regular officers or w/ reactivated WWI General Staff veterans. As war went on, the *problem intensified*. With War Academy closed, there was *no source of additional General Staff officers*. When army began the buildup for *Barbarossa*, the need for General Staff officers went up again, to **1209** by **15.2.41**. The staff tried to meet this demand by expanding its training classes, reactivating more veterans (by raising the age limit), and creating expanded training programs for officers at the unit level. In the end, however, still more staff slots had to be filled by regular and reserve officers who had received no special staff training. *Intelligence slots (Ic)* were the first to be filled this way; most Ic officers at the division level were *reservists* by mid-Jan 41. Division supply officers (Ib) would be next. (Megargee, 127)

The General Staff's *elitism and intellectual consistency* were all the easier to maintain because of the *German conviction that staffs should remain small*. For example, in autumn of **1939**, Foreign Armies West had only **19** officers to monitor Western Europe and the USA. The *Operations Branch* (Heusinger) was no better off: Its organization chart of **1.6.41** shows only **31** officers and officials, 10 of them General Staff officers. For the Germans, these small staffs were not due to shortage of General Staff officers; rather, they were a *matter of principle*, even if it was never written down. The Germans believed that *small staffs were more efficient*; that they cut down on paperwork, briefings and unnecessary detail work; and that they allowed for the clarity that comes from personal interaction. (Megargee, 129)

Die Gesamtstaerke der *Operationsabteilung* [des Heeres] belief sich auf knapp **30 Offiziere**, eingeschlossen ein *Marine-Verbindungsoffizier* u. ein spaeter noch dazutretender Verbindungs-offizier der *Luftwaffe*, 10 *Beamte* u. etwas 90 Mann Unterpersonal, Schreiber, Zeichner, Fahrer, Ordonnanzen. Ausser der *vorrangigen Aufgabe als Arbeitsstab des Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres* oblag der Operationsabtl. zunehmend noch die Koordinierung der Arbeit der anderen Abteilungen des OKH...(see, *Meyer, Heusinger*, 174)

The plans [for attack on Russia] which began to be drawn up after **Jul 40** were based on an operational period of a few weeks. The general staff, while beginning to doubt whether the intended indirect elimination of Britain would work, found a long-cherished hope moving nearer fulfillment – Germany's achievement of immunity to blockade, the precondition for a protracted war, through the occupation of the Ukraine and the industrial regions, as well as through command of the Baltic. Halder's concept and plan for this war envisaged victory by means of rapid and decisive operations towards Moscow. This subject. . . goes beyond any subjective problems stemming from the character of the chief of the general staff, who no longer wielded the

decision-making military authority which, in the First World War, characterized the Hindenberg – Ludendorff team. Concealed behind the relationship between Halder and Hitler lies the diminution of the position of the general staff in the Prussian-German military state, a position achieved by Moltke and his successors. . . Since the victory in the West, if not earlier, Hitler had been „his own Ludendorff“, who let the general staff do the planning work but who alone took the strategic decisions. What Beck had failed to achieve in **1938** – a decision-sharing role for the most senior military advisor – his successor was even less able to achieve in **1941**. His attempt to gain shared military rule – dominance, at least, in the operational field – failed miserably. He was reduced to resorting to indirect methods, to concealment, and to the hope that the magnificent victory sought by the general staff in the direction of Moscow would eventually also convince Hitler and carry him along. Hitler had never shared the view that a great battle outside or for Moscow could bring about the overall decision. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 3)

1.1.3: Doctrine:

Armies vs. Heeresgruppen: In der *Wehrmacht* war die Armee der Grossverband, in dem saemtliche Waffengattungen u. dazu gehoerende Dienste, wie Nachschub, Transportwesen, Gerichtswesen eingegliedert waren u. der direkten Befehlsgewalt des O.B. unterstanden. Sie verfuegte ueber einen umfassenden Stab. Der Stabschef einer Armee war meistens Oberst, bei den H.Gr. war er fast durchgehend General. Der Armee O.B. war oberster Gerichtsherr u. Inhaber der Territorialgewalt in seinem Berich mit Verantwortung fuer das Schicksal der Zivilbevoelkerung. Die Befehlsgewalt der H.Gr. ist nicht klar definiert – sie unterstanden Hitler u. dem **OKW/OKH** direct u. waren zunaechst ein Verbindungsglied zwischen der hoechsten Befehlsstelle u. den Armeen, deren Aktionen sie zu koordinieren hatten. Ihr Stab war, verglichen mit dem Stab einer Armee, klein u. umfasste keine Quartermeisterabteilung. Der H.Gr. OB war weder Gerichtsherr noch hatte er Territorialgewalt. Waehrend die Armee eine grosse Anzahl von Verbaenden befehligte, auch solche, die nicht in Korps eingegliedert waren, unterstanden der H.Gr. nur direkt die AOKs. Eine H.Gr. OB konnte einen Armeefuehrer nicht abloesen – eine Abloesung konnte er nur beantragen. (*M. Stein, GFM Model*, 70-71)

Note: The Germans concentrated on *Waffenkrieg* (the operational level of war) and tactics. What written doctrine they did have, *Truppenfuehrung* (Part I was unclassified and published in **1933**), discussed leadership techniques that the world would come to recognize as *blitzkrieg*, but made very little mention of armored warfare or close air support. Once on the field of battle, German officers applied this theory in combination w/ the independent *Stosstrupp* infiltration tactics of World War I, w/ General Hans v. Seeckt’s theories of *combined arms*, the meeting engagement and the *Schwerpunkt*, all wedded to the internal combustion engine and the radio in order to create *blitzkrieg*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 21-22)

Note: “There is a German way of war. Its distinctive characteristic is the muster of overwhelming force and a rapid advance into enemy territory. The successive Prussian and German states were surrounded (and felt themselves threatened) by vastly larger ones and so aimed at short, decisive wars of movement: the *Bewegungskrieg* – though the term *Blitzkrieg* is more common in English. To Germany’s leaders, both military and civilian, the offensive must ever be immediately taken to force a decision before the geographic predicament could be made to bear. . . The operational excellence of the German and Prussian general staffs is the stuff of hundreds of excellent military histories. But this brilliant cycle of war, shaped by geographic and historical circumstances, masked an *unhealthy strategic shortcoming*: an inability to see national war as the last resort, sometimes even an unnecessary one.

“They forced war on other nations, and w/ the exceptions of the quick wars of unification against Austria in **1866** and France in **1871**, their military skill battered their own state into submission. Frederick the Great began the *Seven Years War* by marching into Saxony; Wilhelm II sent his corps into Belgium and Russia in hopes of maintaining German industrial and social prosperity; and Hitler repeatedly used the army as a crutch for mounting the steps in his climb to global power. Each ended in disaster. The German state never existed as anything other than a militaristic enterprise, which is why its skill led to repeated defeat and, ultimately, to its own devastation in **1945**.” (R. Messenger, “*German Way of War*,” 30)

Background: In general, German military doctrine of WWII based on ideas of *Clausewitz*, *Moltke*, *Schlieffen* and *Schlichting*. Intellectually, German Army of WWII owed much to its imperial predecessor. Basic manuals both during and before Nazi period included: a) ***Fuehrung und Gefecht (1921)***; b) ***Truppenfuehrung***, successor to „a“ and first issued in **1933**; and, c) ***Richtlinien fuer die Fuehrung der Panzerdivision***, first issued in **1938**. If one examines the first two („a“ and „b“), one can see a *clear continuity of thinking between Seeckt and Beck*. Both manuals emphasized the *principles of mobility and combined arms*. Another important element stressed was that of *individual initiative*, esp. on part of *junior officers* and *NCOs*. This was clearly expressed in *Fuehrung u. Gefecht* and perhaps more famously in *Truppenfuehrung*, where war was defined in the best tradition of *Clausewitz* as a „**free creative activity**.“ This notion was in part an outgrowth of German *infiltration tactics*, which demanded a great deal of initiative on part of junior officers and NCOs, who now became „key decision makers.“ The very origins of the concept date back in Germany to the **19th Century**. ***Helmuth v. Moltke*** himself was both a believer and practitioner of the principle of giving subordinate cdns a *wide degree of latitude*, esp. at corps and division levels. This was extended downward to field and company grade cdns in **1888** by the infantry regs written by Prussian general ***Sigismund v. Schlichting***. During WWI, these concepts were developed and refined into the „*infiltration tactics*“ used by German Army w/ success in latter stage of war. These ideas *remained a staple of general German doctrine throughout WWII*. The concept of *combined arms* was expressed in *Richtlinien fuer die Fuehrung einer Panzerdivision* by the notion of breaking the division down into *combined armed battle groups*, or ***Kampfgruppen***. The German Army fought by these ideas throughout the war. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 95)

Concept of Vernichtungsschlacht: The idea of inflicting *strategic paralysis* on the enemy was important to the Germans, but the difference was in emphasis. Whereas *Fuller* and *Liddell-Hart* regarded paralysis as *an end in itself*, for the Germans it was only a *means to an end*—that being the *physical destruction of the enemy’s armed forces*. This was to be accomplished by the *Vernichtungsschlacht*, the battle of annihilation. For *Clausewitz*, the destruction or defeat of the enemy was one of the central objects of any war. *Moltke* also emphasized this in his writings. This was later refined into the concept of the *Vernichtungsschlacht*, developed by the Chief of the General Staff ***General Count Alfred v. Schlieffen*** before **1914**, based on his study of *Hannibal’s* victory at ***Cannae***. This concept—of a battle of annihilation—provided the *basis for the conduct of German ops during the entire war*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 101-02)

Showalter: From platoon to army group, the Germans’ superiority on the eastern front depended heavily on the *flexibility of their command structure and the initiative of their frontline leaders*. (Fuchs, 138)

Citino: The *Wehrmacht* – evincing a long line of continuity to the time of at least Frederick the Great of Prussia – was a “military force *configured, armed, and trained for the offensive war of movement and quick victory*.” Throughout German military history, the officer corps’ operational

doctrine almost always consisted of one thing: making a *beeline for the nearest enemy force and launching an attack on it*...This “*spirit of aggression*” was not something that the German army invented one afternoon in 1935. (Citino, *Defeat of the Wehrmacht*, 12, 17; see also **Section 2.1.7**, “*Kultur*.”)

Truppenfuehrung:

At heart of German training was the *inculcating of a progressive, univerrally taught doctrine*: a set of basic assumptions, beliefs and operating instructions that all German troops, regardless of service branch, learned and were expected to follow. Adherence to this *modern, uniform and realistic doctrine*, enshrined in the **1936 *Truppenfuehrung*** manual, was *one of the great strengths of the German Army*. Developed in early 1930s by some of Army’s best minds, it *avoided the parochialism inherent in individual service doctrines* and signified a **holistic set of procedures** for the Army as a whole. The *soundness and forward looking nature* of this doctrine made a significant contribution to the mil. triumphs of Germany from 1939-42. *Truppenfuehrung* emphasised what Germans called **mission-oriented tactics**. That is, doctrine expected senior commanders to give subordinates broad orders but to *leave actual implementation of those orders to the discretion and experience of subordinates*. Such an approach provided *maximum flexibility and initiative*. Junior officers did not simply learn „school“ solutions to problems but were *taught to think for themselves*. To have confidence in their own decisions and act upon them. Basic tenet of *Truppenfuehrung*: That swift offensive action using speed and shock could overcome a numerically superior enemy, even on entrenched in strong positions. In contrast to the *stereotype of the German soldier* as a blindly obedient automaton, *Truppenfuehrung* emphasised not only individual initiative but also *offensive verve*. Doctrine rightly *ascribed the attack to be superior to the defence* and insisted that *speed and surprise* could often allow an outnumbered and outgunned attacker to prevail over a stronger enemy. This system worked very well in early war years, when the *cream of German society* fought and confronted western militaries still struggling w/ the crippling effects of the Great War. Such flexibility and initiative contributed in no small part to devastating German triumphs early in the war, as *junior officers and NCOs were conditioned to seize opportunities that presented themselves on the battlefield w/o the lengthy delay in seeking higher approval*.⁶ But as the war progressed and German suffered enormous losses, the *quality of the leadership inevitably declined* since training standards slipped. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 8-11)

Col. Dr. Alfred Durrwanger: „I would like to draw attention now to one element of German warfare that had great success, especially in Soviet Russia, the so-called **Auftragstaktik** (*this word had never been used before or during the war and had not been mentioned, as a word, in German regulations*). *Auftragstaktik* is a short description of the way to make units function. In short, it means that the order to fulfill a certain military mission is only given *w/in broad parameters* and all further details regarding its fulfillment are *left to the subordinate*. This principle can be applied to all forces. It is the result of long experiences and especially of a belief that better know-how in warfare decides the issue of who will prevail in battle. Let me give you a *practical example of Auftragstaktik*. [Note: For details of this anecdote from **Jun 41** see, Col. Dr. A. Durrwanger, „**28. ID Operations**,“ in: Glantz, *Initial Period of War*, 236-37)

Blitzkrieg concept:

⁶ Even as late as summer of 1944 in Normandy, I observed this type of behavior repeatedly among the soldiers of the **12. SS Pz.Div**.

“Time, in particular, [is] the *essential ingredient* of the *blitzkrieg*.” (E. Ziemke, *Franz Halder at Orsha*, 173)

Recent West German studies have demonstrated convincingly that the *Barbarossa* campaign of 1941 is the *only endeavor of the entire war to which the German high command consciously employed the **Blitzkrieg strategy***. This is the thrust of Horst Boog, Juergen Foerster, Joachim Hoffman, Ernst Klink, Rolf-Dieter Mueller and Gerd R. Ueberschaer, *Das deutsche Reich und der Zweiten Weltkrieg, Band 4: Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion* (1984). Hitler and his generals hoped for a swift victory of the USSR, which would allow the German military to return to the maritime and air war against Great Britain the following year. (Muller, *German Air War*, xiii)

Operation “*Barbarossa*” was the *climax and the finale of the Blitzkrieg era in German military history at the same time*. The term “*Blitzkrieg*”...summed up a peculiar, unmistakably German method of waging war, *whose origins stretched far into the past*...The idea of *Blitzkrieg* stemmed from Germany’s central position and continuing numerical inferiority in the European wars. It basically *sought to bring about a military victory by way of swift, decisive operational-level movements* designed to isolate enemy forces and smash them piecemeal in large-scale annihilation battles. *Blitzkrieg’s* characteristics were: a) the emphasis (not to say overemphasis) on the *operational art*, and particularly on the offensive; b) the education of officers for quick decision-making and independent action even at the lower command levels (“missions tactics”); c) the acceptance of risks in terms of time, terrain, and enemy situation; and, d) a constant interplay between advance planning and improvisation—all factors requiring a very high degree of military competence. Perfected for decades to the highest professional standards in the *General Staff*, these qualities gave the German arms their most celebrated triumphs, determined the officer corps’ world view and won the admiration of military experts throughout the world. Yet in spite of brilliantly victorious campaigns, these qualities *failed to prevent Germany’s devastating defeat in World War One*. (Sigint and ‘*Blitzkrieg*,’ D. Arazi, 223-24)

In 1920s and 30s, *Blitzkrieg* idea *resuscitated through further development of the operational art, this time accommodating it to modern technology*. Those responsible for this effort included Guderian, v. Manstein, v. Reichenau, Hoth, etc, who searched for a new formula for victory. Their efforts created that *modern, technical form of Blitzkrieg* that w/ its combination of armored and aerial attacks brought about Germany’s greatest victories during the first two years of WWII. Among these innovators was a *military specialist who perfectly embodies this fusion of technology and warfare*, and whose contribution to the creation of modern war (as *Martin van Creveld* recently pointed out) though decisive, has been largely ignored—*General of the Signal Corps Erich Fellgiebel*. (Sigint and ‘*Blitzkrieg*,’ D. Arazi, 224)

Citino: [addressing German ops from 1939-41]: “Analysis of these German ops in WWII *continues to paint them as somehow novel*, as an example of a new method of wargaming called *blitzkrieg*, or “lightning war.” Allegedly invented in the interwar era, *blitzkrieg* is said to have transformed warfare by mechanizing it. In place of the foot soldier and the cavalry, there were now machines, esp. tanks and acft. In place of the trench deadlock that had characterized WWI were vast campaigns of breakthrough, encirclement, and maneuver. In fact, the *word itself is a misnomer*. The German army didn’t invent it, and they hardly ever used the word outside of quotation marks...Even if they didn’t invent the *blitzkrieg*, however, the *Germans clearly did something in the interwar period*...What distinguished the activity of the interwar German army (the *Reichswehr* until 1934, then the *Wehrmacht*) was that it was *not trying to discover anything new*. It felt that it already had a *workable warfighting doctrine: **Bewegungskrieg***, the war of

movement on the *operational level*. This is where the Germans saw tanks and acft as making their contribution. These new wpns had to be *used on the operational level* – that is, in large units, from the divisions on up. The result was the *Panzer division*, a unit built around tanks but containing a *full panoply of combined arms*: infantry, artillery, reconnaissance, supply columns, bridging trains, and more, all of which had their mobility raised to the level of the tank. A Panzer division was *more than any contemporary army could handle from 1939-41.*” (Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 15-16)

As important as the tank and the airplane was the *Wehrmacht's* highly articulated system of *command and control*. Some of this harkened back to older German traditions, esp. the notion of the *independence of the lower commander*, often referred to, *incorrectly*, as *Auftragstaktik*, or mission tactics. Under Field Marshal *Helmuth v. Moltke*, victory of the wars of German unification, the Prussian army prided itself on providing *general missions* to lower levels of command, then allowing the lower commander to devise the best way to carry them out. On all levels of command, orders were to be *short, snappy, and to the point*. Ideally, they were to be delivered orally; the Prusso-German armies made more limited use of written orders than any other contemporary force. Finally, commanders were *encouraged to forgo maps*, if at all possible, and to deliver their orders by pointing to the actual terrain. On its face, the *Prussian command system* might seem to be a *recipe for chaos*, a free-for-all in which each division, corps, and army cdr fought his *own private war*. In fact, there were two circumstances that worked in its favor: a) the staff system; b) the highly aggressive nature of the Prussian-German officer corps (which also helped make *Auftragstaktik* work).

Blitzkrieg concept: Was as much an *economic as a military concept*, based on Hitler's view that Germany could not sustain a prolonged war until she possessed herself of Russia's riches. „Operation *Barbarossa*,“ was to be the last *blitzkrieg*. It was *cut to the bone*. Even in **1941** Hitler was not prepared to put the German economy on a full war-footing. Since the *occupation of Prague*, he had become suspicious of the will of the German people to wage total war, and he was reluctant therefore to drive women into the war factories or to cut civilian production and consumption more than was absolutely necessary to attain his military objectives. As a result, ***Barbarossa was seriously underpowered in terms of the magnitude of its objectives***. There were elements of **153** division involved, but only **3580** tanks [and assault guns], **7,184** guns and **2,740** acft. By comparison, the Soviet offensive in **Jan 45** on the *Berlin front* alone employed: **6,250** tanks, **7,560** acft, and no less than **41,600** guns. Much of the German transport was horse-powered and lack of mobility proved an increasing handicap as the campaign proceeded. The Germans found themselves *fighting a Forties war with late-Thirties weaponry*, and not enough even of that. The defects were *most pronounced in the air*. *Goering* proved an increasingly idle and *incompetent leader*; both his chief technical officer and his staff chief were eventually driven to *suicide* by the exposure of their bunglings. But the responsibility was also Hitler's, for failing to provide acft in sufficient quantity. Equally to blame was Nazi procurement policy, which was *statist and bureaucratic* and totally unable to produce a *satisfactory heavy bomber*. Hitler allowed the *Luftwaffe* to become the most *party-dominated* and *totalitarian* of his armed services, and dearly did he pay for it. (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 377-78: also, *Fest*, 962, 1091)

German armored doctrine:

German armor doctrine as it finally evolved was *essentially an outgrowth of the Army's infiltration tactics* it had developed during *WWI*. In **1920s**, the Chief of the General Staff, General **Hans v. Seeckt**, was a strong supporter of tank development. Germans conducted tank testing and training in secret at joint Russo-German tank school at **Kazan** in the Soviet Union

from 1929-33. (Walter Nehring and Hans-Georg Reinhardt were both graduates of tank school at Kazan.) In *Reichswehr*, speed and mobility were advocated in the 1921 field service regulation—*Fuehrung u. Gefecht*. Principle of *combined arms* also heavily emphasized. [Cruix]: Basic elements of German armor doctrine were *present well before the emergence of the panzer arm*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 89-90)

Dinardo posits that German armored doctrine was *not strongly influenced by ideas of foreign thinkers*, such as *Liddell-Hart, J.F.C. Fuller, de Gaulle*, etc. But they were, of course, familiar w/ their ideas. It is also clear, he states, that German armor, AT, and *military doctrine in general*, was *neither new nor innovative*, as some have argued. Rather, German armored doctrine was *simply the perfection and refining of tactics they had developed during the last two years of World War One*. Similarly, German AT doctrine grew out of German Army's experiences in WWI. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 102-03)

German armor doctrine was *outgrowth of the German Army's experiences in latter stages of World War One*. It also fit into the broader German warfighting doctrine, which was *based on the Napoleonic concept* of achieving the destruction of the enemy's army through the *decisive battle*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 136)

Aug 35: Germans held their *first field maneuvers w/ a panzer division*, commanded by General *Oswald Lutz* who, although depicted by *Guderian* as nothing more than his superior and protector, was also a *fine armor theorist in his own right*. The after-action report on the exercise, signed by Lutz, stated clearly that *infantry and tanks must work very closely together*. This was in *direct contravention* to many of the writings of *Fuller* and *Liddell-Hart*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 90-91)

1940: Following conclusion of French campaign, it was decided to *revise the manual Richtlinien fuer die Fuehrung der Panzerdivision* to incorporate „lessons learned“ from Polish and French campaigns. General *Rudolf Schmidt*, cdr of 39. AK, assigned the task to do this. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 94)

P.P. Battistelli: Germany's victorious 1940 campaign shaped its armored warfare doctrine, helping to further refine the tactics of the *Panzerwaffe*. First, experience gained in difficult terrain – such as the wetlands around Dunkерque – had shown that the Panzer divisions needed more infantry and a better balance between armor, infantry and support wpsn. This was also demonstrated by the experiences of the “four tank battalion” brigades, which proved too cumbersome to manoeuvre efficiently. The subsequent reorganization of these units into a single panzer regiment was another step forward in German doctrine, which conceived of such a division as an all-armed, balanced unit capable of carrying out every kind of mission by itself. . .

Shortly after the conclusion of the 1940 campaign, commanders at every level were requested to submit detailed reports about their own experiences in the field. These were used to improve the 1938 technical manual, which was reissued on 3 Dec 40 under the title *Directives for Command and Employment of a Panzer Division (Heeres-Dienstvorschrift g 66)*. It was reprinted in 1942 w/o further changes, and its guidelines remained unaltered until the end of the war. It stated that the *main task of the Panzer division was to seek decision on the battlefield*. A Panzer division was required to attack every kind of enemy position and to exploit the success using either in-depth penetration behind enemy lines of attacking an enemy's rear positions, and pursuing any enemy remnants. Attack was the only combat method suited to the Panzer divisions; even in defence they were to counterattack enemy breakthroughs. Only

when facing fixed or fortified defence lines were the Panzer divisions to give way to the infantry, not only to avoid severe losses but also to avoid eschewing the decisive advantage of their speed and manoeuvrability. Those dual advantages were the decisive factors in a Panzer division's attack. . .

Combined-arms warfare led to the widespread use of mixed Kampfgruppen, which involved splitting up a Panzer division into two or more mixed groups. . . The mixed Kampfgruppen replaced the Panzer and Schuetzen brigades as the main attack and support groups of the division. . . (*Panzer Divisions: The Eastern Front 1941-43*, 7-8)

Jun-Jul 41: It did not take long before the war on the eastern front *exposed the shortcomings of German doctrine*.⁷ The lack of an adequate road network and accurate maps, the erroneous estimates of fuel consumption (**60,000** litres of fuel daily for a **200**-tank Panzer regiment soon turned into **120,000** and **180,000** litres daily) and the wear and tear on the vehicles greatly influenced the Panzer divisions' capabilities, along w/ the inability of the infantry to keep pace w/ the armored advance. Until **27 Jun 41**, **2** and **3 PzGr** advanced **320 km** w/ a daily rate of 64 km; this shrank to 20 km a day in early **Jul 41**. (*P.P. Battistelli, Panzer Divisions: The Eastern Front 1941-43*, 8)

German Defensive Doctrine:

(Example of Yelna / **Jul-Aug 41**):

[**Note:** After World War I, the Germans devised a defensive doctrine in the **1930s**, which was a "revised form of the World War I elastic defense. The objective was to spread the troops to make them less vulnerable to artillery barrages. A defensive line involved four [**4**] areas. First came the advance position, then the outpost zone, followed by the [HKL], and finally a reserve line. . . The elastic defense had worked well in World War I until the tank appeared. . . The major issue in the late **1930s**, therefore, was to adjust the elastic defense to tanks attacks. The goal was to separate the infantry from its supporting tanks."]]

The second series of pockets around Smolensk resisted even longer and the German advance began to bog down. The Russians stopped the Germans on the Desna River at Yelna on **15 Jul 41**. Russian morale improved when told that they were defending Moscow. *Soviet artillery and AT guns were better than their German counterparts* and played an important role in the battles. The Katusha rocket launchers were used for the first time on **15 Jul 41**, giving the Germans a disagreeable surprise. On **11 Aug 41**, the Russians launched furious counterattacks in the center, attempting to relieve the surrounded troops around Smolensk. The attack at Yelna against a thinly-held line penetrated the German defenses. A counterattack by **10. PD** restored the situation by **30 Aug 41**. However, on **5 Sep 41**, the Germans gave up the Yelna salient – the first operational withdrawal by the German Army in WWII. The Germans went on the defensive, and the doctrine of elastic defense came into play.

The German field commanders assumed that they would have flexibility to select positions and conduct an elastic defense that would be an infantry responsibility. They also assumed that there would be sufficient infantry available for defense in depth, creating the four [**4**] zones called for by German defensive doctrine. [See "**Note**" below.] The principle threat would come from the

⁷ **Note:** Did it expose the shortcomings of the doctrine, or of the equipment and resources available to execute that doctrine?

Red Army infantry. German tanks would be held in reserve for counterattacks. These German assumptions proved wrong.

At Yelna as at other locations, the German divisions held sectors more than 30 kilometers wide. Instead of elastic defense, there was a thin belt of widely spaced strong points defending improvised lines on unfavorable ground. Russian artillery fire destroyed the strong points, killing many German troops. . . The Germans *did not have sufficient **infantry** even in Aug 41 to prepare an elastic defense*.

German infantry doctrine in 1942 was determined by the lack of infantry. (*W. Dunn, Hitler's Nemesis*, 7-10)

Engineers:

Use of Engineers: Another important element of German *combined arms doctrine* was use of engineers. This was advocated as early as 1935 in the first after-action report written on the exercises of the first German *panzer* division. Later on, *Guderian* and other writers dwelt on the importance of engineers [in tank ops] and found the ultimate reflection of this in the 1938 manual ***Richtlinien fuer die Fuehrung der Panzerdivision***. Engineers became an important element in ops throughout the war. Their *special capabilities*, such as: a) bridging water obstacles; b) removing obstructions from roads, etc.; c) laying and clearing of mines; and, d) ability to attack fortified positions, were all *vital to progress of panzer operations*. They were also able to fight as *regular infantry*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 91)

Division-size units:

Mit knapp 18,000 Mann (im Verlauf des Krieges gekuerzt auf 12,000 Mann)⁸ waren die Divisionen – so die einschlaegige *Heeresdienstvorschrift (H.Dv. 300/1: Truppenfuehrung*, 1. Teil [Abschnitt I-XIII], Berlin 1936, S. 7) „die kleinsten Heereskoerper, die durch ihre *organische Zusammensetzung* zu operativer Selbstaendigkeit befahigt“ waren. Sie konnten selbstaendig kaempfen u. sich selbst versorgen. Es handelt sich hier also um relativ geschlossene mil. Organisationen, wenn man so will: um *Armeen im Kleinen*, aus denen der Krieg nicht selten *Schicksalsgemeinschaften* formten. Wie hoch deren *Bindekraft* noch war, als dieser Krieg laengst aufgehoert hatte, machen Einrichtungen wie die *Veteranenverbaende* deutlich: Deren Organisationsgrundlage war in der Regel „ihre“ Division. Vorteile bietet auch die Groesse einer Division, denn sie war einerseits recht nah „dran“ am eigentlichen mil. Geschehen. Andererseits war eine Division doch schon so gross, dass sich in ihrer Geschichte stets auch die *Grosse Strategie* erkennen laesst u. damit auch die politischen Intentionen der kriegfuehrenden Parteien. (*C. Hartmann, et al., Wehrmacht in der NS Diktatur*, 9)

1.1.4: Training (& Indoctrination):

Background:

⁸ Gemeint ist die Staerke einer Inf.Div.

Physical fitness and military prowess were *key tenants of Nazi ideology*. IAW this, pre-military age youths received what might be described as *paramilitary training*. During first few years of Nazi rule, all young men from 18-20 given military training by the SA. The SA training sought to compress the equivalent of American basic training into about four weeks. After the purge of **30.6.34**, the SA was *removed from any role in military training*. Any military training given to the *Hitler Youth* was conducted by the Army. By **1937**, pre-military training for the Hitler Youth had become more sophisticated. After leaving the HJ, young men went on to the *National Labor Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst, or RAD)*. There they received more paramilitary training, w/ heavy emphasis on physical fitness and drill. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 57*)

German *emphasis on individual as well as command initiative and flexibility*—this had its roots in the *Imperial Army's infantry regs of 1888*, written largely by *General Sigismund v. Schlichting*. This was then carried on in the form of the development of *infiltration tactics* during German Army in WWI. One element of pre-1939 German military training that *American military attaches* found noteworthy was that the German Army *lacked a „school solution“* to solve problems. Soldiers, NCOs and officers were trained to *judge each situation as being unique and not to react in dogmatic fashion*. This attitude reflected throughout German manuals, beginning w/ the *basic German field service regulation, Truppenfuehrung*, w/ its *Clausewitzian* definition of war as an *„art, depending upon free creative activity, scientifically grounded.“* Wartime training stressed the *chaotic nature of combat...*[Crux]: Clearly evident that German Army training reflected to a very great degree the most basic German Army doctrine of individual, small unit and divisional *initiative*. Also important to note that, at least in the training of infantry, the *German Army still adhered to the concepts developed in the late stages of WWI*. Here again there is a *clear continuity* between the *Wehrmacht* and its imperial predecessor. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 68, 96*)

Continuity between German Army of WWII and its *Imperial* predecessor also seen in area of training. For example, *live ammunition* often used in training exercises, a practice employed by the pre-1914 Imperial Army during some phases of their annual summer maneuvers. Units also trained w/ live ammo during their rest, refitting or rebuilding periods [during Second World War]. The Germans retained this kind of *realistic training* for duration of war. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 62, 65*)

German policy of *giving everybody combat training* made the necessary *rear area „comb outs“* a relatively successful means of keeping combat units up to strength, at least temporarily. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 67-68*)

The training of officers and NCOs was *both long and thorough*. In the *Reichswehr*, training courses were long since both officers and NCOs were *trained to act in a capacity two steps above their rank*. This proved valuable during the Army's rapid expansion after 1935. Training programs for officers/NCOs were very demanding, hence there was a *high drop out rate*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 65*)

Basic Training:

The German Army *did not have a uniform basic training program*. Upon induction, each recruit joined a unit of the arm or service to which he had been assigned. For example, in peacetime, the recruit destined for the tank forces was immediately assigned to a tank company, whereas in wartime he joined a tank training company or the replacement army. Early in WWII, basic training was conducted for a *period of 12 weeks*—later reduced to *eight weeks*—at the end of

which the recruit was considered *fully trained and ready for assignment*. (CMH Pub 104-7, *German Tank Maintenance in WWII*, 29-30)

Once drafted into the *Army proper*, a soldier's training would be undertaken by his *parent unit*.⁹ Basic training would be conducted by his division's *replacement battalion*. The *physical training* portion was *designed to push the new recruits to the limits of their endurance*. Once a soldier completed basic, he was sent to his parent unit. (See, *Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 57, for other components of *basic training*.)

Training was **long, arduous, realistic**. **Discipline** rigidly enforced. German training programs did not restrict themselves to an 8-hour day between hours of 9 to 5, but *sought to replicate as closely as possible combat conditions*. Troops trained in all weathers and during the evening and night. Basic training was *inherently dangerous* since **live-fire exercises** were *routine* in order to replicate combat conditions that were realistic as possible. Thus, they were exposed to real danger of death during training. German military accepted the **one percent fatality rate** it suffered in training as necessary price to pay for saving more soldiers' lives on the battlefield. Training was *forward looking and thorough*—every soldier was instructed to *do his superior's job as well as his own* in case they assumed command. Training fostered a strong sense of comradeship and *group identity*—i.e., bonding to a *primary unit*. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 8)

Droegemueller: “Basic training for all soldiers was tough in the German army – very *physical*. It would compare to the training for elite American units like the Marine Corps.” (*Steinway article, “German Horse Soldier,”* 37)

Combined arms training:

Pre-war training program included an emphasis on familiarity w/ *combined arms*. Tank and anti-tank (AT) units were encouraged to train together. Also of note is fact that all of the battalion's personnel [specific example here is of 39th AT Btn of 3. PD in 1937] were trained extensively as infantry. Also of note in German pre-war training was amount of training carried out jointly w/ *engineers*, as they were considered *integral to armor ops as well as AT defense*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 58)

In German Army of WWII, soldiers, NCOs and officers were *all trained to understand the value of the combination of tanks, infantry, artillery and engineers*. This not only allowed individual divisions to employ *combined arms battle groups (Kampfgruppen)*,¹⁰ but also allowed *panzer* divisions to do this in concert w/ non-motorized infantry divisions. This doctrine and its practice had been *stressed as the basic German armor doctrine* before the war. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 67)

Wartime training:

⁹ This very different to approach of U.S. Army, where basic training was carried out *before* a soldier was assigned to a unit. (59)

¹⁰ *Kampfgruppe* concept allowed Germans maximum latitude for „*tailoring*“ forces for specific missions. Also, combined arms nature of the battle groups allowed them to undertake almost any type of mission. *Kampfgruppe* could be based on rgts, battalions, and in dire straits, even companies. *Kampfgruppe* system allowed Germans to obtain maximum use of their divisions, even after they had taken heavy losses. Germans continued this practice throughout the war. (119-22)

Wartime training was a *good dealer tougher than in peacetime*. The **German High Command was disappointed in their soldiers' performance in the Polish campaign**. Halder echoed the complaint made commonly by field cdrs that the infantry were *not very vigorous in the attack*. He also noted that *march discipline* in mot. units was poor, resulting in traffic jams. Guderian noted several occasions where his mot. and *panzer* units exhibited *signs of nervousness* about going into action. The Army High Command became well aware of this situation, having been alerted by a *number of brutally honest after-action reports* from unit cdrs disclosing the shortcomings of their troops. Thus, between Polish and French campaigns, there was a concentrated effort to raise the level of efficiency in the Army to a uniformly high level. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 60-61)

Autumn 1940: As part of preparation for *Barbarossa*, OKH ordered another round of intense training. Panzer divisions were to train extensively in *combined arm tactics*, esp. the integration of tanks, infantry and artillery in either massed tank attacks or mixed battle groups. Motorized infantry divisions were to train for fighting unsupported and to *clear forests* and villages quickly. Germans also paid close attention—after initial experiences [in Russia?]*—to night combat training*. Polish and French campaigns had seen *little in the way of night combat*. The 1941 campaign in Russia, however, *gave the Germans a nasty shock*. The Russians excelled in night combat; and night patrols, ambushes and skirmishes were *terrifying to German soldiers*. Thereafter, German training documents laid great stress on night combat training for all branches. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 62-63; see also, Fritz, *Frontsoldaten*, 39. 141)

Importance of „lessons learned“: Germans always *took great pains to make sure combat lessons learned from the latest campaign were quickly incorporated into training*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 63)

20.3.41: GFM v. Kluge's assessment was that, although his **4 Army** motorized forces [?] had performed well in France, they were not tough enough for Russia. They needed to be more aggressive in the attack. On **20 Mar 41** he directs that training should concentrate on hardening the soldiers, since in Russia they would be w/o even the simplest comforts. Men and horses had to practice long-distance marches, be *prepared to cope w/ chemical and biological wpns*, and anticipate assaults, when they came, to consist of several and deep waves of infantry supported by tanks and artillery. German infantry wpn co-ordination would have to improve if ever they were to defeat such attacks. Soldiers needed to be tougher to cope w/ the inevitability of close combat and overcome their *aversion to fighting at night*. The coming war would not be conducted on roads as in the West; limitless space and massive forest areas would need to be reconnoitered and cleared. German HQ staffs would now be vulnerable. Normal security precautions would not suffice. HQ personnel should become familiar w/ their side arms and expect to use them. (Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 21)

20.3.41 [GFM v. Kluge]: The German Army officer corps still had a healthy respect for the Red Army. A number of senior German officers knew the Russian Army from World War I on the Eastern Front. Any fight w/ the Red Army would be a serious affair. . . The training manuals issued by the Cdr of German **4. AOK**, GFM v. Kluge, represent typical concerns of the senior German generals. On **20 Mar 41**, v. Kluge directed his subordinates to hasten their troop training efforts. He stated that the training should stress toughening the troops, since in Russia the soldiers would be w/o even the simplest comforts; training the men and horses to march great distances; and protecting the troops from *chemical and biological wpns*. The field marshal observed that the Red Army could be expected to attack in several thick waves w/ the strong support of tanks and artillery. As a combatant the Russian would be tough and disdainful of

casualties. Von Kluge stated that German infantry would have to coordinate all its wpns to defeat Red Army attacks. In addition, German infantry should be trained for greater hardness in close-combat and should overcome its aversion to night combat, since, as a child of nature, the Russian reveled in night combat. The German infantry would also have to expect to be assaulted by Russian tanks. Therefore, they should be trained to emulate Finnish and Spanish infantry – aggressively attacking enemy tanks w/ explosive charges. Von Kluge also foresaw special difficulties resulting from the vast Russian space, where German units would frequently have unguarded flanks. He recommended that units become accustomed to providing sufficient reconnaissance and security, paying particular attention to large forests, where large units of Russian cavalry would seek cover. Nor could German staffs rely upon normal security precautions; all HQ personnel should become familiar w/ their side arms and expect to use them. (S.J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions*, 131-32)

27.3.41: On this day, GFM v. Kluge, like the other army cdrs and their chiefs of staff, attended a conference directed by the Army C-in-C, GFM v. Brauchitsch. The latter stressed the importance of training German troops to meet the particular problems presented in fighting the Red Army. He stated that the ***Red Army could be expected to use chemical warfare***. . . It remained clear that v. Brauchitsch and v. Kluge did *not expect the invasion of Russia to be an easy task*. (S.J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions*, 132)¹¹

Training in the German Army for combat under ***Russian terrain conditions*** was by no means „uniform or systematic.“ A *specialized training program was impossible* for many reasons. Plans for the war against the USSR wre long kept a *closely guarded secret*. There were division cdrs who, even a week before the start of the campaign, regarded their transfer to the East and assembly of German forces at the frontier as a *precautionary measure or a bluff*. Other units were pulled out of the Balkan campaign and shipped directly to the east; they had no time for special training. Then, too, there were *no suitable training grounds*—no place in France, Netherlands or central Europe was suitable for training in combat in deep forests, extensive swamplands or sandy areas. Wherever the training was actually attuned to Russian conditions or terrain, it was instituted on the initiative of individual army, corps, or division cdrs. Since only suggestions but *no binding regulations came from higher levels*, any kind of special training program bore the *personal stamp of the initiating cdr*. There was ***no uniformity of procedure***. In only one respect did the German top echelon take *uniform and systematic action* for coping w/ ***special problems of Russian terrain***: the combat forces were equipped w/ light vehicles, and *impedimenta were reduced to a minimum*. German issue transportation mostly comprised ***Polish Panje carts*** drawn by native horses – Russia’s conventional means of conveyance. All unnecessary baggage and every bit of nonessential ballast that soldiers are wont to carry was *left behind at large collecting depots*. [Author also discusses the organization of a few so-called *light divisions* for employment in the east.] (*FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 25-29)

¹¹ Writes Lewis: “Historians approaching the topic of the German invasion of Russia in **1941** uniformly maintain that the German military leaders underestimated Russian military capability. Barry A. Leach, *German Strategy Against Russia 1939-1941* [1973], pp. **47-49**, asserts that the German Army’s generals gleefully invaded Russia, even though they had previously balked at invading Poland and France. Even Klaus Reinhardt, in his well-documented and balanced *Die Wende vor Moskau* [1972], pp. **18-23**, stated that today it remains impossible to understand the optimism and confidence w/ which the German Army conducted its pre-invasion plans. . . Yet there is considerable reason to doubt that the senior German generals early in **1941** suddenly abandoned their professionalism and eagerly looked forward to the prospect of invading Russia.” (132-33, f.n. 10)

Training in forest fighting: World War I clearly proved the German need for training in forest fighting. Early in that struggle, the *French Chasseurs Alpins* demonstrated their *superiority over German infantry* in the close terrain of the *Vosges forests*. But the period between the wars saw that technique of combat treated as *the stepchild it has always been*. [Notes that the *authoritative German field manual on operations* provided guidance that was insufficient—and mostly theoretical in flavor—on forest fighting.] This reason helps explain why the German higher and lower command had a *tendency toward avoiding forests and forest fighting during the Russian campaign*. But central European Russia was *heavily wooded*, so such fighting could not be avoided. [Note: Author provides examples of forest fighting at start of campaign (pp 57-62) involving **LIII AK**, which in one case suffered heavy losses due to inexperience in such fighting. Within a few months, however, the corps had „elaborated and refined“ a key technique of forest fighting (see p. 62-64).]¹² (*FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 50, 57-64)

H. Grossmann (Cdr. **6. ID**) points out *lack of experience of the division in forest fighting* at beginning of *Barbarossa*. Serious losses suffered coming thru the forest west of Prienai (23/24 Jun 41): “Die Truppe musste sich an diese Art Kampf, bei dem die schweren Waffen der Inf. kaum verwendbar waren u. anerkennenswerter Schneid allein nichts half, erst gewöhnen. Hier war ein *Verfahren nach Indianerweise* gegen den naturverbundenen Feind noetig.“ (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 43)

German troops „nicht speziell im Waldkampf ausgebildet.“ Also not specially trained for *Haeuserkampf*. (*Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID*, 8-9 Dec 06)

“Zu Deiner Frage A: In meiner Rekrutenzeit fanden *Waldkampfuebungen*, sowie zur Frage B: *Haeuserkampfuebungen* auf den Truppenuebungsplaetzen *Atterheide* [sp?] u. *Eversheide* statt.“ (*Ltr, H. Stockhoff* [**6. ID**] to *C. Luther*, 13 Nov 07)

Account of rigorous training in the *Waffen-SS* (*Verton*, 60-70). Notes lectures/movies on dangers of *sex with locals*. States that *Waffen-SS* “not one iota better equipped than the *Wehrmacht* units.” (108)

Fuer die Ausbildung im Fruehjahr hatte die *Ausbildungsabteilung* des Generalstabs des Heeres Anweisungen gegeben, die auf einen Russlandfeldzug *verdeckt* hinwiesen: Es sollte viel nachts u. in Waeldern geuebt werden, Panzerverbaende sollten sich selbst vor Nahangriffen schuetzen koennen, schmale, tiefe Schuetzenloecher seien gegen Panzergefahr zu graben, *Fuehrung u. Truppe haetten zu lernen, sich mit wenigen schlechten, teilweise unrichtigen oder veralteten Karten abzufinden*. Besonders Letzteres wies auf ein Land hin, ueber das kein gutes Kartenmaterial vorlag, u. das war *Russland*. Koennte es aber auch ein Land ausserhalb Europas sein, *Persien* oder *Indien*? (*W. Paul, Pz.Gen. Nehring*, 113)

Die Ausbildung [re: 18. PD] stand im Zeichen der Erziehung von Fuehrer u. Mann „zu *ruecksichtslosem Angriffsgeist*, zu *Kuehnheit* u. *entschlussfreudigem Handeln*, getragen von dem Vertrauen auf die Ueberlegenheit des dt. Soldaten ueber jeden Gegner u. dem unbeirraren Glauben an den endgueltigen Sieg.“ (*W. Paul, Pz.Gen. Nehring*, 114)

¹² **Note:** The technique used by **LIII AK** involved *sealing off* forested areas inhabited by the enemy; this approach became standard operating procedure for the corps, instead of trying mop up enemy forces in a forested region. Very interesting account!

Guderian:¹³ „Enorme Leistungsanforderungen sind bei dem kommenden Einsatz notwendig,“ hatte er am **17.4.41** dem Divisionsstab [**18. PD**] gesagt, „keine Ruhe, kein Schlaf, um schnell ins freie Feld zu kommen. *Verpflegung wird duerftig sein.* Munition ist schwer heranzuschaffen, Fahrzeuge wegen schlechter Wege nicht ueberlasten, die *Hauptwaffe sind die Panzer*, Schuetzen werden nicht durch Panzer vorwaertsgerissen, sondern der Schuetze nuetzt den Erfolg der Panzer aus.“ (W. Paul, Pz.Gen. Nehring, 115)

Ideological Indoctrination:

The German military increasingly attempted to instill a NS world view in its troops as the war progressed to further buttress combat resolve. At the start of the war, *indoctrination remained an entirely haphazard and unregulated affair*, reflecting the long struggle between the Nazi party and the army to politicise its soldiery. During the early war years, ideological indoctrination was styled „*spiritual strengthening*,“ and was *left to unit cdrs* and the euphemistically termed „welfare officers.“ It was not until late **1943** that ideological indoctrination was *regularized w/ the appointment of National Socialist Leadership Officers*. Ideological indoctrination helped to inculcate *Osthaerte* – the brutal, savage practices that became the norm in the bitter struggle against the USSR. Contemporary Allied prisoner examinations concluded that *most German soldiers remained ideologically committed to Nazism*, that they **rarely blamed Hitler for German defeats**, and that they still believed in ultimate German victory. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 12-13)

1.1.5: Tactics:

J.Erickson: Since the Soviets in the later stages of the war enjoyed superiority in tanks and artillery and a **3:1** superiority in manpower, German efficiency at the *tactical* level was pronounced (expressed as **5-7** Soviet casualties/day for every **100** German defenders). In Soviet offensive ops in later stages of the war, Soviet success involved a casualty rate which equaled **25-30%** of *enemy strength*. German “efficiency” in inflicting casualties (killed and wounded) was by such estimates in the order of **1.5:1** (sobering enough but a far cry from the more furiously hysterical assessments of Soviet ineptitude and profligacy). A recent Russian account, using gross figures, arrives at a figure of **1.6:1** Soviet casualties for every German casualty. (J. Erickson, *Soviet War Losses*, 263, 266)¹⁴

In S. Knappe book, interesting discussion of *infantry tactics* during early days of *Barbarossa*. He notes that his *forward scouts*—motorcycle troops, and some cavalry—who reconnoitered ahead *were rarely killed*, or even wounded. Also notes that fighting usually stopped at night. (S. Knappe, **87. ID**, *Reflections*, 206-8)

S. Knappe was battery cdr. Was always up front with the inf. btn. his battery was supporting. His battery marched with this battalion. (Note: Appears that each German inf. rgt. had an artillery btn. assigned to it.) (S. Knappe, **87. ID**, *Reflections*, 224, 227)

¹³ From book context, not clear to me if Guderian or Nehring is saying this.

¹⁴ **Note:** Here, Erickson is using a study by a Swiss Army reserve colonel, Fritz Stoeckli: “Wartime Casualty Rates: Soviet and German Loss Rates during the Second World War. The Price of Victory,” in: *Journal of Soviet Military Studies*, 3; Dec. **1990**, pp 645-51.

See, *H.J. Dismar (AR 6/6. ID)* for excellent description of *close cooperation between infantry & artillery* during the first phase of Operation „*Taifun*:” „wir waren, wie man so sagt, durch gemeinsames Erleben *zusammengeschweisst*.” (53-54)

All-arms cooperation within the *panzer division* proved the key to German effectiveness. One crucial component of these divisions was its motorized infantry (*Panzergrenadiere*), which cooperated intimately w/ the armor. In Operation *Barbarossa*, the half-track mounted infantry of a tank unit usually *covered the flanks of armored penetrations* to prevent enemy counterstrokes. However, the increasing Soviet resistance encountered highlighted how *vulnerable they – in their open-topped and thinly-armored APCs – had become to enemy fire*. Private **Wilhelm Drabich (10. PD)** recalled the severe casualties that decimated his APC-mounted section across terrain which had turned into a muddy morass in late **Oct 41**, during the German drive on Moscow. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 47)

Artillery: Germans deployed their artillery well forward and often firing direct (at targets the guns could see themselves), as opposed to indirect (at coordinates on the map). Played major role in initial German breakthroughs. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 172)

Keil u. Kessel tactics: For detailed analysis of such tactics at *Smolensk (Jul/Aug 41)* see, *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 94-97). Among other things, he addresses the Germans’ „inappropriate“ tactics and the „inadequacies in German defensive doctrine,“ when applied to the more tenacious Russians. He also writes: „German Panzer divisions may have been fearsome in the attack but they were less formidable when tied to static defensive tasks because they were *short on infantry*. An up-to-date Panzer ops manual, published just six [6] months before the campaign, devoted **26** pp to the ‚Attack,‘ but only **2 paragraphs** [!] covered ‚Defense.’“ Motorized units skilled in the art of mobile warfare did not have the eye for ground that experience conferred when selecting defensive positions. A young inf. *Leutnant* w/ the 1 Btn. of **IR „GD“** explained the dilemma of having to create a defensive position near *Smolensk* by night: „The btn had taken up a so-called security line spread improbably far apart. This was something new for us; *we had never practiced it*. There was no defense, only security. But what if the enemy launched a strong attack?“ In *France* or *Poland*, mot. units had generally superimposed a hasty and *ad hoc* screen consisting of primarily security pickets around an encircled enemy force. It did not work in Russia. (See *GFM v. Bock’s Tagebuch*, **20.7.41**)¹⁵

2.10.41: Operation „Typhoon“ represented **25** years of tactical evolution for the German Army – the successful marriage of World War I infantry tactics w/ modern technology. In the attack, German infantry still attempted to break thru the enemy lines in small assault groups. Had Field Marshal Ludendorff returned from the dead to observe German infantry in **1941**, he would have seen only slight modifications of doctrine and tactics from those of **1918**. The attack still followed a short artillery barrage and infantry cannons still accompanied the assault to reduce enemy strongpoints. In the defense, German infantry still attempted to deploy in depth, relying upon the firepower of divisional artillery to repel the attackers. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions*, 147-48)

Winter 41/42: The Germans were forced to adopt the **strong point system of defense** because they lacked sufficient forces to occupy continuous lines backed up by reserves. (*CMH Pub. 104-6, Effects of Climate*, 16)

¹⁵ **Note:** On pp. 97-98, Kershaw addresses the tactical problems posed by “wandering pockets:” “pockets were not only porous, they moved.” Containing „wandering pockets“ appeared an insurmountable problem. Von Bock reacted belligerently to the „Fuehrer’s ideas on the subject. . .“ (98)

Winter 41/42: As the German defense increasingly abandoned *linear defense* and resorted to *improvised fortified village* „**hedgehogs**,“ troops abandoned the zones between these positions to the enemy. Lacking the manpower to close these gaps, the Germans relied on *artillery*, firing on pre-set coordinates, to repulse Soviet *infiltration*. Gunners also learned the necessity of *stringent fire control* and saw that concentrated fire could disrupt Soviet incursions. By **1943**, in fact, coordinated artillery fire had become the *backbone of the German defense on the eastern front*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 55)

“Gegenstoss im Gange:” This phrase appears *repeatedly* in the “*Geheime Tagesberichte*” (Mehner). German doctrine clearly promoted a very active defense during the winter of **1941/42**.

13.1.42: Das Ausschalten der T 34 ist die entscheidende Frage fuer die erfolgreiche Durchfuehrung der Abwehr. Rein infanteristische Angriffe des Gegners, wenn sie auch mit starken Kraefte gefuehrt wurden, wurden fast immer unter hohen blutigen Verlusten fuer den Feind abgewiesen. (Mehner, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 135)

Winter tactics (hedgehog point defense): In his biography of *Guderian*, *Russell Hart* discusses G.’s relief from command and replacement by *Rudolf Schmidt*. Gen Schmidt was apparently much more adept at defensive, positional warfare. He placed his remaining strength in positional defensive strongpoints – *hedgehog positions* – normally built around *villages*. They maximized the remaining German strength—i.e., acted as *force multipliers*. This policy – as opposed to continuing to withdrawal – helped to husband his army’s remaining heavy wpns. The Russians sustained tremendous losses attempting to crush these hedgehogs; their local breakthroughs or infiltrations between the German positions were usually cleared up w/ immediate German counterattacks. (Hart, *Guderian*, 80)

1.1.6: Discipline (Military Justice):

Note: Discipline in the *Wehrmacht* was often *brutal*. Many thousands of soldiers were executed over course of war; in contrast to WWI, were few were executed. *Omar Bartov* notes that, once the “*primary groups*” began to disintegrate – a process that had at least begun by late 1941 (my note) – the *Wehrmacht* resorted to *ever-harsher disciplinary measures* to maintain the army’s cohesion. Bartov estimates that *at least 15,000* German soldiers were executed during WWII, mostly for offenses considered to have been *politically motivated*, such as desertion, cowardice, and self-inflicted wounds. According to B., “the dramatic increase in the number and severity of sentences, manifested esp. in the unprecedented incidence of executions, was evidence of a *fundamental transformation in the German army’s concept of martial law*. From now on, what kept the soldiers at the front was, to a large extent, *fear of punishment*.” (Bartov, *A View from Below*, 330)¹⁶

The German Army maintained order, discipline and combat effectiveness via a *draconian system of military justice* in which even minor offenses could meet w/ severe punishment. This approach emerged *organically from German culture*, which placed national unit and strength foremost and before individual liberties and freedoms. This culture recognized the need for discipline in an effective mil. force. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 11)

¹⁶ Is Bartov perhaps overstating his case here? Was it primarily fear of punishment that explains German unit cohesion in the final years of the war?

German *military justice* was prone to convict soldiers accused of infractions of the military code of justice. During first two years of WWII, **89% of German soldiers brought to trial were convicted by military courts.** (Hart, *German Soldier*, 11)

W. Schaefer-Kehnert: “Sie haben recht, dass die Disziplin in der Wehrmacht sehr strickt war. Sie war die Grundlage der hohen Kampfkraft, die die Wehrmacht besass, wie der israelische Militaerhistoriker Martin van Creveld in seinem Buch „Fighting Power“ ueberzeugen dargelegt hat. Da jedermann wusste, dass Verstoesse gegen die Disziplin hart bestraft wurden, kamen solche Verstoesse nur selten vor. Ein Todesurteil habe ich in meiner Abteilung den ganzen Krieg ueber nicht erlebt. (Vergewaltigung von Frauen z.B. wurde – nur wegen Disziplinlosigkeit mit der Todesstrafe bedroht.)“ (Ltr to C. Luther, 10 Dec 03)

W. Wette: We possess a more exact figure on the sad topic of the number of death sentences imposed on soldiers by military courts during the war: **30,000**. More than **22,000** of these men were sentenced for the crime of *desertion*, and in some **15,000** cases the sentences were actually carried out. This toll of lives provides further evidence that those who tried to resist the war in any form were treated w/ the greatest possible severity. It was the murderous excess of a military justice system unleashed against its own troops, and it has *no parallel in history*. In the democracies of the English-speaking world, exactly **one soldier** was executed for desertion during WWII, a man from Detroit named *Eddie Slovik*. The treatment of deserters and so-called “underminers of morale” (*Wehrkraftzersetzer*) can be understood properly only in the context of the First World War, or, more precisely, the way the experiences of this war were interpreted during the **1920s**. Servicemen at the front, “in the trenches,” came to be surrounded w/ an almost *mythological aura*, at the opposite end of the scale from “cowards,” “shirkers,” and, worst of all, deserters, who were detested as morally inferior. (*The Wehrmacht*, 165-66)

Jeder militaerische Grossverband verfuegte ueber ein Kriegsgericht, dass den Namen des Verbandes trug [i.e., of the division, corps or army]. Im Rahmen der Heeresgruppen gab es keine eigenen Kriegsgerichte u. ihre Oberbefehlshaber waren nicht Gerichtsherrn [i.e., *supreme legal authorities*]. . . Laut Satzung **14 KStVO** [Kriegsstrafenverordnung] war fuer eine Anzahl von Delikten [*crimes*] das Reichskriegsgericht zustaendig. Zu ihnen gehoerten Hochverrat, Landesverrat, Kriegsverrat, Angriff gegen den Fuehrer u. Reichskanzler, Verbrechen nach Verordnung des Reichspraesidenten vom **28.2.33** zum Schutz vom Volk u. Staat, Wehrmittelbeschaedigung, Nichtanzeige von Straftaten in der Zustaendigkeit des Reichskriegsgerichts, Verstoesse gegen das Gesetz gegen Wirtschaftssabotage u. Zersetzung der Wehrmacht. Das Reichskriegsgericht sprach bis Ende **Feb 44 1189 Todesurteile** aus, davon die Haelfte gegen Auslaender. **1049** Todesurteile wurden vollstreckt. Das Militaerstrafgesetzbuch wurde am **10. Okt 40** neu gefasst. . . Waehrend des Krieges erfolgte eine schrittweise Entmachtung der Wehrmachtgerichte, jedoch konnten diese bis Kriegsende eine gewisse Unabhaengigkeit bewahren. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 286-88)

Die Statistik der Todesurteile der Wehrmachtgerichte: F. Seidler¹⁷ erstellt folgende Statistik unter Bezugnahme auf die Ziffern der Amtsgruppe Rechtswesen des OKH: Vom **1. Sep 39** bis **30. Jun 44** wurden in allen Wehrmachtteilen **630,000** kriegsgerichtliche Verfahren durchgefuehrt, sowohl gegen Soldaten wie auch gegen Auslaender u. Zivilpersonen. Ein Drittel der Verfahren betraf Vergehen wie Raub, Notzucht, Totschlag, Mord u.a. die auch nach dem Strafgesetzbuch zu ahnden waren. Waehrend des gleichen Zeitraums wurden rund **13,000** Todesurteile verhaengt, davon **9731** gegen Soldaten u. Wehrmachtbeamte. Etwa jedes **54.** Urteil eines Heeresgerichts war ein Todesurteil. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 288-89)

German military also demonstrated a *willingness to execute its own*, esp. as the war progressed. While precise number of those soldiers *judicially murdered* by Nazi regime will probably never be known, the *total came close to 30,000*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 11)

Okt 41–Mar 42 [*Soviet assertion*]: Die Dimensionen der Niederlage [vor Moskau] u. der Verluste der *Wehrmacht* waren so betraechtlich, dass sie bis Sommer 1942 keine grossen Angriffsoperationen unternehmen konnte. Es entstand eine Krise des moralischen Geistes der dt. Truppen. Im Personalbestand der *Wehrmacht* machten sich *Niederlagestimmungen* breit, die *Disziplin* liess nach. Die faschistischen Militaer-*Feldgerichte* haben innerhalb von 6 Monaten (Okt 41-Mar 42) ueber **66,000** Soldaten u. Offiziere abgeurteilt. Es wurden *Todesstrafen*, *Zuchthaus-* u. *Gefaengnisstrafen* u. andere Bestrafungen verhaengt. (A. Samsanow, *Schlacht vor Moskau*, 196)

As the war progressed, military justice became *more erratic and murderous* as the Nazi regime added the nebulous crime of „undermining fighting spirit“ [*Wehrzersetzung*] as a capital offense alongside *murder, rape, homosexual acts, desertion, mutiny, treason, and assaulting a superior officer*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 11-12)

Anecdote: Despite their elite status, troops of German tank units experienced the same *severe discipline* received by other arms of the *Wehrmacht*. When **Henry Metelmann**, while on exercies in the *Crimea* during spring **1942**, got his Panzer **38(t)** stuck in the mud through careless driving, and then *back-chatted* a superior during an upbraiding, he received a punishment of three days imprisonment in a stable. Far worse, though, was the humiliation which preceded his jail sentence: his cdr forced him to *wear a triangular paper hat and, w/ a stick between his legs, gallop up and down in front of the assembled company shouting out that he was a little panzer that had got stuck in the mud*. [!] (Hart, *German Soldier*, 43)

Anecdote: Heute wurde ein Kamerad, ein Kanonier von uns, wegen eines taetlichen [*violent*] Angriffs auf einen Unteroffizier *zu zehn Jahren Gefaengnis verurteilt*. Fuer unsere Begriffe eine ungeheuer harte Strafe. Ein sonst braver Mensch hat im berauschten [*intoxicated*] Zustand einem Vorgesetzten zwei *Ohrfeigen* verabreicht u. muss jetzt schwer buessen; zuhause warten die Frau u. seine zwei Kinder schon ein Jahr auf ein Wiedersehen. (Wm. Josef L., **5.Bttr./AR 129/129. ID, 11.12.41, BfZ**)

¹⁷ F. Seidler: „Das Justizwesen der Wehrmacht,“ in: Die Soldaten der Wehrmacht, Hrsg. H. Poepfel, et al., Muenchen 1998, S. 361-404. Seidler bemueht sich, zwei entgegengesetzte Tendenzen in der modernen Literatur gegeneinander abzuwaegen. Es gibt Darstellungen, in denen die Wehrmachttrichter als „blutruenstige Werkzeuge des NS-Regimes“ bezeichnet werden. Im Gegensatz hierzu machen ehemalige Wehrmachttrichter geltend, dass sie sich um eine unideologische Rechtsprechung, entgegen den Vorgaben der nationalsozialistischen Fuehrung bemueht hatten. Seidler kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die historische Wahrheit wie immer in der Mitte liegt u. dass es sowohl unmenschlich harte, als auch menschlich nachsichtige Richter gab. (Stein, 286, f.n. 959)

Anecdote [Jan 42]: “*Arinok* on the river *Tim*. At the beginning of the year we experienced the lowest temperatures of the entire winter campaign. We had to post sentries and spell each other every half hour...One sentry who collapsed in a haystack and carried on sleeping was *court-martialed and shot*. Another was unable to find the unit to which he was taking a message in the darkness and was *sentenced to death for cowardice* in the face of the enemy. Whoever stole food, even a piece of bread, was *executed for looting*. It was a tense time. Prisoners of war were dangled off the trees all around, as a result of a command that was intended to frighten off the Russians. The war had become insane.” (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, 53)

Desertion: German military experienced *very low rates of desertion*. The military *culture* and the prestige associated w/ soldiering exerted enormous pressures against desertion which was treated as a *heinous crime*. Both the military and the state went to great lengths to *apprehend and severely punish* deserters. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 92)

1.1.7: Kultur:

Citino: “If there was one army in the world that was used to fighting from a position of *material inferiority*, this was the one. Since the earliest days of the German state, a *unique military culture* had evolved, a **German way of war**. Its birthplace was the kingdom of Prussia. Starting in the 17th Century w/ *Frederick William*, the Great Elector, Prussia’s rulers recognized that their small, relatively impoverished state on the European periphery had to fight wars that were *kurtz und vives* (short and lively). Crammed into a tight spot in the middle of Europe, surrounded by states that vastly outweighed it in terms of manpower and resources, it could *not win long, drawn-out wars of attrition*. From the start, Prussia’s military problem was to find a way to fight short, sharp wars that ended in a *decisive battlefield victory*. Its conflicts had to unleash a storm against the enemy, pounding it fast and hard. The solution to Prussia’s strategic problem was something the Germans called *Bewegungskrieg*, the “war of movement.” This way of war stressed *maneuver on the operational level*...The goal was *Kesselschlacht*: literally, a “cauldron battle,” but more specifically a *battle of encirclement*, one that hemmed in enemy forces on all sides before destroying them through a series of concentric operations. This vibrant and aggressive operational posture imposed certain requirements on German armies: an *extremely high level of battlefield aggression and an officer corps that tended to launch attacks no matter what the odds*, to give just two examples. The Germans also found over the years that conducting an operational-level war of movement required a *flexible system of command* that left a *great deal of initiative in the hands of lower-ranking cdrs*. It is customary today to refer to this command system as *Auftragstaktik* (mission tactics): the higher commander devised a general mission (*Auftrag*), and then left the means of achieving it to the officer on the spot. It is more accurate, however, to speak, as the Germans themselves did, of the “*independence of the lower commander*” (*Selbstaendigkeit der Unterfuehrer*). A commander’s ability to size up a situation and act on his own was an *equalizer for a numerically weaker army*, allowing it to grasp opportunities that might be lost if it had to wait for reports and orders to climb up and down the chain of command.” (see, *Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 4-5)¹⁸

¹⁸ **Note:** According to *Citino*, the classic illustration of the strengths and weaknesses of concept of *Bewegungskrieg* was the Seven Years’ War (1756-63). He also notes that the *Wehrmacht*’s situation after 1941, ringed by powerful enemies who vastly outnumbered it, *was nothing particularly new in German military history*. And although launching repeated offensives to smash the enemy coalition failed in the end, “no one at the time or since has been able to come up w/ a better solution to *Germany’s strategic conundrum*.” (8)

Citino: “The preference for the “short and lively” war; *Bewegungskrieg* (the war of movement at the operational level); an officer corps that was allowed to handle matters in the field as it saw fit, w/o a great deal of interference from above;...tanks and acft working in close harmony, commanded and controlled by the *modern miracle of radion communications* – these comprise the impressive and highly successful *operational package* the Germans brought to the table in the opening years of WWII. Like all *military cultures*, it was a unique combination of traits, a “distinctive language” spoken only by the *Wehrmacht*, as the leading German military journal of the day, the *Militaer Wochenblatt*, put it. As in all of Germany’s wars, the main – indeed, the only – question was whether Germany’s adversaries could learn to decipher it in time.” (*Citino, Defeat of the Wehrmacht*, 17)

German war of war: The Germans fought WWII from the start along *traditional lines*. Despite all the trappings of modern technology, the *operational principles were old ones*, and their roots lay deep within the history of Prussia and the second Reich. And in times of misfortune, the German high command responded by *retreating into their own history* (see examples of Jodl, Halder and Bock during battle for Moscow). This „*linkage of past and present*“ was characteristic of *German military culture*.¹⁹ On very night Hitler returned to East Prussia after having been notified of the *Stalingrad* encirclement – instead of discussing the possibilities of a breakout; the modalities of the upcoming air supply effort, for ex. – he was thinking of *history* (not of the future): „We must show firmness of character in misfortune,“ he told Chief of the General Staff General *Kurt Zeitzler*, „We must remember **Frederick the Great**.“ (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 309)

During the subsequent winter of **1941/42**, over **30** generals, corps and division cdrs and senior officers were removed from command. They were the leaders that brought the *Ostheer* w/ dramatic success to the gates of Moscow. Now they were gone. Hitler, in removing them, completed the physical and moral transformation the *Ostheer* had been undergoing since **Jun 41**. The last vestiges of Weimar and General Staff influence were gone. The *Ostheer* and *Wehrmacht* became the military arm of a National Socialist Reich. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 233)²⁰

Demodernization of the Wehrmacht: The historian *Omer Bartov* has described the „*demodernization*“ of the *Wehrmacht* that took place in the course of the fighting in the east. Within the specific limits of his thesis, he is correct. The severity of the fighting tore apart the bonds of modern social and relational life inside the army, a vacuum that was filled by *Hitler worship* and by National Socialism’s murderous racist ideology. Speaking strictly of the *army’s operational characteristics*, however, *it is not an appropriate term*. The *Wehrmacht never demodernized operationally*. In its bedrock conceptions of battles and campaigns, in its emphasis on the *genius and will of the cdr over material factors*, *it wasn’t all that modern to begin with*. (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 309)

Showalter: The “*Wehrmacht was permeated from top to bottom by a kind of military vitalism*, stressing moral factors, as opposed to physical and material considerations. It antedated the Nazi era, being in large part a product of WWI and its aftermath—a period in which German military doctrine *stressed the importance of intangibles*...But while morale factors may considerably

¹⁹ **Note:** German military deeply imbued w/ a sense of its own history – from which it derived lessons, inspiration, sense of continuity w/ and connection to its past, etc.

²⁰ **Note:** From context, not sure if Kershaw is including, Brauchitsch, Bock, Rundstedt, Leeb, Guderian and Hoepner in this number **30**.

enhance fighting powers, they will not make their possessors bulletproof and cannot compensate entirely for numerical or technical inferiority. Far too often, even in early stages of *Barbarossa*, Germany's commanders put an *almost mystical faith in the ability of the man on the front line to surmount any difficulty by ingenuity and force of will.*" (K. Fuchs, 130; also, Stephen G. Fritz, *Frontsoldaten: The German Soldier in WWII*. 1995.)

Anecdote: [Friedrich Wilhelm v. Seydlitz]: At the crisis of the battle of *Zorndorf* [Seven Years' War], *Frederick the Great* ordered his cavalry cdr, *von Seydlitz*, to launch an immediate counterstroke on the left of the hard-pressed Prussian infantry. When it seemed late in coming, the king sent a messenger to Seydlitz w/ orders to march immediately, and w/ threats if he did not do so. Seydlitz was a cdr who moved only when he judged the moment ripe, however, His response was one of the *most famous moments in the history of the Prussian army*, known to every cadet who had passed through the *Kriegsakademie*, and certainly part of the *mental lexicon* of every German cdr in the field in 1942: „Tell the king that after the battle my head is at his disposal,“ Seydlitz told the king's messenger, „but meantime, I hope he will permit me to exercise it in his service.“ Those days – [that is, the days of such independence on part of a subordinate cdr] – were evidently long gone by late 1942. The *new dispensation* was most evident in the attenuated struggle within the *Stalingrad Kessel*. Paulus and 6th Army may have been cut off from supply, but they certainly weren't cut off from communications. From *Hitler's first intervention* (his orders of **22.11.42** that „6th Army will hedgehog itself and await further orders“) to the last (the **24.1.43** refusal of permission to surrender), the *Fuehrer had been the de facto cdr of the Stalingrad pocket*. Thus, **1942 marked the end of a long tradition in German military history** – the *death of the notion and practice of independent command*.²¹ This fateful year also marked the end of an era in German military history: the death of the *Kesselschlacht*, a way of war that *no longer corresponded to modern conditions*. (Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 304-05)

Frederick the Great: Der alte Fritz. The man who, more than any other, had invented *Bewegungskrieg* as a solution to *Prussia's strategic dilemma*. And the man who had once summed up *his art of war* in the simple motto: „**The Prussian army always attacks.**“ (Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 49)

German military staffs: G.P. Megargee notes that Germans “kept their staffs small and relied on personal coordination to a large extent.” This had advantages/disadvantages...There were no “shifts” in the German HQ as there were in American staffs; everyone was on duty 24 hours, at least in theory. Lack of sleep [fatigue] and leisure time—both outgrowths of the small size of German staffs, but also common to armies everywhere—may have adversely affected German performance...People who manned the command system were *remarkably junior in most cases*. Hitler's role aside, *only the most fundamental questions reached the top levels of the army hierarchy at this stage of the war*; the lower-level staff members took care of all the routine work and let their superiors get on w/ the more important tasks...In general one can say that, at this point in the war at least, the German staffs kept up well w/ the daily demands of operations...Megargee later notes that staff organization and procedures were two of the German's greatest strengths, if one ignores the *problems at the top between OKW and OKH*. The

²¹ At both *El Alamein* and at *Stalingrad*, the *new communications technology*, an essential ingredient in the *Wehrmacht's* earlier victories, now showed its negative face. Radio gave the high command a precise, real-time picture of even the most rapid and far-flung ops. It also allowed staff and political leaders alike to *intervene in the most detailed and, from the perspective of field cdrs, the most obnoxious way possible*. (304-05) [My note: It also allowed Hitler to remonstrate for hours w/ Kluge over the placement of a few MGs in a cemetery during winter 1941/42!]

organizational and procedural expertise that the *Germans had built up over the preceding century* were serving them well, if only in terms of the staff elements' internal mechanisms. The potentially fatal problems existed in the higher realms. Deep flaws were emerging in the larger high command organization, flaws that the ***personal leadership styles of Hitler and many senior cdrs exacerbated***. When one adds *strategic incompetence* and weaknesses in personnel administration, intelligence and logistics into the mix, one can see why the course of the war was turning against the Reich [by Dec 41]. From end of 1941 forward, these problems would only get worse, until they overwhelmed the efficiency of the staff system completely. (*Inside Hitler's High Command*, 148-9, 153, 168-69)

Upon death of fellow artillery battery cdr, *S. Knappe* notes that he (Schumann) was, at 31, old for his rank, because he had been promoted through the ranks instead of attending a military academy, a *practice that had begun with the start of the war in 1939*. Unfortunately, such eople—i.e., those promoted thru the ranks to become officers—were looked down upon by many officers...There was even a bad joke about them. They were called, “**vomags**,” a term composed of the first letters of the expression “folk officer w/ a laborer's face.” It was a very degrading expression. Schumann felt the insult keenly...but he had been a good soldier and a good officer. (*S. Knappe, Reflections*, 238)

1.1.8: Cohesion / Kameradschaft / Demodernization

Cohesion:

The German army had a *long tradition* of manpower and unit organization geared to preserve and enhance the *social ties* between its members. Soldiers were recruited on a *regional basis*, served in formations established according to geographical criteria, and could expect to remain w/ the same companies, battalions, regiments, and divisions throughout their service, and return to them even if forced out through wounds or illness...Thus the *remarkable cohesion* of the *Wehrmacht* was initially based to a large degree on *organizational factors* rather than ideological commitment...However striking as this “**primary group**” feature of the German military organization was, on the eastern front its *role quickly diminished* as a result of the *ceaseless disintegration of units* and the *rapid manpower turnover* caused by the unprecedented casualties. And yet the *Ostheer* as a whole *did not break down*, but in fact went on fighting w/ even greater determination till the very last months of the war. The means employed to achieve such overall military cohesion and effectiveness in the face of material decline and the *destruction of the traditional social organization of the Wehrmacht*, however, had other serious consequences for the reality of life at the front. (*Bartov, A View from Below*, 329-30)

“The single most important element in the mil. cohesion of the *Wehrmacht*, and particularly of the *Ostheer*, was the view shared by a large number of its officers and soldiers regarding *their own mission in the war*, the character of the enemy confronting them, and the *fate they might expect in case of defeat*.” Helping maintain cohesion of Army was the *extreme dehumanization and demonization of the enemy* – a process which terrorized the troops to such an extent that anything, including death, seemed to them better than falling into Soviet hands.” (*Bartov, A View from Below*, 333-36)²²

²² What B. fails to mention, however, is that from the opening day of the campaign the behavior of Soviet troops toward captured German soldiers justified and confirmed the latter's dark perception of their Russian opponent; as did what they knew of Soviet behavior (NKVD, etc.) in the territories occupied by Red Army from Sep 39 – Jun 40.)

Territorial System & Promotion of Cohesion: Like its *imperial predecessor*, the German Army's divisions were organized on a ***territorial basis***. The personnel came from the *same territorial area*, or even a large city such as Vienna or Berlin. The *territorial system* provided Germans w/ several advantages. First, the system was very cognizant of the *psychological needs of the fighting soldier*. This contributed to the *cohesion of German units in combat*. Strenuous efforts were made to *maintain the integrity of the units*. This even involved pulling whole divisions out of the front line for rehabilitation, the careful treatment of replacements and wounded, as well as the granting of leave. The *treatment of wounded* was very important. The *basic German policy* was to *return wounded men to their old units* (German officers and NCOs who were wounded always returned to their original units). For this purpose, divisions often set up their own *convalescent homes*. German policy of returning wounded to their old units important in that it: a) returned the soldier in question to the *familiar surroundings and comradeship* afforded by his old unit; and b) returning wounded represented to their old unit a *badly needed reservoir of experience* which could be used to leaven the rest of the division's manpower. The *granting of leave* was also given high priority. Fighting units regularly granted leave as a *matter of policy*. This policy was *maintained by the 6th Army*, even while it was under the strain of the *Stalingrad campaign*. Such policies were instrumental in building and maintaining a division's *Kampfkraft*, and in keeping the number of psychological casualties to a minimum. The Germans went to such pains in their personnel policy because the German Army believed in the *idea of quality over quantity*. The experience of both WWI and WWII as it progressed indicated that the *outcome of a battle could be determined by the actions of small units w/ a few well-trained and experienced soldiers, NCOs and officers*. Thus, the German divisions often granted leave even in the most trying of circumstances. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 46-47, 53*)

Kameradschaft:

Karl Fuchs (7. PD) in letter to his wife (26.10.41), writes about the deep and enduring ties of ***comradeship*** that bind the men together: "This loyalty and devotion to the cause again and again was the decisive factor in many a battle and I tell you, this comradeship has been *one of the most magnificent experiences out here*. This loyalty is the essence of the German fighting spirit. We can depend on each other unconditionally." (141) [*Showalter commentary*: "This attitude, while found among veterans of all armies and all wars, was particularly strong in the *Wehrmacht*, and contributed significantly to the highly praised fighting power and endurance of German troops on all fronts of WWII. At its heart was the *deliberate fostering of small-group loyalties*, combined w/ systematic efforts to generate a sense of membership in a *Wehrgemeinschaft* (i.e., a military community functioning by virtue of its own internal dynamics, as opposed to imposed discipline) as well as a *Volksgemeinschaft* (i.e., a community of *pure Germans*). Since well before 1914, Germany's military leaders had sought to enhance the identity of the army with society.] (*K. Fuchs, 142*)

In dieser unmenschlichen Welt, „gab es nur noch die ***Kameradschaft***, das schönste Geschenk das ein Mensch einem anderen machen kann. Alle saßen im gleichen Boot, vom Oberst bis zum Schütze-Arsch, wie man den allerletzten des Regiments nennt. Alle gingen zu Fuß, aßen die gleiche magere Suppe, suchten die gleichen Läuse am Abend ...“ (64) „Disziplin wurde Solidarität, sie wurde Kameradschaft, einzige und bescheidene Überlebenschance. Die kleine Einheit, der „verlorene Haufen,“ was der amerikanische Historiker, ***Omar Bartow*** die „*Primärgruppen*“ genannt hat, das war, was Bedeutung hatte, dies ist die einzige Erklärung für die *außerordentliche Kohärenz* und für die unwahrscheinlich hohe *Kampfkraft* der deutsche

Soldaten während dieser Machtprobe im Winter 1941/42.“ (100) „Die Anstrengungen waren einfacher, weil man wusste, dass sie von allen Kameraden geteilt wurden.“ (125) (*La Guerre a L'Est, August v. Kageneck*)

Kameradschaft: „Soldiers at the front had an especially close relationship. Your outfit was *almost like a family*. The greater the pressure on the unit, the more it stuck together. I believe that even if there were no more goals, even if you saw that it was pointless and that everything was over, you would have kept on fighting so as *not to shame yourself in front of your comrades*. You had to stick together to survive. And I think this made these small units as strong as they were, even in a catastrophe.” (*Martin Koller, in: Voices from the Third Reich, 148-49*)

Otto Trotsch (5. PD): “Wie schon in meinem Eingangsschreiben vermerkt, bin ich Heimatvertriebener u. kam **1950** nach russischer Gefangenschaft ueber Friedland direkt nach Deutschland. Hab u. Gut, damit auch meine originalen Kriegsunterlagen waren verloren. . . . Meiner Schwester gelang es einige Feldpostbriefe von mir zu retten. Aus einem davon, vom **Sep 43**, ich befand mich nach schwerer Verwundung u. Fleckfieber als Ausbilder im **Ers.Btl.13** in Neisse schreibe ich an meine Schwester:

Du schreibst ich sollte versuchen nicht mehr an die Front zu kommen. Ich weiss es selbst nicht, was mich da raus zieht. Hier fuehle ich mich nicht wohl. Wenn ich dazu von den schweren Kaempfen im Osten lese u. hoere, habe ich unguete Gefuehle u. Gedanken die mir sagen, warum bist du noch hier im E.Btl? Ich bin jung, wieder gesund u. fronttauglich, gehoere also hinaus zu meiner Division. Die Kameraden warten, **man fuehlt sich da verbunden**, wie in einer Familie.

Krieg kann ja nie was schoenes sein. Zerstoerung, Elend, Not u. Tod begleiten einen Schritt fuer Schritt. Es ist wohl unser Schicksal.“

(*Ltr from O. Trotsch to C. Luther, 12 Jan 09*)

Demodernization:

As time went on, Germany's tanks, trucks and SP guns were concentrated in a few elite units which spearheaded every offensive or rushed to block each Soviet attack. Meanwhile, the rest of the German Army underwent a demoralizing process of „*de-modernization*,“ fighting an increasingly well-equipped enemy w/ much the same wpns as their fathers had on the Western Front between **1914-18**. German infantry divisions had more automatic wpns than their WWI equivalents, but *fewer field guns*. From **1942** many divisions were reorganized w/ **6** btns rather than **9**, although their firepower was augmented w/ extra MGs and mortars, esp. captured Russian 120mm wpns. But Germany was unable to substitute technology for manpower. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia, 139*)

Note: For topic of “demodernization” see also, FMS **P-201**, “*Personal Diary Notes of the G-4 of the German 9th Army, Aug 41 to Jan 42*” (Genmaj. Josef Windisch. 1953) in my Notebook #6. See Halder's comments under **23.11.41** addressing “*Entmotorisierung*” of the infantry divisions.

1.1.9: Awards / Medals / Uniforms:

a) Awards & Medals:

As *Napoleon* once said, „it is w/ colored ribbons that men are led.“ Most of the important medals, of course, went to senior officers, though there were a few awards ordinary soldiers could win. Among these were *campaign shields*; other obtainable awards included *wound badges* and *close-combat tank destruction medals*. For outstanding heroism, an ordinary soldier might gain the coveted **EK 2**. Further actions of special bravery could be rewarded with the **EK 1**. And thereafter by the *five ascending classes of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross*; the Knight's Cross w/ **Oak Leaves, Swords, Diamonds** and finally **Golden Oak Leaves**. During the Second World War some **2.3 million EK 2** were issued (about one man in eight received one); **300,000 EK 1** (about one soldier in 60); **5000 Knight's Crosses** (about one in 3000 men); **871 Oak Leaves, 148 Swords, 13 Diamonds** and a **solitary Golden Oak Leaves** [Hans Rudel?]. That these decorations were *cumulative* created a *powerful incentive for repeated deeds of bravery and heroism*. Actions that qualified for a decoration varied between enlisted personnel and officers; more was expected of officers. *Eligibility requirements* were *very stringent*. Mere bravery was insufficient; it had to be matched w/ repeated instances of individual action and initiative. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 13-15)

Importance of Kriegsauszeichnungen (anecdote): „Eben rief mich *Generaloberst Guderian* an u. gratulierte mir zum *Ritterkreuz* des Eisernen Kreuzes. Die Freude ist natürlich groß u. ein seelischer Druck, der seit 1 Jahre auf mir lag, ist endlich beseitigt; ich kam mir bisher allen meinen militärischen Kindern gegenüber so kläglich vor, weil ich ihnen immer das *Führerideal* gepredigt hatte u. dann selbst nicht Vorbild war. Nun kann ich freier in die Welt blicken.“ (Tagebuch Lemelsen, 29.7.41)

Aug 41: One young German officer [w/ **13. PD**] pleaded w/ his division cdr to be released from duty as an ordinance officer (w/ division staff) so he could return to his **Pz IV** coy to take part in an assault: “To be honest one of the reasons that I wanted to go was because I had chest pains.’ I wanted the [EK 1] which I did not have yet. We were advancing through Russia so fast at that time that I figured if I did not participate in the action, the war would be over before I could get the [EK 1]. I wanted this medal in the worst way.” (R. Hertenstein, *Experiences of a German Panzer Cdr*, 28-29)²³

16.9-15.11.41 [6. ID]: Vom **16 Sep – 15 Nov 41** hat die Division verliehen: **1521 EK 2. Klasse, 5 Spangen** zum EK 2. Klasse; **156 EK 1. Klasse, 4 Spangen** zum EK 1. Klasse. (*Taetigkeitsbericht der Abteilung IIa*; quoted in: (*Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 51, S. 11*)

13.11.41: [**1./IR „GD“ / Eisernes Kreuz angeheftet!**]: Dem Oblt. von der Ersten, Derben, wird das Eiserne Kreuz erster Klasse angeheftet. Er traegt es fuer den Kampf in der Arbeitersiedlung. Es war die Kroenung dutzender erfolgreicher Gefechte. *Stets freuen wir uns von neuem ueber das schlichte Kreuz*. Es ist der schoenste deutsche Orden. Man sieht sich nie leid darauf. Schinkel schuf damit wirklich ein Kunstwerk. In vier Kriegen trugen nun schon deutsche Soldaten das Eiserne Kreuz fuer Tapferkeit. Immer wieder stossen wir auf diesen Gedanken: wir setzen ein Werk fort, vollenden es.

Mit einem gruenen Likoer begiessen wir das Ereignis. Noch einige Obergefreite u. Unteroffiziere erhalten das E.K. I. Der Oberst findet die rechten Worten. Er sagt nicht: „Tragen Sie es gesund

²³ Hertenstein finally was awarded his coveted **EK 1** on **27.10.41**. (39)

nach Hause.“ Der Oberst spricht: „Die Kompanie sieht jetzt besonders auf Sie.“ Das geht dem Mann ins Herz. Im Gefecht spuert er das Kreuz auf seiner Brust. (*Tagebuch, Oblt. Beck-Broichsitter, RH 37/6332*)

Winter 41/42 [Ostmedaille]: Unscheinbare [*insignificant*] Schicksalhafterkeit bedeutete das Band zur Medaille “Winterschlacht im Osten.” . . . Das Band zu dieser Auszeichnung hatte eine bedeutsame Auslegung – der weisse Streifen war die „Rollbahn“ (wie man die Vormarschstrasse nannte); die schwarze Linie darauf waren die deutschen Soldaten des Ostheeres; und die roten, grossen Seitenfelder war die sowj. Uebermacht – das Meer der russ. Angreifer. (*E. Wardin, “Medaille ‘Winterschlacht im Osten’ ”*)²⁴

Jan 42: German Cross in Gold: In the middle of **Jan 42**, I was summoned to the divisional commander. General v. Funk received me in a particularly friendly fashion. “Luck, two important bits of news for you. I had recommended you for the Knight’s Cross. A few weeks ago, *Hitler founded a new order*, the German Cross in Gold, which ranks between the EK I and the Knight’s Cross. All recommendations for the Knight’s Cross have been converted. Yours, too. In the name of the Fuehrer, I have the honor to present you w/ this new order for bravery in face of the enemy.” I was appalled: a large and clumsy star, w/ an oversized swastika in the middle of it, to be worn on the right breast. The General smiled. “Nice and impressive, isn’t it? May I congratulate you all the same.” His words were full of irony. We at once coined a new name for this monstrosity: *Hitler’s fried egg*. Except for headquarters’ visits, I never wore the order. (*Hans v. Luck, Panzer Cdr, 83*)

ca Jun 42 [9 IR/23. ID]: Der Ordenssegel fuer den einjaehrigen Einsatz im Osten war nur ein schwacher Trost: **501** EK1 u. **5214** EK2. (*Nayhauss-Cormons, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen, 242*)²⁵

Jul 42 [IR 18/6. ID / „Ost-Medaille“]: Ende **Jul 42** wurde allen Soldaten des Rgts., die den Winterfeldzug **1941/42** mitgemacht hatten, die sogenannte „Ost-Medaille“ verliehen. . . Die Landser nannten sie respektlos „Gefrierfleisch“-Orden. Die Medaille wurde an einem breiten dunkelroten Band getragen. In seiner Mitte verlief ein weisser Streifen, durch den sich ein schwarzer Laengsstrich zog. Die Soldaten interpretierten das Band in ihrer Weise: Der Strich in der Mitte ist die Nachschubstrasse zur Front, der weisse schmale Streifen rechts u. links davon sind die eigenen Sicherungen beiderseits der Strasse; das Rote sind die Russen, die von beiden Seiten den schmalen Verteidigungsschlauch zur Front bedrohen. (*E.M. Rhein, Das Inf.-Rgt. 18, 173*)

15.7.42: An diesem Tage erhielt General Model die “Ostmedaille,” die Medaille “Winterschlacht im Osten 1941/1942,” deren Stiftung angeblich auf seinen Vorschlag zurueckging. (*Stein, GFM Model, 74*)

b) Uniforms:

Colors: German officers’ branches could be quickly ascertained because of the Germans’ extensive use of Waffenfarben. Each branch of the army had its own distinctive color (*white* for

²⁴ **Note:** See sketch among Wardin’s file.

²⁵ **Note:** Author implies that this one regiment garnered nearly **6000** EK 1 u. 2 over the course of first year of combat in the east. That seems like awfully high number. The regiment had suffered terrible losses, however.

infantry, *red* for artillery, *green* from panzergrenadier, *rose* for panzer, etc.) which showed on the officers' (and soldiers') caps, collar tabs and epaulets. Unlike in the U.S. Army, where such colors were only used on officers' full dress blue uniforms and branch was only denoted by insignia on the collar of the field uniform, German officers' branch could thus be swiftly identified. (*W. Adamczyk, An Artilleryman's Life, 223, f.n. 1*)

1.1.10: Drug & Alcohol Use:

Note: In his novel, Theodor Plievier writes about time of **Oct 41** offensive: “[The German troops] were exhausted but could not sleep because of the drug that had been issued to them for the new effort.” (*Moscow, 256*)

The Nazis preached abstinence in the name of promoting national health. But when it came to fighting their Blitzkrieg, they had no qualms about pumping their soldiers full of drugs and alcohol. Speed was the drug of choice, but many others became addicted to morphine and alcohol. *Pervitin*, a stimulant commonly known as speed today, was the German army's -- the Wehrmacht's -- wonder drug. (*A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers"*)

Many of the Wehrmacht's soldiers were high on Pervitin when they went into battle, especially against Poland and France -- in a Blitzkrieg fueled by speed. The German military was supplied with millions of methamphetamine tablets during the first half of 1940. The drugs were part of a plan to help pilots, sailors and infantry troops become capable of superhuman performance. The military leadership liberally dispensed such stimulants, but also alcohol and opiates, as long as it believed drugging and intoxicating troops could help it achieve victory over the Allies. But the Nazis were less than diligent in monitoring side-effects like drug addiction and a decline in moral standards. (*A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers"*)

After it was *first introduced into the market in 1938*, Pervitin, a methamphetamine drug newly developed by the Berlin-based Temmler pharmaceutical company, quickly became a top seller among the German civilian population. According to a report in the *Klinische Wochenschrift* ("Clinical Weekly"), the supposed wonder drug was brought to the attention of Otto Ranke, a military doctor and director of the Institute for General and Defense Physiology at Berlin's Academy of Military Medicine. The effects of amphetamines are similar to those of the adrenaline produced by the body, triggering a heightened state of alert. In most people, the substance increases self-confidence, concentration and the willingness to take risks, while at the same time reducing sensitivity to pain, hunger and thirst, as well as reducing the need for sleep. In September 1939, Ranke tested the drug on 90 university students, and concluded that Pervitin could help the Wehrmacht win the war. At first Pervitin was tested on military drivers who participated in the invasion of Poland. Then, according to criminologist Wolf Kemper, it was "unscrupulously distributed to troops fighting at the front." (*A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers"*)

During the short period between April and July of 1940, more than 35 million tablets of Pervitin and Isophan (a slightly modified version produced by the Knoll pharmaceutical company) were shipped to the German army and air force. Some of the tablets, each containing three milligrams of active substance, were sent to the Wehrmacht's medical divisions under the code name OBM, and then distributed directly to the troops. A rush order could even be placed by telephone if a shipment was urgently needed. The packages were labeled "Stimulant," and the instructions

recommended a dose of one to two tablets "only as needed, to maintain sleeplessness." (A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers")

Even then, doctors were concerned about the fact that the regeneration phase after taking the drug was becoming increasingly long, and that the effect was gradually decreasing among frequent users. In isolated cases, users experienced health problems like excessive perspiration and circulatory disorders, and there were even a few deaths. Leonardo Conti, the German Reich's minister of health and an adherent of Adolf Hitler's belief in asceticism, attempted to restrict the use of the pill, but was only moderately successful, at least when it came to the Wehrmacht. ***Although Pervitin was classified as a restricted substance on July 1, 1941, under the Opium Law, ten million tablets were shipped to troops that same year.*** (A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers")²⁶

The effects were seductive. In ***January 1942***, a group of 500 German soldiers stationed on the eastern front and surrounded by the Red Army were attempting to escape. The temperature was minus 30 degrees Celsius. A military doctor assigned to the unit wrote in his report that at around midnight, six hours into their escape through snow that was waist-deep in places, "more and more soldiers were so exhausted that they were beginning to simply lie down in the snow." The group's commanding officers decided to give Pervitin to their troops. "After half an hour," the doctor wrote, "the men began spontaneously reporting that they felt better. They began marching in orderly fashion again, their spirits improved, and they became more alert." (A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers")

Alcohol, the people's drug, was also popular in the Wehrmacht. Referring to alcohol, Walter Kittel, a general in the medical corps, wrote that "only a fanatic would refuse to give a soldier something that can help him relax and enjoy life after he has faced the horrors of battle, or would reprimand him for enjoying a friendly drink or two with his comrades." Officers would distribute alcohol to their troops as a reward, and schnapps was routinely sold in military commissaries, a policy that also had the happy side effect of returning soldiers' pay to the military. "The military command turned a blind eye to alcohol consumption, as long as it didn't lead to public drunkenness among the troops," says Freiburg historian ***Peter Steinkamp***, an expert on drug abuse in the Wehrmacht. (A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers")

But in ***July 1940***, after France was defeated, Hitler issued the following order: "I expect that members of the Wehrmacht who allow themselves to be tempted to engage in criminal acts as a result of alcohol abuse will be severely punished." Serious offenders could even expect "a humiliating death." But the temptations of liquor were apparently more powerful than the Fuehrer's threats. ***Only a year later***, the commander-in-chief of the German military, General Walther ***von Brauchitsch***, concluded that his troops were committing "the most serious infractions" of morality and discipline, and that the culprit was "alcohol abuse." Among the adverse effects of alcohol abuse he cited were fights, accidents, mistreatment of subordinates, violence against superior officers and "crimes involving unnatural sexual acts." The general believed that alcohol was jeopardizing "discipline within the military." According to an internal statistic compiled by the chief of the medical corps, 705 military deaths between September 1939 and April 1944 could be linked directly to alcohol. The unofficial figure was probably much higher, because traffic accidents, accidents involving weapons and suicides were frequently caused by alcohol use. (A. Ulrich, "Hitler's Drugged Soldiers")

²⁶ **Note:** *Stabarzt Lierow (6. ID)* refers to Pervitin use in his memoirs. See his diary entry for **5.1.42** for details.

Sulfanilamides: *Sajer* refers to soldier who had been wounded by shell fragment and was now „stuffing himself w/ sulfanilamide.“ (96). Later mentions men who...were powdered w/ sulfanilamides. (*Sajer, Forgotten Soldier*, 96, 112)

Jan 42: In late **Jan 42**, Col. Hans v. Luck (7. PD) was transferred from eastern front to Rommel in North Africa. He and his driver high-tailed it out of Russia in their Mercedes – driving day and night, relieving each other w/ each **100 km** driven. To stay away, they swallowed Pervitin. (See, *Hans v. Luck, Panzer Cdr*, 83-86)

1.2: German Military Economy:

1.2.1: Background:

J. Foerster: While the Soviet Union was waging total war from the summer of **1941**, the Third Reich did not dare to impose similar burdens on the Germans. (*GSWW*, Vol IV: *Attack on the Soviet Union*, 1254)

E. Ziemke: Hitler had not yet shifted the German economy to a wartime footing [as of **Jun 41**]. The early blitzkrieg campaigns had been so successful and so relatively cheap that he had kept the economy on a quasi-peacetime basis. War production in **1941** was at the **1940** level, which itself had been lower than the original economic mobilization plans had specified. In the meantime, however, the Soviet Union had more than caught up w/ Germany in budgeting for war production. (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 15)

E. Ziemke: Germany was in fact far from being on a total war footing in early **1943**. War production had been over **40%** greater in **1942** than in **1941** (largely owing to Armament and Munitions Minister Speer's organizational improvements), and **1942** had been the first year in which consumer goods production had been cut significantly, but the assumption that the war would soon be over had governed economic planning until the end of the year. Thus, although the output of consumer goods was **10%** less in **1942** than in **1941** (but only **12%** less than in the last prewar year, **1938**), the tendency had been to preserve the consumer sector of the economy, and the numbers of employed in such industries had held steady even though the war industry work force had declined almost 10% between **1939** and **1942**. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 504-05)

E. Mawdsley: Even in **Jun 41**, the Reich economy was prepared “in breadth” but not “in depth.” The notion that Hitler set out to fight a series of short wars, and organized his economy accordingly, is now generally accepted by historians. . . Administrative inefficiency also held back the war economy of the Reich. Hitler was an economic illiterate, and Goering, head of the Four-Year Plan, a poor co-ordinator. The situation improved after **1940**, when technocrats were put in charge of war production – first Fritz Todt, and then, in early **1942**, Albert Speer. Production was rationalized; more effective use was made of available labor, machinery and raw materials. This was partly a response to shortcomings that had become evident at the *beginning* of **1941** (after the **1940** French campaign but before “*Barbarossa*”); it also came partly after the realization at the end of **1941** that the war in Russia was going to be a long one. In **1942-44** the Germans achieved a “production miracle.” (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 51-52)

A. Seaton: Nor was the paucity of intelligence the only defect in the German High Command's preparations for war. Col.-Gen. Fromm's Replacement Army, which held all the reserves of men and equipment for the field force, had only **450,000** reinforcements for the whole of the German Army in all theaters, at that time no more being available. The reserves of petrol equaled **3** months consumption rate; there was only enough diesel for **1** month. Rubber was in such short supply that no more tires could be provided for army wagons, and consideration was being given to replacing tired [sic! / typo = tires] w/ steel-shod wheels. There was an acute shortage of all motor transport and much of that in use was of unsuitable civilian pattern. (*The Battle for Moscow*, 36; see also, *Halder, KTB*)

Richard Overy, in *Why the Allies Won*, notes that the Germans started w/ many advantages, including „a wealth of resources [?], a large class of competent entrepreneurs and engineers and a highly skilled workforce.“ Yet, *the German economy, on the whole, performed very poorly*. As Overy notes: „it was not enough of a command economy to do what the Soviet system could do; yet it was not capitalist to rely, as America did, on the recruitment of private enterprise.“ (quoted in: *J.S. Corum*, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 214)

Many German memoirs stress the overwhelming numerical and material superiority of the Soviet forces, but in **1942** it was Germany that enjoyed *every industrial advantage*, w/ the factories of most of Europe at her disposal. German *steel* production, for ex., was *four times* that of the Soviet Union. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 75)

As *Charles Winchester* (for one) points out, the Soviet war economy was managed far better than Germany's. As he notes, „by every indicator of economic strength [*except perhaps oil?*], Germany should have outproduced its opponents.²⁷ Had German industry been as well organized as the German Army, the Allies would not have enjoyed such crushing superiority by **1944**. Yet until **1943**, even the much smaller British economy was outbuilding Germany in acft and warships, and closely matching its production of guns and tanks. By squandering its economic advantages in the first half of the war, the Nazi regime *lost the battle on the factory floor*. Competing and overlapping bureaucracies, inconsistent procurement policies and not a little corruption among the Nazi elite deprived German soldiers of the wps and equipment they so desperately needed.“ (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 122)

French acft industry fell into German hands in **1940**. It was capable of manufacturing **5000** acft per year, even using its relatively labor-intensive methods. But French factories produced a mere **2500** acft for Germany in four years of occupation – equivalent to just **10%** of its potential output. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 122)

A giant slice of Soviet industry was captured by the Germans, but achieved only **10%** of its pre-**1941** productivity under German rule. Agricultural yields in German-occupied Russia were so low – just **50%** of pre-**1941** levels – that not enough food was produced to feed both the population and the German army. So the civilians starved. For all Hitler's talk of exploiting the east, Germany received *far more from Russia during the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact* than it did after seizing most of European Russia. [!!!] At its greatest extent, German-occupied Russia comprised about **850,000** square miles and **65,000,000** souls, yet occupied *France* yielded

²⁷ Note: For comparative figures on coal, steel and oil production, see p 122. For ex., in **1941**, Germany produced **246** million tons of coal and **31** million tons of steel, vs. **151** and **18** for Russia, respectively. In **1942** the figures for Germany were **258** million tons of coal and **32** of steel, vs. **75** and **8** for Russia, respectively.

seven (7) times as much in terms of food and minerals. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 122-23)

Nazi regime was *unwilling to embark on a scheme of "total" mobilization of the Reich's economic and human resources until after 20.7.44*, the attempt on Hitler's life. Until that point, reports of popular dissatisfaction and lowered morale due to Allied strategic bombing campaign made Hitler leery of squeezing the German population as hard as Germany's WWI government had done, and thus running the risk of another *popular explosion* similar to Oct/Nov 1918. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 300)

The *decisive campaign* of WWII was the German invasion of Russia in 1941. The defeat of that effort reflected the *failure of German leaders to prepare the economic and productive capacity of the Reich and western Europe for war on a continental rather than a western European scale*. Thus, in a certain sense, ***the production and industrial decisions made by the German leadership in the summer of 1940 represented the decisive turning point in WWII***. In effect, Germany's leadership had *sealed her fate* before the campaign opened. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 77)²⁸

One can argue w/ justification that *the Germans lost WWII in the late summer of 1940* and that their future defeats on the ground and in the air sprang from their unwillingness at that time to identify and to face the *real strategic situation*. In the *euphoria of victory over France*, the political and military leadership refused to acknowledge that it had won only the *first round of a long struggle*. Even defeat in Battle of Britain failed to shake a *remarkable mood of optimism*. Hence, ***the force structure and organization w/ which the Wehrmacht embarked on Barbarossa was in no fashion suitable to the demands of a continental war***. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 302)

Could the Germans have produced the vehicles and fuel in sufficient quantities to *completely motorize the army*? The answer to this question is *undoubtedly no*. Germany simply did not have the resources to create an air force, a navy and a fully motorized army. Hitler might have been able to motorize a large part of the Army *if he had not decided to build a navy*, and instead devote more resources to production of tanks and vehicles. Yet given Hitler's designs on western powers, esp. Britain, there was *no way he could avoid building a navy* as part of his armaments program. Moreover, even if requisite numbers of vehicles could have been produced, Germany could not obtain the oil need to fuel them. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 134)

Paul Johnson: Hitler was obsessed by the cost and risk of over-production, and by the need for import-substitutes. As a result, German research was devoted to *ersatz* materials rather than to accelerating mass production, and the economy was held back. At the end of **1941**, *Fritz Todt*, Hitler's production chief, protested bitterly at the premature switch of production from the Russian to the Western theaters and the failure to cut back the civil economy. His death in a mysterious air crash on **2.2.42** *may not have been accidental*. For Germany, **Jodl** claimed, „actual rearmament had to be carried out after the war began...“ The real reason Germany's economy failed to rise into top gear until the end of **1942** was *Hitler's obstinate attachment to the military-economic doctrine of Blitzkrieg*. (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 400-01)

Albert Seaton: The truth was that, whatever strategy it had adopted, Germany entered the war in the East w/ inadequate resources. The Germans were entirely w/o troop reserves. The wide frontages, which increased in extent the further east one advanced, the depth of the penetration,

²⁸ I support this perspective entirely; it seems to be the "bottom line" in explaining the failure of *Barbarossa* in 1941.

and Hitler's insistence that formations should keep in close touch w/ their flanking neighbors, meant the invading troops had neither depth nor reserves and eventually lost momentum. Luftwaffe air cover and tactical air support, except in the selected main sectors of ops, were sparse for precisely the same reason. No strategic bombing and little interdiction in depth were attempted. . . The German reserves of air transport were limited and little reliance could be placed on the Soviet railway system. . . Not only did Germany enter Russia w/ inadequate air and railway transport support, but it lacked sufficient numbers of motor vehicles, and those it had were of a most unsuitable type [i.e., captured motor vehicles or those of German or French civilian pattern]. It had vehicle fuel reserves for **3** months and tyre stocks for only **2** months. Even its horses and general service army wagons foundered and broke up under the weather conditions and the strain of the corrugated pot-holed tracks. (**Note:** Still, Seaton also concludes that: "It was probable that Germany was strong enough in 1941, even w/o allies, to have destroyed the Soviet Union, but the margin in their relative strengths was not great. The overthrow of the USSR would have required the mobilization of the whole of the German economy and of all of Germany's reserves, and there could have been no question of dissipating forces in Africa, the Balkans, Scandinavia and Western Europe, or of fighting Britain in a bitter air and sea war. . . Even if it had concentrated all its strength against the USSR, Germany alone could not have won the war in a single summer and autumn campaign, because of its lack of mechanized forces and reserves. Victory might, of course, have been won before the end of the year if Japan could have been induced to take up arms against the Soviet Union in **Jun 41**.) (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 217-19; 222-23)

1940/41 [German production stagnates] : Material deficiencies within the Army were in no way a sudden or surprising occurrence, having dogged the Army since the start of the war. They could hardly be attributed to battlefield losses, which had been relatively light. Rather, they were result of: lack of coherent overall direction, systemic inefficiency, corrupt officialdom, rivalries between armed services, stifling bureaucracy, and the poorly-coordinated actions of economic planners, military cdrs and industrialists. Added to this was the inherent shortage of manpower, raw materials and specialized machine tools.

The result was plain; while the Soviet Union and Great Britain almost doubled their armament production in only the second year of the war, and the U.S. tripled theirs, Germany's armament production stagnated and achieved no further growth between **1940/41**. Beyond administrative complexities, Germany's armament industry also suffered from structural flaws owing to the specialized assembly process which, as a rule, turned out technically-advanced, high-quality wpns in daunting multiplicity of makes and designs, but for these reasons proved unsuited to the demands of mass production. Underscoring the extent of industrial dispersal and accordant organizational overlap is the bewildering array of armaments being constructed which at its height saw **425** different models of acft in production [!], and equipped the Army w/ **150** different makes of trucks and motorcycles.

Eventually the gross impracticality of this "confused and inefficient system" drew a harsh rebuke from Hitler, who insisted in **May 41** that "more primitive, robust construction" must follow w/ the introduction of "crude mass-production." (For more details see, *D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 75; also, *R. Overy, Why the Allies Won*, 201-03)

1.2.2: Economic Organization:

Failure to rationally organize its military economy: Germany's ability to produce the requisite equipment for a motorized army also limited by several other factors. Among these was the

question of who was responsible for the direction of the process of rearmament, not to mention the economy as a whole. *Hitler never provided any clear direction in this.* Initially, authority for rearmament rested w/ two agencies: the Wehrmacht's Office of Economics and Armaments (*Wirtschafts u. Ruestungs Amt*, or *Wi Rue Amt*), headed by MajGen *Georg Thomas*; and the Reich Ministry of Economics (*Reichswirtschaftsministerium*, or *RWM*), head by Dr. *Hjalmar Schacht*. Then in **1936** Hitler, ostensibly to prepare for war, created the "*Four Year Plan*," and placed the agency under Goering...Following outbreak of war, Hitler added yet another agency—creating the Ministry of Armaments and Munitions under Dr. *Fritz Todt* in **1940**. In Feb 42, *Albert Speer* succeeded Todt when latter killed in plane crash. Structure of the economy had several unfortunate effects, the primary of which was the *question of who actually ran the economy*. Lack of clear organizational structure resulted in jurisdictional battles, rivalries, competition, etc. (*DiNardo*, 7-8)

In the old *Ministry of War* there had been a War Economy Staff (*Wehrwirtschaftstab*) which, on the disappearance of the Ministry, became a department of OKW and was renamed the *War Economy and Armaments Dept.* (*Wehrwirtschafts u. Ruestungsamt*) under **General Thomas**. Its chief functions were the *formulation of detailed plans for economic mobilization for war, the coordination of the requirements of the three services and the preparation of directives for the armaments industry*. The department had a regional organization of Armaments HQs (*Ruestungskommandos*). In **Jan 40**, a new Ministry, the *Ministry of Arms and Munitions*, was created under **Todt**. In **Feb 42**, *Todt was killed* and **Speer** took over the Ministry. Then began the *process of centralising Germany's armaments production in Speer's hands*. In **May 42**, the larger part of the War Economy and Armaments Dept., together w/ its vast regional organization, was transferred to Speer. The very small remnant left in OKW was later renamed the Field Economic Dept. (*Feldwirtschaftsamt*) and was concerned almost solely w/ the collation of economic information on occupied and foreign territories. Thus, OKW *suffered the loss of one of its most important functions*. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 412)

1.2.3: Raw Materials:

According to B.H. *Liddell-Hart*, there are some *20 basic raw materials* vital to the waging of war. These include oil, coal, iron, rubber, lead, copper and aluminum, to name a few. *In almost all of these, Germany was deficient.* Certainly she was *deficient in production of steel and oil*—both vital for production of motor vehicles and tanks. Right from the start, ***Germany's position in steel production was precarious.*** Germany was one of major steel producers of Europe, but was *lacking an indigenous supply of iron ore*...Both before and during the war, ***Germany received most of its iron ore from Sweden***, reaching a high of ***10.3 million tons*** in 1943...(*DiNardo*, 6-7)

German-Soviet Pact: Under agreements of **19.8.39** (just before the pact), widened in **Feb 40** and renegotiated to lay down new delivery schedules in **Jan 41**, *trade between Germany and USSR rapidly recovered* from the nadir of the later 1930s to reach a level roughly in line w/ that when Hitler took power. Germany was the recipient of *millions of tons of grain, timber and petroleum products as well as tens of thousands of tons of precious manganese and chromium*. The Soviet Union received in return *machinery, construction, equipment, chemical products and other manufactured goods*. Pact also helped Russia construct a *cordon sanitaire* around the Soviet western border by seizing eastern part of Poland, Baltic states, etc. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 259)

Raw Materials situation: Overall, Germany's position here very poor. Oil was of course a *serious problem*. Large dependency on *Romanian oil*. On **27.5.40**, Germany signed the „*Oil*

Pact“ w/ Romania, by which Germany would trade arms for oil...Yet Germany’s oil situation would *deteriorate steadily during the war*. Germany increased its oil imports from Romania to **2,114,000** tons by 1941; this proved totally inadequate to meet the requirements of the 1941 campaign against Russia, which the Germans conducted on what amounted to a *logistical shoestring*...Conversely, the *conquest of France and Low Countries* palpably improved Reich’s raw material position and was *vital to Germany’s panzer force*. In fact, by end of **1941**, **107,841** tons of iron and steel, as well as **912,761** tons of scrap metal had been seized from occupied France. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 13, 23)

8.2.40: The whole of Hitler’s strategy [i.e., *Barbarossa*] was based on the assumption that Russia would be laid low in a *blitzkrieg* of only a few months. Germany’s *oil and rubber stocks* would not hold out much longer. Repeatedly during the latter months *Keitel* had warned the services to economize on oil consumption so that a stockpile could be built up for *Barbarossa*. Now, on **8.2.41**, Keitel learns from his staff that while the *Luftwaffe* and navy would have enough fuel to last until the coming autumn, gasoline and diesel fuel for the army’s tanks and motor transport would not hold out beyond mid-**Aug 41** if supplies from Romania dried up – unless of course the oil fields of the Caucasus could be reached in time. Keitel ordered further economies. The *rubber* situation allowed for even less leeway. Much of Germany’s rubber supplies had reached her from the Far East along the *Trans-Siberian railroad*. War w/ Russia would cut that link, leaving only an uncertain trickle supplied by blockade-running ships. (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 206)

Jun 41: At beginning of *Barbarossa*, Germany had just three (**3**) months’ reserves of petrol and a one-month reserve of diesel. Tyres were a major problem as rubber was in short supply. (*B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 5)

Aug 41: The *raw materials problem* – which became more and more critical in the Reich and forced cuts in armament programmes as early as **Jul 41** – was the *main reason* why Hitler did not continue the attack in the centre beyond Smolensk but initiated a thrust in the direction of Kiev and the Crimea in the south, as well as sealing off Leningrad in the north. (*K. Reinhardt, “Moscow 1941,”* 211; see also, *Tagebuch Bock*, 12.8.41)

Sep 41: As early as **Sep 41**, the **OKW** realized that owing to the “critical shortage of fuel and rubber” the use of motor vehicles would have to be curtailed considerably. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 139)

Nov 41: Shortage of miners led to a further fall in coal production. Production figures for hard coal were about **700,000** tonnes and for brown coal almost **1,000,000** tonnes below those for the previous month, and well below those for the month of **Nov 40**. This resulted in the closure of a series of factories after already insufficient coal supplies had been used up by end of **Nov 41**. However, the armaments factories that were manufacturing for the point-of-main-effort programmes were exempted for time being. It was quite clear that there would not be a real increase in coal supplies unless the Wehrmacht could release the called-up miners as soon as possible. This could not be justified either, on account of setbacks on the eastern front. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 267)

Nov 41: While things seemed to be looking up again on the labor front, by beginning of November, the German armaments industry’s second main problem, the *shortage of raw materials*, had become an insurmountable obstacle to the implementation of plans. As the urgently required raw materials from the Soviet Union could not be exploited or supplied to

German industry as originally planned,²⁹ the German leadership was forced to admit “that owing to a shortage of raw materials” it was impossible even to meet the requirements of the most important of the point-of-main-effort programmes. Thus, “considerable cutbacks will have to be made right down the line.” . . . The time it took the German leadership, once it had recognized that the overall demands of the *Wehrmacht* were beyond the economic potential of German industry and that cuts were therefore necessary, to draw conclusions and implement required measures seems remarkable today. . .

It must be borne in mind that all armaments planning was still based on the assumption that the eastern campaign would end in victory by the end of **Oct 41** at the latest, enabling the Germans to exploit Russian deposits of raw materials. Still, it seems “incomprehensible” that it was not until the beginning of **Nov 41** that the services were ordered to calculate their programmes precisely and ascertain what raw materials, production and manpower were required to ensure implementation of their individual plans. Without these precise calculations, it would have been impossible to determine whether it was possible to achieve the global figures called for by Hitler in his programmes. After these calculations were submitted, it became apparent that the shortage of raw materials rather than the shortage of manpower was a far more serious obstacle to armaments production for the second stage of Hitler’s plans, and that as a result the point-of-main-effort programmes could not be completed according to plan. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 138-40)

Nov 41: Not only the *Luftwaffe* but also the Army Ordnance Office had to admit at beginning of **Nov 41** that the programs called for by Hitler could not be completed under the circumstances. . . For example, there were shortages of alloys such as chromium, molybdenum and nickel, which were essential for production of tanks, AT guns and ammunition; this meant that full use could not be made of available quantities of steel. . . Serious shortages also of the alloy tungsten; shortages of copper. . . Thus at beginning of **Nov 41**, plans for army ops after “Barbarossa” had also to be abandoned, as the raw materials required for manufacture of armaments for the ops were not available. Most of the raw materials should have been seized in Russia, but the difficult military situation ruled this out. . . plans for a large-scale exploitation of raw materials, even if the Germans managed to advance rapidly towards Russian mineral resources, were impossible to carry out in the short term, owing to widespread destruction by the Russians and more especially to shortcomings in the German transport system. . . The army’s production forecasts, like *Luftwaffe* armaments planning, dealt exclusively w/ the completion of the program for ops after “*Barbarossa*.” They did not take into account demands from the eastern front, as Hitler had ordered that these were to be satisfied from their own supplies and reserves. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 144-47)

Nov 41: During this month, there were still enough supplies of iron and steel to meet current production requirements; but not of non-ferrous and precious-metals. The steadily growing demand for non-ferrous metals from the services finally forced Hitler to establish quotas for non-ferrous metals and scarce metals and only release them for those wpns, ammunition, and equipment that “can be proved to be crucial to the outcome of the war.” *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 267-68)

Nov-Dec 41: By this time, the power-supply situation had also become more acute, so that a **7%** “cut in electricity” for all factories, including armaments factories, had to be ordered. The reasons for the fall-off in electricity supplies could in turn be attributed to shortfalls in coal production, a shortage of “water as a result of frost” and the steadily growing demands of industry, which, as it

²⁹ Owing to destruction of Soviet industries, shortcomings of rail network, etc.

had to manufacture more, also required more power. (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 267)

Oil Situation:

Note: Germany's precarious oil situation would have a *distorting*—and potentially *fatal*—effect on German strategy during *Barbarossa*. This was due to Hitler's decision to suspend drive on Moscow and divert elements of Army Group Center southward (*Fuehrer Directive* of **21.8.41**), a move justified (at least in part) as necessary to eliminate the *Crimea* as a potential air base for attack on the Romanian oil fields. (*Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 290)

--Germany's position w/ regard to oil was also very weak. In 1933, Germany produced **233,000 tons of crude oil**. This was minor compared w/ Romania's production of 7,377,000 tons and the Soviet Union's output of **21,489,000 tons**...Germany's *dependence on imported oil* was marked. As early as 1934, Germany consumed about three million tons of petroleum products, of which **85 percent were imported**. If Germany had one advantage, it was its *ability to produce synthetic oil*. Germany built the first synthetic oil plant after WWI...Although ahead of rest of the world in this area, synthetic oil production as late as 1938 amounted to only **1.6 million tons**. (*DiNardo*, 6-7)

--**28.11.40:** OKH reported to OKW that the newly established monthly allocations of gasoline and diesel fuel were *wholly inadequate for even relatively minor operations*, including the projected *Balkan campaign*. (*DiNardo*, 37)

--Germany's *oil situation* on eve of *Barbarossa* precarious: She had increased oil imports from *Romania* to **2,114,000 tons by 1941**. This was to prove *completely inadequate* to meet the requirements of the 1941 campaign. Thus, even the most modern elements of the German Army were poorly equipped for the invasion. (*DiNardo*, 38)

--Once early years of war had passed, Germany found herself confronted by coalition of mightiest industrial powers in the world. Although Soviet Union lacked an automobile industry, trucks supplied by *lend-lease* certainly made up for that deficiency. Moreover, *the Allied powers and neutral countries possessed over 90 percent of the world's oil refining capacity*, w/ the USA and USSR accounting for almost 70 percent. In contrast, *Germany, Italy, the occupied territories and minor Axis powers accounted for a mere 4 percent of the world's refining capacity*. Given these circumstances, Germany's situation was clearly hopeless after miscarriage of *Barbarossa*. (*DiNardo*, 119)

--Following statistics tell a great deal about the German *fuel situation*: In **Dec 40**, at height of her military success, Germany, her Axis allies and occupied territories possessed **4.1%** of the world's oil refining capacity, compared to **21.5%** for the Allies and **73%** for the neutrals, which at that time included the USA and the Soviet Union. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 134)

Aug-Oct 41: The length of the eastern campaign – on top of production problems and heavy losses at the front – left the Wehrmacht and the armaments industry so short of oil that, by end of **Oct 41**, it was impossible to continue providing the required quantity of fuel to the three services and industry. German and Romanian reserves were exhausted, which meant that oil requirements

could only be met from current production in Germany and Romania. However, as this was not nearly enough to satisfy demand, allocations had to be reduced urgently. At end of **Oct 41**, this led to a reduction in the allocation of oil to the services and the civilian sector, and at the same time cuts for the next few months were announced.

The consequences of this rationing added still further to the problems already faced by the German armaments industry. It was, however, impossible to redress the situation, as deliveries of Romanian oil did not live up to German expectations. . . Even more serious, however, was the fact that General Thomas's predictions³⁰ that from **Oct 41** onwards stocks would be exhausted and it would no longer be possible to offset the significant shortage of oil because the eastern campaign was lasting longer than planned were now proving correct. Thomas repeatedly stated that the only possibility of alleviating the oil crisis in Germany in the event of a long war was to utilize Russian oil for benefit of the Reich. Thus he stated that "it was crucial to seize quickly and exploit the Caucasian oilfields, at least in the areas around Maikop and Grozny. . . " When in **Aug 41** it became obvious that the campaign would go on for longer than planned, Thomas drafted a new report on the oil situation, in which he concluded: "Even if production were pushed to its limits it would be impossible to supply all the required oil. Therefore, the only option open to us is to cut consumption in line w/ availability of supplies." It became apparent, therefore, that the supplies of oil still available in Europe would be exhausted in the months that followed and that current production would not keep up w/ demand. Thus, Thomas was forced to make cuts in all areas that would not directly affect operations by the fighting troops. . . Again, it became clear that shortages could not be offset unless the oilfields around Maikop were captured . . . By **Oct 41** the situation had worsened considerably. As a result of the extraordinarily high consumption at the front, on **7 Oct 41** Thomas was obliged once again to review the "situation of oil supplies in the fourth quarter on the basis of the situation on **1.10.1941**." (For details of this report see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 149-51)

Nov-Dec 41: Exhausted oil supplies and insufficient deliveries from Romania had negative consequences for both the military and civilian sectors of industry. The Navy had already realized on **1 Nov 41** that the "reduction in allocations of oil" would impose immediate "restrictions on the conduct of the naval war." As a result of this, the U-boat war had to be restricted to the German sector to "keep departure routes open and escort vital transports." The employment of naval forces in the North Sea was now only possible on a limited scale.

The Army was in a better position. Its operations in **Nov-Dec 41** were not curtailed by the wide-spread shortage of oil, resulting from the fact that available supplies of fuel were neither delivered to the fighting troops on time nor in sufficient quantities owing to shortcomings in transport. When on **19 Nov 41** Halder requested **107,000** tonnes of fuel for the month of **Dec 41**, Thomas could not allow the army to have it. In addition, the head of the War Economy and Armaments Office explained that there would be no supplies for 1942, since after the **Dec 41** quota had been used up there would only be **75,000** tonnes left in **Jan 42** for the entire Wehrmacht.

The only way to increase supplies of oil now was to continue exploiting Romanian oilwells. Therefore, on **30 Nov 41**, Goering arranged a meeting w/ the Romanian Deputy Prime Minister, Mihai Antonescu, who was in Berlin at the time, during which he tried to force Romania to make a greater effort by arguing that Germany and Romania would either win or lose the war together. He said that fuel was urgently needed for the "panzer battles" around Moscow. Goering finally went so far as to demand that Romania should pump its oilwells "completely dry," as it would be

³⁰ **Note:** Apparently, Thomas had made these forecasts in late **Mar 41**. (see, p. 159, f.n 89)

able to receive compensation for this later in the Middle East. . . While Antonescu assured Goering that he fully appreciated the problem and that Romania would deliver anything that was possible, in the ensuing period deliveries from Romania fell from **223,000** tonnes in **Nov 41** to **73,000** tonnes in **Feb 42**.

As the advance to Maikop was no longer considered promising from a military point of view, although Hitler was still insisting on it up to the end of **Nov 41** and only had his eyes opened by the setback at Rostov, hopes of offsetting the shortage of oil by capturing the oilfields of southern Russia had faded. It was now impossible to obtain any more oil. . . Halder rightly concluded that in future the Wehrmacht would have no operational freedom. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 270-72)³¹

Dec 41: German oil production was only **5.7** million tons in **1941**, of which **3.9** million was synthetic oil. The Romanian oil fields were vitally important to Germany, but they produced only **5.5** million tons in **1941**, and **5.7** million tons in **1942**. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 50)

Coal & Steel:

1940: In general, the Russians won the production contest [w/ Germany] because of the sacrifices made by the civilian sector and the basic strength of their economy – even though it was not equal to the total European economy. The European nations under German control produced **31.8** million tons of steel in **1940**; compared to only **18.3** million tons produced by the Soviet Union that year. Despite the disparity, the Soviets were able to manufacture more wps than the Germans. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 24)

Jun-Aug 41: A pressing challenge was posed by the increasingly debilitated condition of Germany's *heavy industry*. As usual, the problems circled around *coal* and *steel*. By late spring **1941**, stocks of coal in Germany were *virtually non-existent* and output was well short of requirement. At a meeting of the *Four Year Plan* at end of June, *General Hanneken* reports that the German *Grossraum* faced an overall coal deficit of roughly **40,000,000** tons. This reflected both lagging production at the pits and the ever-increasing demands of German industry... Within Germany, the *steel industry* was having its coal consumption throttled by **15%** and there was the threat that this might soon be increased to **25%** ... In the end it was not Hitler but Keitel who intervened. At a series of meetings between **14.-16.8.41**, he attempted to force the three branches of the *Wehrmacht* to tailor their armaments programmes to fit the constraints imposed by the coal shortage. Instead of monthly steel production of **2,000,000** tons, Germany would have to make do w/ only **1,650,000** tons. (See, *Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 497-98)

25.10.41: Whereas the *Luftwaffe* was merely frustrated in its programme of expansion,³² the army faced truly devastating cuts. On 25 Oct 41, the army's *steel ration* was set at a miserly **173,000** monthly tons, a level not seen since before the May crisis in **1938**. This drastic shift was fully in line w/ German *armaments strategy* since the autumn of **1940** – shifting resources to the *Luftwaffe* and the navy as soon as the battle in the East was won. But it was starkly at odds w/ the

³¹ **Note:** Even a successful advance towards Maikop would not have resulted in rapid oil production, as drilling and production installations would most probably have been destroyed by the Russians before arrival of German troops. (275, f.n. 58)

³² **Note:** Within weeks of announcing „the gigantic *Goering programme*,“ the *Luftwaffe* was forced by Keitel to settle for the extraordinarily modest objective of simply replacing the acft destroyed on the Eastern Front over the last two months.“ (498)

reality the *Wehrmacht* was facing in Russia ... Faced w/ drastic cuts to its steel ration, the army procurement office *panicked*. Without extra steel, it saw no possibility of resupplying the *Ostheer* to continue the war in **1942**. And the army was *not bluffing*. As we have seen, the *production of ammunition* had been *deliberately run down* in **1940/41**. After months of intense fighting, *stocks of shells and bullets had fallen to dangerously low levels*. If the *Wehrmacht* was to continue active ops in **1942**, it desperately needed to replenish its stocks. Not only that, given the *startling superiority* of much of the Red Army's weaponry, the *Wehrmacht* needed *an entire new generation of tanks and infantry wpns*. What the Third Reich was facing in **Oct 41** was not another bout of inter-service bickering. What it faced was the ***bankruptcy of its entire war fighting strategy***. (See, *Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 498 ff.)

Nov 41: In light of the exhaustion of both the workforce and of coal supplies, the *Wehrmacht's* mil.-econ. office looked forward to the upcoming holiday season „w/ unconcealed relief.“ In late Nov., *General Thomas's* office recommended that the German armaments economy should *shut down for an extended holiday* between **24.12.41-1.1.42**, enabling it to conserve both coal and manpower. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 499)

1941-44: The steel output of Germany and occupied Europe averaged no less than **33.4** million tons a year during these years, compared to **11.3** million a year for the USSR. (**Note:** Several pages earlier, author states that Soviet steel production in **1940** was **18.3** million tons. Did war disrupt steel production that much?) All the same, German production of basic types of wpns was smaller than that of Russia. . . Even in **Jun 41**, the Reich economy was prepared “in breadth” but not “in depth.” The notion that Hitler set out to fight a series of short wars, and organized his economy accordingly, is now generally accepted by historians. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 51)

1.2.4: Labor Situation:

Exacerbating all production problems was a ***major labor shortage***. With so many German men mobilized for service w/ the *Wehrmacht*, a large deficit existed in manpower available for industry. In Britain, women filled many of the shortages caused by rapid military expansion; however, Germany's *ideology* interfered directly w/ economic good sense—Hitler *refused to allow widespread use of women in factories* as had occurred in World War I. The result was that, by summer and fall of 1941, an *acute shortage of workers existed throughout the armaments industry*. While the Germans had millions of POWs captured in Polish and western campaigns, most of those worked in the countryside to keep German agricultural production going. In summer of 1941, Germans captured millions of Russian soldiers, who signified a manpower pool of enormous potential. However, *ideology intervened w/ a vengeance*—Hitler refused to allow the transfer of any of these prisoners to the *Reich* for work either on farms or in the factories. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 99)

Germany suffering from ***desperate shortage of labor***. In the summer of 1941, it is estimated that **8,400,000 women** were working on farms, in factories and offices, and as maidservants, not including those who had taken over the jobs of husbands gone to the front. (*Assignment to Berlin, Flannery*, 255)

R.L. *DiNardo* argues that the German economy—like the French economy—was *not really modern*. German industry, for example, still employed techniques and organization *more attuned to the 19th Century*. Supply of armaments components, for example, severely hindered by fact

that they were often manufactured by a large number of small-scale concerns scattered throughout the countryside. Many of these were no more than workshops employing no more than 30 men...*This helped make mass production virtually an impossibility.* In addition, German industry *relied heavily on skilled labor*, of which there was a *shortage*. (DiNardo, 119)

Sep-Oct 41: As early as September, while preparations for Operation “*Taifun*” were in full swing, it became apparent that previous solutions to the labor problem were no longer proving effective. . . On top of the existing problems in labor market came the additional burden caused by the call-up of those born in **1922**, a move which deprived the armaments industry of many young skilled workers. . . For several reasons, it was no longer possible to solve the problem by employing foreign workers . . . Despite [remedial efforts], at the end of **Sep 41** things had reached a point where it was no longer a question of “both. . . and” but only “either. . . or.” Thus the demands of the armaments industry read as follows: “Either the troops or the armaments industry will be provided w/ personnel. This decision can no longer be avoided.” Nonetheless, call-ups from the armaments industry continued in **Oct 41**, because heavy casualties in the army necessitated urgent measures to cover the great shortage of men. . . Ultimately, the only really effective solution to the increasing dilemma in the labor market was to employ more Russian POWs.

However, as late as end of October, Hitler hesitated to employ large numbers of Soviet POWs in German industry and agriculture, as he believed the Soviet Union had already been beaten and that the war in the east would end soon, thus enabling the release of substantial numbers of soldiers for employment in the armaments industry. It was not until the very end of **Oct 41** that, in contrast to previous directives, Hitler issued an order providing for the employment of Russians on a large scale, even in the Reich. This order from Hitler on **31.10.41** led **Keitel** to order the “extensive” use of Soviet prisoners in the German armaments industry. . . On **7.11.41**, at a meeting chaired by Goering to discuss the Four-Year Plan, the guidelines for employment of Soviet POWs and civilian workers were laid down. The Russians were to be employed mainly in the coal-mines, in transport and in armaments factories. . . Germany was dependent on Russian labor and hoped that, by employing **3,000,000** Soviet prisoners of war, it could overcome its most serious labor problems and thus solve the German armaments industry’s main problem. (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 135-37)

Oct-Nov 41: On top of the inability to organize the employment of POWs in Germany, in **Nov 41** “many armaments factories. . . lost considerable numbers of workers on account of the evacuation of the Jews.” Between **16.10.-13.11.41**, ca. **20,000** German Jews were transported out of the Reich to the Lodz ghetto. A further **30,000** Jews were deported to Russia in **mid-Nov 41**. GFM v. Bock protested vehemently against these deportations, using military arguments. As soon as he learned “that several trains full of Jews were to be sent from Germany to the rear areas of the army group” he complained to Halder that “using trains to transport Jews meant that the same number of trains vital to operations would not be running.” (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 266; *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 12.11.41)

Nov 41: Shortage of soldiers at front and workers in industry had forced Hitler, despite his ideological objections, to agree to employing considerable numbers of Russian POWs. With the “large-scale employment” of **3,000,000** Russian prisoners, the German leadership hoped to solve the pressing employment problem. However, two [2] factors stood in the way of employing captured Russian soldiers: 1) Serious transport problems in the east prevented the **5-6000** miners from Krivoy Rog and large numbers of POWs from being transported to Germany; 2) typhus had broken out among the Russian prisoners in almost all the POW camps, which along w/ acute

malnutrition prevented any employment worth talking about. (For more details see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 263-64)

Dec 41: By the beginning of **Dec 41**, the situation on the “labor market” had become intolerable . . . As there were no more reserves [for the Ostheer], large-scale call-ups have a direct effect on armaments production. However, these call-ups could not be avoided. . . Morale among the workers had also hit a new low. There was a sharp increase in the numbers reporting sick – up to **20%** of the workforce in the armaments industry. This fight for manpower [between Army and industry] was to intensify further as a result of the military developments in the east. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 266-67)

Feb-Mar 42: In **Feb 42**, Dr Mansfeld, who was in charge of providing manpower w/in the frame-work of the Four-Year Plan, discovered that out of the original **3,900,000** Russian POWs only **1,100,000** remained; and only **400,000** of these could be employed in the Reich. . . In **mid-Mar 42**, Hitler finally realized that “food for Russian prisoners of war and workers was thoroughly inadequate and that they must be given enough to eat.” . . . Hitler’s conversation w/ Speer on **21.-22.3.42** reveals that the subordinate HQs were much “stricter” than he was: “The Fuehrer made it quite clear in a lengthy statement that he did not approve at all of the poor diet of Russian workers and prisoners. He said that they should be given enough to eat and that Saukel [the newly-appointed General Plenipotentiary for Employment] was to ensure that this food was to be obtained from Backe.” (See, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 265-66; 273, f.n. 26)

1.2.5: Production:

The most dangerous trend in 1941 was a production program that one can best describe as *inadequate*. The Germans had entered the war w/ a surprisingly low production rate—yet production levels had reflected the *Reich’s* economic reality. The victories of 1940, however, fundamentally altered Germany’s strategic and economic situation. She had captured large stockpiles of raw materials in France and the Low Countries; moreover, the modern industrial plant of those nations was now under her control. Also, the occupation of France opened up direct access to *Spanish and Moroccan raw material resources* (particularly, *tungsten and iron ores*). With these resources at their disposal, the Germans were in a position to organize the new conquests in tandem w/ their own economy in order to increase drastically their armament production. They did no such thing. Rather, after the rapid victories over Poland, France, etc., they deluded themselves into believing they could continue armament production at the prevailing low level. Thus, after Fall of France, the Germans made only *minimal alterations* in the production of all major wpn systems in spite of the radically altered raw material and industrial (base) situation. Symptomatic of this situation in summer of **1940** was the Army ordnance office’s rejection of **Hitler’s proposal to increase tank production from 100 to 800 units per month** because such a level would be too expensive and require too many skilled workers. (for more details see, *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 96-103; also, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 114)³³

³³ See, *Reinhardt, Wende vor Moscow*, Chapter I, for an excellent detailed discussion of the inadequacies of German production in 1940/41. *Murray* notes that the aircraft industry was underutilized at this time (1939-42)—w/ most factories on 8-hour shifts, once a day. In addition, Germans failed to use factories in occupied countries in 1941/42—instead often looting them of precious machine tools and shipping them to Germany, where they were consigned to storage facilities! (98)

R.-D. Mueller: Als sich im **Mar 41** der verdeckte Aufmarsch [gen Osten] verstaerkte, mussten gravierende Maengel in der Ausbildung u. Ausruestung immer wieder notduerftig beseitigt werden. Die Reserven waren schon vor Feldzugsbeginn weitgehend erschoeft. Im **Dez 40** hatte das **OKW** noch einmal den Vorrang des Luft- u. Seekriegs gegen England bestaetigt. Als im **Mai 41** das „Ruestungsprogramm B“ des Heeres auslief, waren *viele Ziele noch nicht erreicht*. Dennoch waren die meisten Fabriken mit Heeresauftraegen nicht einmal voll ausgelastet u. liefen mit nur einer friedensmaessigen Schicht. [!] Doch die Heeresfuehrung zeigte sich ueberhaupt nicht besorgt. Man war sogar bereit, mit den anderen Wehrmachtsteilen ueber eine weitere Neuverteilung der Ruestung zu Lasten des Heeres zu verhandeln. Noch vor Beginn des Feldzuges [gegen UdSSR] wurde die deutsche Ruestung auf die Zeit nach „Barbarossa“ umgestellt. (*Der letzte Deutsche Krieg*, 84-85)

Burton Klein was one of the directors of the *U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey*, which was a **208-volume** report giving detailed insight into the German (and Japanese) war production efforts during WWII. Klein, in his more general Harvard work (*Germany's Economic Preparations for War* [Cambridge, Mass, 1959] pp 181-94, 208-10), reveals the *extraordinary weakness of German armaments production in 1940-41*. British production alone of „armored vehicles“ was *greater than German* in both years. Soviet production of tanks was also considerably greater than German during the same years; and the Soviet tank force existing in **1941** proved to be ca. **seven times larger than the German force** employed in Operation *Barbarossa*: **3200 vs. Ca. 24,000** tanks. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 30)

Lack of trucks: One of Germany's critical weaknesses during Second World War was its *inability to make as many trucks as its enemies*. While production increased steeply during the war, it did not match that of British factories. In its first year of war, the USA built **620,000** trucks compared to Germany's **58,000** – a **10:1** advantage that would prove General *Sherman's* point about the folly of declaring war on a nation of mechanics. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 138-39)

Tank production: Size of Germany's *panzer* arm also affected by the matter of who built the tanks and how they were built. Tanks are automotive devices and, thus, best built by automobile companies. This was certainly the case w/ American *Sherman tank*, which was produced by combined efforts of Ford, Chrysler and GM. *This was not the case in Germany*. To begin w/ the **German military was mistrustful of mass production**; items produced via mass production were regarded as *substandard and shoddy*. Also, in Germany, *the companies that produced tanks also produced railroad equipment*, esp. locomotives. Techniques used in the construction of RR equipment did not lend themselves to techniques used in mass production. Situation made worse by fact that *Germany suffered from a shortage of rolling stock*, a problem which had to be addressed. During much of the war, a great deal of resources had to be devoted to the production of rolling stock. During critical years of **1941-43**, Germany produced **9,798** locomotives and **172,000** pieces of rolling stock. This was certainly an *inhibiting factor in German tank production*. (*Dinando, Panzer Arm*, 8-9)

1940: German *tank production* was only **2200** per annum as late as **1940**. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 31)

1940/41: In the last six months of **1940** tank production averaged **182** units a month (all types), w/ this rising slightly to **212** in the first six months of **1941**. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 81)

1941 [*Tank production*]: During 1941, *tank production rose only marginally on a monthly basis*. In Jan 41, it was slightly less than **200 units per month**. By 22.6.41, it has increased slightly above **250 units per month**. It would not reach ca. **400 units per month** until spring 1942. (See, *Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 16; also Figure 1.2)

1941 [*Tank production*]: “Nun verlassen die Panzer aus Gruenden, die uns unerfindlich bleiben, nur mit einer *monatlichen* Durchschnittszahl von **271** im Jahr **1941** die dt. Fabriken – d.h., **217** pro Monat im ersten Halbjahr u. **330** im Oktober, November u. Dezember. Aber anstatt die Verbaende an der Front aufzufuellen, deren Maenner u. Fuehrer an der Grenze ihrer Leistungsfahigkeit sind, haelt Hitler das neue Material fuer die Aufstellung neuer Pz.Div. zurueck. Es geht entweder an das Heer (**22., 23., 24. PD**) oder an die *Waffen-SS*. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 113)

1941 [*Assault gun production*]: Assault guns had a great many things in their favor. First, they were *cheaper* to build. Also, the lack of a turret proved an advantage in installing a heavier gun w/o adding a prohibitive amount of weight. Being essentially simpler vehicles, they also had higher readiness rates than tanks. Conversely, the lack of a turret was a *tactical drawback*, as it gave the gun only a *very limited traverse of 24 degrees* as opposed to a tank’s *360 degree traverse*. Production of these wpns in 1941 was *miniscule: well below 100 per month* for all of 1941. (Would not pass 100 per month until late 1942.) Began *Barbarossa* with an inventory of *less than 500*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 26-27; Figures 1.5 & 1.6)

1941 [*Assault gun production*]: Am **22.6.41** befinden sich davon etwa **250** bei den **11** Abteilungen u. **5** Batterien der Frontverbaende. Waehrend der zweiten Haelfte dieses Jahres werfen die dt. Fabriken noch weitere **285** aus. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 113)

Germans also would hurt themselves by building a *large number of variations of the same model*. From 1934-45, they produced four versions of the Pz I; 10 versions of the Pz II; 13 versions of the Pz III; 10 versions of the Pz IV; four versions of the Pz V (*Panther*); and several versions of the Pz VI (*Tiger*). Primary reason for this unhealthy state of affairs was a *profusion of overlapping authorities*. Hitler also affected the process; being fascinated by technical devices and machines, he often *personally ordered design changes to armored vehicles*. Another problem was the *German automobile industry*, which could not fulfill demands of tank forces for a variety of vehicles they required, such as trucks needed to tow artillery, carry gasoline, munitions and men. (See, *Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 9-10)

Russian tank factories built more **T-34s** than the sum total of **Pz. IIs, Pz. IIIs, Pz. IVs, Panthers, Tigers** and other *exotica* that German industry assembled; and America built more **M4 Shermans** than the Russians built T-34s. For impressively long periods, even the British were building tanks and acft faster than the Germans. With almost the whole of the European coal and steel industry under its control, the German war economy failed miserably to provide the wpns its army required. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, author’s note)

Armored vehicle production:

German:

1940 = 2200
1941 = 5200
1942 = 9200
1943 = 17,300

Soviet:

1940 = 2794
1941 = 6590
1942 = 24,446
1943 = 24,089

1944 = 22,100
1945 = 4400

1944 = 28,963
1945 = 15,419

(Source: C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 129; figures included tanks, all types of SP guns, ammunition carriers, SP anti-acft guns and other specialist vehicles.)

Jun-Dec 41: Despite all the planning, the *Luftwaffe* did not manage to produce the planned number of acft in the summer and autumn of **1941**. The average monthly production figures for fighters, four-engined bombers, recce acft, bombers, trainers and troop-carriers did not rise above **1150** acft. It was already apparent by **mid-Aug 41** that the expanded air armaments program, known as the “**Elch Program**,” which envisaged an average monthly production quote of **2400** acft, could not be implemented. [Note: The “Elch Program” was, in last analysis, a “watered-down version” of the original “Goering Program.”] The air armaments industry did not have the **120,000** skilled workers required for the job. Nor were the required quotas of raw materials such as magnesium, aluminium, iron and steel to be had. (For more details see, K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 141-44; 155, f.n. 27)

14.7.41 [*Armaments planning*]: It is important to remember – esp. when considering armament industry – that the start of *Barbarossa* coincided w/ preparations for the accomplishment of the *second stage* of Hitler's general programme, which aimed at establishing Germany as a world power. These preparations are reflected in the order of **14 Jul 41** reorganizing the armament efforts, in Directive No. **32** for the “preparations for the time after Operation *Barbarossa*,” and in a series of orders to withdraw some of the major [mobile] units from the eastern front as early as **Aug 41** to re-equip them for new ops – after the Russian campaign – which were to begin as early as the fall of **1941**. . . The changes in armament policy ordered on **14.7.41** – i.e., in support of the second phase of Hitler's plan to achieve global power status – called for the main effort to be shifted to the air forces, as well as to submarines and armored forces. The armament order put a *stop* [?] to all other armament programmes and brought *disastrous consequences* late in **1941**. Thus, during the actual Russian campaign, the priorities for German armaments were placed on a programme to be initiated only *after* the end of Operation *Barbarossa*. (K. Reinhardt, “*Moscow 1941*,” 209, 218)

Jul-Dec 41: “The defeat in the battle for Moscow was a *fatal set-back*, not only in the purely military field but also in the field of the armaments industry. Hitler's *Blitzkriegkonzept* envisaged the defeat of individual opponents in quick, lightning campaigns, not letting them develop their own economic power. According to the concept current at the time, the *Blitzkrieg* campaign against the Soviet Union seemed to have been adequately stockpiled and sufficiently prepared. After initial successes in the east, therefore, and as early as **14.7.41**, Hitler issued an order to change armament policy in support of the second phase of his plan . . . Very soon, the economic limits of armament production became apparent, i.e. *lack of labor and raw materials* – in particular *iron, steel, aluminium, cooper and mineral oil*. Originally, this lack of raw materials was to have been balanced by the exploitation of Russian raw materials. However, the latter could not support the German armament effort adequately. The German High Command hoped to be able to make up for the *lack of labor* by employing Russian [POWs]. Nevertheless, the *labor problem for 1941* could not even be solved by these measures. Originally, Germany had expected to be able to release approx. **300,000** soldiers by disbanding the bulk of the divisions after the victory over the Soviet Union late in **1941** and to reintegrate them into defense production. From **Nov 41**, the defense industry was confronted not only w/ giving up hope of getting the expected **300,000** workers, but also w/ having to detach a considerable labor force as soldiers to the east front. . . In **Dec 41**, the worsening of the military situation on the eastern front forced the full-scale continuation and, compared to former times, even an intensification of armament efforts for

the Army. These had previously been stopped, esp. in the field of *ammunition*. . .” (K. Reinhardt, “*Moscow 1941*,” 217-19)

Nov 41: By this point, Germany facing acute shortages of raw materials, serious shortage of labor, etc. Problems made more acute by transport problems facing the *Reichsbahn*, which remained for the moment insurmountable. The concepts of *Blitzkrieg* and “armaments in breadth,” which had led to a shortage of supplies, were now taking their revenge and revealing their limitations. (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 262-63)

Nov 41: By the time Milch realized that the “*Goering Program*” could no longer be completed, the *Luftwaffe* had already lost **5180** acft at the front, **2966** of which were completely destroyed. In the period from **22 Jun – 10 Nov 41**, these losses compare w/ a total of **5124** available acft. This meant that from the beginning of **Nov 41** “losses sustained in the east [could] no longer be covered.” . . . For example, **1527** fighter acft were lost³⁴ on eastern front by **31.10.41**, w/ **853** totally destroyed. The **1079** new fighters produced between **Jul – Oct 41** inclusive fell short of this “loss.” It is obvious from this that it was impossible to stockpile acft for future operations. Current production was not even at a level that would offset losses sustained at the front. In conclusion, at the end of **Oct 41**, one of the principal military factors for the realization of ops after “*Barbarossa*,” namely the formation of a superior air force, was no longer feasible as a result of problems in the air armaments industry. (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 141-44)

Nov 41 [Ammunition Production]: In an assessment of the ammunition situation on **1 Nov 41**, the Army Ordnance Office came to conclusion that the “supplies of various types of ammunition available for distribution on **1.11.41** just about covered current requirements.” This was because from the month of **Oct 41** onwards the little ammunition that was being produced had to be sent directly to the front, making it impossible to build up stocks. Most of the stocks of ammunition had themselves already been used up. From **Nov 41** onwards, it became difficult to supply some types of ammunition,³⁵ and it was realized that only by “recommencing and increasing production of most types of ammunition. . . will access to supplies be guaranteed.” However, resumption of ammunition production on a large scale, which had been stopped by Hitler in mid-Jul 41, required more manpower, raw materials, explosives and gunpowder. They could hardly be provided any longer owing to acute shortages of all of them. (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 147-48)

Nov 41 [Tank Production]: The panzer situation looked even bleaker at this time [i.e., compared to ammunition shortages.] The eastern army, which went into the campaign w/ **3580** tanks and SP guns, recorded **2090** armored vehicles “out of action” on **10 Nov 41**, for which only **601** replacement tanks and SP guns had been supplied since the start of the campaign. . . Between **Jul** and **Oct 41** inclusive, panzer and SP gun production ran to only **1402** vehicles. In a “*Beurteilung der Kampfkraft des Ostheeres*” the **OKH** concluded that the fighting strength of the panzer rgts had dropped to a level of about **65-78%** on average, and that the actual fighting power of a panzer division was down to “**35%** of its normal strength.” (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 148; 158, f.n. 73 & 77; also, *KTB OKW*, 1074)

³⁴ **Note:** The term “out of action” includes all acft, vehicles and artillery, etc., that were total losses or could not be repaired w/in **5** days. (156, f.n. 49)

³⁵ **Note:** By **Nov 41**, there was a shortage of ammunition, esp. for light field howitzers; heavy **10 cm** cannons **18**; **17 cm** cannons on a mortar carriage; **21 cm** cannons **39**, and **24 cm** cannons. (158, f.n. 70; check German text for artillery designations)

3.12.41: On **3 Dec 41**, Hitler orders a “simplification of procedures and an increase in production in the armaments industry.” This initial order from Hitler, which is supposed to bring about far-reaching rationalization, did not, however, signify a change in his previous ideas of armaments. . . Measures considered included efforts to simplify construction methods, concentrating contracts in those factories best equipped to manufacture each piece of equipment, etc. Hitler also ordered restrictions on technical requirements for wpns and equipment and the standards of “appearance, durability and fittings were to be limited exclusively to the needs of the war.” However, all these measures were still part of the concept of “armaments in breadth” [*Breitenruestung*], whose possibilities could now be exploited better, as it was now better planned. In the last analysis, however, they could not hide the fact that raw materials and labor could not be made available in sufficient quantities and w/in a short time if previous production practices were maintained. . . Hitler’s order of **3.12.41** was based on what he assumed would be a relatively quiet winter break, which would enable the Ostheer to be rested, re-equipped and made operational again. The setbacks in **Dec 41** [in Russia], the considerable losses of materiel they entailed, and the ensuing need to “step up armament of the Army in almost every area and also re-start manufacture of all types of munitions,” created very serious problems for Germany’s already overburdened war economy. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 268)

Late 41: For discussion of problems w/ food supplies in Germany, efforts to feed German army in the east w/ local produce, etc., see, K. Reinhardt. Among other things, he states that it “had proved possible to feed almost all of the Eastern Army w/ local produce.” Again, he notes that problems were due to shortfalls in the transport system, shortages of manpower for harvesting, Red Army’s destruction of most of the harvest while retreating, etc. (See, *Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point* 269-70; 274, f.n. 45)

Dec 41-Jan 42: Summarising all armaments measures taken, General *Thomas* stated on **23.12.41**³⁶ that war requirements *exceeded by far* available capacities, and that therefore *drastic reorganization* had to be undertaken. Hitler finally ordered the reorganization of armament production on **10.1.42**, for even he now felt compelled to shift the main production effort at once and quite clearly back to the army. The system of *Blitzkriegwirtschaft*, which Hitler had tried to stick to as long as possible – and the success of which was critical for the success or failure of his programme – was now altered to become a *long-term system of economic warfare*. (*K. Reinhardt, “Moscow 1941,”* 217)

Dec 41-Jan 42 [German production]: Germany’s labor shortage, combined w/ fuel problems, raw materials deficiencies, and the continued competition between the armed services for available production, *almost brought German production to a standstill during Dec 41 to Jan 42*. On **10 Jan 42**, Hitler issued a new set of production priorities, subordinating his grand plans for new mech. and expeditionary forces to the need to replace equipment for the field armies. This order marked his belated recognition that Germany was engaged in a long war. [**Note:** On **21 Mar 42**, Hitler officially subordinated the entire economy to war requirements.] . . . However, the *Wehrmacht* was **never fully reequipped after the disastrous battles of Moscow**. Army Group South, designated to conduct the main attack in **1942**, brought its units up to **85%** of their authorized equipment only by forced transfers from the other two army groups. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 104)

Winter 41/42 [German material losses]: Es sollte hier kurz ueber die Material-Einbussen einiges gesagt werden: Die materiellen Gesamt-Verluste an Fahrzeugen, Waffen u. Munition u. sonstiger

³⁶ **Note:** In footnote, Reinhardt gives the date for Thomas’ comments as **23.10.41**. (224, f.n. 71). Clarify!

Ausrüstung, die dieses Winter-Chaos im Grossraum Moskau u. z.T. noch darüber hinaus im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte verursachte, hatten immense Ausmasse. Was bis heute offenbar so gut wie kaum richtig bekannt geworden ist, so handelt es sich um ein Volumen, das *einem Ausstoss der Gesamt-Produktions-Kapazitäten der damaligen Grossdeutschen Rüstungs-Industrie (einschl. der in den besetzten Gebieten) von 7 Monaten entsprach*. Weit mehr als das, was Stalingrad materialmässig kostete! Nach der Kenntnis damaliger Experten konnte dieser Material-Verlust vor Moskau **1941** bis Kriegsende nicht wieder ganz ausgeglichen werden. [Note: Check for accuracy!] (K.-F. Vierkorn, **23. ID**, „Erinnerungen,“ 6)

1941/42: For figures on comparative armaments production (German vs. Russian) see, E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 47):

1941:

Artillery: **22,000** vs. **41,000**
Tanks/SP: **3800** vs. **6600**
Combat Acft: **8400** vs. **12,400**

1942:

Artillery: **41,000** vs. **128,000**
Tanks/SP: **6200** vs. **24,700**
Combat Acft: **11,600** vs. **21,700**

(Note: Be careful w/ these and all figures!)

Dec 41-Jan 42: The catastrophic material losses of the German army that winter had to be made good. Anticipating a swift defeat of Russia, in **mid-1941** Hitler had ordered production effort switched to the navy and the *Luftwaffe* – now the army’s needs, particularly for ammunition, could barely be covered. In **Nov 41**, the economics ministry had declared its virtual *bankruptcy*: General Hermann von *Hanneken* saw no way of increasing arms production on the present raw materials basis. Hitler himself had to devise the ways and means of rationalizing arms production and surmounting red tape. Seated in his private plane on **3.12.41**, while flying to the eastern front, he dictated to Munitions Minister Todt a three-page decree ordering the *simplification and expansion of arms production*. Basically, future arms manufacture was to be concentrated in the most efficient factories, turning out *standardized and unsophisticated wpns by mass-production means*. Todt initiated a *radical reform* of the arm’s industry’s structure. On **10.1.42**, Hitler ordered the industry to revert to its earlier *preferential treatment of the army’s needs* at expense of the navy and *Luftwaffe*. (Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 370)

10.1.42: Am 10 Jan 42, bestimmte ein neuer *Rüstungserlass* Hitlers „in Anpassung an die veränderte Kriegslage,“ dass der seit Sommer 1941 beabsichtigte stärkere Ausbau von *Luftwaffe* u. *Kriegsmarine* zurueckgestellt u. das Heer bei der Rüstungsproduktion zunaechts wieder bevorzugt werden sollte. (KTB OKW, Bd. 2, 1265 ff.)³⁷

Feb/Mar 42: Wurden Albert Speer zum Reichsminister fuer Bewaffung u. Munition ernannt sowie Gauleiter *Sauckel* zum Generalbevollmaechtigten fuer den Arbeitseinsatz bestellt. Insofern

³⁷ Note: Diese besondere Fuehrerweisung war vom Wehrwirtschafts- u. Rüstungsamt (Gen. Thomas) seit Dez 41 dringend gefordert worden, vgl. *Reinhardt, Wende*, 266 ff., u. *DRZW*, Bd. 4, 1024 (Beitrag Mueller).

bedeutete die Niederlage der dt. Truppen vor Moskau fuer die dt. Kriegswirtschaft eine deutliche „Zaesur,“ da man auch auf kriegs- u. ruestungswirtschaftlichem Gebiet vom Blitzkriegskonzept Abstand nahm. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa*, 169)

Feb-Jul 42: As a result of Todt's reforms, during this period German arms production increased **55%**. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 370)

Keegan: German economic strategy, quite as much as its military one, was geared to the concept of *blitzkrieg*. Until **1942**, Hitler had been adamant that the mil. effort should not depress civilian living standards or curtail the output of consumer goods; between **Jan-May 42**, at the insistence of his Armaments Minister, Fritz Todt, and then (after Todt's death) Dr Albert Speer, he accepted that mil. output as a proportion of GNP would have to rise. Todt and Speer introduced *centralized measures of economic control* which did indeed begin to raise output at a spectacular rate (for ex., armaments, as a proportion of industrial production, increased from **16%** in **1941** to **22%** in **1942**, **31%** in **1943** and **40%** in **1944**). (*Keegan, Second World War*, 211)

Deutsche Ruestung u. Kriegsproduktion bis 1941:³⁸

Summary: Der Zusammenbruch des Jahres **1918** wirkte sich nicht nur auf pol. u. mil. Gebiet, sondern ganz besonders auf die dt. Wirtschaft aus. Der Wiederaufbau der Erzeugungskraft der dt. Industrie ging, obwohl von verschiedenen Komponenten beguenstigt (*Inflation* u. Verbrauchsbegrenzung), nur langsam vor sich. Es dauerte etwa **10** Jahre bis nach dem Zusammenbruch von **1918** der *Vorkriegsstand* [i.e., **1914**] der industriellen Erzeugung in Deutschland wieder erreicht wurde. Es ist selbstverstaendlich, dass auch in dieser Zeit, wo der militaerischen Kraftentfaltung durch die *Friedensvertraege* genau festgelegte Grenzen gegeben waren, die Produktion von Kriegsgeraet u. mil. Ausruestung auf ein im Hinblick auf die Gesamtproduktion kaum ins Gewicht fallendes Mass beschaenkt blieb. Selbst die pol. Entwicklung der Jahre **1932-36** hat darin noch keine fuehlbare Aenderung gebracht. Die Ausgaben fuer Ruestung u. *Wehrmacht* im *Reichshaushalt* blieben unter dem Betrag von **2** Milliarden [**Mrd**] Reichsmark pro Jahr, sie beliefen sich daher nur auf rund **4%** des damaligen *Volkseinkommens* der Deutschen. (4)

Erst die Aufruestung, die Deutschland ab **1936** zur Erreichung seiner pol. Ziele betrieb, hatte Rueckwirkungen auf die dt. Industrieproduktion. Die Ausgaben fuer Ruestung u. *Wehrmacht* im Reichshaushalt stiegen in dieser Zeit beträchtlich an. Sie betragen:

1936/37: **5.8** Mrd. Reichsmark = **9%** des Volkseinkommen [*national income*];
1938/39: **18.4** Mrd. Reichsmark = **22%** des Volkseinkommen (bzw. **58 vH** [i.e., %] der Gesamtausgaben. (4)

Es ist in diesem Zusammenhang weiters festzustellen, dass die dt. pol. Fuehrung das allmaehliche Anlaufen einer Ruestungsproduktion zum Anlass nahm, durch *bewusste Uebertreibung* der Welt gegenueber das Bild einer grossen mil. Staerke vorzutauschen. Die Ueberlegneheit Deutschlands lag bei Kriegsbeginn **1939** darin, dass es gegenueber seinen ersten Gegnern *Polen* u. *Frankreich* immerhin ueber modernes Kriegsmaterial verfuegte, dass sich gegen das veraltete der Gegner in den kurzen, rasche Entscheidungen suchenden Feldzuegen erfolgreich durchsetzte. (5)

³⁸ **Note:** This entire section gleaned from Gerhard Donat, *Der Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg im operativen u. taktischen Rahmen*, 1992.

Obwohl die Ruestungskapazitaet gegenueber den Jahren nach dem ersten Weltkrieg sich bedeutend vergroessert hatte, war Deutschland aber doch keineswegs in der Lage, einen lange dauernden Krieg durchzustehen, ohne Gefahr zu laufen selbst von einem Gegner mit materiell u. voelkischer Gleichwertigkeit auf die Dauer uebertroffen zu werden. (5)

1939: Wenn man die *Munitionsproduktion* nach dem ersten Weltkrieg bis **1939** betrachtet, so war sie bis zum Jahre **1936** praktisch so unbedeutend u. von den Siegermaechten anfangs kontrolliert, dass sie kaum in der Lage war, den Bedarf des **100 000** Mann-Heeres zu decken. Auch mit der Vergroesserung der dt. *Wehrmacht* bis zum Jahre **1939** konnte die Produktion kaum Schritt halten. (5)

29.9.39: Das KTB Halder verzeichnet am **29 Sep 39** einen Bericht von Generalmajor *Thomas*, Chef der *Amtsgruppe Wehrwirtschaft* im **OKW**, dass die Forderungen der drei Wehrmachtteile auf dem Munitions- u. Waffensektor weit ueber das hinausgingen, was die dt. Industrie zu leisten imstande sei. (20-21)

Polen- u. Frankreichfeldzug [1939/40]: Die dt. Angriffsarmeen ueberschritten am **1.9.39** die polnische Grenze u. verfuegte teilweise nur ueber eine in einzelnen Munitionsarten nicht einmal volle *erste Munitionsausstattung*. Auch die im Fruehjahr **1940** folgenden Feldzuege gegen Norwegen u. Frankreich wiesen im *Munitionsverbrauch* noch keine solche Zahlen auf, die Ruecwirkungen auf die Produktion haette. Die Kuerze der mil. Kampfhandlungen u. die Ueberlegenheit der dt. Waffen. . . fuehrten die dt. Truppen zum Sieg, u. sie liessen auch infolge eines engen Verkehrs- u. Strassennetzes die Munitionsversorgung nie zu einem ernsten Problem werden. Es ist daher nicht verwunderlich, dass im Verlauf des Jahres **1940** noch eine von hoechster Stelle befohlene u. ausdruecklich verkuendete *Drosselung der Munitionsherstellung* erfolgte. . .(5-6)

Wenn im Jahre **1940** der *Munitionserzeugung* nach dem *Ruestungsindex* des Planungsamtes noch **40.9%** der dt. Ruestungsendfertigung zukam, so war dieser Prozentsatz im Jahre **1941** infolge der bereits erwaehnten Beschraenkungsmassnahmen nur mehr **25.3%**. Dieser Rueckgang wirkte sich bis in das Jahr **1942** aus, u. erst ab Mitte dieses Jahres. . . konnte eine fuehlbare Besserung des Munitionsausstosses der dt. Industrie verzeichnet werden. (6)

Es ist, von der heutigen Warte aus gesehen, *kaum glaublich feststellen zu muessen*, dass die Indexziffer der Ruestungsendfertigung, die **1940** als Ausgangsbasis **100** nimmt, im Jahre **1940** um kaum mehr als **1%** anstieg. Ein klarer Beweis dafuer, *wie wenig mil. u. wirtschaftliche Planung aufeinander abgestimmt waren*. (6)

Mit wie geringer Voraussicht u. wie *unvorbereitet* Deutschland **1941** auf dem Gebiet der Ruestungsproduktion in den Krieg mit Russland eintrat, hat Dr. *Wagenfuehr* so eindrucksvoll dargelegt, dass er hier woertlich zitiert sei:

Was will es besagen, dass in einer einmaligen Anstrengung z.B. monatlich **50** bis **60** *schwere Feldhaubitze* abgeliefert wurden, wenn Ende **1941** der Ausstoss auf **10** je Monat sank? Entsprechend gilt fuer die *leichte Feldhaubitze* (**Apr 41: 140** Stueck, **Dez 41: 21** Stueck. (6)

Nicht anders das Bild bei der Munition:

Gliederung der Munitionserzeugung 1941

(Anteile in vH.)³⁹

Monat	Leichte Inf. Munition	Schwere Inf. Munition	Artl. u Werfer Munition	Flak Munition
<i>Jaenner</i>	6	6	27	20
<i>Juni</i>	5	4	15	27
<i>Dezember</i>	3	3	7	36

(Note: KwK Munition = 5,5,5 for Jan, Jun, Dez 41; the other category, Abwurf Munition was 24, 24, 28 for three months surveyed. Das anteilmassig starke Vordringen der *Flakmunition* war fuer den Feldzug im Osten ohne nennenswerte Bedeutung, 5-6)

(Note: For “Die dt. Munitionserzeugung vor u. nach Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges,” measured in Mill. RM, see p 7. For ex., this table points out that production of *Artilleriemunitions* in 1941 peaked in Feb 41 at 69.1 Mill. RM. In Dez 41, the figure plunged to 15.7 Mill RM. The maximum for 1941 [i.e., the Feb. figure] would not be reached again for 15 months. *Leichte Inf.-Munition*, which peaked at 12.9 in Apr 41, was only 6.3 in Dec 41. Same roughly held true for *schwere Inf.-Munition* [12.8 high in Feb 41, but only 6.9 in Dec 41]).

Je mehr man sich in die Einzelheiten der Munitionsfertigung vertieft, um so staerker tritt die *Unterschaetzung des Bedarfs* zutage: *Infanterie-Patronen* Jan 41 rund 100 Mill. Schuss, Dez 41 50 Mill.; *Sprenggranaten* fuer die *leichte Feldhaubitze*: Feb 41 rund 700.000 Schuss, Dez 41 90.000 Schuss, usw.

Die Folgen dieser Entwicklung waren nur zu rasch erkennbar: Zum erstenmal seit Beginn des Krieges ergeben sich staerkere Rueckgaenge in den Bestaenden an wichtigen Waffen- u. Munitionsarten (nach Unterlagen des Planungsamtes), weil die Ausfaelle im Ostfeldzug weit grosser waren als man vorher angenommen hatte. Hierfuer nur zwei Beispiele: Die Bestaende an *leichter u. schwerer Artillerie* hatten im Jun 41 einen Hoechststand erreicht. Von Jul bis Nov 41 war der *Frontverbrauch* [i.e., losses] etwa eben so gross wie die Produktion; im Dez 41 u. im Jan 42 ging aber der Frontverbrauch weit ueber die laufende Erzeugung hinaus. Noch entscheidender war der *Abfall* der *Bestaende* an *Artilleriemunition*. Hier setzte binnen neuen Monaten, vom Jun 41 bis Mar 42, ein so starker Entzug [*deprivation*] ein, dass der Munitionsbestand auf ein Drittel sank. Damit wurde die Kampfkraft der deutschen Artillerie entscheidend beeintraechtigt.

Und aus der Ferne kuendigte sich eine weitere Zuspitzung der Lage an: Herbst 1941 erreicht die *amerikanische* Ruestungsproduktion zum erstenmal den Stand der Deutschen. Daneben ein weiteres: Bei *Stagnieren der dt. Ruestungsproduktion von 1940-41* hat sich nach *Goldsmith* die der Vereinigten Staaten, Grossbritanniens u. der Sowjetunion im gleichen Zeitraum fast verdoppelt (p 8):

**Die Ruestungsproduktion der grossen Maechte
(in Mrd. \$; Preise des Jahres 1944)**

Land	1940	1941	1943
USA	1.5	4.5	37.5

³⁹ Note: Not quite sure what these figures are measuring. It can't be overall quantities produced, for the Germans would not have produced four times as many artillery and mortar shells as ammunition for light inf. wpns! (27 vs. 6). Is table measuring dollars? Check Donat again.

England	3.5	6.5	11.1
UdSSR	5.0	8.5	13.9
<i>Zusammen</i>	<u>10.0</u>	<u>19.5</u>	<u>62.5</u>
Deutschland	6.0	6.0	13.8
Japan	1.0	2.0	4.5
<i>Zusammen</i>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>8.0</u>	<u>18.3</u>
<i>Verhaeltnis</i>		1: 2,4	1: 3,4

(Deutschland u. Japan erreichten 1940 noch etwa 70 vH der Ruestungsproduktion der genannten drei Grossmaechte – 1941 waren es nur noch gut 40 vH. Goldsmith bemerkte hierzu: “Dass diese *vorsaeztlich* langsame Ausdehnung der (dt.) Ruestungsproduktion, die sich waehrend der meisten Zeit des Jahres 1941 eigentlich gleichblieb, der groesste Fehler war, den Deutschland im Bereiche der Kriegswirtschaft machte, u. eben *jener, der es jede Chance auf den Sieg kostete*, ist jetzt klar.”) (9)

For an “*Uebersicht ueber die Hoehe der Produktion von Munition*” in the years 1940-44 see, p 30. For example:

Gew. u. Pist.Mun./Mrd. Stueck = 2.95 (1940) vs. 1.34 (1941) vs. 1.34 (1942)
uebr. Inf.Waff.Mun./Mill. St. = 29.4 (1940) vs. 19.7 (1941) vs. 40.0 (1942)
Artl.Mun. ab 7.5 cm/Mill. St. = 27.0 (1940) vs. 27.0 (1941) vs. 57.0 (1942)

Munition insgesamt/1000 t = 865 (1940) vs. 540 (1941) vs. 1270 (1942)⁴⁰

1.2.6: *Rearmament:*

3.2.33: Hitler wasted on time in establishing the „outright priority of rearmament.” On this day – four days after becoming chancellor – Hitler addressed his top generals about his determination to build up the armed forces. He went on to hint at the direction of future foreign policy. Perhaps more exports could be won, he suggested. But the suggestion was raised only to pour doubt on it. „Perhaps – and probably better – *conquest of new living space* in the east and its *ruthless Germanization*“ was posed as the alternative. It was a cautious reassertion of his dogma of the 1920s. Most who heard it probably took it to mean no more than a vague allusion to expansionism at some future point to win back territories lost at Versailles and establish German supremacy in central and eastern Europe – some that few disapproved of fundamentally – but scarcely saw it as a concrete foreign policy aim.“ Nor was it, at this stage. But it still implied a *direction* to Hitler’s thinking on foreign policy, and one that was *unchanged from the views he had developed a decade earlier*. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 58-59)

Army’s efforts at modernization also impaired by the *breakneck pace of its expansion*. Here *DiNardo* discusses differing viewpoints on pace of modernization of army leaders (Beck, etc.) and Hitler. (*DiNardo*, 10)

⁴⁰ **Note:** Unclear whether these totals are for *all* munitions production, or only for the four (4) categories in this table (the other being “I.Flak u. Bordmun.”).

Recent scholarship [i.e., *Wilhelm Diest*, 1981; *Richard Overy*, 1994] has portrayed the *process of German rearmament as either complete chaos* or an attempt at total mobilization that was grossly mismanged. Perhaps the *best explanation* has been provided by *Overy*, who has argued that ultimately the German economy „*fell between two stools*,“ reflecting some aspects of both the Soviet and American economies, but unable to imitate the achievements of either. In any case, structure and organization of German economy was not well-suited to meet demands of a *large armored force* [among other things]. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 6)

Among the many shortcomings of German's „organization“ for direction of the military expansion process, was that there was no *strong regulating mechanism* among the armed forces themselves. Ideally, the OKW's *Wi Rue Amt* was supposed to coordinate the armament programs of the three services and the head of the *Wi Rue Amt*, *General Georg Thomas*, did issue guidelines and directives to this end. *None of the services, however, abided by them*. Thus, the services competed not only against the civilian economy, but against each other as well. Although *Speer* succeeded in *imposing order on this chaos in 1943*, it was far too late to affect the war's outcome. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 5)

Another factor detrimental to Germany's rearmament efforts was the *continued priority of the civilian sector of the economy*. As late as **1938**, civilian construction projects still had high priority. These included buildings to stage future Nazi party congresses and the *autobahnen*. As late as **1943**, Germany produced some 120,000 typewriters, 13,000 duplicating machines, 50,000 address machines, 3,000 accounting machines, 200,000 radios, 150,000 electric bedwarmers and 3,600 refrigerators. While harmful militarily, this did give Germany a degree of political stability it had not had in WWI. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 6)

DiNardo: “Clearly evident that the German economy was *incapable of providing the vehicles and fuel requisite to the creation of a modern, fully motorized force*.” Moreover, in **Jun 41**, *German economy still operating at a peacetime pace*. (*DiNardo*, 10, 41)

S.J. Lewis: “Anglo-Saxon misconceptions regarding Blitzkrieg led certain authors to see systems that did not actually exist, for instance the notion that Hitler had an economic Blitzkrieg theory – policies geared toward short term wars. It is only recently [i.e., *mid-1980s*] that scholars have reexamined the German economy and determined that the Nazi state was not governed well enough for such systems to have existed. What did exist was simple mis-management by *small men lost at sea*. The best recent study is Wilhelm Deist, The Wehrmacht and German Rearmament (1981), which discloses that the German rearmament under Hitler amounted to *organized chaos*.” (*Forgotten Legions*, xiv)

Naval rearmament: Should Germany have built a navy, particularly one which involved construction of large surface vessels? In **1937**, German naval construction resumed at full tilt. In ensuing scramble for resources, Grand Admiral *Erich Raeder* was able to obtain, at the **5 Nov 37** conference, a *monthly steel allocation of 74,000 tons*. To the army, this was the potential for a great many more tanks, trucks and guns. Yet, they went to a service that could not be ready for war until 1944, at the earliest. (*DiNardo*, 8)⁴¹

⁴¹ “...da habe ich die mehrfache (!!!) Aussage meines Vaters [Pz.Gen. Walther K. Nehring], wonach das Heer den Bau von „*Dickschiffen*“ immer fuer Unsinn gehalten hat; u. die paar modernen Marine-Offiziere auch. Aber *Raeder* war OB der Marine, u. das Fuehrungscorps der Marine war – mit ganz wenige Ausnahmen – *stockkonservativ*; denen sass noch immer a) die geringen Erfolge der Hochseeflotte in WW I u. b) die Meuterei der Flotte 1918 in den Knochen!!!!“ *Dickschiffe* = „Marine-Jargon – sind alle

Naval rearmament: In his *second book*, Hitler wrote that the High Seas Fleet contributed nothing to Germany's war effort in WWI. However, *Grand Admiral Erich Raeder*, who first met Hitler in spring of **1933**, was able to convince him of the utility of a surface navy, especially as a *political instrument*. The Navy was also aided by a *shift in Hitler's thinking from his original position* [i.e., position in his second book, written in **1928**]. After resolution of the *Munich crisis*, Hitler began to anticipate need to deal definitively w/ England and the USA. Thus, after Munich, *the Navy became the chief recipient of Germany's armament efforts*. Yet naval expansion—based on Raeder's *wishful thinking* as ultimately expressed in his *wildly ambitious „Z Plan,*“ which called for a navy of **365 ships**, including **6 battleships** and **4 acft carriers** by **1944**—was utterly unrealistic, not to mention *wasteful*. Indeed, for Germany's *tank arm*, the expansion of the navy was a *gross misuse of scarce resources*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 7-8; see also G. Weinberg, A World at Arms, 28*)

1.2.7: Automobile industry:

According to *DiNardo*, this was another reason for failure of the Nazi regime to create a modern, motorized German Army. German automobile industry simply not up to task of producing requisite number of vehicles needed to give Germany a completely motorized army...As late as **1939**, *no system in place for converting the auto industry to war production*, and even as late as 1944 the army was still using large numbers of civilian trucks, which were unsuited for military purposes. Due to shortcomings of its indigenous industry, Germany had to *resort to expedient of using captured vehicles and equipment*...Germany would develop a *large-scale dependence on captured equipment*, including tanks and motor vehicles...Even w/ its use of so many captured foreign vehicles, German Army was short some **2 700 trucks** at start of campaign. (*DiNardo, 9, 16-17, 41*)

German population also contributed to lack of modernization of German Army. As late as **1937**, Germany, with ratio of **one vehicle for each 47 people**, evinced the poorest ratio in Western Europe. By contrast, in 1933 USA had one vehicle for every *five* people. Thus Germany did not have an *automotively inclined population*. (*DiNardo, 9*)

1.3: German High Command (OKH/OKW):

Note: See Section **1.1.0** “Frankreichfeldzug,” for details on how French Campaign fundamentally altered Hitler's relationship w/ his Generalstab.

E.F. Ziemke: Hitler was the Fuehrer (“leader”) and chancellor of Germany and supreme cdr of the armed forces. The latter role had emerged in **1938** when Hitler had combined what had been the president's constitutional powers (under the Weimar Constitution) as commander in chief of the armed forces w/ the minister of war's direct command responsibility. The Armed Forces High Command (OKW) under the Chief, OKW, GFM Keitel, had assumed the minister of war's former administrative roles, and the OKW Operations Staff did Hitler's military operational planning. General der Artillerie Alfred Jodl, the chief of the OKW Ops Staff, was Hitler's personal chief of staff. The service commands – the OKH, OKH and OKM – executed ops on the

Schiffe ueber ca. 18.000 BRT Groesse u. die alle Kanonen ab Kaliber 18 cm. haben.“ (*Emails, C. Nehring to C. Luther, 22 Oct & 26 Oct 07*)

basis of strategic directives from Hitler issued thru the OKW Ops Staff. The service cdrs in chief – Brauchitsch, Goering, Raeder – reported directly to Hitler and also received verbal instructions from him.

The campaign in the Soviet Union brought a split in the German command structure. Hitler limited the OKH's sphere of responsibility to the Eastern Front and gave the OKW control in the Western Theater, the Balkans, North Africa, and Scandinavia (including Finland). The OKH thereby lost control of army elements in the other theaters but did not achieve full independence in the East since Hitler continued to issue his strategic directives through the **OKW Ops Staff**. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 4)

Note: Another matter clearly documented in the present volume is concurrency between Hitler and the top military in the OKW and the OKH on the meaning of the war. It was to be, simultaneously, a war of annihilation and of conquest of living-space. These categories were familiar to military thinking. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 4-5)

Note: Hitler's regime was based on the irrational, and on his personal power. Neither before the war, nor during it, did Germany have state structures suited to rational military planning at the strategic level. There was nothing comparable to the British War Cabinet or even the Russian wartime State Defense Committee (GKO). . . By definition, the Fuehrer was central to the decision-making process and his power could not be shared. . . He dominated the German military establishment. . . Even w/o the toxic effects of Hitler's leadership, there were massive structural problems in the Wehrmacht. The Wehrmacht High Command (**OKW**) lacked an effective planning organization and had to rely for much of its preparatory work on the Army General Staff. The **OKW** initially concerned itself w/ broad strategy, but it came to have a leading role at the operational level from the time of the German invasion of Norway – a genuine tri-service operation – in early **1940**. By the summer of **1941** a situation had evolved under which the **OKW** was taking control over Germany's western and southern fronts, leaving the Army High Command (**OKH**) control over the eastern one. . . (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 4-6)

Note: All the officers in the high command seem to have shared an *illusion of control*, the idea that, w/ the communications means at their disposal, *they could orchestrate developments on the ground hundreds of miles away*...Probably its clearest *indirect expression* was the stubbornness w/ which the senior military leaders *refused to recognize the seriousness of the situation at the front*...This concept not a new phenomenon in 1941...It was, in fact a danger that some of Germany's military leaders seemed to recognize. Surely they should have. *Carl v. Clausewitz*, the 19th Century military *philosopher* whose work *On War* the staff officers pretended to know [!!!], warned of the "fog of war," and a force he called "friction" that could make the best plan go awry. No less a figure than *Moltke the Elder* had also written of *the danger of interfering needlessly in subordinates' decisions*. Despite such warnings, Germany's leaders, and esp. Hitler, tended to intervene more and more frequently as the war went on. The seeming efficiency of German staffs, and the modernity of communications technology that supported them, were two factors that helped to support the *illusion of control*. (*Inside Hitler's High Command*, G.P. Megargee, 168)

*German victories (early 1941):*⁴²

⁴² **Note:** This impressive string of victories, in such a short time, must have enhanced the *hubris* of Hitler and his High Command on eve of *Barbarossa*.

9.2.41: Hitler sends *Afrika Corps to Libya* to provide assistance to his stricken ally. Romme;s first victory took *only eleven days*, sending the British reeling back into Egypt.

28.2.41: Nazis, who already had Hungary and Romania as their puppets, now moved into *Bulgaria*.

17.4.41: Yugoslavia – following *coup d’etat* which removed pro-German government – collapsed after a week’s fight.

23.4.41: Greece surrenders.

5.41: In eight days’ desperate fighting, the British, already driven out of Greece, *shamed* in *Crete* by German paratroopers. By end of May, *Cairo* and the *Suez Canal*, the oilfields of *northern Iraq, Persia* and the Gulf, the world’s largest refinery at **Abadan** and, not least, the sea and land routes to India, were all beginning to look vulnerable...The startling successes, which had committed only a fraction of the German forces, had been achieved at insignificant cost. *Admiral Raeder* and naval high command begged Hitler to launch a major thrust at the *Middle East*, which at the time was well within German capabilities. British naval, air and military power was *thinly stretched* over a vast area and vulnerable every-where. From what we now know, it seems almost certain the the Germans *could have driven through the Suez barrier and on into the Indian Ocean*, ready to link hands w/ the Japanese when they surged down into Southeast Asia and up into the Bay of Bengal. *Raeder’s* view was that such a coup would strike the British Empire ,a deadlier blow than the taking of London.’ Hitler had **150** divisions, plus most of the *Luftwaffe*, arrayed in eastern Europe. Barely a quarter of these forces would have been enough to drive through to *India*. (Note: P. Johnson makes case that such a strategy might have made an Allied victory unobtainable. „Here,“ he writes, „we have *one of the great ,ifs’ of history*.“ But Hitler, w/o hesitation, „clung to his view that the *real war, the war he had always intended to wage, was against Russia*. See, *P. Johnson, 374-75*)

1941/42: Like the Soviet, the German Command underwent a transition in **1942**, in its instance completing the one begun in **Feb 38** when Hitler had made himself cdr-in-chief of the armed forces. While Hitler had progressively expanded his role in military affairs, especially during the early campaigns of the war, the Armed Forces High Command, **OKW**, had not evolved into a true armed forces command, and during the **1941** campaign in the Soviet Union the service high commands had continued as semi-autonomous parts of the command structure represented in the high-level decision-making process by their cdrs-in-chief. In “*Barbarossa*” and “*Taifun*” the Army High Command (**OKH**) had also figured as the designated high command for operations on the eastern front. However, following the dismissal of Brauchitsch in **Dec 41**, the **OKH** had ceased to be a high command in all but name, and Hitler had assumed direct personal control of the eastern front. Subsequently, the **1942** ops were planned and executed according to his specifications. . . Stalin’s response⁴³ was rational and self-serving; Hitler’s only self-serving. In **Sep 42**, he further dismantled the command structure, leaving himself alone atop the “heap of wreckage.” The clean sweep – of Keitel and Generals Jodl and Halder – that Hitler threatened did not materialize. . . But Hitler secured everything he wanted: an **OKW** and General Staff firmly brought into agreement w/ him and subservience to him and, through General Schmundt and the army officer personnel office, a direct hold on every officer from lieutenant to field marshal. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 508*)

⁴³ **Note:** See my “Notebook 3, Section **3.8.2**, entry for **28.7.42**.

1.3.1: *Organization & Responsibilities:*

4.2.38: OKW established on **4 Feb 38**, when Hitler took over direct control of the German armed forces. At same time, **Blomberg** was dismissed—his powers at Minister of War vested in **Keitel** as Chief of OKW. Chief of OKW, however, occupied a position in chain of command *only equal in authority to the C-in-Cs of the three armed service branches*, while the Minister for War had been their superior and between these C-in-Cs and Hitler. By the change, the C-in-Cs of Army, Navy and *Luftwaffe* gained the right of direct access to Hitler (**Note:** This change had little impact on GAF, for Goering had always rejected the notion of any authority interposed between himself and Hitler.) (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 411)

Feb 38: Mehr aus momentaner Verlegenheit heraus denn auf langfristiger Planung basierend hatte Hitler. . . im **Feb 38** die tatsaechliche Befehls- u. Kommandogewalt ueber die Wehrmacht uebernommen. Aus Blombergs eingespieltem militaerischen Stab, dem **Wehrmachtamt**, wurde das **OKW**, aus dessen Chef, Wilhelm Keitel, der „Sekretaer“ des Fuehrers fuer das Militaer. Die Generale u. Admirale *wurden ihrer strategischen Beratungsfunktion enthoben* u. auf die Ebene der Operateure hinuntergedrueckt. Hitler's „*Griff nach der Wehrmacht*“ brachte zwar die alte Militaerelite auf, aber weniger gegen Hitler als gegen das **OKW**. (*J. Foerster, "Hitler als Kriegs- u. Feldherr*, 2-3)

Kershaw: The **OKW**, set up as the *vehicle of Hitler's own control*, did not function as a collective advisory body on military strategy, in contrast to to the British War Cabinet. Hence, there was *little or no coherent planning devised collectively by the three branches of the armed forces* – army, air force, navy. These largely *operated alongside each other*, their C-in-Cs dealing in the main *bilaterally* w/ Hitler. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 71)

Kirchubel: The **OKW** never managed to coordinate national political and economic objectives, nor Germany's four armed services (Army, *Kriegsmarine*, *Luftwaffe*, *Waffen-SS*); it was intentionally kept weak in accordance w/ Adolf Hitler's leadership style. (*Barbarossa 1941*, 20-21)

On German High Command organization: „Ein Absolvent der wiedererrichteten Kriegsakademie in Berlin, Werner Reerink, berichtet, dass der damalige Major i.G. *Graf Stauffenberg* im Jahre 1941 in einem Vortrag vor einem Generalstabslehrgang bissig bermerkt habe: „*Unsere Kriegsspitzengliederung waehrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges ist noch bloeder, als die befahigsten Generalstabsoffiziere sie erfinden koennten,wenn sie den Auftrag bekaemen, die unsinnigste Kriegsspitzengliederung zu erfinden.*“ (*de Maiziere*, 74)

On „division of labor“ between OKW/OKH: „Auch in der *Kompetenzverteilung* vermischten sich die Zustaendigkeiten. *Waehrend der Gen.St.d.H. in seiner eigentlichen Domaene, der operativen Fuehrung, nur fuer die Ostfront verantwortlich war*—die anderen Fronten fuehrte operativ der *Wehrmachtsfuehrungsstab*—blieb er fuer Organisation, Ausbildung u. Logistik des gesamten Feldheeres zustaendig, gleichgueltig, an welcher Front die Verbaende eingesetzt waren. Die Einheit der Fuehrung, ein bewaehrter mil. Grundsatz, war damit durchbrochen...“ (*de Maisiere*, 74)⁴⁴

In winter of 1941/42, German armies found themsleves in great difficulties in Russia and Hitler, *considering himself the only man who could save the situation*, took over command of the Army.

⁴⁴ Note: Need to determine just when this *division of labor* occurred—i.e., when OKH was made solely responsible for operational command of *Ostfront*.

The practical result was that **OKW ceased to have any responsibilities at all for the Eastern Front**, which was looked after entirely by Hitler as head of OKH. Although retaining its name and theoretical position, OKW became in most respects *only a parallel staff to OKH*, and was obliged to abandon its main task as the supreme authority for strategic planning for all theaters of war. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 412)

Oct 40: By mid-Oct 40, Army Group East had been set up in Poland and **OKH** had moved from France to its *location for the rest of the war* at the great former Imperial German complex at **Zossen-Wuensdorf**, south of *Berlin*. **OKW** – the joint armed forces command – would *look after operations in the rest of the world*. **OKH**, the army command, would have *exclusive control of Barbarossa*. Another „quirky“ piece of Hitler’s organization. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 129-30)

Dec 41: On „division of labor“ between OKW/OKH: In Dec 41, Hitler still issued written orders to the Army General Staff. *through the OKW*, although as C-in-C of the Army (from 19.12.41) he had the right to issue orders directly to the army group cdrs (and in fact did so on occasion, telephonically). Thus, *at this stage of the war the OKW remained closely involved in operations on the eastern front*, just as the General Staff continued to monitor events in the other theaters. (*Inside Hitler’s High Command, G.P. Megargee*, 163)

19.12.41: Hitler uebernahm persoendlich den Oberbefehl ueber das Heer. Das **OKH** als Fuehrungstab der Teilstreitkraft wurde *zersplittert*. Waehrend der Generalstabschef Hitler *unmittelbar unterstellt war*, uebernahm **Keitel** als Chef des **OKW** fortan alle Aufgaben des OKH in *Kommando- u. Verwaltungsangelegenheiten*. Das hinderte jedoch Hitler nicht daran, den ehem. ObdH gegenueber verschiedenen Personenkreisen als **Suendenbock fuer den gescheiterten Feldzug** u. alle inzwischen aufgetretenen Schwierigkeiten verantwortlich zu machen. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 256-57)

ab 19.12.41 [*Spitzengliederung der Wehrmacht*]: With Hitler’s assumption of the army high command, many OKH tasks were handed off the GFM Keitel: „Die Verantwortung fuer *Erziehung u. Ausbildung, Organisation des Heeres, Zusammen-wirken mit dem Ersatzheer*, der grosse Komplex der *Generalquartiermeisterangelegenheiten*, alles interne Angelegenheiten eines Wehrmachtsteils, fiel dem GFM Wilhelm Keitel zu, in dessen hochtrabend als „Chef des OKW“ bezeichneten kriegsministeriellen Funktion, erweitert jetzt um die nicht naeher bestimmte Aufgabe zugleich als *stellvertretender Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres*. Kollisionen, Ueberschneidungen der Dienstwege, *Leerlauf*, auch vielfache *Doppelarbeit* der verschiedenen Aemter u. Abteilungen waren die unausbleibliche Folge...Es blieb aber weiter bei der weitgehenden *Unabhaengigkeit* der Wehrmachtteile *Kriegsmarine* u. *Luftwaffe*, waehrend dem Heer ausser Hitlers bleibendem *Argwohn* noch die *Konkurrenz der Waffen-SS* erwuchs. Und auf der *operative Seite* blieb es natuerlich auch bei den **OKW-Kriegsschauplatzen**...Entsprechend existierten *zwei Generalstabschefs*, Halder (u. seine Nachfolger), auf der anderen Seite **Jodl**, mit doppeltem Unterbau, voran *zwei Operationsabteilungen*. Kurzum, „*das Chaos der Spitzengliederung* wird immer groesser,“ erkannte Heusinger schon im Dez.41... (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 169)

ab 19.12.41 [*Relations OKW/OKH*]: With Hitler’s assumption of role of C-in-C of the Army, high command structure became *less rational*. For OKW, the change brought w/ it more work and less organizational clarity. The Army General Staff, meanwhile, became even less the strategic command organ that **Beck** had envisioned. Instead Hitler, to whom it was now directly subordinate, *restricted it more and more to the eastern front*. The General Staff had been “first among equals” within the OKH; now its influence was considerably less. It no longer had the

same prominent voice in policy decisions governing issues such as replacements, organization, and wpns procurement. In effect, *the OKH had ceased to exist as a unified organization.* (Megargee, 139-40)

ab 19.12.41 [Relations OKW/OKH]: For details of working relations between these agencies following Hitler's assumption of Army high command see, *Megargee*, 166. He notes that OKW was "becoming increasingly dependent upon OKH for many supporting staff functions, esp. those having to do w/ intelligence and logistics." Also states that "even within the *operational elements*—the Operations Branch (OKH) and the National Defense Branch (OKW)—*the relationship was still strong at the lower levels.* There was as yet still *no great split between the two HQs*, as would develop later. However, at the *very top of each organization* there was a *definite lack of mutual effort.* At that level the *clash of personalities was too great*, esp. between Halder and Heusinger on the one hand and Keitel, Jodl and Warlimont on the other... There was no bond [between these men] no true exchange of ideas and intentions. As yet this fact was *more a nuisance than anything else*, since there was not yet any great point of contention between the two sides, but that would change before long." (*Inside Hitler's High Command*, G.P. Megargee, 166)

Wehrmachtfuehrungstab: By far the most important section of OKW was its *Armed Forces Operations Staff (Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab)*, which performed the functions of a joint General Staff. As chief of its staff, **Jodl** had great responsibilities. It was he rather than **Keitel**, who was in *direct contact w/ Hitler and was the latter's chief adviser on strategy and planning.* Keitel's responsibilities were more those of a Minister for War, while Jodl played the part of chief of staff of the Armed Forces, and as such was *more influential w/ Hitler.* In spite of the importance of the *Wehrmachtfuehrungstab*, the GAF representative there *only held the rank of major.* In fact, while officers of all three branches of Armed Forces were employed at OKW, none of the heads of the departments were *Luftwaffe* officers. There is also *no evidence that a Luftwaffe officer of higher rank than Oberst was ever employed in that organization.* Positions in OKW were *dominated numerically by over 5 to 1 by the Army* (and outranked by the latter to extend of seven officers of General rank and above.) (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 412-13)

Operationsabteilung des Heeres: Seine Zustaendigkeit war seit dem Juni 1941 *auf den oestlichen Kriegsschauplatz reduziert.* (Meyer, Heusinger, 6)

1.3.2: *Barbarossa (Planning & Preparations):*⁴⁵

Note: David Stahel writes of the "tenuous" state of German preparations for "Barbarossa." (*And the World held its Breath*, 71)

Note: Given the overall importance of Barbarossa to the development of WWII, it is surprising *how limited the research has been.* The planning phase of this enormous operation is a good example. Only a handful of specialized works exist and none is recent. The most comprehensive are those by **Ernst Klink** and **Barry Leach**, appearing in **1983** and **1973**, respectively. Klink's book, however, is the "definitive work and his endeavors remain until now unsurpassed." Klink was the first to identify the Army's own independent planning for the invasion of the Soviet Union even before Hitler's order. He also explored the emergent split between Hitler and the

⁴⁵ **Note:** By far the most thorough analysis of the military preparations for "Barbarossa" is to be found in *Das Deutsche Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Vol. 4., pp. 190-326.

OKH over the strategic direction of the campaign. . . (D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 21)

a. Background:

Note: Emperor *Frederick I Hohenstaufen (1152-1190)*, known as *Barbarossa* (Redbeard) was a „legendary figure in German folklore.“ He „symbolized one of the pinnacles of medieval German history and his mysterious death by drowning during the Third Crusade gave birth to the myth that this great monarch had not died but was waiting in the bowels of the holy great mountain of *Kyffhaeuser* and would emerge some day to lead the German people to victory and to fresh triumphs . . . It was „no accident“ that Hitler, in his directive of **18.12.40** altered the code name of the operation from the nondescript „Fritz“ to *Barbarossa*. This name not only played on popular associations w/ a period of national splendor but also implied that the time had come to complete the unfinished task of the medieval monarch and to launch a new „crusade“ to overthrow the sworn enemy, Russia, and to erect the worldwide German Empire. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 243)

Note: In **1189**, Frederick I Barbarossa (Red Beard), Emperor of Germany and self-styled Holy Roman Emperor, took up the cross and led the *3rd Crusade* against Saladin’s Muslim armies that had just captured Jerusalem. . . Yet almost **800** years before **1941**, Barbarossa’s 3rd Crusade foundered in Asia Minor, before his armies reached and liberated Jerusalem from the infidels. He drowned in the *River Seleph* (Calicadnus) [in Asia Minor] on **10 Jun 1190**. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 13, 214)

Note: The problem for anyone invading Russia from the west is that the invader enters Russia from the narrow end of a funnel that tapers out to a distance of **2000** miles. While Army Group Center’s mot. divisions were away winning those expensive victories [*i.e.*, *Kiev*, etc.], the army group’s infantry armies remained alone west of Moscow to defend a front of **450** miles – a front far too long for its forces to hold. Their defensive operations symbolized the inherent problems for the German Army in Russia, and one of those battles, at the Yelna salient, represents a microcosm of the war on the Eastern Front. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions*, 136)

Note: The *traditional German emphasis on operations* hamstrung the planning for personnel, military intelligence and logistics, especially given the unrealistic assumptions about *Barbarossa’s* expected length – of between **6-10** weeks. Also, the massive size of the eastern front would dramatically decrease German *weapon densities*: they could count on **1** tank per **29** square miles in the West, but in the East this fell to **1:112**. Above the battlefield, the ratio plummeted from **1** acft per **20** square miles in **1940**, to **1:95** during *Barbarossa*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 12)

Invasion *controversies* in Germany (early 1950s):

- a. Was the war against the USSR necessary?
- b. Had the German top command been *correct in its combat estimate* of the Soviet enemy?⁴⁶
- c. Was it possible and justifiable to postulate the experience of the Polish, French and Balkan campaigns in dealing w/ the *much vaster expansions of the Soviet Union*, w/ their

⁴⁶ This question answered by Hitler himself w/ his *public statement in the Reichstag*, where he confessed that the magnitude of Soviet war potential had surprised him. (11)

much more numerous and variegated natural obstacles? In other words, do the *size and topography of the USSR* not preclude **continuity of offensive operations from the first to the last day of the campaign – the blitzkrieg?** (FMS T-34, Terrain Factors, 10)

“Der dt. Angriff auf die Sowjetunion am 22. Juni 1941 trug von Anfang an ein ‘*doppeltes Gesicht*.’ Aber anders als Erich von Manstein in Nuernberg aussagte, waren *militaerischer u. weltanschaulicher Kampf fuer Hitler nur verschiedene Seiten eines einzigen grossen Krieges*, in dem *Ostexpansion, Vernichtung des Bolschevismus u. Ausrottung des Judentums* untrennbar miteinander verbunden waren. (J. Foerster, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 173)

W. Nehring: “...Unsinn ist auch Dr. Kitchens Angabe, dass die Generale (die deutschen!) eifrig fuer den Krieg gegen Russland eintraten. Bis auf wenige im OKH u. im OKW waren sie *gegen diesen weiteren Krieg*, der einen neuen starken Feind schuf, der eine zweite Front im Ruecken Deutschlands darstellte. Kitchen uebernimmt auch das *Maerchen* [A.J.P.] *Taylor*s ueber „die Freude der Generale am *Kommissarbefehl*.“ (Ltr, W.K. Nehring to Dr. M.G. Williams, 1.6.75)

E. Ziemke: To Hitler and his military advisors, the strategic concerns associated w/ a war in the Soviet Union appeared to be mostly geographical. One was the climate, which was markedly continental, w/ short, hot summers and long, extremely cold winters and an astonishing uniformity from north to south, considering the country’s great expanse. . . The big strategic question was the one that had also confronted earlier invaders: how to accomplish a military victory in the vastness of the Russian space? Apart from the Pripjat Marshes and several of the large rivers, the terrain did not offer notable impediments to the movement of modern military forces. But maintaining troop concentrations and supplying armies in the depth of the country presented staggering, potentially crippling, difficulties. The entire Soviet Union had only **51,000** miles of railroad, all of a different gauge than those in Germany and Eastern Europe. Of **850,000** miles of road, **700,000** were hardly more than cart tracks; **150,000** miles were allegedly all-weather roads, but only **40,000** miles of those were hard surfaced. (For more on German planning see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 13-15)

E. Ziemke: The vastness of its territory had been the most vexing strategic problem the Russian empire presented to a would-be conquerer. In **June 1811**, a year before Napoleon I made his attempt, Tsar Alexander put it in classic form to General Armand de Caulaincourt, the French ambassador in St. Petersburg: “We have plenty of space,” Alexander said, “. . . which means that we need never accept a dictated peace, no matter what reverses we may suffer.” (Quoted in: *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 515)

W/ the benefit of hindsight, the German military leadership’s belief that they could attain the strategic objectives set by Hitler *looks like sheer, incomprehensive hubris*. But w/ all the *boundless self-assurance* they exuded at the time, they were *perfectly aware of the huge hazard of this undertaking*—and of the resulting, extremely high strain which it would exert on their operational skill and judgement. (*Sigint and ‘Blitzkrieg,’ D. Arazi*, 228)

K. Uebe: „The decision for war against the Soviet Union was a *desperate gamble* for Germany. The *Luftwaffe*, already deeply committed in the West and in the South, was in many ways *unready for such a vast offensive on a new front* unless a quick and victorious decision could be achieved. The German Army faced similar problems, but it was the [GAF] which most *stoutly opposed the venture* [?!] since German airmen had enjoyed no respite from battle after the fall of France in June of 1940. **Time was, then, the key to the entire campaign**, for unless victory could be assured at an early date, the [GAF], despite its superior pilots and

equipment, would be steadily ground down in a *war of attrition*." (*Russian Reactions to German Airpower*, 15)

Heusinger: Als hauptsächliche Fehler beim Angriff auf Sowjetrußland sah Heusinger... "dass die Einschätzung der mil., wirtschaftlichen u. innenpol. Macht des Sowjetstaates *voellig falsch war*." Man habe diesen Gegner auf allen Gebieten „weit unterschätzt“ – ein Fehler allerdings, räumte er ein, dem nicht Hitler allein, „sondern *die Mehrzahl der führenden Maenner* verfallen“ gewesen sei. „*Wenige Prediger in der Wueste*," haetten sich gegen diese Auffassung nicht durchsetzen koennen. „Man sah Rußland bereits im Herbst 1941 am Boden liegen!“ Er fuehrt dies auf „Wunschgedanken u. Wunschtraeume“ zurueck von denen *er allerdings zunaechst selbst nicht frei gewesen ist*, als er dem Gegner vor Beginn des Angriffs wenig zutraute. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 150)

Lt.-Gen. Gerd Niepold (ret.): He witnessed the first year of the eastern campaign in the **OKH**. On **1 Apr 41**, in his first assignment as a general staff officer, he was appointed *aide-de-camp* [i.e., ordnance officer, or personal staff officer] to Maj.-Gen. Paulus, *Oberquartiermeister I*, in the General Staff of the Army. He notes that early in **Sep 40**, Lt.-Gen. Paulus [sic] took over coordination of all planning for Operation „*Barbarossa*.“ He states: „In the opinion of the General Staff, and in particular of its chief, the *center of gravity* of the entire campaign had to be placed on the *quick seizure of Moscow*. The view was held that the Soviet state would collapse totally once its capital and center of all railway and communication links was eliminated.“ (For fascinating account of planning period see, *G. Niepold*, „*Plan Barbarossa*," in: *Glantz, Initial Period of War*, 66-74)

J. Foerster: Hitler left the military planning of the war against the Soviet Union largely to the general staffs. Not until the end of **1940** did he had the operational intentions of the Army High Command submitted to him. These plans received his overall consent, even though they deviated from his directives on significant points. It was characteristic of the relationship between Hitler and Halder that their obvious differences of opinion concerning the start of the second phase of the operations were not clarified. While Hitler assumed that his directive would be followed, Halder believed that Hitler would yield to his judgement if operational developments proved it to be correct. For Hitler, the capture of important economic bases in the north and south was always a major priority. In contrast, Halder hoped to win the war by making a concentrated attack on Moscow. Conflict over the priority of Moscow as an operational objective – as against Leningrad and the possession of the economic potential of the Ukraine and the Caucasus – was thus inevitable from the outset. Halder decided to follow *his* plan of operations. (*J. Foerster*, in: *GSWW*,⁴⁷ Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 1248)

D. Glantz: Plan Barbarossa required the *Wehrmacht* to vanquish the largest military force in the world and ultimately advance to a depth of **1750 km (1050 miles)** along a front of over **1800 km (1080 miles)** in an underdeveloped theater of ops whose size approximated all of Western Europe. . . German military planners sought to exploit Russia's lack of decent roads and railroads laterally across the front and into the depths to prevent the mass of Soviet troops from regrouping from one sector to another or withdrawing eastward before they were surrounded. However, German intelligence *overestimated the degree of Red Army forward concentration and was totally unaware of the groups of reserve armies the Soviets were already deploying east of the Dnepr river*. Once the border battles had ended, Plan *Barbarossa* required the three **(3)** German army groups to advance along diverging axes – AGN toward Leningrad, AGC toward Moscow, AGS toward Kiev. Thus, from its inception, Plan *Barbarossa* anticipated dangerously

⁴⁷ GSWW = Germany and the Second World War.

dissipating the Wehrmacht's military strength in an attempt to seize all of Hitler's objectives simultaneously. (*Barbarossa*, 14-15)

E. Mawdsley: The German planners assumption of a quick victory was fatally flawed, and flawed in its own terms. The two main *Wehrmacht* thrusts into Poland in 1939 had to cover **65** and **150** miles (from East Prussia and Silesia, respectively). In the 7-week campaign against France in 1940, the depth of the longest advance was **250** miles – the panzer drive west across the Meuse River to the English Channel. The breadth of the active front against France and the Low Countries was only **150** miles. In contrast, even for the “borderland” battle of annihilation in Russia the anticipated theater of ops was vast. The Dvina-Dnepr line, within which the *Vernichtungsschlacht* was to take place, was some **200-350** miles from the 1941 Soviet border, and the German Army had to attack along a breadth of **750** miles. A Soviet defeat w/in the western border zone would not expose Moscow in the way that the German drive to the Channel exposed Paris. The distance of the pursuit from the line of the Somme and Aisne rivers to the French capital had been only **75** miles; in contrast, Moscow was **350** miles east of the Dvina-Dnepr line. The German planners also greatly underestimated the forces required to win the decisive “battle of annihilation.” The *Wehrmacht* began the Russian campaign w/ forces little stronger than those available in **May 1940**, especially in terms of tanks and acft. (*Thunder in the East*, 41-42)⁴⁸

Jun 40: *Germany's Strategic Problem*: Victory over France brought *unanticipated strategic problems*. Hitler had expected the British to recognize their hopeless situation and *sue for peace*. He seems, however, to have given almost no thought to what options Germany possessed should Britain reject his offer. As Italian Foreign Minister *Galeazzo Ciano* noted after a visit to Munich in Jun 40, Hitler resembled a successful gambler who „has made a big scoop and would like to get up from the table, risking nothing more.“ Ciano's description was most apt, *for Hitler did wish to escape a war against Britain*. He calculated, quite correctly, that those who stood most to gain from a British defeat were the Japanese and the Americans and not the Germans.

What the Germans misread, however, was the *real significance of the victory over France* in 1940. Their success did not mean that Germany had won the war, as *Jodl's memorandum of 30 Jun 40* suggested. Rather, it meant that Germany had acquired the economic and raw material resources to fight a long war. The nature and direction that a protracted war might take would depend on the strategic choices that the Germans were now to make; nevertheless, no matter what strategy Hitler and his advisors chose, the *Reich* was in for an *extended and difficult struggle*. The refusal of Germany's political and military leaders to recognize that fact *destroyed whatever small chance Germany had to realize her inordinate goals* and contributed directly to the catastrophe of 1945. Above all, *this failure in grand strategy* reflected the unwillingness of the German military to comprehend the nature of warfare between great powers in the modern age. This led to the unrealistic belief that victory over France represented a *return to the era of the short war*. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 69)⁴⁹

⁴⁸ **Note**: Under section “War of Attrition” (Chapter 2) Mawdsley notes: “The enormity of the territory that the *Wehrmacht* had to conquer in a prolonged war (rather than occupy after a quick battle of annihilation) also shows the impossible demands facing the Germans. The area of the European part of the USSR alone extended over **2,110,000** square miles, w/ a further **6,460,000** square miles in the Asiatic part. . . By comparison, previous German conquests seemed trifling: the territory of Poland was **120,000** square miles, that of France **213,000**. Overall the Germans are officially reckoned to have taken **693,000** square miles of Soviet territory by **Nov 42**.” (45)

⁴⁹ See *W. Murray*, pp 69-72 for good discussion of strategic dilemma facing Hitler after the fall of France in 1940, and why he decided to turn to the east. He notes *Molotov's* “disastrous behavior” in Berlin in Nov 40; the general deterioration of German-Soviet relations since summer 1940; the Soviet move against

b. Planning and Preparations:

Note: *Bernd Wegner* writes – in ref. to **1942** campaign planning but certainly relevant to **1941** – that “quite obviously *uncritical optimism* had become a *dogma* in German military planning.” (*Road to Defeat*, 118)

Note: Bereits mit den ersten operative Ueberlegungen fuer einen Ueberfall auf die UdSSR entstand ein leichtfertiges Optimismus bei den Beteiligten, der die weiteren Vorbereitungen nicht wieder verlassen sollte. Die ueberaus gluecklich erscheinenden Kriegsaussichten im Sommer **1940** koennen allein nicht erklaren, weshalb insbesondere der Generalstab des Heeres Traditionen nuechterner u. verantwortungsbewusster Stabsarbeit fallen liess, die erst Wochen zuvor noch bei der Vorbereitung des Frankreich-Feldzuges beachtet worden waren. Dessen unerwartet schneller Erfolg hat – so Andreas Hillgruber – ein Denken befluegelt, das schon im Kaiserreich angelegt war: der *Primat des operativen Gedankens*. Losgeloest von politischer Verantwortung u. den materiellen Bedingungen der Kriegsfuehrung war offensichtlich auch fuer Franz Halder ein Sieg ueber die UdSSR vor allem eine *Frage des „richtigen“ operativen Ansatzes*. (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 81-82)

Note: Die Entwuerfe mehrerer Sachbearbeiter, die unterschiedliche Schwerpunkte u. Stossrichtungen untersuchten, beruhten ausnahmslos auf Halders Grundgedanken: in Grenzschlachten die feindl. Hauptarmeen einkesseln u. vernichten, dann rasch in die Tiefe u. direkt auf die feindl. Hauptstadt vorstossen, deren Einnahme den Krieg beenden wuerde. Im weiteren Verlauf der Planung des Unternehmens „Barbarossa,“ wurde alle erkannten Probleme diesem Ansatz untergeordnet, moegliche Friktionen ausgeblendet oder durch optimistische Annahmen ueberspielt [i.e., *covered up*]. . . Was als Gedankenspiel begonnen hatte, schien erst allmaechlich ernst zu werden. Der neue Chef der Op.-Abt. im Generalstab des Heeres, Oberst i.G. Adolf Heusinger, glaubte wie viele andere Offiziere noch Anfang **1941 nicht** daran, dass man den Plan tatsaechlich realisieren werde. Neben „Barbarossa“ liefen zahlreiche andere Planungen u. Unternehmungen ueber seinen Tisch. Sein Chef Halder zweifelte noch im **Jan 41** am Sinn der „grossen“ Loesung, freilich nicht an deren Erfolgsaussichten. . .

Die Einschaeztung der Heeresfuehrung vom **Jul 40**, dass ein Feldzug gegen die Sowjetunion quasi ein Kinderspiel sein wuerde, verhinderte auch eine umfassende Mobilisierung u. Bereitstellung eigener Kraefte. Nach dem Frankreich-Feldzug war die Ruestung auf den Schwerpunkt See- u. Luftkrieg gegen England umgesteuert worden. . . Im **OKH** blieb man davon ueberzeugt, mit dem vorhandenen, siegreichen Herr auch moegliche Aufgaben im russischen Raum loesen zu koennen. . . Das kuenftige „Ostheer“ wuerde dem Umfang nach (rund **150** Divisionen) etwa dem entsprechen, was man gegen Frankreich ins Feld geschickt hatte. Weil aber die inzwischen besetzten europaeischen Gebiete gegen England abgesichert werden mussten, waren zusaetzliche Besatzungsdivisionen aufzustellen. Insgesamt sollte das Herr im naechsten Fruehjahr also **180** Divisionen umfassen. . .

Auf nahezu allen Gebieten von Ausruestung u. Bewaffnung musste improvisiert werden. Ein grosser Teil des Ostheeres wurde mit der Beute ausgestattet, die man bei den bisherigen

Rumania in Jul 40, etc. Russians antagonized by movement of German motorized troops into Rumania; Finnish-German agreement allowing for transport of German troops through Finland to northern Norway, etc. Murray notes that *conflict between Russia and Germany was indeed inevitable*. (71-2) (**Note:** See also relevant section in my *Rommel* book.)

Feldzuegen gemacht hatte,⁵⁰ was die Ausbildung u. den Nachschub erschwerte. *Hitlers Ostarmeen glichen am Ende einem Flickenteppich, ja teilweise sogar einem europaeischen Militaermuseum.* [!] Die Zahl von modern ausgestatteten, voll ausgeruesteten u. gut ausgebildeten Einheiten blieb gering. Diese Elitedivisionen wuerden den Stosskeil bilden. . . Die Masse der Heeresverbaende, die im Fruhjahr 1941 verdeckt an der Ostgrenze aufmarschierten, unterschied sich kaum von den Armeen Ludendorffs im Ersten Weltkrieg. Sie entsprach keinesfalls dem Bild der Wochenschau von der Wehrmacht als motorisierter Blitzkriegarmee. Die Mehrzahl der Soldaten marschierte wie weiland Napoleons Grande Armees zu Fuss, begleitet von Pferd u. Wagen, nach Osten. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 82-84)

Note: Auf allen Problemgebieten des Plans "Barbarossa" ging man von der Annahme aus, dass Stalin u. die Fuehrung der Roten Armee nicht instande seien, dem deutschen Ansturm standzuhalten u. einen wirkungsvollen Widerstand zu organisieren. Deshalb hatte man fast das ganze Osttheer an der Grenze fuer diesen alles entscheidenden Schlag aufgestellt. Das **OKH** verfuegte lediglich ueber eine Reserve von 14 Divisionen, im Gegensatz zum Frankreich-Feldzug, bei dem man **42** Divisionen zurueckgehalten hatte.⁵¹ Alte Klischees ueber die organisatorische Unfaehigkeit des kommunistischen Systems, die slawische Rasse u. die Ineffizienz der Roten Armee waren states schnell zur Hand, um das Szenario zugunsten der deutschen Erwartungen zu gestalten. So stellte man z.B. ohne weiteres in Rechnung, dass es gelingen werde, die russ. Eisenbahn im wesentlichen unzerstoert in die Hand zu bekommen u. fuer den deutschen Vormarsch zu nutzen. Kein Gedanke daran, dass Stalin ueber die Zeit u. Faehigkeit verfuegen koennte, die Ressourcen des riesigen Landes zu mobilisieren u. zum Gegenschlag auszuholen. Hitler wie auch sein Generalstab waren davon ueberzeugt, dass man es mit einem „toenernen Koloss“ zu tun hatte, der nur eines Anstosses bedurfte, um innerhalb weniger Tage u. Wochen in tausend Teile auseinanderzufallen. . .

Die Selbstueberschaetzung der Wehrmachtelite war neu u. *die Frucht des Triumphs ueber Frankreich im Mai 40*; die damit korrespondierende Unterschuetzung der Sowjetunion hatte aeltere, hauptsaechlich ideologische Wurzeln. Die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft, geloest von den Fesseln des Kalten Krieges u. einer deutschen Nabelschau, erkennt heute deutlicher, dass die deutsche Vorurteile im Zweiten Weltkrieg nicht allein aus NS-Verblendung resultierten, sondern von allen Generalstaeben u. Expertengruppen der westlichen Welt geteilt wurden. Und es gab, von der antikommunistischen Grundeinstellung abgesehen, gute Gruende fuer die Annahme, dass es Hitlers siegreicher Wehrmacht ohne Schwierigkeiten gelingen werde, die Sowjetunion niederzuwerfen. Am Zahlenvergleich lag es nicht. Der sprach fuer eine quantitative Ueberlegenheit der Roten Armee. Fruher als Hitler hatte Stalin in den **30er** Jahren eine gigantische Hochruetzung begonnen. **1935/36** verfuegte er ueber die groesste u. modernste Armee der Welt, in vielem nach deutschem Vorbild ausgerichtet u. hoechst innovationsfreudig. Dann entschied sich der sowj. Diktator, auch die Armee einer politischen „Saeuberung“ zu unterziehen. . . (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 87-88)

Note: According to Albert Seaton, Hitler basically adopted *Jodl's plan* for the attack on the Soviet Union. He writes: "Unknown to v. Brauchitsch and Halder, Hitler had resorted to his customary practice of ordering the secretive Jodl who, as a member of the Armed Forces High Command (**OKW**), had at this time *no responsibility at all for ground operations in the east*, to

⁵⁰ **Note:** As well as the weapons (tanks, etc.) confiscated from the Czechs.

⁵¹ **Note:** On p. 46, Mueller states that Germans had **45** divisions in reserve for Campaign in West; also, if I recall correctly, the OKH "Kriegsgliederung" for **22.6.41** lists about **24** divisions in reserve for "Barbarossa."

prepare an independent appreciation and plan for the new war. This plan was meant only for Hitler's eye and he *subsequently used as his own many of the arguments contained in it*, particularly where they differed from the German Army High Command (OKH) plan presented by Halder. On the basis of Jodl's views the Fuehrer began to voice doubts as to the necessity for an early advance eastwards beyond Smolensk. Moscow, he thought, 'was of no great significance.' The ports and naval bases in the Baltic had to be given priority. The seizing of Leningrad, too, and a junction w/ the Finns were of greater importance than just taking the Russian capital. . . This Jodl strategy, under the protective guise of *Fuehrerstrategie*, was to find no favor w/ v. Bock who was sure that the early seizure of Moscow was essential to Germany's fortunes."

Seaton also writes: "In fact, Hitler [i.e., in **Jul-Aug 41**] was determined to advance to the Jodl strategy of the previous autumn." However, Seaton also notes that, by late **Aug 41**, Jodl had "changed his mind and considered that the main thrust should be continued on Moscow and he went so far as to undertake to use his influence to try and persuade the dictator to this end. . ."
(A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 33-34, 48)

Summary: Immediately after conclusion of the armistice w/ France, the Army General Staff had begun preparatory work for an offensive in the East *on their own initiative* and had conducted relevant map exercises in the autumn of **1940**. The results were presented to Hitler at beginning of **Dec 40** and led to his Directive No. 21 ("Operation *Barbarossa*"), issued on **18.12.41** and followed on **31.1.41** by the *deployment order* of the Army High Command. These basic directives determined German objectives in the first phase of ops in the East and required the *Wehrmacht* to "defeat Soviet Russia in a fast campaign" and advance to a line between the *Volga* and *Archangel*. This would place the industrial areas of the *Urals* within the range of the *Luftwaffe* and Germany itself beyond the range of Soviet acft. The *decisive prerequisite* for the success of the German attack was, however, that the mass of the Red Army must be annihilated *west* of the *Dvina-Dnieper* line in order to open the way to the East [and to prevent withdrawal of large elements of Red Army into Russia's interior]. (B. Wegner, *Road to Defeat*, 110)

As planning for *Barbarossa* began, the general staff's geographic department suggested that the occupation of Leningrad, Moscow, the Ukraine, and the Caucasus would *not exhaust Soviet economic potential*. The Five Year Plans had created substantial economic strength along and east of the *Urals* that would allow the Soviets to continue resistance, even should most of European Russia fall. *Astonishingly*, planning for the campaign *ignored this factor*. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 115-17)

Kershaw: Writes that decision to attack Soviet Union the following spring was „*effectively taken on 31.7.40*. It was not turned into a war directive until **18.12.40**. Even that directive, of course, did not mean in itself that an invasion had to be launched; but in Dec 40 the *points were switched irreversibly onto the track that led to the invasion*. He also asks: Did Hitler, even as the logistics being worked out for Operation *Barbarossa*, have *options* which might have given him a better chance of ending (or even curtailing) the threat to Germany posed by Britain's continuation of war and America's presumed eventual entry? Germany's *naval leadership* thought so⁵²; and, for

⁵² **Note**: For a discussion of German naval thinking, and how it differed from Hitler's see, 72-80. The Navy envisaged the destruction of British world power as its central aim. Admiral Raeder briefed his so-called *Mediterranean strategy* to Hitler in **Sep 40**. That said, Raeder, while he favored another approach, did not actually *oppose* the invasion of Russia. (87)

a while, so did the *Foreign Ministry*.⁵³ (**Note:** Kershaw goes on to contrast the decision-making process in the Reich – that is, Hitler basically imposing his will w/o any real debate, because no healthy and robust government mechanisms existed to help guide and shape that debate – with the British *War Cabinet*, which engaged in real and intense debate.) (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 70-71)

Strategic options to Barbarossa: Kershaw points out that, in the summer and fall of 1940, several variants of a so-called *Mediterranean strategy* were offered to Hitler as an option to an attack on Russia – i.e., as a way to bring down Britain w/o a war in the east. The proponents of a so-called *peripheral strategy* included: Jodl (and his deputy, Warlimont); Raeder and the *Seekriegsleitung* (SKL); and, Ribbentrop, the foreign minister. However, the military potential for such a strategy rested upon *important diplomatic breakthroughs* (w/ Italy, France, Spain); as well, upon a large navy, which Germany did not have. While Hitler expressed interest in this so-called peripheral approach, his own preference – both ideological & strategic – was an early strike on the Soviet Union. Moreover, Hitler never viewed such a strategy as an *alternative* to invading Russia, as Raeder, Warlimont (if not Jodl) and even Ribbentrop apparently did. For Hitler it was merely a prelude to secure Germany's rear before engaging in showdown w/ Soviet Union. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 79-81, 86)

German High Command: Whatever the misgivings of some generals about the venture, Hitler's decision to attack Russia was *neither opposed nor contested by the military leadership*. (Even if they had wanted to oppose it, the *divided organizational structure* of the German armed forces in itself hindered promotion of any serious alternative to Hitler's own plans; structurally, therefore, it was impossible to construct a coherent alternative strategy. [87-88]). In fact, sensing what was coming, the army's General Staff had already begun to prepare *feasibility studies* weeks before Hitler announced his intention to strike at the Soviet Union. His military leaders were as aware as he was of the strategic position. They put forward *no alternative strategy* for attaining final victory, assuming that Britain could not be invaded or bombed into submission. Moreover, like Hitler, they *grossly underestimated the Red Army* – particularly since its poor showing in the „Winter War“ against Finland. And they *shared his detestation of Bolshevism*, some of them even his identification of the Soviet regime w/ the power of the Jews. Yet it is doubtful in the extreme whether they would have of themselves come to recommend a decision, *w/in a few weeks of the defeat of France*, to prepare urgently for an invasion of the Soviet Union. **That decision was Hitler's and his alone.** (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 69-70; 87-88)

28.7.40 [*Seekriegsleitung*]: Three days before Hitler, at the *Berghof*, announced his decision to move against Russia, the chief of the *Naval Warfare Executive (Seekriegsleitung)*, *Rear Admiral Fricke*, composed a memorandum outlining his views on conflict w/ Russia, which *Raeder* read the following day, 29 July. *Fricke* accepted that Bolshevism was „*a chronic danger*,“ which had to be „*eliminated one way or another*;“ hence, he *posed no objection to the envisaged German attack*, other than acknowledging the *sectional disadvantage* that naval interests would take a back seat to those of the army and the *Luftwaffe*. Thus, at time of the crucial decision by Hitler on 31 July to prepare for war w/ Russia, the navy *raised no objection* and had no clearly devised strategic alternative to offer. Over the following months, however, this was to change, w/ the emergence of a *Mediterranean strategy*. This was offered as a *real alternative* to attack on Russia. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 76)

⁵³ **Note:** In late **Sep 40**, the German navy's ideas of directing Germany's war effort at the Mediterranean corresponded quite closely to the notion developed by the German Foreign Ministry of a "Continental bloc" of countries formed into a powerful alliance against Britain. (80)

Apr 41: Nachdem im April 1941 noch der "tuechtigste" Balkanstaat – so *Vietinghoff* meinte *Serbien* – in nur sechs Tagen „weggefegt“ worden war, glaubte der Chef des Generalstabes der 4. Armee [Blumentritt, I believe], dass sich dieser „*Nimbus der dt. Waffen*“ bald auch auf die Rote Armee auswirken werde. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 172)

Guderian: „The winter and spring of **1941** passed as in a nightmare. Renewed study of the campaigns of Charles XII of Sweden and of Napoleon I clearly revealed all the difficulties of the theater to which we threatened to be committed; it also became increasingly plain to see how inadequate were our preparations for so enormous an undertaking. . . At this time [**early 1941**] our yearly tank production scarcely amounted to more than **1000** of all types. In view of our enemies' production figures this was very small. As far back as **1933** I had visited a single Russian tank factory which was producing **22** tanks per day of the Christie-Ruski type. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 142-44)

Erhard Raus: „Unfortunately, due to the lack of vision and the fundamental blunders of Germany's leadership, it is no exaggeration to state that the entire Russian campaign will go down in history as *one gigantic improvisation*...Especially in the fields of tactics and logistics in European Russia and the arctic, better preparations should have been made before military ops began. Any observer who looks at the Russian campaign in retrospect will come to the conclusion that the *multitude of tactical and logistical improvisations* that had to be employed to compensate for this lack of planning far exceeded what *Field Marshal Helmuth von Molke* once designated as a "system of expedients" in a tactical sense. In reality, our troops found themselves forced to introduce the first improvisations as soon as they crossed the Russian border. The farther they penetrated into the Soviet Union, the more expedients they had to devise, and the number rose by leaps and bounds when ops began to be hampered first by mud and swamps and later by snow and ice." (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 1-2)

Note: Bald nach dem Kriege hat *Heusinger*, „der vor dem Ostfeldzug immer den Feldzug verworfen hatte,“ die auch sonst *im OKH umlaufenden anfaenglichen Vorbehalte gegen den Angriff auf die Sowjetunion* folgendermassen zusammengefasst: Einmal habe grundsatzlich Sorge bestanden vor der *Eroeffnung einer zweiten Front*, die die deutsche Kraefte ueberspannen wuerde. Dann sei auch die Vermutung verbreitet gewesen, dass die *Sowjetunion auf absehbare Zeit eigentlich keine Bedrohung darstelle*. Und ferner – nach dem „Wunder von *Duenkirchen*“ wuerde Grossbritannien auch durch eine Niederwerfung der Sowjetunion *nicht zur Kapitulation zu zwingen sein*. Schliesslich habe die Weite u. Tiefe des Operationsgebietes *ausserhalb der Vorstellungskraft* gelegen, bezogen auf die verfuegbaren dt. Kraefte, nach *Heusinger 140* Divisionen ohne nennenswerte materielle u. personelle Reserven. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 149)

Note: Nach Ansicht des GFM v. *Manstein* war es nicht gelungen, „*eine einheitliche strategische Konzeption zwischen Hitler u. dem OKH zustande zu bringen*. Weder...beim bei Anlage der Gesamtoperation noch im Verlauf der Durchfuehrung 1941...Hitler wollte militaerisch die Entscheidung auf beiden Fluegeln suchen, wozu die deutschen Kraefte nicht ausreichten. Das OKH strebte sie aber im Zentrum (*Moskau*) der Gesamtfront an.“ (*Manstein, Verlorene Siege*, 173; quoted in: *Nehring, Panzerwaffe*, 244)

Note: In der Rueckschau betonte *Heusinger* als *hauptsaechlichen strategischen Fehler Hitlers* u. seiner mil. Berater *unzureichende Kenntnis ueber die innere Festigkeit des Kommunismus*, vor allem Hitlers Theorie, „der Koloss Russland wuerde zusammenbrechen, wenn man nur

ueberhaupt militaerisch angriff.“ Wo der *Schwerpunkt der Operation liegen sollte*,⁵⁴ war lange umstritten, im „ewigen Schwanken zwischen mil. Gesichtspunkten, wirtschaftl. Gesichtspunkten, pol. Gesichtspunkten,“ ebenso war „das Problem Raum, Zeit u. Kraefte“ nicht genuegend bedacht worden, „die Zahl der verfuegbaren Kraefte auf unserer Seite reichte fuer die Weite des Raumes“ von vornherein kaum aus...Auf der anderen Seite habe Hitler „gegen die Auffassungen des Heeres den *Polen-Feldzug* in kurzer Zeit erledigt, den *Balkan-Feldzug* verhaeltnismaessig schnell, u. *vor allem im franzoesischen Feldzug den Erfolg gehabt*, entgegen allen Warnungen“ von seiten des OKH. Danach sei es „wirklich schwer“ gewesen, gegen Hitlers Auffassungen „auch militaerisch zu opponieren,“ so dass – er gestand dies ein – de facto „*ein ernsthafter Widerstand gegen die Planung u. die Durchfuehrung des Russland-Feldzuges seitens des OKH nicht bestanden hat*, weil man einfach dem Mann gegenueber nicht durchgekommen waere.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 156-57)

Note: Planning and preparations for Operation *Barbarossa* were strongly influenced by the traditional *Ruslanbild* of the General Staff. According to this, the Soviet Union, like Czarist Russia, was a “colossus of clay,” which would break asunder under a swift, strong blow from the outside. In view of several leading German generals, the Red Army in 1940-41 was clumsily, incapable of operational initiative at all command levels, habituated to mechanical military planning and operational conduct, and in general unprepared to wage modern warfare. The *poor performance of Soviet forces in Poland and Finland* was adjudged *prima facie evidence* that the Red Army had neither recovered from the decimation of its officer corps in the purges, not assimilated the new military technologies that it was known, or suspected, of developing.⁵⁵ The *swiftness and ease of the victory in 1940 over France* (the strongest military power in Europe, according to conventional wisdom) confirmed OKH in the belief that *German military-technical superiority and leadership* would ensure a swift, effective result against the Soviet Union. The planning documents for *Barbarossa* and official statements and diary entries of ranking German generals regarding the feasibility of the undertaking combine to suggest that OKH, the WFSt, and the *Generalstab* viewed the the problem of an attack on the Soviet Union as *essentially a matter of the correct operational preparations*. (D. Thomas, 274-75)

Priority of Leningrad [Auftrag H.Gr.Mitte]: Noerdlich der Pripjet-Suempfe wird der von der H.Gr.Mitte unter Einsatz starker Schneller Kraefte aus dem Bereich um Warschau u. Suwalki in Richtung Smolensk zu erzwingende Durchbruch auszunutzen sein fuer das *Eindrehen starker Schneller Truppen nach Norden*, um im Zusammenwirken mit der aus Ostpreussen in allgemeiner Richtung *Leningrad* angreifenden H.Gr.Nord die im Baltikum kaempfenden fdl. Kraeft zu vernichten, anschliessend in Verbindung mit dem finnischen Heere u. gegebenenfalls aus Norwegen herangefuehrten dt. Kraeften die letzten Widerstandsmoeglichkeiten des Feindes im noerdlichen Russland endgueltig zu beseitigen u. damit die Bewegungsfreiheit fuer weitere Aufgaben – gegebenenfalls im Zusammenwirken mit den im suedlichen Russland operierenden dt. Kraeften – sicherzustellen. Bei ueberraschendem u. voelligem Zusammenbruch des feindlichen Widerstandes im Norden Russlands kann unter Verzicht auf ein Einschwenken sofortiger Vorstoss auf Moskau in Frage kommen. . .“ (Hofmann, “Schlacht von Moskau,” 141)

⁵⁴ **Note:** Hitler & OKH never overcame this *strategic dissonance* – failed to agree on the enemy *center of gravity* and act accordingly. Primacy given in initial weeks of campaign to *purely military objective* – i.e., destruction of Soviet army west of *Dnieper – Dvina*. When that objective failed, the “tug-of-war” between Hitler and OKH began, w/ devastating consequences.

⁵⁵ **Note:** A serious examination of Zhukov’s victories over Japan in 1939 might have given the Germans pause. Yet they never seriously examined this far eastern campaign.

Limitations of the Blitzkrieg: Distance from the *line of departure* of German offensive on the Bug River to the western end of the Smolensk – Moscow Ridge measures about **300 air miles**. The distance from the same jump-off line to the *middle course of the Volga* measures at least **1100 miles**. The *population of the USSR* outnumbered that of Germany by **more than two to one**. Thus Germany faced an enemy doubly superior in numbers. A sober consideration of these factors should have revealed the *impossibility of overrunning the great area of European Russia and its defenders in one fell swoop*. A sustained, uninterrupted offensive had *not even been possible in campaign against France*, despite fact that neither the area involved there nor enemy's numerical war potential even remotely approached those of the Soviet Union. After the first great battles on the *Franco-German frontier*, the German advance had been **forced to halt for about 10 days on the Somme**. And even this single 10-day stop in France had offered the French Army an opportunity for consolidation. In dealing w/ Russia, a simple and rough estimate of *logistical problems* made it evident that merely the *distance factor*, not to speak of Soviet mil. resistance, would of necessity *require protracted breathing spells*. (FMS T-34, *Terrain Factors*, 11-13)

In view of the *tremendous extent of the front* it was impossible to attack everywhere. The procedure was to establish *focal points* [*Schwerpunkte*], to cut off strong Russian forces w/ deep penetrations at the decisive places, and to force them into battles w/ *reversed front*. The *first operational objectives* were laid down to about the line, **Dnieper – Orsha – Leningrad**. The further plans hinged on the development of this first phase of the war. (Assmann, *Battle for Moscow*, 312)

German mistakes in preparing the invasion:

- a. One fact of far-reaching consequence: The campaigns in *Poland* and *France* were **carefully thought out from beginning to end**. The campaigns in *Norway* and on the *Balkans* were **improvisations**, but both aimed at definite objectives: the crushing of mil. resistance and the occupation of the entire country. The campaign against the *USSR* was **neither an improvisation nor had its broad strategic outlines been established** as in the case of France. Hitler's belief in the collapse of the Communist regime in the interior of the Soviet Union had the effect that the *planning stage never progressed to mapping a German advance beyond the lower course of the Dnepr, the region west of Smolensk, and the Leningrad area*. In the actual course of events, the Germans' operations that took up where the planning left off were **improvisations** born on the spur of the moment. [Thus] events took *precisely the course which had to be avoided in the vast expanses of Russia* if the campaign were to end successfully: the **initiative slipped from the hands of the German forces and was seized by the enemy**.
- b. It is safe to conjecture that Hitler had made a thorough study of the topography of European Russia. However, in tune w/ his entire disposition he *saw things not as they were but as he wanted them to be*. Natural obstacles seemed to have lost most of their meaning [given successes from 1939-41]; like difficulties, they were to be overcome. He simply **did not wish to acknowledge the military might of the Soviet Union**, even though it was called to his attention by the German *military attache in Moscow* and other well-informed persons.
- c. In his ignorance of the Soviet land and its people, Hitler was not alone in Germany. This *lack of knowledge was common throughout the entire country* [indeed throughout the entire West!], even in the top echelons of the armed forces. The Germans have lived near

the Russians for centuries. After the *two partitions of Poland* the two nations shared a common frontier for **140 years**; they have been allies and have fought one another. Still, the vast country to the east and its people have **forever been and remained a sealed book to the Germans**. The so-called *Iron Curtain* had been a fact long before the phrase was coined.⁵⁶ (*FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 13-16)

Man ging davon aus, dass die Rote Armee westl. der Linie *Dvina – Dnepr* geschlagen u. vernichtet werden koennte, so dass danach kein nennenswerter Widerstand beim Verfolgen nach Osten mehr anzunehmen sei ... Unbeantwortet liess das **OKH** die Frage, wie der Sieg errungen werden sollte, falls die Sowjetarmee nicht westl. von *Dvina* u. *Dnepr* vernichtet werden konnte. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa*,” 145)

Handbook on the USSR: Issued to field forces on eve of the invasion. Contained „blatent examples of false logic and *many misleading statements*. Said, for ex., that the Red Army was particularly vulnerable to *threats against its flanks and rear*. In actually practice, the very first days of combat proved exactly the opposite! Other statements were in a similar vein: the Russians were a people w/ *no mechanical aptitude*; they were *poor organizers*; had a *weak transportation system*, etc. Interestingly, the handbook contained „*little to nothing about the great mil. significance of the muddy season*. Difficulties lurking in the size and complexity of the Soviet Union, that is to say, the rivers, streams, extensive forests, swamps, sand and road conditions, etc., were not omitted from the book; however, in tune w/ the times, the higher command as well as the combat forces tended to *underestimate those difficulties*. (*FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 23-24)

c. *Chronology:*

31.7.40: „With Russian smashed, Britain’s last hope would be shattered. Germany then will be master of Europe and the Balkans. Decision: Russia’s destruction must therefore be made a part of this struggle. Spring 1941...If we start in May 1941, we would have five months to finish the job.“ With these astonishing sentences, *Hitler announced to his generals*, meeting on 31 Jul 40 at his Alpine retreat, the **Berghof**, in the mountains high above *Berchtesgaden*, his *most fateful choice of the Second World War*. The magnitude of what Hitler was proposing appears, in light of what happened, „*sheer madness*.“ The decision „looks like a *death-wish* for himself and his nation.“ (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 54; also, *Halder KTB*, 31.7.40)⁵⁷

31.7.40: ...verkuendete [Hitler] den auf dem *Obersalzberg* versammelten mil. Spitzen seinen bereits erwahnten, ‚bestimmten‘ Entschluss, die Sowjetunion im Fruehjahr 1941 zu ‚erledigen.‘ *Niemand wagte einen Widerspruch oder formulierte eine strategische Alternative*, um die dt. Herrschaft ueber Europa und den Balkan langfristig abzusichern. Der Oberbefehlshaber der Marine war schon vorher gegangen, u. *Brauchitsch* brachte seine Bedenken vom Vortag nicht zur Sprache. Auch sein erster operativer Gehilfe, der Chef des Generalstabes *Halder*, vollzog den

⁵⁶ **Note:** Here, author uses ignorance of the Russian muddy seasons as example of Germans’ lack of knowledge *vis-à-vis* USSR. States that Germans “had never learned of that elementary natural phenomenon.” [Accurate?] Also writes that the “field forces were taken completely by surprise by the first muddy season in late fall of 1941;” and that the so-called **Handbook on the USSR** (issued to field forces shortly before invasion began) contained “little or nothing about the great mil. significance of the muddy season...” (16-19, 23-24)

⁵⁷ **Note:** Later, *Kershaw* refers to war with Russia as the „*war he really wanted*.” (64)

Uebergang zu einem grossen Krieg gegen die Rote Arme *nahtlos*. Erst nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg glaubte [Halder], ueber Hitlers ploetzlichen Entschluss ‚erschuettert‘ gewesen zu sein. Auch die Luftwaffenfuehrung schwenkte reibungslos auf Hitlers Angriffsplan im Osten ein. Nach den Enttaeschungen ueber dem Aermelkanal glaubte sie, in einem *kurzen u. ‘ordentlichen Krieg’* wieder mil. Erfolge zu erringen u. das ramponierte [*battered*] Prestige der Luftwaffe ausbessern zu koennen. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 170; see also, *Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 219-220; *KTB Halder*)⁵⁸

1.8.40: Following conference at the *Berghof* the day before, *Halder* goes to work on the plans [to attack Russia] w/ his General Staff. Though he would later claim to have opposed the whole idea of an attack on Russia as *insane*, his diary entry for this day discloses him *full of enthusiasm* as he applied himself to the challenging new task. Planning now went ahead w/ *typical German thoroughness* on three levels: a) that of the Army General Staff; b) Warlimont’s Operations Staff at OKW; and, c) General Thomas’ Economic and Armaments Branch of OKW. (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 799)

5.8.40 [Marcks’ Plan]: The draft produced by Marcks on **5 Aug 40** is of particular interest since *it came to be used as the basis for the final orders for the invasion*. (See, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 30-32)

5.8.40: Early planning for *Barbarossa*. Initial OKH study by *General Erich Marcks* presented on *5 Aug 40*. His study suggested that it would take **9-17 weeks** to defeat the Soviet Union. Emphasized a main thrust north of the *Pripyat marshes* and a drive on *Moscow*. Most officers agreed w/ this approach. Hitler, however, did not agree fully; he emphasized that, after capture of the border areas, the advance on Moscow would not take place until the capture of *Leningrad*. Emphasis on Hitler’s strategy was on *gaining Soviet economic resources as quickly as possible*. Thus, right from the start, there was a **dicotomy in German strategy** between *Hitler’s emphasis on economic targets and the army’s preoccupation w/ strictly military factors*...Both Hitler and *general staff* underestimated the Red Army’s numerical strength, Soviet industrial resources, and the inherent logistical difficulties in waging a **campaign on a continental scale**. Yet, as Murray points out, there were reasons for underestimating the Russians! (see, *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 77-8)

5.8.40: Bereits am 5.August 1940 legte *Gen.Maj. Marcks* dem OKH befehlsge maess einen „*Operationsentwurf Ost*“ vor, der im Auszug lautete: „...Unter diesen Gebieten bildet **Moskau** den *wirtschaftlichen, politischen u. geistigen Mittelpunkt der UdSSR*. Seine Eroberung zerreisst den *Zusammenhang des russ. Reiches*. *Leitende Idee ist*, im geraden Stoss auf *Moskau* die Masse der russ. Nordgruppe...(westlich) *Moskau* zu vernichten, im Besitz von *Moskau* u. Nordrussland sich nach *Sueden* zu wenden, im Zusammenwirken mit der dt. *Suedgruppe* die *Ukraine* zu erobern u. im **Endziel die erstrebte Linie Astrachan-Gorki-Archangelsk zu gewinnen**.“ Das OKH billigte diesen Entwurf in seinen Grundzuegen. (See, *Nehring, Panzerwaffe*, 214-16)

9.8.40: On 9 August, *Warlimont* gets out his *first directive* for preparing the deployment areas in the East for the jump-off against the Russias. The code name for this was *Aufbau Ost* – „Build-up East.“ (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 799)

⁵⁸ **Note:** Hitler’s announcement on 31.7.40, came just *nine days* after London had made clear that it would stay in the fight (following fall of France), “u. dabei nicht nur auf die Hilfe der USA setzte. Hitler zoegerte nicht lange...” He decided to attack Russia. This demonstrates *causal relationship* between failure to bring England to terms and decision to attack USSR (170).

26.8.40: Hitler orders **10** infantry and **2** armored divisions to be sent from the West to Poland. The *panzer* units, he stipulates, are to be concentrated in southeastern Poland so that they could intervene to protect the Rumanian oil fields.⁵⁹ (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 799; also, *KTB OKW*, 26.8.40)

3.9.40: Lt Gen *Friedrich Paulus* (not *von Paulus*, as often described) took over responsibility for planning the war on Russia. As *Oberquartiermeister I*, he was responsible for all planning work on the Army General Staff. In planning the attack on Russia, he drew heavily on the work of *Marcks* and *Lt Col Feyerabend*, who did much of the work on the organization of German forces for the eastern campaign. (*Germany and Second World War*, Vol IV, 262-66)

6./26.9.40: W.L. *Shirer* writes of Hitler's „incapacity to grasp the larger, *intercontinental strategy* that was called for and that *Raeder* and even *Goering* had urged upon him.“ Twice in **Sep 40**, on the 6th and 26th, the Grand Admiral had attempted to open up new vistas in the Fuehrer's mind now that the direct attack on England seemed out of the question. On second date (26th), *Raeder* able to corner Hitler alone (w/o the Army and Air Force officers to muddle the conversation); he gives the Fuehrer a lengthy lecture on naval strategy and the importance of getting at Britain in other places than over the English Channel. *Raeder* advocates seizure of *Gibraltar* and the *Canary Islands*; taking the *Suez Canal*. After that, he speaks of an advance from *Suez* through *Palestine* and *Syria* as far as *Turkey*, etc., to drive the British out of the Mediterranean; put *Turkey* and *Russia* in Germany's power, etc. (See, *Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 812-14)

Sep-Dec 40: Halder gave General *Paulus* the task of developing the *Marcks Plan* when the latter became *Oberquartiermeister I* on **3 Sep 40**. *Paulus* finished this work in just two (2) weeks, presenting his own “Foundations of the Russian Operation“ at the end of **Oct 40**. War-games tested these plans from **29 Nov–3 Dec 40**. *Von Brauchitsch* told his staff to expect “a hefty border fight” lasting some four (4) weeks, after which the remainder of the Soviet Union would be occupied against only “weak resistance.” The overview portion of the *OKH Aufmarschanweisung* mentioned *Moscow* as an objective of *v. Bock's* command *only* after resistance in the North had been broken, and specific instructions for his army group did not mention the Soviet capital. . . After taking *Smolensk*, both strategic and operational leaders anticipated that Army Group Ctr would turn north toward *Leningrad*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 12-13)

Oct 40: By mid-Oct 40, Army Group East had been set up in Poland and *OKH* had moved from France to its *location for the rest of the war* at the great former Imperial German complex at *Zossen-Wuensdorf*, south of *Berlin*. *OKW* – the joint armed forces command – would look after operations in the rest of the world. *OKH*, the army command, would have *exclusive control of Barbarossa*. Another „quirky“ piece of Hitler organization. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 127)

Dec 40: Erst Anfang Dez 40 liess sich Hitler die Operationsabsichten der Heeresfuehrung vortragen u. billigte sie pauschal, obwohl sie in wesentlichen Punkten nicht mit seinem Ansatz uebereinstimmten. In seiner strategischen Analyse wiederholte Hitler die Argumente vom Sommer. Fuer Hitler stand – neben der physischen Vernichtung der „Lebenskraft Russlands“ u. dessen „juedisch-bolschewistischer Intelligenz“ – die *Gewinnung der kriegswirtschaftlichen*

⁵⁹ **Note:** Rumania's oil resources were of vital importance to Germany which, because of the *British blockade*, could no longer import petroleum by sea. (800)

Basen im Norden u. Sueden der europaeischen Sowjetunion im Vordergrund. Damit wollte er sowohl die dt. Versorgung sichern als auch dem Gegner die materiellen Grundlagen fuer einen Neuaufbau seiner mil. Kraefte entziehen. *Die Heeresfuehrung wollte dagegen den Blitzkrieg im Osten durch einen konzentrierten Stoss auf Moskau erzwingen.* Charakteristisch fuer den Entscheidungsprozess auf dt. Seite war, dass einerseits die *deutlichen Auffassungsunterschiede zwischen Heer u. Hitler ueber den Ansatz der zweiten Operationsphase 1940/41 nicht wirklich diskutiert u. geklaert wurden.* Die spaeteren heftigen Auseinandersetzungen um die Vorrangigkeit Moskaus oder Leningrad u. Kiev waren damit **vorprogrammiert.** (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat, 171-72*)

5.12.40: Halder and Brauchitsch show Hitler the Army General Staff's plan for the onslaught on the Soviet Union; at the end of a *four-hour conference*, he approves it. The Nazi warlord stresses that the Red Army must be broken through both north and south of the Pripet Marshes, surrounded and annihilated „as in Poland.“ Moscow, he tells Halder, „was not important.“ Altogether, some **120-130** divisions are allotted to the campaign. In his report on this conference, as in previous references to the plan to attack Russia, Halder's diary employs the code name „**Otto.**“ (*Shirer, Rise and Fall, 810; Halder KTB; OKW KTB*)

5.12.40: At **3:00 p.m.**, Hitler's military advisers – *Brauchitsch* and *Halder* of the army, and *Keitel* and *Jodl* of the OKW – come to the Chancellery to argue out each phase of the coming ops and their tactical details. Now for the first time the *two varying concepts* of the Russian campaign – the meticulous studies drawn up and exercised by Halder's staff and the draft OPlan submitted by Jodl's Col *Lossberg* – were brought into *informal synthesis*. Halder's proposal was distinguished by a particularly powerful main drive toward Moscow; Lossberg's "*Fritz*" attached more weight to the northernmost army group and the occupation of the Baltic coast. Lossberg's plan was evidently *not* actually discussed at this conference, but its influence on Hitler is clear, for in his reply to Halder the Fuehrer now drew heavily on Lossberg's arguments. Both Halder's plan (which had originated w/ General *Erich Marcks* and was completed by General *Friedrich Paulus*) and Lossberg's assumed that the Russians must of necessity defend the western areas of the Soviet Union and the Ukraine; and both stated that the Russians must be prevented from staging an ordered retreat as in **1812**. Halder proposed that the offensive end along a line from the Volga River to *Archangel*. Where Hitler took exception, though at first w/ noticeable mildness, was to Halder's insistence that nothing detract from the main assault on Moscow. Hitler wanted the Russian forces in the Baltic countries to be encircled first; a similar huge encirclement would liquidate the Russian armies in the Ukraine. Only after that should it be decided whether to advance on Moscow or to bypass the Soviet capital in the rear. "Moscow is not all that important," he explained. This was the *first hint of a strategic controversy* that was eventually to rage between Hitler and the General Staff in the summer of **1941**, though neither Halder nor Brauchitsch took it seriously yet. (See, *Irving, Hitler's War, 188-90, 162*)

5.-18.12.40: On this day, Col.-Gen. Halder presented the army concept of operations [in Russia] to Hitler. He stressed his view that a particularly strong thrust force would have to advance from the Warsaw area towards Moscow. . . In spite of Moscow being the initial center of gravity, due to the *funnel-shaped topographic form of Western Russia*, the conduct of operations inevitably had to be eccentric. On the whole, *Hitler consented to the OKH CONOPS*. . . He left open the question of the thrust towards Moscow and also *did not consider the overal strategic objective*, the so-called A-A-line between Astrakhan & Arkhangelsk. But what was remarkable about this conference on **5 Dec 40** was Hitler's hint, and, in fact, his plan that the Central Group had to be so strong that the bulk of its forces could turn north in order to encircle the enemy forces in the Baltic Provinces, which, in Halder's opinion, was only a secondary operation. Hence, Halder's most important strategic idea, to make the seizure of Moscow the center of gravity of the entire

Russian campaign, had become questionable. Thus, Hitler got lost in *operational thoughts* instead of determining a binding *strategy*.

Hitler's thoughts took clearer shape in the plan of Lt.-Col. G.S. v. Lossberg, which the **OKW** presented in **Dec 40**. In that plan, the center of gravity was maintained w/ the Central Group of armies, but after the disruption of enemy forces in front of the Dnepr-Dvina line, mobile forces *were to be diverted north to seize the coast of the Baltic Sea, Leningrad, and Kronstadt* to ensure the supply of ore from Scandinavia. Only then was the operation to seize Moscow to be continued. Turning forces towards the Ukraine and the Donets Basin in the second part of the campaign was also considered. The *roots of the conflict between Hitler and Halder* about the further conduct of operations, which later became even more violent, had already begun at this point.

On **18 Dec 40** the period of planning came to an end. Hitler issued his Directive No. **21**, which was based on the plan of the OKW and provided *bindingly* for the *turn of strong mobile formations from the center to the north*, once the enemy had been beaten in front of the Dnepr-Dvina line. It also became manifest that Hitler regarded the seizure of *war-essential economic centers* as the **main objective of the campaign**, whereas Halder considered this a *dissipation of forces* which would then be lacking for the decisive thrust against Moscow. (*G. Niepold, „Plan Barbarossa,”* in: *Glantz, Initial Period of the War, 69*)

18.12.40: Jodl brings to Hitler the final version of the campaign directive, retyped on the large “*Fuehrer typewriter*.” “*Fritz*,” Lossberg's code name for the coming campaign, is replaced by the more majestic-sounding “*Barbarossa*.” Partly the handiwork of *Jodl*, a master stylist whose spoken German was very clear and simple, and partly the product of *Hitler's pen*, the **11**-pg. document instructs the *Wehrmacht* to “*overthrow Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign even before the war w/ Britain is over*.” From now on, Hitler's intention of disposing of the Soviet menace “*was the one constant in Hitler's grand strategy*.” (*Irving, Hitler's War, 190-91*)

18.12.40 [Directive No. 21]: Only nine (**9**) copies of the **49**-page document, in its top-secret cover, *scarlet w/ a diagonal yellow line*, were produced. They were to be carried „by hand of officer, only.“ And, on the cover, only now, the supremely evocative, crusading codename for the greatest operation in the history of war . . . „*Barbarossa*.“ **Frederick I „Barbarossa,”** (c. **1123-90**) had succeeded his uncle as *Holy Roman Emperor* in **1152**. The nickname came from his red beard. He was a *bold and skillful cdr* and astute ruler. After taking part in the *Second Crusade* in **1188**, he led the largest ever medieval crusading army back towards *Palestine* in **1189**, but was drowned crossing the River *Calycadmus* (in modern Turkey) in **Jun 1190**. He became the German equivalent of the British (Celtic) King Arthur. Legend has it that his body now sleeps beneath a mountain at *Kyffhaeuser*, on the Rhine. One day, the story continues, *Barbarossa's* red beard will grown out again, from beneath the mountain, and he will rise, responding once more to the call to arms. It was a „*brilliantly evocative and apposite codename*“ for the **1941** offensive, „*arrogant in its recall of medieval splendours and menacing in its hints of medieval cruelties*.“ (*Bellamy, Absolute War, 126; also, Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 21*)⁶⁰

⁶⁰ **Note:** According to D. Irving, when the first draft directive for the Russian campaign was brought to Hitler by Jodl, it still conformed w/ Halder's recommendation of a main thrust toward Moscow. But Hitler ordered the document redrafted in the form *he* had emphasized: the principal task of the two army groups operating north of the Pripyet Marshes was to drive the Russians out of the Baltic countries.” (See, *Hitler's War, 189-90*)

18.12.40 [*Fall Barbarossa*]: Only nine (9) copies of the Barbarossa directive were produced. The 4 ½-page document printed in Hubatsch's volume mentions Moscow but twice; moreover, it is clear that Leningrad and the Baltic was the primary objective. Under „III. *Die Fuehrung der Operationen*: A.) *Heer*," it states:

In dem durch die Pripetsuempfe in eine suedl. u. eine noerdl. Haelfte getrennten Operationsraum ist der Schwerpunkt noerdlich dieses Gebiets zu bilden. Hier sind 2 H.Gr. vorzusehen.

Der suedlichen dieser beiden H.Gr. – Mitte der Gesamtfront – faellt die Aufgabe zu, mit besonders starken Panzer- u. mot. Verbaende aus dem Raum um u. noerdl. Warschau vordringend die fdl. Kraefte in Weissrussland zu zersprengen. Dadurch muss die Voraussetzung geschaffen werden fuer das Eindrehen von starken Teilen der schnellen Truppen nach Norden, um im Zusammenwirken mit der aus Ostpreussen in allgemeiner Richtung Leningrad operierenden noerdl. H.Gr. die im Baltikum kaempfenden fdl. Kraefte zu vernichten. *Erst nach Sicherstellung dieser vordringlichsten Aufgabe, welcher die Besetzung von Leningrad u. Kronstadt folgen muss, sind die Angriffsoperationen zur Besitznahme des wichtigen Verkehrs- u. Ruestungszentrums Moskau fortzufuehren.* [my emphasis] . . .

Sind die Schlachten suedl. bzw. noerdl. der Pripetsuempfe geschlagen, ist im Rahmen der Verfolgung anzustreben:

im Sueden die fruehzeitige Besitznahme des wehrwirtschaftlich wichtigen Donez-Beckens,

im Norden das schnelle Erreichen von Moskau. Die Einnahme dieser Stadt bedeutet politisch u. wirtschaftlich einen entscheidenden Erfolg, darueber hin-aus den Ausfall des wichtigsten Eisenbahnknotenpunktes. . .

(Source: *W. Hubatsch, Hitlers Weisungen fuer die Kriegfuehrung*, 84-88)

18.12.40: Directive No. 21:

Note: At this stage of war (1941), the *ability of the German Army General Staff to execute a maneuver plan was "unequaled."* The problem was not w/ the scheme of maneuver, however, but w/ the less glamorous but no less important elements of the planning process: *intelligence, logistics, and personel management.* (Megargee, 102)

Fall Barbarossa. Defined goals of operation as follows: The *destruction of the Russian armed forces as far to the west as possible*, in order to prevent their retreat into the vast interior; then an advance to a line that would prevent Russian air attacks from reaching the Reich; and finally an advance to a line stretching from *Archangel to the Volga River*, from which the Luftwaffe could dominate the last Soviet industrial areas beyond the Ural Mountains. The directive went on the place the main thrust (*Schwerpunkt*) north of the Pripyat Marshes. Further, it stated that Army Group Center, which would advance toward Moscow, must be

prepared to swing north and assist the attack into the Baltic region before taking the capital. (Megargee, 131)

J. Foerster: "...hatte Hitler wiederholt Einfluss auf die 'Weisung Nr. 21: Fall Barbarossa' genommen." [Also...] „Ende Nov 40 nahm Hitler – u. zwar ueber seinen ‚Generalstabchef‘ Jodl – auch direkt Einfluss darauf, welche Division als Lehrtruppe nach Rumaenien entsandt u. wer die Operationen gegen Griechenland kommandieren sollte.“ (J. Foerster, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 172; f.n. 89)

Halder's reaction (to *Weisung 21* and early disagreements w/ Hitler) was not to argue, at least at this early stage. Instead, he *worked patiently to create an operational plan that matched his own concept*. When his plan differed from Hitler's, he simply ignored the differences and carried on as if he and Hitler were in full agreement. Thus, the *army's deployment and attack orders*, which came out at the end of **Jan 41**, *differed significantly from Hitler's intentions*, but Halder glossed over this fact in his briefings. Apparently, he expected his concept would win out, once the campaign got under way. (Megargee, 131-32)

Weisung 21:

(W.K. Nehring): Der Plan war nach dem Urteil des Schwiezer Historikers **Eddy Bauer** „von *hoechster Einfachkeit u. Klarheit*.“ Man wird aus diesem Urteil erkennen, wie schwer es fuer einen *Berufshistoriker* sein mag, sich ueber mil. Dinge kritisch zu aeussern. **Der Plan hatte naemlich grobe Fehler:**

- a. Er erkannte nicht den *entscheidenden Wert Schneller Truppen* als Traeger der Operationsgedanken durch *zusammengefassten Einsatz aller verfuegbaren Kraefe* unter *einheitlicher Fuehrung*, sondern **verzettelte diese**.
- b. Die Angriffsrichtungen der drei *Heeresgruppen* u. ihrer *Panzergruppen* **strebten exzentrisch auseinander**. Der Suedfluegel erhielt die Richtung auf *Kiev*, der Nordfluegel auf *Leningrad*. Damit wurde die Angriffsfront *um weit mehr als das Doppelte verbreitert* u. bot dem Verteidiger Gelegenheit zu Gegenangriffen aus der Tiefe des Landes gegen die Flanken der Angriffskeile.
- c. Der Operationsplan laesst erkennen, dass man anscheinend *nur mit einem schwachen Gegner rechnete*, der sich passiv verhalten, zersprengt u. schnell zusammenbrechen wuerde.
- d. Der Plan setzte von vornherein zu einer *Verfolgung* an, ohne dass sich vorher durch eine erfolgreiche Schlacht, also durch die *Pruefung der beiderseitigen Kraefteverhaeltnisse*, die Moeglichkeit dazu ergeben haette. Diese wurde durch eine *falsche Lagebeurteilung Hitlers u. des OKH*, die sich als Wunschtraum aus den Erfolgen der Jahre 1939/41 entwickelte, ersetzt. Bereits hier wurde **einer der Kernpunkte des Misserfolges in Russland sichtbar**.
- e. War die Feindlage aber ungeklaert, so musste man nach **Moltkescher Lehre** und der Ziffer der geltenden Vorschrift „**Truppenfuehrung**“ (von 1936) „*das fuer das eigene Handeln nachteiligste Verhalten des Feindes zugrunde legen*.“ (Nehring, *Panzerwaffe*, 243-44)

Directive 21: In plan of campaign, the General Staff planned for the disposition of two large operational groups, one of which was to advance toward *Kiev*, the other toward *Moscow*. In Halder's view, the conquest of the Baltic states signified a *secondary operation* that must not be allowed to infringe on assault on Moscow. On other hand, Hitler explained to C-in-C of Army on **5.12.40** that "*Moscow is not very important*," and on **17.3.41**, that it was "*entirely immaterial*" to him. Corresponding to this concept which Hitler held from the beginning, in the first directive issued by OKW for *Barbarossa* on **18.12.40** the ***secondary nature of the attack on Moscow came clearly to light***. It provided for two army groups to be employed north of the Pripet Marshes to destroy the enemy forces in White Russia and the Baltic states; their *primary objective* was to be the *conquest of the Baltic states* and the *occupation of Leningrad and Kronstadt*. A third army group was to advance south of the marshes w/ *Kiev* and the area downstream of the *Dnieper River* as its objective. Only after the battles had been fought on both sides of the Pripet area would the objective of Moscow and the occupation of the *Donetz Basin* – east of the bend of the Dnieper – be undertaken "in the course of the pursuit." The contrary concepts of Hitler and the Army High Command resulted from two different points of view. Hitler sought *political and economic objectives*: in the north he wished to *join forces w/ the Finns* as soon as possible; in the south he sought to gain the *granary of the Ukraine* and the *Russian industrial area* in the bend of the Dnieper. Conversely, the primary concern of of OKH was to *destroy the military might of the enemy as quickly as possible*. GFM v. *Brauchitsch* ***postponed clarification of the question*** until the Russian deployment had been broken in the border battles. (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 310)

Directive 21: Perhaps the greatest threat to the success of the German invasion was the *lack of a clearly defined strategy*. Directive No. **21** was very *general in its aims* for the campaign and did *not clearly define one target or objective as priority*, in fact it diverted the main German thrust from a drive in the centre to the flanks. Therefore, the **3** army groups all had their own widely separated objectives, which inevitably drew the advancing armies apart. Moreover, the **28** reserve divisions of **OKH** were wholly insufficient to cover even the *natural expansion of the line* as it moved east. (*B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 29)

ab 18.12.40: The emphasis in Hitler's *Barbarossa* directive in Dec 41 – and in *all subsequent strategic planning* – had been on the thrusts in the north, to take Leningrad and secure the Baltic, w/ a further thrust to the south, to take the Ukraine. Even if unenthusiastically, the Army General Staff had accepted the significant alteration of what it had originally envisaged. According to this amended plan, Army Group Ctr was to advance as far as Smolensk before swinging north to meet up w/ Leeb's armies for the assault on Leningrad. The taking of Moscow figured in the agreed plan of "*Barbarossa*" *only* once the occupation of Leningrad and Kronstadt had been completed. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 408)

Feb-Jun 41: Die *ersten beiden Staffeln* fuer den Angriff auf die Sowjetunion waren ab Mitte Februar 1941 an die Ostfront gebracht worden. Bis zum **20.5.41** wurde die *dritte Staffel* in den Osten gebracht, die letzte schliesslich vom **3.-23.6.41**. (*Das Deutsche Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Bd. 4, 268)

3.2.41: Chief of the Army General Staff presents *Barbarossa* plans to Hitler at a meeting in Berlin. This war conference, attended by the top generals of OKW and OKH, lasted from noon until 6:00 p.m. on 3 Feb 41. While *Halder* – who outlined the Army General Staff's plans – contended later in his book that he and *Brauchitsch* raised doubts about their own assessment of Soviet mil. strength and in general opposed *Barbarossa* as an "adventure," there is not a word in

his own diary entry made the same evening or in the highly secret OKW memorandum of the meeting that supports his contention. Indeed, they disclose Halder to have made at first a businesslike estimate of the opposing forces, calculating the while the enemy would have ca. **155** divisions, German strength would be about the same, yet as Halder reported, „far superior in quality.“ So convincing was Halder’s report on respective strengths and on the strategy⁶¹ for annihilating the Red armies that Hitler at the end not only expressed agreement „on the whole“ but was so excited by the prospects which the General Staff Chief had raised that he exclaimed: „*When Barbarossa commences, the world will hold its breath and make no comment.*“ He could scarcely wait for it to commence. Impatiently, he ordered the operation map and the plan of deployment of forces to be sent to him „as soon as possible.“ (*Shirer, Rise and Fall, 822*)⁶²

21.2.41: Bestellte General *Jodl* den Chef der Abteilung *Wehrmachtpropaganda*, *Oberst i.G. Hasso von Wedel*, zu einer Besprechung von hoechster Wichtigkeit in das Fuehrerhauptquartier. Hier erfuhr *Oberst Wedel* zum ersten Mal vom „Unternehmen *Barbarossa*.“ . . . Er erhielt den Auftrag, in den kommenden Monaten das *groesste Tauschungs- u. Verschleierungsunternehmen* der *Wehrmacht* waehrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges durchzufuehren. Es bestand in der Tarnung des gewaltigen Aufmarsches deutscher Verbaende in ihre Einsatzraeume fuer die Grosseoffensive im Osten. Das Unternehmen lief unter den Decknamen „*Haifisch*,“ u. „*Harpune*.“ Durch zahlreiche Tauschungsoperationen sollte bei den Sowjets der Eindruck entstehen, dass die *Wehrmacht* eine Invasion Englands vorbereitete ... Die Tauschungsmassnahmen von „*Haifisch*“ u. „*Harpune*“ wirkten sich auf zahlreichen mil. Ebenen aus ... Bei den dt. Angriffsdivisionen im Osten entstanden die *wildesten Geruechte* ueber die Truppenmassierungen. Sie waren z.T. ebenfalls von der *Propaganda* im Umlauf gesetzt worden. Einen Angriff auf die Sowjetunion konnte sich vor dem 22.Juni kaum einer der Betroffenen ernsthaft vorstellen. (*Buchbender, Das Andere Gesicht des Krieges, 63-65*)

Spring ,41 [*planning on staff of 4. AOK*]: „A strange atmosphere prevailed during those months. In the first place we realized what this new war would entail. Many of us had fought in Russia as junior officers between **1914-18**, and we knew what to expect. There was an uneasiness both among the staff officers and in the divisions. On the other hand duty demanded precise and detailed work. All books and maps concerning Russia soon disappeared from the bookshops. I remember that *Kluge’s* desk at his Warsaw HQ was usually laden w/ such publications. In particular, Napoleon’s **1812** campaign was the *subject of much study*. *Kluge* read General *de Caulaincourt’s* account of that campaign w/ the greatest attention ... The places where the Grand Army had fought its battles and skirmishes were on the maps before us. We knew that we would soon be following in Napoleon’s footsteps. We also studied the *Russo-Polish War of 1920s*. As Chief of Staff, **4. Army**, I delivered a *series of lectures* to our staff officers on this subject.“ (*Blumentritt, Moscow, in: Fatal Decisions, 34-35*)

27.3.41: *Hermann Plocher* writes that the *coup d’etat* in Yugoslavia (**27.3.41**), followed by immediate decision of Hitler to invade the country, “entailed a *five-week postponement*” of Operation “*Barbarossa*.” Yet, he also writes that the eastern campaign was also delayed by the

⁶¹ **Note:** The strategy was essentially laid down in Directive No. 21 of 18 Dec 40. Again, in comments to Bruachitsch and Halder, Hitler emphasized the importance of “wiping out large sections of the enemy” instead of forcing them to retreat. And he stressed that “the *main aim* [his emphasis] is to gain possession of the Baltic States and Leningrad.” (822*)

⁶² **Note:** See also D. Irving’s fascinating account of this conference in, *Hitler’s War*, 204-05. Irving notes that Hitler again stressed the capture of the Baltic Coast and Leningrad; he also gave, from “memory,” a **10-minute** lecture on Soviet tank production since **1928!**

“extraordinary weather conditions in the Soviet Union [which] resulted in a *very late thaw*. Until the end of May the ground was boggy, w/ roads and unpaved airfields *virtually unusable*. These adverse conditions *seriously retarded the rapid extension of German highway and road networks, the expansion of German airfields, and construction of immense communication lines.*” He concludes by writing that the “two-month delay of Operation *Barbarossa* was to have a tremendous – perhaps a decisive – impact upon the course of the entire campaign.” (*GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 37*)⁶³

27.3.41 [*C. Bellamy*]: *Barbarossa* was delayed – almost certainly w/ *disastrous consequences* for the Germans – because of the **27.3.41** coup in Yugoslavia and Hitler’s subsequent invasion to deal w/ it. (*Bellamy, Absolute War, 100*)

Mar-May 41 [Balkan campaign]: **1941** [Balkan Campaign]: The Balkan Campaign is sometimes narrowly portrayed as Hitler’s response to the successful Yugoslavian coup against the regent Prince Paul, who was deposed after finally acceding to the Tripartite Pact, following months of German pressure. In truth, however, Hitler’s rationale for the new campaign ultimately aimed at restoring the Axis position in the south and ensuring Germany’s flank for the invasion of the Soviet Union.

Since **Oct 40** Mussolini had been embroiled in a disastrous attempt to invade Greece, which soon saw his beleaguered army thrown back into Albania and forced to defend itself against further Greek counterattacks. The following months saw increasingly bold British action in the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, leading to heavy Italian losses and the eventual Greek consent to the landing of four [4] British divisions. . . Hitler feared the British were seeking to recreate another “Salonika front” (1916-18), which had proven such a thorn in Germany’s side during WWI. Of even greater concern to Hitler was the prospect that British bombers might be committed to new RAF airfields and used to strike the vital oilfields in Rumania. In addition, Hitler was undoubtedly aware of the economic implications control over south-eastern Europe held for German. **50%** of Germany’s cereal and livestock came from the region; **45%** of its bauxite (aluminium ore), **90%** of its tin; **40%** of its lead; and **10%** of its copper. Finally, a major operation to occupy Yugoslavia and Greece would provide a somewhat more convincing explanation for the growing German military build-up in the East, helping to allay any Soviet fears of an impending attack. . .

In spite of the continuing turmoil in the south, the [German] Army’s deployment and timing for “*Barbarossa*” remained almost unaltered until the Yugoslavian coup. The heavy commitment of first-rate German combat formations to Operation *Barbarossa* required the immediate dispatch of **9** divisions and **2** corps HQs to new assembly areas in the south, inducing a delay in the launch of the eastern campaign, which Halder estimated at being around **4** weeks. Some have questioned the wisdom of this postponement, but a *delay was almost certainly inevitable given that the late spring thaw had swelled and in some cases flooded the major waterways*, impeding mobile ops over the sodden ground.

Even though the time lost was unavoidable owing to the unseasonable weather, there was still a military price that the Balkan campaign exacted. From the divisions committed to action in Yugoslavia, **2/3** were simply replaced in the line by **OKH** reserves and all combat divisions were on route back to the eastern border by the end of **May 41**. The forces committed to Greece,

⁶³ **Note:** If weather was so bad until end of May, then the *earliest* the Germans could have realistically launched the attack would have been about **1.6.41**. Hence, the actual delay – until **22.6.41** – was about three-weeks.

however, were a different matter. Combat losses were slight yet, as would soon be the case in “Barbarossa,” the long distances and inhospitable terrain took a much greater toll on the German panzers and motorized transports. As a result, these divisions had to make the *long journey back to Germany to receive thorough overhauls and partial re-equipping*. It proved a time-consuming process and meant that **2. PD** and **5. PD**, as well as **60. ID (mot.)**, only arrived on the eastern front well after the initial attack. The two panzer divisions were then held in the **OKH** reserve and did not see action until **Oct 41**. The delay in returning motorized units to service proved an important setback given the brief window of opportunity for the success of Barbarossa. Compounding this was the *loss of the entire 12. Army*, which was needed to provide occupational forces and coastal defense in SE Europe. This complicated the already difficult task of Army Group South, which made the slowest progress of the three army groups in the opening weeks of Barbarossa. . .

Finally, one must consider the resultant military cost of seizing Crete in **May 41**, where some **220** transport acft were lost and **4000** German soldiers killed, devastating the elite **7. Parachute Div.** and ending Hitler’s enthusiasm for further airborne ops. The Balkan campaign placed yet another drain on Germany’s eroding military resources and contributed in no small measure to the mounting over-entention of the Wehrmacht. . . On the last day of **Apr 41**, Hitler settled on **22 Jun 41** as the new date for the start of Operation “Barbarossa.” (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 96-97)

Mar-May 41: Die *vielfaeltigen Probleme*, die sich aus der *Terminplanung* „Barbarossa“ ergeben hatten, waren bereits Ende Maerz [1941] durch eine ploetzliche Aenderung der Verhaeltnisse auf dem Balkan verstaerkt worden [i.e., the overthrow of the German-friendly Yugoslavian government on **27.3.41**, forcing Germans to expand their planned attack on Greece to embrace Yugoslavia]...Ob allerdings mit dem urspruenglichen geplanten Beginn von „Barbarossa“ noch im Mai zu rechnen war, wurde allerdings zunehmend unwahrscheinlicher. Schon mit dem Auftrag fuer den Ueberfall auf Jugoslawien war Brauchitsch u. Halder mitgeteilt worden, das „Barbarossa“ *wahrscheinlich um bis zu vier Wochen verschoben werden muesste*. Die Bestaetigung dieser Informationen lag wenige Tage spaeter vor. In einem *OKW Befehl* wurde offenbar, dass der Beginn des Feldzuges „Barbarossa“ durch die Operationen auf dem Balkan wahrscheinlich um vier Wochen verzoegert werden musste...Allerdings ist die einfache Begrueundung der Verschiebung *keineswegs allein auf die Kriege mit Griechenland u. Jugoslawien zurueckzufuehren*, denn selbst am **28.5.41** war fuer das OKH laengst nicht sicher, ob der nach der Verschiebung in Aussicht genommenen Angriffstermin, der **22.6.41**, eingehalten werden konnte. Erst am Folgetag [**29.5.41**] legte sich Hitler endgueltig auf diesen Angriffstag fest.

Den Verzoegerungen fuer den Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion wurde von Seiten des OKH offensichtlich *kaum Bedeutung zugemessen*, da sowohl Brauchitsch als auch Halder u. auch das OKW weiterhin davon ausgingen, dass ein solcher Feldzug gegen die Sowjetunion *innerhalb weniger Wochen beendet sein wuerde*. Unterstuetzt wurden sie bei diesen Ansichten durch die Vielzahl von einlaufenden u. bestehenden Informationen ueber die *Rote Armee*, wonach diese in Fuehrung u. Ausbildung als *unzulaenglich* fuer eine Auseinandersetzung mit der dt. *Wehrmacht* angesehen wurde. Die in diesem Zusammenhang *seit Herbst 1940 in der quantitativen Feindlage registrierte staendige Vermehrung sowjetischer Verbaende* wurde zwar zur Kenntnis genommen, *loeste aber keine ernsthafte Bedenken ueber die erfolgssaussichten des Feldzuges aus*. Ja selbst die bedenkliche Meldungen der einzelnen Fachleute, wonach die *personellen u. materiellen Reserven des Heeres kaum ueber den Herbst 1941 hinaus ausreichen wuerden*, konnten den Generalstabschef nicht von der Unmoeglichkeit des gesamten Vorhabens ueberzeugen. Halder was sozusagen bereit, *alles auf eine Karte zu setzen*. Er selbst, wie auch

Hitler u. Brauchitsch, schien ueberzeugt die entscheidenden Truempfe zu haben u. die gesamten Operationen bald beenden zu koennen. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 242-44)

Apr 41: „The Balkan [campaign] postponed the opening of [the Russian] campaign by *five and a half weeks*.“ As it happened, it would probably have had to be postponed in any case, since the *thaw came late* in 1941 and the River Bug, in **4. Army's** sector, overflowed its banks as late as early June ... The Balkan campaign and the late thaw had lost us valuable weeks.“ (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 36)

April 41: „The *Balkan campaign*, often depicted by historians as an unwelcome diversion from Hitler's long-laid plan to attack the Soviet Union and as a *disabling interruption* of the timetable he had marked out for its inception, had been in fact *no such thing*. It had been successfully concluded even more rapidly than his prof. mil. advisers could have anticipated; while the choice for D-Day for *Barbarossa* had always depended not on the sequence of contingent events but on the *weather* and objective mil. factors. The German army found it *more difficult than expected* to position the units allocated for *Barbarossa* in Poland; while the *lateness of the spring thaw*, which left the eastern European rivers in spate [?] beyond the predicted date, meant that *Barbarossa* could not have begun much earlier than the *third week in June*, whatever Hitler's intentions. (J. Keegan, *Second World War*, 174)⁶⁴

Apr 41: *Balkanfeldzug*: Nehring also writes of this campaign causing a „zeitliche Verschiebung um fuenf Wochen...“ (Nehring, *Panzerwaffe*, 219, 242)

April 41 [*Balkan campaign*]: “General Halder said that the *weather conditions* were not suitable before the time when the invasion was actually launched.” (B.H.L. Hart, *German Generals Talk*, 142)

3.4.41: Three days before the beginning of the Balkan campaign, the OKW concluded: “The opening date for *Barbarossa* will be *delayed at least four weeks* as a result of the Balkan operation. A further postponement of about **10** days ensued when the German deployment was *delayed by unusually heavy rains* in May. “There can be no doubt that the loss of almost six weeks of precious summer weather had a *decisive and ominous effect* on the outcome of the eastern campaign.” (Assmann, *Battle for Moscow*, 309)

30.5.41: Another spring had brought more dazzling German victories, and the predicament of Britain, which now held out alone, battered at home by nightly *Luftwaffe* bombings, its armies overseas chased out of Greece and Cyrenaica, seemed *darker and more hopeless* than ever before. Its prestige . . . had sunk to a new low point. With *Crete* conquered by **27 May**, Admiral Raeder, who has always been lukewarm about *Barbarossa*, appeals to Hitler on **30.5.41** to prepare a decisive offensive against Egypt and Suez, and Rommel, eager to continue his advance as soon as he had received reinforcements, sent similar pleas from North Africa. “This stroke,” Raeder tells the Fuehrer, “would be more deadly to the British Empire than the capture of London!” But the Fuehrer already had made up his mind; in fact, he had not changed it since the Christmas holidays when he had promulgated *Barbarossa* [i.e., Directive No. 21]. He told Raeder that Russia must be “eliminated first.” His landlocked mind simply did not comprehend the larger strategy advocated by the navy . . . The destruction of the Soviet Union came first; all else must wait. This, we can now see, “was a *staggering blunder*.” At this moment, the end of May 41, Hitler, w/

⁶⁴ **Note:** I think Keegan is probably correct here.

the use of only a fraction of his forces, could have dealt the British Empire a crushing blow, perhaps a fatal one. (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 827-29)⁶⁵

May-Jun 41: Opening of campaign in Russia delayed beyond original date of **15.5.41** for several weeks. Two factors contributed to delay: a) the *severe winter and spring weather conditions*, which conspired to damage the thinly-developed road network in the east, thus inhibiting the cross-country movement of tracked vehicles; and, b) the *political coup* of **28.3.41** in Yugoslavia, which brought to power an anti-German government. Historians and writers have placed much emphasis on this delay in the German attack, w/ the consensus that the *Balkan campaign* was a critical factor in the collapse of the German thrust on Moscow in first week of Dec 41. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 31)

May-Jun 41: In retrospect, the *Balkan campaign* was only a *footnote in the war*. It did not significantly postpone the invasion of Russia. The delay in the Russian campaign resulted more from *supply and organizational difficulties and poor ground and weather conditions* associated w/ the late spring than from the attack on Greece and Yugoslavia. At the most, Balkan ops affected the freshness and staying power of units transferred from ops in the south to the Russian campaign. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 76)

May-Jun 41: The attack on Russia would have to be postponed for up to four weeks [due to Balkan campaign]. In the event, however, fate was on Hitler's side: the spring of 1941 had brought unusually heavy rains to Central Europe, and the ground would have been too marshy for the *panzer* divisions which were the backbone of "*Barbarossa*" to operate earlier than they did; the rivers and dikes were flooded throughout western Russia. The divisions Hitler now committed to the Balkans would have remained idle until June anyway. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 219)

May-Jun 41: The delay "was fatal." Defenders of Hitler's military genius have contended that the Balkan campaign did not set back the timetable for *Barbarossa* appreciably and that in any case the postponement was largely due to the *late thaw that year* which left the roads in Eastern Europe deep in mud until mid-June. But the testimony of the key German generals is otherwise. Field Marshal Friedrich *Paulus*, who at the time was the *chief planner of the Russian campaign* on the Army General Staff, testified on the stand at *Nuremberg* that Hitler's decision to destroy Yugoslavia postponed the beginning of *Barbarossa* by "about five weeks." The Naval War Diary gives the same length of time. *Rundstedt* told Allied interrogators after the war that due to the Balkan campaign, "we began at least four weeks late. That," he added, "was a very costly delay." (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 829-30)

May-Jun 41: *Conventional view of influence of Balkan campaign on Barbarossa* put forth—among others—by *Kurt Assmann*: "Alle Vorbereitungen fuer diesen Feldzug ('*Barbarossa*') waren von langer Hand darauf abgestellt gewesen, dass er **Mitte Mai 1941** beginnen sollte." (He goes on to insist that attack on Russia not pushed back due to planning for „*Marita*," even after planned assault on Greece had been expanded (thru Hitler's order of 22.3.41) to include *all* of Greece..."Die vielfach vertretene Auffassung, dass das englische Eingreifen in Griechenland

⁶⁵ **Note:** In rationalizing *Barbarossa* to his generals, Hitler from the beginning stressed that destruction of Russia was best way to bring about collapse of Britain. Yet clearly, another option to defeat England was available to Hitler, and w/ a small fraction of the forces he committed against Russia. Why didn't he take it? Perhaps because his ultimate objective was *always* to destroy Russia, and with it, "Jewish-Bolshevism." Perhaps he only "lobbied" for the Russian offensive by emphasizing its role in defeating England because he felt that was best way to bring his generals on board.

eine Verschiebung des *Angriffstermin* fuer 'Barbarossa' herbeigefuehrt habe, ist daher nicht zutreffend. Als aber nach dem Beitritt Jugoslawiens zur Dreierpakt (25.3.) durch den *Staatsstreich in Belgrad* (27.3) die jugoslawische Regierung, die den Pakt abgeschlossen hatte, gestuerzt u. der Feldzug gegen Jugoslawien von Hitler beschlossen wurde, mussten die fuer den Balkan-Feldzug abgezweigten Kraefte so *erheblich verstaerkt werden* – im ganzen 9 Divisionen aus den rueckwaertigen Staffeln der fuer 'Barbarossa' bereitgestellten Kraefte –, dass am 3.4., drei Tage vor Beginn des Balkan-Feldzugs, das [OKW] verfuegte: *„Der Zeitpunkt fuer Barbarossa wird sich durch die Balkan-Operationen um mindestens 4 Wochen verschieben.“* Eine weitere Verschiebung um *etwa 10 Tage* trat ein, als eine fuer die Jahreszeit *ungewoehnliche Regenperiode im Mai* den dt. Aufmarsch verzoegerte...Es kann kein Zweifel darueber bestehen, dass der *Verlust von nahezu sechs kostbaren Sommerwochen von eintscheidendem u. verhaengnisvollem Einfluss auf den Ausgang des Ostfeldzugs gewesen ist.* (Assmann, *Deutsche Schicksalsjahre*, 255-56)⁶⁶

Jun 41: In Jun 41, the German Army fielded **175** infantry divisions, **21** panzer divisions and **15** motorized infantry divisions. Almost a third of the infantry divisions remained in western and southern Europe, leaving **120** for the invasion of Russia. This is an extraordinary number of men to leave out of the equation in a war to the death. A total of **38** divisions enjoyed peacetime garrison duties from Germany to the Low Countries and France; **8** divisions had an even easier time in Norway; **7** divisions had a less cushy time in the Balkans. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 20-23)

ca. Jun 41: The Army General Staff had chosen the central sector of the front as the main area of ops at an early stage in their planning. Army Group Ctr thus received a special role, which Halder took into consideration by assigning the chief of his operations department, Maj-Gen v. Greiffenberg, to its C-in-C, GFM v. Bock. Assuming basic agreement between the Army High Command and the army group, this arrangement provided an additional guarantee that direct contact between Hitler and v. Bock or similar "cross-fire from the upper atmosphere" would not lead to serious disagreement w/ regard to the priority of capturing Moscow. (GSWW, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 525)

14.6.41: The final „military powwow“ (14 June) lasts from 11:00 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. It was broken by lunch at 2:00 p.m., at which Hitler gave his generals yet another of his fiery, eve-of-the-battle pep talks. According to Halder, it was "a comprehensive political speech," w/ Hitler stressing that he had to attack Russia because her fall would force England to "give up." But the "bloodthirsty Fueher" [!] must have emphasized something else even more. Keitel told about it during direct examination on the stand at *Nuremberg*: "The main theme was that this was the *decisive battle* between two ideologies and that the practices which we knew as soldiers – the only correct ones under international law – had to be measured by completely different standards." Hitler thereupon, said Keitel, gave various orders for carrying out an *unprecedented terror* in Russia by "brutal means." "Did you, or did any other generals, raise objections to these orders?" asked Keitel's own attorney. "No. I personally made no remonstrances," the general replied. Nor did any of the other generals, he added. (Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 846; also, *Hassell, Diaries*, 198-99, which confirm Keitel's account)

14.6.41: Reich Chancellery packed w/ the *Wehrmacht* cdrs summoned for an all-day series of briefing conferences on the coming campaign. Secrecy was essential, so (paradoxically) uniforms

⁶⁶ Assmann also writes, "Mit dem 5 1/2 Wochen verspaeteten Antreten trug der dt. Ostfeldzug des Jahres 1941 von vornherein *den Keim des Misslingens in sich*. Das Beispiel Napoleons, der 1812 ebenfalls jahreszeitlich zu spaet angetreten war, war eine deutliche Warnung." (285)

were to be worn. Everybody was assigned *different street-entrances* by which to arrive at the sprawling Reich Chancellery complex, so that passerbys might not sense the urgency of the conference proceeding behind the *tall granite walls* that Albert *Speer* had built three years before. At **2:00 p.m.**, Hitler broke for lunch, which he took sitting at a long *oval-shaped table* w/ **28** of his top generals. An hour later he called for silence and spoke of his military reasons for attacking Russia. An unpublished noted taken by a *Luftwaffe* general survives:

Hitler's after-luncheon speech. The main enemy is still Britain. Britain will fight on as long as the fight has any purpose . . . But Britain's fight only makes sense as long as they can hope that American aid will take effect and that they may find support on the continent. This explains why they have high hopes that the Russians will intervene and tie down the Germans . . .

Russia's attitude is perpetually obscure; she exploited every moment of political or military preoccupation elsewhere to raise immediate political demands. We can see this happening in Russia's intervention in the Polish campaign, and again against the Baltic states and Finland, and now in the Balkans (*Bessarabia*, and the treaty of friendship w/ *Yugoslavia*) . . .

The Russian armed forces are strong enough to prevent us from demobilizing soldiers and feeding them into the arms and consumer-goods industries so long as this latent Russian threat persists. Even if we made peace w/ Britain this would still be so. We want this *conflict to come early*, however; indeed it is absolutely vital if we are not to forfeit the favorable conditions that prevail. The bulk of the Russian forces are standing on the frontier, so we have a good chance of defeating them right there.

Hitler rounded off his speech w/ a warning that the Russian forces outnumbered the German, but that the German command leadership, equipment, and experience were superior. Even so, he *warned against underestimating the Red Army*. It was probably on this occasion that when *Goering* loudly proclaimed to a cluster of other generals that this would be a victory on the same scale as those Hitler had already won, the *Fuehrer* took him by the arm and soberly corrected him: „*Goering, it will be our toughest struggle yet – by far the toughest!*“ *Goering* asked him why, and Hitler replied: „*Because for the first time we shall be fighting an ideological enemy, and an ideological enemy of fanatical persistence at that.*“ Three (**3**) years later, Hitler ruefully reminded his generals of these words. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 266-67)

22.6.41: “Das OKH, das am 22.6.41 ueber **208** dt. Divisionen verfuegte, beging zusammen mit Hitler eine absurde Verschwendung, so koennte man mit Generaloberst *Guderian* schliessen, als es auf zweitrangigen Kriegsschauplaetzen **55** Divisionen zurueckhielt. In Wirklichkeit *erlauben wir uns ein solches Urteil nicht*. Wir stellen in der Tat fest, dass von diesen **55** Divisionen **32** erst kuerzlich aufgestellt worden waren u. nicht fuer faehig angesehen werden durfen, an der *Operation Barbarossa* im Hinblick auf die Maengel an ihrem Fuehrerpersonal, ihrer Ausbildung u. ihrer Bewaffnung teilzunehmen. Also nur **23** wirklich einsatzfaehige Divisionen wurden vom Hauptoperationsgebiet ferngehalten. Bei einer Gesamtzahl von **176** ist dies etwas weniger als ein *Siebtel*. Wir bemerken dazu noch, dass **34** von **36** schnellen Grossverbaenden der *Wehrmacht* im Osten eingesetzt wurden. Die Erinnerung an den ‚Fuehrer‘ ist mit zu vielen Verstoessen gegen die wesentlichsten Prinzipien der Kriegfuehrung u. sogar gegen den gesunden militaerischen Menschenverstand beladen, als dass man von unserem Standpunkt aus nicht zoegern muesste, ihn von dieser schlecht begruendeten Anklage zu entlasten.“ (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 111-12)

22.6.41: “Im Gegensatz zu dem fehlerhaften Aufmarsch der Roten Armee, die es nicht rechtzeitig verstanden hatte, den fdl. Schwerpunkt zu erkennen . . . ist der vom OKH im Morgenrauen des **22.6.41** ausgefuehrte [Oplan] von *hoechster Einfachheit u. Klarheit*. Es besteht darin, die dt. Panzerarmeen auf den Fluegeln in die Tiefe der fdl. Abwehrstellung stossen zu lassen. Wenn sie das sowjet. rueckwaertige Gebiet, **150** oder **200** km von ihrer *Ablauflinie* entfernt, erreicht haben, gehen sie in einer Zangenbewegung vor, indem sich die eine gegen die andere auf der vermutlichen Rueckzuglinie des Feindes wendet. Die Infanteriearmeen, die in Gewaltmaerschen folgen, legen taeglich **50** bis **60** km zurueck, splintern die eingeschlossenen russ. Massen entlang der grossen Verbindungsstrassen auf u. vernichten sie. Die deutliche Ueberlegenheit der dt. *Luftwaffe* . . . erlaubt es den Fliegerkraefte Goerings, in der bei den Siegen in Frankreich u. Polen erprobten Weise in den Erdkampf einzugreifen.“ (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 126-27)

d. Hitler vs. his Generals:

Conflict between Hitler and his senior army advisors over campaign’s goals *had been building since Dec 40*. Halder believed *Moscow should be main target*—seat of Soviet government, major industrial center, transportation hub. Halder believed the Soviets would commit the largest and best portion of their remaining forces to defend it, thus ensuring the Red Army’s complete destruction. Hitler had other ideas. He believed the *economic targets* in the Ukraine and the Soviet forces in the Baltic region were equally important. Hitler put the primacy of Moscow in question as early as 5 Dec 40, after Halder briefed him on the army’s plan, but the two men left the issue unsettled at that point. (*Megargee*, 131)

“Weder Hitler noch die mil. Fuehrer zweifelten daran, dass die *Wehrmacht* stark genug war, die sowej. Streitkraefte im Laufe des Sommers vernichtend zu schlagen u. damit auch dem Krieg gegen die angloamerikanischen Seemaechte die entscheidende Wende zu geben.“ (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 173)

In their *postwar accounts*, surviving German generals claimed that *they opposed Hitler’s decision to attack the USSR*. The experience of WWI, they said, showed them *the folly of opening a two-front conflict*. **Halder** criticized Hitler in the harshest terms after the war for underestimating Russian strength. **Heusinger** also said the General Staff viewed the decision w/ extreme alarm. And **Guderian** wrote that he found the decision incredible, since Hitler himself had railed against the stupidity of the men who committed Germany to a two-front war in 1914. Yet *these protestations are a mix of truth, half-truth, and outright deception*. It is true many officers had misgivings about the coming campaign. Many—eg., *Halder, Brauchitsch*—could not see the sense of the operation; *they did not believe it was a valid way to strike at Britain*.

Thus, the generals’ *postwar accounts gave an accurate impression of their strategic misgivings*. However, they were less than honest when they claimed to have opposed *Barbarossa* on operational grounds. Most of Hitler’s advisors *agreed w/ his assessment that “a campaign against Russia would be a sand-table exercise in comparison [w/ the western campaign]*. Almost to a man, senior German officers *believed not only that a showdown w/ Bolshevism was necessary and inevitable but also that Germany could defeat Russia easily*. (*Megargee*, 102-4)⁶⁷

⁶⁷ See *Megargee*, pp 104-5, for brief discussion of the initial *Barbarossa* plans developed by the OKH (Marcks) and OKW (Lossberg). Both plans shared the assumption that the *Wehrmacht* would have to

D. Irving: “Opinion among Hitler’s principal advisors was *divided* about the Russian campaign. *Ribbentrop* had been convinced there was no alternative. *Brauchitsch* certainly did not oppose it. *Halder* gave no clear lead one way or the other: his papers show him to have regarded now Britain, now Russia, as Germany’s most important opponent; his mind was in confusion. *Keitel*’s opposition had been stilled. *Jodl* unquestionably regarded the Russian campaign as inevitable and was optimistic about the outcome. The Party leaders gloated in anticipation of the new empire awaiting them. Only *Goering* and *Raeder* voiced pertinent objections. The Reichsmarschall confronted Hitler w/ them on **13.11.40** . . . On **14.11.40**, it was Raeder’s turn to voice the *admiralty’s emphatic opposition* to attacking Russia before Britain had been defeated, and the admiral maintained this *vigorous criticism* of the plan until the end of the year.” (See, *Hitler’s War*, 181-82)

e. Force Structure:

Decision to *double the number of armored divisions* by reducing the number of tanks in each one did not merely reflect Hitler’s fondness for large orders of battle. The *German approach to mobile war* depended less on strength than on *timing*: a dozen tanks on the spot were better than 50 an hour later. But Germany’s industry was unable to provide the vehicles needed by the new divisions. *Occupied Europe was stripped of everything w/ four wheels and an engine—a process that did as much as the Balkan campaign to delay the attack*. Nor did vehicles designed for the city streets of France and Belgium have much life expectancy in a land where *paved roads was a rarity*. (*J. Steinhoff, Voices of the Third Reich*, 124)

Even more serious was the *condition of the infantry*. They were by no means regarded as mere mop-up troops for the tankers. The armored divisions were supposed to penetrate and dislocate Russian positions, *but the infantry was expected to bear the brunt of the actual fighting against an enemy w/ an historic image of resisting to the last man*. Unlike their counterparts in the West, *German divisions were raised in “waves” (Wellen)*, each w/ a different level of armament and equipment, depending on what was available at the time. They marched into Russia in 1941 w/ an assortment of rifles and guns that included *booty from a half-dozen armies*. The soldier’s only mobility was his legs. . . Supply and transport depended to a great extent on horses. Even most of the artillery was horse-drawn. Western horses, drafted from Belgium or Holland, were no better suited than western trucks to the conditions of the Soviet Union.

The Wehrmacht, in short, **had no real reserves**. If anything at all went wrong, solutions would have to be improvised. And the *strategic planning for Operation Barbarossa virtually guaranteed problems*. Instead of concentrating already-thin resources, Hitler’s final plan called for an advance along a broad front. . . Most of his generals, far from challenging the wisdom of “The Greatest Warload of All Time” [Groefaz!], accepted the principle that German soldiers could do anything as long as their wills held firm. (*J. Steinhoff, Voices of the Third Reich*, 124-25)

f. Personnel Planning:

destroy Russian forces *as far west as possible*, so that they could not withdraw into the interior and prolong the campaign. Neither Marcks nor Lossberg had any doubts about the feasibility of German objectives; both assumed the Russians possessed neither the operational skill to conduct a fighting withdrawal nor the reserves they would need to halt the invasion in the interior of the country. Marcks’ plan envisaged that the campaign would be over by end of Sep 41 at the latest.

In planning and preparations for *Barbarossa*, Germans ran into problems in the *personnel arena* that were just as serious as those connected w/ intelligence and logistics. In general terms (and this applied on the logistical side as well), one of the army's greatest sources of difficulty was the *fact that it had to alter its structure radically in the months leading up to the invasion of Russia*. Army grew from **120** to **180** divisions (later **207**, including **19** instead of **9** armored divisions). Manning, training and equipping the extra units was no simple matter. The enlargement was complete by the time *Barbarossa* began, but ***the army was definitely not, in qualitative terms, what it had been in May 1940.*** (Megargee, 130)

The army's overall personnel situation on eve of *Barbarossa* was not encouraging. *Fromm* reported to Halder on **20.5.41**, that there were **385 000** soldiers available in the Replacement Army (*Erzatzsheer*), plus **90 000** in the *field replacement battalions*. His office predicted 275 000 casualties in the border battles, then 200 000 more in September. Thus the army could run out of trained replacements by Oct 41, unless the OKH called up the next year group of recruits early. *Fromm* saw no need to do that, however; the risk that the army could find itself in the middle of campaign w/ no pool of trained manpower "could be borne." If Halder had any problem w/ that statement, he did not record it. He apparently *assumed the campaign would be over before the supply of troops ran out*. As ***Ernst Klink*** has noted, the ***problems in manning and equipping the army turned the leaders' assumption of a short campaign into an obligation***. The Germans simply could not afford to allow serious reverses that would lead to a winter campaign; they made *no preparations for such an eventuality* before 22 Jun 41. The fact that the General Staff could *generate such an exercise in wishful thinking* is a damning indictment of their professional standards. (Megargee, 130)

1.3.3: Intelligence (OKW / OKH):

E. Mawdsley: The German Army devoted limited resources to intelligence, especially strategic intelligence; it focused on operational solutions. The performance of German military intelligence, both in **1940-41** and later, was unimpressive. (*Thunder in the East*, 53)

D. Irving: "Probably no major campaign has ever been launched upon less Intelligence. The services had furnished Hitler – to say nothing of the lower commands – w/ only the most inadequate information on the Russians. They were certain of only one thing: the German fighting man's inborn superiority. All else was the product of rumor, speculation, and fragile calculations. Admiral *Canaris* told *Keitel* the *Abwehr* had drawn a blank on Russia. Conditions for espionage were impossible. Maps were nonexistent. The range of the army's radio-monitoring stations was strictly limited. Foreign Armies East appealed to the *Luftwaffe* to intensify photographic reconnaissance missions, as it would take eight weeks to print the maps and issue them to the troops. The Russian acft industry was an *unknown quantity* on which the veil was only gradually being lifted. Recent indications were that it was being expanded at a disconcerting speed . . . This lack of proper Intelligence was the *root cause of the ultimate disaster*." (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 205-06)

S.J. Lewis: German military intelligence paid scant attention to Russia after **1933**, when Hitler directed that the German Army withdraw its personnel from Russia. Germany still stationed a military attaché in Moscow, but the Soviets did not allow attaches to leave the city and severely restricted their access to information. Unlike many nations, the Soviet Union did not publish "white papers" on its military or defense expenditures. As a result, foreign powers (including Germany) had no real idea of Russia's military strength or capabilities. (*Forgotten Legions*, 129)

General comment: “Military intelligence has been much on my mind for the past three years because I have been writing a book about it. No military historian can fail to be interested by military intelligence, because *it intrudes into his subject at every turn*. The question I set out to answer is: ‘How important is intelligence in bringing victory or averting defeat?’ It is not a question often asked, even less rarely answered, because the *intrinsic fascination* of intelligence practices pushed it to the margin. F. H. *Himsley*, the historian of British intelligence in the real war against Hitler, made a sustained attempt to show how intelligence affected its outcome. His conclusion, which did not please the intelligence establishment, is that *the efforts of MI6 and Bletchley Park shortened the war, but emphatically did not win it*. His judgment has a general application – ***intelligence never wins wars***. As the American *David Kahn*, the supreme intelligence historian, puts it: ‘*There is an elemental point about intelligence – it is a secondary factor in war.*’“ (“*Forget about James Bond...*,” article by John Keegan)

Note: German intelligence on the Soviet ability to wage war was „profoundly wrong.“ The Germans had a good picture of the Soviet forces deployed well forward, but virtually no picture of the *second operational echelon*, and none of the *second strategic echelon*. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 173-75)

Note: German intelligence *persistently underestimated* Red Army strength by about **20%**. Hitler never believed the summaries of Russian production he received. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, 2)

Note [Jun 41]: Later events proved that the German intelligence analysts had over-emphasized the degree to which the Red Army was concentrated in the forward area, in part due to deliberate Soviet deceptive measures to deter German attack by portraying greater strength forward than was the actual case. In particular, these analysts were *totally unaware of the reserve group of armies being formed east of the Dnepr River*. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 33)

Note: “Ideological prejudices repeatedly resulted in an astonishing loss of any sense of proportion and led to increasingly radical attempts to solve problems requiring a pragmatic solution [such as the *partisan* issue, for ex.]...Perhaps even more harmful was the *effect of ideological preconceptions* on German military intelligence, the main result in that area being *constant underestimation* of the enemy and an often *grotesque overestimation* of Germany’s own possibilities. As this and other examples show, the ideological view of warfare was by no means an alien idea forced upon the military “professionals” by Hitler and fanatics in his inner circle; rather it was the natural consequence of a *specific image* of the enemy held by the German military elite responsible for ops in the East. In other words, the planning and execution of the German campaigns were strongly influenced by ideological factors from the beginning, a fact which had received insufficient attention, even in more recent studies, by British and American historians. (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 109)

Germans had *few true Russia experts*. One was the German military attaché to Moscow, ***Koestring***. According to *G.P. Megargee*: “Clearly the upper echelons of the German military were not interested in information that did not match their plans and preconceptions.”⁶⁸ *Michael Geyer’s* conclusion about Hitler can be broadened to include the senior military leaders: *they did not gather information in order to make major decisions but only to plan the implementation of decisions they had already made.*” The German Army was about “to march willingly into the

⁶⁸ **Note:** Megargee makes this assertion in reference to *Halder’s willingness to bend everything to his operational concept*. (115)

largest battle in history w/o anything more than the *flimsiest information* regarding its enemy.” (Megargee, 116)

B. Taylor: Sometime after signing of pact in **Aug 39**, Hitler forbade *Foreign Armies East* from gathering information on the Soviet Union, so as not to jeopardize the pact. This ban would seriously hinder an already inadequate knowledge of the Soviet Union. Economic potential of USSR was also *virtually unknown*. The existence of heavy industry east of the Urals was greatly underestimated not only by Germany, but by the rest of the world. (*Barbarossa to Berlin*, 3-5)

David Glantz: The Germans “*congenitally underestimated Soviet strength*.” (Glantz, *Zhukov’s Greatest Defeat*, 47)

OKW Intelligence Organs:

a. Amt Ausland/Abwehr:

OKW controlled several military intelligence-gathering and assessment organizations. First among these was *Amt Ausland/Abwehr*, or Office of Foreign- and Counterintelligence, under Admiral **Wilhelm Canaris**. This office was responsible for, among other things, *gathering information on foreign political and military affairs* and disseminating it to the armed forces and various government agencies. It fed information directly to the intelligence officers in the Field Army. (**Note**: For more on mission, organization of this agency see, *Megargee*, 105-6)

Ausland/Abwehr’s *field headquarters in the East* were responsible for clandestine collection, special ops, subversion, and counter-espionage and counter-intelligence. Abwehr operations did not fall w/in the strict scope of FHO activities; however, Abwehr HQ in Berlin furnished intelligence to FHO from the beginning. (*D. Thomas*, 261)

Stab WALLI: Abwehr field organization in the East responsible for espionage, sabotage and counter-intelligence. It was placed under control of FHO in the spring of 1942 (departments I (espionage) and III (counter-intelligence) only). (*D. Thomas*, 261)

For a decade preceding *Barbarossa*, the Abwehr exerted great efforts to gather intelligence on Russia—*without success*. The material submitted by Amt Ausland/Abwehr before Jun 41 contained in FHO files *is of poor quality*. The planning of *Barbarossa* revealed that the **Abwehr knew almost nothing about Soviet Russia**. A German General Staff Soviet analyst described the contribution of Abwehr thus: “*Die Masse des Nachrichtenmaterials, das wir erhielten, war Mist*.” This situation was expected to change after the start of *Barbarossa*, because Abwehr would be able to enter the Soviet Union and *establish agent networks, conduct sabotage, reconnaissance and subversive missions in the Soviet rear*, while availing itself of captured and stolen Soviet secret documents. This made *closer cooperation between the Wehrmacht and Abwehr necessary*; to this purpose, a *formal arrangement for cooperation was concluded on 9.6.41*, under which the Abwehr was given specific operational tasks in support of the army. (*D. Thomas*, 265)⁶⁹

⁶⁹ **Note**: For Abwehr’s formation of *Frontaufklarungskommandos* (FAKs) and *Frontaufklarungstrupps* (FATs) see, *Thomas*, p 265. The FAKs and FATs were restricted to operations in the front area of the army groups to which they were assigned. The first function of FAKs I and III was the deployment of agents (*V-Leuten*) in the frontline area. While large majority of Abwehr agents caught, “turned,” or used

Die Ursache fuer die fundamentale Fehleinschaetzung der Truppenstaerke des Feindes lag nicht zuletzt darin, dass infolge des Paktes mit Stalin der *Abwehr* von Hitler jedwede Taetigkeit gegen die Sowjetunion verboten worden war. Die Abteilung *Fremde Heere Ost* im **OKH** hatte daher fuer die Planung des Unternehmens „*Barbarossa*“ nur hoechst unzureichende Kenntnisse ueber die Rote Armee. Die Folge war, dass man von voellig falschen Voraussetzungen ausgehend den Feldzug begonnen hatte. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 531-32)⁷⁰

Zabecki Encyclopedia [Abwehr]:

The *Abwehr* was the German High Command's *unified, all-services branch for strategic espionage, sabotage, and counterespionage*. The individual services retained their own intelligence sections for operational and tactical intelligence. The *Abwehr* was created in the **1920s** but had predecessors going back to *Frederick the Great*. When Navy captain (later admiral) **Wilhelm Canaris** became head of the *Abwehr* in **1935**, the agency was „in shambles.“ By **1941**, however, Canaris had *revitalized it*. According to *Michael Geyer*, the *Abwehr* „commanded its own sprawling apparatus, its own field organization in Germany and abroad, and also a small police force..., several intelligence field units, and...specialized combat units for sabotage and commando ops.“ After **1936**, the *Abwehr* was organized into *three main sections* corresponding to its three major tasks, plus two other less important bureaus:

Abwehr I: Responsible for espionage. It collected military, political, economic, and social information on foreign powers.

Abwehr II: Engaged in sabotage and subversion, including commando raids in wartime. Some-times called „covert operations“ or „special duties,“ this was the most controversial of the agency's three main functions. It was used by the *Wehrmacht* in 1938 Sudetenland crisis to instigate acts of sabotage. Later, a commando unit called the ***Brandenburgers*** thrust deep into Poland, Belgium, Holland, and Russia simultaneously w/ the *Wehrmacht* attacks on these countries in 1939-41. Its goal was to *secure strategic bridges, forts, and other installations* before they could be destroyed or defended. In **1940-41**, *Abwehr II* was given a *disinformation task*, namely misleading the Soviets into thinking that the military buildup prior to Operation *Barbarossa* was actually directed at England.

Abwehr III: Counterespionage involved protecting the German armed forces from enemy spies, including possible German traitors. It therefore included domestic surveillance. This was the *least controversial* of the *Abwehr's* activities.

unwittingly by the Soviets, “at the tactical and operational level, FHO obtained useful intelligence from the agent sources controlled by WALLI I. However, FHO was not able to rely on WALLI I for timely intelligence about Soviet operational intentions, except in the case of reports from the ***Max Organization***, the most important *Abwehr* network. (266-67)

⁷⁰ **Note:** This is most likely an overstatement. Even if Canaris' *Abwehr* had been given complete freedom of action, it most likely would have had very little success trying to penetrate the Soviet Union – that “counterintelligence state,” as it has been called.

One feature distinguishes the *Abwehr* from virtually every other central agency in the Nazi government: several of its top officers were *opposed to Hitler's* military goals and criminal activities. The main dissidents in *Abwehr* were *Admiral Canaris* himself, a conservative nationalist whose role in the opposition to Hitler was often ambiguous and fluctuated w/ events; **Hans Oster**, Canaris's chief of staff; and **Hans v. Dohnanyi**, head of the head of the foreign policy reports desk in the central administrative office...Headquartered in Berlin's government district, *Abwehr* officers regularly traveled to foreign countries on official business where they made contacts and promoted their cause...Hitler dismissed *Canaris* as chief of *Abwehr* on **11.2.44**. The next day, the SS descended on the *Abwehr* and began to distribute its sections to the **SD** and **RSHA**. The *Abwehr* was finished. *Canaris* himself was initially placed under house arrest, later released, and then rearrested following the **20.7.44** attempt on Hitler's life. On **9.4.45**, he was hanged for high treason. Ironically, he had *nothing to do w/ Claus v. Stauffenberg's* assassination plot. (*Zabecki, Encyclopedia, 569-70*)

b. Gruppe Chiffrierstelle OKW:

OKW also maintained a *Cipher Group* in its Armed Forces Communications Branch (*Abteilung Wehrmacht-Nachrichtenverbindungen*) that intercepted and decoded both military and diplomatic traffic and passed on anything of interest to the services. (*Megargee, 106*)

c. OKW Wehrwirtschaftliche Abteilung:

Finally, OKW's *Defense Economy Branch* provided information on enemy production capabilities. (*Megargee, 106*)

OKH Intelligence Organs:

Army also gathered and evaluated information on its own, and not just within the narrow military realm. Up to mid-1941, the army's top leaders *paid close attention to the broader context of the war*. For example, *Halder* maintained numerous contacts of his own; he met occasionally w/ *Canaris*, the Foreign Office liaison officer to OKH, State Secretary *von Weizsaecker*, foreign representatives, etc. Halder also met regularly with the branch chiefs from the General Staff's Foreign Armies West and East (see below). (*Megargee, 106-7*)

As far as intelligence concerned the planning for *Barbarossa* centered on the trio of *Halder*, *Tippelskirch* (later *Matzky*) and Colonel **Eberhard Kinzel** (chief of Foreign Armies East). **Tippelskirch** was the Army's *assistant chief-of-staff for intelligence*; he was responsible for supervising the army's intelligence assessment efforts. He was always present at Halder's briefings, and the two men also met separately once or twice a week. (**Note:** Before Jun 41, *Tippelskirch* was replaced by **Gerhard Matzky**).

The Army General Staff's intelligence apparatus consisted primarily of two branches: *Foreign Armies West* and *Foreign Armies East*.⁷¹ Sources for both agencies in *peacetime* included: foreign official publications, military literature, press reports, radio and movies, signals intercepts

⁷¹ On the origins of these branches, and for an overview of their history up to 1941, see Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 418-23, 428.

and radio direction finding, and information from military attaches and the OKW intelligence organs. *In wartime* some of those sources—such as military attaches—would dry up, but others would become available: troop reconnaissance, POW interrogations, aerial reconnaissance, and captured documents. (Megargee, 107)

a. Foreign Armies West:

As of **1.5.41**, it covered, among other areas: British Empire, including Iraq, India, and British possessions of the Far East, as well as USA and South America.

b. Foreign Armies East:

Fremde Heere Ost (FHO) was department of OKH responsible for evaluation of all military intelligence about the Soviet Union, including the analysis of Soviet intentions and strategy. As of **1.5.41**, it was responsible for Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, China, Japan and for some Scandinavian countries. This agency headed by *Col Eberhard Kinzel*. Amazingly enough, he had *no special training in intelligence, did not speak Russian, and could boast no special familiarity w/ the country*. The fact that Germans would entrust such a man w/ a task of such importance speaks volumes. (Megargee, 107, 111) In Spring 1942, Kinzel was replaced by Richard Gehlen.

Fremde Heere Ost (FHO) was established on **10 Nov 38**. (Headed from beginning by *Kinzel*.) Was responsible initially for collection of *statistical data* and technical information concerning the armies of Poland, the Scandinavian countries, some Balkan countries, China and Japan, the Soviet Union, and the USA. The collection of data about the Red Army *did not become the primary task of FHO until 31 Jul 40*, when Hitler informed the General Staff of his intention to attack the Soviet Union. Before this date, the Soviet Union was merely one of the areas for which the FHO was responsible and the organizational structure *reflects this low priority assigned to Russian intelligence*. Until invasion of Russia in Jun 41, FHO concerned itself primarily w/ evaluation of statistical data and technical intelligence about the Red Army, furnished by: a) Amt Ausland/Abwehr in OKW (agent reports and reports of German military attaches, primarily from *Helsinki* and Moscow); b) Abteilung ***Fremde Luftwaffe Ost*** (aerial reconnaissance photographs of Red Army troop concentrations, installations, fortifications); c) the *Wehrwirtschafts-u. Ruestungsamt* (Soviet armament production and mil.-tech. data); and, d) the *Leitstelle fuer Nachrichtenaufklaerung Ost* (signal reconnaissance relating to the Red Army). Before commencement of *Barbarossa*, FHO *did not essay to draw broad conclusions regarding the Red Army*, leaving this function to the *Operationsabteilung* of the General Staff. (D. Thomas, 262)

Owing to unsatisfactory performance of German military intelligence in general, and FHO in particular, during the first year of war against Russia, Halder replaced Kinzel w/ Gehlen and *elevated FHO from an essentially statistical organization to the de facto status of an operational department directly subordinated to the Chief of the General Staff and the Operationsabteilung of OKH*. FHO under Gehlen was granted authority to formulate its own judgements regarding large-scale operational issues, including planned German offensives, anticipated Soviet attacks, and probably Soviet military capabilities and intentions. In spring of 1942, OKW agreed to place ***Stab WALLI***, sections I (agent espionage) and III (counter-intel) under the operational direction of FHO. Thus, FHO *assumed responsibility for collecting and evaluating data, and for providing an independent estimate of enemy situation (Feindlagebeurteilung)*. Gehlen reorganized FHO in

May 42, and the new organizational structure was retained w/ minor modifications until end of war. (D. Thomas, 263)⁷²

Foreign Armies East produced a variety of reports on the Soviets. These included a *daily report entitled "Important Features of the Enemy Situation (Eastern Front)"*⁷³ that went to most of the staff sections in the OKH as well as to the subordinate commands. In addition, the branch produced a *daily report on the strength and disposition of Soviet forces*...One point of interest about these reports is that Foreign Armies East usually *did not try to forecast enemy intentions*; instead, it provided *raw information* on enemy movements, reinforcements, etc. (*Inside Hitler's High Command*, G.P. Megargee, 158-9)

Heusinger [bei einer Befragung im MGFA, Feb 66]: Weiterhin haette "die Arbeit der Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost [...] zu grossen Ent-taeuschungen gefuehrt." Der Abteilungschef, Oberst i.G. Kinzel, haette mit „einer gewissen Leichtfertigkeit“ „wenn er mal eine Nachricht hatte, ja, da schein ein hoeherer Stab zu sein,“ auf die Lagekarte „eine Division hereingesetzt.“ Dieses *Feindlagebild* sei dann auch mitbenutzt worden, „um zu dokumentieren, dass Russland im Begriff gewesen waere, nach Westen anzugreifen.“ Ueber die Dislozierung der russ. Streitkraefte, „dass sie ziemlich doch weiter in der Tiefe schon standen, sei man sich nicht klar gewesen. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 850, f.n. 22)

Signals Intelligence:

Regarding sources of intelligence used by FHO prior to *Barbarossa*, signal reconnaissance (*Nachrichtenaufklaerung*) and aerial reconnaissance provided much of the hard information about current deployments, order-of-battle, and command structure of the Red Army. From **22.6.41**, FHO began to base its computation of Soviet order-of-battle and its evaluation of Red Army capabilities and intentions on intel data gleaned from *six major sources*: a) troop reconnaissance, b) POW interrogations, c) aerial reconnaissance, d) signals intelligence, e) agent reports (Abwehr I and III), f) captured Soviet documents. (D. Thomas, 264)

Signals reconnaissance was the *most important source of intelligence* available to FHO concerning the Red Army order-of-battle, the grouping of Soviet forces, functioning of the Soviet chain-of-command, and Soviet operational intentions. Radio reconnaissance (*Funkaufklaerung*) was the most effective and important type of signal reconnaissance on the eastern front.⁷⁴ *Drahtaufkalerung* (telephone reconnaissance), including the tapping of Soviet telephone lines and field cables, was restricted mostly to the tactical level. The interception of Soviet diplomatic radio traffic (*Diplomatenfunk*) was *totally unsuccessful*. (D. Thomas, 267)

Before *Barbarossa*, the *Kommandeur, Horchtruppen Ost* was responsible for signal reconnaissance, which was conducted from three fixed stations: *Warsaw, Koenigsberg, and Breslau*, by four Horch coys. After the invasion, the *Leitstelle fuer die Nachrichtenaufklaerung Ost* in OKH was set up; it passed the signals intelligence gleaned from radio reconnaissance on to FHO. Also, signal reconnaissance regiments *were attached to every army group*. German signal

⁷² See Thomas article for details of new org. structure set up by Gehlen (263-64).

⁷³ *Wesentliche Merkmale der Feindlage (Ostfront)*.

⁷⁴ However, radio reconnaissance only furnished information about the portion of the Soviet Union that was accessible to it; radio reconnaissance provided almost no hard intelligence about Soviet reserve formations in the interior, Soviet active-duty units *not* stationed in European Russia, and the operation of the Red Army conscription system (275).

reconnaissance achieved its best results at the *tactical and operational level*, by “unbuttoning” Red Army two, three and four-digit ciphers, and by establishing the tactical order-of-battle and command structures and groupments of Soviet forces by means of *radio direction-finding (Funkpeilung)*; traffic analysis (*Verkehrsauswertung*) and content evaluation (*Inhaltsauswertung*). The Germans also *broke certain NKVD ciphers*, as well as ciphers used by the Soviet RR organization, inland shipping vessels, collective farms, and certain defense factories. The *Luftwaffe signal reconnaissance* organization broke some high-level Soviet Air Force ciphers, including those transmitting meteorological data. However, like the Army, *Luftwaffe* signal reconnaissance obtained most of its intelligence about strength and deployment of Red Air Force units through the interception of ground radio traffic and by aerial direction finding and analysis of pilot and air controller communications. (D. Thomas, 268)

German signal reconnaissance *never broke any high-level Soviet army, intelligence, or diplomatic cipher*. The impenetrability of all Soviet strategic cryptosystems therefore deprived FHO of any veracious intelligence about Soviet military strategy and intelligence ops based on high-level encoded traffic between the STAVKA and Red Army field HQs at army and front level, and between the Moscow HQ of the GRU, NKGB, NKVD, and SMERSH and major field offices in Soviet territory, singleton agents and agent groups in the German rear, and *lega* and illegal *Rezidentura* in foreign countries. Nevertheless, ***signals intelligence was the basic source for most FHO estimates of the enemy situation.*** (D. Thomas, 268-69)

Operational signals intelligence may not have been a panacea, but it was a *highly welcome command tool* for deploying German forces, always operating on the verge of overextension, to the maximum effect. *As such it was indispensable...*An analysis of the *typical command problems* that repeatedly plagued the operational command echelons during the first, seemingly successful, phase of *Barbarossa* makes it all the more clear how *indispensable signals intel* was. The questions they had to confront were always of the same basic nature: Where should the advancing troops, thrusting in a funnel shape, close the ring of encirclement around as many Soviet forces as possible, as securely as possible, w/o failing to reach their next objectives which lay still further forward? Or, where and when would the Soviets, w/ their numerical superiority, launch a counterattack against the *chronically exposed German flanks*? Such problems caused *constant worries concerning “large” and “small” operational solutions*, and repeatedly manifested themselves in *operational crises*. ***Only signals intel could supply in time the information on Soviet forces’ strength and intentions necessary to overcome this strain.*** Thus the German army in the east was able to maintain—initially—its balance. (*Sigint and ‘Blitzkrieg,’ D. Arazi, 228-29*)

ca. Oct 41 [Signals intelligence]: *Colonel Stoves*: “I served as an S-2 under the G-2 of 1. PD in 1942. We were not afraid of the G-2 work on the other side. In our opinion they had much to learn. We improved our own tactical recon results by creating an interception-recon team in each of our signal btns. A special trooper came from signals command in Berlin. He brought special equipment which enabled us to tap into the main Russian wire line from Moscow to Leningrad, which was 45 miles away. We listened to command communications on that line. We noted all tactical intercepts, and when we took prisoners later, the numbers of the divisions on the other side matched. This was during the Moscow operation.” [Note: Date not clearly delineated.] (*Glantz, Initial Period of the War, 447*)

German Radio Intercept Service:⁷⁵

The intercept service was divided into two branches—the more traditional *Stationary Intercept Posts* (***Feste Horchstellen***) in the Military Districts, established since the First World War, and the mobile, motorized *Intercept Companies* (***Horchkompanien***), created by Fellgiebel, which were to *advance w/ the attacking forces*. At the top of the hierarchy was the *Main Intercept Post* (***Horchleitstelle***), directly under Fellgiebel himself, which was *exclusively devoted to operational intelligence*. (A different department, the *Cipher Section*—***Chiffrierwesen-Abteilung***—was tasked w/ *strategic intelligence*.)

After some “teething troubles” during the Polish and French campaigns, intelligence *gained the operational command echelons’ trust* and, in keeping w/ the principles of *Blitzkrieg*, underwent a *process of decentralization*. On basis of experience gained in these campaigns, *Fellgiebel* gave up tight control of signal intel from above, as it had proved to be slow and operationally inflexible, and loosened the *Horchleitstelle’s* grip on the individual intercept units. At the *operational level*, i.e. at the *Army Group level* he created staffs of “*Commanders of Intercept Troops*” (***Kommandeure der Horchtruppen***) and gave them a *large degree of operational autonomy*.

One permanent target of German radio intelligence was, of course, Soviet Union. Following Russian Revolution, the *Cipher Section* closely studied Polish signals intelligence successes against the Soviets during war of **1920**, and successfully deciphered numerous Soviet military and diplomatic codes during the 1920s and 30s. The *mobile intercept service* did not come into its own until the *Spanish Civil War*, when it had the opportunity to conduct a “war by proxy” against the Soviet army radio system: the Republican army’s signals communications equipment was mainly of Soviet origin. As in many other fields, this war served as a *test bed for German signals intel* and as a dry run for WWII. The systematic examination of captured Soviet wireless equipment and coding keys, the interrogation of captured signals personnel and the experience working against Soviet military communications procedures *formed the basis for work during the later war against the Soviet Union*.

The *intercept companies* deployed in the Polish campaign of **1939** monitored the radio transmissions of the officially friendly Red Army during its invasion of Eastern Poland, gaining a *lively impression of the Soviets’ lack of radio discipline and faulty security arrangements*. When most intercept coys were transferred westwards for the campaign against France, a “*Commander of Intercept Troops East*” (***Kommandeur der Horchtruppen Ost***) was left in occupied Poland to continue monitoring the Soviet Union from the *intercept posts in Koenigsberg/Cranz and Striegau* w/ the **3rd/7** and **3rd/18 Intercept Coys**. Following the Western Campaign, he was placed under *Heeresgruppenkommando B* (later *Hr.Gr.Mitte*), which had moved eastwards. Before *Barbarossa*, during the massive German redeployment to the East, the *principle of decentralization* was invoked again to create similar staffs within the other army groups, too, and the observation area was divided between them.

On eve of invasion of Russia, *German signals intelligence in the east comprised 8 intercept units*, which meant a total of **250 receivers** along an attack sector of around 1000 km—as against an estimated number of **10 000 Red Army transmitters**—an *astounding imbalance*. Within the terms of the Germans’ *Blitzkrieg* thinking, trusting their own *qualitative superiority*, it was

⁷⁵ **Note:** This section gleaned from, “***SIGINT and ‘Blitzkrieg’ German Military Radio Intelligence in Operation ‘Barbarossa.’***” Doron Arazi. In: *From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World, 1939-1941.* Ed. Bernd Wegner. 226-35.

considered acceptable. This imbalance, of course, *merely reflected the general imbalance of forces that marked Barbarossa from the beginning*—and ultimately caused its failure. (*Sigint and 'Blitzkrieg,' D. Arazi, 226-28*)⁷⁶

Commander of Army Group Center, GFM v. Bock, *paid personal attention to signals intel reports*. His knowledge of Soviet command difficulties during the great encirclement battle near *Smolensk*, was based on radio intercept reports, as his *diary entries* show. (For more details see, *Sigint and 'Blitzkrieg,' D. Arazi, 230-31*)

The culmination of German radio reconnaissance activities in the field was the *comprehensive enemy radio situation report (Feindfunklagemeldung)*, based on the findings over a 24-hour period, which was produced and passed on to the Army Group's *IC officer*. These reports based on the findings of *traffic analysis* (Soviet wavelengths, network links, call and operating signs) and *VN-Meldungen* which, under the code-name *Verlaessliche Nachricht* (reliable source), contained the results of *contents analysis*, i.e., clear or already decoded msgs. (**Note:** Here, the author seems to be talking only about ops at Army Group South. For more details see, *Sigint and 'Blitzkrieg,' D. Arazi, 230-33*)

For its part, the Main Intercept Post (*Horchleitstelle* / Fellgiebel) reported its findings thru a liaison officer to *Foreign Armies East* department of the General Staff. They *played a major part in the department's overall situation assessment*. (233)

Although this had already become clear on the resumption of the German offensive in the autumn of 1941, after the *Soviet winter offensives in December signals intel was finally forced into a defensive role from which* (apart from the short interlude of the German summer offensive of 1942) *it was never to emerge again*. The conversion of signals intel's commander and patron, *General Fellgiebel*, from a loyal servant of Hitler to a member of the military conspiracy against him was surely due, at least in part, to his realization that his concept of *Blitzkrieg*, even using the most modern communications technology, no longer had any future.

End Arazi article.

ab 22.6.41 [Soviet wireless procedures]: Soviet staffs lacked effective communications to control their subordinates and report the situation to their superiors. Once German infiltrators and air strikes hamstrung the fixed telephone network, many HQs were unable to communicate at all. Even the military district HQs, which upon mobilization became *front* commands, were short of long-range radio equipment and skilled radio operators. *Existing Soviet codes were so cumbersome that cdrs often transmitted their mgs "in the clear,"* providing ample tactical intelligence for the German radio-intercept units. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed, 64*)

Aerial Reconnaissance:

⁷⁶ However, *Arazi* also notes: The imbalance between the available radio reception capacity (one intercept company was able to operate **36** receivers simultaneously, dropping to **24** in the case of round-the-clock monitoring) and the huge theater of ops made extensive overall surveillance impossible...Still, signals intel never lost its grip on the overall picture of the *Soviet order of battle and deployment*. (232)

After signals intelligence, *air reconnaissance* was the most reliable source of strategic intelligence available to FHO. Railroad reconnaissance (*Eisenbahnaufklaerung*) and the reconnaissance of principal roads (*Strassenaufklaerung*) constituted the most valuable forms of strategic air reconnaissance used by FHO in evaluation of Soviet intentions.⁷⁷ However, the *outstanding aptitude of the Red Army and Red Air Force for camouflage and concealment* at the tactical, operational, and strategic level, the characteristics of Russian terrain, weather conditions, Soviet air defenses and the *shortage of German reconnaissance acft* all combined to restrict the effectiveness of air reconnaissance, esp. after 22 Jun 41. *Fremde Luftwaffe Ost* (German Air Force Intelligence) never achieved the level of efficiency and sophistication in the collection, processing and evaluation of air reconnaissance data attained by air intelligence organizations of the British and Americans. (D. Thomas, 269-70)

Oct 40 [Rowehl Geschwader]: Lt.-Col. Rowehl received a personal and top-secret order from Hitler: „You will organize long-range reconnaissance formations, capable of photographic reconnaissance of Western Russian territory from a great height. This height must be so exceptional that the Soviets will not notice anything.“ In the late winter, „Rowehl Geschwader“ began its secret flights. Machines used were **He-111** w/ special high-altitude engines; **Do-215-B2**, a special model made by the Dornier works. Special Junkers models, the **Ju-88B** and **Ju-86P** – magnificent machines capable of reaching **33,000** and **39,000** feet, respectively. That was a sensational height for those days. These long-range recon flights were *virtually the only source of really significant intelligence material for the first phase of the campaign*. All the airfields in Western Russia, including the well-camouflaged fighter bases near the frontier, were photographed. (See, P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 60)

22.6.42: Der militaerische Nachrichtendienst [i.e., FHO] legte mit dem Naeherruecken des Angriffstermins immer genauere Angaben ueber das Ausmass des sowj. Aufmarsches vor. Gemeinsam mit den Ergebnissen der Luftaufklaerung, die rechtswidrig in den sowj. Luftraum eindrang, ergab sich somit unmittelbar vor dem **22 Jun 41** eine Konzentration gegenerischer Truppen besonders in den beiden weit nach Westen vorspringenden Frontboegen [i.e., Suwalki, etc.] Dahinter standen bis zu einer Tiefe von **350** Kilometer zahlreiche operative Gruppierungen, die so disloziert waren, dass sich eine offensive Bedrohung ablesen liess. Damit war die Erste strategische Staffel ziemlich zutreffend erfasst. Da aber die Frontaufklaerung darueber hinaus nicht weiter in der Tiefe wirken konnte, *blieb dem Nachrichtendienst die **Existenz der Zweiten strategischen Staffel** u. der sonstigen Reserven verborgen*. (H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 34)

Fall 41: „Fuer mich ist es heute noch ein *Raetsel*, dass unsere *Fernluftaufklaerung* zwar lebhaften Verkehr, aber meines Wissens niemals in diesen u. den vorhergehenden Tagen den **strategischen Aufmarsch der Fernostarmeen** meldete. Aber auch der noch Ende Oktober gemeldete *verstaerkte Eisenbahnverkehr* haette das OKW zur Vorsicht mahnen sollen. Spaetestens Mitte November, als von den Heeresverbaenden das *Auftreten sibirischer Verbaende* an der Front gemeldet wurde, haette man das Zurueckgehen in eine *Winterstellung* anordnen muessen.“ (Kesselring, *Soldat*, 130)

⁷⁷ To insure accurate interpretations of air reconnaissance, the *Luftwaffe* practice was to fly photo reconnaissance missions of strategically important stretches of road and of key railroad stations and transshipment installations three times a day. By this method, *Luftwaffe* intelligence was able to estimate, w/ a reasonable degree of accuracy, the number of trains and thus the number of troops and vehicles (such as tanks) that were being transported over a specific stretch of track or road (270).

Counterintelligence:

This assumed a *position of special importance in German intelligence ops on the eastern front*. When Germany invaded Russia neither the Abwehr nor FHO (nor RSHA) possessed any realistic conception of the complexity, the intensity, and scale of the war that they would be compelled to wage against the Soviet intelligence and security services. OKH and Abwehr *grossly underestimated the Soviet intelligence threat to the Wehrmacht and never succeeded thereafter in confuting the activities of the Soviet services*. **Russia won the “intelligence war” on the eastern front**—not thru signals intelligence and aerial reconnaissance, as did Britain and American on the western front—but by means of *espionage* conducted by Soviet agents at every level of operations, from parachute agents in the tactical zone of the *Wehrmacht* in Russia, to networks and penetration agents w/ access to the German High Command and German intelligence organizations. (D. Thomas, 271-72)

During the initial advance into Russia, German counter-intelligence units *combed out the border zone to a depth of 200-300 km*. Following the armored units closely, the **FATs** concentrated on larger cities, HQs, and Soviet governmental offices as their targets. The **FAKs** were concentrated to await the occupation of Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev and Odessa. When it was discovered that there were *numerous NKVD intelligence units* in the area between the border zones and the line Leningrad-Moscow-Kiev-Odessa, the *FATs were removed from the FAKs and assigned to the armies*. In 1941, **the FAKs and FATs captured so much Soviet documentary material that its evaluation could not be completed until shortly before the end of the war**. However, the most important success of WALLI III (counter-intel) in 1941 was the acquisition of a relatively complete picture of the Soviet intelligence and security services based on captured documents and the interrogation of captured Soviet agents and intelligence officers. (D. Thomas, 272)

When the German advance came to a standstill in late 1941, the changed military situation *created severe difficulties for WALLI III*. The flow of captured Soviet records reduced to a trickle, depriving the FAKs and FATs of their best source of operational intelligence. (D. Thomas, 273)

Fremde Heere Ost (Feindbeurteilungen):

CRUX: The overall assessment of the Red Army by FHO between **Jul 40–Jun 41** must be described as *incomplete and inaccurate*. After Jun 41, FHO continued its poor performance via *repeated judgement in its intelligence estimates that the Red Army was near collapse* and incapable of taking the offensive. Thus, between **Jul-Dec 41**, FHO issued a number of inaccurate estimates, which *nourished the overconfidence of OKH and Hitler*, and resulted in errors of German strategy and operational conduct at decisive moments in the campaign. To conclude, the *poor performance of FHO in evaluating the capabilities and the strength of the Red Army in connection w/ the planning of Barbarossa is “beyond dispute.”* Nor can there be any doubt about the *unsatisfactory record of FHO between June 1941 and April 1942* in assessing Soviet operational intentions and fighting power. FHO became more efficient under Gehlen, but still failed on a number of decisive occasions either to apprehend Soviet intentions or to predict major Red Army offensives at army and front level. (D. Thomas, 275, 279, 288-9)⁷⁸

15.1.41: Most wide-ranging assessment of Russia from Foreign Armies East appeared on this day. Two thousand copies of this assessment were issued. In essence, FHO was quite unclear

⁷⁸ For actual Soviet strength totals in 1941 see, *Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*, 71-6.

regarding the most important questions, namely, the strength and organization of the Red Army. It estimated peacetime strength of Soviet Army at about 2,000,000; a figure that would rise to 4,000,000—in 200 rifle divisions + other units—in wartime. Thru radio reconnaissance (primarily direction-finding) and aerial reconnaissance, FHO established that at least 11 Soviet armies had been formed in European Russia. The number of tank and motorized regiments and the number of special formations of artillery were not known. Moreover, FHO *evaluated the known Soviet tanks and armed vehicles as obsolete*, or as copies or modified versions of foreign models. As of this time, the existence of the T-34 main battle tank was unknown to FHO and the *Wehrwirtschaftsamt*, despite its use in the **Khalkin Gol** campaign in 1939. In fact, FHO *grossly miscalculated the number and quality of Soviet tanks*. FHO summed up the Red Army thus: “The clumsiness, schematism, avoidance of decisions and responsibility has not changed...The weaknesses of the Red Army reside in the clumsiness of officers of all ranks, the clinging to formulae, the insufficient training according to modern standards, the aversion to responsibility and the marked inefficiency of organization in all aspects.” Still, the FHO concluded that the *Red Army was evolving into a completely modern fighting force*, at the end of which process the Soviet armed forces would be capable of attacking Germany and Europe. (Megargee; D. Thomas, 275-77)⁷⁹

20.5.41: Foreign Armies East issued another assessment (*Feindbeurteilung*) of enemy situation; by this time raising its estimate of Soviet strength in European Russia along to **192** major units. This assessment reaffirmed that the bulk of Soviet ground forces were deployed in European Russia. It also repeated claim that the Russians would be unable to withdraw to the interior as had happened in 1812; thus, the Germans *would be able to force a battle of annihilation close to the western frontier*. (Megargee; D. Thomas, 277-78)

One *erroneous presumption* figured in every FHO evaluation of the Red Army in 1940/41, to the detriment of an objective understanding of the actual capability of the Soviet military leadership and Red Army strategy and tactics; to wit: FHO *convinced itself that the Red Army High Command did not yet possess the ability rapidly to plan and execute large-scale, armored attacks on the operational or strategic level, in response to German mobile warfare*. (D. Thomas, 278)

These assessments were *seriously flawed*; vastly underestimated Soviet military potential, the skill and flexibility of its officer corps. For example, the army that Foreign Armies East estimated contained 2,000,000 men at start of Jan 41, actually contained **4,205,000** already, and that figure would grow to **5,005,000** by 22 Jun 41. The 10,000 tanks the Germans expected turned out to be **20-24,000**, and would include the **T-34**, about which the Germans knew nothing, even though information was available! (See, Megargee, 111-16, for more details.)

Jun 41: Prior to the invasion, German intelligence had a fairly accurate assessment of the total strength of the *active* Red Army, but they had almost no knowledge of the *new Soviet mechanized corps* and *antitank bdes*. German intelligence analysts apparently believed the Red Army was still at the **1939** stage, when large mech units had been abandoned in favor of an infantry support role. Prior to **22 Jun 41**, the Germans had identified only **3** of the **16** mech corps in the forward military districts. The massed appearance of these mech units in the field against **1 PzGr** at end of June was almost as great a surprise as the first encounters w/ **KV-1** and **T-34** tanks. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 66)

22.6.41: Within days of invasion, every *Wehrmacht* army group HQ discovered that the intelligence furnished by FHO about the deployment, resistance, and strength of opposing Soviet

⁷⁹ See *Thomas* for detailed breakdown of assumed Red Army order-of-battle (276).

forces was *inaccurate and otherwise inadequate for operational planning in the field*. Typical example provided by *after-action report* prepared by operations section of **XLI Pz.K.**: “*The documents to hand provided indeed only a superficial picture of the enemy resistance to be expected*. Despite all endeavors including those of the *Abwehr station in Koenigsberg*, no clear picture about the strength, groupment, and organization of the enemy forces opposing the corps was attained.” FHO underestimation of the Red Army in 1941 was acknowledged by OKH, although, paradoxically, it was not deemed to be a serious problem at the time, given magnitude of initial successes and confidence in final victory. (*D. Thomas, 278-79*)

11.8.41: On this day, *Halder* would confide in his journal: “Regarding the general situation, it stands out more and more clearly that *we underestimated the colossus Russia*...At the start of the war we reckoned w/ **200** enemy divisions. Now we already count **360**. These divisions are not armed and equipped in our sense, and tactically they are inadequately led in many ways. But they are there. And when a dozen of them are destroyed, then the Russians put a new dozen in their place.” (*Halder KTB, 3:170; quoted in Megargee, 133*)

16.8.41: *Generalfeldmarschal v. Bock* notes position of *Foreign Armies East*, which was “simply” that the Russians are “*finished!*” He had a different opinion. (*Bock War Diary, Gerbet, 284*)

2.10.41: In the assessment of enemy fighting power there were considerable differences between the ideas of **OKH/FHO**, which spoke of the enemy’s having a combat efficiency of **54** divisions opposed to AGC, while the army group itself assumed there were **80** divisions and **10** reserve divisions on the opposing side. However, despite these different assessments, both commands believed it was possible to defeat the enemy quickly, thereby opening the way to Moscow w/o too much difficulty. . . The differences occurred because the ideas of the **OKH** were based on the calculation of “combat efficiency,” which estimated that the beaten Russian divisions would only be at between **1/3** and **1/2** of their original strength, while AGC was of the opinion that “all enemy units that have been seen to have several regiments, must be counted as full divisions.” (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 63; 70, f.n. 56*)

Mid-Nov. 41: Halder—and Hitler’s—determination to continue with the attack (on Moscow) shows yet again the *inadequacy of the intelligence* they were receiving, plus an astounding willingness to gamble w/ limited resources. Foreign Armies East estimated in mid-November that the Russians possessed **200** major units, but added that those units’ combat effectiveness was under 50 percent because more than half of their officers and men were untrained. Actually, the Soviets had **373** major units, and some of the ones in the west were of high quality because the Soviets had—contrary to German predictions—begun transferring units from the Far East. (*Megargee, 136*)

Nov-Dec 41: In Nov 41, Red Army launched its first series of counterattacks w/ a wider, fixed operational objective—against **1st Panzer Army** at *Rostov-on-Don*; **16th Army** near *Tichvin*; and against **4th Army** on flank of Army Group Center. *FHO did not foresee these counter-offensives*. Moreover, in late Nov – early Dec, FHO also *did not anticipate the formation of new Soviet reserves*, and it *failed to discover the deployment of the fresh formations disposed behind the Moscow front for a full-scale counteroffensive designed to destroy Army Group Center*. (*D. Thomas, 280*)

1.12.41: Foreign Army East estimated the strength of the Red Army facing the German front at **275** large units, among them **35** cavalry divisions and **40** armored bdes. In addition, **24** large units were assumed to be on the Finnish front, **34** others in Asia and the Far East, and **22** in the

Caucasus. The last-mentioned group was thus readily available for the front in the west. New units of undetermined size were assumed to be in the area of the lower Volga and the military districts of the Urals and Siberia. According to *Ernst Klink*, these figures – from the “enemy situation report” of **1 Dec 41** – were “rather unreliable.” (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 707, f.n. 580; also, *KTB OKW*, 1075)

4.12.41: FHO informed OKH that the Soviet forces in front of Army Group Center presently would be incapable of a large-scale offensive. FHO failed to predict the counterattack against the army group. The *alarming contents of the numerous items of intelligence pointing to a Soviet counteroffensive* against Army Group Center, forwarded by *Luftwaffe Intelligence East* and the *Ic Section of Army Group Center* itself, were not evaluated in timely fashion by FHO. FHO continued to believe that the Red Army was incapable of training a significant number of new divisions. (*D. Thomas*, 280)⁸⁰

Problems w/ German Intelligence:

Megargee discusses the *cultural weaknesses* within German intelligence apparatus; its *lack of intelligence resources, assets* vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, etc. on pp 108-16 of his book. In essence, he sees **two basic flaws:** a) a “subtle but pervasive” *bias against the intelligence function itself*, and, b) a *tendency to accept convenient preconceptions in place of hard facts*. The German **Ic** (intelligence officer) was clearly *subordinate to the Ia* (operations officer); no attempt was made to make the intelligence officer an equal of the ops officer, as the *French* and *Americans* did, at least nominally, by placing the two on the same level under a chief of staff. The intelligence officer remained first a foremost a *supplier of information*, not someone whose independent assessments carried special weight on their own. Problems w/ quality and experience among lower-level intelligence officers were also “serious.” The position of Ic did not possess the prestige of the Ia. Officers generally wanted to move out of the Ic job as quickly as possible. Moreover, as war went on, the army filled Ic positions more and more w/ *reserve officers* rather than w/ General Staff officers. Also, in the German Army, intelligence efforts took place within a restrictive context, in which *everything revolved around the operational concept or maneuver plan*. (*Megargee, Inside Hitler’s High Command*, 108-10)

1.3.4: *Russlandbild:*

Leading figures in Army High Command, including intelligence officers, *faced w/ a shortage of complete, accurate information on the Soviet Union*; this enabled their preconceptions to dominate the decision-making process. Germans also began w/ a **long-standing image of Russia—the “*Russlandbild*,”** as *Andreas Hillgruber* terms it—and *they never really saw beyond it*. The *Wehrmacht* had little in the way of hard facts w/ which to check its assumptions. (Note: For *Russlandbild* and problems w/ gathering intelligence on the USSR see, *Megargee, Inside Hitler’s High Command*, 110-116)

A *sense of racial and cultural superiority*, shared by most German officers, contributed to an underestimation of Russia’s powers to resist. As sophisticated a general officer as ***Guenther Blumentritt*** could claim in 1941 that „Russian military history shows that the Russian as a

⁸⁰ **Note:** See *Klaus Reinhardt, Die Wende vor Moskau* (202-04), for references to FHO evaluations and reports; see also, *Boog, et al., Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*, 600-1.

combat soldier, illiterate and half-Asiatic, thinks and feels differently.“ Given such attitudes, it was not surprising that many German soldiers, as well as their leader, expected that once they kicked in the door, the structure—*ruled by Jewish subhumans*—would collapse...What is so surprising about all this is that in WWI, it had taken the German army *three years of hard fighting to beat the Russians*; they had, thus, been there before, and post-war protestations about having been surprised by conditions in Russia are not credible considering the German experience in WWI. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 79; f.n. 61, 109)⁸¹

„The images the Germans gleaned of the country [Russia] they were occupying in **1918** had a *lasting impact*, helping to shape the mentalities that fed into the second, far more vicious occupation a generation later. ‚Deepest Russia, w/o a glimmer of Central European *Kultur*,‘ one [German] officer noted. ‚Asia, steppe, swamps, claustrophobic underworld, and a godforsaken wasteland of slime.‘“ (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 55)

The *Russo-Finnish War* of **1939-40** appeared to confirm German High Command’s perception of the Red Army: an old-fashioned ponderous mass, just like the army Germany had defeated in the First World War. Its equipment did not appear terribly impressive. Red Army suffered over **200,000** casualties, and only sheer weight of numbers enabled the Soviets to prevail. (See, *C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, 36-37)

Russlandbild: How did the German *leadership* view the Soviet enemy in general? The problem of German intelligence was not really the paucity of intelligence sources, nor even the quality of info available, and the structural inefficiency of the service; the *problem was one of attitude*. The generation which made the military decisions of 1940-41 based its *image of Russia* not merely on intelligence reports. The recipients of that information, be it false or correct, did not view the USSR as they did other military rivals. They relied on much older experiences and assumptions, too; these were resistant to contrary hard facts, since they were distorted to match their own optimistic plans...In 1940-41, after the *fall of France*, German military planners did not assess the Red Army as being an equal opponent for the *Wehrmacht*. This tendency matched the *belief in Germany’s decisive qualitative superiority in leadership*. Maj Gen. *Erich Marcks* went so far as to regret openly the fact that the Russians would not do Germany the favor of attacking first; and the Austrian-born Maj Gen *Edmund Glaise von Horstenau* was convinced he could reach the *Urals* w/ only 3 *panzer corps* under his command [!]...The Chief of Staff of **4.Arme**e, Maj Gen *Guenther Blumentritt* said on **18.4.41** – in a good example of pre-war assessments by the German military of their Soviet opponent – that „there will be fourteen days of heavy fighting. Hopefully, by then we shall have made it.“ (see, *Foerster & Mawdsley, Hitler & Stalin*, 68-69)

Lt.Gen. Uebe: „In the eyes of the German cdrs, their Russian opponents appeared to be a *mentally lethargic lot*, inclined toward *stolid insensibility*, sometimes contrary, while at other times taciturn and crafty. The Russians, often so communicative and trusting, had a strong latent tendency toward excess ambition and *extreme ruthlessness*. A German Army leader, speaking of the Russian soldier, declared: ‚His emotions run the gamut from *animal ferocity* to the utmost kindness; odious and cruel in a group, he can be friendly and ready to help as an individual.‘ These peculiarities stem from the *inherent character* of the Russian people, a character differing considerably from that of Western people. General der Infanterie *Guenther Blumentritt* ascribes

⁸¹ **Note:** Germans hardly unique in this sense. Americans displayed same sense of racial superiority *vis-à-vis* the Japanese. I imagine such feelings were *reciprocated!* Japanese also, I believe, had feelings of racial contempt for Chinese, Koreans, etc. Indeed, in many ways, WWII was a *race war*, or at least a war fueled by racial hatreds.

these traits of character to an ‚*Eastern-oriented mentality*,’ closely resembling the mentality of other Eastern Europeans. A relatively *lower value on human life* seemed to another characteristic of the Russians, and could be observed in the *air dropping of Soviet partisans and troops behind German lines during the winter when these men were often dropped, w/o parachutes*, in wooden crates or in straw-filled sacks in which they were obliged to endure not only the severe shocks of landing but the harshness of exposure as well. Russian soldiers were not surprised by such unorthodox measures, but *stoically* accepted them as matters of course.“ (K. Uebe, *Russian Reactions to German Airpower*, 1)⁸²

Blumentritt: „Eastern man is very different from his Western counterpart. He has a much greater capacity for enduring hardship, and this *passivity* induces a high degree of equanimity towards life and death. In the East the importance of the individual is not stressed to the same extent as in the West. Great losses are accepted almost w/ indifference. Eastern man does not possess much initiative; he is accustomed to take orders, to being led. His way of life is simple, even primitive by our standards. Conditions are poor. In the cities the Bolsheviks can point to great achievements since 1917, imposing buildings and modern streets. The *villages*, on the other hand, *have not changed since the First World War* and the countryman lives no better now than he did then. Most of the houses are of wood w/ thatched roofs in varying stages of decay. Furniture is sparse and wretched. But since the inhabitants know no better, they generally lack any ambition to improve their lot. They attach little importance to what they eat or wear. It is surprising how long they can survive on what to the Western man would be a starvation diet. The Russian lives very close to nature. Heat and cold do not affect him duly ... The Siberian, who is partially or completely an Asiatic, is even tougher and has greater powers of resistance than his European compatriot. We had already learned this when we met the *Siberian Army Corps* during the First World War...“ (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 37-38)

E. Raus:⁸³ „It is possible to predict from experience how virtually every soldier in the Western world will behave in a given situation – but not the Russian. The characteristics of this *semi-Asiatic*, like those of his vast country, are strange and contradictory. During the last war there were units which one day repulsed a strong German attack w/ exemplary bravery, and on the next folded up completely. There were others, which one day lost their nerve when the first shell exploded, and on the next allowed themselves, man by man, literally to be cut to pieces. . . The key to this odd behavior can be found in the *native character of the Russian soldier* who, as a fighter, possesses neither the judgement nor the ability to think independently. He is subject to moods which to the Westerner are incomprehensible; he acts by *instinct*. As a soldier, the Russian is *primitive and unassuming*, innately brave but morosely passive when in a group. These traits make him in many respects an adversary superior to the self-confident and more demanding soldiers of other armies. . . Disregard for human beings and *contempt for death* are other characteristics of the Russian soldier. He will climb w/ complete indifference and cold-bloodedness over the bodies of hundreds of fallen comrades, in order to take up the attack on the same spot. With the same *apathy* he will work all day burying his dead comrades after a battle. He looks forward to his own death w/ the same resignation. . .“ (See, *E. Rauss, Russian Combat Methods*, in: *Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 16-17)

⁸² **Note:** Uebe also refers to the Russians „rather primitive traits of character . . . gregarious nature . . . almost legendary obedience to authority . . . willingness to work in almost unbearable conditions . . . sense of inferiority in their relations w/ peoples of the West . . . psychological inferiority . . . veneer of incredible stoicism and a supreme fatalism . . .” (2-3)

⁸³ Tsouras has consistently spelled Raus as “Rauss.”

In her book, *Hitler's War and the Germans*, Marlis G. **Steinert** investigated these questions [ie. impact of NS propaganda on German people] in detail, using reports from the **SD** (*Sicherheitsdienst*), the SS intel service, and other documents in which the *mood of the public* was reported. The results of her research are surprising, for they suggest that after some initial success, the anti-Soviet propaganda had less and less effect. Steinert summarizes the development as follows:

Rank and file Germans, inundated w/ anti-Bolshevik propaganda for years, were nevertheless more inclined to interpret this agreement [i.e., the Hitler-Stalin pact] positively because fear of a two-front war and of an onslaught from the east was more deeply rooted than ideological antipathy . . . The rupture of the agreement and the attack on Russia could only be made acceptable to the broad masses by using the argument of an inevitable military confrontation between Bolshevism and National Socialism and by playing on *atavistic fears*. Thus the picture of Asiatic "sub-humans" (*Untermenschen*) was incessantly drummed into the public. As early as the **winter of 1941-42**, however, cracks appeared in this artificial caricature, and doubt began to creep in as to its authenticity. Men who fought so doggedly for their fatherland and their political system, who were able to bring such military potential into play, could not operate exclusively under the lash of their commissars and be completely primitive. The daily contact w/ the eastern worker, who showed himself to be intelligent, technically talented, and likeable, caused the real breach in this carefully created image of the enemy. Collective stereotype and personal experience clashed increasingly, and despite all official propaganda efforts the fear of Bolshevism vanished [really?], esp. among certain strata of the working class and among those who had nothing more to lose as respect grew for the tremendous accomplishments of the eastern foe. The view began to spread that it was only the establishment – old and new – that had to fear for its existence, and not the mass of the working people. However, the Red Army's conduct on German soil painfully confirmed Goebbels' worst invectives concerning the "Asiatic hordes." (quoted in: *W. Wette, The Wehrmacht*, 170-71)

D. Irving: „This confident prediction⁸⁴ was symptomatic of the German army's *crass underestimate* of their Russian opponent's strength. Virtually nothing was known about the Red Army: a complete search of archives in France – Russia's own ally! – had yielded nothing." (*Hitler's War*, 188)

Hetzaufrufe: Vor Beginn von „Barbarossa“ u. in den ersten Wochen des Feldzuges erliessen eine Reihe von Oberbefehlshabern u. Kom.Gen. Hetzaufrufe, die teilweise als Vorboten fuer spaetere Mordaktionen bezeichnet werden koennen:

- General Reinhardt (**XXXXI Pz.K.**): „Es ist der alte Kampf der Germanen gegen das Slaventum, die Verteidigung europaeischer Kultur gegen die moskowitisch-asiatische Ueberschwemmung, die Abwehr des juedischen Bolschewismus.“
- General Hoepner (**4 PzGr**): „Die ziemlich seltenen Sabotagefaelle sind einzelnen kommunistischen Elementen, vor allem Juden anzulasten.“

⁸⁴ Hitler, ca. **Dec 40**, exclaiming his troops would be in Leningrad in three weeks following an attack on Russia (188)

- Generaloberst Hoth (17. AOK): „Ihre Ausrottung [gemeint sind die Juden] ist ein Gebot der Selbsterhaltung.“

(Also similar quotes from Manstein, Reichenau, Stuelgnagel, v. Salmuth, etc. In saemtlichen finden man das Schlagwort „juedisch-bolschewistisch“⁸⁵ in verschiedenen Varianten. In der H.Gr.Mitte erliess der OB GFM v. Bock keine derartigen Befehle oder Aufrufe, ebenso wenig der Generaloberst Guderian, der General Geyr v. Schweppenburg u. die ihm unterstellten Kommandeure. *Stein, GFM Model*, 235-36)

1.3.5: *Chronology of Events:*

Planning Period:

31.7.40: Wenn diese Gedanken Hitlers [betr.: Russland] fuer *Brauchitsch* zunaechst nur Orientierungen grundsaeztlicher Art, also ohne einen konkreten Zeitplan, gewesen sind, so waren spaetestens mit der *Besprechung am 31.Juli* die kuenftigen Absichten Hitlers jedem Teilnehmer klar geworden...sollen sich *Halder u. Brauchitsch* noch einig gewesen sein, dass aus mil. Sicht zunaechst die *Beibehaltung der angeblichen dt.-sowjet. Freundschaft sinnvoller sei, als in einem Zweifrontenkrieg nach Osten zu marschieren*. Eine generelle Ablehnung des Krieges mit der Sowjetunion an sich, oder die Unmoeglichkeit eines solchen Feldzuges wird jedoch *von keiner Seite erwaeht*. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 220-22)

Fall 40: Im Gegensatz zu Hitler hatten die beiden hoechsten Fuehrer des Heeres [Brauchitsch / Halder] fuer die *Fortfuehrung des Krieges die Alternative im Mittelmeerraum gegen England favorisiert*, sofern die Invasion im Herbst 1940 nicht mehr durchgefuehrt werden koennte...Seit dem Herbst 1940 konzentrierte sich Hitler wieter auf die Sowjetunion u. an einer Verlagerung des strategischen Schwerpunktes vom britischen Heimatland in den Mittelmeerraum *zeigte er nur wenig Interesse*. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 222)

5.12.40: [Besprechung bei Hitler zur *Operationsplanung „Barbarossa“*] Dieser 5. Dezember war, so hoffte Halder, nun endlich *der Tag fuer die ausstehende strategische Entscheidung Hitlers*...[After Hitler discusses potential assault on *Gilbraltar*, possible landing in England, potential ops in Balkans and North Africa, Halder discusses Russia plans]. Dann hatte der Generalstabschef erstmals Gelegenheit, die bisherigen Ueberlegungen des OKH fuer eine Ostfeldzug vorzutragen. In den Plaenen hatte das OKH die Bildung von drei Heeresgruppen vorgesehen. Waehrend die Hr.Gr.Nord gegen *Leningrad*, die Hr.Gr.Sued in *Richtung Kiew* angreifen sollte, lag der *Schwerpunkt des Feldzuges bei der Hr.Gr.Mitte*, der das Ziel **Moskau** entlang der Linie *Minsk – Smolensk* vorgegeben wurde. Der erforderliche Kraefteansatz fuer die Gesamtoperation wurde mit **137 Divisionen** veranschlagt. Damit hatte Halder, *wohl bewusst*, dass damit aehnlich wie in den ersten Ueberlegungen zum Westfeldzug ein *eindeutiger Schwerpunkt fehlte*, beide Vorstellungen, seine u. die Hitlers, fuer die erste Phase in einen einzigen Plan gezwaeengt. Obwohl **Hitler** die *Planungen billigte*, hatte er sie sogleich wieder eingeschraenkt, in dem er hinzufuegte, dass **Moskau fuer ihn nicht so wichtig waere**. Diese konnte zwar das Potential fuer kuenftige Streitigkeiten um das Ziel des Feldzuges sein, doch zu einer Auseinandersetzung um diesen Punkt kam es am 5. Dez. nicht. *„Beide vertrauten darauf, dass die Entscheidung – wie im Polen u. Frankreich auch – bereits in der Anfangsphase des*

⁸⁵ **Note:** This demonstrates that, like Hitler, many (most?) German Heerfuehrer conflated the “Jewish threat” w/ Bolshevism – they were one and the same.

Feldzuges fallen wuerde. Was den sich daran anschliessenden Operationsabschnitt anging, so glaubten offensichtlich beide, den anderen im gegebenen Moment *umstimmen oder ueberspielen zu koennen* [!]. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 224-25)⁸⁶

18.12.40: Weisung 21, „Barbarossa.“ An dieser Stelle ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass der *urspruenglich gebilligte Vortrag Halders sich in den Anordnungen der Weisung 21 nicht widerspiegelte. Das primaere Ziel in Hitlers Direktive bildete Leningrad* u. erst dann koennte das, auch nach Hitlers Ansicht, wichtige Verkehrs- u. Ruestungszentrum Moskau ins Auge gefasst werden...Interessant...dass Brauchitsch u. Halder zu dieser Weisung *keinerlei Einsprueche* bei Hitler unternahmen...Es ist offenkundig, dass Brauchitsch u. Halder gar *keine Interesse an einer gruendsaetzliche Verhinderung des Krieges* hatten u. daher auch keine Konfrontation in diesen Fragen mit Hitler provozieren wollten. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 226)

1941 [German knowledge of T-34]: “I have done two histories of the T34 in English and much research in Russian and German language sources. I do not think the German Army was totally unaware of the T34. Documents in the archives in Washington identify it by the prototype number T32. So German intelligence did know the Soviets had a new medium tank T32, but they did not know the significance of it. . . There was a German study of the Soviet war industry in 1941 immediately before the outbreak of war w/ Russia. The study went down factory by factory and indicated what each factory produced. It listed in the factory at Khar’kov, which did produce the T34, the designation T32, medium tank – new tank in production. They obviously had a source. T32 was the early prototype designation for T34. When in testing it was T32. When it went into production it was T34. Thus a German source knew it was produced at Khar’kov, which was correct. There is a great difference between knowing the number and knowing its capabilities.” (Steven Zaloga, in: Glantz, “Initial Period of the War,” 452)

9.1.41: Waehrend Halder bis Mitte Januar in Urlaub ging, musste der **ObdH** bereits am 9. Januar erneut auf den **Berghof**. Nachdem Hitler bei dieser Gelegenheit zuerst auf die weiteren Planungen fuer *Nordafrika, Gibraltar u. dem Balkan*, Deckname „*Unternehmen Marita*“, eingegangen war, fuehrte er im weitem Verlauf noch einmal seine mil. u. pol. Analysen zu der Haltung Englands u. der Sowjetunion aus. **Der strategische Schwerpunkt des kuenftigen Handels fuer 1941 sollte endgueltig die UdSSR sein**, da er, Hitler, weiterhin ueberzeugt war, dass England nach einer sowjet. Niederlage rasch aufgeben oder zusammenbrechen wuerde. Ein besonders guenstiger *Nebeneffekt* nach dem Sieg ueber die Sowjetunion, so Hitler weiter, waere der *Wegfall Amerikas* auf der Seite Englands, da Japan dann verstaerkt im pazifischen Raum auftreten koennte. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 226)

31.1.41: German Army High Command issues *deployment order* for Operation “Barbarossa.” (B. Wegner, *Road to Defeat*, 110)

Late Jan 41: Und noch End Januar wollen sich *Brauchitsch u. Halder* angeblich ueber den Sinn des drohenden Krieges mit der Sowjetunion nicht klar gewesen, denn weder von der Wirkung auf England noch von einer Verbesserung der wirtschaftlichen Basis fuer Deutschland aufgrund eines dt.-russ. Krieges seien sie ueberzeugt...Dessen ungeachtet hatten beide im Januar mit *Nachdruck*

⁸⁶ **Note:** At this point (Nov-Dec 40), Brauchitsch not yet deeply involved in *Barbarossa* planning; priorities for him were still England and the planning for occupation of *Gibraltar*. **Loeffler:** Mit Hitlers Entscheidung zur intensiven Vorbereitung des ‘Ostfeldzuges’ waren [Brauchitschs] u. Halders Bestrebungen, die Verlagerung des strategischen Schwerpunktes zur Forsetzung des Krieges auf den **Mittelmeerraum** zu erreichen, aber gescheitert. (225)

die Vorarbeiten fortsetzen lassen u. die Heeresgruppen mit *Planspielen* [map exercises] zur Ueberpruefung bestehender Erkenntnisse fuer kuenftige Aufgaben beauftragt. Ueberhaupt ist seit Halders Rueckkehr aus dem Urlaub *dessen persoenliches Engagement fuer „Barbarossa“ im Gegensatz zum Vorjahr bemerkenswert* u. auch *Brauchitsch liess sich nun vermehrt in die Vorbereitungen einbeziehen u. unterrichten*. Dass es zum Krieg mit der Sowjetunion kommen wuerde, stand demnach fuer beide *zweifelsfrei fest*. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 227)

3.2.41: Am 3. Februar wurde der *neue Operationsplan* im Rahmen eines Fuehrervortrages praesentiert. Obwohl der Generalstabschef *eine grundlegend andere Konzeption* befuehwortet haette, orientierte sich der Plan jetzt eng an den **Vorgaben Hitlers**, die aus vorangegangenen Besprechungen u. der Weisung „Barbarossa“ abzuleiten gewesen waren...**Entscheidender Grundgedanke** des Feldzuges war, dass die **Masse des sowjet. Heeres bereits in der Anfangsphase zerschlagen u. ein Rueckzug schlagkraeftiger Teile der Roten Armee in die Tiefe des Raumes verhindert werden sollte**. *Moskau* war in dem Operationsplan, wie von Hitler am 5. Dezember angewiesen, ein *weitergehendes Ziel*, das nur unter besonderen Umstaenden direkt in Angriff genommen werden sollte. Auch die Auftraege der drei Heeresgruppen zum schnellen Vormarsch u. zur Einkesselung der gegnerischen Armeen, blieben im Grunde dieselben: Hr.Gr.Nord mit Ziel *Leningrad*; Hr.Gr.Mitte in *Richtung Smolensk* um die spaeteren Operationen der Hr.Gr. Nord oder Sued unterstuetzen zu koennen; Hr.Gr. Sued mit Ziel *Kiew* u. der Wegnahme der *Dnepr-Uebergaenge*...So hat *Halder*, auch was die Ziele des Feldzuges betraf, *einen offenen Konflikt an diesem Tag vermieden u. Hitler stimmte grundsaeztlich dem OKH-Plan zu*. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 228-29; see also, *OKW KTB I*, 298)

19.6.41: Only three days before “Barbarossa” began, the **OKW** issued a directive to Brauchitsch relating Hitler’s intentions for the future use and deployment of panzer divisions. With undisguised conceit Hitler’s instructions read:

1. Eastern Front: The eastern front should as much as possible *live from its own materiel reserve*. In case of heavy losses panzer divisions can be consolidated together. Newly established panzer divisions in Germany shall be staffed by personnel vacated due to the consolidations.
2. From these newly-formed units 2 panzer divisions are for France, 1 panzer division for Norway.

The document goes on to direct that tank losses in Africa must be replaced as soon as possible, *leaving nothing in reserve for those on the eastern front*. From this it is clear that Hitler’s lofty confidence was as delusional as it was self-destructive, reinforcing yet again **the absolute dependence on the forces at hand** for the fullest achievement of the operational plan. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 82)

Barbarossa:

22.6.41: The rub lay in the fact that even by **22 Jun 41**, there was no consensus in the senior command structure of the German army w/ regard either to the strategy or tactics to be utilized in the second phase of the offensive [i.e., after initial envelopment ops along the frontier]...If profound differences over strategy would create a dysfunctional atmosphere of schizophrenia in the German command structure, fundamental disagreements over tactics would lead to shouting matches on the battlefield, charges of insubordination, wasted effort, and excessive, irreplaceable casualties...Ironically, had either group [i.e., Guderian, Hoth, Model, etc. vs. Hitler, v. Kluge, von

Schweppenburg, etc.] achieved a dominant position prior to the beginning of the invasion, the Germans might well have won the war in 1941. (For more details see, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 113-14)

22.6.41: Wie verbreitet die *Siegeszuversicht* im **OKH** war, zeigt eine Prognose des Oberquartiermeisters I, *Generalleutnant Paulus* – sonst ein kühler analysierender Generalstabsoffizier – als er am 22. Juni die ersten von der Front eingehenden Erfolgsmeldungen dem **ObdH** vortrug u. auf die *Frage Brauchitschs* nach der vermutlichen Dauer des Feldzuges erwiderte, *man muesse wohl mit sechs bis acht Wochen rechnen*. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 151)

ab 22.6.41 [OODA loop]: The Germans, by moving so fast and unpredictably, got inside the Soviets *decision-making loop*. To use the term invented by the great U.S. fighter pilot and military strategist John Boyd, they got inside the Russians **OODA loop**. The term is an acronym for: Observe, Orient, Decide, Act. „The key to victory is operating at a faster tempo than the enemy,“ Boyd’s biographer Robert Coram writes. „The key thing to understand about Boyd’s version is not the mechanical cycle itself, but rather the need to execute the cycle in such a fashion as to *get inside the mind and decision cycle of the adversary*.“ Coram describes what can happen when one player gets inside another’s OODA loop: „If someone truly understands how to create menace and uncertainty and mistrust, then how to exploit and magnify the presence of these disconcerting elements, the loop can be vicious, a terribly destructive force, virtually unstoppable in causing *panic and confusion* and – Boyd’s phrase is best – ‚unraveling the competition.‘ . . . The most amazing aspect of the OODA loop is that the losing side *rarely understands what happened*.“ (*Michael Barone, "McCain Flies his Campaign Past Obama,"* in: *Townhall.com*, 13 Sep 08)

ab 22.6.41: *Blumentritt* revealed that, from the start, there was a *vital conflict* of ideas about the method of operations:

Hitler always wanted to carry out encirclements – according to the principles of *orthodox* strategy – and Bock agreed w/ him. So did most of the senior generals on this issue. But *Guderian* and the new school of tank experts had a different idea – to drive deep, as fast as possible, and leave the encircling of the enemy to be completed by the inf. forces that were following up. *Guderian* urged the importance of keeping the Russians on the run, and allowing them no time to rally. He wanted to drive straight on to Moscow, and was convinced he could get there if no time was wasted. Russia’s resistance might be paralyzed by that thrust at the heart of Stalin’s power. But Hitler insisted on having the plan carried out in his own way, and kept a curb on the advance of the armored forces.

Guderian’s plan was a *very bold one* – and meant big risks in maintaining reinforcements and supplies. But it might have been the lesser of two risks. By making the armored forces turn in each time, and forge a ring round the enemy forces they had by-passed, a lot of time was lost. (*B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 150)

24.6.-3.7.41: Hitler intervenes in tactical matters from the outset. As early as 24 June, he tells *Brauchitsch* of his worries that the encirclement at *Bialystok* is not tight enough. The following day (25 June), he expresses concern that Army Groups Center and South are operating too far in depth. On 27, 29, and 30 June and again on 2 and 3 July, *Halder* records in his diary worried queries or interventions by Hitler in tactical deployments of troops. *Halder*’s irritation at Hitler’s

interference is understandable. But the *errors and misjudgements*, even in the first, seemingly so successful, phase of “*Barbarossa*,” were as much those of the professionals in Army High Command as of Hitler. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 407; *Halder KTB*)

25.6.41: *Heusingers* erste Briefe [to his wife] aus dem „*Mauerwald*“ nahe *Angerburg*, wo sich fortan das Hauptquartier des OKH befand, klingen *durchaus optimistisch*. Die Erfolge seien „mal wieder *maerchenhaft*“, schreib er am 25. Juni, setzte aber hinzu, „aber auch der Gegner ist zaeh u. kampfwillig“, es seien „sicher die schwersten Kaempfe“ dieses Krieges. Dennoch hoffte er „auf ein rasches Ende auch dieses Feldzuges.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 151)

26.6.-4.7.41: Hitler’s views on further operations:

26.6.41: Nachdem Lage bei H.Gr.Mitte guenstig fortschreitet u. mit Einkesselung der starken Feindgruppe im Bogen von Bialystok zu rechnen ist, will Fuehrer nunmehr bald eine *Schwerpunktverlagerung* zur H.Gr.Sued einleiten, deren Pz.-Stosskeil durch konzentrischen Anmarsch bzw. Antransport neuer Feindkraefte in Schwierigkeiten kommen wird. In erster Linie will Fuehrer Verstaerkung auf dem Luftgebiet, um fdl. Transporte zu verhindern. (*KTB OKW, Sonderakte, Anlage 6, Bd. I, 1019*)

27.6.41: Die ueberraschend schnelle Wegnahme von *Duenaburg* wirft die Frage der Fortfuehrung der Operationen bei der H.Gr.Nord auf (Einschwenken nach Norden oder Vorbeistossen auf Moskau?). Fuehrer stellt den Gesichtspunkt heraus, dass es nicht darauf ankomme, die fdl. Hauptstadt, sondern die Kraefte des Feindes zu treffen. (*KTB OKW, Sonderakte, Anlage 7, Bd. I, 1019*)

29.6.41: Fuehrer spricht ueber die Fortfuehrung der Operationen nach Erledigung des Bialystoker Kessels bzw. seiner ostwaertiger Erweiterung. Neben einer auf alle Faelle vorzunehmenden Verstaerkung der H.Gr.Nord kommt im Norden in Frage:

- a) sofortiger Weiterstoss auf Moskau oder
- b) Stoss auf Leningrad.

Fuehrer neigt vorlauefig zum Eindrehen auf Leningrad, um damit baldmoeglichst den Russen aus der Nordsee auszuschliessen (Sicherung der *Erztransporte*), die Kraefte der Finnen zum Tragen zu bringen u. die linke Flanke fuer den Vorstoss auf Moskau frei zu bekommen. Moskau selbst will Fuehrer fruehzeitig bombardieren. General Jodl macht darauf aufmerksam, dass der Umweg der Panzerkraefte ueber *Petersburg* u. Umst. [?] die motorische Leistungsfahigkeit der Panzer-Verbaende uebersteigt. (*KTB OKW, Sonderakte, Anlage 8, Bd. I, 1019-20*)

30.6.41 [*Erwaegungen des Fuehrers*]: Fuehrer erwaegt nach wie vor staerkere Teile der Panzergruppe der H.Gr.Mitte nach Norden auf Leningrad abzdrehen, um das Industriezentrum von Leningrad rasch in die Hand zu nehmen. Dann sollen die Panzerverbaende von Leningrad auf Moskau vorstossen. (*KTB OKW, Anlage 9, Bd. I, 1020*)

4.7.41: Fuehrer: „Ich versuche mich dauernd in die Lage des Feindes zu versetzen. Praktisch hat er diesen Krieg schon verloren. Es ist gut, dass wir die russ. Panzer- u. Luftwaffe gleich zu Anfang zerschlagen haben. Die Russen koennen sie nicht mehr ersetzen.“ Fuehrer beschaefigt sich mit der Frage, was nach Durchbrechung der Stalin-Linie geschehen soll: „Eindreihen nach Norden oder nach Sueden? Es wird vielleicht die schwerste Entscheidung dieses Krieges sein!“ Es wird die Frage geprueft, ob H.Gr.Sued ueberhaupt noch zu einer wirksamen Umfassung kommt. Soll grosse Operation nach Sueden (Abdrehen der H.Gr.Mitte) eingeleitet werden? Fuehrer: „Es wird die schwerste Entscheidung dieses Feldzuges sein.“ (*KTB OKW, Sonderakte, Anlage 11, Bd. I, 1020*)

27.6.41: ...gab er [*Heusinger* an seine Frau] seinem einstigen Abteilungschef *Manstein*, jetzt Kom. Gen. des **LVI. Mot. Korps**, den Beinamen „*Eroberer von Duenaburg*.“ Was auf zwei Wochen veranschlagt gewesen sei, sie „*in sechs Tagen gegangen*.“ Wenn es so weitergehe, koenne alles „viel schneller erledigt sein,“ als bisher zu hoffen gewesen sei. Die „*unvorstellbaren*“ Erfolge fuehrte er zurueck auf die „*turmhohe Ueberlegenheit* der Fuehrung ueber die russische.“ Der gegnerische Truppe versagt er den Respekt nicht. Sie schlage sich ausgezeichnet u. lasse sich bis zum letzten Mann totschiessen, anstatt sich zu ergeben: „***Wir haben so etwas in diesem Krieg noch nicht erlebt***.“ Alles verlaufe „so reibungslos wie nur moeglich.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 151-52*)

27.6.-1.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Halder, auch wenn er ihm „etwas muede u. kribbelig“ [edgy] erschien (**28.6.**), gar „*abgespannt*“ (**1.7.**), u. Brauchitsch – „besonders nett“ (**28.6.**), „*frisch wie immer*“ (**1.7.**) – liessen ihm ***voellig freie Hand***. Nicht ohne Stolz bemerkt er, er koenne „*diese ungeheueren Maschinere steuern u. lenken*“, wie er es fuer richtig halte, die *Koordinierungsaufgabe* fuer die drei Heeresgruppen Sued, Mitte u. Nord (**27.6.**). (*Meyer, Heusinger, 152*)

27.6.41: ...trafen sich die beiden *Panzergruppen* bei *Minsk* u. bildeten den oestlichen Rand dieser ersten grossen Kesselschlacht im Raum um *Bialystok-Minsk*...An der Durchfuehrung dieser ersten grossen Kesseloperation *entzuendeten sich heftige Meinungsverschiedenheiten ueber die Frage einer Verwendung der schnellen Truppen*. Sollten sie sperren u. die Kesselwaende halten oder sollten sie *weiter in die Tiefe stossen*, wo wenige oder noch keine Feindkraefte standen, u. die neuen Gegenmassnahmen des ueberraschten u. verwirrten Verteidigers schon bei ihrer Planung entscheidend durchkreuzen? *Guderians Kampfgrundsaeetze* zielten in die Tiefe – der *Artillerist v. Kluge* wollte infanteristisch sichergehen. Auch Hitler war dieser Auffassung. (*Nehring, Panzerwaffe, 220*)

28.6.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Den naechsten Brief [i.e., this one] durchzieht dann schon *ein ernsterer Ton*. Zwar sei „wirklich alles *phantastisch* gegangen,“ aber „die Kaempfe sind schwer.“ Er wiederholt, Gefangene gebe es wenig, „da der Russe sich nicht ergibt, sondern einzeln totgeschlagen werden muss.“ Der Eindruck verfestigt sich, dass dieser Feldzug *der schwerste sei*, „den wir bisher gefuehrt haben.“ Aus den inzwischen gesammelten Erkenntnissen ueber den Feind zieht er den Schluss, dass ***dieser Feldzug noetig gewesen sei***, „denn nach allem, was wir jetzt sehen, waeren die Russen in einem Jahr ein Gegner geworden, dessen wir wohl kaum noch Herr geworden waeren.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 152*)

30.6.41: Hitler had always intended that Leningrad should be taken before Moscow and very early on he came to regard the seizure of the whole of the Ukraine, the Donets basin and even Caucasia as having priority over an eastwards advance from Smolensk. On **30 June**, he had

emphasized the economic importance of the Ukraine and that of the Baltic. A week later [early **Jul 41**], he proposed that Hoth's **3 PzGr** should move away from Smolensk to the NE as flank protection for Army Group North, while Guderian's **2 PzGr** should move SE into the Ukraine. His attention was riveted on the Crimea, which he came to regard as a Soviet aircraft carrier for use to bomb the Ploesti oilfields, and the occupation of the Crimea would, he thought, enable German troops to invade the Caucasus by the shorter route across the Straits of Kerch. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 141-42)

Jul 41: Herr u. Hitler sahen den Feldzug im Osten *bereits nach zwei Wochen* als gewonnen an. Doch schon wenige Tage spaeter zeigte sich, dass die „Masse des russ. Heeres“ westl. der *Dnepr-Dvina-Linie* nicht hatte vernichtet werden koennen, das bolschewistische System weiter funktionierte, der sowjet. Gegner *unterschaetzt* worden war. Auch die „intellektuelle Elite“ des dt. Generalstabes hatte sich bei ihren operativen Planungen nicht nur von „nuechternem Professionalismus“ leiten lassen. Nicht bloss bei Hitler, sondern auch in dieser, „*damals in aller Welt hoch angesehenen*“ Institution waren Elemente des „*Unberechenbaren, ja Irrationalen*“ vorhanden gewesen. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 173-74)

Jul 41: Zweierlei war beim *Eintreffen am Dnjepr* Gewissheit geworden; einmal was es **nicht gelungen, die russ. Kraefte westlich des Dnieprs vollkommen einzukesseln u. zu vernichten**, und zum zweiten war es klar geworden, dass noch im Gebiet zwischen Moskau u. Dniepr *frische Kraefte vorhanden waren* oder aufgestellt u. mit dem notwendigen Nachschubgut versorgt werden konnten...Wenn man sie aus den spaeteren Ereignissen (Gefangene u. Tote) *rekonstruiert*, so musste man gegenüber der Hr.Gr.Mitte mit **1 500 000 – 2 000 000** Millionen rechnen. *Budjennys* Kraefte gegenueber der Hr.Gr.Sued hatten sicherlich dieselbe Staerke, waehrend die Hr.Gr.Nord etwas weniger Kraefte gegen sich gehabt haben duerfte. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 134-35)

Jul 41: Mitte Juli, nachdem die Hr.Gr.Mitte ihr Ziel *Smolensk* erreicht hatte u. sich damit die *Frage nach der weiteren Absicht der Operationen* stellte, sollte sich der **schwelende Konflikt zwischen Hitler u. der Heeresfuehrung in seiner Gesamtheit entzuenden**. Jetzt kam es zu der Situation, die seit dem Vortrag zum Operationsplan „*Barbarossa*“ im **Dez. 40** sowohl von Hitler wie auch von Halder beiseite geschoben worden war. Halder hatte es bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt durch die Ausgestaltung der ersten Operationsziele verstanden, den *Konflikt mit Hitler zu vermeiden*, da dieser seine Ueberlegungen in den Planungen des Heeres wiederfinden konnte. Nachdem die **Rote Armee aber nicht wie erwartet nach den ersten Monaten vollstaendig zusammengebrochen war**, musste jetzt entschieden werden, ob die schnellen Verbaende der Hr.Gr.Mitte nach Nordosten bzw. Suedosten zur Unterstuetzung der benachbarten Heeresgruppen eingesetzt werden oder in einem weiteren Angriff auf Moskau vorruecken sollten. Hinzu kam die Erkenntnis, dass die *sowjet. Armee sowohl personell als auch materiell wesentlich unterschaezt worden war* u. nunmehr die Fortfuehrung der Kaempfe noch immer kriegsentscheidend sein wuerden. Das Ziel, den Feldzug in der *Anfangsphase* zu entscheiden...hatten die dt. Verbaende nicht erreicht. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 245-46)

Jul 41: Fuehrer [4.7.41?] beschaeftigt sich mit der Frage, was nach Durchbrechung der Stalin-Linie geschehen soll: „Eindrehen nach Norden oder nach Sueden? Es wird wahrscheinlich *die schwerste Entscheidung des Krieges sein!*“ Es wird die Frage geprueft, ob H.G.Sued ueberhaupt noch zu einer wirksamen Umfassung kommt. Soll grosse Operation nach Sueden (Abdrehen der Hr.Gr.Mitte) eingeleitet werden? Fuehrer: „Es wird die schwerste Entscheidung dieses Feldzuges sein.“ („*Hitler waehrend der ersten drei Monate des Ostfeldzuges 1941*“, **KDC**, Microfilm „E;“ see also, *KTB OKW*)

1.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: „Unsere Erfolge gehen weiter,“ aber die Kaempfe seien „mehr als hart.“ „Der Russe“ kaempfe wie ein Verzweifelter bis zum letzten, „viele einfache Leute“ schoessen sich vor der Gefangennahme selbst tot, „ein Ergeben gibt es bei der Masse nicht...“ Es sei „klar erwiesen,“ dass es *der letzte Moment war*, „wo wir diese Gefahr [i.e., Russen] bannen konnten. Im naechsten Jahr waeren sie zu stark gewesen.“ Am gleichen Tag erzaehlt er von einem Besuch Hitlers in der *Operationsabteilung*, ein seltenes Ereignis, anlaesslich des 57. Geburtstages von Halder. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 152)⁸⁷

3.7.41: “On the whole one can indeed now say that the mission to destroy the mass of the Russian army forward of the *Dvina* and the *Dnepr* [rivers] is fulfilled... Thus it is not too much to say when I maintain that the campaign against Russia was won within fourteen days. Naturally it is not over yet. We will yet be occupied for weeks w/ the expanse of the territory and w/ stubborn resistance...” (*Halder* KTB 3:38-39)

3.7.41 [*Halder Tagebuch*]: Im ganzen kann man also schon jetzt sagen, dass der Auftrag, die Masse des russ. Heeres vorwaerts Duena u. Dnjepr zu zerschlagen, erfuellt ist. Ich halte die Aussage eines gefangenen russ. Kom. Gens. [i.e., corps cdr] fuer richtig, dass wir ostwaerts von Duena u. Dnjepr nur noch mit Teilkraeften zu rechnen haben, die allein staerkenmaessig nicht in der Lage sind, die dt. Operationen noch entscheidend zu hindern. Es ist also wohl nicht zuviel gesagt, wenn ich behaupte, dass der Feldzug gegen Russland innerhalb [von] **14** Tagen gewonnen wurde. Natuerlich ist er damit noch nicht beendet. Die Weite des Raumes u. die Hartnaeckigkeit des mit allen Mitteln gefuehrten Widerstandes wird uns noch viele Wochen beanspruchen. *Weitere Plaene:* a) . . . Wenn wir erst einmal Dnjepr u. Duena ueberwunden haben, wird es sich weniger mehr um das Zerschlagen fdl. Wehrmachtsteile handeln als darum, dem Feind seine Produktionsstaette aus der Hand zu nehmen u. ihn so zu hindern, aus der gewaltigen Leistung seiner Industrie u. aus den unerschoepflichen Menschen-Reserven wieder eine neue Wehrmacht aufzustellen. b) Sobald die Kriegsfuehrung im Osten aus dem Bereich der Zertruemmung der fdl. Wehrmacht in den Bereich der wirtschaftlichen Lahmlegung des Feindes uebergeht, werden die weiteren Aufgaben der Kriegsfuehrung gegen England wieder in den Vordergrund treten u. eingeleitet werden muessen. Diese sind: (See KTB for details, 38-39)

3.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Wenn Heusinger auch am 3. Juli 1941 glaubte, militaerisch werde dieser Krieg seinen Hoehpunkt bald ueberwunden haben, *regten sich doch Zweifel*. „Auf solchen Verfahren aufgebaut,“ gemeint ein *Angriffskrieg*, werde „die Welt auf die Dauer nicht leben koennen.“ Die Sache werde aber in Ordnung kommen, meint er, „wenn wir den Krieg gewonnen haben.“ Die *Weltgeschichte habe ein kurzes Gedaechtnis*, hofft er, „u. *derartige Ueberfaelle auf ein anderes Volk* sind keine Seltenheit.“ Zu denken gibt ihm allerdings die Entfernung von der „*Humanitaet des letzten Jahrhunderts*.“ Insofern „**handeln wir wie weiland der alte Dschingis Khan**.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 153)

5.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Er nimmt an, dass „der Hauptteil geschafft“ sein werde, wenn *Smolensk* erreicht sei. Der Gegner habe „uns ja den Gefallen getan, sich zum Kampfe zu stellen, statt in die Weite des Raumes auszuweichen.“ Es duerfe aber nicht uebersehen werden, *regen sich weitere Zweifel*, dass das gegnerische Kriegspotential „ungeheuer gross ist u. sie immer noch neue Panzer in den Kampf werfen.“ Auch sei dies „die erste Operation, wo man mit grossen *Gegenzuegen*“ rechnen muesse, was sie aber auch „besonders interessant“ mache. Das der Kampf

⁸⁷ **Note:** According to his biographer, Heusinger’s views would change by end of war and after 1945, when apparently he became convinced that Russia would *not* have attacked Germany in either 1941 or 1942. (see, *Meyer*, 152; also, *Heusinger, Befehl im Widerstreit*, 130)

jedoch „zum Teil asiatische Formen“ angenommen habe, „vor allem in der Frage der Gefangenenbehandlung,“ missfaellt ihm zusehends. (Meyer, Heusinger, 153)

8.7.41: Frau Heusinger hatte inzwischen prognostiziert, dass sich der Widerstand „an der alten russ. Grenze“ versteifen wuerde. Ihr Mann bestaetigt irh das am 8. Juli mit den Worten, dass man diesen Widerstand natuerlich erst brechen muesse. Dann werde es aber sehr schnell gehen. Aber wieder bereitet ihm die unendliche Weite der Raeume Sorgen.⁸⁸ Man bekomme das Grausen [horror] beim Gedanken daran, „wie weit wir noch laufen muessen, bis die russ. Gefahr endguelting beseitigt sein wird.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 153)

8.7.41: Halder notiert schon am **8. Jul 41** in seinem persoelichen Tagebuch, dass es des Fuehrers feststehender Entschluss sei, Moskau (u. Leningrad) dem Erdboden gleichzumachen. So koenne man verhindern, dass die Ueberlebenden der Schlacht in der Stadt bleiben wuerden, die man deutscherseits den Winter hindurch nur ernaehren muessten. Die Staedte sollen durch die Luftwaffe vernichtet werden. Panzer duerfen dafuer nicht eingesetzt werden. Mann muss dadurch eine kuenstliche „Volkskatastrophe“ hervorrufen, „die nicht nur den Bolschewismus sondern auch das Moskowitertum der Zentren beraubt.“ (Halder KTB; quoted in: Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht, 102)

8.7.41 [Vortrag Ob.d.H. u. Gen.Obst. Halder beim Fuehrer]: Von **164** bekannten russ. Schuetzenverbaenden sind heute zu bewerten:

- 89** vernichtet
- 46** kampffaehig
- 18** an Nebenfronten (darunter Finnland)
- 11** unbekannt

(KTB OKW, Bd. I, Sonderakte, Anlage 14, 1021)

8.7.41: Fuehrer umreisst seine Gesamtauffassung der grossen Lage: H.Gr.Nord wird voraussichtlich mit ihren derzeitigen Kraeften ihren Auftrag, nach Leningrad vorzustossen, erfullen koennen. Bei H.Gr.Mitte entsteht die Frage, ob sie auf Moskau vorstossen oder mit starken Teilen hinten dem Pripjet nach Sueden einschwenken soll. Fuehrer betont grundsaeztlich, dass er Moskau u. Leningrad dem Erdboden gleich machen wolle. Dies koenne aber mit der Luftwaffe eingeleitet werden u. brauche nicht die Erdoperationen zu beeinflussen. Im ganzen muesse H.Gr.Mitte noch erheblich Raum nach Osten in Richtung Moskau gewinnen, um auf alle Faelle gegenueber Moskau starke Sicherungskraefte stehen zu haben, falls Teile nach Sueden eindrehen. Entscheidung betr. H.Gr.Mitte heute also noch nicht erforderlich. (KTB OKW, Bd. I, Sonderakte, Anlage 13, 1021)

8.-11.7.41: German strategic intelligence continues to flounder. At a **8 July** conference at Rastenburg, they put Timoshenko's strength at **11** divisions; in reality, Army Group Ctr faces **66** divisions (**24** in the first echelon, **37** actually in position). Three days later (**11 July**), Halder writes that the Soviets have no reserves behind the fighting front; in fact, Stavka has created reserves that OKH could only envy. (Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 49)

⁸⁸ **Note:** Earlier in July, Heusinger had also expressed such concerns: “Die meiste Sorge mache ihm jedoch, ‘wie wir eigentlich dieses Riesenreich verdauen wollen...Es seien ‚irrsinnige Wege‘ bis Moskau, Leningrad u. Baku. (153)

11.7.41: Halder writes in his diary: “The enemy Command is acting ably . . . The enemy is putting up a fierce and fanatical fight.” (*Halder KTB*)

14.7.41: Fuehrer spricht ueber Notwendigkeit Moskau zu bombardieren, um das Zentrum des bolschewistischen Widerstandes zu treffen u. den geordneten Abzug des russ. Regierungsapparates zu verhindern. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Sonderakte, Anlage 15*, 1022)

15.7.41 [*Vortragsnotiz ueber die Besetzung u. Sicherung des russ. Raumes u. ueber den Umbau des Heeres nach Abschluss Barbarossa*]: . . . *Grundlegende Forderungen fuer die Besetzung u. Sicherung des russ. Raumes*

1. Die Besetzung u. Sicherung des eroberten russ. Raumes muss mit moeglichst geringen Kraeften durchgefuehrt werden. Hierfuer sind an grossen Verbaenden insgesamt vorgesehen:

12 Pz.Divisionen
6 mot.Divisionen
34 Inf.Divisionen
3 Geb.Divisionen
1 Kav.Division

Insgesamt: **56** Divisionen

In diesen Zahlen ist die Operationsgruppe fuer das Unternehmen Kaukasus – Iran inbegriffen. (for more details see, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1022-23)⁸⁹

ab 16.7.41: With capture of *Smolensk* on 16 July and the subsequent great battle of encirclement the *first phase of “Operation Barbarossa” came to an end*. On the surface the victory in the Battle of Smolensk appeared to be another great German success (by beginning of August over 300,000 prisoners, over 3,000 tanks and about same number of guns had been captured), but for the *first time*, German military leaders were now confronted w/ a great number of unpleasant truths w/ far-reaching consequences. The duration and course of the battle had shown that the *enemy’s deter-mination to stop the German advance on Moscow at any price was unbroken*. Hitler observed w/ resignation that “the Russian” could not be defeated by German operational successes “because he simply refuses to recognize them.” The Red Army would therefore have to be destroyed *piece by piece in small, tactical encirclements*. (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 112; also, *Halder KTB*, 26.7.41)

17.7.41 [*Fuehrererwaegung*]: Angesichts der Lage der H.Gr.Nord hat der Fuehrer den Gedanken wieder aufgenommen vor weiterem Vorgehen auf Moskau starke Panzer-Kraefte der H.Gr.Mitte (**PzGr 3**) nach Nordosten vorzufuehren.

⁸⁹ **Note:** According to this document (under “*Zeitliche u. kraeftemaessige Bindungen*”): “Sobald die noch ostw. der Dnjepr-Duenalinie stehenden russ. Kraefte im wesentlichen zerschlagen sind, werden daher die Operationen moeglichst nur mit den mot.Verbaenden, sowie denjenigen Inf.-Verbaenden fortzusetzen sein, welche endgueltig im russ. Raum verbleiben sollen. Die Masse der Inf.-Verbaende muss, soweit sie die Linie Krim-Moskau-Leningrad erreicht haben u. – was anzunehmen ist – nicht mit der Bahn gefahren werden koennen, **Anfang August** [!] den Rueckmarsch antreten. . .” In other words, German inf.-divs. were to begin coming home in August! (1024)

Aufgaben: Durchschneiden der Verbindungslinie Moskau – Leningrad. Im Zusammenwirken mit der H.Gr.Nord den vor dieser stehenden Feind zu vernichten. Leningrad abzuschliessen. (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 1029)

17.7.41: [Heusinger an seine Frau]: Zunehmend irritiert zeigte sich Heusinger ueber das unerschoepflich erscheinende personelle Potential der Roten Armee. Am 17. Juli meinte er, in den grossen Schlachten an der alten russ. Grenze sei die Entscheidung „im grossen“ gefallen – Doppelschlacht bei Bialystok u. Minsk, Einnahme von Smolensk –, jedoch werde „das Aufraeuern der Schlachtfelder“ noch lange dauern. Druueckend sei jetzt die Ungewissheit, „was der Russe nach diesen erneuten Niederlagen u. dem Verlust der Masse seines Heeres [!] machen wird.“ Eine Bitte um Waffenstillstand von russ. Seite wuerde „von uns“ jedenfalls nie angenommen. (Meyer, Heusinger, 154)

19.7.41: Up to this day, the progress of Army Group Center in the direction of Moscow was *very gratifying*. In conformity w/ the objectives of OKH, it had been possible, despite tough resistance, to seize the passage between the *Dvina and Dnieper rivers* and to secure the *triangle Orsha – Smolensk – Vitebsk* as a base for a further advance on Moscow. As early as **13.7.41**, GFM v. Bock, who was *always one to press on w/ all his might*, viewed the prospects of a “breakthrough of tank spearheads on Moscow” as very favorable. However, strong enemy pressure from the **21st, 4th & 13th** Russian armies now began to be felt on the *southern flank of the army group*. This was the general situation when Hitler’s *Directive No. 33* of 19 July was issued. It contemplated a turning movement of strong forces, in particular fast formations, of Army Group Center *to the southeastward and southward* to annihilate, in cooperation w/ Army Group South, the Russian **5th Army** and the enemy forces which had been shifted to the east bank of the Dnieper.⁹⁰ Other motorized forces of Center were to advance northeasterly, cut the lines of communication *Moscow-Leningrad*, and cover the right flank of Army Group North in its assault on *Leningrad*. Army Group Center was to continue the advance on Moscow w/ *infantry alone*. Thus began a *turning point in the war*, incomprehensible to the Russians – “*Marne miracle*” – as a Russian general called it – which was to save Moscow just as Paris was relieved in **1914**. (Assmann, *Battle for Moscow*, 314-15)⁹¹

19.7.41: Die am 19. Juli herausgegebene *Weisung No. 33* ueber die Fortfuehrung des Krieges im Osten setzte allerdings *andere Ziele als Halder erhofft hatte*. Waehrend der *Generalstabschef* annahm, dass die Sowjetunion alles daran setzen wuerde, ihre Hauptstadt u. damit gleichzeitig *den wichtigsten Eisenbahn- u. Versorgungsknotenpunkt* zu verteidigen, hatte Hitler andere Plaene. Anstelle des von Halder favorisierten raschen Vormarsches auf Moskau, sollten *die noch zu erreichenden Teile der Rote Armee an einem Ausweichen in die Tiefe des Raumes gehindert u. vernichtet werden*. Der Vormarsch der Hr.Gr.Mitte auf Moskau sollte ausdruuecklich allein mit *Infanterie fortgesetzt werden*. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 246)

⁹⁰ **Note:** In the opening days of the campaign, Hitler had expressed concern for Army Group South, fearing enemy flank attacks from north and south. In fact, the farther eastward it advanced, the greater became the danger to both its flanks, as Hitler had feared. This was particularly the case on the northern flank, where the **5th** Russian Army was concentrated in the Pripet area. (314)

⁹¹ As Assmann notes, however: „The time had not yet arrived when directive no. 33 had to be acted upon. The troops were still engaged on all fronts in concluding the ops in progress...The C-in-C of the Army advanced the argument that the fast forces of Army Group Center...*urgently needed a 10 – 14 day rest period to restore their combat effectiveness.*” Hitler apparently agreed, and admitted that the armored forces of Army Group Center needed time for rest and refitting; thus, he directed them to delay execution of the newly assigned tasks (Directive No. 33), and ordered Bock to go over to the defensive temporarily. (315-16)

21.7.41 [Besuch des Fuehrers bei H.Gr.Nord]: Fuehrer wies auf folgende Punkte hin:

1. Baldige Wegnahme von Leningrad u. Bereinigung der Lage am Finnischen Busen sei noetig, um die russ. Flotte auszuschalten. Hiervon haengt die ungestoerte Erzzufuhr aus Schweden ab. . .

2. Bei dem Vorstoss auf Leningrad kommt es darauf an, rasch die Bahnlinie Moskau-Leningrad zu unterbrechen, um das Ausweichen russischer Kraefte an andere Fronten u. auf Moskau zu unterbinden. In diesem Zusammenhang erwog der Fuehrer das Heranziehen der **PzGr 3**, um auf diese Weise schneller, als es der H.Gr.Nord moeglich, in allgemeiner Richtung Wyschnij Wolotschek vorzustossen u. hier die Bahn zu unterbrechen.

Diese Frage wurde im Zusammenhang beleuchtet mit der Marschrichtung der H.Gr.Mitte, also allgemeiner Richtung Moskau. Zur Zeit sei die H.Gr.Mitte noch fuer mehrere Tage festgelegt, um mit **PzGr 2** u. **3** einen aeusseren Ring um die vor der Front befindlichen Feindkraefte zu schliessen. In spaetestens **5** Tagen aber muesse die Entscheidung ueber das Herausnehmen der **PzGr 3** aus Richtung Moskau nach Nordosten fallen.

In diesem Zusammenhang kann es dazu kommen, dass **PzGr 2** nach SO eindreht, so dass fuer den Stoss auf Moskau nur Inf.-Armeen der H.Gr.Mitte uebrig bleiben. *Der Umstand macht aber dem Fuehrer keine Sorge, da Moskau fuer ihn nur ein geographischer Begriff ist. . .* (see, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, Anlage 18, 1029-30)

22.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau] Inzwischen bemerkte er *Nervositaet, Gereiztheit u. Missstimmung* bei den „hohen Herren,“ Kennzeichen der Auseinandersetzungen auf hoechster Ebene bis Monatsende. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 154)

22.7.41: Diese Entwicklung [i.e., Weisung 33] passte nun gar nicht in das Konzept des Generalstabschefs u. der *ObdH* [*Brauchitsch*] hatte noch am 22. Juli Gelegenheit die abweichenden Auffassungen des OKH bei Hitler vorzutragen. Erstaunlicherweise hat sich Hitler ausnahmsweise *die Einwaende des ObdH naeher betrachtet*, denn schon am naechsten Tag wurde die *Weisung ergaenzt*. Doch auch mit der Ergaenzung war Halder *keineswegs zufrieden*, denn diese loeste das nach seiner Ansicht bestehende Problem nicht...Ohne eine *vernichtende Entscheidungsschlacht*, davon war Halder ueberzeugt, konnte der Feldzug *nicht gewonnen werden*. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 246)⁹²

ab 22.7.41: From this date, the fact that Hitler and the Army General Staff had *not come to any real agreement on the point of main effort of the offensive* began to exert a negative influence on German ops. It now became clear that **Directive No. 21** represented „a *superficial compromise* between two fundamentally incompatible operational ideas.” On the one hand, the Army General Staff believed that Moscow as the operational objective should have absolute priority. Its capture would mean the elimination of the political and administrative nerve center of the Soviet Union and the fall of the most important Soviet *traffic junction*. Conversely, Hitler was convinced that *military successes on the flanks* of the offensive were more important than capturing the Soviet

⁹² **Note:** Die Entscheidung war in den wesentlichsten Punkten gefallen...Die Fortfuehrung der Operationen war **im Sinne Hitlers entschieden**. Halder KTB: „Im uebrigen interessiert [Hitler] im Augenblick Moskau gar nicht, sondern nur **Leningrad**. (247)

capital. In the north, he wanted to *link up w/ the Finns* and destroy the Soviet position in the Baltic by eliminating *Leningrad*; in the South, he wanted to capture the all-important industrial and raw materials centres of the *Donets Basin* and the *Caucasus* and destroy Soviet air bases near the *Black Sea*, which posed a threat to German oil supplies from Romania. It was no accident that the *conflict between Hitler and his military leaders*, which had been smouldering for months, *broke out into the open exactly one month after the start of the offensive when Hitler decided on 22.7.41 that his armored units should not advance farther to the East.* (B. Wegner, *Road to Defeat*, 112)

23.7.41 [*Besprechung des Fuehrers mit Ob.d.H. bei Chef Gen.St.d.H. u. Oberst Heusinger*]: Gen.Obst. Halder traegt ueber das Feindbild vor u. weist darauf hin, dass man bei der Fortfuehrung der Operationen weiterhin mit fdl. Widerstand rechnen muss.

Es werden geschaezt:

gegenueber H.Gr.Nord = **20 ID / 3 ½ PD**
gegenueber H.Gr.Mitte = **32 ID / 3 ½ PD**
gegenueber H.Gr.Sued = **26 ID / 6 PD / 2 Kav-Div**

Die eigenen Kampfkraefte schaezt er z.Z. auf **80%** bei den Inf.-Div., **50%** bei den Pz.-Div., u. mot.Div. im Durchschnitt. . .

Gen.Obst. Halder gibt allgemeinen Ueberblick ueber die zeitlichen Moeglichkeiten der Fortfuehrung der Operationen:

H.Gr.Sued: Ueberschreiten des Dnjepr Mitte August.

H.Gr.Mitte: Fruehestens **5.8.[41]**. Vorher Bereinigung der Saecke um Smolensk u. Bevorratung der Armeen pp. In Richtung Moskau mit staerkstem Widerstand zu rechnen, starke Luft-abwehr.

H.Gr.Nord: Nicht gluecklich gruppiert, Umgruppierung?

Fuehrer spricht ueber Ziele u. betont, dass es grundsaeztlich darauf ankommt, die lebendige Kraft des Feindes zu vernichten, wo man sie erreichen kann. . . Fuehrer hat auch heute dem [Ob.d.H.] gegenueber, wie schon in den vergangenen Tagen, die operative Lage dahin gezeichnet, dass nach Erledigung des Kampfes im Raume Smolensk die **PzGr 2** u. **3** rechts bzw. links auseinanderklappen muessten, um die H.Gr.Sued bzw. Nord zu unterstuetzen. H.Gr.Mitte muesse den Vormarsch auf Moskau mit Inf.-Div. durchfuehren. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, Sonderakte, Anlage 19, 1030-31)

23.-28.7.41: General Halder made this note of the conference w/ the *Fuehrer* on this day: “At present the *Fuehrer* is *not at all interested in Moscow, only Leningrad.*” After another conference w/ Hitler on **25.7.41**, Halder viewed the new directive as a “*bogging down of the current stirring operations;*” a reference to the importance of Moscow was “*summarily rejected*” by Hitler. On **28.7.41**, the former added: „The operation ordered by the *Fuehrer* will lead to a *scattering of forces* and to *stagnation in the decisive direction*, Moscow. Bock will be so weak that he will not be able to attack.” (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 315)

24.7.41: Von OKH ergehen Weisungen fuer die Fortfuehrung der Operationen: Hr.Gr. Sued – Suedfluegel 2. Armee u. PzGr 2 (unter 4. Armee) sollen nach Abschluss der Kaempfe um Smolensk ueber Linie Gomel-Brjansk nach Sueden eingesetzt werden, um mit Hr.Gr. Sued zusammenzuarbeiten. Nach Vernichtung des Feindes westl. des Dnjepr sind baldmoeglichst PzGr 1 u. 2 unter 4. Pz.Armee zusammenzufassen, um...Inf. u. Geb.-Divisionen nach Gewinnung des Industriegebietes von Charkow ueber den Don *nach Kaukasien vorzustossen...*

Hr.Gr.Mitte -- mit Resten 2. Armee u. 9. Armee den zwischen Moskau u. Smolensk befindlichen Feind, unter Vortreiben des linken Fluegels, schlagen u. zunaechst Industriegebiet suedl. u. noerdl. Moskaus in Besitz nehmen. PzGr 3 wird Hr.Gr. Nord unterstellt, um vom Nordteil der Waldaihoeehen baldigst Verbindung Moskau, Leningrad endgueltig zu unterbinden. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

25.7.41: Beim Fuehervortrag vorgestern hat GenStChef Halder folgende Termine genannt: **Moskau** nicht vor **25.8**; Don nicht vor 1.10.; **Kaukasus** nicht vor 1.11 (Winter!) (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

25.7.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*]: „Ewige Unruhe u. ein ewiges Eingreifen von hoechster Stelle, das ganze ueberfluessig ist. Veraergerung ist die Folge...Noch meinte er, man stehe „vor dem Moment, wo der Russe nicht mehr kann.“ Unausgebildete wuerden als „reines Kanonenfutter zum Angriff vorgehetzt“ u. „zu Tausenden u. Abertausenden erschossen“ – das koenne auf die Dauer nicht gutgehen. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 154*)

25.7.41: Nach Beurteilung *Heusingers* ist Feldzug bei Nord planmaessig, bei Mitte bis zum Hoehepunkt der Schlacht um Smolensk gleichfalls planmaessig, bei Sued wesentlich langsamer als erwartet, verlaufen. Auf allen Fronten *werden Zahl des feindl Materials u. Widerstandskraft des Feindes unterschaezt...Fuehrer ist der Verzoegerung wegen sehr nervoes*. Als Halder ihm vor Operationsbeginn 3-5 Monate nannte, wollte er es nicht glauben. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

25.7.41: Besprechung zwischen *Brauchitsch* u. den Chefs der Heeresgruppe[n?]: B. verdeutlichte die Notwendigkeit, im Hinblick auf die Weiterfuehrung der Operationen, zu einer *einheitlichen Auffassung zwischen OKH u. den Heeresgruppen zu kommen*, denn einen Schutz vor den Eingriffen von *oberster Stelle* [i.e., Hitler] sei nicht mehr moeglich. Im *Klartext* war dieser Hinweis an die Heeresgruppen kaum fasch zu verstehen: Mit weiteren Eingriffen Hitlers in die Fuehrung des Feldzuges musste also, aehnlich wie im *Frankreichfeldzug*, auch in Zukunft gerechnet werden. Die *Heeresfuehrung fuehrte nicht mehr, sie war immer mehr zum ausfuehrenden Organ des „Fuehrerwillens“ geworden, dass nur in Ausnahmefaellen um fachliche Beratung gebeten wurde*. Die Stimmung des ObdH muss in diesen Tagen, angesichts der *stetig zunehmenden Eingriffe Hitlers*, immer schlechter geworden sein, waehrend gleichzeitig seine Widerstandskraft gegen die *Ausschaltung des OKH in der Operationsfuehrung immer mehr schwand*. (see, *Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 247*)

25.7.41 [*Besprechung des Chefs OKW mit OB der H.Gr.Mitte*]:⁹³

GFM Keitel:

Weitausholende, operative Umfassungen entsprechend Lehren des Generalstabes waren im Westen bei Flankenempfindlichkeit u. geringem Widerstandswillen des Gegners richtig.

⁹³ Quelle: Anl. Bd. z. KTB der H.Gr.Mitte.

Gegenueber den Russen fuehren sie nicht zum vollen Erfolg. Er faellt immer wieder mit starken Kraefte die eigenen Umfassungsfluegel an, bindet Kraefte, verhindert rechtzeitige Einkreisung u. totalen Vernichtungserfolg. Durch zaehen Widerstand innerhalb der Einkreisung bindet er eigene Kraefte zu lange.

Fuehrer wuenscht daher, dass mil. Fuehrung sich von grossen, operativen Einkreisungsschlachten umstellt auf taktische Vernichtungsschlachten in kleineren Raeumen, in denen gestellter Feind 100%ig vernichtet wird.

Dieser Taktik ist um so notwendiger, als bei weiterem Vorgehen im russ. Raum Aufspaltung der Verbaende des Heeres in einzelne Kampfgruppen unabhaengig voneinander u. ohne Anlehnung unvermeidlich ist. *Diese allein moegliche Form weiterer Kriegsfuehrung in Russland bedingt vorherige restlose Erledigung der russ. Armee, damit eigene Kampfgruppen volle Bewegungsfreiheit haben.*

Fuehrer verspricht sich durch diese Kampfweise gleichzeitig groesseren Zeitgewinn, alls wenn aus weitraeumigen Einkreisungen immer wieder wesentliche Teile des Feindes entweichen, um sich dann erneut zum Kampf zu stellen.

In diesem Sinne war der Fuehrer fuer frueheres Eindrehen der Umfassungsfluegel sowohl bei *Bialystok-Minsk*, wie bei *Smolensk*. . .

Wertvolle Panzer-Waffe wird durch Flankenangriffe des Gegners zu stark abgenutzt. Abstand Infanterie zu Schnellen Verbaenden muss deshalb im Gegensatz zu Weltfeldzug in Russland verkuerzt werden. Nur so ist totale Vernichtung eingeschlossener Feindgruppe gesichert. . .

Zusammenfassend wirft Fuehrer dem Generalstab vor, dass er gegenueber Verhalten des russ. Gegners operative zu grosszuegig fuehrt, taktisch daher die Erfolge im Verhaeltnis zu den Leistungen zu gering sind.

Im Falle *Smolensk* fuerchtet er, dass auf diese Weise der angebahnte Erfolg ausbleibt, zumal Reichsmarschall Goering ihm vorgetragen hat, dass Gegner aus Luecke ostw. Smolensk seit mehreren Tagen in dicken Kolonnen entweicht.

Weitere Plaene im grossen:

GFM Keitel:

1. Leningrad muss schnell abgeriegelt u. ausgehungert werden. . . Pz.Gr. Hoth wird fuer diese Aufgabe von [nach?] Norden abgedreht. . . Spaeter muss Pz.Gr. Hoth der H.Gr.Mitte wieder zugefuehrt werden.
2. Im Sueden ist fuer weitreichenden Auftrag ueber Charkow hinaus Einsatz von **2 PzGr** notwendig. Deshalb Panzergruppe Guderian nach Suedosten.

3. Ausserdem muss Feindgruppe *Gomel–Mosyr*⁹⁴ vernichtet werden. Deshalb Eindrehen rechter Armee H.Gr.Mitte nach Sueden.
4. Vorgehen H.Gr.Mitte denkt Fuehrer sich mit **2** Armeen beiderseits der Autobahn nach Moskau. . . Moskau selbst muss – wie Leningrad – nicht angegriffen, sondern eingeschlossen u. ausgehungert werden. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I. 1035-36)

26.7.41: „Ich sehe in dieser Gedankenbildung [*Weisung 33*] den Anfang des Versandens der bisherigen schwungvollen Operation...(Halder *KTB*)

28.7.41: Fuehrer betont erneut seine Auffassung, dass ihm das Industriegebiet um Charkow wichtiger ist als Moskau. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Sonderakte, Anlage 24*, 1040)

28.7.41: „Bei ObdH weise ich erneut auf die *Unsinnigkeit* der nunmehr beschlossenen Operation hin. Sie fuehrt zu einem *Auseinanderlaufen der Kraefte u. einem Stehenbleiben in der entscheidenden Richtung auf Moskau*...(Halder *KTB*)

28.7.41 [*Erwaegungen u. Anordnungen des Fuehrers*]: Angesichts der Entwicklung der Lage in den letzten Tagen, vor allem das Auftreten neuer starken Feindkraefte vor der Front u. in der Flanke der H.Gr.Mitte, ist der Fuehrer zu der Ueberzeugung gekommen, dass der Gedanke auf Durchfuehrung weitrauemiger Operationen, wie er in der Ergaenzung zur Weisung No. **33** vom **23.7.[41]** Ausdruck gefunden hat, zunaechst hinter der Vernichtung der vor der Front stehenden Feindkraefte zuruecktreten muesse. Als dringlichste Aufgabe hat Fuehrer es dem ObdH gegenueber daher bezeichnet, die Lage in der rechten Flanke der H.Gr.Mitte durch Zerschlagen der im Gebiet um u. noerdl. *Gomel* stehenden Feindgruppe zu bereinigen. Hierbei soll **PzGr 2** nach der notwendigsten Auffrischung aus dem Raum um u. ostw. *Kritschew* in scharf suedwestl. Richtung auf *Gomel* vorstossen, um den Gegner am Entkommen nach Osten oder Sueden zu verhindern. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1040)⁹⁵

29.7.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*]: Wenige Tage spaeter⁹⁶ ist ihm aber klar, dass ein Ende des Krieges „vorlaeufig noch nicht abzusehen“ sei. Zwar sei der Krieg gegen Russland „*notwendig*“ gewesen, „sonst waeren die Russen bald ueber Europa hergefallen u. haetten es mit ihren Massen niedergewalzt,“ schliesst er sich der *verbreiteten Meinung* in diesen Wochen an, folgert jedoch: „Aber es ist unsere Lage dadurch nicht besser geworden, wenigstens vorlaeufig nicht.“ Er tue sein Moeglichstes, um zu einem schnellen Erfolg zu kommen, habe aber gemeinsam mit *Halder* „gegen viele Widerstaende zu kaempfen, insbesondere gegenueber den Gedanken des Fuehrers.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 154)

30.7.41: Hitler orders Army Group Center to take up defensive positions. For him the *massive resistance* of the Red Army in the narrow area between the *Dnieper* and the *Dvina* and the

⁹⁴ „Besondere Sorge des Fuehrers richtet sich z.Z. auf Raum um Mosyr, wo sich nach seiner Beurteilung neue starke Feindgruppe aus Feind vor rechtem Fluegel **2** Armee u. Feind vor **6** Armee bildet, dabei wahrscheinlich starke Artillerie.“ (1036)

⁹⁵ **Note:** For this operation several changes in command undertaken; for ex., “**PzGr 2**, an welche **2** Armee **IX AK (263, 292, u. 268 ID)** abgibt, wird unter Bezeichnung “Armeegruppe Guderian” der H.Gr.Mitte unmittelbar unterstellt...” (1040)

⁹⁶ See above, *Heusinger* letter to his wife, **25.7.41**.

considerable *logistical problems* of the German army,⁹⁷ especially in the central sector of the front, were convincing arguments for a *return to the idea*, which he had favored from the very beginning, of *seeking a decision on the flanks*. This did not mean that Moscow had been abandoned as an operation objective, but only – as envisaged in a *directive* of **12.8.41** – that its *capture had been postponed* until the situation on the flanks had been taken care of. While Hitler probably regarded this plan as a *compromise* in the dispute about the direction of further ops, the army leaders found it *extremely alarming*. They feared that the operation, which until then had developed considerable momentum, could run out of energy and that Moscow would not be reached in time, that is before onset of winter. Moreover, the offensive now seemed *in danger of failing to achieve its main objective*: the destruction of the Red Army. Because the enemy expected the main German thrust to be against Moscow and had concentrated the mass of his forces in the central section of the front against Army Group Ctr, *so the Army General Staff calculated*, the best chance of forcing a decisive battle would be there. (B. Wegner, *Road to Defeat*, 112; also “*Ergaenzung der Weisung 34*” of 12.8.41, in: *Hitlers Weisungen fuer die Kriegfuehrung*, 148 ff.)

30.7.41: ...wurde Halder durch die *erstaunliche Tatsache* ueberrascht, dass Hitler die Ausfuehrung der „*Weisung 33*“ auf Grund der Feindlage, der eigenen Versorgungslage u. der Notwendigkeit, die Pz.Gr. 2 u. 3 aufzufrischen, durch die „*Weisung 34*“ „vorerst“ zurueckgestellt hatte. Halder schrieb dazu: „Diese Loesung befreit jeden denkenden Soldat von dem *fuerchterlichen Alpdruck* der letzten Tage..., (der) durch die *unnachgiebige Haltung des Fuehrers* (entstanden war)...Endlich einmal wieder ein *Lichtblick!*“ (Nehring, *Panzerwaffe*, 224; also, *Halder KTB*)

30.7.41: Hitler bekraeftigt seine Auffassungen noch einmal in der *Weisung 34*: Waehrend im Norden der Angriff in Richtung *Leningrad* vorangetrieben u. im Suedbereich starke Kraefte der Roten Armee *westlich des Dnjepr* geschlagen werden sollten, wurde fuer die Hr.Gr.Mitte zunaechst der *zeitweise Uebergang zur Verteidigung angeordnet*, damit diese ihre *ueberlasteten Panzerkraefte* aus der Front herausziehen u. auffrischen konnte. Immerhin war *Halder* insofern zufrieden, als die Hr.Gr.Mitte nicht bereits zu diesem Zeitpunkt, wie urspruenglich von Hitler vorgesehen, ihre Panzer nach Norden u. Sueden abdrehen lassen musste. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 248)

31.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Am 31. Juli *gab er es auf zu prophezeien*, wenn auch in der Hoffnung, „vielleicht geben uns die naechsten Wochen bereits ein klareres Bild. Er schufte [toiled] z.Z. wie „noch nie in diesem ganzen Krieg,“ u. „es ist ja das erste Mal, dass ein Staat nicht gleich zusammenbricht u. damit der Abschluss der Operationen erreicht wird.“ *So steigerten sich „die Probleme ins Ungemessene.“* Er habe dabei „gegen die Nerven der hohen u. hoechsten Herren anzukaempfen,“ vielleicht das Schwerste an der ganzen Arbeit. Dabei gehe es mit *Brauchitsch* noch besser als mit *Halder*, „der sehr kaput ist, mir einerseits alles ueberlaesst, andererseits aber doch immer wieder mit eigenen Gedanken dazwischen kommt.“ Er hoffte auf eine „gewisse Entspannung, wenn es an der Front wieder weitergeht.“ *Ratlos* machte ihn weiterhin das *personelle Potential des Gegners*. (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 154)

Late Jul 41: [*Auszug aus dem Entwurf zu einem Schreiben des OKH an OKW/WFSt vom Ende Juli 1941*]:

⁹⁷ **Note:** For these logistical problems see, Klaus A. Friedrich Schueler, *Logistik im Russlandfeldzug*, 1987, pp. 308 ff.

This document is preceded by **ObdH** concerns that tasks („operative Absichten“) laid out in Hitler’s supplement to Directive No. 33, particularly for H.Gr.Mitte, are not currently possible to accomplish; thus, on **23.7.41**, ObdH requested from the Chef OKW that they be postponed (request denied). There also is discussion of Hitler’s concerns about the operations of the „schnelle Verbaende“ in Russia – i.e., that mobile ops deep into enemy territory w/ ambitious goals must take a back seat to more modest encirclements – given stubbornness of enemy defense, etc. (1031)

In „*Auszug aus dem Entwurf*“ to OKW/WFSt, the OKH points out the difficulties of trying to move on Moscow w/ infantry units alone. OKH points out that only **20-22** inf-divs., operating on a front of some **250** km, would be available for the operation. OKH argues for continuation of offensive on Moscow with concentrated forces of H.Gr.Mitte (i.e., w/ the **2** Pz.Gr.). Estimates that this operation – after replenishment of the mobile units – could begin as early as **12.8.41** and reach Moscow by early **Sep 41**. (1034). OKH also argues that the deployment it is proposing will support *both* Hitler’s proposed plan and that of OKH.

(For more details see, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Anlage 21*, 1031-34)

Jul/Aug 41: In late Jul 41, Hitler is still adamant that capturing the industrial region of Kharkov and the Donets Basin and cutting off Soviet oil supplies would undermine resistance more than the fall of Moscow. But he was *wavering*. At this point, even *Jodl* and the *Wehrmacht Operations Staff* had been converted to the need to attack Moscow. In early August, Hitler remains wedded to *Leningrad* as the priority. The second priority for Hitler was, as before, “the south of Russia, esp. the Donets region.” Moscow was a clear *third* on his priority list. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 410; *OKW KTB*, 1037, 1040; *Warlimont*, 185)

Jul/Aug 41: With one notable exception, all important actors w/in OKW, OKH and Army Group Ctr favored *continuation of the offensive w/ the objective to seize Moscow*. The **Jul-Aug consensus** among actors as disparate as Jodl and Warlimont at OKW, Brauchitsch and Halder at OKH, and v. Bock, Guderian and Hoth at Army Group Ctr constitutes a *powerful case in favor of the realism of Moscow as an attainable objective in summer of 1941*...Instead Hitler ordered the attack into the Ukraine. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 32; see, *Warlimont, Hitler’s Headquarters*, 181-93, for the view from inside OKW of the struggle for a decisive course of action after **16.7.41**.)

Jul/Aug 41: Within the German leadership in **Jul-Aug 41**, Hitler and Halder advocated different objectives for the second stage of operations, and supported different methods for achieving them. The main debate was whether the two armored groups of Army Group Ctr should wheel round towards one of the two flanks (Leningrad or the Sea of Azov), or whether Army Groups North and South could fulfill their objectives w/o such reinforcement, leaving all the forces in the centre to be concentrated for the defeat of the Soviet forces before Moscow. This debate in the summer of **1941** also reflects the growing awareness of the German leadership that Operation “Barbarossa” had failed. . . It seems that Hitler was a more realistic judge of the situation than Halder in the summer of **1941**. The chief of the Army General Staff still believed he could achieve victory by launching a wide-ranging operation against Moscow. By the end of **Aug 41**, on the other hand, Hitler considered that the war against the Soviet Union could no longer be completed in that year. He therefore hoped to destroy the fighting force of the Red Army in

narrow encirclements, to capture the sources of Soviet power, and to establish good starting-positions for **1942**. (*J. Foerster*, in: *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 1252)

Jul/Aug 41: In controversy over future German strategy in east, German generals argue in favor of continuing assault on Moscow. The Russian capital, they point out to Hitler, was a vital source of *armament production* and, even more important, the *center of the Russian transportation and communications system*. Take it, and the Soviets would not only be deprived of an essential source of arms but would be unable to move troops and supplies to the distant fronts, which thereafter would weaken, wither and collapse. But there was a *final conclusive argument* which the generals advanced to the Fuehrer: All their intel reports showed that the main Russian forces were now being concentrated before Moscow for an all-out defense of the capital. “The *center of gravity* of Russia strength,” wrote Halder (in a report prepared for the Allies immediately after the war), “was therefore in front of Army Group Ctr . . . The General Staff had been brought up w/ the idea that it must be the aim of an operation to defeat the military power of the enemy, and it therefore considered the next and most pressing task to be to defeat the forces of Timoshenko by concentrating all available forces at Army Group Center, to advance on Moscow, to take this *nerve center* of enemy resistance . . .” (quoted in: *Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 856)

Jul/Aug 41: Die tatsaechliche Lage an der Front erzwang die Aufgabe ueberholter Annahmen, an denen ein *ideologisches Feindbild* seinen Anteil gehabt hatte. Dieser Prozess war – gerade nach der *Euphorie der ersten beiden Wochen* – fuer *alle* Beteiligten *schmerzhaft*, auch wenn spaeter das Scheitern des Blitzkrieges allein auf Hitler angelastet wurde. Innerhalb der dt. Fuehrung verfochten Herr u. Hitler *unterschiedliche Vorstellungen* von den Zielen u. der Art der Durchfuehrung der zweiten Operationsphase. Im Grunde ging es darum, ob entweder die zwei *Panzergruppen* der Hr.Gr.Mitte in Richtung auf einen der beiden Fluegel (*Leningrad* oder *Asowsches Meer*) eindrehen sollten oder ob die beiden Heeresgruppen Nord u. Sued die ihnen gestellten Aufgaben allein erfuehlen u. im Zentrum alle Kraefte fuer den *Frontalangriff in Richtung auf Moskau* zusammengefasst werden koennten. Die Haerte der *Auseinandersetzung* um das **arcanum des Sieges** spiegelt bereits die wachsende Erkenntnis in der dt. Fuehrung wider, dass die *Plannungsgrundlagen fehlerhaft*, der **Blitzkrieg 1941 nicht mehr zu gewinnen waren** u. die *Wehrmacht 1942 zu einem „neues Blut u. Zeit kostenden Angriff gegen neue rote Kraefte gezwungen“ sein wuerde*. Noch aber hoffte man, die Operationen vor Einbruch des Winters zu einem befriedigenden Abschluss bringen zu koennen. Die *neuen privaten als auch bis dato bekannten Quellen* aus der *Operationsabteilung des Generalstabes des Heeres* verdeutlichen, dass *nicht nur Hitler angesichts der Entwicklung an der Ostfront tatsaechlich „sehr nervoes“ war oder „grosse Ungeduld“ zeigte*, wiederholt in laufenden Einzeloperationen eingriff u. sogar „allzu *selbsherrlich*“ den Schwerpunkt der Gesamtoperation veraenderte. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 173-74)⁹⁸

Jul-Aug 41: Die *Versteifung des sowjet. Widerstandes* erforderte bereits Ende Juli 1941 auch ein erstes Zurueckstecken des dt. Zeitplans fuer den Verlauf des Ostfeldzuges...Der langsame Fortgang der Ostoperationen im August machte dann weitere *Abstriche* erforderlich. In der „*Denkschrift des OKW*“ vom **27.8.41** kam erstmals klar zum Ausdruck, dass mit einem Einsatz der dt. Ostverbaende im Herbst 1941 in anderen Raeumen nicht mehr zu rechnen sie, das heisst, es wurde jetzt auch die geplante *Eroberung von Gibraltar* u. die Gewinnung einer dt. Bastion in Nordwestafrika aufgegeben. (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 454-55)

⁹⁸ See also, *Tagebuch Thilo*, Eintrag vom **24.8.41**.

Early Aug 41: Dennoch waren nicht alle Hoffnungen des Generalstabes des Heeres vergebens, denn [Anfang August] wurde in der *Ergaenzung zur Weisung 34* die *Option Moskau* zwar nicht favorisiert, aber auch nicht vollkommen ausgeschlossen. Unter besonderen Bedingungen konnte die sowjet. Hauptstadt doch noch in das Zentrum des dt. Angriffs rücken, aber *Leningrad* war nach wie vor das von *Hitler bevorzugte Ziel* geblieben.⁹⁹

Early Aug 41: Überhaupt hat sich der Russe ja richtig stark gegen die Ostfront der HG Mitte gemacht! Und dahinter die vielen Reservearmeen.. Ob wir es schaffen ihn vor Moskau zu schlagen? Für uns wird das *Nachschubproblem* immer schwieriger, die Ausfälle bei der Pz.Gruppe durch Abnutzungserscheinungen des Materials werden auch nach der Auffrischung in steigendem Maße zunehmen und die Truppe wird auch immer abgekämpfter. Vor allem die hohen Offiziersverluste! *Gesamtverlust bisher 266 000 Mann*, die Russen haben vielleicht noch 150 Divisionen (Gefechtswert>) durch ihre vielen Neuaufstellungen, sie haben auch viel Artillerie und sehr viel Munition, die wir nicht heranbringen können. Dazu die verbissene, zähe, heimtückische, ihr Leben mißachtende Fechtweise des Russen, die nicht nur auf Zwang beruht!...

Man kann tatsächlich oft in Zweifel sein, ob es uns gelingt, in der sehr kurzen Zeit bis zum Herbst den Russen noch entscheidend zu schlagen und seine Hauptindustrieregionen in Besitz zu nehmen. Weiter wie bis zur Wolga kommen wir günstigen Falles nicht und es ist doch sehr wahrscheinlich, daß mit Hilfe der Industrie im Ural und in Sibirien im nächsten Frühjahr neue Armeen auftreten! Wenn diese gefährlich sind, was bei der ganzen Art der Russen in diesem Feldzug anzunehmen ist, kann der dadurch hervorgerufenen Zweifrontenkrieg übelste Folgen für den Gesamtkriegsverlauf haben! Hoffentlich kommt es anders!!!
(*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*)

Aug 41: Logistics, intelligence, production, manpower: the Germans were having their difficulties in any number of areas by August. How they dealt w/ those problems should not surprise anyone even passably acquainted w/ the long-term pattern of German military operations. Rather than drastically beef up the logistical pipeline, ruthlessly draft every able-bodied man in the Reich, and bring some sense to an increasingly disordered economy, the Wehrmacht high command decided to do the traditional German thing: *tinker w/ the maneuver scheme*. During August, *Fuehrer* met w/ his top generals, both the staff and various field HQs, and decided that the *real problem facing Barbarossa* was that the drive on Moscow had outstripped those on the flanks...This was the *genesis of the decision* to detach *Guderian's Panzer Group 2* from the drive on Moscow to help encircle the Soviet forces in the Ukraine. There has been a mountain of historical literature written on this decision, virtually all of it *highly condemnatory*. The *Kiev encirclement* is one of those *alleged turning points that lost the war for the Germans*. Postwar accounts by General Staff officers, in particular, would point to it as *Hitler's classic blunder*. He wasted precious time on a sideshow in the Ukraine while the road to Moscow lay open. Although that certainly is a *plausible case*, there is another one to be made. The *road to Moscow* was certainly *not wide open*. The battles in front of *Smolensk* had been hard, and German forces had been sitting on the *Desna River* for two weeks awaiting supplies and replacements. Despite their *ex post facto* protests, there was a *great deal of support from the staff and command echelons for the turn into the Ukraine*. Indeed, in forcing Army Groups Center and South to cooperate by converging on the principal concentration of enemy forces still in the field,

⁹⁹ **Note:** As *Loeffler* notes, the flurry of Hitler directives (*Weisungen*) since mid-July 1941 was disturbing to the Army leadership at OKH and also to the army group cdrs. Moreover, a clear operational objective (*klare operative Auftrag*) was still lacking. Yet in the coming weeks, German reconnaissance (*Aufklaerung*) would help to confirmed suspicions of *Brauchitsch* and *Halder* that the Red Army was assembling large forces to defend Moscow. (247-48)

Hitler had *brought a rare moment of operational coherence* to an *increasingly confused and scattered Barbarossa*. It was the greatest victory in German history. (Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 42-43)

Aug 41: The contest between *Brauchitsch* and Hitler over the operational decision continued during the first half of August and *reached its height at this time*. The notes of the Chief of the General Staff picture clearly this *drawn-out conflict*; here and there, they also show that the *stand of GFM Brauchitsch was not always firm enough*.¹⁰⁰ Time and again, Hitler emphasized his previously announced objectives – first *Leningrad*, then *eastern Ukraine*, and thirdly *Moscow*. (Assmann, *Battle for Moscow*, 317)

Aug 41: Halder tries, w/o success, to get Brauchitsch to *obtain a clear decision* on whether to put everything into delivering the enemy a fatal blow at Moscow or taking the Ukraine and the Caucasus for economic reasons. He persuaded *Jodl* to intervene w/ Hitler to convince him that the objectives of Moscow *and* the Ukraine had to be met. (Kershaw, *Hitler*, 411; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, 499-500)

1.8.41: Bald jedoch schlug die Stimmung im Fuehrerhauptquartier um [in comparison to the euphoria of the opening weeks]. Goebbels trug am **1 Aug 41** in seinen Tagebuch ein: „Man gibt offen zu, dass man sich in der Einschaeztung der sowj. Kampfkraft etwas geirrt hat. Die Bolschewisten zeigen doch staerkeren Widerstand, als wir vermuteten, u. vor allem die materiellen Mittel, die ihnen dabei zur Verfuegung stehen, sind groesser, als wir angenommen haben.“ (Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 458)

2.8.41: (*Hauptquartier OKH im Mauerwald. H. Stieff an seine Frau*): ...Ueber die Entwicklung im grossen kann man im allgemeinen sagen, dass sich nicht alle Erwartungen in vollem Umfange erfuellt haben, die man meiner Ansicht nach in zum Teil ungerechtfertigtem Umfange gehegt hatte. Meine Auffassung, dass es sich eben diesmal um einen *Kampf zweier Weltanschauungen* und junger Ideen handeln wuerde, *wobei die Haerte der Kaempfe ein ganz anderes Mass erreichen wuerde*, ist in vollem Umfange bestaetigt. *Darueber hinaus haben wir uns aber nicht nur ueber die mil. Staerke unseres Gegners getaeuscht*, sondern auch sein *Fuehrungsvermoegen unterschaezt*...Die zum Ziel gesetzte grosse operative Auswirkung ist jedoch ausgeblieben – darueber darf man sich keinen Taeschungen hingeben...

In der Mitte hat sich unsere Operation *festgefahren*, vielleicht weniger auf der feindl. Gegenwirkung beruhend als auf der natuerlichen *Abnutzung unserer schnellen Verbaende*, die...nunmehr unbedingt eine Ruhepause zur Instandsetzung ihrer Kfz u. zur Auffuellung der *bis zu 30 % personellen Verluste* brauchen...

Der Nervositaet an oberster Stelle (gemeint ist *Hitler*) kannst Du Dir vorstellen. Wenn es nicht so trauig waere, koennte man ueber die Blueten, die das dann treibt, hellauf lachen. Unsere alle paar Tage geaenderten Weisungen, die gar nicht mehr zur Ausfuehrung kommen, weil man eben mit Gewalt die Dinge nicht erzwingen kann, fuehren jetzt die oberste Willensmeinung nur noch in „Anfuehrungsstrichen“ auf...*Ob dann allerdings die weitgesteckten Ziele noch in diesem Jahr zu erreichen sind, mag fueglichen dahingestellt bleiben*. Ich befuerchte, dass es nicht der Fall sein wird, so dass wir im kommenden Jahr mit Teilen noch antreten muessen. Dadurch wird unsere Lage natuerlich entscheidend verschlechtert...*Das erste Mal waehrend dieses Krieges kommen mir Zweifel, ob wir mit der Aufgabe fertig werden*.

¹⁰⁰ However, Assmann notes that Brauchitsch “also had a lengthy discussion w/ ...General *Jodl*, w/ a view to winning over the Fuehrer. Jodl was *strongly impressed* and promised to use his influence w/ Hitler.” (317)

Ein Ausfluss dieser *Nervosität an oberster Stelle* ist auch unsere Art der Berichterstattung. Sie ist fuer meinen Begriff schlimm. *Die Wehrmachtberichte* sind nichts weiter mehr als Mittel der politischen Propaganda, werden von ihm [Hitler, I assume] nur noch persoendlich abgefasst ohne Ruecksicht auf die ihm oft vorgetragene Rueckwirkung auf die Stimmung u. die Erwartungen der kaempfenden Truppe, fuer die sie *das einzige Unterrichtungsmittel ueber den grossen Verlauf der Kaempfe darstellen*...Mit Fug u. Recht [rightly] kann man ihren Wahrheitsgehalt anzweifeln. Es ist schade, dass *nunmehr auch das letzte Bollwerk des Anstandes in diesem Staat auf dem Altar eines von korrupten oder irrsinnigen Menschen geleiteten Systems geopfert wird*. Ich bin sehr verbittert wie noch nie in diesem Kriege u. bestimmt noch wie nie im Verlauf eines Feldzuges. (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 113-15)

6.8.41: First cracks in the high command's facade begin to appear. On this day, *Warlimont* produced a "Brief Strategic Overview on the Continuation of the War after the Campaign in the East." In it he said that the German military leadership *must reckon w/ the fact that the Wehrmacht would not reach its operational goals*—a line from the Caucasus oil region to the Volga and on to Archangel and Murmansk—in 1941, and so an open front would remain in existence. (*Megargee*, 133)

6.8.41: By **6 Aug**, visiting *Rundstedt* and General *Antonescu* at Army Group South HQ in the dreary Ukranian town of *Berdichev*, Hitler's mind was all but made up. He would make his *main push southeastward toward the oil fields*, while the northern advance on *Leningrad* from the *Luga* bridgeheads began. Moscow would be left for last. Meteorologists had assured him the dry weather would remain longer in the center than the south anyway. Yet even so, no firm directive was issued. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 298)

10.8.41: Im **Aug 41** verflog die anfaengliche Sieges euphorie im Fuehrerhauptquartier. Am **8. Aug 41** hielt Goebbels fest [in seinem Tagebuch]: „Es wird noch sehr harter u. blutiger Auseinandersetzungen beduerfen, bis die Sowjetunion zerschmettert am Boden liegt.“ Hitler litt an schweren Durchfall, den Goebbels politisch korrekt als „Ruhranfall“ umschrieb, weil den Fuehrer die militaerischen Vorgaenge im Osten so mitgenommen haetten, wie der Propaganda-Minister zu berichten wusste. Goebbels fuhr fort: „Es ist auch erklaerlich, dass die militaerischen Vorgaenge der letzten Wochen ihn [Hitler] sehr reizbar gemacht haben. [. . .] Die militaerischen Schwierigkeiten sind in dem Umfange von uns nicht erwartet werden. Es war eine ausgesprochene schlechte Zeit in den letzten vier [4] Wochen.“ (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 458; see also, *Goebbels, Tagebuch*)

10.8.41: Army Group North begins its *attack on Leningrad*, both from the southward and the westward. Even before this offensive had begun, the *breakthrough to the Gulf of Finland* at *Kunda*, halfway between *Tallinn (Reval)* and *Narva*, was accomplished on **7.8.41**. The *German Naval Staff* was particularly interested in this phase and *constantly urged on the Supreme Command the early occupation of Leningrad*. From its point of view *this was more important than the capture of Moscow*. (see, *Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 316)¹⁰¹

10.8.41 [*Lagebeurteilung zur Lagenkarte durch OKW/WFSt. Abt. L.*]:

Zu hiermit zusaetzlich vorgelegter Karte 1. ueber Kraeftevergleich an der Ostfront (mit OKH abgestimmt) ergibt sich, dass der staerkste Gegner vor der

¹⁰¹ **Note:** From perspective of *Seekriegsleitung*, if Leningrad and Kronstadt captured, the Russians would lose their last Baltic naval base. This would end naval warfare in the Baltic Sea, and all forces of the *Kriegsmarine* would become available for their primary task—the war against the U.K. (316)

H.Gr.Mitte, u. hier vor deren Ostfront, steht. Seine Vernichtung u. die Besitznahme Moskaus werden fuer das wichtigste Ziel gehalten.¹⁰²

An sich verlockende Operationsmoeglichkeiten aus der Mitte der Ostfront zu den benachbarten H.Gr. hin haetten dann zuruecktreten. Dagegen muessen dem entscheidenden u. mit den Gesamtkraefen der H.Gr.Mitte zu fuehrenden Stoss auf Moskau nach den Flanken hin Angriffe *mit begrenztem Ziel* vorangehen. . .

Veranschlagt man, dass die Flankenbereinigungen nach Sueden u. Norden noch etwa **14** Tage erfordern (im Sueden voraussichtlich weniger) so koennte der geschlossene Angriff Richtung Moskau – Fussarmeen in der Mitte, Pz.Gruppen auf dem Fluegeln – **Ende August** beginnen. Der Gegner wird hier bestimmt nicht ausweichen koennen, sondern sich mit den neugebildeten schlechten Ersatzdivisionen spaetestens in der anscheinend vorbereiteten Aufnahme-stellung – allgemeine Linie *Rshew – Wjasma – Brjansk* – bis zum letzten Schlagen.

Bei solchem Entschluss muessen die H.Gr.Sued u. Nord mit ihrem Gegner zunaechst allein fertig werden. . .

Das **VIII Fliegerkorps** wird der H.Gr.Nord nur so lange belassen sein, bis der bevorstehende Angriff der H.Gr.Mitte um den **20.8.41** Umgruppierung der Sturzkampfverbaende erfordern wird.

Zusammenfassend:

Schwerpunktangriff der H.Gr.Mitte Richtung Moskau fuer Ende August vorbereiten in einer Form, die spaeteres Abdrehen der Pz.Gr. Guderian aus der Verfolgung heraus im Zuge des Don nach Suedosten ermöglicht. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Anlage 32*, 1043-44)

11.8.41: *Halder* confided in his journal: “Regarding the general situation, it stands out more and more clearly that *we underestimated the colossus Russia*...At the start of the war we reckoned w/ **200** enemy divisions. Now we already count **360**. These divisions are not armed and equipped in our sense, and tactically they are inadequately led in many ways. But they are there. And when a dozen of them are destroyed, then the Russians put a new dozen in their place.” (*Halder KTB*, 3:170)

12.8.41: Fuehrer betont erneut, dass die Voraussetzung aller weiteren Operationen die Beseitigung der Feindkraefte sei, die in der Flanke, besonders der Suedflanke der H.Gr.Mitte, stehen. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Anlage 33*, 1044)

12./15.8.41: In his Supplement to Directive No. **34**, issued on 12 Aug 41, Hitler *for the first time stated categorically* that once the *threats from the flanks* were eliminated, and the *panzer* groups refreshed, the attack on the enemy forces massed before Moscow was to be prosecuted. Yet three days later (**15.8.41**), Hitler intervenes once more in the tactical dispositions, ordering the tank forces from the northern flank of Army Group Ctr to help Army Group North resist a strong

¹⁰² Abtl. L was Warlimont’s domain. This document appears to support other sources which indicate that OKW was coming around to views of OKH vis-à-vis Moskau.

Soviet counterattack. Hitler's concession, if heavily qualified, on Moscow, then – in effect – rapid negation of the decision, may have been affected by the *severe attack of dysentery* from which he was suffering in the first half of August. Although he had enjoyed remarkably good health over the past years, he was now “laid low at a vital time.” (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 411; *DRZW*, Bd. 4, 504)

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12.8.41: (*Hauptquartier OKH im Mauerwald. H. Stieff an seine Frau*): ...Haschen [seine Frau], Du beklagst Dich – und wohl mit Recht –, dass ich so wenig schreibe. Ich bin aber einfach nicht zum Schreiben aufgelegt. *Dieser Feldzug ist so ganz anders als alle vorhergehenden. Ueber uns allen liegt eine vorher nie gekannte Gereiztheit u. Nervositaet...*Zum Teil mag das mit der Laenge des Krieges zusammenhaengen, den *jeder* mehr als satt hat. *Die Hauptsache ist aber wohl das drueckende Gefuehl, dass wir trotz aller schoenen Augenerfolge in einer sehr schweren Krise stehen...*Die Zeit brennt bis zum Beginn des Winters (Anfang Oktober) tatsaechlich auf den Naegeln, u. wir haben noch nicht die Haelfte von dem geschafft, was wir brauchen, um keinen Zweifrontenkrieg zu bekommen...Alle diese Verhaeltnisse, die man Tag fuer Tag sieht u. erlebt – es faengt ja hier oben an!—bringen einen langsam in ein Stadium der Verbitterung...*Wenn nicht in Kurze ein Wandel in all dem eintritt, muss es eine Katastrophe geben.* (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 119-20)

12.-15.8.41: Am 12. ploetzlich voellige Wandlung zum Pessimismus bei HGR Süd. Vor allem wegen der AOK 6 „Gefahr, daß russ. Nordflügel die HGR zum Einsturz bringt, voellige Erschoepfung der Truppe usw...Reichenau hat in diesem Feldzug ueberhaupt keinen Schwung ! Angriff auf Kiew wird wegen zu großer Verluste und Erschoepfung eingestellt u.d. Divisionen in guentigere Stellungen zurueckgenommen. Hier wird alles nicht so tragisch beurteilt. Halder und Hsg. [Heusinger] fliegen am 13. nach Uman und treffen sich dort mit allen Chef's von Süd. Die sind schon wieder beruhigt nach ihrer pessimistischen Phase und es wird ueber die weiteren Absichten Einigkeit erzielt. (*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*)

15.8.41: Der Fuehrer hat heute nach Vortrag des **Ob.d.H.** befohlen: 1) Bei der Hr.Gr.Mitte sind weitere Angriffe in der Richtung Moskau zu unterlassen. Die Verteidigung ist in Abschnitten zu fuehren, die keinen umfassenden Angriffen des Gegners ausgesetzt sind u. die Abwehr dieser Angriffe auch ohne die staerkere Mithilfe der eigenen *Luftwaffe* u. unter Schonung der infanteristischen Kraefte gestatten. („*Hitler waehrend der ersten drei Monate des Ostfeldzuges 1941*,” **KDC**, Microfilm „E;“ see also, *KTB OKW*)

15.8.41: Der Fuehrer hat heute nach Vortrag des **ObdH** befohlen:

1. Bei der H.Gr.Mitte sind weitere Angriffe in der Richtung auf Moskau zu unterlassen. Die Verteidigung ist in Abschnitten zu fuehren, die keinen umfassenden Angriffen des Gegners ausgesetzt sind u. die Abwehr dieser Angriffe auch ohne die staerkere Mithilfe der eigene Luftwaffe u. unter Schonung der inf. Kraefte gestatten.
2. Der Angriff der H.Gr.Nord muss in kuerzester Zeit zum Erfolg gefuehrt werden. Erst dann ist an die Wiederaufnahme des Angriffs gegen Moskau zu denken. . . Der H.Gr.Nord sind daher sofort aus der Pz.Gr. Hoth

soviel schnelle Verbaende (etwa 1 Pz. – u. 2 mot.Div.) zuzufuehren u. zu unterstellen, wie die H.Gr.Nord zum Ansatz bringen u. versorgen kann.

Der Chef des OKW

I.A.

gez. Jodl¹⁰³

(Source: *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Anlage 36*, 1045)

15.8.41: Against advice of C-in-C of Army, Hitler now directed *Armored Group 3*, which had finished its rest period, to turn over one armored corps to Army Group North. A strong Russian penetration at *Staraya Russa* had occasioned a local crisis and Hitler seized the opportunity to take a tactical measure which was entirely in consonance w/ his plan of operations. (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 316)

17.8.41: ...In welcher Saustimmung ich mich befand u. zum Teil noch befinde, sagte ich Dir ja schon. Denn viel hat sich an den Gruenden dienstlicher Natur nicht geaendert. *Die Eingriffe von oberster Stelle [Hitler] werden, wie vor Duenkirchen, immer toller.* Man kann nur beten, dass sie uns nicht, ebenso wie im Vorjahr, um die Fruechte des Feldzuges bringen. Auf dem besten Wege sind wir jedenfalls wieder dazu. Sowie irgendwo ein kleines Risiko durchzustehen ist, *versagen die Nerven u. man gibt die besten Chances aus der Hand.* Es ist niederziehend, dass alles mit offenen Augen ansehen zu muessen...(H. Stieff, *Briefe*, 120-21)

18.8.41: Ein weiteres Mal entschlossen sich Brauchitsch u. Halder Mitte August eine *Denkschrift* vorzulegen,¹⁰⁴ die noch einmal alle Argumente fuer einen Angriff auf Moskau zusammenfasste. Auch die *erkannten [russ.] Truppenzusammenziehungen* u. der *Ausbau von Verteidigungsanlagen* vor der sowjet. Hauptstadt bestaerkten das OKH in seiner Beurteilung, dass die Rote Armee, so die Darstellung in der *Denkschrift*, mit der *“Masse der lebendigen mil. Kraefte“* vor der Front der Hr.Gr.Mitte den entscheidenden dt. Angriff erwartete. In der weiteren Beurteilung der Lage wurden die verfuegbaren Truppen der beiden anderen Heeresgruppen als ausreichend bewertet, um die ihnen gestellten Ziele alleine erreichen zu koennen. Diese Schlussfolgerung erschien jedoch bei der *angespannten Versorgungs- u. Ersatzlage* fraglich. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 248-49)¹⁰⁵

18.8.41 [*Beurteilung der Ostlage durch OKW/WFSt/Abt. L*]: [**Note:** This memorandum by Warlimont supports start of major operations against Moscow in early **Sep 41**; argues H.Gr. Sued and Nord strong enough to reach their objectives w/ their own forces. After arguing that H.Gr.Sued will be able to master its own destiny w/o help of Guderian’s Pz.Gr., Warlimont continues]:

...Die H.Gr.Mitte hat mit ihrem Angriff zur Bereinigung der Suedflanke vollen Erfolg gehabt. Der Gegner zwischen Gomel u. der Desna wird zum groessten

¹⁰³ GFM Keitel was “Chef” OKW. So, “I.A.” = “im Auftrag” In other words, document prepared by Warlimont (WFSt/L) and signed by Jodl on behalf of Keitel?

¹⁰⁴ **Note:** Die durch den ObdH vorgelegte *Denkschrift* ist ediert in OKW KTB (1055-59). Die *Denkschrift* war durch die *Operationsabteilung [Heusinger]* ausgearbeitet u. von Halder beim ObdH vorgelegt worden. (See also, *Halder KTB*.)

¹⁰⁵ **Note:** Albert Seaton also notes that the “memorandum was initiated by Heusinger.” (See, *Russo-German War*, 143, f.n. 41).

Teil vernichtet werden. Der gesamte Suedfluegel der H.Gr. is damit in Kuerze operative frei.

Der Angriff gegen die Feindgruppe *Welikije Luki – Toropez* beginnt am **21.8.41**. Auch hier ist spaetestens bis zum Monatesende mit einem Erfolg zu rechnen.

Die H.Gr. kann damit Anfang **Sep 41** bei Beibehalten des bisherigen Entschlusses (Zusatz zur Weisung **34**) die erwuenschten Ausgangsstellungen *auf Moskau* einnehmen u. bald darauf (mit schnellen Kraeften auf beiden Fluegeln) antreten. Ein solcher Entschluss wird auch nach der Schwaechung der **3 PzGr** des **XXXIX AK** [dispatched to H.Gr.Nord] fuer den besten gehalten. Er zielt gegen die kampfkraeftigsten, dem Gegner verbliebenen Armeen, die sich unter allen Umstaenden fuer Moskau schlagen werden u. fasst diesen Feind mit Schwerpunkt an seinen schwaecher besetzten Fluegeln. Die Inbesitznahme Moskaus ist mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit gewaerleistet.

Voraussetzung fuer diesen Angriff ist freilich Zusammenhalten der Kraefte u. Verzicht auf den unter anderen Umstaenden verlockenden Ansatz der **2 PzGr** nach Suedosten. . .

Zusammenfassend:

Das Ostheer ist stark genug, um den Hr.Gr. Nord u. Sued die Erfuellung ihrer Aufgabe aus eigener Kraft anzuvertrauen u. gleichzeitig mit der H.Gr.Mitte den entscheidenden Stoss auf Moskau zu fuehren. Voraussetzung ist, dass auf einladende Teilerfolge (z.B. Sued-Stoss der **2 PzGr**) verzichtet wird, u. dass erforderlichenfalls oertliche Krisen zu Gunsten des Gesamterfolges durchgestanden werden.

gez. **Warlimont**

(Source: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, *Anlage 38*, 1054-55)

18./20.8.41: Halder's own nerves were by this point also frayed [i.e., like Hitler's]. He now thought the *time had come to confront Hitler once and for all* w/ the imperative need to destroy the enemy forces around Moscow. On this day, *Brauchitsch* sent *Halder's memorandum* to the Fuehrer, arguing for an immediately resumption of the offensive toward Moscow. His memorandum had been prepared by Col *Heusinger*, the army's Chief of Ops. Two days after its submission (**20.8.41**), Heusinger discussed the memorandum w/ Jodl. Hitler's closest military advisor suggested *psychological motives* lay behind the dictator's strategic choices. Heusinger recalled Jodl saying that Hitler had an "*instinctive aversion to treading the same path as Napoleon*. Moscow gives him a sinister feeling (*etwas Unheimliches*)." When Heusinger reaffirmed the need to defeat the enemy forces at Moscow, Jodl replied, "That's what you *say*. Now I will tell you what the Fuehrer's answer will be: There is at the moment a much better possibility of beating the Russian forces. Their main grouping is now east of Kiev." Heusinger pressed Jodl to support the memorandum. Jodl remarked: "I will do what I can. But you must admit that the Fuehrer's reasons are *well thought out* and cannot be pushed aside just like that...His intuition has generally been right. You can't deny that!" The *Fuehrer myth* still prevailed – even among those closest to Hitler. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 412)

19.8.41: Weiterhin notierte Goebbels am **19. Aug 41** in sein Tagebuch: „Wir haben offenbar die sowj. Stosskraft u. vor allem die Ausruestung der Sowjetarmee gaenzlich unterschaezt. Auch nicht annaehernd hatten wir ein klares Bild ueber das, was den Bolschewisten zur Verfuegung stand. . . Der Fuehrer ist innerlich ueber sich sehr ungehalten, dass er sich durch die Berichte aus der Sowjetunion so ueber das Potential der Bolschewiken hat taeuschen lassen. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 458-59; also, *Goebbels, Tagebuch*)

20.8.41: Fuehrer mit Vorschlag des **ObdH** fuer die Fortfuehrung der Operationen vom **18.8.[41]** nicht einverstanden. Es kommt ihm gar nicht auf Moskau u. die dort versammelten starken Feindkraefte an, vordringlich ist vielmehr, die russ. Industriegebiet auszuschalten, bzw. fuer eigene Zwecke in die Hand zu bekommen. Ausserdem ist ein schneller Fortschritt im Sueden als Druck auf die *Haltung Irans* gegenueber den eng.-russ. Vorhaben erwuenscht. Besonders wichtig auch, dass die Krim bald als Luftwaffenstuetzpunkt der Sowjets verschwindet u. die Gefahr fuer die rumaenischen Oelfelder beseitigt wird. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, *Sonderakte, Anlage 39*, 1061)

20.8.41: The further development of the situation to 20 August was not entirely satisfactory for Army Group south. To be sure, it had been possible to cut off considerable Russian forces at *Uman* [i.e., some **100.000** prisoners taken], and almost the *entire bend of the Dnieper downstream from Kiev* had been cleared of the enemy, but the **6th Army** still remained *tied down before Kiev*. Like a *dread specter*, the Russian **5th Army** *continued to threaten the deep inner flanks of Army Groups South and Center*. Moreover, strong Russian counterattacks in vicinity of Kiev several times led to *serious local crises*. (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 316)

20.8.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] ...schrieb Heusinger, dass die Operationen wieder voll im Zuge seien u. man hoffe, „im September die wichtigsten Ziele zu erreichen...“ Dieses Russland sei auf dem besten Wege gewesen, „ein ganz modernes Land zu werden, u. was die Bolschewisten geleistet haben, ist schon sehenswert.“ Deswegen sei es aber auch „umso notwendiger“ gewesen, „sie bald zu zerschlagen.“ meldet sich auch bei ihm der *Zeitgeist*, „denn wir waeren ihnen bald nicht mehr gewachsen gewesen.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 155)

21.8.41: In response to memorandum of **OKH** supporting resumption of advance on Moscow, Hitler sends *both* a *Fuehrerweisung* drafted by **Jodl** and a *personal memorandum* to von Brauchitsch, full of reproaches that the OKH was not carrying out the operation as he (Hitler) wanted it and comparing Brauchitch unfavorably w/ Goering. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 143)¹⁰⁶

21.8.41 [*Operative Gedanken des Fuehrers u. Weisungen*]:¹⁰⁷ Der Fuehrer hat sich dem Vorschlag fuer die Fortfuehrung der Operationen im Osten *nicht anzuschliessen* vermocht. Entsprechend der Auffassung, die er von Anfang an gehabt hat, dass naemlich die Inbesitznahme des Industriegebietes von Leningrad u. die Eroberung des ukrainischen Industrie- u. Rohstoffgebietes der Wegnahme des Gebietes um Moskau voranzugehen habe, sieht er auch jetzt das wichtigste, noch vor Einbruch des Winters zu erreichende Ziel nicht in der Einnahme von Moskau, sondern in der Wegnahme der Krim u. des Industrie- u. Kohlengebietetes am Donez,

¹⁰⁶ **Note:** I don't believe *both* documents were sent by Hitler to Brauchitsch on this day, **21.8.41**. Need to clarify.

¹⁰⁷ Quelle: OKW L KTB, Bd. 9. This was Hitler's answer to Brauchitsch's memorandum of **18.8.41**, and it settled once and for all the future course of operations (bringing an end to all the disagreements going back to mid-Jul).

sowie in der Abschnuerung der russ. Oelzufuhr aus dem Kaukasus-Raum u. im Norden in der Abschneidung Leningrads u. der Vereinigung der Finnen. . . (For rest of document see, *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, *Anlage 40*, 1061-62)

21.8.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*]...freute er sich „ganz besonders“ auf die Lektuere des *Caulaincourt* – zwei Buecher,¹⁰⁸ gewissermassen kriegsgeschichtliche Beispiele fuer die bevorstehende Winterkrise des dt. Ostheeres. Sie spielten in Heusinger's *Vorstellungswelt* schon laenger eine bedeutsame Rolle. Er hat sie oft im Kriese der Operationsabteilung zur Lektuere empfohlen, laengst bevor dann die Baende u. eine Reclam-Ausgabe von *Heinrich Beitzkes* – weiland Leutnant im Yorkschen Korps – „*Geschichte des russ. Krieges im Jahre 1812*“¹⁰⁹ im Winter 1941/42 in hohen Staeben gleichsam *Pflichtlektuere* wurden. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 155)

21.8.41: Aus der Ton der *Weisung* Hitlers vom **21 Aug 41** an den [ObdH] ist nicht nur das innere Zerwuerfnis Hitlers mit dem OKH, sondern auch sein Wunsch spuerbar, von nun an *sich selbst massgeblich in die Leitung der Operationen einzuschalten*. Die Weisung Hitlers begann mit den Worten: „Der Vorschlag des Heeres fuer die Fortfuehrung der Operationen im Osten vom 18. August stimmt mit meinen Absichten nicht ueberein.“ 144)

21.8.41: Hitler provides following directive to C-in-C of the Army:

The army's proposal for the continuation of the operations of **18 August** *does not correspond w/ my plans*. I order the following: 1. The most important objective to be achieved before the onset of winter is *not the occupation of Moscow*, but the taking of the *Crimea*, the *industrial and coal region on the Donetz* and the severing of Russian oil deliveries from the Caucasus area, in the north the *encirclement of Leningrad* and *link-up w/ the Finns*. (quoted in: *Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 290)¹¹⁰

21.8.41: Beim ObdH [*Brauchitsch*] fanden sie [*Heusinger* u. *Halder*] *nicht die erwartete Unterstuetzung*, erst recht nicht, als bei ihnen am 21. August abends „*wie eine Bombe*“ eine Weisung Hitlers einschlug. Nach einem neuerlichen – vergeblichen – Versuch Halders, Brauchitsch doch noch einmal zum Widerspruch bei Hitler zu bewegen, waren Heusinger u. er sich sich darueber im klaren, dass Hitlers Weisung eine „*grundlegende Aenderung*“ der Zielsetzung des Krieges mit nicht abzusehenden Folgen bedeutete. Brauchitsch stand aber auf dem Standpunkt, „*was habe es denn fuer Zweck, dem Fuehrer nochmal vorzutragen?*“ u. handelte sich dafuer Heusingers *Replik* ein, „Gott, wenn wir unser ganzes Leben danach einrichten wollen, ob etwas, was man tut, Zweck hat?“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 156)¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ a) *Unter vier Augen mit Napoleon. Denkwuerdigkeiten des Generals Caulaincourt, 1937*; b) *Mit Napoleon in Russland. Denkwuerdigkeiten [Caulaincourts], 1938*. (850, f.n. 33)

¹⁰⁹ *Heinrich Beitzke, Geschichte des russ. Krieges im Jahre 1812*, Berlin **1856**. Reclam-Ausgabe von **1912**, die des guenstigen Preises wegen weiter verbreitet war. (850, f.n. 33)

¹¹⁰ **Note:** As *Loeffler* writes in his biography of *Brauchitsch*: “Der Weg von Brauchitsch u. Halder war gescheitert...Die Krise um die Fuehrung der Operationen war zugunsten Hitlers entschieden.“ (249-50)

¹¹¹ **Note:** Vgl. Ausfuehrungen Heusingers bei einer Befragung im MGFA am **16. Feb 1966**: „Der entscheidende Moment war eben dieser 21.Aug. [...] Ich wurde damals nochmals von Brauchitsch hingeschickt zu *Jodl*, um ihn zu beschwoeren, er sollte Hitler beeinflussen, am Stoss aus Moskau festzuhalten, u. ich sehe mich noch, wir sassen an der Karte im Freien, wir hatten die Karte auf die Erde gelegt u. ich redete also mit Menschen- u. Engelszungen u. Jodl sagte, ich sehe das vollkommen ein, ich bin vollkommen ihrer Auffassung. Aber ueberzeugen sie mal den Mann!“ Heusinger fuegte im Rueckblick hinzu, vielleicht

21.8.41: Zwischen dem OKH u. Hitler traten *Meinungsverschiedenheiten* ueber die Weiterfuehrung der Operationen auf [in Aug 41], die die Entschlussfassung verzogerten u. letzten Endes auch der Front nicht verborgen bleiben konnten. Waehend das OKH die Vernichtung der russ. Truppenmacht anstrebte, glaubte Hitler, in erster Linie *wirtschaftliche u. politische Ziele* verfolgen zu muessen. Das OKH ebenso wie die mittlere Fuehrung waren sich klar, dass der *entscheidungsuchende Stoss* einzig in Richtung Moskau gefuehrt werden musste, weil hier die feindl. Hauptkraefte zu suchen waren: *Im Zentrum Moskau lief das ganze Eisenbahn- u. Nachrichtennetz zusammen, dessen Verlust die russ. Operationsfreiheit schwer beeintraechtigen musste* u. das sich die russ. Fuehrung mit moeglichst starken Kraeften erhalten musste. Hitler dagegen wollte im Sueden das *Korn der Ukraine*, das *Industriegebiet am Don* u. die reiche *Krim*; im Norden suchte er aus politischen Gruenden die *unmittelbare Landverbindung mit Finnland* ostwaerts des Ladogasees...Am **20.8.41** wurde der das OKH leitende Gedanke zum Weiterstoss auf Moskau (*Denkschrift des Ob.d.H. vom 18.8.41*) durch den Entschluss Hitlers unterbrochen, der starke Teile der Hr.Gr.Mitte nach Sueden abdrehen liess, um in der *Schlacht von Kiew* mit den inneren Fluegeln der Heeresgruppen Sued u. Mitte den Feind umfassend anzugreifen u. ihm den Rueckzug nach Osten zu verlegen. Aus dem Ton der *Weisung Hitlers an den Ob.d.H. vom 21.8.41* ist nicht nur das *innere Zerwerfnis Hitlers mit dem OKH*, sondern auch der Wunsch Hitlers spuerbar, von nun an sich selbst massgeblich in die Leitung der Operationen einzuschalten. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 15*)¹¹²

21.-22.8.41: Hitler delivers a “devastating riposte” to the OKH memorandum of the 18th. On the 21st, the Army High Command is told Hitler has rejected its proposals as out of line w/ his intensions. Hitler develops his arguments the following day in a “study” blaming the High Command for failing to carry out his operational plan, reaffirming the necessity of shifting the main weight of the attack to the north and south, and relegating Moscow to a secondary target. Brauchitsch is accused of a *lack of leadership*; particularly wounding was the praise, in contrast, handed out to Goering’s firm leadership of the *Luftwaffe*. In the privacy of his diary notes, Halder “cannot contain himself.” He is deeply upset and regards the situation created by Hitler’s interference “unendurable for the OKH.” The treatment of Brauchitsch, he goes on, was “absolutely outrageous.” (*Kershaw, Hitler, 413-14; Halder KTB*)

22.8.41: “Fuehrer Directive of 21 August (*WFST L Nr. 441412/41*) arrived. It is *decisive to the outcome of the campaign*.” (*Halder KTB*)¹¹³

22.8.41 [*Hitler Memorandum*]: Der vom **ObdH** unter dem **18.8.41** verfasste Vorschlag fuer die Weiterfuehrung der Operation der H.Gr.Mitte in Zusammenhang mit der H.Gr.Sued u. Nord veranlasst mich, noch einmal auf das Grundsatzliche dieses Feldzuges einzugehen. (**Note:** This is a long document – 5 pp – too long to address here. See, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Anlage 42*, 1063-68)

waere der Krieg anders verlaufen, „wenn man Moskau gekreigt haette.“ Sicher sei das aber auch nicht, „denn die Russen waren doch so eingestellt auf das Ausweichen in die Tiefe, dass sie wahrscheinlich auch [den Fall von] Moskau noch verdaut haetten.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 850, f.n. 35; see also, Heusinger, Befehl im Widerstreit, 132*)

¹¹² **Note:** Prien, *et al.*, go on to assert that the operational turn to Ukraine and Kiev in Aug-Sep 41, compelled Hr.Gr.Mitte to postpone advance on Moscow by almost two months. This is the *conventional wisdom*; however, some (eg., van Creveld) insist that, because of need to replenish and resupply forces after capture of Smolensk—activities which took much longer than anticipated—the drive on Moscow was delayed by no more than two weeks at most.

¹¹³ Hitler’s responses of **20.-22.8.41** to the OKH memorandum of **18.8.41** can be found in *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1061-68.)

22.8.41: Noch am selben Tag [22 August] lag dem Generalstabschef eine *ergaenzende Denkschrift Hitlers* vor, in der er noch einmal grundsatzliche Darlegungen ueber *Sinn u. Zweck des Krieges* gegen die Sowjetunion zusammenfasste.¹¹⁴ Die Ablehnung der operativen Konzeption des OKH u. der Inhalt der *Fuehrerdenkschrift*, uebersaet mit *Vorwuerfen gegen Brauchitsch u. seinen Generalstab*, wirkten *niederschmetternd*. Halder will an diesem Tag *so ausser sich gewesen sein, dass er Brauchitsch nahe legte eine gemeinsame Enthebung aus dem Amt zu erwirken*. Doch der ObdH soll den Vorschlag mit der Gewissheit abgelehnt haben, dass Hitler auch dieses Mal den Ruecktritt ablehnen wuerde; von dem dann *entstehenden Chaos in dieser kritischen Phase des Krieges* ganz zu schweigen. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 249)

23.8.41: ...Ich bin bloss nicht mehr so hoffnungsfreudig wie Du. Das bezieht sich allerdings weniger auf die Entwicklung der kriegerischen Lage als auf die Verhaeltnisse im allgemeinen. Ich bin manchmal ganz verzweifelt ueber alles u. trage in mir einen gesunden Hass gegen vielerlei...[Discusses possible transfer for 2-3 weeks to a *Panzerkorps*, as a learning experience]...Ob es wirklich etwas nutzt, erscheint mir zweifelhaft, naemlich der Glaube an die Sache u. die bedingungslose Einsatzbereitschaft bis zum letzten fuer diese Sache sind mir geschwunden, so traurig das klingen mag. Aber es vergeht ja jetzt hier kein Tag, an dem man nicht in der *Ablehnung dieses groessenwahnsinnig gewordenen Proleten* [commoner, clod] *bestaerkt wird*. [note: Must be ref. to A.H.]...Meine Achtung vor bestimmten Leuten ist jedenfalls tief gesunken. Haschen – es ist einfach ekelhaft u. unwuerdig!!...

Dieser blutige Dilettantismus, der von solch glorreichen Vertretern wie K[eitel] u. J[odl] auch noch unterstuetzt wird, kann uns, weiss Gott, diesen Krieg kosten. Denn fuer uns kommt es jetzt darauf an, *keine Zeit mehr zu verlieren* u. insbesondere die bereits stark mitgenommenen Kraefte zusammenzuhalten u. nicht noch mutwillig zu dezimieren. (H. Stieff, Briefe, 121-23)

23.-24.8.41: Guderian meets w/ Hitler at Rastenburg [details known]. When he reports to Halder the next day (24 August), the Chief of the Army General Staff fell into a rage at Guderian's complete *volte-face* on being confronted by Hitler at first hand. Halder's dismay is all the greater since Guderian, whom he had considered as a possible future Army C-in-C, had been among the *most vehement critics* of Hitler during the meeting at Hr.Gr.Mitte HQ the previous day. (Kershaw, Hitler, 415; also, Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 198-202)

24.8.41: Gestern gab Fuehrer, gegen Widerspruch OKH, einen Befehl, der sich (gleich seinem Befehl vor *Duenkirchen* z. Anhalten der PzVerb) fuer den ganzen Feldzug verhaengnisvoll auswirken kann. Hiernach sind von Gomel unter Guderian 2 InfKorps u. 2 Pz, 2 motDiv zur Umfassung der roten 5. Armee mit rechtem Fluegel auf Tschernigow anzusetzen. **1.** Stoss kommt zu spaet. **2.** Entziehung der 2. Armee [Guderian?] die zum nunmehr spaetestens einzusetzenden Angriff der Moskau(?) Kraefte, die Operation an dieser letzten Hauptfront des Gegners in diesem Jahr in Frage stellen. *Zu Beginn des Krieges haben wir den Russen unterschaezt; heute ueberschaetzen wir ihn; jede Luecke schafft bei OKW Nervenkrisen*. Was bedauerlich ist, dass niemand aus des Fuehrers Umgebung – ObdH schon gar nicht – mehr widerstehen kann. *Er ist allzu selbstherrlich...*¹¹⁵

Wird Moskau in diesem Jahr nicht mehr geschafft, haben wir fuer den Winter den vom Gegner gewuenschten Stellungskrieg, der ihm Zeit u. Material zur Wiederauffrischung (aus Moskauer

¹¹⁴ Loeffler: "Insbesondere die *Argumentation gegenueber England* taucht in dieser als Studie deklarierten Denkschrift wieder auf. (249, f.n. 866; see also, *OKW KTB* 1063-66)

¹¹⁵ In other words, none of the generals of German High Command – certainly not Brauchitsch – able to act as counterweight to Hitler. See, Foerster, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 175-76)

Industriegebiet) schafft...Im Fruehjahr sind wir zu neuem Blut u. Zeit kostenden Angriff gegen neue rote Kraete gezwungen...(Tagebuch Thilo)

24.8.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Halders u. Heusingers Enttaeuschung war gross [re: Hitler's final ruling of 21 August; failure of *Guderian* to change *Fuehrer's* mind, etc.], u. am 24. August schrieb Heusinger sich die Last der vergangenen Tage von der Seele. Mit „von oben“ angeordneten Massnahmen fuer die weiteren Operationen haette er sich nicht abfinden koennen, „weil sie m.E. nicht *zweckmaessig* waren.“ Er habe drei Tage kaempfen muessen „u. schliesslich sogar gebeten, ueber meine Person hinwegzusehen u. *mich von der Verantwortung durch andere Verwendung zu entbinden.*“ Halder, „ganz auf meiner Seite,“ waere auch zur Konsequenz des Ruecktritts bereit gewesen. Dazu sei es aber nicht gekommen, denn der ObdH befahl ihnen, dass jeder auf seinem Platz zu bleiben habe. „Man“ – gemeint Brauchitsch – scheute den „Kampf mit hoeheren Gewalten u. beugte sich.“ Solche Stunden, faehrt er fort – viele dieser Art u. von diesem Gewicht hatte er aber *noch nicht erlebt* – seien nicht leicht „u. bringen einem viele Sorgen.“ ... Brauchitsch habe es ja auch „verteufelt schwer.“ Heusinger meinte damit, dass sich der ObdH *zwischen zwei Feuern befand*, auf der einen Seite Halder, der es Brauchitsch verdachte, dass er sich nicht staerker fuer seine Vorschlaege – nicht nur in diesem Falle – einsetzte, auf der anderen Hitler. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 156*)

27.8.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Nachdem er unlaengst schon an der *Berezina* die Erinnerung an Napoleons Feldzug von 1812 gegen das kaiserliche Russland beschworen hatte...riet er nun auch *seiner Frau* dringend zur Lektuere der Gespraechе Napoleons mit *Caulaincourt*. Das Buch sei „ausserordentlich interessant u. *bietet viel Parallelen*. Napoleon ging zugrunde daran, dass er nicht rechtzeitig in seinen Zielen zuruecksteckte. Hoffentlich verpassen wir nicht auch diesen Moment.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 158*)

28.8.41: In mood of depression [i.e., after Hitler had *set things straight* on 21 August], OKH receives a report from v. Bock, stating that in view of the projected withdrawal of forces from Army Group Center “he could foresee the end of his Army Group’s ability to hold out.” (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow, 316*)

29.8.41: (*H.Stieff an seine Schwester*): ...Der Ostfeldzug ist eine harte Nuss geworden. Und wenn wir auch von Anfang an die Schwere dieses Kampfes nicht unterschaezt hatten, *da es sich um einen Krieg der Weltanschauungen handelt*, der natuerlich in einer ganz anderen Schaeufe ausgetragen wird als jede andere Auseinandersetzung, so sind och auch wir ueberrascht worden durch die Zahl u. Guete der materiellen Mittel, die dem Gegner zur Verfuegung standen u. auch wohl noch stehen. Ebenso muss man der hoeheren Fuehrung auf der andern Seite zubilligen, dass sie jedenfalls in ganz anderer Form als unsere bisherigen Gegner den Willen zum Kampf bis zur Entscheidung zeigt. All das verlangsamt natuerlich das Zeitmass, *weil praktisch jeder Russe einzeln totgeschlagen werden muss*...Der Verlauf des Feldzuges lehrt aber, dass *es die hoechste Zeit war, diese ganz Europa bedrohende Gefahr auszuraeumen*...Nicht aber anzuzweifeln ist die Absicht der Sowjets, zu ihnen gegeben erscheinender Zeit *die Weltrevolution mit Waffengewalt ueber das Abendland herueberzutragen*...Es waere unvorstellbar grausam u. entsetzlich gewesen, wenn dieses haette Wirklichkeit werden koennen...Ich habe noch die Hoffnung, dass wir vor Einbruch des Winters den Feldzug entgueltig zum Abschluss bringen. Sehr wesentlich wird das aber von der Witterungsgestaltung abhaengen...(H.Stieff, Briefe, 124)¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ This letter of *Stieff* to his sister demonstrates that, for all his contempt for Hitler, Keitel, Jodl, etc., and despite his bitter criticisms of operational conduct of war, he had no doubt about the rightness of the German cause and the need to eradicate Bolshevism.

30.8.41: Erst am 30. August, unter dem Eindruck des gerade erzielten Erfolges bei Kiev, traf sich Brauchitsch mit Hitler zu einer Aussprache *unter vier Augen*. Gegenstand der Besprechung sollen vor allem die *Spannungen*, die aufgrund der Denkschrift des ObdH u. der gegenteiligen Anordnung Hitlers entstanden waren, gewesen sein. Halder, der ueber das Gespraech noch am selben Tag durch den ObdH unterrichtet worden war, bezweifelte allerdings, dass es durch B. zu nachdruecklichen *Klarstellungen* gekommen sei u. auch die angebliche Reaktion Hitlers, der die ganze Angelegenheit nach Auskunft des ObdH gar nicht so gemeint habe, konnte wenig ueberzeugen. „Jedenfalls ist das Ergebnis [der Besprechung] eitel Liebe u. Freude. Alles ist wieder gut. Geaendert hat sich gar nichts.“ (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 250-51; *Halder KTB*)¹¹⁷

30.8.41: Die *Meinungsverschiedenheiten* zwischen der Heeresfuehrung u. dem Obersten Befehlshaber [Hitler] konnten durch eine persoenliche Aussprache zwischen Hitler u. Brauchitsch zunaechst geklaert werden, bevor sie dann in der zweiten Fuehrungskrise Nov/Dez 1941 wieder auflebten. Hitler *schwenkte im Sommer zwar auf die operative Grundidee* von Brauchitsch u. Halder ein, die Entscheidung vor Moskau zu suchen (Operation „*Taifun*“), aber ein *Cannae* erwog er nie. (J. Foerster, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 176)

Sep 41: Die Auffassung des engeren Kreises um Hitler ueber die strategische Lage im **Sep 41** geht aus einer Denkschrift hervor, die vom **OKW** entworfen war u. die Billigung Hitlers hatte. Die wesentlichen Gesichtspunkte sind folgende: Es taucht bereits der berechnete Zweifel auf, ob Russlands Machtpotential noch im Laufe des Jahres **1941** gebrochen werden kann; wenn nicht, so muss das Jahr **1942** zur Vernichtung der sowjet. Widerstandskraft fuehren – als *Voraussetzung fuer die Friedensbereitschaft Englands*. Russlands Niederwerfung ist also das naechste Ziel, erst dann ist es moeglich, sich mit allen Kraeften auf England zu konzentrieren. Noch immer hofft man auf ein *Eingreifen Japans* gegen Russland trotz des Nichtangriffspaktes der beiden Regierungen. Die *Tuerkei* u. *Spanien* werden nur dann ihre Neutralitaet aufgeben u. sich auf Deutschlands Seite stellen, wenn die Tuerkei vom Niederbruch Russlands ueberzeugt ist, u. wenn Spanien die dt.-ital. Machtposition im Mittelmeer voellig gesichert sieht. *Grosse Sorge macht die Verbindung Englands nach Russland ueber Iran*, die derzeit nicht unterbunden werden kann . . . Die Rueckschluesse, die die Oberste dt. Fuehrung aus diesen Ueberlegungen zog, war folgerichtig: es musste der Versuch gewagt werden, noch in diesem Jahr die mil. Hauptkraefte Russlands niederzuzwingen, die auf dem Weg nach Moskau zu erwarten waren! (Hofmann, „*Schlacht von Moskau*,“ 145-46)¹¹⁸

Sep 41: ..Anfang Sep 41, noch ganz unter dem Eindruck der *Kontroverse*, litten Halder u. Heusinger „unter dem Schwanken in unseren Massnahmen.“ Besonders Halder glaubte, dass es *schon seit Ende Juli keine operative Linie mehr gebe*, u. Heusinger fuegte hinzu, das sei wesentlich die „*Schuld des O.K.H.*,“ nicht unter Inkaufnahme letzter Konsequenzen seine Meinung gegenueber dem Fuehrer vertreten zu haben.“ Hitler hat sich in dieser Auseinandersetzung abermals als dem „*Geist von Zossen*“ gegenueber willensstaerker u. ueberlegen gezeigt. Letzten Endes ging es in dieser Krise aber um sehr viel mehr als um eine operative Frage. Es zeigte sich noch einmal ein *grundsuetzlicher Dissens*. Hitler fuehrte einen *Eroberungs- u. Weltanschauungskrieg*, waehrend der Generalstab des Heeres, traditionellen machtpol. Vorstellungen folgend, als Kriegsziel die Ueberwindung der mil. Energie dieses Gegners ansah, um damit indirekt

¹¹⁷ **Note:** Daneben brachte Brauchitsch aus der *Reichskanzlei* [i.e., from the **30.8.41** meeting between B. and Hitler] eine weitere Nachricht mit. Mit dem absehbaren Erfolg bei Kiev *schien sich Hitler entschlossen zu haben doch gegen Moskau zu marschieren*. Damit hatte der Generalstabschef endlich die Genehmigung fuer die Durchfuehrung seines Planes erreicht. (251)

¹¹⁸ **Note:** This is only an excerpt. See R. Hofmann article for more details concerning this **OKW** „Denkschrift.“ See also, *Halder KTB*, 13.9.41.

England, den hauptsächlichen Gegner, zu treffen. Indem Hitler sich durchsetzte – die Auseinandersetzung spielte sich ja keineswegs in einem kollegialen Führungssystem ab – deklassierte er zugleich den Generalstab des Heeres weiter zum „gefuegigen u. subalternen Generalquartiermeisterstab.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 157)

Sep 41: [Kiewer Kesselschlacht]: Die neuerlichen Erfolge, die sich in den naechsten Wochen aus dem Zusammenspiel zwischen der Hr.Gr. Mitte u. Sued ergeben hatten, schienen Hitler zunaechst recht zu geben u. *bestaerkte ihn weiter in seiner Vorstellung des grossen Feldheern*. Mehr als **600.000** sowjet. Soldaten gerieten in dt. Gefangenschaft u. selbst die Mehrzahl der mil. Fachleute glaubte nicht, dass sich die Rote Armee von dieser erneuten Niederlage erholen wuerde. Doch *Halder war anderer Auffassung*; fuer ihn war der *Sieg bei Kiev nur ein taktischer, wenn auch exzellenter Erfolg, ein Pyrrhussieg*. Dagegen konnte die Lage im Norden bis Mitte September aus dt. Sicht kaum als befriedigend bewertet werden. Zwar war es gelungen, **Leningrad abzuschliessen**, doch nun *lehnte Hitler von sich aus*, entgegen seiner kurz zuvor erteilten Anordnung, *eine Eroberung der Stadt ab*. Vielmehr sollte durch eine Belagerung die Zivilbevoelkerung ausgehungert werden. Selbst wenn der Hunger wirkte, so bestand von Seiten der pol. Fuehrung kein Interesse daran, die eventuell fluechtende Bevoelkerung in dt. Obhut verpflegen u. versorgen zu muessen – *Fluechtlinge sollten durch direktes Feuer wieder zurueckgetrieben werden*. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 250).

Sep 41 [Kiewer Kesselschlacht]: Fuer Hitlers groessten militaerischen Triumph musste die Wehrmacht allerdings einen hohen Preis zahlen. Der Chef der Op.-Abt. im Generalstab des Heeres, Oberst Heusinger, hatte zu Recht befuerchtet, dass dies ein *Sieg ohne operative Auswirkungen* sein wuerde, der an den Kraefte zehrte u. weiteren Zeitverlust bedeutete, womit in letzter Konsequenz der Weg in die Niederlage begann. Doch die Euphorie bei den meisten Verantwortlichen war kaum zu bremsen. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 110; see also, Meyer, Heusinger, 157 ff.)

1.9.41: Gestern hat der ObdH den Fuehrer um Unterredung unter 4 Augen gebeten. Die Meinungsverschiedenheiten wurden geklaert. *Der Fuehrer hat prinzipiell seine Zustimmung zur baldigen Fortsetzung der Operation gegen Moskau gegeben*. Wenn auch unterdessen viel Zeit verloren ging, ist doch das Verhaengnisvolle der am 24.8. erwaehnten *Fuehrerweisung* vielleicht noch zum Guten zu wenden. ObdH u. Fuehrer fliegen morgen zu GFM v. Bock, um das Weitere zu besprechen. (Tagbuch Thilo)

3.9.41: [Heusinger Brief an seine Frau] Der Gegner versuche mit allen Reserven, die er habe, „uns zurueckzudruecken,“ jedoch weiter mit „zum Teil voellig unausgebildeten“ Massen, „das reinste Kanonenfutter. Aber er hat es ja, u. Menschenleben spielen fuer ihn keine Rolle.“ Daran knuepfte er Betrachtungen ueber eine „**asiatische Menschenflut**,“ die gegen Europa anstroeme. **Spengler** koennte mit seinen Voraussagen ueber den *Untergang des Abendlandes* recht bekommen, „wenn wir nicht Einhalt gebieten.“ Heusinger bring hier, u. spaeter, im Oktober 1942, noch einmal so etwas wie ein *uebergeordnetes Verstaendnis fuer Hitlers Krieg auf*, wenn er ihn damals als der „zentralen Macht in Europa“ auferlegtes Schicksal verstand, fern allerdings des ihm von Hitler verliehenen Charakters als rasseideologischer Vernichtungs- u. Raubkrieg. Die anderen Voelker wollten das nicht wahr haben, meinte er, „aber die Geschichte wird uns eines Tages recht geben, davon bin ich ueberzeugt.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 159)

5.9.41: (Stieff to Frau): ...Dass der Ostfeldzug in diesem Jahr zu einem einigermaßen befriedigenden Ende zu bekommen ist, erscheint ausgeschlossen. Wir werden wohl leider teilweise zu einer *Erstarrung der Front* kommen u. im kommenden Jahr nochmals antreten

muessen.¹¹⁹ *Wir haben uns alle gruendlich militaerisch, politisch u. wirtschaftlich mit den Russen verrechnet....* Ausserdem aber ist die Zukunft *so* dunkel, dass man sich es sehr ueberlegen sollte, Kinder in die Welt zu setzen.

Unsere Gesamtlage hat sich, nicht nur meiner Auffassung nach, so entscheidend zu unsern Ungunsten veraendert, dass wir zwar nicht den Krieg verlieren, ihn aber auch nicht mehr gewinnen koennen...

Die Ostfront von [Hr.Gr.Mitte] *steht seit Tagen, ja Wochen, in schwersten Abwehrkaempfen von Weltkriegsausmass* (bis zu 300 Feindbatterien in einem Korpsabschnitt), bei denen es taeglich zu schweren Einbruechen kommt u. *in denen die Kampfkraft unserer Divisionen wie Schnee an der Sonne schmilzt*. Das Tragische ist dabei, dass unsere Truppe *an chronischem Munitionsmangel* aus Transportgruenden leidet. **Die Lage ist dort auf des Messers Schneide, da wir keine Reserven mehr haben**. Hoffentlich geht dem Russen die Puste frueher aus, sonst besteht die Gefahr des Verlustes von *Smolensk*. (H. Stieff, Briefe, 126-28)

6.9.41: Die *Grundzuege der kommenden Angriffsunternehmen* [i.e., gen Moskau] wurde in der *Weisung Nr. 35* festgelegt. (see, Hubatsch, Weisungen)

6.9.41: *Seit laengerer Zeit wirkt sich Entschlusslosigkeit OKH u. mangelnder Schwung auf Verlauf der Operationen aus. Es fehlt uns ein Mann wie Ludendorff. Brauchitsch* ist keine starke Persoenlichkeit, weder nach oben noch unten. Nachteilig wirkt besonders, dass er in keiner Weise mit dem Fuehrer harmoniert. *Halder* ist auch keine Persoenlichkeit, zudem ueberarbeitet, vielleicht auch zu alt. Ein radikaler Wechsel im Oberkommando koennte sich gut auswirken, vor allem wenn ein starker Mann mit guter Veranlagung getragen vom Vertrauen des Fuehrers hier kuriert. Diese misslichen Verhaeltnisse wirken sich jetzt erst so praegnant aus, weil dieser Feldzug zum ersten Mal nicht planmaessig laeuft, schnelle u. harte Entschluesse verlangt...(Tagebuch Thilo)

Mid-Sep 41: Unmittelbar nach der Schlacht bei *Kiev*...wuchs bei der *Heeresfuehrung* angesichts der hohen Verluste der Roten Armee seit Kriegsbeginn die Hoffnung, vor dem Wintereinbruch doch noch die *Halbinsel Krim*, auch den Uebergang zum *Kaukasus* zu bewaeltigen, u. dass die „Operation Taifun,“ der Stoss auf Moskau, gelingen koennte. Sie kommt sehr vorsichtig auch bei Heusinger zum Ausdruck. (Meyer, Heusinger, 159)

15.9.41: ...ordnete Hitler die *Wiederaufnahme der Offensive* auf ganzer Breite der Front [?] an, wobei als Angriffsdatum der **2.Oktober** festgesetzt wurde. Zwei Tage zuvor, am **13.9.41**, hatte er eine *Denkschrift des OKW* gebilligt, die zu dem Ergebnis kam, dass **der Feldzug im Osten im Jahre 1941 nicht mehr zu beenden sei**; den Soldaten an der Front wurde diese Erkenntnis *geflissentlich verschwiegen*, statt dessen wurde ihnen in Tagesbefehlen vor dem Beginn des Angriffs versprochen, dass dies der *letzte u. alles entscheidene Angriff* werde, der die endgueltige Zerschlagung der Roten Armee zur Folge haben werde... (Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 16)

20.9.41: [Heusinger Brief an seine Frau] Angesichts des bevorstehenden dritten Kriegswinters wurde Heusinger sehr nachdenklich. Er habe manchmal Zweifel, „ob der *Fuehrer* sich ueber die ‚Begeisterung‘ seines Volkes so recht im klaren ist u. nicht letzten Endes von ihm Dinge fordert, die eines Tages ueber seine Kraft gehen. Das waere ein gefaehrlicher Weg!“ ... Nur wenige grosse Maenner haetten wirklich etwas geschaffen, „was die Voelker dann ohne Schwierigkeiten

¹¹⁹ Here, the editor of *Stieff's* letters notes: “Ein Zeugnis fuer die klare Lagebeurteilung Stieffs u. fuer seinen Weltblick.“ (226)

halten konnten...“ Beispielhaft erschien ihm *Bismarck*, „der sich wohlweislich beschränkte.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 159)

24.9.41: Vor Leningrad Angriff im wesentlichen eingestellt. Die dort verfügbaren Kräfte reichen zum Durchbruch bis zum Stadtkern nicht aus...Die nun...gewordene Lage ist im wesentlichen auf *Führungsfehler* und allzu grosse Methodik im Angriff zurückzuführen. Obwohl bei OKH erkannt, wurde nicht eingegriffen. Nun hat wieder der Führer eingegriffen...Die ***Entschlusslosigkeit des OKH ist himmelschreiend.*** (Tagebuch Thilo)

Oct 41: Die Erfolge der ersten Tage u. Wochen [i.e., von „*Taifun*“]...schienen die *siegesbewusste Stimmung* des Generalstabschefs u. des ObdH zu bestärken. Dass dabei innerhalb des OKH den Meldungen der *Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost* über die *Stabilisierung der Roten Armee in Disziplin, Organization, Bewaffnung u. Taktik* nur wenig Beachtung geschenkt wurde, kann kaum verwundern. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 252)

Oct 41: General of the Infantry *Thomas*, Chief of the War Economy and Armaments Office (OKW), had warned High Command against optimistic assumptions [i.e., that Soviet system will collapse immediately if Moscow seized]; as early as **Oct 41**, he points out in a memorandum that, even if the Donets Basin, Stalingrad, Voronezh, Moscow, Gorkij and Leningrad were seized by German troops, the Russians would *still remain viable* as a result of their potential remaining in the Ural area and therefore able to continue the war. *Thomas' study is not taken seriously.* (K. Reinhardt, “*Moscow 1941*,” 215)

4.10.41: Chief of Army General Staff observes that „*Taifun*“ proceeding in a “classic” manner, since the Soviets were cooperating in the development of the encirclement by holding their lines rigidly wherever they had not been attacked. (KTB Halder)

5.10.41: *...the last great collapse stands immediately before us...* Operational goals are being set that earlier would have made our hair stand on end. Eastward of Moscow! Then I estimate that the war will be mostly over, and perhaps there really will be a collapse of the [Soviet] system...I am constantly astounded at the Führer's military judgement. He intervenes in the course of operations, one could say decisively, and up until now he has always acted correctly. (Wagner, *Generalquartiermeister*, 204; quoted in *Megargee*, 135)¹²⁰

7.10.41: Der neue Befehl Hitlers in diesem Sinne [i.e., Moskau dem Erdboden gleichzumachen], erreichte das Oberkommando der Hr.Gr.Mitte am 7. Oktober, der jegliche Annahme einer Kapitulation, egal ob sie von Seite des Militärs oder der Bevölkerung angeboten werde, verbot u. den Truppenführern zur Pflicht machte, die *Parlamentäre* aus der belagerten Stadt, wenn nötig sogar mit Waffengewalt, vor den Kampflinien abzuweisen. Moskau, so war es im Führerhauptquartier vorgesehen, sollte mit seiner ganzen Bevölkerung sterben! (Gosztony, *Entscheidungsschlacht*, 102)

8.10.41: [Heusinger Brief an seine Frau] Die Offensive komme nun so gut vorwärts, „in kaum vorstellbarem Tempo“, dass es mit der Rückkehr [der Operationsabtl.] nach Berlin wohl erst November werden würde. Es stand in diesen Tagen nicht allein mit der Annahme, „dass nun dem Russen doch noch der **Knock-out** gegeben wird.“ Bei einem Besuch mit Brauchitsch in

¹²⁰ This and following series of Oct 41 letters from Wagner to his wife are *highly instructive*—they mirror the shift in opinion from confidence to doubt that began to take place in German High Command at this time.

Smolensk [HQ Hr.Gr.Mitte] – „uebrigens eine sehr nette, nur voellig zerstoerte Stadt“ – registrierte er „**Hochstimmung**.“ Mit *Greiffenberg*, Chef des Generalstabes dort, u. *Tresckow*, dem Ia, stimmten sie in dem Urteil ueberein, „**noch drei Wochen**“ zu benoetigen, „dann wird es geschafft sein.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 160)

10.10.41: Ein *Reitunfall Halders*, der dann bis Anfang November mit eingegipstem rechten Arm Dienst tat. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 160)

10.10.41: Hitler calls off *Army of Norway* operations out of northern *Finland* because it appears that the Soviet main front is about to collapse. (*E. Ziemke, Franz Halder at Orsha*; also, *Ziemke, German Northern Theater of Ops*, 178)

12.10.41 [*OKH Fernschreiben an H.Gr.Mitte*]:

OKW hat befohlen:

Der Fuehrer hat erneut entschieden, dass eine Kapitulation von Moskau nicht anzunehmen ist, auch wenn sie von der Gegenseit angeboten wuerde.

Die moralische Berechtigung zu dieser Massnahme liegt vor aller Welt klar. Ebenso wie in Kiew durch Sprengungen mit Zeitzuendern die schwersten Gefahren fuer die Truppen entstanden sind, muss damit in Moskau u. Leningrad in noch staerkerem Masse gerechnet werden. Dass Leningrad unterminiert sei u. bis zum letzten Mann verteidigt wuerde, hat der sowjet. Rundfunk selbst bekannt gegeben.

Schwere *Seuchengefahren* sind zu erwarten.

Kein deutscher Soldat hat daher diese Staedte zu betreten. Wer die Stadt gegen unsere Linien verlass will, ist durch Feuer zurueckzuweisen. Kleinere, nicht gesperrte Luecken, die ein Herausstroemen der Bevoelkerung nach Innerrussland ermoeeglichen, sind daher nur zu begruessen. Auch fuer alle uebrigen Staedte gilt, dass sie vor der Einnahme durch Artilleriefeuer u. Luftangriffe zu zermuerben sind u. ihre Bevoelkerung zur Flucht zu veranlassen ist.

Das Leben deutscher Soldaten fuer die Errettung russischer Staedte vor einer Feuersgefahr einzusetzen oder deren Bevoelkerung auf Kosten der dt. Heimat zu ernaehren, ist nicht zu verantworten.

Das Chaos in Russland wird um so groesser, unsere Verwaltung u. Ausnuetzung der besetzten Ostgebieten um so leichter werden, je mehr die Bevoelkerung der sowjetruss. Staedte nach dem Innern Russlands fluechtet. . .

(Source: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1070-71)

14.-15.10.41: [*Heusinger Briefe an seine Frau*] Es beduerfe jetzt noch „einer kleinen Zahl von kleineren Operationen zur *Verbesserung der Winterstellung*.“ Die Operation im grossen sah er fuer dieses Jahr als *nahezu beendet* an...Mit den erreichten Zielen glaubte er eigentlich bis auf „einzelne Expeditionen“ des Heeres in Richtung auf den *Kaukasus* u. *Aegypten* nicht mehr an „groessere Erdoperationen.“ „Der weitere Krieg wird der *Luftwaffe* u. der *U-Boot-Waffe* zu ueberlassen sein,“ spekuliert er am 14. Oktober 1941, wie hauefig in diesen Wochen, *zwischen*

Zuversicht u. Skepsis schwankend. Ernster stimmte ihn *am Tage danach* seine **Caulaincourt-Lektuere**. Er finde „*erschreckend viele Parallelen* zwischen damals u. heute, vor allem bezueglich der zwei fuehrenden Maennern.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 161)

Mid-Oct 41: Sehr aergerlich kritisierte Heusinger die den Krieg im Osten begleitende *Siegespropaganda*, „dieses Aufbauschen u. namentlich Prophezeien.“ Gewiss seien die Erfolge „unvorstellbar gross,“ aber „der Gegner ist auch unvorstellbar *hart u. zahe*,“ werfe immer wieder neue Kraefte entgegen, wenn auch „groesstenteils *Unausgebildete oder halbe Kinder*.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 161)¹²¹

Ca. Mid-Oct 41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Nun verlangsamten sich die Operationen. *Einige Tage erwartete er noch die baldige Rueckkehr* [der Operationsabtl.] nach **Berlin**, da nach menschlichem Ermessen *fuer einen ruhigen Winter an der Front* [!!] die Operationsabteilung eigentlich nicht benoetigt wuerde. Der Wintereinbruch naehrte diese Hoffnung. „Seit heute Nacht faellt unaufhaltsam, u. in dichten Flocken weicher Schnee in unseren Wald.“ Es sei, „als ob die Natur uns nun mahnen moechte, mit den kriegelerischen Ereignissen Schluss zu machen, u. als ob sie den Mantel ueber die Geschehnisse dieses Jahres decken moechte. So ist auch meine Stimmung.“ Man habe „keine Lust“ mehr, noch Operationen zu befehlen u. wuensche sich „den *Uebergang zur Winterruhe* u. die Rueckkehr von hier.“ [!] (Meyer, Heusinger, 161)¹²²

18.10.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] ...Obenan steht sein Wunsch, dass die *Welt vielleicht doch noch zur Vernunft komme*. **Er habe diesen Krieg recht satt**. (Meyer, Heusinger, 161)

19.10.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Tochter*] Eine dunkle *Grundstimmung* drueckte sich in einem Brief an seine noch nicht 10 Jahre alte Tochter **Ruth**. Zwar bemuehte er sich sehr, auf die kindliche Psyche einzugehen. Aber dann wurde er doch sehr ernsthaft u. schrieb von dem vielen Schnee u. der Kaelte in Russland...Viele seien auch schon gefallen, „u. so viele Kinder haben ihren Vater verloren, dass man darueber ganz traurig werden kann.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 161)

20.10.41: It can't be kept a secret any longer: *we are hung up in muck, in the purest sense*. (Wagner, *Generalquartiermeister*, 207; quoted in *Megargee*, 135)

24.10.41: von Paulus announced to assembled General Staff branch representatives that an attack through the Caucasus, that could reach the passes from Iran into Iraq late in 1942 (thus threatening the British position in Middle East) would have to wait until the following spring. (Megargee, 135)

24.10.41: In my opinion it is not possible to come to the end [of this war] this year; it will still last a while. The how? is still unsolved...[the fact] that this war would still be long and hard was already clear at the end of last year. (Wagner, *Generalquartiermeister*, 210; quoted in *Megargee*, 135)

¹²¹ **Note:** Vgl. zusammenfassender Vermerk **Muenchhausen**, “Verschiedenes vom 1. bis 13.10.:" „Auch furchtbar die Siegesfanfaren z.B. Rede des Reichspressechefs **Dietrich!** Gewaltiger Sieg, Russe zerschmettert, in Kuerze Moskau, mit dem Sieg der Krieg gegen Russland praktisch beendet. Die russ. Armee zerschlagen, dass auch nicht mehr nennenswerte Reste da seien usw. *Militaerisch unverzeihlich, solche Tiraden loszulassen, die militaerisch ja nicht stimmen*.“ (quoted in: Meyer, Heusinger, 851, f.n. 54)

¹²² **Note:** This diary entry of *Heusinger's* is priceless – demonstrates that Army High Command had absolutely no idea what the future weeks would bring!

Oct/Nov 41: Um ihre zwischen *Euphorie* u. *Niedergeschlagenheit* wechselnde Stimmungslage im Herbst 1941 analysieren zu koennen, griff die Generalitaet auf die dt. Militaergeschichte zurueck. War die Stimmung der dt. Fuehrung Anfang Okt. 41 noch „wunderbar geloest u. bestens,“ sah General **Jodl** die gewonnene *Schlacht von Vyasma* als ein **zweites Koeniggraetz** an, so war Mitte Nov. 41 klar, dass die Operation „*Taifun*“ gescheitert war u. der Truppe harte Wintermonate in Russland ohne entsprechende Bekleidung bevorstanden. Nun verglich der Oberbefehlshaber der Hr.Gr.Mitte [v. **Bock**] das Steckenbleiben des dt. Vormarsches vor Moskau mit der *Situation an der Marne* 1914. Wenige Tage spaeter, d.h. noch vor dem sowjet. Gegenschlag, befuechtete GFM v. **Bock** sogar ein „**zweites Verdun**.“ Doch die sowjet. Seite setzte nicht auf einen Stellungskrieg u. das langsame Ausbluten des Gegners. Die Rote Armee wollte die Hr.Gr.Mitte vor Moskau vielmehr einkesseln u. vernichten. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 177)

Oct/Nov 41: Das Scheitern des Blitzkrieges u. der ueberraschende sowjet. Gegenstoss trafen auf eine dt. Fuehrung, die ueber die Ursachen der operativen Krise der Wehrmacht u. ueber die Massnahme zu ihrer baldigen Ueberwindung **uneins** war. Darueber hinaus waren die fuehrenden Maenner in der Heeresfuehrung, also **Brauchitsch und Halder, abgespannt u. fuehrungsschwach**. Unter deren Mitwirken entschied sich Hitler zu seinem *beruechtigten Halte-Befehl vom 16.12.41*. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 177)

1.11.41: *Brauchitsch* is still claiming, in lengthy talks w/ Goebbels on this day, that an advance to *Stalingrad* was possible before the snows arrived and that by the time the troops took up their winter quarters Moscow would be cut off. But now this was wild optimism; and Brauchitsch is forced to acknowledge the existing weather problems, the impassable roads, transport difficulties, and the concern about the winter provisioning of the troops. In truth, whatever the *unrealism* of the Army and *Wehrmacht* high commands about what was attainable in their view before the depths of winter, the *last two weeks of October* had had a *highly sobering effect* on the front-line cdrs. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 435-36)

2.11.41: Man beginnt daran zu zweifeln, ob die dt. Erfolge wirklich so gross u. entscheidend sind (bzgl der vom Fuehrer angekuendigten „letzten entscheidenden Operation“) wie nach den Voraussagen der Chefs (hier: Vorschusslorbeeren) anzunehmen war. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

2.11.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Aber dann erwiesen sich die „Forderungen der Kriegsfuehrung“ staerker als alle Wuensche. Es solle nun doch noch abgewartet werden [**note:** H. was hoping to return to Berlin w/ his *abteilung* for a peaceful winter!] „ob nicht eine guenstige Wetterlage den Fortgang der Operationen bis zu dem nicht mehr weit entfernten Endziel zulaesst.“ Dahinter verbirgt sich die inzwischen *erheblich von der Wirklichkeit abweichende, gleichwohl immer noch im OKH u. von Hitler gehegte Vorstellung, alle gesteckten Ziele, darunter Moskau, doch noch zu erreichen*. Das war jedoch angesichts des zunehmend sich verschlechternden Wetters u. der zusehends abnehmenden Kraft des Angriffs der abgekaempften Verbaende eine **Utopie**. Auch *Heusinger liess sich noch taeuschen von den anhaltenden hohen Verlustzahlen der Roten Armee*, verbunden mit bedeutenden materiellen Einbussen u. bisher weitraeumigen Gelaendeverlusten, sowie nicht zuletzt schwerwiegenden Fuehrungsfehlern des Gegners, die den *baldigen Zusammenbruch* zu signalisieren schienen. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 162)

3.11.-9.12.41 [*Halder diary*]: Army Chief of Staff's diary over this period mirrors decline in moral component of Ostheer's fighting power. On 3 November, Halder admits that Army Group South is „pessimistic“ and losing drive, and that „some energetic persuading would be

in order to kick them.“ On 22 November, he assesses that the troops on the southern wing and centre of **4 Army** „are finished.“ On 1 December he observes: The cdr of **13 PD** „and one of his ablest rgt. cdrs have had complete nervous breakdowns. On 9 December, he comments on Guderian’s „serious breach of confidence“ in the field commands, and that the „commanding general of the **XXVII AK** is said to have failed completely.“ (*Halder Tagebuch*)

5.-7.11.41: *Halder* talks first to Army Quartermaster General, Brig.Gen. Eduard *Wagner*, about the condition of forces on the eastern front; and then to Col. Adolf *Heusinger*, Chief of Ops. He tells *Heusinger* that it was *necessary to establish bases on which to terminate the campaign in the east* [for the winter?]. He had apparently already talked to several of the cdrs and chiefs of staff at the front, but contrary to his usual habit, he had *not kept a written record* because his right arm had been in a plaster cast until two days before, the result of a horseback riding accident in October. In sum, he told *Heusinger*, the *extreme conceptions* were to conserve strength (*Erhaltungsgedank-en*) or to seek maximum effect (*Wirkungsgedanken*). The two would have to be balanced against each other and the result transmitted to the armies through General Staff channels.

Two days later, *Halder* sent each Army group and Army chief of staff a copy of an 11-page *top secret document* and a map w/ notice to “the Gentlemen Chiefs of Staff” that both would be the subject of a General Staff conference to be held in about a week. The surviving copies of the document and map reveal that in *Halder*’s own mind the balance had swung heavily to the side of the *Wirkungsgedanken*. An outbreak of cold weather to be expected in a few days, he wrote, would bring a short period of good conditions for another rapid advance. The enemy apparently was no longer able to maintain a continuous front from Lake Ladoga to the Black Sea and could be forced to confine himself to defending two areas: one around Moscow, the other in the Caucasus...Holding the Caucasus at this stage, *Halder* continued, was not vital to the Soviet Union except negatively, to deny the *Maikop oil fields* to Germany. Moscow, however, was the “*bridgehead to Asia*.” *Five railroad lines from the Urals* converged on it; thus, it constituted a *potential staging area* from which a regenerated Soviet Army could mount offensives in any direction it chose.

The German objective before closing out the current offensive, *Halder* stated, ought at least to be to get favorable starting positions for **1942** while “minimizing” the danger of the troops’ being caught unprepared by the winter. It would be highly worthwhile, he added, to *take some risks w/ regard to the onset of winter “into the bargain”* and secure a favorable long-term defensive alignment “in case the highest leadership should decide against resuming the attack in the East later.” On the map he had *two lines drawn*. The first, designated the “*minimum boundary*,” ran from the middle *Svir River*, 30 miles east of Lake Ladoga, to *Rostov* on the Black Sea, passing **160** miles east of Moscow and following the course of the middle and lower *Don River* in the south...The second line, designated the “*farthest boundary still to be attempted*,” would have pushed the Army Groups North and Center fronts another **75-90** miles east to take in *Vologda* and *Gorki* and moved Army Group South’s center east another **30** miles [300 miles?] to *Stalingrad* and swinging its right flank southeast better than **200** miles to and somewhat beyond *Maikop*. (For more details see, *E. Ziemke, Franz Halder at Orsha*, 174)¹²³

5.-7.11.41: [*Heusinger Briefe an seine Frau*] *Heusinger* richtete seine Hoffnungen auf Umstaende, die der menschlichen Einwirkung entzogen waren. „Drei Wochen leidlicher Frost u. wir waeren am Ende unserer Ziele u. diesjaehrigen Taetigkeit.“ (**5.11.41**) *Ratlosigkeit* verbreitete sich. Allmaehlich wisse keiner, „wie dieser *Orlog* zu Ende gehen soll, wenn nicht die beiden Partien Vernunft annehmen.“ [**7.11.41**] Darauf war allerdings noch weniger zu rechnen als auf die

¹²³ Top secret document addressed by *Ziemke* was: *Der Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres, Op. Abtl, Ia Nr. 1630-41, 7.11.41*, in: AOK 18, 35945-1.

Hilfe des Wettergottes, dessen Guentst allein noch den weiteren Vormarsch ermoeglichen koennte, um „in den Besitz der Industrie von Moskau“ zu gelangen. Dann waere es moeglich, setzte sich Heusingers *Milchmaedchenrechnung* fort, immerhin die *Oelzufuhr aus dem Kaukasus abzuschneiden*, was grosse russ. Offensivhandlungen im naechsten Jahr unmoeglich machen wuerde. (Meyer, Heusinger, 162)

7.11.41: Hitler finally admitted to Brauchitsch that *Germany could no longer hope to reach the farthest objectives*, such as Murmansk, the Volga River, and the Caucasus oil fields, in 1941. (Megargee, 135)¹²⁴

7.11.41: Army General Staff continues to persist in view that Red Army is on point of collapse, and greatly inferior in fighting power and leadership. Such views, despite all evidence to the contrary, still prevailing w/ Halder (and, indeed, largely shared by GFM v. Bock), underlay the *memorandum*, presented by the General Staff on **7.11.41**, for the second offensive. The hopelessly optimistic goals laid down – occupation of *Maykop* (a main source of oil from the *Caucasus*), *Stalingrad*, and *Gorki* were on the wish list – were the work of Halder and his staff. There was **no pressure by Hitler on Halder**. In fact, it was *quite the reverse*: Halder pressed for acceptance of his operational goals. These corresponded in good measure w/ goals Hitler had foreseen as attainable only in the following year. Had Hitler been more *assertive* at this stage in rejecting Halder's proposals, the disasters of the coming weeks *might have been avoided*. As it was, Hitler's *uncertainty, hesitancy, and lack of clarity* allowed Army High Command the scope for catastrophic errors of judgement. (Kershaw, *Hitler*, 438; see, Engel, *Heeresadjutant*, 12., 16., 22., 24.11.41, for Hitler's uncertainty)

9.11.41: Commander of Army Group South, *von Rundstedt*, advocates a *cessation of operations* in order to preserve striking power of the military forces; but *Brauchitsch* and *Bock* are agreed that the *attack must continue*. Von Bock in particular *stressed the necessity of carrying through*, and both insisted that “both opponents were calling on their last reserves of strength and that the one w/ the *more determined will* would prevail.” Moscow lay only about **37 miles** from the German front. German leaders reminded themselves of the ***Battle of the Marne in 1914***, which was given up for lost when it *might yet have been won*. There is widespread belief that the question of the resumption of the offensive led to sharp differences between Hitler and *Brauchitsch*, but this is *myth*. (Assmann, *Battle for Moscow*, 321)

9.11.41: Kfz Lage erfordern gruendliche Ueberholung waehrend des Winters...Da *der Krieg gegen Russland anscheinend ohne Fruehjarsfeldzug nicht entschieden werden kann*, erscheint Auffrischung u. Wiederherstellung Operationsfaehigkeit der Armeen wichtigste Voraussetzung fuer weiter Kriegfuehrung. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

11.11.41: In evening, in East Prussia, Hitler and OKH conduct a meeting. Fuehrer not only confirms his *intention to capture Moscow*, but also sets objectives far beyond the city. (*Supplying War, van Creveld*, 174)

12.11.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Angeregt durch einen Artikel des „Reichspropagandaministers“ *Goebbels* gelante er zu dem Schluss, dass „wir“ in einen „schicksalhaften Kampf [...] hineingeraten sind, ohne dass im Anfang jemand das klar uebersehen hat, vielleicht nicht einmal konnte.“...Und da bleibe nichts anderes uebrig, „als weiterzumachen, sonst sind wir verloren.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 162)

¹²⁴ *Megargee*: Note that Hitler's own staff *had come to this conclusion four months earlier*. See also, Halder KTB, 3:283.

12.-15.11.41: Besprechung Chef GenSt mit den Heeresgruppen- u. Armeechefs der Ostfront. Fahrt im Sonderzug nach Orscha, Wohnung im Schlafwagen I. Klasse, gemuetliches Essen im Speisewagen, 2x mit Halder am Tisch.

Besprechung: *Ziel Ostfeldzug – russ. Herr von Kriegfuehrung auszuschalten – misslungen.* Russ. Heer 1942 voraussichtlich 150 Div u. 40 PzBrig stark. Ziele dieses Jahres, die trotz grossen Wetter- u. Wegeschwierigkeiten vollsten Einsatz rechtfertigen, sind **Maikop, Stalingrad, Industriegebiet u. Eisenbahnkopf Moskau.**

Unsere Ziele 1942 – Kaukasus. Vorgehen gegen Wolga...

Schlussbesprechung Halders ergibt: *2. Jahr Feldzug gegen Russland, der starkes dt. Heer im Osten bindet...Entscheidung des Krieges z.Zt. nicht moeglich. Gegenseitiger Abnutzungskrieg...Schwerpunktverlagerung der Industrie auf Luftwaffe zum Kampf gegen England [!!!]. (Tagebuch Thilo)*

12.-13.11.41: At nightfall on 12 Nov 41, Col. Gen. Franz *Halder*, Chief of the Army General Staff, arrived in the small *Belorussian* city of **Orsha** aboard his special train. Also on board were officers from the operations, organization, intelligence, and supply branches of the General Staff. Beginning at 10:00 a.m. the next morning and continuing until late that night, Halder and his colleagues conferred w/ the chiefs of staff of the Army groups and Armies on the eastern front.

In the literature on the 1941 campaign in the East, the General Staff conference at Orsha has *long been accepted as a somewhat nebulous landmark along the way of the German Army's march to disaster at Moscow that December.* Because Orsha was in FM v. Bock's sector and the conference was held just when, after three weeks of rain and mud, cold weather was beginning to freeze the ground hard enough for his Army Group Center to get back in motion, it has been *assumed that the subject was the drive to Moscow which was resumed two days later.*

Scattered summaries, particularly in the files of Army Group Center and its armies, have appeared to confirm that impression and have led Western historians to suspect (as there was not much to be decided any longer about the push toward Moscow) that Halder was only, perhaps half-heartedly, acting on instructions from Hitler to stiffen the spines of the field commands. (see, *Reinhardt*, 140; *Seaton*, 137).

Possibly owing to the presumed connection w/ the Moscow offensive, the *most complete record of the conference* has remained buried for more than a generation in the files of **18. Army**, which was out of the way on the line at and south of *Leningrad*...*That record, together w/ several entries in the Halder diary otherwise too cryptic to be meaningful, tells another story:* At Orsha, Halder emerges as the heir to *Moltke* and *Schlieffen*, conducting a *grand review of strategy* and attempting to bring that fabled cohesive expertise of the General Staff to bear on an enterprise that at the peak of its success had started to go sour. (*E. Ziemke, Franz Halder at Orsha*, 173)

13.11.41 [Orsha]: At a top-level conference of Army Group Ctr, in a temperature of **-8 F.**, Guderian's *Panzerarmee*, as part of the orders for the renewed offensive, is assigned the objective of cutting off Moscow from its eastward communications by taking **Gorki – 250 miles east of Moscow.** [!] The *astonishing lack of realism* in the army's orders derive from the *perverse obstinancy* w/ which the General Staff continues to persist in the view that the Red Army is on the point of collapse.¹²⁵ Yet the opposition which Halder's plans [as expressed in his

¹²⁵ **Note:** My take on this is somewhat different – Given losses of Red Army over a period of ca. **3 weeks** – at Kiev, *Vyazma* and *Bryansk*, some **15** armies destroyed, some **1.3** million prisoners taken, etc. – belief of Army High Command that Red Army was finally finished and could never recover is hardly surprising. And this, coupled w/ the poor work of *Fremde Heere Ost*.

memorandum of 7.11.41] encountered at the conference result in a *restriction of the goals to a direct assault on Moscow*. This is pushed thru in full recognition of the insoluble *logistical problems* and immense dangers of an advance in near-arctic conditions w/o any possibility of securing supplies. Even the goal was not clear. (See, *Kershaw*, 438)

13.11.41 [*Conference at Orsha*]: Halder meets w/ army group and army chiefs of staff for a planning conference. At the meeting (and again in another w/ his assistant chiefs of staff ten days later, 23 Nov) Halder stated that he and Hitler were *both inclined to a strategy that, rather than simply conserving strength, would aim for the maximum possible gain w/ what was available*. He argued initially that the army would have to take some risks so that it could reach the farthest boundary if possible (i.e., the maximum geographical objectives he had set), or at least the minimum boundary. Under pressure from the assembled staff officers, he ended the day by *admitting that such far-flung goals were not realistic*. He still, however, expected that all three army groups would push on until mid-December, and that Army Group Center's forces would take Moscow, even if they did not get far beyond it. He *expected six weeks of cold but dry weather*, from mid-Nov until end of Dec 41, in which to carry out the operations. (*Megargee*, 136)

13.11.41 [Halder at *Orsha*]: He faced „vehement protests“ from *Eckstein* [*Aussenstelle Mitte*]. Bock, however, did not support his *supply officer*, insisting that to make one final effort was preferable to spending the Russian winter in the open. Even though it was clear to him that the operation could not be adequately prepared, *Halder reluctantly allowed himself to be persuaded by Bock*, saying that he would not rein in Army Group Center if it wanted to attempt the attack, for an *element of luck belonged to warfare*. Thus the attack was authorized, only to fail, in the first place, because of the *state of the railways*. (*Supplying War*, van Creveld, 174)¹²⁶

13.11.41 [*Conference at Orsha* (*Ziemke*)]:

When conference began, the anticipated change in weather had already set in. Above freezing two days before, the temperature that morning was **0 degrees F**, and the tank crews at the front were having to *chop their machines out of solidly frozen ground*. Aboard his train, Halder first briefed the three army group and seven army chiefs of staff on the situation as the Army High Command saw it. The campaign thus far, he said, had run off “like a moving picture,” but it was now passing the limits of the original General Staff thinking. Hence, a *new concensus* as to what was still needed and achievable was required... After acknowledging that the “fundamental idea” of the campaign – to “wrest a decision” in 1941 that would make possible a shift of the main effort to the war against England – had not been achieved, he concludes that the Army would, as a result, have to “*strive to maximize damage on the enemy*” before the year was out and early in the new year...

Next, Col *Eberhard Kinzel*, Chief of Foreign Armies East, reviewed the enemy situation. He admitted what everyone knew – that the previous estimates of Soviet military strength had not been particularly accurate. He offers a somewhat disquieting picture. Says that, at moment, Soviet Army had **260** divisions in Europe; because a good half of the personnel in them were untrained and the officers relatively worse than the men, he rated them at an *effective strength* of about **75** divisions. Besides, there were **40** tank bdes, many of them recently converted cavalry divisions and likewise low in proficiency; nearly all, however, were well equipped. Most signifi-

¹²⁶ *Van Creveld's* interpretation is unique—at least in so far as his assertion that Halder only *reluctantly* agreed to a resumption of the offensive. Here, he cites *Eckstein's memoirs*, which are printed in *Wagner*, pp 288-89. Compare Creveld w/ *Ziemke's* account of conference.

cant for the long run was the *Soviet ability to keep on raising men and producing heavy arms*. Before the war Foreign Armies East had expected the Soviet Army to have **19,000** artillery pieces; to date, **24,000** had been captured, and the Russians had not said “a single word” about artillery in the *Lend-Lease* negotiations w/ the USA and Britain...He also estimates that the enemy could be expected to achieve an *effective strength* of at least **150** divisions and **40** tank bdes by spring **1942**.

Halder then breaks in to remark that actual Soviet capacity was “*opaque*,” but no doubt substantial. Given time, the Russians would be able to move their industry still in Europe back to the Urals and western Siberia. This was the reason for the desire to take *Gorki* and the *Rybinsk-Yaroslavl* area before year’s end. The “highest state leadership” (Hitler) had emphasized that reaching *Stalingrad – Maikop – Vologda* by end of the year would also justify “the most intensive effort.” Above all, Halder admonished his listeners to keep in mind:

Although weak in the knees, we are still for practical purposes in the pursuit. The enemy presently is *worse off than we*; he is on the *verge of collapse*. Therefore we are justified and obligated to exert full effort once more so that the troops will not have to pay in blood next year for what is neglected now.

Two concluding briefings, on Army organization and supply, demonstrated that, either way, the choice the Germans faced was potentially desperate. Brig.Gen. *Walter Buhle*, the Organization Branch chief, revealed that the Army High Command had believed from the first that the *forces created in 1940 for the Soviet war could not be kept in being more than one year*. This, he declared, was now a fact. The losses sustained so far in the Soviet Union could not be covered, at least not before mid-1942, if then. To get replacements, the Army would have to *disband 15 divisions* on the eastern front; moreover, the field forces would not get any new motor vehicles except tanks. Each *panzer* division could expect its normal allotments to be cut by **500** vehicles. The infantry divisions would be *completely de-motorized*, and the rear echelon supply trains would become one-third horse drawn. *The Army, Halder interjected, had its best time behind it.*

The Quartermaster General, *Wagner*, drew a similarly bleak picture. The front, he said, would experience an *ammunition drought* by early 1942 because the plants had been shifted to *Luftwaffe* production during the summer, when Army stocks had appeared large enough for the mission in the Soviet Union. They were being reconverted to Army production, but it would take time. Yet the most immediate problem was not making ammunition, but transporting it and everything else to the front. The *railroads* were getting far too few trains to Army Groups Center and South, and North was getting just a “bearable” number. Winter clothing, for ex., could only be shipped by “throttling” other supplies; thus, it would not all get to the front before **Feb 42**.

In the afternoon, Halder listened to the chiefs of staff. Maj.Gen. *Kurt Brennecke* told him that his Army Group, North, had *no divisions for an extended drive to the east*. Brennecke noted that Halder did not mention *Vologda* again. Maj.Gen. *Greifenberg* (Center) would seem to have been the one of the chiefs of staff *most nearly in agreement w/ Halder*. Talking to Greifenberg, Halder tried unsuccessfully to persuade him – and through him, GFM v. Bock – to *delay the attack until late in the month* to let strength accumulate for a deeper thrust. Lt.Col. *Kurt v. Liebenstein* (Stabschef 2. Pz.Armee) told Halder that he should remember they were not in France and the month was not May [!]. No doubt, he and Halder knew he had the then substantial authority of Col.Gen. *Guderian* behind him.

Third Panzer Group, the northern spearhead, while not represented at Orscha because it had not yet been elevated to Army status, had argued in writing a week before *against operating w/ tanks so late in the year...* Maj.Gen. George v. **Sodenstern** (South), reiterated the stand of his chief, GFM v. **Rundstedt**, who was the *most outspoken proponent of the Erhaltungsgedanken* among the army group cdrs. After having described the projected advance to *Maikop* as a good way to put his one large armored unit, First Pz.Army totally out of commission for the next year, Rundstedt had, on **9.11.41**, called on the Army High Command to let his Army Group South *stop where it was and conserve its strength*.

One objection was *consistently raised* and Halder could not dispute it as a matter of opinion or point of view – namely, the **condition of the railroads**. It was bad he had to admit, and could only get worse if the front moved farther east; and nothing could be done about it. In the whole occupied territory, the Germans had captured no more than **500** serviceable *locomotives* and **21,000** cars. Those, w/ no allowance for breakdowns, constituted barely a *tenth* of what were required, and German equipment could not run on the Soviet lines until the tracks had been *relaid* to the western European gauge...Halder concluded that there was no way “just now” to increase RR capacity.

In the evening after dinner, Halder gave his *summary* of the meeting’s results. From the exchanges w/ the chiefs of staff he had concluded, he said, that ops as extensive as those proposed on **7.11.41** and in the morning session could *no longer be considered*. *Everything depended on the railroads*, and they could not be renovated in time for extensive movements. Still, in the time remaining, until about mid-December, “*as much as humanly possible*” would still have to be gotten out of the troops. Army Group South would have to push ahead to the east, albeit “apparently” not as far as to *Stalingrad*. Center would not gain “substantial” ground beyond Moscow, but it would still, at the *minimum*, have to “achieve” a *stronger pressure on the city*. Army Group North would resume its drive past *Tikhvin*, close in on *Leningrad*, and “stretch a hand” to the *Finnish Army* east of Lake Ladoga. The other objectives – *Vologda, Gorki, Stalingrad – Maikop* – would have to be left to next summer, when “the Russians will have a plus in strength and we a minus.”

At 10:00 p.m., a locomotive coupled onto the train. Before departing, Halder favored the officers present w/ a thumbnail resume of *Germany’s strategic position*. The Soviet Union, he maintained, despite its “enormous” military potential, was *cancelled out as a “power factor” and no longer a decisive threat*.¹²⁷ *England* was the enemy most seriously to be reckoned with. Problem was, England afforded no “handle by which it could be seized;” therefore, Germany would have to reconcile itself to a **war of attrition**. The Chief of Staff took his leave at 10:20; and 10 minutes later, his train steamed away into the night.

What may have occurred to Halder on his way back to the High Command compound in **Angerburg**, East Prussia, and what must have disturbed some of those who left Orsha that night to return to their commands, was that *a balance of sorts had been struck*; but the General Staff ideal, a consensus of trained minds brought up in a uniform doctrine, was *far from realized*. The balance was still on the side of the *Wirkungsgedanken*. With Hitler to answer to, Halder could not have let it go any other way, and in *blitzkrieg* terms *he was correct*. Risks had to be taken. ***A hundred years of meteorological statistics supported an expectation of reasonably good weather through December.*** To that extent, time could still be counted as a German ally.

¹²⁷ **Note:** How could the discussion w/ his *Stabchefs*, and the gloomy assessments of Buhle, Wagner, etc., had led Halder to such a conclusion?!?

On his return to East Prussia, Halder would even be talking again – to Hitler – about reaching *Rybinsk* and *Yaroslavl* in December, maybe also *Vologda*, and striking out for *Stalingrad* and *Maikop* in January. But it was not May and it was not France. And the chiefs of staff were uneasy. Within three weeks their disquiet would be more than justified at *Rostov*, *Tikhvin*, and in the snow and cold on the approaches to Moscow. (*E. Ziemke, Franz Halder at Orsha, 175-76*)

14.11.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Verbreitetes Unwissen ueber den Stand u. den Gang der Dinge registrierte Heusinger sogar nach einem zufaelligen Zusammentreffen im **Sperrkreis I der Wolfschanze** mit dem „Reichsleiter“ *Martin Bormann* u. dem „Reichspressechef“ *Otto Dietrich*. Diese unterschiedlich einflussreichen Funktionaere immerhin aus der engsten Umgebung Hitlers wuessten „auch nicht die Bohne mehr als wir kleinen Leute,“ nimmt der deren Worte fuer bare Muenze. „Unsere Probleme sind auch die ihren, ohne dass sie eine Loesung wissen.“ Ueber den weiteren Kriegsverlauf haetten sei jedenfalls „noch weniger als wir“ gewusst u. „ueberhaupt sehr in der Vergangenheit u. Zukunft, weniger in der viel schwierigeren Gegenwart“ gelebt, was Heusinger als „allerdings bedenklich“ empfand. Neues habe die Unterhaltung nicht geboten, „wenn man nicht die Tatsache darunter rechnen will, dass in *Berlin spaeter ein grosser Triumphbogen gebaut*“ u. das angeblich schon schadhafte errichtete **Brandenburger Tor** mit kriegerischen Reliefs geschmueckt u. aus besserem Stein wiederhergestellt werden solle. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 163*)

Mid-Nov 41: ...Spaetestens Mitte November, als von den Heeresverbaenden das *Auftreten sibirischer Verbaende* an der Front gemeldet wurde, haette man das Zurueckgehen in eine *Winterstellung* anordnen muessen.“ Unter dem *belebenden Einfluss* der Kesselschlachten von *Kiev* u. *Brjanks-Wjasma* wurde dagegen die *Fortfuehrung des Angriffs auf Moskau* befohlen, fuer den allgemein wenig Neigung bestand, vor allem bei den in erster Linie verantwortlichen Fuehrern...(Kesselring, *Soldat*, 130-31)¹²⁸

19.11.41: Eben las ich einen Zeitungsbericht der **170. ID**, geschrieben vom Rgt. u. BtlKdr waehrend der *Kaempfe um die Krimengen*...Dennoch ist *Zustand der Truppe erschuetternd*. Bestes Fuehrer u. Unterfuehrerpersonal sowie Masse der Kernmannschaften sind ausgefallen. Der Nachersatz schlecht (Ausbildungsmethoden unseres Ersatzherres!!), Truppe uebermuedet, Verluste, seelisch stark mitgenommen. Vereinzelt Angriff nur noch unter Androhung von Waffengebrauch zu erzwingen. Daraus erhellt: **die Kampfkraft des Ostheeres** -- denn die Verhaeltnisse sind vielfach gleichgeartet – **ist erschoept**..

Wenn endlich dem Fuehrer daemmert, dass das nicht jahrelang weitergehen kann – sagen tut es ihm ja leider keiner von den **obersten Waschlappen**. Russland ist auch im naechsten Jahr nicht zu besiegen. M.E. wird vielleicht erst den Besitz der Uralindustrie (im uebernaechsten Jahr?, denn 1 500 – 2 000 km entfernt!) den Ausschlag geben...

England-Amerika ist erst recht nicht zu besiegen. Wie soll ein Mensch diesen „**Abnutzungskrieg**,“ der letzten Endes hoechstens einen Vergleich bringt, verantworten? Und OKH, Operationsabt. etc. feiert Feste, besaeuft sich moeglichst oft. *Dieses preussische, reaktionaere Junker- u. Herrentum stink zum Himmel.* (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

¹²⁸ **Note:** Here, *Kesselring* mentions *Kluge* and *Hoepner* as having little stomach for a continuation of the offensive. (131)

18.-22.11.41: (Halder), „...Feind hat auch keine Tiefe mehr u. ist *sicherlich noch schlechter dran als wir*...Noerdlich Rostow ist...die 1. Pz.Arme e in die Abwehr gedraengt u. wird es schwer haben...durchzuhalten...**Bock fuehrt die Schlacht von Moskau weit vorn selbst...Die Truppe hier is am Ende**...Aber bei Pz.Gr. 3 ist die *Moeglichkeit des Erfolges noch gegeben*...(Halder KTB)

22.11.41: In his diary, *General Halder* notes that the troops have reached the limit of their endurance. (KTB Halder)

25.11.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Eine harmlose Entspannung ein paar Tage spaeter, die Vorfuehrung eines dem normalen *Kinopublikum* vorenthaltenen Films, machte den Betrachter [H.] „ganz weich.“ Heusinger musste sich „ordentlich hueten, nicht *elegisch* [melancholy] zu werden.“ Es war „*Ninotchka*“ mit **Greta Garbo** in der Hauptrolle, „schoen u. blenden spielend wie je, neben ihr als Agent Felix Bressart.“ Auch der *Regisseur, Ernst Lubitsch*, ist ihm noch als „alter Bekannter der Ufa“ errinerlich. Es kam ihm schwer an, „dieses nette gesellschaftliche Leben einer schoenen Friedenszeit zu sehen.“ Was entgehe der Menschheit nicht alles durch diesen Krieg! (Meyer, Heusinger, 163)

27.11.41: Wagner told Halder that the German army was „*at the end of our personnel and material strength.*“ (Halder, KTB, 3:311)

30.11.41: „...Die Leute [gemeint ist Hitler u. sein OKW] haben keine Ahnung von dem Zustand unserer Truppen u. bewegen sich mit ihren Gedanken im luftleeren Raum...Der ObdH...zum Fuehrer bestellt...Aussprache...in welcher der Fuehrer nur mit *Vorwuerfen u. Schmaehungen* um sich warf u. unueberlegte Befehle gab...Am selben Tage gab es im **Ostheer 340 000 Fehlstellen**. Das war die Haelfte der Gefechtsstaerke der Infanterie. *Kompanie-Gefechtsstaerke 50 bis 60 Mann*. An *Kraftfahrzeugen* laufen hoechstens (noch) **50 Prozent**. (Halder KTB)

30.11.41: *General Halder* notes in his diary that Hitler and those closest to him “have no idea of the condition of our troops and move about w/ their thoughts in a vacuum.” (KTB Halder)

1.12.41: In his diary, *Halder* declares that the troops of Army Group Center were clearly no longer fit for operations. (KTB)

3.12.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Vier „*tolle Tage voller Aufregung u. Arbeit*“ lagen hinter ihm, schrieb er am 3. Dez. Der Gegner „hat bei *Rostow* scharf angegriffen, u. es ist damit zum ersten Male in diesem Kreig *eine ernste Krise* eingetreten., Ihr erstes Opfer sei der GFM v. *Rundstedt*, „der zuruecktreten musste, weil der *Fuehrer* ihn zum Meistern dieser Krise wohl nicht mehr geeignet hielt.“ ...Hinzu komme, fuhr Heusinger fort, „*die ganze Spannung an der Front*,“ die ihn dauernd in Atem gehalten habe. **Jetzt sei allmaehlich Klarheit eingetreten**. Er gelangt zu der Feststellung: „*Wir sind fuer dieses Jahr am Ende u. werden nun nicht mehr weiter boxen*.“ Was die Truppe in den letzten drei Wochen noch einmal geleistet habe, sei unbeschreiblich, sie habe wirklich bis zum letzten gekaempft. Abermals setzten ihn die *unerschoepflichen personellen Reserven des Gegners* in Erstaunen. Man koenne tausend totschiessen, „an ihrer Stelle stehen wieder tausend u. mehr, wenn auch kaum ausgebildet.“ Wenn die *eigenen Kompanien* „dann allmaehlich nur noch **20 – 30 Mann**“ zaehlten anstelle von normalerweise **180**, „dann reichen eines Tages deren Schuesse eben nicht mehr aus, u. die Anzahl des Gegners zu erledigen.“ ...Obendrein sei *Brauchitsch* „schwer leidend.“ Er wolle es sich nicht zugeben, aber so gehe es nicht weiter. Jetzt muessten Leute heran mit „*Nerven wie Straenge*,“ die sich nicht unterkriegen liessen. Er, Heusinger, habe Halder klar gesagt – der sich schon seit dem 10. Nov. ueber den Gesundheitszustand *Brauchitschs* Sorgen machen musste –, dass er **dem**

Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres den Ruecktritt nahelgen muesse. Das war freilich nicht der einzige Grund. Denn Brauchitsch hatte es „laengst aufgesteckt [i.e., *given up*], seine „bessere Meinung zu vertreten,“ u. sich nach Ansicht Heusingers wegen seiner „ganz anderen Kinderstube u. den Ton u. die Art des Fuehrers voellig **mundtot** machen lassen.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 164)¹²⁹

4.12.41: Der Fuehrer war 2 Tage bei 1. Pz.Armeekorps u. Hr.Gr.Sued. Imponierend, er faehrt zum Brennpunkt, wohin sich der **ObdH** bisher nicht begeben hat. *Kein Wunder, wenn er kein Vertrauen zu uns hat* u. dann mal dazwischen schlaegt. Meines Erachtens hat sich OKH u. GenStdH in bisheriger Art in diesem Feldzug das Todesurteil gesprochen. Der schleppende buerokratische Geschaefstgang und die zum Paktieren neigende Art gegen nachgeordnete Dienststellen sowie die **Schleimscheisserei** nach oben sind verheerend u. bergen Gefahr schwerster Rueckschlaege. (Tagebuch Thilo)

4.12.41: Col. *Gyldenfeldt*, Brauchitsch's chief staff officer, writes in his diary: "With utter candor he [B.] has admitted that he just can't go on any longer, particularly since he feels completely incapable of holding his own in discussions w/ the Fuehrer. Therefore he intends to take the necessary measures to wind up the eastern campaign [?], which must be regarded as not won, and to take responsibility for this; then he'll ask the Fuehrer to relieve him of his post." (Quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 854)¹³⁰

5.12.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Im Rueckblick bemerkte Heusinger am 5. Dezember, die Tage seit Ende November seien „*die bisher schwersten dieses Krieges gewesen*.“ Es sei der Moment gekommen, vor dem er schon immer gewarnt habe, „dass man in den russ. Winter nicht hineinstolpern duerfe.“ Napoleons Beispiel „*steht uns warnend vor der Seele*.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 164-65)

6.12.41: Mitte: Gesamter Angriff Moskau wird eingestellt...(35 Grad Kaelte)...Der Russe hat gute Winterbekleidung. *Suende des OKW u. OKH ist es, aus „allzu optimistischer“ Einstellung nicht rechtzeitig Ausruestung fuer einen Winterfeldzug herangebracht zu haben.* (Tagebuch Thilo)

7.12.41: „The commander in chief [Brauchitsch] is *hardly even a messenger boy anymore*. The Fuehrer goes over his head to the army group commanders.” In his diary this day, Halder also writes that neither Hitler nor the OKW realized the condition of the German troops and were engaged in “petty faultfinding.” (*Halder KTB*, 3:332)¹³¹

7.12.41: Schlacht um Moskau ist aus – wir muessen allenthalben in Ausgangsstellungen zurueck; **30 Grad Kaelte zwingen, nicht der Feind, die hohen Opfer waren umsonst.** (Tagebuch Thilo)

7.12.41: „Die Erfahrungen dieses Tages sind wieder *niederschmetternd* u. *beschaemend*. ObdH ist **kaum mehr Brieftraeger**. Der Fuehrer verkehrt ueber ihn hinweg mit den OB der Heeresgruppen. Das schrecklichste aber ist, dass die Oberste Fuehrung den Zustand unserer

¹²⁹ **Note:** Heusinger was deeply shaken by relief of Rundstedt, whom he greatly admired. Rundstedt replaced by *Reichenau* as cdr of Army Group South. 16 hours later, Reichenau lodges the same request to withdraw that his predecessor had made! (164)

¹³⁰ **Note:** According to Irving, “the Soviet counteroffensives opening on December 5-6, 1941, clearly accelerated Brauchitsch's decision to resign.” (854)

¹³¹ **Note:** Brauchitsch had suffered a severe heart attack on 10.11.41.

Truppe nicht begreift u. *kleinliche Flickschusterie* [*picayune measures*] betreibt, wo nur grosse Entschlusse helfen koennen. (*Halder KTB*)

7.-8.12.41: Es zeigt sich doch allgemein, daß *unsere Truppe stark ermüdet und abgekämpft ist*. Die angespannte Transportlage läßt ein Hineinfließen zur Front von Ersatz nur in geringem Umfang zu. Unseren Leuten fällt es naturgemäß ungeheuer schwer, sich an die Verhältnisse des russischen Winter zu gewöhnen. The next day (8 Dec), he notes in diary: „Das Schlimmste ist, daß *unsere Truppe doch eben sehr am Ende ihrer Kräfte ist*.“ (*Gyldenfeldt Tgb*)

8.12.41: Auf ganzer Front Defensive, ueberall Angriff der Russen. Einbrueche bei Kalinin u. Tichwin, die zu weiterer Zuruecknahme der Front fuehren. *Zahlreiche Erfrierungen* bei der Truppe. *Stimmung der Truppe z.T. schlecht*, mit Recht. Dass der Fuehrer mit seinen stetigen Verboten ohne Beruecksichtigung der Einwaende *die Hauptschuld traegt*, wird spaeter niemand glauben wollen – „wenn der Fuehrer wuesste.“ Jedenfalls hat die *Verkennung der Lage* u. die *Entschlusslosigkeit* von **Brauchitsch** u. **Halder** grosse Mitschuld. Der **Kulminationspunkt** lag *Anfang November* u. wurde v.d. Armeen erkannt u. gemeldet! (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

9.12.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier / Gespraech mit Fm. von Bock*]: ...“*Vertrauenskrise*’ ernster Art bei der Truppe. Abgesunkene Kampfstaerke der Infanterie! Im Hinterland werden alle erreichbaren Kraefte zusammengekaemmt (bei einer Pz.Div. 1600 Gewehre!). Panzerschuetzen u. Fahrer werden natuerlich vorn nicht eingesetzt. *Die Heeresgruppe braucht Menschen!*“ (*Franz Halder, Echolot, 371*)

10.12.41: OKH hat [am 8.12] „Weisung fuer Aufgaben des Ostheeres im Winter 1941/42“ herausgegeben...Uebergang zur Verteidigung an gesamter Front. Ueber dieser Weisung steht meines Erachtens, zu spaet.“ Verteidigungsentschluss, Bau von Feldstellungen, Unterkuenften, Anlaufen der Bevorratung u. Auffrischung muessten vor mindestens 1 ½ Monaten sein. OKW u. OKH haben den Bogen ueberspannt...Ob uns Auffrischung zu neuer Operationsbereitschaft voll gelingt, bezweifle ich sehr. *Unser Zaudern im Entschluss u. falsche Beurteilung* der Moeglichkeiten von Kampfkraft u. Witterung brachte dem Russen vor Moskau „**das Wunder an der Marne**.“ (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

10.12.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Japans „ungeheuerer Erfolge in den ersten Kriegstagen“ – der spektakulaere Angriff auf die amerikanische Pazifik-Flotte in Pearl Harbor – sieht er als den „einzigsten *Lichtblick*“ an, in der Annahme, dass sich das auch „erleichternd“ auf „unsere Fronten“ auswirken koennte, bei moeglicherweise nun ausbleibenden amerikanischen Lieferungen an England u. Russland...Am 10.Dezember gibt H. *unverhohlen* zu, dass die dt. Fuehrung nach Abklingen der eignen Offensive „auf Grund der Wetterlage“ von den starken sowjet. Gegenangriffen *ueberrascht worden sei*. „Wir“ haetten „eigentlich nicht recht daran geglaubt, kein Kompliment fuer die noch von dem Oberst i.G. *Eberhard Kinzel* geleitete Abteilung *Fremde Heere Ost*, u. „so stehen unsere durch starke Verluste geschwaechten Verbaende in einem sehr sehr schweren Abwehrkampf,“ dessen Ablauf recht schwierig vorauszusagen sei. „Wir koennen von hier aus leider wenig helfen, *da wir keine rechten Reserven mehr haben*. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 165*)

11.12.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Die Kriegserklaerung Hitlers an die USA am 11.Dezember regt Heusinger am gleichen Tag zu eher resigniert-galligen Betrachtungen an. Hitlers Rede im *Reichstag*...nennt Heusinger sarkastisch „ja gerade keine Schmeichelei“ fuer Roosevelt. Inhalt u. Still erinnerten ihn an die „*homerischen Helden*, die sich vor Beginn ihrer Kaempfe erst mal ordentlich beschimpften.“ Aber dann stellte er fest: „*Nun haben wir also den Weltkrieg in Reinkultur, groesser als das letzte Mal*. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 166*)

11.12.41: Fuehrerrede in Berlin. Kriegserklaerung an Amerika. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

11.12.41: *Hitler declared war on the United States*. Historians have wondered at Hitler's hubris ever since, but in truth, as *Gerhard Weinberg* has pointed out, Hitler had believed for years that he would have to fight the USA eventually. His determination to do so had even helped to shape his policy decisions and plans after the fall of France. Hitler knew that his navy was too weak to take on the Americans directly—but w/ Japan on his side he would have an ally w/ a powerful fleet. Thus, *Germany's declaration of war represented neither a change in German policy nor a great risk from the point of view of the Wehrmacht's leaders*. [And]...they easily dismissed the threat that America posed. **Raeder** was positively eager for the fight, while the *army and Luftwaffe paid hardly any attention at all*. Halder, who still occasionally noted international events in his journal, had nothing to say on the subject of the German declaration. (*Megargee*, 137)

12.12.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: 11:30 Uhr Gespraech mit FM v. Bock: 1. Lage in besonders kritisches Stadium getreten. 2. **134.** u. **45.** Div. ueberhaupt nicht mehr kampffaeig. Keine Versorgung. *Fuehrung zwischen Tula u. Kursk bankrott*. (*General Franz Halder, Echolot*, 417)

13.12.41: *Bock recommends to Brauchitsch that Hitler should make a decision on whether Army Group Ctr should stand fast and fight, or retreat*. In either eventuality, Bock openly states, there is the danger that the army group would collapse “in ruins” (*in Truemmer*). Bock makes no firm recommendation, but does indicate the disadvantages of retreat: the discipline of the troops might give way...The implication is plain – the retreat might turn into a rout. Bock's evaluation, remarkably, is not passed on to Hitler at this time; he only receives it on the 16th, when Bock tells Schmundt what he had reported to Brauchitsch three days earlier. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 450-51; *DRZW*, 610; *Bock Tagebuch*, 16.12.41)

13.12.41: Als der bereits von seiner Herzkrankheit gezeichnete von Brauchitsch am **13 Dez 41** in von Bocks Hauptquartier in Smolensk eintrifft, wird ihm ein schonungsloses Bild der Lage geboten. Bock verlangt, auf hoechster Ebene eine grundsaeztliche Entscheidung zu treffen, naemlich entweder die Frontlinie unter letztem Einsatz zu halten oder aber auf eine nicht vorbereitete, kuerzere Linie zurueckzugehen. Das Risiko wuerde in beiden Faellen etwa gleich hoch sein. Ausserdem ersucht von Bock darum, einen Nachfolger fuer ihn zu finden. Nachdem der Ob.d.H. auch mit von Kluge u. Guderian gesprochen hat, erklaert er, dass er ein allmaehliches Ausweichen der gesamten H.Gr. auf die vorgesehene Winterstellung fuer unvermeidlich halte, wogegen von Kluge fuer ein Absetzen in einem Zuge eintritt.

Doch von Brauchitsch, der immer weniger Energie aufbringt, versaeumt offenbar, *Hitler ueber das volle Ausmass der Gefahr*, die ueber der H.Gr. schwebt, *zu unterrichten*. Hitler zeigt sich ueber dessen Verhalten schwer veraergert. . . (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 210)

13.12.41: „Die Kampfkraft der Truppe ist durch die nun bald seit 6 Monaten andauernden, ununterbrochenen Kämpfe, durch die Kälte, den Hunger, die schlechte Winterbekleidung derart herabgesunken, daß die Abwehr- und Widerstandskraft nur noch gering sind. Durch die Verluste sind die Verbände derart schwach, daß eine zusammenhängende Linie garnicht mehr gebildet werden kann. Schon durch die Kälte getrieben gehen die Leute nachts in die Dörfer, und die dünnen Postierungen zwischen diesen werden bei den weiten Räumen dann glatt durchstoßen. Vor allem läßt auch an einigen Stellen die Stimmung der Truppe eben durch die hohen Verluste,

die Kälte, das Bewußtsein, Tausend von Kilometern von der Heimat entfernt zu sein, die Unmöglichkeit des Urlaubs usw. nach.“ (*Tagabuch Gyldenfeldt*)

14.12.41: „Nach der Besprechung essen wir noch zusammen eine Kleinigkeit. Dei beiden Armeeführer verabschieden sich dann, von denen übrigens Feldmarschall v.Kluge einen durchaus frischen, *Gen.Oberst Guderian dagegen als mit seinen Nerven ziemlich fertigen Eindruck machten.*“ (*Gyldenfeldt Tgb*, after meeting in Roslavl w/ Kluge and Guderian)¹³²

15.12.41: Brauchitsch was “very depressed and sees no way to save the army from its difficult situation.” His heart ailment continued to trouble him, and his nerves were fraying. (*Halder KTB*, 3:348)

15.12.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: „14.00 Uhr Gfm. v. Brauchitsch kehrt von Frontreise zur Hr.Gr.Mitte zurueck...18.00-19.30 Uhr sehr ernste Besprechung mit *ObdH* ueber die Lage. Er ist *sehr niedergeschlagen* u. *sieht keinen Ausweg mehr*, um das Heer aus der schwierigen Lage zu retten.“ (*Halder KTB, Echolot*, 463-64)

15.-21.12.41: [“A Week in the Life of the High Command,” *G.P. Megargee*].¹³³

15.12.41 (Monday): Well before first light on Monday morning, in HQ compound of the OKH, “*Mauerwald*,” messages began coming into the *Operations Branch* of the Army General Staff. Under branch chief (*Heusinger*) and his assistant (the so-called Ia, *Grolman*) there were 3 groups. **Group I**, the “Eastern Group,” under *Major Gehlen*, comprised *three subgroups* (**IN**, **IM**, and **IS**), each which oversaw ops of an army group. Now, by *phone and teletype*, the army groups were sending in their *morning reports*.¹³⁴ The reports were short; they dealt soley w/ events since midnight. Officers in the sub-groups used the info to update the *more comprehensive reports that had come in several hours earlier* [with] info on friendly & enemy situation, intentions, losses, troop strength, supplies, weather, etc. With new information at hand, the subgroup leaders (**Heinz Brandt** for Hr.Gr.Mitte) entered Heusinger’s office one at a time and briefed him on situation. Grolman also had overview of enemy situation prepared by *Fremde Heere Ost*. By **9:30 a.m.**, the entire process, from first reports to Heusinger’s briefing, was complete.

At this point, Heusinger joined by small group for the *morning General Staff briefing*. **Halder** was there, as were his assistant chiefs of staff for ops and intelligence, **Paulus** and **Matzky**, along w/ **Kinzel** (Foreign Armies East), **Gercke**

¹³² **Note:** From *Gyldenfeldt’s* diary entries (**5-15.12.41**), it is clear that OKH/OKW *well-informed of desperate conditions at the front*, in sector of *Hr.Gr.Mitte*, etc. He makes repeated references to fact that the troops at the end of their tether—worn out, cold, no winter clothing, no replacements, food/equipment reaching front, etc. Also indicates that, at first, Hitler had approved withdrawals in sector of *Hr.Gr.Mitte* to shorter lines. Notes beginnings of a *Vertrauenskrise*—loss of faith in OKW/OKH, etc.

¹³³ **Note:** Glimpse of how the German High Command functioned in detail. From: *Inside Hitler’s High Command*, G.P. Megargee, 2000. (142-69)

¹³⁴ See *Megargee* for details on *types of reports* submitted to the OKW Ops Branch. For example, first type of report required was the normal *situation report*, which the Ops Branch subgroups received from the army group ops sections. The army groups had to submit *three of these every day*—Morning Report (due 8:00 a.m.); Interim Report (7:00 p.m.) and Daily Report (2:00 a.m.) More narrowly focused reports, such as the Enemy Situation Reports (Ic reports) came in to the Foreign Armies East Branch *direct* from army and panzer group HQs. Reports to be filed by *teletype* whenever possible. (157-8)

(Transportation), **Buhle** (Organization), etc. Heusinger led off the briefing w/ a summary of the friendly situation as it had developed during the night; Kinzel followed w/ estimate of enemy situation. The other branch chiefs added their input in turn. As briefing went on, **Halder** added his own thoughts, posed questions, assigned new tasks. In this way all the principals in the General Staff learned what the situation was and why tasks they were to carry out.

Normally, Halder and the principal branch chiefs would next have given **Brauchitsch** an abbreviated briefing, at which the Army Cdr-in-Chief would have issued any fundamental orders which were necessary. On this day, however, v. Brauchitsch was not yet at the HQ; he was en route from the front, where he had been consulting with v **Bock** and his subordinates, **Hans v. Kluge** and **Guderian**.

Halder's activities were *fairly typical*. Between noon and 1:00 p.m., he spoke by telephone w/ each of the three army group chiefs of staff: first w/ **Hans v. Greiffenberg** (Center), then the chiefs of army groups North and South...After last call, **Heusinger** arrived to discuss the situation at Army Group Center. Then, at 1:20, **Fromm** stopped by to report on meeting had w/ Hitler the night before and to discuss *two special programs*—code-named **Walkuere** and **Rheingold**—w/ which the Replacement Army would form more units in the homeland. At 1:30, **Gercke** briefed Halder on problems w/ the railroads. Brauchitsch arrived as Gercke was leaving.

The biggest concern for both men [Halder / Brauchitsch] were the situations at Army Groups Center and North. In former case, **Bock** wanted to *take the entire army group back 60 to 90 miles to a new defensive line*. Problem was, no defenses existed on that line, as Bock himself admitted, and his troops would have to leave large quantities of heavy equipment behind. Hitler had rejected the idea on **Dec 14** for exactly those reasons, but apparently there was some confusion regarding that decision. Heusinger told both Halder and Greiffenberg on the afternoon of the 15th that he had spoken w/ **Jodl**, who had *relayed Hitler's permission for a limited withdrawal*...

At 6:00 p.m., Halder met w/ Brauchitsch for an 1 1/2 hours to discuss situation at the front. Army C-in-C strikes Halder as being “very depressed,” and seeing “no way out.” At about 10:00 p.m., Halder met w/ Heusinger and Paulus to go over the army groups' interim reports and issue final orders.

By the time Halder finished his meeting, Hitler and his advisors were *on the train from Berlin* (where Hitler had declared war on the USA) to their field HQ just east of **Rastenburg**. Jodl took opportunity to talk w/ his old friend **Bernard v. Lossberg**, head of the Army Ops Group in the National Defense Branch (OKW). Lossberg was *very critical of Hitler's handling of the war*. He believed Fueher's unwillingness to allow any withdrawal on the eastern front to be a mistake. He called for the erection of a massive “*east wall*” along a defensible line in the rear, to which the armies could retreat in need. Also suggests that strategic direction of war be handed over to an “outstanding soldier,” to whom Hitler would listen. Lossberg suggested **Manstein** for the post. Jodl was noncommittal. (144-47)

16.12.41 (Tuesday): Early in the morning, Hitler's special train pulled through Rastenburg and into the little station of *Goerlitz*, which was now part of his HQ, code-named *Wolfsschanze*...¹³⁵ Jodl once described the atmosphere inside the Fuehrer's compound as "*a mixture of cloister and concentration camp.*" Moreover, Hitler's *isolation* here allowed him to fully understand neither events at the front nor developments in the homeland. Moreover, Hitler, Keitel and Jodl were *cut off not only from the outside world but also from the Armed Forces Command Staff [Wehrmachtsfuehrungstab] itself.* Days would go by w/o any personal contact at all between Jodl and *Warlimont*...Physical environment in OKW compound also a hindrance. The *Wolfsschanze* was *hot and humid in the summer, cold and damp in the winter*...Overall the setting was *not conducive to good work*...

First major event this day is Hitler meeting w/ *v. Leeb* (North), who had flown in that morning. Leeb found the mood "gloomy;" Jodl compared the situation at front to that of **1812**. Leeb, however, able to persuade Hitler to sanction withdrawal of his army group's northern wing (w/o mentioning that this withdrawal was already underway!). Hitler then turned his attention to Army Group Center. At some point in morning, he had Armed Forces Command Staff begin drafting a *Fuehrerbefehl* to army and Luftwaffe general staffs, the Replacement Army Cdr, and Wehrmacht transport chief. This order laid out actions that each army group was to take and *identified reinforcements* that would be sent to front ASAP. (See also, *OKW KTB 1:1083*)

At about same time, *Schmundt*, who was then in area of Army Group Center, responded to an *urgent appeal from Guderian for a meeting.* The two spoke for 1/2 hr. at the *airfield at Orel.* Guderian tried to convey how serious the situation was and asked Schmundt to convey his impressions to the Fuehrer. Schmundt's activities in this instance *indicate the idiosyncratic ways in which Hitler gained info about events at the front*...Hitler sent officers to the front—or called cdrs back to his HQ—when he believed their reports would *support his views against those of the General Staff.* To this end, he tended to use men such as Schmundt upon whom he could count to take position *hostile to OKH.*

While Hitler worked crisis at Hr.Gr.Mitte, Halder called Bock to give him approx. text of an order he said Hitler would be releasing later. According to Halder, the 3rd and 4th *Panzergruppen*, which were trying to hold on a line NW of Moscow, could fall back gradually if they had no other choice; the *other armies would have to hold.* If Halder was talking about the order the Armed Forces Command Staff was even then drafting, however, he cannot have known its contents. *That order* went to the Ops Branch at some point in the evening. Army Group Center got its copy of the order at 1:05 a.m., on the 17th. It called on the officers there to force their troops into "*fanatical resistance...w/o consideration for enemies that have broken thru to the flanks and rear.*" Only thru such resistance could the army *win time* to bring up reserves.

¹³⁵ For details of Hitler's East Prussian HQ see, *Megargee*, pp 148, 152. Except for a few weeks spent at another compound in the Ukraine in 1942 and 1943, *Wolfsschanze* would be Hitler's HQ from Jun 41 to Nov 44. (**Note:** Megargee notes that location & layout of Hitler's HQ were "problematic." By retreating to this "remote compound," Hitler cut himself and his staff off from critical gov'm't and military organs still in Berlin, etc. (148-9)

About 10:00 p.m., Schmundt calls *Greiffenberg*. Tells him that Hitler had “turned off” Brauchitsch during that day’s discussion of the situation, and that he (Schmundt) would be staying in close touch w/ the army group for the time being. Bock calls Schmundt back. Wants to know if Brauchitsch had relayed his report on the situation to Hitler; Schmundt says he has not. At that, Bock read the report to S. over the phone. It said that *Hitler had to decide whether or not to retreat, but did not hold out much hope either way*...Schmundt assures Bock that Hitler doing all he could to get more men to the front; adds that it was “extremely regrettable that...the Fuehrer has not been properly briefed about the seriousness of the situation!” Bock points out, as he had to Halder at noon, that he *had absolutely no reserves left*. He closed by saying his *health was hanging “by a thread”* and that, if the Fuehrer believed a fresh mind was needed there, he should not hesitate out of consideration for him (Bock)...This exchange *certainly places Hitler in a better light than many later accounts do*. Bock *obviously had no solutions to offer*.

Army’s senior leadership was **losing power as the crisis deepened**. Hitler was dealing w/ army group and even army cdrs, *both directly and via OKW staff officers*. He had **shut Brauchitsch out of the decision-making process altogether**, and he was now working, if not at odds w/ Halder, then at least parallel to him...(148-51)

17.12.41 (Wednesday): ...On basis of sleep periods, Tuesday was not yet over. Shortly before midnight, Brauchitsch, Halder and Heusinger had reported to *Sperrkreis I* in the *Wolfsschanze* and the guards passed them thru to *Hitler’s briefing room*. Normally, *Hitler’s midnight briefing* was a smaller affair than the one at midday; *Jodl usually handled the briefing itself alone*. In this crisis, however, Hitler had ordered the army officers to attend.

Halder has recorded main points of the meeting in his *diary*. For the most part, they agreed w/ the order OKW had just issued. **There was to be no talk of retreat**, Hitler said. The enemy has broken thru in only a few places. Talk of building positions in the rear is *fantasy*. The only thing wrong w/ the front is that the enemy has more men. He is *much worse than we are in all other respects*. New *Luftwaffe units* and Army divisions were on the way. The number of trains were limited, so *infantry replacements w/ light weapons and AT guns must have first priority*; everything else can wait. (see, *Halder KTB*)

A series of follow-up calls with Army Group Center followed the briefing proper. First, *Hitler called Bock at about half-past midnight*. Explains to Bock his (A.H.) decision not to withdraw. Both Hitler and Keitel speak again w/ Bock before night was out...

[By now] the leaders had made the *major operational decisions that the situation demanded*. What remained was to implement them. Main job was to get reinforcements—both complete units and infantry replacements—to the front. [Note: On 15 Dec., Armed Forces Command Staff had already issued an order to the Armed Forces commander SE and the German generals in Rome and Agram, initiating steps to bring more Italian and Bulgarian forces into the *Balkans*, in

order to release German forces there for service in Russia. Also, Hitler's order of that night directed that several unspecified divisions be sent to the front. Work on the reinforcement issue continued on the 16th: Army Group D (C-in-C West) to transfer 5 divisions to eastern front...Hitler and OKW *took direct role in the reinforcement situation* on the 16th; met with *Wehrmacht* transport chief, Gercke; directed that RR give top priority to *infantry replacements* rather than formed units. Also, that day's Armed Forces Command Staff order to army groups,' while further emphasizing the *immediate need for riflemen*, identified 5 infantry divisions that would arrive at Army Group Center between 1 Jan and 1 Feb 42.]

Now, Wednesday, the General Staff went to work to implement the Command Staff's order...Their [Halder / Heusinger / Paulus, etc] primary mission was to *organize transport to get infantry forward as quickly as possible*. (See also, *Halder KTB*)...Heusinger drafts plan to transport replacements to the front, according to which infantry would be *separated from their parent divisions and sent forward first*. In addition, *Walkuere personel* (i.e., men gleaned from the Replacement Army) would go into the divisions on the front rather than forming new divisions themselves. In the meantime, Gercke met w/ Hitler and *State Secretary Kleinmann*, the *Reich traffic minister*. The three of them then agreed to a plan *to increase the no. of trains to the east from the current 122 per day to 140 by 1 Jan and to 180 by 1 Mar 42...*(151-55)

18.12.41 (Thursday): The daily and morning reports for this day revealed *no great change in the German's situation*. South was continuing its attack on Black Sea port of *Sevastopol*. North was completing its withdrawal w/o great difficulty. *Army Group Center remained the danger point*. There, 12 new Russian divisions had appeared. The Germans were outnumbered everywhere and their supply services remained on *brink of collapse*. Only a fraction of the needed materiel was getting through. Fuel, food, ammunition in short supply. Winter clothing had *only reached one-third of the troops* because more important supplies had priority...

Halder spoke several times w/ *Greiffenberg*...Hitler had decided to replace von Bock w/ von *Kluge*...(156)

19.12.41 (Friday): On Thursday, the Soviets *opened the second phase of their counteroffensive* against Army Group Center, w/ attacks against the central portion of the front. In his diary, Halder simply wrote: "Attacks everywhere." The Germans counted four more new Russian divisions and two more armored bdes in the sector that day. By evening, Halder knew of *Soviet breakthroughs in three places*. "Situation very tense," he wrote. He spoke with Greiffenberg, Kluge, *Blumentritt* (chief of staff, 4th Army, which was bearing brunt of the attack.) *Blumentritt* was *esp. discouraged*. He reported the troops were becoming *apathetic*, that the Russians attacked by night and were behind the forward positions by daybreak. Halder could do little to help, but did brief Hitler on Center's predicament in the early afternoon. OKH working reinforcement issue as hard as it could. Realistically, all Center could do was to *try and hang on*.

As tense as circumstances were, another event that day all but overshadowed them—at least for small group of officers in the high command: Hitler *accepted v. Brauchitsch's resignation*. At 1:00 p.m., Hitler summoned Halder to his HQ and gave him the news saying, “*Anyone can handle the little task of directing operations*. The task of the C-in-C of the army is to train the army in a National Socialist sense. I do not know a general in the army who can fulfill this task as I wish. Therefore I have decided to take over command of the army myself.”¹³⁶ Hitler informs Halder that he will keep him on to oversee ops as chief of the General Staff, but that *Keitel* would take over all administrative duties that Brauchitsch had fulfilled. Hitler also said that he expected Halder to brief him daily. Then he lectures Halder in typical fashion. Says that, as far as the front was concerned, *the thing to do was hold*, w/o fear of threats to the flanks. That evening Hitler released an Order of the Day, announcing his decision to take over command of the Army...Mood of the moment (at OKH) seemed to be that Brauchitsch had reached end of his endurance, and that the army would *benefit by having Hitler at the helm*. (160-61)

20.12.41 (Saturday): ...Up to this point, Halder had *only occasionally taken part in the Fuehrer's briefings*; now they would become a regular part of his life (one impact new command structure—and changing relationship w/ Fuehrer—would have on Halder's work). Briefings would use up an inordinate amount of time and also disrupt Halder's (and his staff's) entire morning schedule, since he required detailed notes from which to make his presentation. Moreover, while he had sometimes taken issue w/ Hitler's decisions in the past, there was usually a buffer (i.e., Brauchitsch) to shield him from the full force of Hitler's megalomania and stubbornness. Now he was on his own.

Form of Hitler's midday briefing now changed. Before this point, *Jodl* had briefed the situation on all fronts by himself, except on those infrequent occasions (once/twice weekly) when Brauchitsch or Halder had been present. Now the OKH submitted its situation reports to the Armed Forces Command Staff as before, and the staff worked them into Jodl's notes, but only in a general form. In the briefing Jodl would *cover the overall situation*, including the western and southern theaters in detail and an *overview of the east*, for which last task he used a **1:1 000 000 map**. Then Halder would *brief the eastern front in detail*, using **1:300 000 maps** and extensive notes that covered the situation down to army and sometimes corps or even division level. Heusinger and one or two other General Staff officers would be present to provide any additional detail Hitler required.

From this description, the briefings might appear to have been orderly affairs, *but in truth they were not*. Disruptions often came from Hitler's so-called inner circle...Keitel, living up to his nickname, usually restricted his remarks to the occasional, “*Jawohl, mein Fuehrer!*” Unless Hitler asked him a direct question. [Note: He was little more than a “cipher” it seems.] Jodl remained quiet for the

¹³⁶ Writes *Megargee*, „The words may not be accurate; as far as we know, Halder did not write them down until after the war. However, the spirit of the quote is accurate, as Hitler's subsequent actions would prove.” (281, f.n. 81)

most part during Halder's portion of the briefing, except to throw in an occasional remark supporting something Hitler had said...Army Group or theater cdrs also called regularly during the briefings, in hopes of getting a favorable decision from the Fuehrer on some matter. And Hitler himself often called some HQ at the front, esp. when he wanted to contest some fact that Halder had presented.

As *Warlimont* pointed out, *Hitler's personal style* was probably the factor that wore on Halder the most during their daily interaction. Not only was the Fuehrer *endlessly caught up in details*, but at any point he might launch off into a monologue on any subject old or new, important or not, constantly repeating himself, sweeping away concrete questions and suggestions w/ an unrestrained, rushing stream of talk. This side of Hitler's personality showed up in the extensive notes Halder took during the briefing on this day. [Note: See, 2.8.1 below, "Hitler as Military Commander," for details.]

Following the briefing, Hitler took the opportunity to back up his instructions to Halder w/ a written document. He had Jodl draw up a draft memorandum this same day. It covered nearly all the points Hitler had made in the briefing; defined reinforcements to be sent to eastern front, etc. Memo also called on the army to *strip all local inhabitants and POWs of their winter clothing "ruthlessly."*

While staff of OKW busy drafting the memorandum, Halder, Heusinger, *et al.*, returned to *Mauerwald*. Halder had already spoken w/ Kluge once, at 11:00 a.m. At 3:45 p.m. they consulted again, and *Halder passed on the news that Hitler had forbidden any withdrawal whatsoever*; the Fuehrer would not give Kluge the *freedom of action he sought*. Kluge emphasized that his forces were weak, and that he had no reserves. At 6:00 p.m., the two men talked again, but Halder could only echo Hitler's objections to a pullback. The two discussed *Guderian*, who was just arriving at *Wolfsschanze*, having *gone over Kluge's head to appeal directly to Hitler for permission to withdraw*. Kluge told Halder that *Guderian* was not following orders; that he had *"lost his nerve"* and was preparing to retreat.

Guderian met w/ Hitler for nearly five hours that evening, w/ only a couple of interruptions. Keitel, Schmundt, and several other officers from OKW were there. No one from OKH was in attendance, although Halder had briefed Hitler on the situation at Center and on Guderian's intentions just before the latter went in. [Note: See Guderian's memoirs, etc., for details. Halder later described Hitler's and Guderian's discussion as "dramatic"—but Hitler would not budge; he would sanction no withdrawal.] (161-65)

21.12.41 (Sunday): Morning did not bring better news. Soviet attacks on Army Group Center continue to gain ground. Overnight the Soviets had forced their way into a *major supply center* for 4th Army. South of there, a **50-mile-wide gap** was developing across the boundary of 2nd and 2nd Panzer Armies. Pressure against the southern portion of 2nd Army front had *made some local withdrawals necessary*...Army Group North faced strong attacks as well, but was able to defend against them successfully.

To help shore up the front, Halder *took a new step*. He sent five senior officers OKH to headquarters on the front and in the rear areas to raise the commands' self-confidence and restore order. None of the men Halder selected had any special qualifications, but he must have counted on their *common General Staff training* and experience to allow them to spot problems and take corrective action. "*Wem Gott ein Amt gibt, dem gibt er auch den Verstand*," as the saying went in staff circles: „To whom God gives an office he gives also the necessary understanding.”

At 11:00 p.m., Halder tells Greiffenberg over the telephone that *if everyone could just hold for another 14 days the whole thing would be over*, that the enemy could not possibly keep up his frontal attacks much longer...

Supplement to order of 19th, by which Hitler took command of the army: The order (signed by Keitel) stated that Hitler had decided to issue orders directly to the Replacement Army commander and to the chief of the Army Personnel Office on all fundamental matters. A new staff, *Staff OKH*, was also to be created. This staff to be formed from the former office of the Army C-in-C's adjutant, in order to help w/ the army-related tasks that Keitel now had to carry out; to that end, it would be a *liaison element* w/ the Army General Staff. Lt Col **Heinz v. Gyldenfeldt**, Brauchitsch's former adjutant, would be in charge of the Staff OKH. (165-66)

16.12.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: *Mitternacht* zum Fuehrer befohlen: **ObdH, ich, Op.Chef**. Befehl: *Von Absetzen kann keine Rede sein*. Nur an einigen Stellen tiefere Feindeinbruecke. Rueckwaertige Linien aufzubauen, ist *Phantasie*. Die Front krankt nur an einem: Der Feind ist zahlreicher an Soldaten. Er hat nicht mehr Artillerie. *Er ist viel schlechter als wir*. (KTB Halder, Echolot, 489)

16.12.41: Mitte: Durchbruch bei **2. Armee** endlich zum Halten gebracht!...Absicht, mit **PzGr 4** u. **3** weiter auszuweichen auf *Riegelstellung Rusa, Wolokolamsk, Staritza*. Vorbereitung rueckw. Stellung *Kursk-Oka-Gschatsk-Rshew* (Linie nach Schlacht Brjansk – Wjasma!).

Und wieder greift der Fuehrer ein, befiehlt **4. Armee geht keinen Schritt zurueck**. Luecken bei *Limnij* u. west. *Tula* sind zu flicken. *OKH fand keinen Entschluss, das Ausweichen abzustoppen oder ganz grosszuegig in rueckw. Stellung abzusetzen*. Letzteres bei Winterwetter ohne vorher. Stellung u.U. von schweren Folgen. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

16.12.41 [*Hitlers erste Haltebefehl*]: An diesem Tage erlaesst Hitler den ersten „Haltebefehl“, der aber noch beschraenkte Ausweichbewegungen an den Flanken der H.Gr. gestattet. Bock gibt daraufhin Befehl, dass jedes Absetzen von der Division an aufwaerts von seiner Genehmigung abhaenge. In der darauffolgenden Nacht schaerft Hitler telefonisch von Bock nochmals ein, dass es besser sei, die Front unbedingt zu halten, als auf eine unvorbereitete Linie auszuweichen, auch auf die Gefahr hin, dass die Front zerreißen wuerde. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 210)

16.12.41: Innerhalb der *Operationsabteilung* [des Heeres] wurde Hitlers **Halte-Befehl** „mit dem Entschluss **Friedrichs des Grossen bei Leuten** [1757] verglichen. Es geht um Sieg oder Niederlage.“ Das Halten der erreichten Linien, also „*fanatischer Widerstand*“ u. nicht ein

„napoleonischer Rueckzug“ der abgekaempften Truppe sollte die drohende Zertruemmerung der Hr.Gr.Mitte abwenden. Dabei nahm Hitler *bewusst die Opferung von Mensch u. Material in Kauf*. (J. Foerster, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 177)

16.12.41: Und als Hitler Ende Dezember [actually, **16.12.41**] der unter dem Ansturm der Sowjetarmeen weichenden Truppe befahl, die Stellungen um jeden Preis zu halten u. von nun an „um jeden fussbreit Boden mit letztem Einsatz zu kaempfen,“ folgten sie [i.e., **OKW / OKH**] ihm. . . Wenn sie sich immer weiter von Hitler mitziehen liessen, dann freilich auch deshalb, weil sie auch „mitgefangen“ waren, weil sie Befehle akzeptiert u. ausgefuehrt hatten, die jeglichem soldatischen Ethos zuwiderlaufen. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 555)

16.12.41: „Die Lage an der Front ist folgende: ...Bei der Heeresgruppe Mitte ist es notduerftig gelungen, den Einbruch bei *Lichwin* (westl. *Jelez*) abzuriegeln; es soll sogar versucht werden, das Loch offensiv auszubeulen. In die *Einbruchsstelle bei Tula* hat der Feind keine neuen Kräfte nachgefuehrt. *Die 4. Armee haelt ihre Stellungen, Panzer-Gruppen 4 und 3 sowie rechter Fluegel 9. Armee sind aus dem vorspringenden Bogen, in welchem sie bisher waren, im Zurueckgehen auf eine Sehnenstellung.* Nachdem *Klin* bereits aufgegeben worden war, ist heute nacht auch *Kalinin* – leider mit seinen großen Baumwoll-, Leinen- und Getreidevorräten – geräumt worden. Der Russe verfuegt also wieder ueber die *große Bahn Moskau – Bologuje*. Bei der 9. Armee – abgesehen von den russischen Angriffen auf *Kalinin* – Ruhe...

Vom Fuehrer ist morgens eine Weisung eingegangen, nach der die 4. Armee keinen Schritt auszuweichen habe, auch im uebrigen ueberall, wo es irgend gehe, die jetzige Stellung zu halten sei. Damit zeigt der Fuehrer seine grundsatzlich andere Auffassung, als sie OKH, Heeresgruppen und Armeen haben, auf, und ist die Entscheidung bereits vorneweg gefallen, für die der Ob.d.H. die Grundlagen dem Fuehrer auf Grund der Eindruecke seiner heute erst vortragen wollte.

Mittags kommt der Fuehrer aus Berlin zurueck. Er hat sich zuerst den *Feldmarschall v.Leeb* bestellt; in einer anscheinend ziemlich heftigen Auseinandersetzung muß er diesem schlieÙlich zubilligen, die Front hinter den *Wolchow* zurueckzunehmen, etwas, was bisher strikt abgelehnt worden war. Dann traegt *Oberst Schmundt*, der gerade von seinem Frontflug zur H.Gr. Mitte zurueckgekehrt ist, von seinen ernstesten und unerfreulichen Eindruecken vor, die sich mit denen, die wir vorne gehoert haben, decken. Der Fuehrer hat sich dann noch den Transportchef, *General Gercke* bestellt und von ihm eine Besserung der Transportleistung verlangt, eine Forderung, die aber wohl kaum zu erfuellen sein wird, da sie an den staerkeren Verhaeltnissen scheitern muß. Abends ist dann der O.B. der 11. Armee, Gen.Oberst *Busch*, zum Fuehrer bestellt. Sowohl *Feldmarschall v.Leeb* wie *Generaloberst Busch* melden sich auch beim ObdH. Da die so bedeutungsvolle Aussprache zwischen dem Fuehrer und dem ObdH. ueber die Frage, ob ausgewichen werden soll oder nicht, auch am Abend noch garnicht in den Bereich der Moeglichkeit gerueckt ist, wirke ich am spaeten Abend noch auf den *Oberst Schmundt* ein, diesen Vortrag nun wenigstens für morgen zu erreichen. Stattdessen kommt kurz darauf die Aufforderung, der Ob.d.H. moechte noch in der Nacht zum Fuehrer kommen. So faehrt er gegen Mitternacht mit *Generaloberst Halder* und *Oberst Heusinger* hinueber. Zu einer »Aussprache« kommt es jedoch wieder nicht, da der ObdH wiederum nicht ins Gespraech kommt; *vielmehr stellt der Fuehrer novh einmal die energische Forderung auf, daß um jeden Preis die jetzige Stellung zu halten sei.*“ (*Tagebuch Gyldenfeldt*)

17.12.41: „Bei Tula scheint der Russe in das Loch nun doch motorisierte Truppen nachzufuehren. Bei **Pz.Gr. 4** entsteht beim **IX. A.K.** eine neue Krise; beim Zurueckgehen der Divisionen des Korps *bleibt die masse der Artillerie liegen*...

Mittags ist der ObdH – ich in seiner Begleitung – mit *Generaloberst Fromm* beim Fuehrer. Letzterer stellt eine Reihe von Forderungen, vor allem hinsichtlich des *Menschennachschubes*, Aufstellung von neuen [Abkürzung unleserlich: Ku..?] Kolonnen, *Ski-Abteilungen*

(Jagdkommandos) zur Partisanenbekämpfung usw. *Er betont noch einmal, daß es unumgänglich notwendig sei, in die jetzigen Linie zu halten, da jedes Zurückgehen den Verlust der Masse des Gerätes bedeute, ohne daß durch das Ausweichen gewährleistet sei, daß in der neuen Stellung wirklich gehalten werden könne.* –

Vor dem ObdH waren der Transportchef, *General Gercke*, und *Staatssekretär Kleimann* von der Reichsbahn, ferner *Minister Dr. Todt* und der General der Pioniere, *General Jacob*, beim Führer gewesen. Nach uns kommt *Minister Göbbels* [richtig: Goebbels] an die Reihe, *der eine öffentliche Sammlung von Winterbekleidung für das Ostheer ins Leben rufen soll.*

Anschließend an seine Besprechung mit dem Führer meldet der ObdH diesem, daß der *Feldmarschall von Bock* aus Gesundheitsgründen sich gezwungen sähe, um einen Erholungsurlaub zu bitten. Bei dieser Gelegenheit eröffnet der Führer dem ObdH, daß er beabsichtige, unter seiner – des Feldmarschalls von Brauchitsch – Beurlaubung selbst die Führung des Heeres zu übernehmen. So kommt nunmehr eine Lösung, wie sie durchaus nicht beabsichtigt war, und die erst erweisen muß, ob sie zweckmäßig ist. *Es ist nicht zu bestreiten, daß wir zu diesem System durch die Art des Feldmarschalls v.Brauchitsch kommen, der es nicht verstanden hat, ein richtiges Verhältnis zum Führer zu finden und sein Vertrauen zu erringen.* Und einen General, der geeignet wäre, den Posten des ObdH zu übernehmen, glaubt der Führer im Moment wohl nicht zu haben. Sicher ist, daß die nun vorgesehene Beurlaubung des ObdH so oder so gekommen wäre; beschleunigt worden ist sie durch die neulich erfolgte Krankmeldung des Feldmarschalls v.Brauchitsch. – *Die H.Gr. Mitte übernimmt Feldmarschall v.Kluge, die 4. Armee General Kübler.*“ (Tagebuch Gyldenfeldt)

18.12.41: „Die ersten Gerüchte – aber nur Gerüchte! – über die neuen Stellenbesetzungen schwirren herum: *General v.Manstein* soll Chef des Wehrnachtsgeneralstabes, *General Jodl* – als *Nachfolger des Generaloberst Halder* – *Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres* werden. Es soll dann eine Stelle des Generalinspektors des Heeres geschaffen werden, der im Auftrag des Führers gewisse Vollmachten gegenüber dem Heer bekommt; hierfür wird der *Feldmarschall Keitel* genannt. Auch der *Chef des H.P.A., General Keitel*, soll abgelöst werden. Auch gegen den Generalquartiermeister, *General Wagner*, wird geschossen. Also alles in allem eine erhebliche Beunruhigung.

An der Front zeichnet sich bei der 4. Armee bei *Serpuchow* eine neue Krise ab. Dem Gegner gelingt es hier, durch schwere Angriffe an verschiedenen Stellen einzubrechen. (Tagebuch Gyldenfeldt)

18.12.41 [Hitlers zweite Haltebefehl]: Noch bevor die Frage des Fues u. Wider¹³⁷ erörtert werden kann, erlaesst Hitler am **18 Dez 41** den zweiten, viel schaefer formulierten Haltebefehl.“ Nun ist auch ein begrenztes Absetzen untersagt. Der Befehl fordert, dass die Truppe ohne Ruecksicht auf durchgebrochenen Feind in Flanke u. Ruecken zum Widerstand in ihren Stellungen gezwungen werden muesse. . . Dies hiess, dass ab nun jede Ausweichbewegung von Hitlers Genehmigung abhing. Ausserdem bestimmte der Befehl die fuenf [5] Divisionen, mit denen in den naechsten Wochen die H.Gr. verstaerkt werden sollte, sowie die Zufuehrung von Fliegerkrafte, vor allem von sechs [6] Luftransportgruppen an das **8. Fliegerkorps**. Die Transportgruppen sollten fuers erste einzelne Marschbataillone in Frontnaehe befoerdern, um vor allem den Mangel an Infanteristen zu verringern. . .

Wenn auch einige Befehlshaber wie Guderian u. Hoepner gute Gruende gegen das Halten an Ort u. Stelle vorbrachten, da man die bisherige aktive u. bewegliche Fuehrung aufgab, so *weckte das Eingreifen Hitlers, wie man heute weiss, bei vielen Soldaten u. Offizieren ungeahnte psychische Reserven*. General Reinhardt kommentierte: „Endlich ein klarer Befehl des Fuehrers.“ Hitlers

¹³⁷ **Note:** See Magenheimer entry above for **16.12.41** = Hitler’s erste Haltebefehl.

Autoritaet u. Suggestivkraft waren noch so stark, dass sie den Schock von Fuehrung u. Truppe zu ueberwinden halfen. Der „Haltebefehl“ entsprang *nicht etwa einem Starrsinn Hitlers*, sondern entsprach der Ausnahmesituation, in der sich nicht nur die H.Gr.Mitte, sondern das gesamte Ostheer befand. Wie im nachhinein von vielen Seiten eingeraeumt wurde, bot Hitlers Befehl damals den einzigsten Weg, einer wahrhaft Napoleonischen Katastrophe entgegenzuwirken. . .

Der „Haltebefehl“ hatte keineswegs, was *bei seiner Beurteilung **meist uebersehen wird***, absolute Gueltigkeit. Wie die Ereignisse in den naechsten Wochen vor Augen fuehrten, war Hitler durchaus bereit, raeumlich begrenzte Frontbegradigungen zu gestatten, etwa im Bereich der **4. Armee**, die ihr Zentrum u. ihren rechten Fluegel mit Genehmigung Hitlers zurueckzog, um der Bedrohung ihrer tiefen Flanke entgegenzuwirken. An anderen Abschnitten wieder beharrte er auf der unbedingten Verteidigung der Stellungen, auch wenn dadurch die Gefahr, durchbrochen oder umfasst zu werden, stieg.

Zugleich mit der Verlautbarung des „Haltebefehls“ wurde auch die bisher uebliche, locker gehandhabte „Auftragstaktik“ eingeschaenkt, um zu einer Straffung des Fuehrungsvorganges zu kommen. Dies entsprang der Auffassung, wonach die hoeheren Kommandos den unterstellten Staeben bisher zu viel Freiraum bei der Ausfuehrung der Befehle gelassen u. somit die Auftrags-erfuellung gefaehrdet haetten. Jetzt gelte es, den Spielraum bei der Durchfuehrung der Befehle enger zu ziehen. Diese Neuerung war nicht zuletzt begruendet im nicht unberechtigten Misstrauen Hitlers in die Heeresleitung, die bisher am „langen Zuegel“ gefuehrt, ihre Verantwortung nicht energisch genug wahrgenommen u. in der Krise zu spaet eingegriffen haette. . . (H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 210-13)

19.12.41: Hitler relieves GFM v. Brauchitsch as C-in-C of the army upon the latter's request. "I'm going home," Brauchitsch told Keitel after meeting w/ the Fuehrer. "He has relieved me; I can't do any more." The army's reaction to this spectacular event was "illuminating." In retrospect many officers would see this latest *coup* as the final death knell for the army's independence, but *at the time no one expressed any such misgivings*. On the contrary, this appeared to be *the perfect solution to the army's problems*. Even Halder did his best to accommodate himself to the new situation, in hopes that he could work w/ Hitler more successfully than Brauchitsch had. And, in truth, there was some cause for the *army's initial burst of enthusiasm*. With Hitler in command, for example, the civilian RR authorities within the Reich suddenly became more responsive to the army's needs. (Megargee, 138-39)¹³⁸

19.12.41: Mittags war Halder zu Hitler befohlen worden, der ihm unter knapper Darlegung, wie er sich die kuenftige Zusammenarbeit dachte, nach der Erinnerung des Chef des Generalstabes eroeffnet haben soll: „*Das bisschen Operationsfuehrung kann jeder machen. Die Aufgabe des Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres ist es, das Heer nationalsozialistisch zu erziehen.*“ Da er keinen General des Heeres wisse, der diese Aufgabe in seinem Sinne erfullen koenne, habe er sich entschlossen, den Oberbefehl ueber das Heer selbst zu uebernehmen. Nachmittags sprach Brauchitsch noch einmal mit Halder, der danach nur *delphische Worte* notierte, „kein wesentlich neuer Gesichtspunkt.“ Am Abend gab Halder den Offizieren des Generalstabes des Heeres Hitlers Entschluss bekannt. (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 167; also, *Heusinger, Befehl im Widerstreit*, 151; *Warlimont, Hauptquartier*, 225)

¹³⁸ **Note:** There is some question as to whether Hitler forced Brauchitsch to resign, but the latter, in his own statement at Nuremberg, said that he asked to be relieved on 7 Dec 41. (276, f.n. 90) For more on what this change meant to the army see, *Megargee*, 139-40.

19.12.41: Uebernahm *Hitler* den Oberbefehl ueber das Heer selbst. So sehr diese Massnahme auch nach dem Krieg *von interessierter Seite* kritisiert wurde, nicht wenigen Generalen u. Offizieren in verantwortungsvollen Positionen schien dies 1941/42 *eine begruessenswerte „klare Loesung“*, die Stellung eines Oberbefehlshabers des Heeres entbehrlich zu sein. Es waren eben nicht nur die Herren des OKW, namentlich *Keitel* u. *Jodl*, die das „*Fuehrerprinzip*“ verinnerlicht hatten. Auch andere Offiziere waren wie *Halder* stolz darauf, dass der Dienstweg abgekuerzt u. sie einen direkten Zugang zu *Hitler* hatten, oder glaubten wie *Stauffenberg*, der Generalstab des Heeres koenne „*die ganze Kraft der Nation*“ jetzt besser fuer den „*Entscheidungskampf des Heeres*“ einspannen. „Seit Fuehrer unmittelbar befiehlt, wird viel geschaffen [...] *Halder* traegt vor u. Fuehrer befiehlt alle Dinge zugleich als Staatsoberhaupt (Ersatzlage, Wirtschaft etc.). Stellung u. Einfluss des Heeres nun staerker als je – wenn *Halder* das zu nutzen versteht.“ (*Tagebuch Thilo*, quoted in: (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 178)¹³⁹)

19.12.41: From the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union, the German Army C-in-C's operational responsibilities had been confined to the Eastern Front, not including Finland. All other fronts became OKW theaters, in that they were controlled by Hitler thru Jodl and the Wehrmachtsfuehrungstab. This direct control by Hitler applied, however, only to the German Army in the OKW theaters, since all formations and units of the Luftwaffe and the Navy, whether in the East or the West, came directly under their own C-in-Cs. The OKH therefore, unlike the OKL and OKM, had already suffered a serious diminishing of its operational authority. When Hitler stated his intention of taking over the post of C-in-C of the German Army [**Dec 41**], he sought direct operational, even tactical, control over the cdrs of the army groups in the East. In v. Brauchitsch's many other important duties Hitler had no interest, and these he transferred to **Keitel**, head of OKW. Thereafter, Halder and succeeding Chiefs of the General Staff had little or no responsibility for staff branches outside the General Staff, and the real control over armament, equipment, administration and the Replacement Army passed to **Keitel**. The Chief of the General Staff was in this way separated from other branches of the OKH, while Keitel, in addition to being Chief of OKW, acted for Hitler on general affairs pertaining to the German Army. Halder became merely Hitler's executive for the Eastern Front and he and the later Chiefs of the General Staff were at time to suffer interference from both **Keitel** and **Jodl** even on operational matters in Russia. This meddling was condoned by Hitler, who used **Keitel** and **Jodl** to counter unwelcome advice proffered to him by the Chief of the General Staff. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 212)

19.12.41: An diesem Tag loeste Hitler Brauchitsch ab u. uebernahm selbst den Oberbefehl ueber das Heer. Halder, der jetzt direkt dem „Fuehrer“ unterstellt war, fuegte sich rasch, weil er hoffte, nun als eine Art von „Reichsgeneralstabschef“ mit *Hitler* den Krieg besser in seinem Sinne fuehren u. die Rolle des Heeres verstaerken zu koennen. (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 115)

19.12.41: Nach dem Ruecktritt des ObdH, GFM von Brauchitsch, Ende 1941 u. der Uebernahme des Oberbefehls ueber das Heer durch *Hitler* zusaetzlich zum Oberbefehl ueber die gesamte Wehrmacht wurden die Verhaeltnisse noch komplizierter. Soweit es das Heer betraf, unterstanden dem Fuehrer—ohne eine koordinierende Zwischenebene—der Chef des Generalstabes, der Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres u. die Chefs des Heeres-Personalamtes u. des Heeres-Waffenamtes. *Auch die Oberbefehlshaber der Heeresgruppen waren Hitler in seiner Eigenschaft als ObdH unmittelbar nachgeordnet...*(*de Maisiere*, 74)

¹³⁹ See also, Schreiben *Halder* vom 25.12.41 und 6.1.42, zitiert nach *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Bd. 4, S. 614 und 618; *Hoffmann, Stauffenberg und der 20. Juli*, S. 237, Brief vom 11.1.42.

19.12.1941: „(Freitag) Ich fahre vormittags ins F.H.Quartier, wo ich mit Schmudt über die Lage spreche; *der Führer will nun bereits mit dem heutigen Tage den Oberbefehl über das Heer übernehmen.* Der Chef GenStab soll dem Führer unmittelbar unterstehen, die übrigen Befugnisse des ObdH als Oberster Kommando- und Verwaltungsbehörde des Kriegsheeres soll im Auftrage des Führers der *Feldmarschall Keitel* – unter Beibehalt seiner Stellung als Chef OKW – ausüben. Die Adjutantur soll in ihrer bisherigen Form bestehen bleiben; sie soll als Stab – mit mir als Chef des Stabes – dem Feldmarschall Keitel für die obengenannte Tätigkeit zur Verfügung stehen. Mittags ist *Generaloberst Halder* zum Führer bestellt. Da *General v.Manstein* wegen des z.Zt. auf *Sewastopol* laufenden Angriffes nicht abkömmlich ist, die Einsetzung des General Jodl – der ja durch General v.Manstein in gewisser Form ersetzt werden soll – als Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres noch nicht möglich ist, *soll Generaloberst Halder sein Amt zunächst weiterführen.*

Um 15,30 Uhr ist der ObdH, Generalfeldmarschall *v.Brauchitsch*, zum Führer bestellt, der ihm eröffnet, daß er mit dem heutigen Tage die Führung des Heeres selbst übernehme. Das Heer hat in diesem Moment seinen alten Oberbefehlshaber verloren!

Am Spätnachmittag kommt auch der entsprechende Erlaß. Der Wechsel wird in einem Aufruf an das Heer bekanntgegeben, in dem jedoch die Krankheit des Feldmarschalls nicht erwähnt wird. Dem ObdH wird in einem Brief des Führers seine Beurlaubung bis zur Wiederherstellung seiner Gesundheit mitgeteilt. Abends geht noch ein langer Erlaß des Führers, den Wechsel in der Kommandoführung betreffend, an das Heer heraus, ebenso ein Abschiedserlaß des Feldmarschalls von Brauchitsch, in dem er *als Grund für sein Fortgehen seine Herzkrankheit angibt...*

An der Front *spannt die Lage stark bei der 4. Armee*, wo der Gegner wütend angreift. Durch den Wechsel in der Befehlsführung ist meine Tätigkeit als 1. Generalstabsoffizier beim ObdH mit dem heutigen Tage beendet...“ (*Tagebuch Gyldenfeldt*)

19.12.41: Die *Winterkrise* im Osten um die Jahreswende 1941/42 führte zugleich zu einer tiefgreifenden **Vertrauenskrise** zwischen Hitler u. den *führenden Generälen des Heeres*; da Hitler die *Vermessenheit seiner Feldzugsplanung* u. die verhängnisvollen Fehleinschätzungen der vorangegangenen Monate nicht einzugestehen vermochte, wurden nun **Suendenboecken fuer das Scheitern gesucht**—Offiziere, die es wagten, ihrem „*Fuehrer*“ zu widersprechen oder seinen Befehlen zuwiderzuhandeln, wurden abgesetzt. Am **19.12.41** uebernahm Hitler persoendlich den Oberbefehl ueber das Herr; der vormalige Oberbefehlshaber GFM v. *Brauchitsch* wurde aus „*gesundheitlichen Gruenden*“ verabschiedet; Hitler hatte ihn zuvor in einer seiner beruechtigten *Tiraden* – woertlich – als „*eitlen, feigen Wicht*“ [*creature, urchin, wretch*] bezeichnet. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 9/1, Prien, 3*)

20.12.41: Through Schmudt, Guderian has a *direct line* to Hitler. He makes use of it to arrange a special meeting w/ the Fuehrer at the Wolf's Lair. The audience lasts for five (5) hours, allowing Guderian to make his case for a withdrawal. All Hitler's military entourage is present. Guderian informs him of the state of the **2. Pz.Army** and **2. Army**, and of his intention of retreating. Hitler expressly forbade this. But Guderian is not telling the whole story. The retreat, for which he had presumed to receive authorization from Brauchitsch six (6) days earlier, was already under way. Hitler is unremitting. He says the troops should dig in where they stood and hold every square yard. Guderian returns to the front empty handed. Within days, *Kluge* will request the tank cdr's removal. (For colorful accounts of this meeting see, *Kershaw, Hitler, 454; Guderian, Panzer Leader, 265-70*)

20.12.41: Fuehrererlass: Fuehrer had Oberbefehl ueber Herr selbst uebernommen. Brauchitsch wegen seines Herzleidens auf eigene Bitte seiner Aemter enthoben. Chef etc. lassen Kopf haengen, setzen *Leidensmiene* auf. Meines Erachtens *klare Loesung, die sehr zu begrussen ist,*

vorausgesetzt, dass sich Halder als GenStChef in seinen Ansichten nicht niederknueppeln laesst, was abzuwarten ist. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

20.12.41: Wie sich Hitler die weitere Kampffuehrung im einzelnen vorstellte, kam am **20 Dez 41** im Zuge einer Lagebesprechung mit Halder zur Sprache. Er verlangte, alles zu tun, um Zeit fuer das Heranfuehren der Reserven, der Rueckfuehrung des wertvollen, aber beschaedigten Materials, fuer den stuetzpunktartigen Ausbau einer rueckwaertigen Stellung u. die Verbesserung des Nachschubs zu gewinnen. Gruendsaetzlich forderte er: „Der fanatische Wille zur Verteidigung des Bodens, auf dem die Truppe steht, muss mit allen, auch den schaarfsten Mitteln der Truppe eingempft werden. . .“

Des weiteren verlangte er von der Truppe, den Gefangenen u. Einheimischen ihre Winterbekleidung wegzunehmen sowie die im Zuge des Absetzens aufzugebenden Haeuser u. Gehoefte niederzubrennen. Selbst wenn man die Notlage der Truppe beruecksichtigt, handelte es sich um eine menschenverachtende Forderung, u. die *Truppe nahm an vielen Stellen davon Abstand*, u.a. auch deshalb, weil die Inbrandsetzung von Gehoeften u. Doerfern dem Gegner die taktischen Absichten der Deutschen verraten haette. *Von einer militaerischen Notwendigkeit des Abbrennens konnte keine Rede sein*, da der Gegner auf die betroffenen Ortschaften zumeist nicht angewiesen war. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 211*)

20.12.1941: „(Sonnabend) [ausgelassen: *Abschied des ObdH* von seinem Stab. Zur neuen Lage] *Diese Entwicklung waere vom Fuehrer so oder so herbeigefuehrt worden, und zweitens war die Tuetigkeit des ObdH in der letzten Zeit eben keine Fuehrung des Heeres mehr.* Diese war bereits nach und nach in die Haende des Fuehrers uebergegangen. Und schlieBlich ist zu betonen, daB die fehlende Spannkraft [energy; vigor] des Feldmarschalls ein weiteres Verbleiben eigentlich ausgeschlossen machte...

An der Front entwickelt sich bei 4. Armee die Lage in dem *Loch bei Tula* kritisch; der Feind vermag hier tief einzudringen und *kommt mit Kavallerie bis Kaluga*. Starke Angriffe richten sich weiterhin gegen den Suedfluegel der 2. Armee sowie gegen fast die ganze Front der 4. Armee. (*Tagebuch Gyldenfeldt*)

21.12.41: Gestern waren *Kluge u. Guderian beim Fuehrer*. **Jodl** sagte ueber diese Besprechung, *in seinem ganzen militaerischen Leben habe er nicht solche Dramatik erlebt*. Es ging darum, dass OB Mitte u. OB 2. PzArmee mitteilten, unter keinen Umstaenden mehr halten zu koennen. Der Fuehrer befiehlt zu halten u. ging von seiner Ueberzeugung aus, der Russe fuehre seine derzeitigen Angriffe *mit letzten Kraeften...* u. muesse sich verbluten. Nehme man die 4. Armee zurueck, werde sie vernichtet, daraus ein „*napoleonischer Rueckzug*.“ Er naehme in Kauf, starke Teile der Armee zu opfern, aber damit den russ. Angriff aufzuhalten. Sein *sechster Sinn* sage ihm die Richtigkeit dieser Gedanken entgegen allen Ueberlegungen...

Die Spannung hier ist kaum mehr ertraeglich. Auch ich habe solche Spannungszeiten u. ernsten Sorgen in meinem Leben noch nicht erlebt. – *Fueherentschluss wurde mit dem Entschluss Friedrichs d Gr bei Leuthen verglichen*. Er geht um Sieg oder Niederlage!! (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

23.12.41: Nach der Morgenlage am 23.Dez. sprach Hitler [*Heusinger*] die *Befoederung zum Generalmajor* aus...Es war keine kuenstlich aufgesetzte *Demut*, wenn Heusinger das Ereignis eher sorgenvoll u. nachdenklich kommentierte. Die Nachricht von seiner Befoederung hatte sich natuerlich einem Lauffeuer aehnlich verbreitet. Auch der **Major Artur Weber**, Generalstabsoffizier beim *Chef des Transportwesens* im OKH...gratulierte seinem *einstigen Faehnrichsvater* aus Kasseler Tagen. Heusinger dankte Weber in alter Freundlichkeit, um dann sogleich hinzuzufuegen: „Und wie geht es den Kameraden an der Front? Die sitzen im russ. Winter, man

kann ihnen kaum helfen, u. jetzt kommen alle u. gratulieren mir. Ach – *es ist zum Kotzen.*“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 170)

24.12.41[?]: Gestern Abend in meinem Zimmer. 1 besinnl. Stunde als „Weihnachtswunsch.“ Man ist in keiner Stimmung. Die Last des Alltages u. der Ernst der Lage bedruecken all zu sehr. Am 28.12 fahre ich in Urlaub...Am 28.12 sind 190 Tage Krieg – d.h. diese Zeit ohne jede Ausspannung u. jede 2. Nacht durchgearbeitet. Man wird laengere Zeit brauchen, um sich zu entspannen. – *Das Essen ist sehr schlecht, knapp u. eintoenig geworden* (4x mittags – 4x abends nur Suppe). (Tagebuch Thilo)

24.12.41[?]: Mitte – Suedfluegel e. Armee u. 2. PzArmee – Lage weiterhin sehr ernst. **45., 134.,** u. gestern **167.** ID zerschlagen. Fast alle Div hoechstens noch 50% Kampfkraft. Doch steht zu hoffen, dass gehalten werden kann. Suedl. 4. Armee bekam gestern *Erlaubnis, hinter Oka-Hindernis auszuweichen.*

Sonst: In der Heimat Aufstellung 2 neuer Wellen, hiervon 1 Welle aus U.K...Hr.Gr.Mitte wird aus Westen u. Heimat erheblich verstaerk, aber das dauert lange (*Transportlage ist derzeit Kriterium aller Dinge*).

Seit Fuehrer unmittelbar befiehlt, wird viel geschaffen. Dienstweg abgekuerzt. Halder traegt vor u. Fuehrer befiehlt alle Dinge...Stellung u. Einfluss des Heeres nun staerker als je, -- wenn Halder das zu nutzen versteht. (Tagebuch Thilo)

24.12.41: 1700 *Weihnachtsfeier im HQ u. OKH.* – Wald frisch verschneit, 1 grosser Baum mit Lichtern geziert. Soldatenchor mit Musikkapelle sang Weihnachtslieder. Dazwischen Radiouebertragung von Kirchenglocken. *Dann sprach Halder, kurz, soldatisch, sehr gut, unchristlich* (*Abhaltung v. Weihnachtsfeiern durch Geistliche von OKW verboten!*). Halder sprach: Mag man im Weihnachtsfest die Wiedererstehung des Glaubens an Heilandsgeburt [birth of the savior] – wozu ich mich bekenne – mag man die Wintersonnenwende [Winter Solstice] im Kampf u. Sieg des Lichts ueber Dunkelheit sehen...Noch mehr weilen die Gedanken bei den Kameraden der Front, die auch heute kaempfen muessen...*Wir erleben das erste wahre Kreigsweihnachten.* Dann gilt Gedenken u. Liebe dem Fuehrer, der die Verantwortung des Krieges traegt u. uns zum Sieg fuehrt. (Tagebuch Thilo)

26.12.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Ganz beherrscht vom Ernst der Lage schrieb er seiner Frau von einem *acht Tagen andauerndem, bisher nicht erlebten Hochbetrieb.* Halder u. er muessten *taeglich fuer etwa drei Stunden „zum Fuehrer zum Vortrag,*“ was das ganze Tagesprogramm umwerfe. (Meyer, Heusinger, 170)

28.12.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Ausdruecklich betonte er das „*recht gute*“ **Einvernehmen Halders u. Hitlers.**¹⁴⁰ (Meyer, Heusinger, 171)

29.12.41-2.1.42: Entries in *Halder's journal* reflect strain on German army in east and on high command. Entries for these days begin thus: **29.12.41:** “*Ein sehr schwerer Tag!*“ **30.12.41:** “*Wieder ein schwerer Tag!*“ **31.12.41:** “*Wieder ein schwerer Tag!*” **2.1.42:** “*Ein Tag wilder Kaempfe.*“ (Halder KTB)

30.12.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: “Krisis bei **15. ID.** *Dramatische Aussprache zwischen Fuehrer u. von Kluege am Fernsprecher.* Das Zurueckverlegen der Front des Nordteils der 4. Armee wird

¹⁴⁰ **Note:** Reference here is to fact that Halder, rather than trying to circumvent Hitler's strategic plans as he had during summer 1941, was working closely w/ *Fuehrer* to enforce his *Haltebefehl* – his policy of no withdrawal.

vom Fuehrer abgelehnt. Sehr schwere Krisis bei **9. Armee**, wo anscheinend die *Fuehrung* voruebergehend *die Nerven verloren hat*. Mittags aufgeregter Anruf v. Kluges, 9. Armee wolle bis hinter *Rshew* zurueck ausweichen. Schliesslich scheint sich aber der OB Hr.G. doch durchgesetzt zu haben...“ (*Halder KTB, Echolot, 675-76*)

1942: The strategic problem facing the Reich was quite a bit different from that of the previous year. Germany now faced a *grand alliance of unprecedented power*...She thus faced serious strategic obstacles in early 1942. It was outnumbered on land and sea and in the air. It was surrounded by enemies. Its principal field army had just suffered a horrible, almost annihilating blow in the fighting before Moscow and during the winter. Its own casualty list in the east had just topped *one million men*. Nevertheless, what is perhaps most noticable about *German decision making* in the spring is how little dissent there was to Hitler's decision to *launch another great offensive* in the Soviet Union. Viewed through the long-term lens of German military history, the *Wehrmacht's* seemingly hopeless situation left it only one option: *attack*. And, indeed, the spring of 1942 once again brought great victories for German arms: In **May 42**, at **Kerch** and **Kharkov**; in *North Africa* at **Gazala**. Then, in **Jun 42**, the *Wehrmacht* „placed an exclamation point“ on this successful season w/ the reduction of the great *fortress of Sevastopol*. And late Jun into **Jul 42**, w/ unleashing of Operation „*Blau*,“ saw Germans again advancing deeper into Russia – this time toward *Stalingrad* and the *Caucasus*. (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht, 51-52, 303*)¹⁴¹

1.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Das neue Jahr begann er in *gedrueckter Stimmung*. Bis kurz vor Mitternacht am 31.Dez. hatte er „zu tun.“ Dann habe er noch zwei Stunden mit den Offizieren der *Operationsabteilung* zusammengesessen: „*Es war auffallend still in dem Kreise u. jeder hing seinen Gedanken nach*.“ Fuer ihn reduzierte sich die bisher schwerste Krise vor allem auf das *Transportproblem*...Die Situation koenne nur „mit aeusserster Anstrengung“ gemeistert werden. Man *duerfe nicht zurueckgehen*, „weil dadurch die Dinge nur noch schlimmer werden.“ Die „*Auspizien fuer 1942*,“ betrachtete er als „nicht gerade guenstig,“ dieser russ. Feldzug habe zu viel gekostet. Daher werde das Jahr 1942 „*im grossen unter dem Zeichen der Defensive stehen*“ u. koenne „auch noch nicht die Entscheidung bringen,“ darueber muesse man sich klar sein. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 171*)

3.1.42: Eine *umfassende Lagebeurteilung* erreichte **Heusinger** auch von seinem einstigen *Taktiklehrer* waehrend der *Fuehrergehilfenausbildung*, **Hans-Georg Reinhardt**, inzwischen Generaloberst u. Oberbefehlshaber der **3. Pz.Armee**. Bis Anfang Dezember, schrieb er Heusinger am 3. Januar, sei er „*gehetzt u. ueberspannt*“ worden, „trotz mehrfacher recht scharfer Auseinandersetzungen“ mit **Bock**, „wohl aus der falschen Feindbeurteilung heraus, der Feind sei am Ende seiner Kraft.“ „Besonders schwer“ habe ihn dann am 6.Dez. ein feindl. Gegenangriff getroffen, bis die Bildung einer neuen standfesten Front einigermassen gelungen sei: „Wir haben alles durchgekostet, *beispielloses Heldentum*, unerhoerte Haerte zur Ueberwindung unvorstellbarer Winterkaelte, Abwehrkampf selbst unserer Schreiber *vor den Toren unseres Gefechtsstandes* u. *erschuetternde Bilder des Teiles der Soldaten, die es immer gibt, die Kopf u. Haltung verloren*.“ „Als teuerstes Gut“ habe aber seine „ausgezeichnete Truppe, so schwach wie die wahren Kaempfer an Zahl noch sind, auch aus diesen Rueckzugkaempfen mitgebracht, dass sie sich *ungeschlagen u. wie immer auch heute noch dem Feind ueberlegen fuehlt*“ – Eindruck von seinen staendigen Besuchen „vorn bei meinen Truppen.“ Die Winterkaelte, nicht Feindeinwirkung, habe dazu gezwungen, *Fahrzeuge u. Zugmaschinen auf dem Rueckzug zu zerst hoeren*. In einigermassen gesicherter Stellung nun habe sich seine Armee dann in „sehr unerfreulichen Auseinandersetz-

¹⁴¹ **Note:** I think *Halder* may have been one who demurred. Did he not want to stay on the defensive in 1942, rebuild the *Ostheer*, and only then go back on the offensive?

ungen“ bis aufs letzte Hemd ausziehen lassen [i.e., let itself be „fleeced“] zur Hilfe fuer die linken u. rechten Nachbarn, **V., XXVIII, u. VI. AK**, „selbst von drei bis fuenf Panzer, von einzelnen Kompanien sollte das Glueck der Nachbarn abhaengen.“ ... *Reinhardt* plaedierte energisch dafuer, „den Befehl zum Zurueckgehen u. Aufbauen einer neuen verkuerzten Front“ sofort zu geben, „der Kilometer im weiten Russland spielt ja keine Rolle.“ Das „Halten um jeden Preis, das Inkaufnehmen von Einbruechen, recht schwierigen Frontverlaufen“ erschien ihm nur gerechtfertigt, wenn sich auch personelle u. materielle *Schwaechezustaende beim Feind* abzeichneten – aber das zu beurteilen sei er nicht in der Lage. Er sei aber „sehr neugierig, wann u. was fuer eine Loesung gewaehlt wird, das Hin u. Her ist das Schlimmste.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 172*)

5.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Die Krise, „wie sie schaefer nicht gedacht werden kann,“ setzte sich fort. Er spricht von „harten Tagen,“ u. „nervenbeanspruchenden Stunden“ gerade in den Besprechungen bei Hitler...Der Fuehrer sei „von einem unbeugsamen Willen zum Durchhalten beseelt“ u. halte Halder u. ihm „taeglich lange Reden ueber seine Plaene, als ob er vor einer grossen Versammlung spraeche.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 171*)

8.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Die Spannung verschaerfe sich von Tag zu Tag, „u. wir sind noch lange nicht ueber den Berg.“ Obendrein wuerden die Methoden „immer rigoroser,“ mit denen gefuehrt werde. Hohe Offiziere, „die nicht das erfuellen, was man von ihnen erwartet,“ wuerden „abgesaegt, teils mit, teils ohne Pension,“ eine *Anspielung* auf die Entlassung des Generalobersten *Hoepner* am **8.1.42**. Heusinger fuerchtete, solche Methoden koennten „zu den schwersten Folgen fuehren,“ setze man sie „uber die gegenwaertige Krise“ fort. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 171*)

11.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Er fuehlte sich „hineingeworfen in einen Strom, gegen den man nicht anschwimmen kann, in dem man vielmehr mitgerissen wird u. froh sein kann, wenn man nicht untergetaucht wird.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 171*)

11.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Es fiel Halder gewiss nicht leicht, die durch die Praxis der neuen Spitzengliederung u. die schwierige Lage an der Front gleichermassen *erzwungene Uebereinstimmung mit Hitlers Ansichten zur Stabilisierung der Front* zu akzeptieren. Er hatte sich nun Hitler als unmittelbarem Vorgesetzten *bedingungslos unterzuordnen*, wo er doch der Rolle eines verantwortlichen Feldherrn selbst durchaus nicht abgeneigt war. Deswegen erschienen in diesen Wochen *seine Nerven* „recht beansprucht,“ registrierte Heusinger aufmerksam. Halder verliere „bisweilen die Kontenance“ u. koenne dann recht scharf werden. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 173*)

19.1.42: (Tgb *M. Feuersenger*): „Im Dienst lese ich jetzt die Aufzeichnungen *Armand Caulaincourts* ueber seine Gespraechе mit Napoleon...Er begleitete Napoleon 1812 auf dem Rueckzug. Hochinteressant! *Man reisst sich hier um das Buch...*Scheidt sagte mir, dass auch im FHQu dieses Buch sehr gefragt ist u. darueber gesprochen wird. Natuerlich ist die Lage nicht vergleichbar. Unser Chef [Obst Scherff] verbreitet nach wie vor Optimismus. Er glaubt eben nicht nur an das Genie des Fuehrers, sondern auch an dessen Genius!“ (*Im Vorzimmer der Macht, M. Feuersenger, 104*)

27.1.41: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Einige Wochen spaeter griff er dies mit der Bemerkung auf, Hitler setze *einige Hoffnungen auf die Auswirkung der japanischen Erfolge*. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 166*)

30.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Heusinger sah sie [i.e., die japanischen Erfolge] mit eher „geteilte Gefuehlen.“ Es sei eigentlich eine *Schande fuer die weisse Rasse*, wie sie sich dort im

fernen Osten verdraengt sieht...u. schloss eine eigenwillige Interpretation des bekannten **Treitschke-Wortes**, dass *Maenner die Geschichte machten*, an. Es sei in seinen Augen jetzt „schlagend bewiesen:“ „Man nehme Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt u. Mussolini weg u. ich glaube kaum, dass die Voelker von sich aus noch lange diesen Krieg machen wuerden. (Meyer, Heusinger, 166)

2.2.42: [Heusinger an seine Frau] ...nach „wieder recht heissen Tagen“ sah Heusinger **die Fronten als stabilisiert** an u. meinte sogar, die eigentliche Angriffskraft des Gegners beginne wesentlich schwaecher zu werden...(Meyer, Heusinger, 175)

8.2.42: [Heusinger an seine Frau] Am 8.Feb. war Heusinger zuversichtlich, dass **die schwerste Krise ueberwunden sei**, trotz Angriffen auf der ganzen Front unter „Hekatomben von Opfern.“ Sorgen bereiteten ihm die *eigenen stark abgesunkenen Gefechtsstaerken*, „viele Bataillone mussten bereits aufgeloeset werden,“ die Kompanien haetten meistens nur noch **Staerken unter 50 Mann**. Jedoch: „die Bahnleistung ist das Kriterium,“ die „*ernsteste Sorge*,“ u. hier wirke sich der russ. Winter besonders schlimm aus, weil die *Lokomotiven* „waehtend der Fahrt einfrieren.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 175)

24.2.42: [Heusinger an seine Frau] „Die Vortraege beim Fuehrer“ in letzter Zeit „immer laenger“ gedauert haetten, „so dass fuer die praktische Arbeit immer weniger Zeit uebrig blieb.“ Dabei gehe es doch jetzt im grossen darum, „den nuechternen Boden der Tatsachen wieder (zu) gewinnen u. an oberster Stelle *Illusionen zu vertreiben*, die man sich dort noch immer macht u. die in grossen Angriffsoperationen gipfeln.“ Heusinger fasste damit die Auseinandersetzungen ueber die *Operationsziele des Jahres 1942* zusammen, ein nicht leichter Weg, meinte er, der „*sehr psychologisch beschriften*“ werden muesse, wobei Halder ihm „zu vorsichtig“ erschien, der „daher nicht recht weiter“ komme. (Meyer, Heusinger, 177)

3.3.42: [Heusinger an seine Frau] Anfang Maerz begannen sich immerhin die Zustaende an der Front trotz *fortgesetzter sowjet. Angriffe* „bald hier, bald da“ zum Besseren zu wenden, „langsam milderes Wetter mit beginnendem Schlamm,“ langsam guenstigere *Bahnlage* „u. damit **Ueberwindung der Krise der letzten drei Monate.**“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 177)

14.3.42: [Heusinger an seine Frau] Heusinger klagte dass „ja taeglich **mindestens drei Stunden mit den Vortraegen beim Fuehrer**“ vergingen, „die nicht aufzuholen sind.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 177)

18.3.42: [Heusinger an seine Frau] „Tage *rechter Spannung*,“ registrierte er am 18. Maerz. Denn vor der *Schlammperiode* muessten „unbedingt noch einige *Berichtigungen der Front*“ vorgenommen werden, „mehr oder weniger grosse Angriffe,“ zu denen er jedoch „*kein rechtes Vertrauen*“ hatte. Die verfuegbaren Kraefte sah er als „zu schwach u. muede“ an. Er hatte „eine andere Loesung durch *Zuruecknahme bestimmter Frontteile* vorgeschlagen.“ Aber der Fuehrer sei nicht zu bekehren gewesen u. glaube an den Erfolg. Das habe zu nicht geringen *Spannungen* gefuehrt...**Halder** ist eben *sehr abgekaempft* u. fuehlt sich mit der *Rueckendeckung des Fuehrers sehr maechtig*,“ werde „in seinen Ausdruecken *immer bayrischer u. derber* [coarser] u. nimmt ungewollt mehr u. mehr den Ton an, den er an oberster Stelle immer hoert. Gehe es so weiter, fuerchtet Heusinger, „wird er bald den *Vorrat an Vertrauen*, den er hat, verbraucht haben.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 177)

20.-22.3.42: [Heusinger an seine Frau] Im zweiten Maerzdrittel beobachtete Heusinger aufmerksam *eine allgemeine Abgespanntheit* „auch an oberster Stelle.“ (**20.3.42**) Zwei Tage spaeter „bei den hohen Herren,“ zu denen er sich nicht rechnete, „*eine gewisse Gleichgueltigkeit*

u. Apathie.“ Das galt ihm als gefaehrliches Zeichen, denn „der Mann in der Front“ koenne sich ihr natuerlich nicht hingeben. Von ihm werde immer die gleiche Bereitschaft verlangt. Vielen dieser Tage *von der Front zurueckkehrenden Generalstabsoffizieren* sehe man an, „**wie sie gealtert waren u. was sie durchgemacht hatten.**“ Dieser Krieg nehme eben „immer scheusslichere Formen an.“ Man habe ihn so satt u. wage sich „auch gar nicht mehr auszumalen, wie es mal wieder werden kann,“ so fern sei einem der Frieden gerueckt. (22.3.42) (Meyer, Heusinger, 178)

21.3.42: Am 21.Maerz unterrichtete der Befehlshaber des *Ersatzheeres*, Generaloberst **Fromm**, seinen Chef des Stabes, *Oberst Karl-Erik Koehler*, ueber eine Aussprache mit dem *Admiral Canaris*, Chef des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr in OKW. Canaris, so Fromm zu Koehler, habe die Lage als „sehr ernst“ bezeichnet u. die Auffassung vertreten, *der Krieg sei nicht mehr zu gewinnen*. Fromm gab auch *Canaris'* Eindruecke von den Persoenlichkeiten in Hitlers Umgebung wieder, der *Halder* als „**innerlich zerbrochen**“ charakterisierte, er spreche mit keinem Menschen u. sei „voellig misstrauisch.“ *Heusinger* hingegen erscheine als die „**tragende Saeule**.“ Er habe sogar *um seine Entlassung gebeten*, „da niemand dem Fuehrer die Wahrheit sagt ueber die Lage.“ *Jodl* erschoeepfe sich in *Schimpfereien* gegen das Heer, das nicht kaempfe u. hoechstens fuer *Promenaden-Kriege* wie gegen Polen u. Frankreich geeignet gewesen sei. (Meyer, Heusinger, 178)

25.3.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Am Ende der Winterkrise stand fuer *Heusinger* nur *Bitterkeit*. In einem langen Brief vom 25.Maerz 1942 *schrieb er sich seinen ganzen Verdruss von der Seele*. „Hoffnungen u. Erwartungen“ an „hoechster Stelle“ [i.e., Hitler] habe er „bereits vor Wochen“ *Halder* gegenueber „als *Illusionen bezeichnet*.“ Man habe Operationen verlangt, „von denen bei nuechterner Ueberlegung von vornherein zu sagen war, dass sie unausfuehrbar sein wuerden.“ Haette an die Armeen Forderungen gestellt, „die von diesen nur als Forderungen *vom gruenen Tisch* bezeichnet werden mussten.“ Mit allen Mitteln habe er gegengehalten, immer wieder gewarnt u. auch *Halder* gegenueber immer wieder betont, „dass wir auf dem besten Weg seien, *den Weg sachlicher Generalstabsarbeit zu verlassen*.“

Er *zweifelte an Halder*, der sich nicht bewegen lasse, „auch nur einmal offen u. ruhig bei den Vortraegen solche Gedanken, *denen er innerlich wohl zustimmt*, auszusprechen.“ *Halder befinde sich „nunmehr in hoffnungsloser Abhaengigkeit vom Fuehrer*.“ Diese „ewig zustimmenden Blicke u. Worte“ *Halders* zu Hitlers Aeusserungen koenne er nicht mehr sehen u. hoeren, sie erscheinen ihm „*jammervoll*.“ „Ohne Erfolg“ habe er sich bemueht einzuwirken, „dass die Dinge anders behandelt werden.“ ... Nun werde er *Halder* gegenueber „ganz klar zum Ausdruck bringen, dass dieses *Illusionsspiel* so nicht weitergehen kann u. darf.“ Sonst komme nie eine klare sachliche Linie in die Operation hinein, „sondern (wir) *wursteln* [muddle thru] weiter, immer getragen von *Wunschgedanken* u. *Hoffnungen*, die immer nur wieder zur Enttaeuschungen u., was viel schlimmer ist, zu unwiederbringlichem Zeitverlust fuehren.“

Heusinger hoffte auf eine klaerende Aussprache mit *Halder*, um ihm zu sagen, dass er „nicht gewillt sei, hier mitzumachen, u. sie sich dann einen anderen suchen sollen.“ Er koenne es auch *vor sich selbst nicht mehr verantworten*, Dinge anzuordnen, von deren Unrichtigkeit er ueberzeugt sei...

Nicht nur an *Halders Kapitulation vor Hitlers Willen* nahm er Anstoss. „Diese ganze Spiel dort drueben bei unseren Besprechungen“ erscheint ihm „ja oft so *verlogen* [hypocritical?] u. *unwahr*,“ dass „*niemand von den verantwortlichen Leuten den Mund aufzumachen wagt*. Dort herrsche deshalb eine solche Welle *gegenseitiger Unaufrichtigkeit*, „dass einem nur ganz schlecht werden kann.“ Mehrfach *habe er sich bereits Halders Zorn zugezogen*, „wenn ich dem Fuehrer gelegentlich mal weniger angenehme Dinge gesagt habe, ihm mit Zahlenangaben ueber Verluste u. Ersatz aufgewartet habe, die nicht mit Traeumen zu tun haben, die er sich aber ruhig angehooert hat.“

Hitler werde „ja sonst derart belogen von allen Seiten, weil sie alle solche Angst vor ihm haben, dass es einem grauen kann.“ „Mit Neid,“ erinnert er sich *Caulaincourts* Aussprachen mit *Napoleon*: „Welch’ freies Wort fuhrte dieser Mann im Gegensatz zu jetzt.“ Er werde sehen, „so schnell wie moeglich wieder aus diesem Kreise herauszukommen,“ sonst nehme er schliesslich noch selbst *Schaden an seiner Seele*. Als das Schlimmste sieht er an, dass man ja mit Hitler anders reden koenne, als Halder das tue. Hitler koenne „auch andere Leute vertragen,“ aber sie muessten etwas koennen „u. vor allem bereit sein, jederzeit die Konsequenzen ihrer Worte tragen zu wollen,“ voellig frei sein u. nicht an ihrer Stelle kleben. *Halder* koenne das nicht mehr, „hoffnungslos festgenagelt u. unfrei geworden, viel mehr, wie es *Brauchitsch* ja gewesen ist.“

Heusinger sah sich in seinem taeglichen Kampf nach oben *recht allein* u. glaubte gar, er sei darueber „nicht hoeflicher“ geworden...Er fuehle sich innerlich auch frei, weil er im Gegensatz zu frueher an dieser Stellung „wirklich nicht mehr haenge.“ ... Sein dringender Wunsch war es, sich diese innere Freiheit „unter allen Umstaenden auch gegenueber der hoechsten Stelle erhalten zu koennen.“ Noch lieber waere es ihm aber, wiederholte er, *diesen hoechsten Kreis bald wieder verlassen zu koennen*, „denn er ist nicht gut.“ Nur mit **Grolman** koenne er ueber diese Dinge sprechen, der ihm „eine wirklich grosse Hilfe in seiner *uranstaendigen* Auffassung u. seiner Zurueckhaltung“ sei. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 178-79*)¹⁴²

28.3.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Heusinger zeigte weiter Flagge. Bei einem „langen Fuehrer-vortrag“ am 28.Maerz konnte er sich „einiges von der Seele“ reden. *Hitler* hoerte ihm wieder einmal ruhig zu, waehrend *Halder* „unruhig an seiner Brille“ herumgerueckt u. wohl gefuerchtet habe, dass er „zuviel sagen wuerde. Nachher war er mir dann sehr dankbar,“ vermerkte Heusinger u. kommentierte, so sei eben die Welt, „Mut vor Koenigsthronen ist selten, u. ueber den Dingen stehen nur sehr wenige Menschen.“ ... Heusingers Enttaeuschung darueber, dass *Halder* zum *gefuegigen Werkzeug Hitlers* geworden war, hielt an. Heusinger respektierte ihn selbstverstaendlich weiter, in fortdauernder kritischer Loyalitaet, auch wenn er ihn nicht mehr verstand. (*Meyer, Heusinger, 180*)

5.4.42 [Sommeroffensive]: Stalingrad nahm im Zuge des Operationsplans eine Schluesselposition ein: die Stadt lag an der Wolga, einem Hauptverkehrsstrang, u. dort konnte man den Transport des kaukasischen Erdoels nach Norden unterbinden. In der Weisung No. **41** vom **5.4.42** wurde daher angeordnet, bis nach Stalingrad vorzudringen, die dortige Ruestung lahmzulegen u. die Wolga zu sperren. Allerdings galt die Eroberung der Erdoelfelder des Kaukasus, naemlich bei *Majkop, Grosny* u. *Baku*, als Hauptziel des Feldzugs, wobei man auch die Schwarzmeerkueste bis an die tuerkische Grenze besetzen wollte. . . Man war sich im klaren, dass die Operation grosse Risiken schuf: So erstreckte sich der Flankenschutz zwischen *Woronesch* entlang des Don bis zur Wolga bei Stalingrad ueber **600** km, wozu man fast ausschliesslich ungarische, italienische, u. rumaenische Verbaende einsetzen wollte, um dt. Truppen fuer die Hauptaufgaben frei zu machen. Insgesamt standen naemlich nur **60 1/2** dt. Divisionen,¹⁴³ darunter **9** Pz.-Div., zur Verfuegung. Doch dass groesste Problem war die Versorgung, da man bis zum

¹⁴² **Note:** In Heusinger’s remarks, one can see the disastrous results of Hitler’s takeover of the Army High Command – Hitler cemented his dominance over the General Staff; Halder lost all professional independence and is now completely unable to challenge the Fuehrer (if Heusinger is correct) and his dangerous operational schemes. In fact, no one is willing to challenge him. Thus are the seeds sown for the disasters in 1942/43 in the winter of 1941.

¹⁴³ By comparison, Germans committed **78** divisions and nearly **2** million men to Operation “Taifun” in Oct 41. Satellite formations employed in 1942 offensive unable to compensate for growing weakness of the Wehrmacht. And it was barely **350** km to Moscow, but **1 100** to Baku!

wertvollsten Erdoelgebiet von Baku **1 100** km zuruecklegen musste. (Dr H. Magenheimer, „Eine historische Korrektur,“ 5)

1.3.6: *Tagebuch Muenchhausen (Op. Abt. / OKH):*¹⁴⁴

Aug 41:¹⁴⁵ Überhaupt hat sich der Russe ja richtig stark gegen die Ostfront der HG Mitte gemacht! Und dahinter die vielen Reservearmeen.. Ob wir es schaffen ihn vor Moskau zu schlagen? Für uns wird das *Nachschubproblem* immer schwieriger, die Ausfälle bei der Pz.Gruppe durch Abnutzungserscheinungen des Materials werden auch nach der Auffrischung in steigendem Maße zunehmen und die Truppe wird auch immer abgekämpfter. Vor allem die hohen Offiziersverluste! *Gesamtverlust bisher 266 000 Mann*, die Russen haben vielleicht noch **150** Divisionen (Gefechtswert>) durch ihre vielen Neuaufstellungen, sie haben auch viel Artillerie und sehr viel Munition, die wir nicht heranbringen können. Dazu die verbissene, zähe, heimtückische, ihr Leben mißachtende Fechtweise des Russen, die nicht nur auf Zwang beruht!...

Man kann tatsächlich oft in Zweifel sein, ob es uns gelingt, in der sehr kurzen Zeit bis zum Herbst den Russen noch entscheidend zu schlagen und seine Hauptindustrieregionen in Besitz zu nehmen. Weiter wie bis zur Wolga kommen wir günstigen Falles nicht und es ist doch sehr wahrscheinlich, daß mit Hilfe der Industrie im Ural und in Sibirien im nächsten Frühjahr neue Armeen auftreten! Wenn diese gefährlich sind, was bei der ganzen Art der Russen in diesem Feldzug anzunehmen ist, kann der dadurch hervorgerufenen Zweifrontenkrieg übelste Folgen für den Gesamtkriegsverlauf haben! Hoffentlich kommt es anders!!!

12.-15.8.41: . . . Bei uns ist staendig Mangel an Artillerie-Munition, die der Russe verschwenderisch hat. . . Guderian bezeichnet die Kampfleistungen der Infanterie im Verhaeltnis zu den schnellen (*Verbaenden?*) nicht als ausreichend. . . **1c** H.Gr.Mitte sagt: „Ungeheure Anzahl von Gefangenen durch mangelhafte Verpflegung u. ruecksichtslose Behandlung geht zu Grunde u. wird auch abgeschossen. Gegensatz zu unserer Propaganda, das spricht sich rum u. die Truppe muss es beim Kampf ausbaden. Gottesdienste durch die Pfarrer von Seiten der Truppe starke Beteiligung. Aeltere Teil der Bevoelkerung bringt die Kinder auch zum Taufen in die Kirchen, d. jg. Teil steht Kirche u. Religion teilnahmslos gegenueber.

16.-18.8.41: . . . **PzGr 3**¹⁴⁶ muss leider auf Befehl des Fuehrers **1** Pz. u. **2** mot. Div. an H.Gr.Nord abgeben, was alles ueber den Haufen wirft, was bisher hier geplant wurde. Nachdem nun bei Gomel die Sache fast bereinigt ist u. die () Sache am **21.** beginnt u. somit die *Aengste des Fuehrers um die Flanken* fast beseitigt sind, wird nun () uns gedraengt, dass endlich richtungsweisende Entschluesse gefasst werden. Und zwar wird von **OKH** als entscheidend die Einnahme von Moskau angesehen, waehrend der Fuehrer ja auch Suedosten mit **PzGr 2** ab () wollte u. auch **PzGr 3** nach Nordosten fuehren wollte.¹⁴⁷ Wir muessen das Industriezentrum Moskau noch

¹⁴⁴ **Note:** Georg Heino Freiherr von Muenchhausen – 1940 bis 1944 *Ordonnanzoffizier* beim Chef der Operationsabteilung im OKH, Generalleutnant Adolf Heusinger. This document provided to me by my „spy“ at the BA-MA. (Is not to be released w/o approval of the “Eigentumerin.”) This is a most valuable find which has been little used by historians to date. Diary transcribed from the Suetterlinschrift by Marianne Miethe (**Jun 09**).

¹⁴⁵ **Note:** This first entry transcribed by C. Nehring; all following by M. Miethe.

¹⁴⁶ **Note:** Marianne had transcribed as “B Gru 3,” but must be Pz Gru 3.

¹⁴⁷ **Note:** Again, Marianne has transcribed as “B Gru 2” and “B Gru 3,” but means of course the panzer groups!

vor Winter in die Hand nehmen, auch aus Prestige- u. psychologischen Gruenden. Heusinger arbeitet seit **16.** An einem neuen Operationsentwurf in dieser Richtung. Zunaechst besteht mit Halder eine Differenz, der nach Abgabe des Pz.-Korps an Nord es nicht mehr fuer moeglich haelt, den Stoss auf Moskau noch in diesem Jahre durchzufuehren. Er laesst sich aber von Heusinger ueberzeugen, dass es doch gemacht werden muss. Im Grossen ist der Vorschlag so: Mitte mit **10** Div. bleibt stehen u. verteidigt, rechts u. links je eine Armee mit den Pz.Gruppen auf Moskau, im Sueden folgt eine Armee im Staffilverhaeltnis mit **2** schnellen Verbaenden als Flanken-deckung. . .

Zeitberechnung ergibt Angriff etwa **5. Sep.**, das wuerde auch mit Angriffsabsicht bei [H.]Gru Sued ueber den Dnjepr uebereinstimmen. Der Ob.d.H. muss auch zustimmen u. am **19.** geht die Sache ans **OKW**. Hoffentlich entscheidet sich der Fuehrer dazu. Angedeutet ist ja die Zustimmung schon in der letzten Ergaenzungsanweisung, fuer die Jodl in unserem Sinne gearbeitet hat.

Bei H.Gr.Nord. . . H.Gr.Nord fuehrt ausgesprochen schlecht u. hat keine Nerven. () sagte mir heute, „es wird hoechste Zeit, dass sie bald mit dem Ende der Operationen da oben zwangslaeufig ihre Taetigkeit einstellen muessen.“ Vollkommen die Nerven verloren haben sie wegen der Angriffe. . .

Manstein hat grosses Pech. Er hat nun keine Pz.Div. mehr u. wird dauernd mit schlechten, nicht entscheidenden Sachen betraut. Er ist wegen seiner Energie fuer viele ein rotes Tuch, besonders oben, auch wegen seiner politischen Einstellung wohl. Es ist aber eine Schande, einen unserer besten Leute, einen solchen Feuerkopf nicht richtig auszunutzen. Typisch fuer unsere Zeit, die keine Charaktere duldet! Und typisch fuer Liebesdienerei gewisser () des **OKH** nach oben.

ca. 18.-21.8.41: . . . **6. Armee** ist also weiter ohne Schwung, wohl beeindruckt durch vorherige hohe Verluste. H.Gr.Mitte: Gomel schlecht beendet. . . Nordoestl. Smolensk setzt Russe seine Angriffe unter Einsatz immer neuer Panzer fort. Die Truppe leidet darunter mehr wie unter Angriffskaempfen, staendiges Artilleriefeuer u. keine Abloesung. (), der von **14**taegigen () zurueckkam, erzaehte, dass er die ganze Zeit in kl. Einmannerdloch lebte u. schlief. Zugabschnitt 400 – 500 m. Gruppe noch **1:6**. . .

Inzwischen trat fuer die Weiterfuehrung des Krieges vielleicht entscheidendes Ereignis ein: Entgegen der Hoffnung, dass ein allgemeines Einverstaendnis zur Absicht des **OKH** fuer den entscheidenden Stoss auf Moskau sich () . . . kam ploetzlich eine neue Weisung des Fuehrers. Wir sassen am **21.** nach Krebsessen noch nachts im Kasino um $\frac{1}{2}$ **2** als Frankenberg sie reinbrachte. Gehrholz, Stieff, Studenbeck?¹⁴⁸ Wir lasen sie u. waren ausser uns, weil wir gleich die Bedeutung sahen u. wussten, welche Enttauschung sie hervorrufen wuerde. Sie war selbst unterschrieben von A.H. „Der Vorschlag des Heeres fuer die Fuehrung der Operation am **18.** d.M. stimmt nicht mit meinen Absichten ueberein! Ich befehle folgendes. . .“ Ungefuehr so: **1.** Wichtiger als die Gewinnung von Moskau ist die Inbesitznahme von Leningrad, des Donezbeckens u. der Krim, um d. Bedrohung des rum. Oelgebietes aus der Luft auszuschalten u. den Russen die Oelzufuhr aus dem Kaukasus abzuschneiden. . .

Das bedeutet klar, dass wahrscheinlich nun ein Angriff auf Moskau in diesem Jahre nicht mehr moeglich sein wird! Wie Generaloberst Halder in einer Randbemerkung zur Weisung schreibt: „Dieser Befehl bedeutet, dass die Masse des deutschen Heeres im Winter **41/42** in Russland

¹⁴⁸ **Note:** Be careful to confirm spelling of names – transcriptions may be incorrect!

gebunden bleibt u. die geplanten Operationsvorhaben des Heeres (u. wohl auch der Luftwaffe) nicht durchgefuehrt werden koennen.“

Die *neue Weisung schlaegt wie eine Bombe ein, da man geglaubt hatte, der Fuehrer wuerde nun dem **OKH** Vorschlag zustimmen.* Heusinger hatte allerdings schon beim Abendvortrag gesagt, er fuerchte, dass die Einnahme von Gomel u. das (Abbauen) der russ. **5. Armee** zur **AOK 6** uns einen derartigen Befehl bringen wuerde, aber doch nicht mit solchen Zielsetzungen.

Alles ist einfach ausser sich. „Das kann den Verlust des Krieges bedeuten!“ Halder kommt nach dem Vortrag beim Ob.d.H. zu Heusinger ins Zimmer u. spricht mit erhobener Stimme mit Heusinger ueber die Sache. Wohl veranlasst durch *zoegernde Haltung des **Ob.d.H.*** sagt er:

„Wir koennen das nicht wieder stillschweigend hinnehmen; wir koennen nicht schweigen, dass wir anderer Ansicht sind u. dann **14** Tage bocken [*sulk?*], aber alles schlucken u. schliesslich so tun als ob alles beim Alten waere. Der Befehl bedeutet eine grundlegende Aenderung der in der Aufmarschanweisung festgelegten Zielsetzung des Krieges, naemlich der Vernichtung der gegnerischen Wehrmacht zu Gunsten von territorialer Inbesitznahme u. wirtschaftlichen Vorteilen.“

Den ganzen Tag wird **Ob.d.H.** von Halder u. Hsg. bearbeitet, um endlich mal die abweichende Absicht **OKH** unmissverstaendlich beim Fuehrer nochmal muendlich zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Aber vergeblich. Hsg., vielleicht auch Halder, traegt sich mit Gedanken, seinen Posten aufzugeben, weil er nicht die Verantwortung uebernehmen koenne. Halder zeichnete ja schon neulich den Befehl betr. Abgabe des mot. Korps an H.Gr.Nord nicht ab, sondern nur Brauchitsch. Ob.d.H. gibt aber ausdruecklichen Befehl, dass jeder auf seinem Posten zu bleiben habe. Brauchitsch habe gesagt, sagt mir Hsg.: „Was habe es denn fuer Zweck, den Fuehrer nochmals zu fragen? Hsg.: Gott, wenn wir unser ganzes Leben danach einrichten wollten, ob etwas, was () Zweck hat? Aber er ist es sich selbst u. dem Heere u. der Sache schuldig, dass er spricht!“ Zivilcourage fehlt den Leuten eben! Die neue Sache geht also seinen Gang. Erst das Pz.Korps an Nord u. nun **2 PzGr** u. **2. Armee** zu Sued! . . .

24.-28.8.41: . . . Bei H.Gr.Mitte . . . Ernste Sorge an Mittelfront mit den erheblichen Angriffen! Erwaegungen, ob nicht groesseres Absetzen u. dann Offensivstoss in den nachdraengenden Gegner, um ihm so mal die Angriffsinitiative zu nehmen. Bis bisherigem Verhalten u. da wir ohne Reserven sonst allmaehlicher Verbrauch unserer Divisionen. . .

29.8.-5.9.41: . . . Mitte: . . . Bei H.Gr.[Mitte] doch starke Krise wegen der starken russ. Angriffe. Keine Reserven. Entschluss [*Eln'ja?*] aufzugeben, gefasst! Zu verlustreich u. gefaehrlich, ihn zu halten. Nun auch weiter suedlich Probleme, bei **34.** u. **31. ID** russ. Angriffe. Ich habe grosse Sorge um () grosser Einbruch bei der **34.!!!** . . .

Bei Mitte gibt es *immer wieder **Krach mit Guderian, der einfach nicht gehorcht.*** Er bekam darauf scharfe Zurechtweisungen von () u. Brauchitsch. Es war schon feierlich. Er wollte die **17.** u. **18. P[D]** weiter nach Osten einsetzen, anstatt mit aller Macht weiter nach Sueden zu stossen. . . Die Lage ist bei H.Gr.Mitte durch den Abzug der Kraefte nach Sued u. Nord u. durch die harten, staendig ueberlegenen russ. Angriffe ausgesprochen ernst.

Bei Nord ist die Fuehrung zu zaghaft u. unge...). Sie nutzt die erzielten Erfolge der Pz.Gr. nicht energisch aus u. zoegert u. hat staendig Angst um die Flanken. Tatsaechlich haben die Divisionen aber auch enorme Verluste u. sehr schwieriges Gelaende. . .

Allgemeines: Hsg.: Russe fuehrt gegen jede Regel, auch unvernuenftigsten Lagen setzt er sich aush. Daher ist grosse Operation () bei uns erforderlich u. oft Schwanken in unseren Massnahmen. Ich finde, man muss zugeben, dass es der Russe dadurch fertig bringt, *uns immer mal wieder die Initiative streitig zu machen*. Allerdings nicht in ganz grossen. **OKH** leidet unter den Schwanken in unseren Massnahmen, besonders Halder, der glaubt, dass *eine operative Linie seit Ende Juli nicht mehr vorhanden sei bei uns*. Hsg. sagt, dann waere das wesentlich die Schuld des OKH. Aber die Sache lag so: Operationsziele waren Einschliessung Leningrads, Vernichtung des Feindes vor H.Gr.Mitte, also Timoschenko u. als Folge die Gewinnung Moskaus, u. bei Sued Gewinnung Charkows u. des Donezbeckens. **OKH** wollte zuerst Vernichtung des feindl. Haupttheeres Timoschenko u. damit Stoss auf Moskau. Haelt auch heute noch der andere fuer falsch. Fuehrer will an sich dasselbe, aber zeitlich anders. Zuerst Leningrad u. Charkow. Dazu muss auch Mitte helfen mit Abgabe des Pz.Korps zu Nord u. Stoss der **2 PzGr** u. des **AOK 2** nach Sueden, um dem **AOK 6** den Weg ueber den Dnjepr zu oeffnen. Wenn so *die Flanken bereinigt sind*, dann Stoss gegen Timoschenko. *Also Grund ist die einzige Angst vor dem Flankenrisiko* – u. die Zeit draengt doch zu dem entscheidenden Schlag, der womoeglich durch die fortgeschrittene Jahreszeit unmoeglich gemacht wird. Schuld des **OKH**, meint Heusinger, ist es vielleicht, dass es *nicht unter Umstaenden unter Inkaufnahme letzter Konsequenzen seine Meinung gegenueber dem Fuehrer verfochten hat*. Das Schwanken in der operativen Linie liegt nun wesentlich daran, dass **OKH** den Fuehrerbefehl nur mit halben Herzen erfuellte u. immer hofft, doch noch den Stoss bei Mitte bald machen zu koennen.

Ein Truppenwitz ist es, dass nunmehr befohlen ist, dass die **2. PD**, die eben auf Befehl des Fuehrers nach Frankreich in die Gegend von () umverlegt ist, nunmehr wieder nach dem Osten geholt wird, ebenso die **5. PD** aus der Heimat!! Ein uebles Debakel ist die Gefangenenfrage. Schon das jeder Kommissar erschossen wird, ist eine schlimme Massnahme. Dann die Leute ohne Unterkunft u. mit mangelhaftester Verpflegung wochenlang lassen! *Sie sterben wie die Fliegen. . .*

Um noch mal auf obige Ueberlegungen zurueckzukommen: Schlappeit nach oben u. unten ist leider im **OKH** chronish! Nach oben wagt **Ob.d.H.** nicht eine Lippe zu riskieren u. nach unten wird ungerne befohlen. Alles wird Besprechungen, Erwaegungen u. Anregungen ueberlassen. Auch wenn hier die klare Erkenntnis vorhanden ist, dass Massnahmen der H.Gr. falsch sind, wird nicht eingegriffen u. befohlen wird nur im aeussersten Notfall. An dem Prinzip, sich moeglichst nicht in die Fuehrung der H.Gr. einzumischen, wird eisern festgehalten. Und was wird andererseits ueber die Fuehrung der H.Gr.Nord z.B. geschimpft. Schliesslich kommt est oft so, dass **OKW** bzw. Fuehrer dann eingreifen u. nun muss der **OKH** seinerseits was tun. Das foerdert nicht das Vertrauen! Ueberhaupt *waechst die Neigung zu Eingriffen von oben*. Das nimmt z.T. unmoeegliche Formen an. Ueber den Kopf des **OKH** hinweg wird mit einzelnen Generaelen telefoniert [!], Keitel faehrt z.B. zur H.Gr.Nord u. macht Konfusion u.a. Oft wird der kleinste Dreck von ihm persoendlich befohlen. Bis zu einzelnen Divisionen runter. . .

6.-30.9.41: . . . 15.9. Verbindung zwischen **1 PzGr** u. **2 [PzGr]** hergestellt u. damit den Ring um die russ. Armee im Raum Kiew geschlossen. Es wird begonnen, bei Tscherwinka [sp?] Infanterieverbaende herauszuloesen u. H.Gr.Mitte zuzufuehren. . . **19.9.** Kiew genommen. . . **26.9.** Kaempfe oestlich Kiew im Wesentlichen beendet. **665.000** Gefangene. . .

Wie entwickelte sich die Schlacht um Kiew? Am **22.8.** erging die Fuehrerweisung, dass **2. Armee** u. **2 PzGr** (Guderian) der **6. Armee** die Dnjepr u. Desnauebergaenge zu oeffnen habe, u. dabei die noch westl. des Dnjepr stehende russ. **5. Armee** zu vernichten habe. Die andere Ansicht des **OKH** ist schon frueher eroertert u. die sich daraus ergebenden Hemmungen, *diese Operation mit vollen () zu fuehren*. Guderian zieht sich im Verlauf der Sache wieder des Oefteren heftige Ungnade zu, weil er wieder nicht bei der Stange bleibt, d.h. nach Sueden mit aller Kraft stoest, sondern nach Osten ausbricht u. sich so verzettelt. Strikte Befehle ergehen deshalb an ihn. Die russ. **5. Armee** setzt sich im Uebrigen unbemerkt ab u. entkommt ueber den Dnjepr. Bei **OKH** gehen nach wie vor die Gedanken auf ein moeglichst fruehzeitiges Abbrechen der Suedbewegung der **2. Armee** u. **2 PzGr**, um moeglichst bald zur Operation bei Mitte zu kommen. . .¹⁴⁹

31.8. Heusinger arbeitet an neuer Operation Mitte, u. Halder u. Brauchitsch sind einverstanden. **2.9.** Ob.d.H. () u. Hsg. bei Mitte, um geplante Operation mit H.Gr.Mitte zu besprechen. . . **5.9.** Br. [Brauchitsch?] beim Fuehrer wegen Operation gegen () gegen Mitte nach der Schlacht bei Sued. Dieser endlich einverstanden. **6.9.** Hsg. u. Halder beim Fuehrer mit Hsgs. Operationsentwurf, der gebilligt wird.¹⁵⁰ . . . **10.9.** Weisung **OKH** an alle drei H.Gr. ueber die beabsichtigten Operationen. Alles zugeschnitten auf Operation Mitte f. Ende **September** je nach Beendigung der Kiewer Schlacht. Abgaben dafuer von Sued u. Nord. Bei Nord enge Einschliessung Leningrads angestrebt. Bei Sued Stoss auf Charkow, Krim () – bei Mitte „*Taifun*.“

In der Zeit v. **6. – 30.9.** wird H.Gr.Mitte allmaehlich von allen Reserven entbloesst, weil fast alle schnellen Verbaende an Sued u. Nord abgegeben werden. Die Inf.Div. bluten ungeheuer unter den staendigen Angriffen Timoschenkos auf () u. (). Jelnje-Bogen wird freiwillig geraeumt zur Vermeidung weiterer Verluste u. Schaffung v. Reserven. *Staendig oertliche Krisen u. russ. Einbrueche*. Zeitweise ist grosse Besorgnis, ob die Front bei Fehlen jeder Reserve ueberhaupt zu halten sein wird. H.Gr.Mitte ist in dieser *Nervenkris*e vorbildlich u. ordnet alles dem () unter zum Erfolg der Schlacht bei Kiew u. bei Leningrad. In der **2.** Haelfte lassen die Angriffe sehr nach u. gegen Ende des Monats taucht die Besorgnis auf, dass der Russe sich abgesetzt haben koennte u. der Stoss der H.Gr. ins Leere ginge.

H.Gr.Nord v. **6. – 30.9.:** . . . Auf H.Gr.Nord ist man hier wahnsinnig () u. auf Leeb wird masslos geschimpft. Wohl auch von der Truppe, wie mir [wir?] z.B. von **4 PzGr** wissen. Der Fuehrung fehlt der noetige Schwung u. das „Wagen.“ Die Pz.Div. sind ausser sich, dass sie fruehzeitig nach dem Durchbruch wieder angehalten wurden u. den Russen dann Zeit gelassen wurde, sich wieder zur Verteidigung einzurichten. Das kostet dann immer wieder viel Blut. Unter den Divisionen der **18. Armee** stehen **8** unter den Nummern **1-20** der hoechsten Verluste – von **143** Divisionen! – Die H.Gr.Nord stellt zudem staendig Forderungen an Heerestruppen u. Divisionen, vom () was abzugeben u. laesst jedes Verstaendnis fuer die Gesamtlage vermissen. Sie schreit auf Sonderwegen beim Fuehrer usw. Zugeben muss man ihr, dass ihre Kraefte verhaeltnismaessig schwach waren u. ihre Truppen in einem aeusserst schwierigen Sumpfgelaende kaempfen mussten. Aber durch falsches Einsetzen der Divisionen u. Fehlen von Schwerpunkten () usw. wurde auch der Erfolg erschwert. . . Wie die Lage nun mal war, durch Fuehrung z.T., aber z.T. auch durch die schweren Kaempfe, muss man sagen, dass das **OKW** recht hatte diesmal gem. d. Fuehrer, der gegen den Willen des **OKH** befahl, dass ein Pz.Korps an

¹⁴⁹ **Note:** Clear from Muenchhausen's account that **OKH's** heart was not in the Kiev operation! And once again, Guderian, not w/ the program!

¹⁵⁰ **Note:** So, operational planning for the assault on Moscow accomplished by Heusinger's Op.Abt. in **OKH**.

Nord von Mitte abgegeben wurde. Ohne dieses waeren wir kaum vor Leningrad vorwaerts gekommen u. oestl. die hoechste Stelle hatte mal wieder ueberhaupt keine Nerven, als die Angriffe der Russen oestl. der Nawa [sp?] eine kritische Lage schufen. . .

1.-13.10.41: . . . H.Gr.Mitte: Am **30.9.** wird durch den Vorstoss der **2. Pz Armee** (Guderian) die Operation „Taifun“ eingeleitet. Am **2.10.** folgt der Angriff der gesamten H.Gr. . . Groesste Hoffnungen werden auf die Operation gesetzt. . . Befuerchtungen des **OKH** gehen dahin, dass **1.** die Jahreszeit nun zu spaet sein koennte u. Eintritt schlechten Wetters uns entscheidend hemmen koennte u. **2.**, dass der Russe doch etwas von unserem grossen Aufmarsch gemerkt haben koennte, u. deswegen oder ueberhaupt wegen der Niederlage bei Sued sich abgesetzt haben koennte. *Letzteres beherrscht die Gedanken in den ersten Tagen*, bis klar ist, dass der Russe doch in alter Staerke an der Front stehen geblieben ist.

Der Durchbruch gelingt ueberall ueberraschend schnell. Spannungen ergeben sich auf dem noerdlichen Umfassungsfluegel bei **3 PzGr.** Diese ist an sich schon sehr schwach, u. sie bleibt aus Nachschubgruenden fast **2** Tage bald liegen. Wegeverhaeltnisse u. Fehler in der Organisation des O.() der Pz.Gr. sind der Grund (kein Sprit). Ueberraschend schnell wird der Grosse Kessel bei Wjasma zusammengedruickt. Befuerchtungen entstehen zeitweise, ob dem Druck der Massen die Front noerdlich Wjasma, die bei **7. PD** besonders sehr duenn ist, standhalten wuerde. Fliegermeldungen besagen, dass *noch nie gesehene Massen* in dem Kessel herumwimmeln. Bis **13.** ist der Kessel praktisch ausgeraemt u. fast **600.000** Mann sind gefangen genommen. **4** russ. Armeen sind vernichtet. Waehrenddessen haben die nicht an der Kessel-front eingesetzten Divisionen weit nach Osten Boden gewonnen u. zunaechst kaum noch Widerstand. . .

Bei **2. Pz Armee**, die zunaechst aus Benzinmangel nicht Boden gewinnt, sollte bald das weitere Vorwaartskommen beginnen. Die Masse wird an den Kesseln bei Briansk gebunden. Es gelingt, die unbedingt noetige einzige Nachschubstrasse ueber Briansk vom Osten her durch **17. PD** zu oeffnen, aber die vordersten Teile bei () bleiben zu schwach u. alles andere bleibt an den beiden entstandenen Kesseln noerdlich u. suedlich von Briansk gebunden. Die Raeume sind zwar sehr gross u. teilweise scheussliches Waldgelaende mit schlechten Wegeverhaeltnissen. Aber der Hauptgrund ist doch, dass Guderian der Ruhm weiter von – Tula – in der Nase steckt u. er hinten den Gegner vernachlaessigt u. nicht von vornherein schaefer anpackt, sowohl von Osten wie auch von der alten Front her zum Westen. So entwickelten sich daraus langwierige Kaempfe, wo der Feind volle Bewegungsfreiheit hat u. vor allem suedlich Briansk koennen starke Feindteile entkommen, die nun alte Nachschubstrassen (), bedrohen u. Schweinereien hervorrufen.¹⁵¹ . . .

Verschiedenes v. 1.-13.10.41: Fuer Taifun sind die meisten Pz.Div. wieder erstaunlich vollzaehlig geworden nach der kurzen Auffrischungszeit. Durch Zufuehrung von etwa **400 neuen Panzern**, die *dem Fuehrer abgezwungen werden mussten* u. Instandsetzung wurden verschiedene Div. wieder **100%**ig mit Panzern. . . Andauernd gibt es mit ganz oben [i.e., Hitler?] Reibungen. Es wird andauernd bis in Kleinigkeiten reinbefohlen. Die *alte Flankenangst* meist u. *Nervoesitaet vor Durchbruechen* usw. Wahrscheinlich ist er nervoes ueber den Verlauf des Gesamtkrieges. Dazu dann Br. [Brauchitsch?], der es laengst aufgesteckt hat, seine bessere Meinung zu vertreten. Seine Erklaerung dafuer ist nach Hsg., dass Leute wie Br. durch ihre andere Kinderstube [?] u. den Ton u. die Art des Fuehrers sich voellig mundtot machen lassen. Erfahrungsgemaess geht jede Beratung dort ja auch wie das Hornberger Schiessen aus [?], da

¹⁵¹ **Note:** Another theme of M.'s diary is ostensible contempt (or simply irritation?) for Guderian and his personal agenda.

ausschliesslich der Fuehrer „redet.“ Wenige Leute haben die richtige Art mit ihm, () u. eine Stellung haben, z.B. Rundstedt. . .

ab 17.10.41: Allgemeine Gespraechе im Kasino nach dem **17.10.** ueber Frieden u. Krieg. Am **17.** Grosse Aufregung – es ging an der Front gut u. der Fuehrer liess durchgeben, Presse, Agenten u. sonstige Nachrichten liessen vermuten, dass der Russe ueberall aufgegeben u. zurueckginge. . . Jedenfalls dadurch angeregt, wurden die tollsten Meinungen im Kasino von sich gegeben. „Friede mit Stalin“ oder sein Sturz, Kriegsende im Osten, England gibt auch dann auf usw. Zu grosse Kinderei. Stalin wird nicht gestuerzt u. kaempft bis vor die Puppen weiter u. wenn er nur noch Sibirien haette. Jedenfalls ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit f. seinen Sturz minimal. . . Und England macht vorlaeufig auch noch nicht Schluss – wenn ueberhaupt. *Der Krieg erfordert fuer uns einen grossen Ostfeldzug 1942 bis zum Ural*. In Russland bleiben dann immer noch sehr viele Truppen gebunden. . .

Fliegerei? Die enttaeuschende Erfahrung des Feldzuges bezueglich unserer Luftwaffe ist, *wie schwach sie doch ist u. schnell abgenutzt*. Englands u. Amerikas Luftwaffe waechst zur Prioritaet u. darueber hinaus. . .

Unsere Truppe muss man bewundern, dass sie nach diesen Strapazen immer noch so guter Stimmung u. angriffsfreudig ist! Es macht sich allerdings mancher Mangel bemerkbar, besonders durch den Ausfall von Offizieren u. Unterfuehrern, auch M.G.-Schuetzen usw. . . Aber schnelle Verbaende werden jetzt oft als *nicht mehr angriffsfreudig*, launig im Ortskampf, Waldkampf, Nachtkampf bewertet. Wenn es nicht gleich geht, lassen sie es – schreien nach Infanterie u. dann schimpfen sie auf die Infanterie, die feige waere. Guderian voran! Sie haben nicht so hohe Verluste in der Spitze wie viele Inf.Div., allerdings sehr hohe Offiziersverluste! . .

Eine graessliche Angelegenheit ist die Gefangenenfrage. Es fallen in den Kesseln so grosse Mengen auf einmal an, dass mit ihnen nicht fertig zu werden ist. Bei der gespannten Transportlage kann gerade die Versorgung unserer Truppe gesichert werden. Die **60.000**¹⁵² schon vorher im Kessel halb Verhungerten ziehen nun zu Fuss, bewacht von wenigen Leute, nach hinten. Teils sind ihnen vorn, wegen uns auch fehlender Winterbekleidung, Maentel u. Schuhe weggenommen worden. Uebernachtung natuerlich im Freien. Verpflegung: Nachbutteln [buddeln?] in abgeernteten Kartoffelfeldern, bestenfalls ein totes Pferd, oder ein halbtotes lebendig zwischen die Gefangenen gejagt. Wer nicht mehr kann oder umfaellt, wird erschossen am Weg. Die paar Leute, die bewachen, werden nicht mehr fertig; wenn sie es nicht tun, dann bleibt sofort die Haelfte liegen. Grosse Ausbruchsversuche vor Hunger an der Tagesordnung! Pz.-Jaeger-Abt. mussten schon zu Hilfe geholt werden u. schossen rein. Wer Glueck hat, kommt in einen offenen Gueterwagen, so eng, dass er sich nicht bewegen kann, aber er kommt ins Lager nach hinten. Dort sterben die Leute noch in Massen an Entkraeftung durch das vorangegangene Hungern. An sich kriegen sie im Lager auch wenig, aber nicht zum Verhungern wenig. Es ist ja kurzsichtig, sie zu minimieren, *wir brauchen sie ja dringend ueberall als Arbeiter*. () schrieb allerdings von da auch eine Geschichte, dass sie in Hungerpanik nach einer Seite draengten, Dutzende zertrampelt, Dutzende vom elektrischen Lagerzaun verbrannt wurden!! Gehrholz hatte das nach hinten ziehende Heer gesehen bei Smolensk. Es waere grauenhaft, sie verhungert, zerlumpt heranwanken zu sehen. Mit Knueppeln u. Kolbenstoessen angetrieben – ein Stoehnen u. Seufzen vor Hunger u. Kaelte haette die Kolonnen begleitet. Am Wege – der grossen Autobahn entlang – laegen reihenweise die Toten. Die Autos fahren ohne Ruecksicht drueber weg. – Es mag vielleicht im Grossen nicht zu aendern sein – entgegen unserer Propaganda zum Ueberlaufen, die

¹⁵² 600.000?

alles herrlich darstellt, aber das mir Furchtbare ist die Gesinnung, in der die Frage auch bei uns hier betrachtet wird, u. die *jede Moral u. Ethik vermissen laesst* u. zwar eigentlich nur bei der neuen Generation bis zum Hauptmann. Die Alten vom Weltkrieg denken anders. Man sieht das alles ungeruehrt. – Gut, wenn von diesem Volk moeglichst viel verrecken! Bezeichnend ist das Erlebnis von Gehrholz mit einem Arzt bei s. Bataillon. Vorbei kommt ein eben gefangener Russe mit zerschossenem Arm. Wahnsinnig blutend. Der Arzt hat keine Deutschen zu versorgen. Den ganzen Tag geruht. Russ. Verbandsmaterial in Massen. Er tut nichts. Auf Frage Gehrholz erwidert er: Ach, die Russen sind ja der Genfer Konvention nicht beigetreten u. muss erst n.G. in Trab gebracht werden! (unverstaendlich!).

Dasselbe Kapitel ist mit der Judenfrage. Man waehlt die grauenhafte Loesung. . . Gehrholz erlebt folgenden Bericht bei der H.Gr.Mitte: Kaum ist die H.Gr. aus [Borissow?] weg, herrscht dort (Sder, Polizei) u. veranstaltet ein „Fest der Polizei“ am **20.10.** [Note: In narrative that follows, M. describes in chilling detail how the „Fest“ – „wueste Sauferei, das Fest artet in zuegelloseste Orgie . . .“ – degenerates into mass murder. The Jewish quarter is surrounded; the Jews intuit their fate, entire families fall to their knees and plead for their lives, some take their own lives. They are tossed into trucks and driven off behind a forest. The Jews are forced to dig out a deep trench, then they are shot – man, woman and child. For **24** hours the M.G.s and sub-machine guns ring out. Some **6500** are killed.] Und wir nennen uns eine Kulturnation u. duenken uns wer weiss was. Leute wie Greiffenberg zucken die Achseln u. sagen: Eine unangenehme Sache. Bock tobt – aber er geht nicht hin zum Fuehrer. . . das wagt niemand. Ja, es koennte ihnen ja auch die Dotation entgehen u. ausserdem bekommen Generalobersten wie sie aus der Privatschatulle pro Monat **2500 M!!!**

Es ist furchtbar. Wie wir uns mit Blut u. Grausamkeit besudeln muessen. . . Es ist ein Rueckfall von Jahrhunderten, wenn nicht Jahrtausenden.

Das *Heer macht es auch mit in Russland*. Aussonderungskommandos der Polizei u. SS werden in die Gefangenenlager entsandt, die alle fuehrenden Kommunisten, bewusste Parteileute, Juden, Intelligenzler „liquidieren“ sollen. Selbst diesen Bolschewistenausdruck uebernahmen wir schon ins Heer! Und dann regen wir uns ueber fruehere polnische Greuel auf. . .

Operationen **13.-31.10.** Sued: **AOK 11** Manstein jetzt als treibende Kraft der () des Angriffs auf die () bei (). Beginn des Angriffs **18.10.** Zehn Tage lang erbitterte Kaempfe der schon abgekaempften Divisionen. Ueble feindl. Luftueberlegenheit zunaechst. Es wird auch von unserer Luftwaffe zusammengekratzt, was noch da ist. . .

[Note: At this point, appears to be long break in diary.]

30.11.41: Heute wieder feine Sonntagsueberraschung. Der Fuehrer ist scheinbar nicht sehr rosig gestimmt aus Berlin wiedergekommen von dem grossartigen europaeischen Kongress. Ob.d.H. war heute oben u. kommt mit einem Sack Befehlen u. Eingriffen wieder. Der Fuehrer befiehlt: **1.** Sewastopol ist so schnell wie moeglich zu nehmen (Mainstein ist aber noch nicht mit dem Artillerieaufmarsch fertig. . . **2.** . . . Musste schon Rostow aufgeben u. weit zurueckgehen. . . Zustand katastrophal. Pro PzA, **15-20** Pz., die groesste Zahl der Kraftfahrzeuge ausgefallen, keine Winterbekleidung, **15-20** Grad Kaelte, VOELLIGE Erschoepfung () nach Zufuehrung des Ersatzes **50** Mann, Lufttransportraum so gering, dass nur allmaehlich einzelne Bataillone heranzufuehren sind. . . **6.** Betr. Angriff **4. Armee** () Schwerpunkt weiter suedlich (richtig). Bei Betreten von Moskau ist Bevoelkerung nach Osten herauszu(). (Neu! *Bisher war Betreten verboten.*) / Angriff bei **I. Korps**: Angriff **254. ID** IST FALSCH ANGESETZT – Verzettelung: Alles zusammenfassen auf W- - - - -. (richtig. Heusinger muss sich seit Tagen ueber den

Bloedsinn (). *Aber das **OKH** hat das Prinzip, moeglichst nicht einzugreifen u. hat nun die Quittung. . .*

1.12.41: Ob.d.H. am Nachmittag beim Fuehrer. Ohne Ergebnis. Man will da oben nicht sehen. . . Was wird nun im Grossen? **OKH** hat nun endlich die Absicht, Schluss zu machen. Eine Staerke-meldung an **OKW** folgt, dass die Inf.Div. im Durchschnitt noch **50%**, die mot.Div. **40%**, die Pz.Div. **25-30%** Kampfkraft haben.

2.12.41: Ich war um **12** gestern weggegangen u. als ich komme heute frueh, sagt mir Huber, Chef [Hsg?] sei um $\frac{1}{2}$ **5** ins Bett gegangen. Groesste Schweinerei – Rundstedt zurueckgetreten. [Note: M. discusses events leading to R.'s dismissal by Hitler.] Was sagte Rundstedt gleich!? Und darum muss unser bestes Pferd im Stall gehen! Sang- u. klanglos! Er wird nicht der Letzte sein. *Aber endlich mal jemand, der zu seiner Meinung gestanden hat*, natuerlich deswegen geflogen ist. Der da oben [i.e., Hitler] weiss alles besser, hoffentlich fuehrt er uns in keine Katastrophe. . .

2.-4.12.41: . . . Fuehrer runter geflogen zur **1. Pz Armee**, **4.** Rueckkehr. . . Fuehrer war gestern u. heute dann bei [H.Gr.]Sued. Soll mit Rundstedt gesprochen haben u. das sei beiderseits freundschaftlich verlaufen. Er [Wer?] waere *mit Traenen in den Augen* rausgekommen. Rundstedt faehrt am **5.** fort.

Bei Mitte quaelt sich der Angriff weiter. Gestern Einstellung des **2** Tage vorher begonnenen Angriffs der **4. Armee**, der bei der **258. ID** u.a. erst ganz schoen vorwaerts gekommen war. Aber bei wachsendem russ. Widerstand blieb der Angriff liegen. Begruendung der Armee: Voellige Erschoepfung der Leute, *bei der Infanterie zeigen sich Anzeichen, dass der **Angriffswille** verloren gegangen ist*. Sehr ernste Beurteilung des gesamten Zustandes der Truppe! Zunehmende Gegenangriffe der Russen vor **3** u. **4 PzGr**.

Auch von Nord Hilferufe. Wie ueberall staendig absinkende Gefechtsstaerken. Die weiten Fronten koennen nur [stutzpunktartig?] besetzt werden. Russen gehen durch die Linien durch u. umfassen. . .

Es ist der **1.** Rueckschlag in diesem Kriege! Das waere nicht so schlimm, wenn man nicht das Gefuehl haette, dass es ein erster Schritt von einem Gipfelpunkt herunter waere. Schlagartig ist alles gezwungen, nun mal endlich Stellung zu nehmen u. zu Erkenntnissen zu kommen, die im Laufe der letzten **6** Wochen sich immer deutlicher abzeichnen, naemlich dass die Leistungsfahigkeit am Mensch, Pferd u. Material eine Grenze hat u. dass das Vorwaertssetzen um jeden Preis zur Katastrophe fuehren kann.¹⁵³ Jetzt wird nun dort unten mit allem Moeglichen geflickt! . . . Man hofft, dass die Front nun haelt. . .

Dort unten braucht man Uebrigens am wenigstens eine besondere Schuldfrage zu suchen,¹⁵⁴ denn von der Pz.Gr. angefangen bis hierher zweifelt niemand, dass es schliesslich, wenn auch unter grossen Opfern, moeglich sein wuerde, Rostow u. den Donezbogen zu nehmen u. im Januar auf () anzutreten. Nur voellig ueberrascht hat es uns, dass es Timoschenko gelungen ist, starke, ueberlegene Kraefte aus dem Kaukasus, der Krim u. von anderswo heranzubringen u. operativ

¹⁵³ **Note:** A great quote, which illustrates that the “Kulminationspunkt” of Operation “Barbarossa” had long been crossed (late **Oct 41?**), and now the German High Command would pay the price for failing to realize that they had pushed too long and too hard.

¹⁵⁴ **Note:** This paragraph provides a clear-headed and sober analysis of Germany’s deteriorating overall strategic position.

richtig u. taktisch zusammengefasst – zum **1.** Mal in diesem Feldzug – auf unsere erschöpften Truppen zum Angriff anzusetzen. U.a. grosse zusammengefasste Panzerangriffe. Seine zu grosse zahlenmaessige u. materielle Ueberlegenheit erdrueckte unsere Verbaende. „*Schuld*“ ist *letzten Endes die falsche Einschaeztung des Russen – staendige Unterschaetzung seit Juni* – u. Nichtsehenwollen des Zustandes unserer Truppen. *Alles hat das Gefuehl, an einer Wende zu stehen*. Es scheint ploetzlich auch dem Optimisten fraglich, ob wir den Krieg gewinnen koennen. Hier unser voellig erschoeptes Heer, dort der Russe naechstes Jahr in dreifacher Staerke. . . Zu Hause steigender Mangel, Sorge um die Ernaehrung, Mangel an Arbeitskraeften fuer die Ruestungsindustrie, Mangel an Waffen, Kraftfahrzeugen, Munition, Flugzeugen u. vor allem droht Mangel an wehrfaehigen Leuten. Es muessen eine grosse Reihe von Divisionen aufgeloeset werden, um die Fehlstellen zu fuellen. Transportleistungen der Eisenbahn reichen fuer den Osten nicht aus. () in Serbien. Bindung der Kraefte in Frankreich u. Norwegen gegenueber moeglichen engl. Landungen. Ueble Lage in Nordafrika u. im Mittelmeer. England ein Jahr Ruhe gehabt u. weiter wird es nicht mehr angegriffen werden koennen. Mangelnde Erfolge des U-Bootskriegs. Riesig ansteigende engl.-amerikanische Kriegsproduktion – alles in Allem ein truebes Bild der Kriegs- u. Friedensaussichten.

Was tun wir – gem. d. Fuehrer – dem allen gegenueber? . . . Wir schaezten die Lage vollkommen falsch ein. Am **1.7.[41]** wurde die Munitionsfertigung auf vielen Gebieten eingestellt! Noch im **Sep [41]** wollte der Fuehrer *keine Panzer im Osten als Ersatz freigegeben!* Die Gefangenen – bitter notwendige Arbeitskraefte – durften nicht nach Deutschland zum Arbeiten gebracht werden bzw. nur in ganz beschaenktem Umfang u. man liess sie verhungern. Wir machten den Russlandkrieg, ohne es in einigen Monaten besiegen zu koennen u. liessen dafuer den Englaendern Ruhe, statt sie durch staendige Angriffe vielleicht doch friedensbereit zu machen. . . Wir haben im Augenblick auf allen Seiten *die Initiative aus der Hand gegeben*.

5.-8.12.41:¹⁵⁵ . . . Mitte: Ueberall starker Kaelteeinbruch bis **35, 38** Grad Kaelte! Auch bei Sued u. Nord. Waffen versagen, Motoren, Panzer u. Kraftfahrzeuge versagen. Erfrierungen grossen Stils bei einem Inf.Rgt. d. **293. ID (2. Armee)**. An einem Tag allein **250** Ausfaelle durch Erfrierungen! () . . . mangelhafte Winterbekleidung. Dazu staendige russ. Angriffe sich verstaerkend! Russen gut ausgeruestet u. bekleidet, Waffen geeignet auch bei Kaelte, () dem Eindruck dieser Tatsachen. . .

1.4: Wehrmacht Soldiers (Biographies):

Note: „Als ich in **Dez 41** bei den **8 cm** Granatwerfer abgestellt war, kam am Heiligen Abend der Btn.-Kdr. zur Werfergruppe u. sagte, „Kameraden, ich habe hier noch drei [**3**] Zigaretten ‚Halbe Fuenf‘ uebrig; die teile ich jetzt mit Euch, da kann jeder ein Paar Zuege machen, da ich immer schon Nichtraucher war, bleiben noch einige Zuege zusaetzlich uebrig. Die Kommandeure damals waren *alle erfahrene Offiziere aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, diese waren alle nicht nur menschlich, sondern auch soldatisch absolute Spitze. Die jungen Offiziere wurden also auch dementsprechend herangefuehrt u. auch dementsprechend bewaehrt.“ (*Ltr P. Folger, 252. ID, to C. Luther, 9. Nov 02.*)

1.4.1: Lack of Strategic Vision:

¹⁵⁵ **Note:** Marianne mistakenly wrote: **5.-8.11.**

Telford Taylor: "At least during this [20th] century, the German military profession has been rightly celebrated for its technical and tactical competence, but its record in the field of grand strategy has been *abysmal*." (*Introduction to: Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941*)

Generalitaet: Nach **Bernd Wegner**, verschrieb sie sich mehrheitlich einer zweifelhaften **Kriegsfuehrung des „als ob,“**—als ob der Krieg noch zu einem annehmbaren Ende zu bringen sei. (*Die Ostfront 1943-44. Das Dt. Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg, Band 8, Karl-Heinz Frieser, B. Wegner, et al.*) (Note: Book apparently also demonstrates that the *hoffnungslose Unterlegenheit der Wehrmacht* from 1943 on was *greater than has been hitherto assumed*; and that it was the *sowjet. Fuehrungsmangel* that prevented an earlier end to the war.)

Note: In der *Wehrmacht* im Zweiten Weltkrieg mangelte es an Strategen – dazu fehlte den hohen Befehlshabern trotz ihrer gruendlichen Ausbildung als Generalstabsoffiziere die noetige Einsicht in die Faktoren Politik u. Wirtschaft, die mit Strategie verbunden sind. Darueber hinaus wurde ihnen im Kriege ein solcher Einblick auch durch den **Fuehrerbefehl Nr. 1** verweigert, der die Kenntnisse der Einzelnen strikt auf ihren jeweiligen Bereich einschraenkte. (*M. Stein, GFM Model, 12*)

Kriege werden nicht durch „Verlorene Siege“ oder „Verratene Schlachten“ verloren. Ausschlaggebend sind zwei Faktoren: das wirtschaftliche Potential, in dem Deutschland hoffnungslos unterlegen war u. die Strategie, die es in der Wehrmacht einfach nicht gab. „Man staunt im Falle NS-Deutschlands ueber das nahezu vollstaendige Fehlen einer systematisch u. umfassenden Bewertung bei der Ausarbeitung der Strategie.“ „Fuer Spitzenfunktionen was das Ausbildungssystem der Wehrmacht eindeutig mangelhaft.“ Sogar Manstein, der wahrscheinlich hervorragendste Generalstabsoffizier der Wehrmacht, kam in seinen strategischen Ueberlegungen nie ueber seine oftmals wiederholte Remistheorie hinaus. . . Ein strategisches Verstaendnis, wie bei Brooke in Grossbritannien u. bei Marshall in den USA, war in der Wehrmacht nicht vorhanden u. auch die Stawka der Roten Armee, besonders nach der Ernennung Antonows zum *de facto* Generalstabschef, war dem **OKH** u. dem **OKW** ueberlegen. . . Dass die Wehrmacht noch bis **1945** weiterkaempfen konnte, war vorwiegend der Qualitaet der dt. Truppe zu verdanken u. dem Koennen ihrer Kom.Gen. u. Kdr., die den entsprechenden Raengen bei den Alliierten ueberlegen waren. (*M. Stein, GFM Model, 61-62*)

1.4.2: Soldiers Biographies:

VON ARNIM, General Hans Juergen:

Hans-Jürgen von Arnim trat **1908** in das deutsche Heer ein und war bei Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges Hauptmann. Von der Reichswehr übernommen, wurde er **1934** zum Oberst und am **1 Jan 38** zum Generalmajor befördert. Im Polenfeldzug führte er ab dem 8. September die 52. Infanterie-Division und erhielt am **5 Okt 40** den Oberbefehl über die 17. Panzerdivision. Diese führte er im Rußlandfeldzug bei der Heeresgruppe Mitte und wurde am **1 Okt 41** zum General befördert. Am **11 Nov 41** übernahm er das Kommando über das **XXXIX. Panzerkorps**, im **Dez 42** wurde er zum Generaloberst befördert und zum Kommandeur der 5. Panzerarmee. Er erhielt den Auftrag, den tunesischen Brückenkopf gegen die alliierten Landungen (Operation "Torch") in Marokko zu verteidigen. Das Vorhaben gelang und die 5. Panzerarmee konnte sich mit dem DAK in Tunesien vereinigen. Nach der Abberufung von Feldmarschall Rommel aus Afrika übernahm von Arnim das Kommando über die Heeresgruppe Afrika, mit der er am 12./13.

Mai 1943 kapitulierte. Er geriet in amerikanische Gefangenschaft. Ritterkreuz (4 Sep 41) (<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de>)

“There were also officers who tried to prevent the executions in their own divisions. We know only of a single case – that of *General v. Arnim*, of **17 PD** – where the *Commissar Directive* was not implemented.” (K.-J. Mueller, *Brutalization of Warfare*, 231)

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BAUR, Hans:

Baur was Hitler’s trusted personal pilot.¹⁵⁶ He was a seasoned aviator who had gained a great amount of experience flying on difficult routes of the *Deutsche Lufthansa AG*, the German national airline, during the **1920s** and early **1930s**. He was also a decorated World War I army flyer. But he was “far more than just Hitler’s personal pilot.” From the early **1930s** until Hitler’s death in Berlin in **1945**, Baur was Hitler’s companion and confidant, and was a close to being the German leader’s friend as anyone in his inner circle. (C.G. Sweeting, *Hitler’s Personal Pilot*, xiii-xiv)

Zaporoche incident:

Sweeting book contains account of Hitler and Baur’s narrow escape from a German air base in Russia in **1943**, just as Soviet tanks arrived at the perimeter. Occasion was Hitler’s visit to Manstein’s HQ in Zaporoche in **Feb 43**. Soviets broke through the German defenses at Dnepropetrovsk and their tanks were advancing toward Zaporoche along the highway that led directly past the airport (i.e., the large airport east of the town). Bad weather w/ blowing snow and a low ceiling would prevent the *Luftwaffe* from attacking the enemy armored column, and there were no German units to stop it. The Russians were coming and would be there in two [2] hours! Baur commandeered a car and raced to v. Manstein’s HQ in the town, where he found Hitler and urged him to depart at once. Hitler agreed to leave soon and Baur returned to the field and told the crews to have the Condors ready for immediate takeoff. *Luftwaffe* ground personnel were taking up positions to defend the airfield, but they had neither AT guns nor heavy artillery. The situation was critical, because over **100** acft were parked on the field, along w/ tons of valuable stores and equipment, and v. Manstein and his entire staff were located in Zaporoche, just a few miles to the west.

Horns began honking when **22 T-34s** were spotted arriving at the eastern corner of the airfield. Baur ordered the engines warmed up and just then Hitler and his entourage roared up in cars and clambered on board. The three [3] Condors raced down the field and took off just as two huge six-engine Messerschmitt **Me 323** “Gigant” transports landed. They learned later what happened and how close they had come to disaster. The Red Army tanks had stopped at the edge of the airport and viewed the frantic activity on the crowded field w/ amazement. Thinking that such a busy facility w/ so many airplanes would be heavily defended, they withdrew to a defensible area nearly w/o firing, where they ran out of gas. . . German reinforcements soon arrived and made use of the cargo of AT wpns that had been carried aboard the **Me 323s**. . . When Hitler was informed later about the events that morning, he simply shrugged and said, “pure luck.” (C.G. Sweeting, *Hitler’s Personal Pilot*, 210-11)

¹⁵⁶ **Note:** Sweeting: “Hitler was also the first national leader to have his own personal airplane and pilot, and for that important job he chose Hans Baur.” (xiv)

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BELOW, Nicolaus von:

Hitler's Luftwaffe adjutant.

“For almost eight [8] years, from **16 Jun 37** to **29 Apr 45**, I served as Luftwaffe Adjutant attached to the *Adjutantur der Wehrmacht beim Fuehrer u. Reichskanzler*. . . My diaries were destroyed at the end of the war: some of them I placed in the fire myself; Hitler's naval adjutant Puttkamer was responsible for burning those at the Obersalzberg; and as Allied troops advanced towards my in-laws' estate, my wife destroyed the remaining documents I kept there. During my captivity I made notes which form the foundation to this memoir. . . I was a career airman and looked to the future. More than once I attempted to return to squadron duty but Hitler would not let me go. . . To the last Hitler wanted me at his side.” (*Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler's Side, 11*)

Note: He became Hitler's *Luftwaffe* adjutant after Hauptmann Mantius (Hitler's former adjutant) had been killed in flying accident. (*Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler's Side, 13*)

Daily routine as Luftwaffe Adjutant:

Our daily timetable had to accord to Hitler's routine. He was very easy to get on with, being amiable and correct towards his staff. In Berlin I would spend about an hour a day taking applications before joining the other adjutants at midday in our Reich Chancellery office. Hitler would not normally appear earlier from his private quarters. Because of his insomnia, Hitler worked into the early hours, when he found the quietness he needed for reflection. We would start w/ a mutual question-and-answer session to clarify outstanding matters. He would then keep his pre-lunch appointments, which were scheduled to finish by **2 p.m.** If he overran the meal would be delayed. . . Further appointments followed after lunch. . . During the afternoon [Hitler] would retire to his private rooms to read or rest, although in good weather he enjoyed a walk in the Reich Chancellery park.

With the exception of the most urgent business, during the day he never used a desk except to sit on it [!]. It was his rather odd custom to burst into sudden dictation, and his adjutants would have to scribble down instructions and intentions and later practically recast them. . . A serious weakness of the whole system of dictatorial government in Germany was that nobody was able to say w/ any certainty what Hitler had really meant when he dictated something at speed as his original idea had passed through several pairs of hands.

The evening meal was normally taken at **8 p.m.** with a smaller circle. Speer, or Heinrich Hoffmann, Baur his pilot, one or two military adjutants and one of the medical officers would be there, and his personal ADCs would look round to make up the numbers w/ guests who enjoyed Hitler's conversation. During dinner a list of the newest films, including foreign releases, would be presented by Goebbels and Hitler's choice would be shown afterwards in the orchestral room. Hitler's house servants, his SS guards and guests' chauffeurs were all invited. After the film he would sit before the fireplace w/ his guests and staff. Drinks, from tea to champagne, would be served – and cakes and sandwiches if the evening looked like being a long one. The evening conversation rarely tailed off much before **2. a.m.** Hitler's female secretaries ate at the table and

joined in the social evening at the Berghof and later at Fuehrer HQs, but not at the Reich Chancellery. (*At Hitler's Side*, 15-16)

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BERGMANN, Gen.Lt. Friedrich:

Zum Kdr. der **137. ID** wurde der **57**-jaehrige Gen.Lt. Friedrich Bergmann ernannt. Der in **38** Dienstjahren, in vielseitiger Front- u. Stabsverwendung, in Krieg u. Frieden ergraute Offizier war nicht eben begeistert von seiner neuen Aufgabe. Hatte er doch bereits die aktive 27. ID in Friedenszeiten ausgebildet u. mit Erfolg im Frankreichfeldzug gefuehrt. Als sie zur mot. Div. wurde, glaubte man, ihr einen juengeren Kdr. geben zu muessen. . . (*W. Meyer-Detring, 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 13)

General Bergmann was killed outside town of Sjawki (SE of Kaluga) on **21 Dec 41**, personally overseeing attack on the town. (For fascinating details see, *W. Meyer-Detring, 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 105-06)

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BERTHOLD, Gen Gerhard:

Kdr. **31. ID**

(1891-1942), Gen.-Maj., **8.41 – 14.4.42** (gefallen) Kdr. **31. ID**.

16.4.42 [Spas Demensk / **AOK 4**]: „Mit groesster Sorge haben wir die letzten Tagen erlebt. Tatsaechlich gelang es dem Feind, sich auf der wichtigsten Hoehe der Rollbahn festzusetzen. Wie durch ein Wunder gelang es am **14ten**, sie wiederzunehmen. . . Die Rueckgewinnung der Hoehe hat uns einen unserer besten Div.-Kdr., General Berthold, gekostet, der zunaechst nach mir das **43. AK 6** Wochen hindurch gefuehrt hat. Er fiel im Kampf um einen Ort. Ich bedauere das sehr, denn er war ein ganz vorzueglicher Mann, anstaendig, klug u. tapfer. . .“ (*Gen. Gotthard Heinrici, Brief an seine Frau*; in: *J. Huerter, Ein Deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 156)

Note: No entry for B. at lexicon-der-wehrmacht.

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BLUMENTRITT, Gen Guenther:

Blumentritt: “In **1914-18**, as a lieutenant, I fought for the first two (**2**) years against the Russians, after a brief contact w/ the French and Belgians at *Namur* in **Aug 14**. In our very first attack on the Russian front, we quickly realized that here we were meeting *essentially different soldiers* from the French and Belgian – hardly visible, entrenched w/ consummate skill, and resolute! We suffered considerable losses.” (Quoted in: *B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 187-88)

* 10. Februar 1892, München	
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† 12. Oktober 1967, München

Günther Blumentritt trat am 29. Mai 1911 als Fahnenjunker in die Kaiserliche Armee ein. Er kam dabei zum 3. Thüringisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 71. Bei diesem wurde er nach dem Besuch der Kriegsschule Danzig am 19. November 1912 zum Leutnant befördert. Mit seinem Regiment nahm er dann ab Sommer 1914 am 1. Weltkrieg teil. Bis zum Frühjahr 1916 hatte er bereits beide Eisernen Kreuze erhalten. Am 22. März 1918 wurde er als Regimentsadjutant zum Oberleutnant befördert. Im Sommer 1918 wurde er verwundet, kehrte aber nach wenigen Wochen zum Regiment zurück. Nach dem Kriegsende wurde er nach einem Einsatz beim Freikorps in das Reichsheer übernommen. Dabei kam er im Übergangsheer im Frühjahr 1920 zum Reichswehr-Infanterie-Regiment 21. Bei der Bildung des 100.000 Mann-Heeres der Reichswehr kam er dann zum 15. Infanterie-Regiment. . . Am 1. Februar 1926 wurde er für die nächsten Jahre in den Generalstab der 6. Division der Reichswehr nach Münster versetzt. Dort wurde er am 1. April 1926 zum Hauptmann befördert. . .

An 1. September 1933 wurde er zum Major befördert. Zum 1. Juli 1935 wurde er dann zum Stab vom Wehrkreiskommando VII nach München versetzt. Am 15. Oktober 1935 wurde er zum 1. Generalstabsoffizier (Ia) im Stab des VII. Armeekorps ernannt. Als solcher wurde er am 1. April 1936 zum Oberstleutnant befördert. Am 12. Oktober 1937 wurde er dann zum Kommandeur des I. Bataillons vom Infanterie-Regiment 19 in München ernannt. Als solcher wurde er am 1. Oktober 1938 zum Oberst befördert. Am 10. November 1938 kam er dann als Chef der 4. Abteilung zum Generalstab des Heeres. Am 18. August 1938 wurde er dann zum Ia der 12. Armee ernannt.

Kurz nach Kriegsbeginn wurde er dann durch die Umbenennung des Oberkommandos zum Ia im Generalstab der Heeresgruppe Süd ernannt und nahm mit dieser am Polenfeldzug teil. Dabei wurden ihm bereits beide Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen verliehen. Danach wurde er durch die Umbenennung seines Kommandos zum Ia im Generalstab der Heeresgruppe A ernannt. Mit dieser nahm er am Westfeldzug teil. Am **20 Okt 40** wurde er dann zum Chef des Generalstabes bei der 4. Armee ernannt. Ab Juni 1941 wurde er dann mit dem AOK 4 im Ostfeldzug beim Angriff auf Mittelrussland eingesetzt. Bei diesem wurde er am 16. Januar 1942 zum Generalmajor befördert. Das Rangdienstalter wurde dabei auf den 1. November 1941 festgelegt. Am 17. Januar 1942 kam er als Oberquartiermeister I in den Generalstab des Heeres. Am 26. Januar 1942 wurde er mit dem Deutschen Kreuz in Gold ausgezeichnet. . .

Bei Kriegsende geriet er in alliierte Gefangenschaft, aus der er Anfang **1948** entlassen wurde. Danach wurde er dann als Autor tätig. Dabei schrieb er unter anderem das Buch "von Rundstedt - The Soldier and the Man", wobei es sich um die Biographie seines langjährigen Vorgesetzten handelte.

Ritterkreuz (13. September 1944) Eichenlaub (18. Februar 1945)

<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de>

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BOCK, GFM Fedor von:

Kirchubel: The 64-yr-old v. Bock has been described as a “difficult man.” In **Apr 1918** Major v. Bock had garnered the *Pour le Merite* for “reckless bravery.” He spoke French fluently, and

English and Russian well. Usually the “stoic guardsman,” he was the *only senior leader to question Barbarossa* when briefed on its plan in **Jan 41**. (*Barbarossa* 1941, 16)

A. Seaton: “Apart from those who had doubts as to the need to go to war, only the **60-year-old, elegant, tall and spidery** GFM v. Bock seems to have *openly questioned Hitler’s political and strategic aims*. Formerly an officer of the Kaiser’s foot guards and a man whose main military ability appeared to be in the field of strategy, v. Bock was arrogant, aloof, cynical, vain and unbending. Yet he was on good terms w/ Hitler, of whom he stood a little in awe. When, on **3 Dec 40**, the Fuehrer visited the sick v. Bock to congratulate him on his birthday, the field-marshal learned for the first time of the dictator’s intention to attack the Soviet Union. He immediately voiced his fears. Russia, v. Bock said, was an enormous country and its military strength was unknown; he believed that such a war might be difficult even for the Wehrmacht.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 31)¹⁵⁷

A. Seaton: “Von Bock, overbearing w/ both superiors and subordinates, was not, however, inhibited from severely restricting the freedom of his own army cdrs, even to the extend of meddling w/ matters which were scarcely his concern. His relationship w/ the level-headed Hoth was satisfactory but tension was to arise between von Bock and Strauss. He did *not get on at all well w/ the energetic GFM v. Kluge*, so well esteemed by Hitler, and he had very little time for the arrogant, impetuous and undisciplined Guderian.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 41)

Gerbet: *At no time was Bock a National-Socialist*. On the contrary, “There are indications that he had scant regard for nazi pomp. He was of the opinion that he stood above the raw political and propaganda intrigues of the Nazis. The story is told that during an official reception at the *Reich Chancellery* in 1938, *Hermann Goering*, like Bock a wearer of the *Pour le Merite*, approached him and said that as wearers of Germany’s highest military honor they could actually be good friends. Bock answered w/ an *icy stare* and told Goering in no uncertain terms that the medal at their throats did not place them on the same social level. On the other hand Bock regarded *Hitler* as head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces and *in his diary refers to him almost reverentially*. As a high-ranking cdr during the Third Reich’s early victories in the Second World War, Bock usually concluded his orders of the day w/ ‘*long live the Fuehrer,*’ not ‘*hail to the Fuehrer*’ as the cdrs who were adherents of national-socialism did.” (*Gerbet*, 19-20; also, *Turney*)

Blumentritt: „[He] was one of our foremost military brains. Like Rundstedt and Manstein he had a talent for controlling operations on the largest scale. He was a tall, slender man, a *typical Prussian of the old school*. During the First World War he had been for a time Chief Operations Officer at the HQ of Army Group German Crown Prince, on the Western Front. He was vivacious, often sarcastic, and expressed his thoughts clearly and well. He *did not look his age* and might have passed for a man of forty. However, his health was not perfect, for he suffered from frequent *stomach pains*.” (*Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 42-43)

Blumentritt: According to him (*Stabschef 4. AOK*), “von Bock was a very difficult man to serve, and von Kluge would have been glad to get out of his sphere.” (Quoted in: *B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 151)

¹⁵⁷ **Note:** GFM v. Bock would see Hitler again, for about an hour, on **2 Feb 41**; the conversation covered the same ground as that two months earlier. Hitler was “breezily optimistic” and regarded the early collapse of the Soviet Union as a foregone conclusion. But v. Bock again brought up the question of strategic aims, and remained unconvinced by Hitler’s answers. . . According to Seaton, v. Bock was the only senior general who questioned the political/strategic aims of “Barbarossa.” (31-32, 35)

Attitude towards liquidation of Jews, Kommissars, POWs: Apparently, Bock intervened vigorously against the “*Barbarossa decree w/ disciplinary order*” [*Gerichtsbarkleiterlass?*] in **Jun 41**, noting that it gave “every soldier the right...to shoot at any Russian he considered—or claimed to consider—a bandit, from in front or behind.” Bock instructed his chief of staff, *Greiffenberg*, to inform Brauchitsch that this order had to be changed immediately. When there was no noticeable reaction, *Bock intervened personally*. He won the concession that punishable acts by soldiers against Soviet civilians should be investigated as usual by the courts martial and punished. These deviations from orders *were only granted to Bock*. “The course of the intervention by Bock shows..., what a cdr could achieve if he came forward w/ confidence. Ultimately, this order had to be rescinded! (*Gerbet, 22; see also, C. Streit, Keine Kameraden, 44*).

Bock also stepped in *energetically* against the mistreatment of POWs by soldiers under his command. He noted: “Acts of brutality have occurred while prisoners of war are being shipped to the rear: I have objected strongly in a toughly-worded letter to the armies.” (*Tagebuch Bock, 22.8.41*). Historian *Christian Streit* also emphasized: “Generals like Bock...tried through orders to prevent mistreatment and willful shooting of prisoners; however as reports on such shootings from Rear Army Area Center, General v. *Schenckendorf* responsible, show, this did not succeed.” Bock also *rejected the actions against the Jews* as “the biological root of bolshevism,” even though not w/ the required resolution, as demanded by officers on his staff. (*C. Streit, 169; Gerbet, 23, 290*)

Gerbet: “The analysis of Bock’s basic ideological-political attitude by credible historians *annuls such a generalizing opinion as:* ‘Bock’s differences w/ the supreme command were not political but purely of a military-professional nature and never went beyond these professional boundaries.’ (*Dr. Bernd Wegner, historian, MGFA, Potsdam, TV documentary by Ia Zwischen Pflicht u. Verweigerung – GFM Fedor v. Bock, broadcast on 28.4.95.*) The statements by *Dr. Horst Muehleisen*, that Bock „was one of Hitler’s paladins, whose orders, no matter what their nature, he never criticized (*Muehleisen, Horst. Patrioten im Widerstand, Carl-Hans Graf von Hardenbergs Erlebnisbericht. In: The Quarterly for Contemporary History,*¹⁵⁸ **3/1993**, p 425) are *quite obviously contradicted by Bock’s diary entries*. Instead, Bock’s “loyalty to Hitler” can best be *explained by his monarchist background* and history of service to the most senior representatives of the state, whether King, the Reich President, or the Fuehrer Adolf Hitler. (*Gerbet, 23-24*)

Kommissarbefehl: Took the courageous stand of *refusing to transmit the now infamous Kommissarbefehl*, which authorized *summary extrajudicial execution* of Soviet political ofers. (*Hart, Guderian, 71*)

Early Life:

Bock’s father, *Moritz Karl Albert v. Bock* (nee, 15 Jan 1828), rose to rank of major-general. On 19 Jan 1873, he was elevated to the nobility, because on 19 Jan 71, while serving as a major and cdr of Inf.Rgt. No. 44, he had refused to give up his command though severely wounded in the battle at *St. Quentin*. Instead, he remained w/ his rgt until battle was over and *led it from his field hospital*. For his action, he was recommended for award of the Order *Pour le Merite*; however, in 1873, Kaiser Wilhelm I instead decided to award him a title. The older v. Bock ultimately became a maj-gen. and commander of *Torgau*. Both his sons would later receive the highest

¹⁵⁸ *Vierteljahrhefte fuer Zeitgeschichte?*

Prussian award for valor, the future *Feldmarschall* and his older brother, *Fedor Franz Karl*, an outstanding general staff officer. (*The War Diary, Gerbet*, 12-13)

After attending school in *Wiesbaden* and *Berlin*, Bock joined the 7th Coy of the *Royal Prussian Cadet Institute* at *Gross-Lichterfelde*. He was universally respected for his *outstanding achievements*. He “was very good in such academic subjects as modern languages, mathematics and history. He spoke fluent French and very good English and *Russian*. (*The War Diary, Gerbet*, 13)

After serving as a senior non-commissioned officer, on **17 Mar 98**, at age of **18**, he passed the selection board and *began his service as a second-lieutenant* (commissioned: **15/3/1898**) w/ the **5th Foot Guards Rgt.** in *Berlin-Spandau*. Now he developed “those physical and mental qualities which later took him to the top of the German military hierarchy. He was *tall and slim, had narrow shoulders and a posture straight like a ramrod*. His *sharp features, piercing green eyes and narrow lips made him look emaciated, indeed almost starved*.” (*The War Diary, Gerbet*, 14; see also, *Turney, Diaster at Moscow*)

Effective **10.9.08**, Bock was promoted to *Oberleutnant*. After general staff training, on **22.3.12**, he was promoted to *Hauptmann*. Just before outbreak of WWI, he joined the *Army League*, where he met von *Brauchitsch, Halder* and von *Rundstedt*. After outbreak of war, Bock took part in fighting in the West (Namur, St. Quentin, Arras, Ypres, Artois). In **1915**, he became a battalion cdr in the **4th Foot Guards Rgt.** Effective **28.12.16**, he became a *Major* in the General Staff of the *Grand General Staff*. He subsequently joined the **200. ID** as general staff officer; this unit saw action in the mountain war in the *Carpathians* and took part in the defensive battles against the Russian “*Brusilov offensive*” of **1916**. In **1917/18**, he served as 2nd then 1st General Staff Officer in the staff of the *German Crown Prince’s Army Group*. There he won the friendship of his C-in-C and he remained faithful to him and the *House of Hohenzollern* – even after abdication of the Royal Family. (*The War Diary, Gerbet*, 14)

In his book, *Erinnerungen aus Deutschlands Heldenkampf*, the Crown Prince of the German Reich and of Prussia, *Wilhelm*, wrote of Bock:

Through his inexhaustible vigour, this highly-giften officer was a never-wavering support to me and my chief of staff in times of the hardest and most demanding work. (*The War Diary, Gerbet*, 15)

For his military achievements, v. Bock was awarded the **EK 1** and **EK 2**, the Order of the House of Hohenzollern and in April 1918, he was awarded the **Order Pour le Merite**. (*The War Diary, Gerbet*, 15)

Reichswehr:

Service in Reichswehr: Of note is that, as 1st General Staff Officer w/ the Chief of Staff of *Luettwitz* (Reichswehr Army Group HQ 1), Bock *refused to take part in the Kapp Putsch*. Later, as Chief of Staff of Military Area HQ III (Berlin), on **1.10.20** he was entrusted with, among other things, the formation and liquidation of the *Black Reichswehr*. Following other promotions, on **6.2.29**, Bock was promoted to *Generalmajor*. On **14.9.29**, Bock was named commanding officer of the *Ist Cavalry Division*. On **7.2.31**, he was promoted to *Generalleutnant*. (See, *Gerbet*, 15-16 for more on Bock’s service w/ the *Reichswehr*.)

Early Nazi Period:

1.3.35: v. Bock promoted to *General der Infanterie*. Three years later, **Mar 1938**, Bock was named C-in-C of the newly-formed **8th Army**. Took part in *Anschluss*—the march into Austria in **Mar 1938**. On **15.3.38**, Bock promoted to *Generaloberst*. In autumn of same year, Bock's troops participated in the occupation of the *Sudetenland*. (*Gerbet*, 16-17)

Anecdote: “In the late 20s and 30s, when Bock was one of the highest officers in the Reichswehr, he was now and then invited to talk to graduates of his alma mater. He spoke passionately, and his theme was always that the *highest honor for a German soldier was to die for the Fatherland on the battlefield*. Because of this *passionate, fanatical encouragement*, v. Bock received the title ‘*the holy fire of Kuestrin*.’” (*Gerbet*, 15-16; see also, *Turney*.)

10.11.38: Bock named C-in-C of Army Group I (Berlin). Responsibility for excesses against the Jews in so-called *Night of Broken Glass* was not placed on Hitler; rather on radical elements in the NS-movement, like *Goebbels*, who von Bock *would most dearly loved to have strung up*. During a meeting of cdrs an agitated Bock asked whether they couldn't “*hang this swine Goebbels*.” (*Gerbet*, 18)

1939-41:

Bock plays major role in Polish campaign as C-in-C of Army Group North; was awarded the *Knight's Cross* for his role in campaign. In **Oct 39**, he was transferred to Western Front as C-in-C of Army Group B. On **19.7.40**, Bock was promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall*. (*Gerbet*, 19)

Russlandfeldzug:

25.6.41 [*Halder Tagebuch*]: General v. *Greiffenberg* (Chief of Staff, AGp. Center) reports on the execution of my order given to von *Tresckow*. **28.** and **161.** **IDs** will be turned southward in the direction ordered, to close the ring around Bialystok. Correspondingly, **V** and **VI AK** of **9 Army** will move to the right, against the line Lida-Vilna. In order to prevent a gap to AGp. North, **900 Bde** will move to the left wing near Vilna. This meets our specifications. It is characteristic that Field Marshal v. Bock expressly demands a *written order*, and *he does not agree w/ us*. (He does not want to do anything about the pocket forming to the south, and would *rather press on to the east*.) (*Halder War Diary*, 422-23)

It was Bock, not the German General Staff, who had been the *chief proponent of a concentrated and quick attack on Moscow since mid-July 1941* (see, *Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*). However, by Dec 41, he was warning emphatically against the attack that had been ordered on Moscow. See his diary entry, **1.12.41**. (*Gerbet*, 21)¹⁵⁹

Also noteworthy is the *clear position Bock took in the case of Generalleutnant Graf v. Sponeck* (C-in-C of **42. AK**). At end of Dec 41, *Sponeck* responsible for defending the *Kersch Peninsula*. Acting on his own initiative, he ordered his troops to withdraw. This resulted in a court martial at

¹⁵⁹ **Note:** *Russell Hart* opines that *Guderian* was the primary proponent of continuing the advance on Moscow. (*Hart, Guderian*, 76; also, *Bradley, Guderian*, 226)

Fuehrer Headquarters, presided over by *Goering*. Result of trial was death sentence, later reduced to imprisonment. Bock stood up for Sponeck and demanded the case should be heard again. To no avail. Sponeck eventually shot three days after attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944 (*Gerbet*, 20).

Possessed a more *sophisticated strategic view* (than Guderian, for ex.). He, Bock, *recognized the necessity of organizing Russian forces to spearhead the overthrow of the regime* under the guise of *national liberation*. (*Hart, Guderian*, 75-76)

Late Dec 41: When GFM v. Bock arrived in Berlin [after going on leave due to health reasons] he learned – w/ anquish – that he was not the commanding general, AGC, on leave, but had been put along w/ Rundstedt in the command reserve pool. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 87)

Note: For an account of Bock's final years and death on **4.5.45**—the result of a strafing attack by low-flying English acft—see, *Gerbet*, 26-27. His final words, to GFM von *Manstein*, who was visiting Bock at the navy hospital in *Oldenburg*: “Manstein, save Germany.”

* * * * *

BRAUCHITSCH, GFM Walther von:

„Like Keitel, von Brauchitsch was an upright, imposing looking man, square-jawed and of confident bearing, in outward appearance what might have been thought a typical Prussian officer, reserved in manner and exacting towards his subordinates. Yet in truth von Brauchitsch was irresolute. (*A. Seaton, „The Battle for Moscow*, 18)

Background:

Ueber GFM von Brauchitsch ist “*nur wenig bekannt u. noch viel weniger ist ueber ihn geschrieben worden*. Ein Mann, der als [ObdH] von 1938 bis 1941 an der Spitze der groessten Teilstreitkraft des Deutschen Reiches stand u. damit eine der Schluesselpositionen in der *Wehrmacht* besetzte, ist nur *schemenhaft u. bruckstueckweise in der vielfaeltigen Literatur* zum Zweiten Weltkrieg sowie zum Nationalsozialismus u. zum Widerstand im ‚Dritten Reich‘ zu finden. Dies ist auf den ersten Blick um so ueberraschender, als sich die historische Forschung bereits eingehend mit den beiden Chefs des Generalstabes in der Amtszeit von Brauchitsch, Beck u. Halder, auseinandergesetzt hat...Eine intensive Auseinandersetzung mit Brauchitsch oder seinen Motiven findet kaum statt...Sudetenkrise, Polen- u. Frankreichfeldzug, schliesslich der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion sind die bekanntesten mil. Stationen, die v. Brauchitsch an der Spitze des Heeres fuehrte u. in deren Verlauf er zuletzt am mil. Wendepunkt im Winter 1941 entlassen wurde. In diesem Zusammenhang ist in der *Nachkriegsliteratur das Bild eines physisch u. psychisch gebrochenen Mannes gezeichnet worden*. Gleichzeitig wurde ihm vorgeworfen, dass er es nicht vermocht habe, den Diktator von der Politik des Krieges abzubringen u. er sich keiner der Gruppen des mil. Widerstandes u. dem Staatsstreich eindeutig angeschlossen hat. Ueber die Jahre nach seiner Entlassung 1941 hinaus, ist nur wenig bekannt. In den Darstellungen u. der Forschungsliterature taucht Brauchitsch nach 1941 nur noch selten auf. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 8-9)

Note: On *final page* of his biography, *Loeffler* admits: Sein Vorbild **Moltke** mit dem Leitsatz “*Erst waegen, dann wagen*,” findet sich auch in den Aufzeichnungen des Feldmarschall mehr als

einmal wieder u. spiegelt seit der Ernennung zum ObdH am deutlichsten seine *Grundhaltung* in der Behandlung von Themen aller Art wieder, wobei tragischerweise *das Waegen dominiert hatte*. Ingesamt aber **bleibt der GFM Brauchitsch, nicht zuletzt wegen der schlechten Quellenlage, weiterhin eine der am wenigsten bekannten Persoenlichkeiten in der mil. Fuehrungselite des „Dritten Reiches.“** (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 276)¹⁶⁰

Halder hatte nach dem Krieg im Auftrag der amerikanischen Besatzungsmacht begonnen, die *Richtung fuer die deutsche u. internationale Militaergeschichte zum Zweiten Weltkrieg aus deutscher Sicht grundlegend zu beeinflussen* u. spaeter massgeblich zu uebernehmen...Seinen 1948 verstorbenen ehemaligen Vorgesetzten *Brauchitsch* hat Halder, insbesondere nach dessen Tod, bei der Darstellung der verschiedenen Ereignisse allerdings *eher vernachlaessigt oder gar nur unzureichend dargestellt*. Wie bei **Beck**, wird Brauchitsch daraufhin zumeist einseitig u. ausschliesslich an den Taten u. Darstellungen Halders, vor allem im Hinblick auf die Beteiligung am mil. Widerstand, gemessen. So steht der GFM v. Brauchitsch in der *Nachkriegsbetrachtung* hauptsaechlich im Schatten seiner Generalstabschefs Beck u. Halder u. das **Bild vom gekauften, psychisch schwachen u. willfaehrigen [compliant] mil. Vollstrecker der Annexionspolitik Hitlers hatte sine Fundament erhalten.** (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 12-13)¹⁶¹

Neben diesen Vorwuerfen zur *fehlenden Unterstuetzung u. Teilnahme am mil. Widerstand* sowie den *Umstaenden seiner Ernennung zum ObdH*, wird B. ausserdem die **Verantwortung an der Brutalisierung des Krieges zur Last gelegt**. Hier sind es zunaechst die Auseinandersetzung des Heeres mit der SS in Fragen der *Vollziehenden Gewalt* sowie Fragen zur Behandlung der Bevoelkerung in den besetzten Gebieten, die ein deutliches Licht auf die Mitverantwortung des ObdH bei der „*volkstumpolitischen Erschliessung*“ der eroberten Laender werfen. *Einem offenem Konflikt mit den Handlangern des Terrors wich Brauchitsch*, insbesondere nachdem Hitlers persoenliches Engagement in diesen „voelkischen“ Fragen offenkundig wurde, **immer wieder aus**. Spaetestens seit dem Fruehjahr 1941 steht mit dem sogenannten „**Kommissarbefehl**,“ u. dem **Gerichtsbareiterlass** fuer das Unternehmen „*Barbarossa*“ fest, dass [B.] nunmehr die eigene Truppe aktiv in die Vernichtungs- u. Lebensraumideologie des Nationalsozialismus verstrickt hat. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 13)

Career Notes:¹⁶²

Seit der fruehesten Jugend war B. durch die Verbundenheit seiner Familie zum *Soldatenberuf* u. *christliche Erziehung* tief gepraeagt. (Loeffler, 266)

¹⁶⁰ **Note:** Loeffler also states that Brauchitsch had kept a *Kriegstabebuch* during his time as ObdH. Unfortunately, this document has been lost (“vermutlich verbrannt”). Loeffler also notes “die unbekannt Menge von vermutlich noch existierenden Privatbriefen.“ (272, 276)

¹⁶¹ **Note:** Auch die Interpretation seiner Aufzeichnungen, das sogenannte Kriegstagebuch, hat Halder *weitgehend selbst gestaltet*. (12, f.n. 16) Weiterfuehrend ueber die *Rolle der dt. Generalitaet bei der Darstellung des Zweiten Weltkrieges*, siehe, **Wegner, Bernd, Erschriebene Siege. Franz Halder, die Historical Division u. die Rekonstruktion des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Geist der dt. Generalstabes**, in: *Politischer Wandel, organisierte Gewalt u. nationale Sicherheit*. Festschrift fuer Klaus-Juergen Mueller, hrsg. von. Bernd Wegner, et al. (Beitraege zur Militaergeschichte Bd. 50, hrsg. vom MGFA, 1995, S. 287-302)

¹⁶² For Brauchitsch’s *Dienstlaufbahn*, Teilnahme an Feldzuegen, Orden u. Ehrenzeichen, Befoerderungen see, Loeffler, *Anlage 1-3*, 304-15. From Loeffler’s account, it is clear that Brauchitsch was a *highly gifted officer*.

Early career: Began military career in **March 1900** as *Leutnant* in a Guards-Grenadier-Regiment. While nothing appeared to stand in the way of a career as a *Gardeoffizier*, B. found that he was not particularly attracted to the infantry branch of service; also, the physical demands of this *Waffengattung* had proven difficult for him: “Ich musste immer mehr feststellen, dass *Schusters Rappen* fuer mich nicht geeignet waren. Ich hatte, wie ich fruher nie gemerkt hatte, einen **Senkfuss**. Bei den langen Maerschen, die oft stundenlang ueber das *Berliner Pflaster* gingen, hatte ich in zunehmenden Masse *unertraegliche Schmerzen*.“ Eventually, B. was determined to be no longer capable to serve w/ the infantry. As a result, effective **1.12.1900**, he was transferred to a *Gard-Artillery-Rgt*. In 1912, ohne zuvor die *Kriegsakademie* besucht zu haben, wurde B. auf ein Jahr zum *Grossen Generalstab* kommandiert u. 1913 um ein weiteres Jahr verlaengert. Die Kommandierung zum *Grossen Generalstab* *ohne Besuch der Kriegsakademie* war eine Ausnahme u. **nur fuer sehr begabte Offiziere moeglich**, die nur auf eine hohe Qualifikation dieses Offiziers zurueckzufuehren ist. [Am **22.3.1914**], genau 14 Jahren nach seinem Eintritt in das Herr am **22.3.1900**, wurde B., inzwischen im Dienstgrad *Hauptmann*, endgueltig in diese hoechste mil. Organisation des Kaiserreiches versetzt (i.e., „unter Belassung beim *Grossen Generalstab* in den *Generalstab der Armee* versetzt.“) (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 44-47)

World War One: Experienced war exclusively on *western front* as general staff officer, but also saw combat service; experienced “den Schrecken des Trommelfeuers u. des Stellungskrieges.” Served as Ia for **34. ID** (1915-16), and later **11. ID** (1917-18). Garnered several combat decorations: **EK I, EK II, Ritterkreuz des Kgl. Hausordens der Hohenzollern mit Schwerden**, etc. Promoted to **Major** in **July 1918**. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 47-48, 266; see also *Anlagen* 1-4, 304-15)

4.2.38: Appointed **Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres**. Am **29.1.38**, wurde B. erstmals von Hitler empfangen. Hier bestaetigte der General seine Aussagen, seine Bereitschaft zu Aenderungen in den Stellenbesetzungen u. zur *vertiefenden Verbindung von Herr u. Nationalsozialismus*, die er bereits gegenueber Keitel geaeussert hatte. Das erste Gespraech mit Hitler nutzte B. aber auch, um sich offen zur *Kirche* u. zu einem *homogenen Aufbau u. Ersatz des Offizierkorps* zu bekennen, dem er besondere Bedeutung zugemessen hat. Somit stand *General der Artillerie* von Brauchitsch, **bei Hitler keineswegs an erster Stelle fuer den Posten des ObdH**, ja es erscheint vielmehr, als waere seine Berufung immer staerker durch Ausschluss der anderen Kandidaten u. mit der *Unterstuetzung Keitels* in den Vordergrund gerueckt. Er war ein **Kompromisskandidat**. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 87-88)¹⁶³

Barbarossa:

Summer ,41: According to *David Irving*, *Brauchitsch* stayed in *Berlin* for some (most?) of the summer of **1941**. Irving writes at one point of B. paying a „rare visit to the Wolf’s Lair.“ (See, *Irving, Hitler’s War*, 294)

¹⁶³ **Note:** „Den angeblichen **Verkauf des Heeres an Hitler** durch die *Rentenzahlung an Brauchitschs erste Frau* – fuer eine wie auch immer geartete grosse Barsumme oder Dotation findet sich *kein Beweis* – belegen zu wollen, ist nicht so eindeutig nachzuvollziehen, wie es in der *Literature* oftmals den Eindruck hinterlaesst. Dieser Vorwurf ist durch **Foertsch** erhoben worden u. dient seither als grundsaeztlicher Beleg fuer die Behauptung, der ObdH *habe sich durch diese Geldzuwendung in seinen Entschluessen beeinflussen lassen, da er sich an Hitler gebunden fuehlte*. Ein Vorwurf der selbst in der neuesten *Forschungsliterature*, mal staerker, mal schwaecher ausgepraegt, **ohne adaequaten Beweis**, weiterhin aufrecht erhalten wird.“ (89-95, 270-71)

Jun-Jul 41: B. stayed in close contact w/ the army groups – both via the telephone and thru visits to the front. Numerous entries in *v. Bock's diary* over visits and phone calls by B. during this period. Also, at least every other day, B. personally updated the *Fuehrer* on course of operations. In July, the differences of opinion between Hitler and OKH over further course of ops also came to a head (*Weisung 33*, etc.). About this B.'s biographer writes: "Besonders dramatisch war dabei, dass die **Widerstandskraft des ObdH** durch die letzten Auseinandersetzungen mit Hitler **endgueltig gebrochen** worden zu sein scheint. Auch eine am **25.7.41** durchgefuehrte Besprechung mit den Chefs der Heeresgruppe zeigte B.s *Anspannung*." (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 247)

31.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Dabei gehe es mit *Brauchitsch* noch besser als mit *Halder*, „der sehr kaput ist, mir einerseits alles ueberlaesst, andererseits aber doch immer wieder mit eigenen Gedanken dazwischen kommt.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 154)

Oct-Nov 41: B. hatte sich auch nach dem Beginn von „*Taifun*“ an den Orientierungen bei Hitler beteiligt u. die drei Heeresgruppen immer wieder *persoenlich besucht* u. *telefonisch* Kontakt gehalten. Doch eine Woche nachdem der Generalstabschef, von *seinem Reitunfall* genesen, seinen Dienst wieder aufgenommen hatte, war diesmal **B. gesundheitlich erneut an einer Grenze angelangt**. Eine bereits **1929** entdeckte aber nicht ausreichend behandelte **Herzerkrankung** hatte sich schon seit laengerem wieder bemerkbar gemacht u. den ObdH in seiner Belastbarkeit weiter eingeschaenkt. Am Morgen des **10.11.41**, dem **143.** Tag des Ostfeldzuges notierte Halder, dass B. **Eine schwere Herzattacke erlitten hatte** u. fuer die Fuehrung ausgefallen war. Eine Information, die aus verstaendlichen Gruenden jedoch gegenueber der Oeffentlichkeit geheimgehalten wurde. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 254)

Ruecktritt: Schon nachdem die Operation „*Taifun*“ endgueltig steckengeblieben war, hatte B. gegenueber Halder u. dem Heeresadjutanten **Engel** seine *Absicht zum Ruecktritt angekuendigt*: „Vertrauen zwischen F. u. OB nicht mehr zu kitten. Jede Lage[besprechung] ist *unerfreulich*. OB ist Angriffe u. Vorhaltungen von F. nicht gewachsen. Sagt mir [...] er koenne nicht mehr, auch gesundheitlich nicht. Will nun endgueltig um Urlaub [?] bitten.“ (*Engel, Heeresadjutant*, 117 (**6.12.41**); quoted in: *Loeffler*, 255)

7.12.41: War der ObdH endgueltig nicht mehr willens u. gesundheitlich auch nicht mehr faehig, die *immer haeufigeren Einmischungen Hitlers* in die Operationsfuehrung u. den eingetretenen Rueckschlag durch die Offensive der Roten Armee hinzunehmen – **er bot seinen Ruecktritt an**. Doch ebenso hartnaeckig wie sich der Diktator in die Operationsfuehrung eingemischt hatte, *wollte er [Hitler] den Ruecktritt des ObdH nicht annehmen*.¹⁶⁴ Vielmehr *handelte Hitler weiterhin selbstaendig u. ueber den Kopf des OKH hinweg, ja sogar in taktischen Entscheidungen an der Ostfront griff er ein*...Dieses Verhalten war sowohl fuer Halder als auch Brauchitsch *unertraeglich*...Da Hitler das *Abschiedsgesuch* abgelehnt hatte, andererseits aber selbst in die Fuehrung der Operationen draengte, blieb Brauchitsch nur die *Rolle eines ins Abseits geratenen Zuschauers*. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 255-56)

13.-19.12.41: Noch einmal besuchte *Brauchitsch* am **13.12.41** die Hr.Gr.Mitte. Die Reise hatte er nur angetreten, da zwei Armeefuehrer gedroht hatten, sofort *persoenlich* zu Hitler zu fliegen,

¹⁶⁴ Hinzu kam ausserdem, dass Hitler, ohne den ObdH zu informieren, den Befehlshaber des *Ersatzheeres* angewiesen hatte, **40 Divisionen zugunsten der Wirtschaft aufzuloesen**. Dies geschah zu einem Zeitpunkt, als der Feldzug noch keineswegs zugunsten der *Wehrmacht* entschieden war. (255, f.n. 889; also, *Halder KTB*, **5.12.41**)

wenn der ObdH nicht erscheinen wuerde. Der Besuch brachte allerdings keinen Durchbruch in dem **Fuehrungs-chaos zwischen Hitler u. dem OKH**. Der ObdH stimmte dann lediglich der Auffassung des OB der Heeresgruppe zu u. betonte, dass dem OKH alle Probleme ausreichend bekannt seien.¹⁶⁵ In den naechsten Tagen war B. nur noch niedergeschlagen u. gegenueber Halder gestand er wenige Tage spaeter ein, dass er *keinen Ausweg mehr sehen wuerde, um das Heer aus der schwierigen Lage zu befreien*. Gegen Mittag am **19.12.41** war es dann soweit – Hitler uebernahm persoendlich den Oberbefehl ueber das Heer u. entliess den *gedemutigten, geschlagenen u. gesundheitlich gebrochenen ObdH* in die sogenannte Fuehrerreserve, in der sich schon sein alter Foerderer, GFM v. Rundstedt, u. der GFM v. Bock befanden. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 256)

B. as **Suendenbock**: Das hinderte jedoch Hitler nicht daran, den ehem. ObdH gegenueber verschiedenen Personenkreisen als *Suendenbock fuer den gescheiterten Feldzug* u. alle inzwischen aufgetretenen Schwierigkeiten verantwortlich zu machen. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 256-57)

Ian Kershaw: „As Commander in Chief of the Army, Brauchitsch was *hopelessly weak and ineffectual*. Torn between pressures from his field cdrs and bullying from Hitler, he offered a *black hole* where clear-sighted and determined military leadership was essential. Long before the crisis which would ultimately bring his removal from office, Brauchitsch was a *broken reed*. The contempt w/ which Hitler treated him was *not w/o justification*.” (Hitler, 418-19)

David Irving: Hitler attached no blame to Bock and asked Schmudt to make this plain to the field marshal. Less cordial was his parting now w/ *Brauchitsch*. Hitler clearly *held him responsible for withholding from him*, whatever the motives, *urgent and serious msgs from frontline cdrs*. The impression he had gained on his visit to Rundstedt’s army group two weeks earlier was confirmed by the *inexplicable suppression* of Bock’s alarming msg of **13.12.41**. More serious were the recent indications of B.’s inability or reluctance to execute Hitler’s orders. According to Major v. Below, Hitler’s *Luftwaffe* adjutant, the incident that was the *last straw* had occurred in Berlin, in that midnight conference between Hitler and General Fromm. “Here Hitler found out that the orders that had reached the Replacement Army were different from those he had issued. After this nocturnal conference Hitler decided that B. would have to resign his command of the army.” (Hitler’s War, 359)¹⁶⁶

1942-45: Ueber die Jahre bis zum Kriegsende gibt es keine durchgaengigen Erkenntnisse...Die Dienstwohnung in Berlin u. sein Jagdhaus auf em Truppenuebungsplatz *Altengrabow* wurden ihm zur weiteren Nutzung ueberlassen, doch die meiste Zeit widmete er sich, immer wieder von seiner *Herzkrankheit* eingeholt, in **Schlesien** auf dem Besitz seiner zweiten Frau *familiengeschichtlichen u. volkswirtschaftlichen Studien*...Im Sommer **1942** besuchte ihn erneut **Sven Hedin**... Der allgemeine Eindruck des *schwedischen Forschers* ueber B. war der eines **traurigen u. verbitterten Mannes** – traurig, dass er nicht mehr ObdH war u. verbittert ueber die von Hitler begangenen Fehler.¹⁶⁷ Ueber Eingriffe Hitlers notierte er sich „Krisen gibt es in jedem Kriege, in jedem Feldzuge, in jeder Schlacht, in jedem Gefecht. Man muss die innere Kraft haben sei

¹⁶⁵ In der Truppe kam dagegen der Verdacht auf, dass Brauchitsch Hitler *nicht ausreichend unterrichtet hatte*. (256, f.n. 891; also, Stieff, Briefe, 146 (Nr. 82)

¹⁶⁶ **Note**: Irving’s perspectives provide quite a different picture of why B. relieved than the conventional wisdom of Hitler cynically using him as a “scapegoat.”

¹⁶⁷ **Note**: Anfang **1942** hatte sich der ObdH einer Operation unterziehen muessen. Der Besuch Hedins im Sommer war dann eine Abwechslung. Insbesondere das Thema der **Winterbekleidung** schien den ObdH *belastet zu haben*. (258, f.n. 900)

durchzustehen. Wer auf jede Nachricht hin seinen Feldzugplan, seinen Schlachtplan, seinen Gefechtsplan aendert, wird vor lauter Aenderungen nie zum Erfolg kommen. [...] Zwischen der pol. U. mil. Fuehrung muss im Krieg u. im Frieden ein unbedingtes gegenseitiges Vertrauen herrschen. Das Eingreifen des pol. Fuehrers in die mil. Operationen ist ein grosser Fehler. [...] Die Operationen fuehrt allein der mil. Fuehrer.” (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 258-59)

Roll in War Crimes:

See **Section 2.24** of many details concerning B. and the planning for *Vernichtungskrieg*. According to his biographer, *Loeffler*, B. attempted to limit the impact of the *Gerichtsbareiterlass*; conversely, he did nothing about the *Kommissarbefehl*, and simply passed it quickly to the *Heeresgruppen*. Indeed, in his *Begleitschreiben* that accompanied the latter order there were: Im Grunde nur zwei erlaeuternde Saetze. Einerseits wurde angeordnet, das Vorgehen gegen einen Kommissar mit einer besonders erkennbaren Handlung oder Haltung zu verbinden u. zum anderen sollte *die Toetung ausserhalb des Kampfgebietes u. unauffaellig geschehen*. Brauchitsch also signed off on the negotiations between *Oberquartiermeister Wagner* and *Heydrich* concerning the operations of the **SS-Einsatzgruppen**; approved the *Gerichtsbareiterlass* (despite his reservations); etc. In general, his actions resulted in the *Wehrmacht's* deep *Verstickung* in Hitler's criminal war of annihilation. (see, *Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 229-41)

Hassell: In early **Apr 41**, he noted in his diary that B. – through his support of Hitler's criminal orders – had *sacrificed the honor of the army*. (*Loeffler*, 240)

Assessment of:

In letzter Konsequenz war B. *ein passiv gebliebener Gegner* der verbrecherischen Politik Hitlers. Doch als **Nur-Soldat**, der sich auf seinen Eid auf Hitler u. die alten Werte von Pflcht, Treue u. Gehorsam bezogen hat, war er nicht in der Lage, diese gegenueber einem verbrecherischen System abzulegen. An der Spitze des Heeres konnte er damit gegenueber Hitler nicht zum Erfolg kommen. Der Weg des ObdH zum pol. Widerstand blieb daher sehr viel laenger u. war von vielfaeltigsten Ueberlegungen behindert worden. In diesem *lang andauernden anzunehmenden inneren Konflikt* gegenueber der Welt der Nationalsozialismus ist B. letztlich gescheitert u. zum passiven u. aktiven Wegbereiter nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen geworden. Es hat sich also gezeigt, dass B. **mit den bisher teilweise vereinfachten Bewertungen nicht hinreichend zu erfassen ist** u. es eine differenzierte Betrachtungsweise brauchte, um seine Rolle u. Haltung im Dritten Reich u. im Nationalsozialismus genauer zu untersuchen. Wie so oft ist eine **Schwarz-Weiss-Malerei** grundsatzlich nicht geeignet, um ein moeglichst objektives Bild zu gewinnen. (*Loffler*, 275-76)

Insbesondere unter den beiden Punkten *Amtsuebernahme* als ObdH u. *fehlende Beteiligung am mil. Widerstand* trifft man bei den Nachforschungen immer wieder auf eine **ueberaus negative Beurteilung der Person Walther v. Brauchitsch**. Die reicht von dem Vorwurf eines grundsatzlichen Versagens als ObdH, bis zu der Aussage, v. Brauchitsch haette in der dt. Militaergeschichte nicht unbedingt eine Biographie verdient. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 14)

In den entsprechenden biographischen *Nachschlagwerken* wird B. als *hochqualifizierter, gebildeter, wohlzogener u. vornehmer aristokratischer Soldaten preussischen Stils* geschildert,¹⁶⁸ der zugleich *sensibel, zurueckhaltend u. empfindsam*, in jedem Fall ein *aufrechter, kluger Offizier mit eignene Vorstellungen*, gewesen sein soll. Im persoelichen Umgang mit seinen Mitarbeitern habe er ein nettes aber kein freundschaftliches Verhaeltnis gepflegt. Dabei sei er *stets zuvorkommend* gewesen u. *niemals schroff* geworden. Als eine der wenigen noch lebenden Zeitzeugen aus dem engeren familiaeren Umfeld berichtet die *Tochter* von B., *Frau Heilwig Mayer*, dass er in *seinem privaten Bereich* eher *zurueckgezogen* gelebt u. *keinen ausgepraegten Freundschaftskreis* gehabt habe.

Daneben galt er in seinem Beruf gegenueber *militaertechnischen Innovationen* wie der Rakete u. insbesondere der *Verwendung u. dem Einsatz grosser motorisierter Verbaende u. Pz.-Divisionen, fruehzeitig als progressiv eingestellter Soldat*. Nach derselben Beurteilung soll B. mit in die erste Reihe der Elite der Befehlshaber des Heeres der dreissiger Jahre gehoert haben. In der Folge seiner Ernennung zum ObdH aber soll er *gegenueber Hitler besonders in Fragen der Kriegfuehrung dauerhaft versagt haben*. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 9-10)¹⁶⁹

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CANARIS, Admiral Wilhelm:

ca. May-Jun 41: Canaris was terribly worried about the approaching campaign. He criticized in the strongest terms the *Wehrmacht* leaders who, despite their expert knowledge, were irresponsible and foolish enough to support the views of a man like Hitler in his assumption that we should be able to conclude the Russian campaign w/in three months. He would not be a party to this, and could not understand how the Generals, von Brauchitsch, Halder, Keitel and Jodl, could be so complacent, so unrealistic, and so optimistic. But any attempt at opposition was useless; he had already made himself unpopular by his repeated warnings. Only a few days earlier *Keitel* had said to him, „My dear Canaris, you may have some understanding of the Abwehr, but you belong to the navy, you really should not try to give us lessons in strategic and political planning.“ When Canaris repeated such remarks he would usually rein in his horse, look at me w/ wide eyes and say quite seriously, „Wouldn't you find all this quite comic – if it weren't so desperately serious?“ (Walter Schellenberg, quoted in: Flower, *The War*, 205)

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FELLGIEBEL, General Erich:

Commanded the German Army's Signal Corps from **1934-44**. He was more than merely an outstanding specialist in his own narrow field. During his entire career he was driven by the idea of reviving the *Blitzkrieg* spirit, lost in WWI, through the use of *modern communications technology*. As a young officer, he commanded a mobile radio unit in one of the cavalry corps which, in the summer of 1914, marched into France in the hope of forcing a swift, *Blitzkrieg*-like victory. There he experienced the double failure of the army's communications system which made mobile command at the *operational level* impossible—on the one hand the collapse of

¹⁶⁸ **Note:** Siehe Borchert, Klaus, *Die Generalfeldmarschaele u. Grossadmirale der Wehrmacht*, 1994, S. 20.

¹⁶⁹ **Note:** Apparently, the conventional historical wisdom is that B. accepted the post as ObdH because it included paying for his divorce! In view of most historians, this limited B.'s freedom of action *vis-à-vis* Hitler and in part explains his failure to support the *Widerstand*. (10-11)

communications, and on the other the collapse of radio security. As a reaction to the first challenge, Fellgiebel developed the *concept of a command system suited to mobile, motorized operations*, above all by using the most modern communications method, i.e., **radio**. A lesser-known concept, developed in response to the second challenge, was the *idea of a mobile, motorized signals intelligence service* designed to supply the operational command echelon with optimal enemy information. His achievement was *to create from scratch a functioning "Intercept Service" (Horchdienst)*, within a relatively short time. (*Sigint and 'Blitzkrieg,' D. Arazi, 225*)

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GAREIS, Martin:

* 6. Oktober 1891, Buch bei Berlin + 26. Februar 1976, Kreuth bei Rottach-Egern	
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Martin Gareis trat am 21. Dezember 1909 aus dem Kadettenkorps kommend als Fähnrich in das Kaiserliche Heer ein. Er kam dabei zum 4. Brandenburgisches Infanterie-Regiment "Großherzog Friedrich Franz II von Mecklenburg-Schwerin" Nr. 24. Von Juli 1910 bis April 1911 besuchte er die Kriegsschule Potsdam und wurde danach am 18. August **1911** zum Leutnant befördert. Am 1. Februar **1914** wurde er zur MG-Kompanie des seines Regiments versetzt, mit der er dann bei Ausbruch des 1. Weltkrieges ins Feld zog. Am 30. Oktober 1914 wurde er verwundet und in ein Lazarett eingeliefert. Am 15. Februar **1915** kam er dann als Lehrer zum MG-Ausbildungskursus in Döberitz. Am 8. April 1915 wurde er dann Kompanieführer im Infanterie-Regiment 24, am 24. Oktober 1915 dann Ordonnanz-Offizier beim Stab der 5. Infanterie-Division. Am 22. März **1916** kehrte er als Kp.-Führer in das Infanterie-Regiment 24 zurück. Am 30. September 1916 wurde er MG-Offizier beim Stab des Inf.-Rgts. 24, am 14. Oktober 1916 Regimentsadjutant des Regiments. Am 18. August 1918 zum Oberleutnant befördert, wurde er am 23. Oktober **1918** Adjutant der 12. Infanterie-Brigade. Im 1. Weltkrieg wurde er mit beiden Eisernen Kreuzen, sowie dem Ritterkreuz des Königlich Preußischen Hausordens von Hohenzollern mit Schwertern ausgezeichnet. Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg wurde er dann in das Reichsheer übernommen. [Note: Details from **1920-33** omitted!]

Am 1. August **1933** wurde er zum Major befördert. . . Am 1. März **1936** folgte seine Beförderung zum Oberstleutnant. . . Am 1. August **1938** zum Oberst befördert. . . Am 25. September **1939** übernahm er das Kommando über das Infanterie-Regiment 282. Dieses Regiment führte er dann zuerst im Westfeldzug. In diesem wurde ihm dann die Spange zum Eisernen Kreuz 2. Klasse verliehen. Danach führte er sein Regiment im Sommer **1941** beim Angriff auf Südrussland. Im Ostfeldzug wurde ihm bereits früh die Spange zum Eisernen Kreuz 1. Klasse verliehen. Am 18. Oktober **1941** wurde er mit dem Deutschen Kreuz in Gold ausgezeichnet. Am **31 Dez 41** wurde er mit der Führung der 98. Infanterie-Division beauftragt. Am **1 Feb 42** wurde er zum Generalmajor befördert. Als solcher wurde er an diesem **1 Feb 42** auch zum Kommandeur der 98. Infanterie-Division ernannt. Am 1. März **1943** wurde er zum Generalleutnant befördert. Am 29. November **1943** wurde ihm das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen. Am 1. April 1944 gab er sein Kommando ab und wurde in die Führerreserve versetzt. Am 5. Mai 1944 wurde Generalleutnant Gareis zum Kommandeur der 264. Infanterie-Division ernannt. Am 9. Oktober 1944 wurde er erneut in die Führerreserve versetzt. Am 19. Januar 1945 wurde er mit der Führung des XXXXVI. Panzerkorps beauftragt. Am 1. April 1945 wurde er zum General der Infanterie befördert. Damit wurde er dann zum Komm.Gen. vom XXXXVI. Panzerkorps ernannt.

Am 2. Mai 1945 geriet er in britische Gefangenschaft. Vom 8. Mai bis Juni 1945 war er Verbindungs-Offizier zwischen dem Hauptquartier des britischen Feldmarschalls Montgomery und den Kriegsgefangenenlagern der britischen Armee. Im Sommer 1947 wurde er aus der Gefangenschaft entlassen. (<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de>)

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GEHLEN, Richard:

Entered the German army as an 18-year-old cadet in 1920 and worked his way slowly but steadily through the ranks. By Sep 39, Gehlen was a major and an ops officer in the **213. ID**, but the campaign in Poland was nearly over by time he reached the front. A year later, preparations for the attack on the Soviet Union made the young officer forget all else. Gehlen's work in *arranging for the transport of men and materiel to the staging areas* for the invasion was so efficient that Halder gushed, "This man is fitted for a leading position within the general staff." On **31.3.42**, *Kinzel was relieved as head of Foreign Armies East in favor of Gehlen*, who took over the next day. Promoted to Lt.Col., he began cleaning house in Foreign Armies East office, which he said, "is amateurish and does not work seriously enough." He replaced all but one of his subordinates w/ younger officers who had combat experience and spoke fluent Russian. For some reason, Hitler held his brilliant undercover chief in low esteem—or mistrust. In **Jul 42**, Gehlen reported that the Red Army was not going to abandon Stalingrad as Hitler believed but defend it until its forces there were either victorious or destroyed. In **Sep 42**, Gehlen began sending the Fuehrer a series of urgent reports warning of an impending counterattack. On **12 Nov 42** he reported *the exact sector in which the assault would come*. Hitler ignored these reports, and his 6th Army was encircled and destroyed.

After the war, despite huge bounties placed on his head by the Soviets, Gehlen *carried on his crusade against the East well into the Cold War*. He worked tirelessly until retiring as chief of the West German Federal Intelligence Service in **1968**. He died at his home in Germany in 1979. ("Gehlen: Shadowy Scourge of the East, by Kelly Bell, in: *World War II*, Sep 04)

D. Glantz refers to Gehlen as the "brilliant, energetic and young" head of *Fremde Heere Ost*. (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 32)

Gehlen, in Nov 42 estimate of Soviet intentions, noted—accurately—that the "Russians had often set goals too distant for the forces they used." The comment described *Zhukov* "to a tee." (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 38)

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GEYER, General Hermann:

Commander, **IX AK**.

He was well-known to Guderian, since he „had twice been my superior officer; first in the old days at the Truppenamt at the War Ministry and later when he was cdr of Wehrkreis V. General Geyer was famous for his razor-sharp intelligence,’ on which Ludendorff had made a celebrated comment as far back as the First World War.“ According to Guderian, he was also a man of „outstanding personal courage.“ (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 184-85)

He was a tall, thin, bespectacled Wuerttemberger w/ close cropped white hair, born in Stuttgart on **7 Jul 1882**. As a skilled staff officer, he played a vital role in World War I at the General Staff HQ although only a captain. Geyer helped draft not only the manual for defense in depth, but also the **Jan 1918** manual for offensive operations. Geyer was intelligent, cynical, and did not suffer fools gladly, which meant that he had many enemies in the officer corps. In the Reichsheer Geyer rose to become Cdr of Military District **V** (Wuerttemberg) in **May 35**, retiring in **Apr 39**. Upon mobilization in **Aug 39**, however, he returned to service, commanding **9. AK** in the field until **Dec 41**, when he once again retired. He committed suicide in **1946**. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions*, 142-43, f.n. 37; also, *Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer*, 100)

20.7.41 [approx]: Die Divisionen des **9. AK** standen von allen zu Fuss marschierenden Truppen des Ostheeres am weitesten (**650** km Luftlinie) in Feindesland u. am naechsten den Panzern. Neben unermuedlichem Einsatzwillen der Truppe gebuehrt das Verdienst daran nicht zuletzt dem Komm.Gen. des **9. AK**, General Geyer. Seinen Grundsatz: „*Vorwaerts ohne Ruecksicht auf Nachbarn, dolchstossartig mit schnellen Spitzen*“, haemmerte er unter ruecksichtslosem Einsatz seiner eigenen Person jedem der unterstellten Kommandeure ein. (*W. Meyer-Detring, Die 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 44)

Note: W. Meyer-Detring states that Geyer “als politisch missliebig seit Ende **1941** im Ruhestand [war.]“ (*137. Inf.-Div.*, 62)

Note: On source on internet says he was a Knight's Cross holder, and that he committed suicide in **1946**. (Confirm!)

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GREIFFENBERG, General Hans von:

Born: **12 Oct 1893**.
General der Infanterie.

Educated at the Central Cadet School, Lichterfelde, Berlin; commissioned as Leutnant on **20 Jan 1914**. Served w/ field forces throughout World War I.

At end of the war he remained in the **100,000**-man Reichswehr. In **1925**, he was detached for General Staff training in Stettin and Berlin. After a General Staff assignment in Berlin from **1926-30**, and a term as a coy cdr in **1931**, von Greiffenberg, now a major, was *detached for a year to the **Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, KS***.

Immediately after the outbreak of war in **Sep 39**, he was appointed Chief of Operations Division, OKH; and, on **1 Aug 40**, was promoted to Generalmajor. He was relieved of his position in OKH in **Jun 41** [**Jan 41**?] and assigned to **12. Army** as Chief of Staff during the Balkan Campaign. In **May 41** [?] he was transferred to the Russian front, where he served as Chief of Staff of Army Gp Ctr until **Apr 42** and from then as Chief of Staff of Army Gp "A" on the southern sector. On **1 Apr 42**, he was promoted to Generalleutnant. In **Oct 43**, he was appointed Military Attache to Hungary. (**Note:** This brief biography gleaned from: *FMS, P-052, "Combat in Forests and Swamps"*)

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GROSSMANN, Gen. Horst:

According to *E.M.Rhein, Grossmann* (Kdr. **6. ID**) had an excellent reputation. Sehr tuechtiger, vorsichtiger, sehr geschick, tapfer, ehrlicher, anspruchloser Mensch. War „ein Soldat in bester Sinne des Wortes.“ (*Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID*)

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GUDERIAN, General Heinz:

Note: From GFM v. Bock's memoirs (edited by *Gerbet*),¹⁷⁰ it is clear that Guderian was a real *meteoric personality*—a “hot head.” Impatient. Volatile. Bursting w/ energy and sometimes even insubordinate.

Note: The personal diary of Georg Heino Freiherr von Muenchhausen – 1940 bis 1944 *Ordonnanzoffizier* beim Chef der Operationsabteilung im OKH, Generalleutnant Adolf Heusinger – contains numerous dismissive references to Guderian. For details see, Section **1.3.6** (Tagebuch Muenschhausen) in this notebook.

Note: Guderian's account of Operation „*Barbarossa*“ in his memoirs offers regular (sometimes daily) updates of the locations of each division of his Panzer Group. His memoirs also contain some useful maps.

A. Seaton: Seaton avers, in the context of Guderian's removal from command in **Dec 41**: „Guderian, brave, headstrong, violent, disloyal, capricious and petulant, was not a sympathetic character, and, in his own eyes, was never in the wrong.“ (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 215)

A. Seaton: This author calls Guderian “arrogant, impetuous and undisciplined.” He also notes that “between Guderian and v. Kluge there was bitter animosity.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 41)

Liddell Hart: “It is clear, too, that [Guderian] possessed most of the qualities that distinguished the 'Great Captains' of history – *coup d'oeil*, a blend of acute observation w/ swift-sure intuition; the ability to create surprise and throw the opponent off balance; the speed of thought and action that allows the opponent no chance of recovery; the combination of strategic and tactical sense; the power to win the devotion of the troops, and get the utmost out of them.“ (*Intro to Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 15)

Note: During the Great War and Weimar period, his experience of *Jaeger*, *signal* and *transport* duties, service w/ the *Freikorps* and training in *Kazan*, USSR, had all prepared him to become one of the world's foremost theorists and practitioners of armored warfare. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 17)

Russell Hart: „Guderian has been lionized by many as the *legendary father of the German armored force* and *brilliant practitioner of Blitzkrieg* maneuver warfare. **Guderian created this legend** w/ his own *highly influential, yet self-serving and distorted memoir*... The result has been an *undeserving hagiography of Guderian*. While undoubtedly a *great military figure*, G. was a man of **appreciable ego and ambition** – a **volatile, impetuous, and difficult personality**

¹⁷⁰ See, for example, Bock diary entries for **4.-6.9.41**. At this time, Bock even considers relieving Guderian of his command.

determined to achieve his vision of a war-winning armored force, irrespective of the consequences.” (R. Hart, Guderian, 3)

Guido Knopp: „Guderian war sicherlich kein Politiker u. kein Ideologe,” erklärt Soenke Neitzel. „Er war ein – diplomatisch formuliert – rechtskonservativer Geist, der schon **1919** in einem Freikorps im Baltikum gekämpft hatte, der mit *ganzer Seele antibolschewistisch eingestellt war*. Er war ein Militaer, ein ‚Professional. . .’ In Frankreich waren es dann erneut seine Panzer, die schon innerhalb der ersten **48** Stunden des Feldzugs rund **100** km weit in gegnerisches Gebiet vordrangen u. danach *entgegen dem ausdruecklichen Befehl Hitlers ohne Flankenschutz tief ins franzoesische Hinderland stiessen*. . . Schon relativ frueh wurde Guderian in die Vorbereitungen des Russlandfeldzuges einbezogen. Moralische Bedenken scheint er keine gehabt zu haben – eher waren seine Einwaende gegen den Angriff fachlicher Natur, wie Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma, einer der Generaale in Trent Park, seinen Mitgefangenen berichtete: „Ich weiss noch, wie Guderian zum ersten Mal von der Russland-Geschichte hoerte – ich war zufaellig da. Er sagte, ‘Was, jetzt noch so ein grosser Irrsinn? Wenn man das nur nicht macht, denn das ist ein derartiger Koloss, da kann man gar nicht durchkommen.’“ . . . Obwohl er die gewaltige Grosseordnung der sowj. Ruestung kannte, scheint Guderian schliesslich geglaubt zu haben, dass der Blitzkriegplan tatsaechlich funktionieren koennte. „Drei Tage bevor es losging, war Guderian bei uns,“ berichtete der in Trent Park gefangene General Friedrich Freiherr v. Broich, **1941** Kommandeur eines Reiterregiments. „Aber da hat es Guderian inzwischen selbst geglaubt. Er sagte, am Anfang habe er kolossal dagegengeredet, nun war es aber befohlen worden. Und da hat er sich in eine Begeisterung hineingeredet, dass er es nachher selber geglaubt hat – obwohl er vorher genau der gegenteiligen Ansicht gewesen war.“ (Quoted in: *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 91-94)¹⁷¹

R. Hart’s assessment: Undoubtedly a *maverick*; an *outsider* who repeatedly flaunted rules or reinvented them [*iconoclast*?]. Man of *progressive ideas* and an *able administrator* capable of turning dreams into reality. He was also an *arrogant, ambitious egotist*. He suffered from *strategic myopia*. Stubbornly believed he was *always right*; was a *political neophyte*. His memoirs allowed him to *carve out for himself an exaggerated role as the father of the German armored force*. Subsequent biographers have all to often *uncritically embraced G.’s self-image*, so that **Kennth Macksey** could conclude about him that „no other general in WWII managed to impress so wide and intrinsic a change upon the military art in so short a time.“ This biography contends that such *eulogistic assertions inflate G.’s true accomplishments*. Macksey claims that Guderian had *strategic insight*, but in reality he was as woefully blinded to strategic realities as Hitler and rest of senior German cdrs. G. certainly had *several great operational accomplishments*—his strike deep into the Polish rear in **Sep 39**; his *dash to the channel* in **May 40**; his advance to *Smolensk* and to *Kiev* in **summer 41**, etc. But most of his great successes were accomplished in positions of substantial strategic, operational, and tactical advantage.¹⁷² He was a *good tactician and technician*; he helped to *devise the communications and logistics infrastructures that made blitzkrieg warfare possible*. He was a **charismatic, dynamic leader of men**. He was a **bold, daring cdr** who saw the strategic future for armored forces but who remained *obsessed both w/ armor* (at the expense of truly combined-arms mech. forces) and w/ the *inherent superiority of maneuver*. Yet he **led too much from the front**, which hampered the

¹⁷¹ **Note:** “1941, als ich zu Hause auf Urlaub war, war mein Vater sehr wenig zugaenglich. Als ich meine Mutter fragte, was denn los sei, antwortete sie mir, dass er erfahren habe, dass es gegen Russland gehen solle, was ihn gaenzlich verstoert hat. Er hatte vorher Napoleons Feldzug in Nordafrika studiert u. war voellig darauf eingestellt, dass es im Mittelmeer weiterginge.“ (*Heinz Guenther Guderian, Sohn von General Guderian*, quoted in: *G. Knopp, Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 94)

¹⁷² Could not the same best said of *Montgomery, Bradley, Patton*, etc?

smooth functioning of his HQ. He was *impetuous*, liable to *react and act instinctively*, sometimes w/o thinking. He was *overly optimistic* and *too determined to have his way*. He was w/o doubt a *strong personality who drove himself very hard*. He was a *great organizer, an intellect, a theorist and a technician*. But, in the final accounting, *his deficiencies outweighed his strengths* and he contributed directly to Germany's defeat. He *bore considerable responsibility for the final abortive push on Moscow in Dec 41*; he proved *unable to master that winter's defensive crisis*. But his *greatest weakness was his limited strategic understanding*, which was probably worse than Hitler's: he remained *fixated on the eastern front and gave scant due to the strategic requirements of other theaters*. He was an army man (and exclusively an *armor man* at that) who *disdained interarms and interservice cooperation*, w/ disastrous consequences. His ego and unswerving advancement of his beloved panzer force *engendered enormous personal animus and accentuated institutional rivalries and conflicts*. He was *politically naive*, and actually little more successful than other German generals in influencing Hitler. A *genuine empathy existed between G. and Hitler* and for far too long G. had believed that *Hitler was Germany's savior*. Only after 1942, did G. begin to *recognize Hitler's failings*; and he lacked the courage to commit himself fully to the removal of the *Fuehrer*. G.'s *biggest failing was his arrogance, which hampered the German war machine at every stage*. (Hart, Guderian, 114-18)¹⁷³

Dinardo quite *critical* of Guderian for a number of *distortions in his memoirs*. For example, in his memoirs, he credits *Liddell-Hart* as having been a major influence in his thinking about armored warfare; this may not be true. He also depicted the creation of the *panzer* arm as a *titanic struggle led by him*, naturally against the hidebound older branches, most notably the cavalry. His image of *General Ludwig Beck* was „incorrect at best, mendacious at worst“—i.e., Beck was not a „reactionary,“ who fought against creation of *panzer* divisions, as Guderian portrays him. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 86, 94, 99, etc.)

Weakness in strategic outlook: 1940/41: G. hoped to see Hitler commit up to *six panzer divisions* to overrun the British position in Egypt. Here again, he showed his *ignorance of the larger strategic picture*, as he gave no thought to the immense logistical difficulties of supplying a mechanized army operating deep in North Africa. Guderian used *von Epp* to intercede on his behalf and *present his plan for invading Africa to Hitler*, which he duly did. Hitler demurred. Nowhere did G. more clearly reveal his *strategic myopia* than in his *stubborn belief that the capture of Moscow would collapse communist rule* and end the war in the east. It was not until 1945 that he began to recognize that only through psychological warfare and *collaboration w/ anticommunist and anti-Russian forces within the USSR* might Germany have stood even a remote chance of defeating a country of the size and resources of the USSR. (Hart, Guderian, 66, 69, 76-77)

Guderian and Resistance: The Oath to Hitler [2.8.34] post the most intractable dilemma in the years to come. . . How could he satisfy honor while conducting campaigns of aggression w/ the knowledge that, in the aftermath of each victory, the people of Poland, Yugoslavia, and Soviet Russia were to be treated as inferior and exterminated? Guderian never was comfortable w/ this problem, so he chose to ignore it. . . He deftly sidestepped involvement w/ the plotters [against Hitler], whom he neither approved of nor had confidence in. Without admitting knowledge of the assassination's imminence [on 20.7.44], Guderian managed, most uncharacteristically, to be out of contact while taking a long walk around his estate; thus, again w/o admitting

¹⁷³ **Note:** R. Hart provides a brief *bibliographical essay* at end of his book. Asserts that *Macksey's* biography is too flattering of G.; that *Dermot Bradley's* work is "most solid German study." Also notes that *Gerhard Weinberg (1995)* and *Norman Goda (1997)*, among others, have proven that G. took *massive bribes from Hitler* that he "forgot" to mention in his autobiography.

it, he was poised either to side w/ the plotters if successful or fill a gap if they failed. This is a gray area. Nowhere else in Panzer Leader is he so evasive or so far below his normal standards of behavior. (K. Macksey, intro to: *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, x-xi)¹⁷⁴

Anticommunism: G. was virulently anticommunist. He „feigned surprise“ when he learned of Hitler’s intention to attack the Soviet Union—at least in his memoirs he said he was surprised. G. claimed to have been *perturbed by specter of a two-front war*. But his *anti-communism left him happy to be off on a campaign against the Soviets*. In reality he offered **minimal resistance to Barbarossa**...In **May 41**, G. again *willingly embraced and disseminated Hitler’s official justification for aggression* – that *Barbarossa* was a **defensive preemptive strike** and a **noble undertaking** to save western civilization from being destroyed by the „*Asiatic Bolshevik-Jewish menace*.“ G.’s actions thus intimate that by **1941** he had „*at least outwardly embraced the core tenets of national socialism* – the necessity both of violent German expansion and of the destruction of the supposed Jewish-Bolshevik threat.“¹⁷⁵ (Hart, *Guderian*, 66, 69-70)

War crimes issue: Throughout the war, G. „never seems to have given much thought to the profound consequences of the brutal ideological war of annihilation (*Vernichtungskrieg*) that Hitler ordered German forces to wage in the east.“ For, German brutality drove the peoples of the USSR into the arms of their unpopular Stalinist regime and offered them no alternative but to fight to the bitter end regardless of cost. G., presumably *blinded by anticommunism and racism*, apparently never understood this most fundamental strategic reality of the war in the east. G. claims in his memoirs that he *never received or passed on the Kommissarbefehl*. Yet the evidence suggests otherwise. German war diaries indicate that the order was „*almost universally followed*,“ and it is clear that some formations subordinated to G.’s 2d Pz.Gr. definitely received the order. G. also claimed that he refused to promulgate a directive (*Gerichtsbarkeiterlass*) that *freed German troops from punishment for war crimes committed in the east*. This claim also dubious. Bottom line: G.’s silence on subject of *wanton brutality of the war in the east* – both at the time and later, in his memoirs – strongly suggests G.’s acceptance of such brutality. Evidence suggests as well that G. was aware of the mass murder committed by the *Einsatzgruppen* in his area. In fact, the *Einsatzgruppen*’s standing orders required them to *report to local army cdrs*, from which they drew their supplies; thus it is inconceivable that G. was not at least *partially aware* of their activities in his area of command. Thus impossible to accept his postwar claim that he was *ignorant both of their existence and of the nature of their missions*. (Hart, *Guderian*, 69-72)

Guderian and War Crimes: Concerning the Kriegsgerichtsbarkeiterlass, Guderian writes: „Since both I and my corps cdrs were immediately convinced that discipline must suffer if the order were published, I forbade its forwarding to the divisions and ordered that it be returned to Berlin. This order. . . was consequently never carried out in my Panzer Group.“ About the Kommissarbefehl he avers: „The equally notorious, so-called „Commissar Order“ never even reached my Panzer Group. No doubt Army Group Ctr had already decided not to forward it. Therefore, the „Commissar Order“ was never carried out by my troops either.“ (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 152)

Early life: Born in **Kulm, West Prussia** on **17 June 1888** to parents who were *middle-class Prussians*. His father and grandfather were Prussian officers, and growing up in a *military family* profoundly shaped G.’s character. As a youth, he exhibited an *obstinate and often arrogant*

¹⁷⁴ Writes Liddell Hart in his foreward to Panzer Leader: “It will be apparent to those who read his memoirs that he did not question the cause which he and his troops were serving, or the duty of fighting for his country. . . As a dutiful soldier, he had to assume that his country’s cause was just. . .” (12)

¹⁷⁵ And, indeed, it *was* a threat in my view.

independence that defined his persona. As an officer candidate (1907) he began to exhibit a critical character: he often complained about the German military system and what he perceived as its weaknesses. This *critical eye* reflected a healthy skepticism, though at heart G. was an *inveterate optimist*. He possessed a *sharp intellect* and immersed himself in the study of military history. He possessed an *outstanding memory* that often proved to be an asset in his career. Always his father remained his *role model* – a classic exemplar of the loyal, obedient, dedicated, professional Prussian mil. officer. G. proved mature beyond his age and was *so focused on his studies and prof. development that he remained aloof and developed few close friends* – traits that likewise characterized his life. As an officer cadet, G. also first displayed the *aversion to senior authority figures* that would haunt his mil. career. While he was clearly among the best of his peers, his self-image reflected ego tinged w/ arrogance. That egotism was revealed when G., convinced that he was surrounded by mediocrity, *demanding a transfer to the elite of the Imperial German officer corps – the General Staff*. On **1 Oct 1912**, G. joined the *Radio Coy* of the **3d Telegraph Btn** at Coblenz. Here he also took preparatory classes for the Imperial War Academy. Applying himself w/ his usual impressive diligence, he quickly qualified as a *French interpreter* and became *virtually fluent in English*. He passed the War Academy entrance exams on the first try and became the youngest, at 25, of 168 officers selected to attend a three-year War Academy staff course in Berlin. On **5 Oct 1913**, he entered the prestigious *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin. His obvious intellect, diligence, and aptitude quickly led his fellow academy students to dub him “*Schnelle Heinz*” (Quick Henry). At War Academy he demonstrated an idiosyncratic blend of studied thought, boundless energy, and *alarming impetuosity* that subsequently made G. *infamous*. In 1914 he joined a field artillery unit. With mobilization for war on **1 Aug 1914**, G. terminated his studies and took command of the **3d Heavy Wireless Station, 5th Cavalry Div**. The basic qualities that G. demonstrated throughout his life were thus *forged in his youth* and early mil. career. G. was an *inveterate optimist*, yet subject to *sudden and wild mood swings*; bad news could throw him into despondency. His intellect, acute powers of observation and outspoken critical nature were equally evident. (Hart, Guderian, 5-8)

World War One:

1914 [Anecdote]: . . . as a rapid learner trained to draw conclusions from every fact and opinion, he was impatient w/ intellects slower than his own. Guderian did not always suffer fools gladly. For ex., after the Battle of the Marne in **1914**, as a mere 2d Lt. in command of the **5 Cav Div's wireless station**, he took the divisional cdr to task for misemploying his detachment and nearly, incidentally, landing him in a French POW camp! (K. Macksey: Intro to: *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, viii)

1918: „As a fervent believer in the rules of the old great General Staff, [Guderian] adhered to the tradition of „Achieve much, appear little“ by maintaining a low profile while a staff officer. Yet, once given command, he was quite unable to suppress his natural charisma and strong opinions when thrusting ahead w/ revolutionary matters, regardless of controversy and, some-times, obedience. . . unlike many ex-infantry General Staff officers, he was by the end of the First World War (as a result of his training and experience) a technologist. He had trained as a signals specialist; had come to understand air power by flying on reconnaissance missions as an observer; had gained practical experience as a logistician when serving as a supply staff officer; and, as a light infantryman (and the son of one), was ever imbued w/ the need for quick thinking, speed, and mobility in combat.“ (K. Macksey, intro to: *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, viii)

Guderian's experiences in Great War were *central to his future mil. career*. In serving as a *staff officer*, he largely avoided the slaughter in the trenches on western front. Major activities included following:

- a. His *wireless detachment* supported a cav. div. that sought to breach the *Marne River* at forefront of the German *Schlieffen Plan* offensive, his unit advancing rapidly through the *Ardennes Forest*;
- b. In **Sep 14**, G. transferred to *Fourth Army* on *Flanders front*, where he took command of the ***14th Wireless Section***;
- c. On *Ypres front* in **Apr 15** he witnessed the premature German deployment of mustard gas, imparting a lesson that stayed w/ him throughout his mil. career (i.e., don't deploy a wpn before it is fully developed);
- d. Promoted to *intelligence ofcr* and moved to *Fifth Army HQ* on the *Verdun front*. Witnesses first-hand the results of the brutal *Materialschlacht* that was the **1916** battle for *Verdun*. He helped write the operational analysis of the offensive's failure, drawing the conclusion that ***artillery firepower could not neutralize an entrenched enemy***; only maneuver could offer a less costly means of victory. This would profoundly shape his subsequent ideas and career. His subsequent ***distain for artillery*** apparently had its roots in his perception of failure at Verdun;
- e. In **Jul 16**, he returned to *Fourth Army in Flanders* as its *senior intelligence ofcr* He was at Flanders when the British first used tanks on the *Somme* on **15 Sep 16**, but like most German army officers at time he showed little interest in what was just one of many new wpns and tactical adaptations;
- f. G. was serving on the *Aisne* in **Apr 17**, when the French first abortively used tanks. Again, this event failed to elicit serious interest;
- g. In **Jan 18**, he finally returned to his prewar staff training, when he attended a General Staff officers training course at *Sedan*. On **28 Feb 18**, G. became a *full-fledged officer of the elite Greater German General Staff*;
- h. In **May 18**, he became the *quartermaster for XXXVIII Reserve Corps*, and became „suffused in the humdrum world of logistics on a quiet sector of the front. His corps finally participated in the ***Peace Offensives*** (unleased on **21 Mar 18**), but only peripherally;
- i. Ca. **mid-Sep 18**, G. suddenly posted as *chief operations ofcr to the German Military Mission* attached to the *Austo-Hungarian Army* fighting in Italy. This important appointment indicated that his superiors held G.'s *administrative abilities* in high regard. Yet he arrived in Italy to hear the news of the crushing Austrian defeat at *Vittorio Veneto*, which led Germany's ally to seek an exit from obviously lost war. G.'s *eternal optimism* however left him *out of touch w/ events*; he naively believed that the war would continue. It was not the last time that his optimism would *blind him to the larger strategic reality*;
- j. He left northern Italy and returned to Berlin in **Nov 18**, bitterly lamenting dissolution of the German empire; appalled by the collapse of social and political order and the disintegration of mil. discipline; horrified by the spread of *Marxist socialism* amid the mil. rank-and-file, etc. (*Hart, Guderian, 9-15*)

1930s: In **1929**, Guderian became convinced that tanks in combination w/ other wpns would revolutionize land warfare. Throughout the **1930s**, he worked skillfully and w/ considerable success, both as a staff officer and a cdr, to modernize the army. It was a struggle against conservatism w/in an organization divided by factions. From **1934** Guderian supported Hitler w/ special enthusiasm after the demonstration at Kummersdorf, when he managed to convince the Fuehrer

of the revolutionary potential of armored forces in battle. (K. Macksey: Intro to: *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, ix-x)

1937: Guderian began to attract public notice in **1937** when his best-selling book, „*Achtung Panzer!*“ was published. It not only established him as a forceful writer and personality, but also made clear that, as the brains behind the newly created *Panzertruppe*, he was a soldier to be reckoned w/ in any future war. (K. Macksey, intro to: *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, vii)¹⁷⁶

Dec 40: Guderian first learns of Hitler’s planned attack on Russia, Operation „*Barbarossa*.“ In his memoirs, Guderian says he was shocked by this turn of events: „Was something which I had held to be utterly impossible now to become a fact? . . . I made no attempt to conceal my disappointment and disgust. (See, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 142)

Role in Barbarossa:

All the vehicles of his panzer group were marked w/ his initial, G, painted in white. He was *not an easy man to deal with and at times could prove extremely stubborn*. He was certainly a superb general and was very popular w/ the men of the armored force. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 43)

28.6.41: Verbindungsoffizier zur **Pz.Gr 2**, Major v. *Below*, berichtet u. ueberbringt Erklarung Guderians, dass er im Falle seiner Unterstellung unter die neue Pz.-Gruppierung unter Fm. v. Kluge um seine *Enthebung* vom Kdo. bitten wird. [!](*Halder KTB*, 22; also, *Guderian, Erinnerungen*, 134, 279)

Guderian actually commanded *fewer tanks than he had in May 1940*. None of the German tank cdrs – least of all Guderian – fully anticipated the *impact of the immense Russian space*. G.’s *Panzergruppe* operated on a frontage in Russia that was ***often four times wider than he had experienced in France***. Even before campaign began, G. became embroiled in a *tactical argument w/ von Kluge*, the senior officer he had *clashed w/ in Poland*. Argument had to do w/ how armored forces were to be committed at start of campaign. G. eventually goes around K. to his army group cdr, v. *Bock*, who allowed the headstrong G. much freedom to execute ops as he saw fit. G.’s squabble w/ *Kluge* was both *personal and professional*, w/ G.’s dislike of his superior ultimately „*burgeoning into hatred*. Kluge tried repeatedly to patch things up, but was rebuffed each time by G.: (*Hart, Guderian*, 70-71)

- a. **22.6.41** on: G. continues to *lead from the front*. His solution to problems of distance was simply to drive himself and his staff twice as hard. He repeatedly came under *direct enemy fire*; experiences a number of *narrow escapes*. Despite inability of German infantry to keep up w/ his advance – as well as its inability to mop up or capture many of the enemy forces thus bypassed and left behind – G. blithely pressed ahead, *indifferent to what went on behind him*. But Hitler and many other senior cdrs were hesitant (w/ good

¹⁷⁶ **Note:** This is the „legacy“ (i.e., conventional) view of Guderian’s role in creation of German *Panzertruppe*, which underplays role of other German military innovators in formation of German armored forces, while exaggerating Guderian’s. Liddell Hart, in his forward to *Panzer Leader*, shares this view: „[Germany’s] opening run of victory in the Second World War was only made possible by the panzer forces that Guderian had created and trained, and by his audacious leading of those forces. . .“ (p. 11) Contrast w/ Hart’s biography!

- reason) and Hitler *demanded that the pincers of the 2d and 3d Pz.Gps* close around *Minsk*—rather than push on toward *Smolensk* as Guderian wanted. (72-72)
- b. G. repeatedly wanted to press forward, while his superiors demanded intermittend pauses to let the inf. catch up and to round up and eliminate the still substantial enemy fighting ferociously in the rear. Although millions eventually captured, hundreds of thousands more fought their way back to safety or simply melted into local communities where they organized resistance groups. (73)
 - c. **Jun/Jul 41:** At end of June, v. Kluge ordered G. to stop temporarily. G. immediately *conspired w/ Hermann Hoth [Pz.Gr.3] to press the advance on Smolensk* in defiance of Kluge's halt order. As G. continued to *ignore von Kluge's halt orders*, the latter *threatened G. w/ a court martial*. As Army Group Ctr pushed on toward *Smolensk*, relations between Kluge and G. declined yet further. G. continued to subvert and evade direct orders from his commanding ofcr; on **9.7.41**, he prepared to cross the *Dnepr* w/o orders. However, he was *again given free reign by von Bock*. As he pressed ahead, **G. demonstrated complete indifference to the urgent mil. needs of v. Kluge's other commands**. (74-5)¹⁷⁷
 - d. **Aug 41:** By mid-August, G.'s style of commanding from the front beginning to take a *physical toll*. He even began to recognize the strain he was under. But like most Germans, he continued to believe the *enemy was nearly broken*. Amazingly, G. told Hitler on **4.8.41** that the Red Army was *scraping the bottom of its manpower barrel*. On **23.8.41**, he flew to *Rastenberg* to meet w/ Hitler in effort to convince him to go straight on to Moscow (not Kiev). But he has no success; in fact, he did not press his case w/ Hitler. Rather, he submitted to Fuehrer's decision (i.e., Kiev), much to *Halder's irritation*. In fact, this incident resulted in *a serious breach between G. and Halder* which was never repaired. (75)
 - e. **Sep 41:** Push south to *Kiev*. Again, G. *ignores orders from his superiors* as he pushed ahead at his own rapid pace. During his daring advance toward Kiev, he encountered stiff resistance that threatened his *exposed flank* and *caused a crisis*. Unknown to G., v. Bock, *disillusioned w/ his mercurial subordinate*, initiated discussions w/ Halder for **Guderian's dismissal**. (76)
 - f. **Moscow:** Hart insists that it was **G. who convinced Hitler to resume attack on Moscow at this late date**: "Prudent voices, such as v. Bock's,¹⁷⁸ *urged a temporary halt to offensive ops for the fall and winter...*Guderian was not one of these prudent voices; quite the contrary. What he *failed to mention in his memoirs* was that he [was] the **leading voice urging Hitler to make one last all-out bid to capture Moscow** before the onset of winter. In fact, it was *Guderian who convinced Hitler to resume the attack*. (76; see also, *Bradley, Guderian*, 229)
 - g. **Oct-Dec 41:** With setbacks to Operation "Taifun" in fall/winter of 1941, G., *who did not take failure well*, began to brood. He had **long shown great concern for welfare of his men**, and became increasingly concerned about their dwindling morale and spirit. Aware

¹⁷⁷ **Note:** In effect, Guderian was *waging his own private war* – at the front against the Red Army; in the rear against his superiors!

¹⁷⁸ Is this *accurate*? I see v. Bock, along w/ Halder, as the two who lobbied most intensely for continuation of attack on Moscow.

that his offensive was hopelessly stalled, on **6.12.41** he *unilaterally withdrew his spearheads* into interim defensible positions. He now *pinned responsibility on v. Bock and Kluge* in an effort to *shift blame for the reverses*. Again, he used his **family connections** to bypass Bock's authority and communication directly w/ Hitler in an effort to get word of what he perceived to be the true state of affairs to Hitler. He *entertained fantasy that officers around Fuehrer were hiding the truth from him*. Nothing was further from the truth. (77-78)

- h. **Dec 41:** Just two days into Soviet counteroffensive, *Bock developed serious doubts about G.'s ability to weather the crisis*. G. had proved *too willing to retreat* while Bock urged him to stand fast. Contributing to *deterioration of their relationship* was G.'s *unwillingness to try to close the crucial gap west of Tula* through which Soviet forces drove deep into the army group rear. G. thus begins to pull back to the **Susha – Oka River line** in front of **Orel**. On **17.12.41**, Hitler ordered G. to *stand fast* and promised reinforcements. On **20.12.41**, G. flew to *Rastenberg* for meeting w/ Hitler; begged for permission to withdraw. Hitler refused: G. returned and *proceeded w/ his withdrawal in flagrant disobedience to Hitler's orders*. Kluge takes over as army group cdr. New squabbles break out between the two. Kluge quickly came to same conclusion as Bock—that **Guderian had lost his nerve** (a conclusion not w/o merit).
- i. **Guderians dismissal:** G. defies Kluge and *abandons Chern* w/o orders; then tries to cover up his action. The two have a *might altercation*. Impulsively, G. asks to be relieved. Kluge more than happy to forward G.'s request to Hitler on *Christmas Day*. The next day, Guderian was gone. *Hart*: „Despite **Kenneth Macksey's** claim that G. ”at this moment of ugliest adversity, had performed at his best,“ the *reality was quite different*. In truth, G. was *too prone to retrograde movement w/ forces incapable of such action*. Moreover, G. was *simply not a very effective defensive cdr.*“ More than anything else, it was his **repeated, insolent defiance of higher authority, his insatiable and threatening demands for more of everything, his inability to understand the needs of other commands or act as a team player, combined w/ his inability to finesse superiors, that cost G. his appointment.** (81)

Dec 41: Like many *Wehrmacht* field cdrs before and since, Guderian was convinced that higher HQ were out of touch w/ the real gravity of the situation. Throughout **Dec 41**, he used Hitler's personal adjutant [Schmundt] and other acquaintances as *back door channels* to convey his concerns to Hitler and **OKH**. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 202-03)

Wegen der Ruecknahme seiner Pz.Div. in die **Ssuscha-Stellung** wurde [*Guderian*] auf Verlangen des neuen Oberbefehlshabers der Hr.Gr.Mitte, GFM v. *Kluge*, von Hitler abgelost; gleichzeitig hatte Guderian wegen des Verhaltens von Kluges *um seine Enthebung gebeten*. (*W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 124)

Note: According to *David Irving*, Guderian was „racked by *sciatica*” at the front in **Dec 41**. (*Hitler's War*, 357)

1944/45: During his eight [8] dramatic months as Chief of the Army General Staff, Guderian rose to his greatest heights of patriotism and courage by daily opposing Hitler's outrageous decisions. (*K. Macksey*, intro to: *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, xi)

Postwar experience: Was POW of USA. Charges of war crimes soon dropped. He wrote series of evaluations for the U.S. Army *Historical Division*. These reports – 9 in all – reflect he *pride, arrogance, prejudice, insight, and caustic wit* that defined his *persona*. In them, Guderian maintained his animosity against old comrades – such as *Halder* and *Kluge*. Ever the *pragmatist*, he **told the Allies what they wanted to hear**, distancing himself from Hitler and his regime, emphasizing his professionalism and disdain for Nazism. In his **secret bugged cell**, however, he spoke w/ other senior officers about his admiration for Hitler and national socialism and his contempt for the Allies, admitting that the „basic principles of National Socialism had been fine.“¹⁷⁹ In example of the *animus many German officers felt toward him*, during 1948 **Fabian v. Schlabrendorff** in his memoirs accused G. of betraying the plotters in order to become *chief of staff*. Guderian threatened to *sue for libel* and forced the author to delete such comments in subsequent editions. G. published his memoirs in 1951; when translated into english the following year they became a best-seller in US and UK. G. remained an *ardent and outspoken German nationalist* until his death, arguing for German reunification and for the need to revive the German military to confront the communist threat. He died on 17.5.54. (*Hart, Guderian*, 114-15)

Reviews of **Russell Hart's biography**:¹⁸⁰

“Biographers and historians have lionized Guderian as the legendary father of the German armored force and brilliant practitioner of *blitzkrieg* maneuver warfare. As Russell A. Hart argues, *Guderian created this legend w/ his own highly influential yet self-serving and distorted memoir*, which remains one of the *most widely read accounts of the Second World War*...In the end, he *distorted the truth* to establish his place in history...he denigrated the myriad important contributions of his fellow officers as he *took personal credit for what were, in reality, collective accomplishments*. Thus, he succeeded in creating a legend that has endured long after his death.” (www.amazon.com)

“...Hart proves convincingly that Guderian, *willingly assisted by British historian Liddell Hart*, succeeded in **mythologizing his own contributions** to Nazi Germany's panzer force and World War II victories, while at the same time *hiding his own personal dedication to Hitler* and his Nazi regime and his deficiencies as a combat cdr. Guderian thus succeeded in creating a legend that has endured to this day...it has long been known that *Guderian “shopped” around in Eastern Europe for an estate worthy of his contributions to the Third Reich and had no qualms about seizing such a prize from its Jewish owners*...” (www.amazon.com)

“This succinct summation of [Guderian's] career is a *deliciously iconoclastic account* of the man who was *once viewed as the “inventor” of blitzkrieg*...Guderian in Hart's formulation was one of a group of officers associated w/ the development of the German armored force in the 1920s and 1930s. He was **very much a junior partner in this effort** – his chief contribution being a *flair for publicity and self-promotion*. (In the Cold War he used this latter skill to write more influential innovators out of his memoirs – and largely out of the conventional historical wisdom.)...” (www.amazon.com)

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¹⁷⁹ **Note:** Apparently, the tape recorded conversations were between generals Guderian, Leeb and von Schweppenburg. (p 133, f.n. 2)

¹⁸⁰ *Guderian: Panzer Pioneer or Myth Maker.*

HAAPE, Dr. Heinrich:

Zu Heinrich Haape: „Kurz einige Zeilen zu Dr. Haape. Er war unser Bat.-Arzt. u. wohl der Beste. Menschlich immer zugaenglich u. hilfreich. Menschlich einmalig. Zu erwaehen sei folgendes: Im **Feb** oder **Mar 42** sollte ich zu ihm kommen. Er lachte als ich in den Bunker reinkam. Es lag dort ein Schreiben meiner Heimatdienststelle Dortmund vor, dass er mich untersuchen sollte, ob ich als Beamter (s. zu Beginn des Schreibens)¹⁸¹ gesundheitlich ok waere usw. Da hat man den Krieg in aller Form kennengelernt. Dr. H. u. ich haben herzlich gelacht.“ (E. Kruedenscheidt, **III./IR 18**, Ltr to C. Luther, 16 Apr 05)

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HALDER, Gen.Obst. Franz:

Nicolaus v. Below: „[The Commissar Order] had caused much disquiet and I knew that not all cdrs had passed it on. It was the first major opposition to a Fuehrerbefehl I had heard of and probably it was not the first. I had observed, for example, Halder's oppositional stance to many of Hitler's instructions and noticed how he had now ceased to argue. I had the impression that Halder had decided to swallow his pride and keep silent, but perhaps he had his revenge by sabotaging Hitler's orders subsequently.” (Comments by v. Below in his memoir, *At Hitler's Side*, addressing period immediately prior to start of “*Barbarossa*.”)

G. R. Ueberschaer:¹⁸²

...da viele Offiziere den Krieg gegen die UdSSR als Kampf ,gegen den richtigen Gegner' akzeptierten oder sogar voll unterstuetzten. Sehr viele stimmten mit Hitler in der Geringschaetzung der militaerischen Staerke der Sowjetunion...Es kam dementsprechend nicht zu nachhaltigen Einwaenden der Heeresfuehrung gegen den Entschluss, die Sowjetunion ueberraschend anzugreifen...(60)

Die besondere Qualitaet dieses Krieges, die *voellige Andersartigkeit im Vergleich zu den Kaempfen in West- u. Nordeuropa*, offenbarte sich im Fruehjahr 1941 durch Hitlers Erklaerungen ueber die beachsichtigte [sic] totale Vernichtung Russlands als Staat u. in den Beherrschungsinstrumentarien u. Besatzungsmechanismen fuer den zu erobernden Lebensraum in Osten. Hitlers rassenideologische Vorstellungen traten am **30. Maerz 1941** klar zutage, als er vor etwa **250 hoeheren Offizieren** der Wehrmacht...zur ,Ausrottung' des Kommunismus 'fuer alle Zeiten' und zur ,Vernichtung der bolschewistischen Kommissare u. kommunistischen Intelligenz' aufrief. Sie zeigten sich ferner in den noch vor Kriegsbeginn herausgegebenen Anordnungen, wie den Richtlinien auf Sondergebieten, dem ,Gerichtsbareiteerlass,' den Richtlinien fuer das Verhalten der Truppe u. dem ,Kommissarbefehl' sowie beim Sonderauftrag an Himmler fuer die Arbeit der Einsatzgruppen. **Diese Befehle kamen unter Mitwirkung von OKW u. OKH zustande.** (62)

¹⁸¹ Kruedenscheidt: „Privat: „Ich hatte den Beamtenweg eingeschlagen u. **1939** die Inspektorenpruefung abgelegt. Dann hiess es Abschied nehmen, zuerst [RAD] dann anschliessend zur Wehrmacht.“ (Lt to C. Luther, 16 Apr 05)

¹⁸² Source of following notes: G. R. Ueberschaer, *Generaloberst Franz Halder: Generalstabschef, Gegner und Gefangener Hitlers*. 1991

Der Versuch von Brauchitsch u. Halder, die Mordbefehle Hitlers durch eine spezielle Order ueber die Wahrung der Manneszucht u. Disziplin in der Truppe abzufangen oder abzumildern, blieb erfolglos; denn die Anordnungen des Diktators wurden im Osten im grossen Umfang ausgefuehrt. (63)

Das Ausbleiben eines scharfen Protestes einerseits sowie andererseits die routine- u. geschaeftsmaessige Beteiligung – insbesondere des Generalstabs unter Generaloberst Halder – bei der Umsetzung von Hitlers Ostkriegsvorstellungen in konkrete Befehle u. Anweisungen fuer die eigene Truppe offenbaren deutlich das hohe Mass an Mitverantwortung u. Verstrickung der Herres- u. Wehrmachtsfuehrung in den radikalen Vernichtungskrieg gegen die Sowjetunion. (63)

Ueberschaer notes that, in spring of 1941, the hastily planned North Africa deployments (Rommel) and the *Balkanfeldzug* Halder's *Improvisations- u. Operationsgeschichte* deutlich werden liess. (64)

For Barbarossa, new OKH Hauptquartier bei *Mauerwald* in Ostpreussen. Author notes that: Die dt. Fuehrungsgremien glaubten im July 1941 ebenso wie Hitler, dass der endgueltige Sieg in einigen Wochen gewiss sei...(65)

Concerning controversy between Hitler and his generals on future coarse of campaign (after border battles), author notes that Hitler rejected the proposals of the OKH in his *Denkschriften vom 12. u. 22. Aug 41*: Before moving on Moscow, Hitler wanted to eliminate threats to the flanks and to capture the Ukraine and the Donez-Gebiet. *Nach dieser direkten Brueskierung durch Hitler erwogen Halder u. Brauchitsch, gemeinsam um Enthebung von ihren Aemtern nachzusuchen.* Brauchitsch rueckte dann aber von diesem Vorschlag Halders ab, da er sich gegenueber dem Ostheer verantwortlich fuehlte. (66)

Als der ‚Fuehrer‘ schliesslich den Angriff auf Moskau unter dem Decknamen ‚Taifun‘ fuer Ende September 1941 vorbereiten liess, *bestanden in den deutschen Fuehrungsgremien erhebliche Meinungsverschiedenheiten ueber die weiteren Erfolgsaussichten.* Halder musste mittlerweile erkennen, dass auch er den ‚Koloss Russland‘ unterschaezt u. sich erheblich geirrt hatte, als er annahm, Stalin habe den Krieg schon im Juli verloren, denn **die Verluste des dt. Heeres konnten bereits ab August nicht mehr ersetzt werden.** (67)

Nach eingehender Generalstabsbesprechung in der Stadt *Orscha* [Nov. 41]...befahl Halder die Angriffsoperationen unter ‚*auesserstem Einsatz*‘ fortzusetzen und trotz erheblicher Versorgungsschwierigkeiten energisch ‚voranzutreiben.‘ **Er setzte alles auf eine Karte: Moskau sollte mit letzter Anstrengung angegriffen werden.** Die ‚letzten Willens- u. Kraftanstrengung‘ beim Angriff auf Moskau wurde fuer ausschlaggebend angesehen, um die *vermeintlich erschoepfte Rote Armee* doch noch schlagen zu koennen. Der Generalstabschef wollte keine Wiederholung des angeblichen ‚Wunder an der Marne‘ im Ersten Weltkrieg...Dabei verlor der Generalstab wie Hitler das Augenmass fuer das Erreichbare. *Die Frage nach den realen Erfolgsaussichten des weiteren Angriffs schien auch fuer Halder u. Brauchitsch eine ‚Frage des Willens‘ zu sein – wie Hitler es verlangte.* Dabei wurden sogar utopische Operationsziele wie die Linie *Jaroslavl – Rybinsk – Wologda* aufgestellt...Die Folgen **dieser Hybris** waren verheerend. (67)

(**Note:** Appears that in Nov-Dec 41, Brauchitsch, Halder, *et al.*, ceased thinking critically like General Staff officers and – consciously or otherwise – had surrendered to Hitler's concept of the “Triumph of the Will.”)

After Soviet counteroffensive in early Dec. 41, auch Halder und andere Heeresgruppen- und Armeebefehlshaber gestanden ihre falsche Lagebeurteilung ein. Hitler war davon jedoch nicht zu ueberzeugen. (68)

Author notes that, surprisingly, Halder did not submit his resignation, or get cashiered by Hitler: Warum harrte Halder in dieser Situation bei Hitler aus. Nach eigenem Bekunden wollte er als Symbol der Kontinuitaet an der zukuenftigen Operationsfuehrung u. Arbeit des Generalstabes weiterhin mitwirken. Darueber hinaus, sah er eine Chance, Hitler durch den zukuenftigen, fast taeglichen persoenlichen Kontakt staerker beeinflussen zu koennen, da der Generalstab nunmehr dem ‚Fuehrer‘ als selbst ernannten Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres unmittelbar unterstand... Vermutlich hoffte der Generalstabschef auch, den Ostkrieg doch noch siegreich beenden zu koennen. (68-9)

Author notes that Hitler also had some interest in not letting Halder go: *Stimmungsberichte* des SD der SS meldeten im Dez. 1941 ‚lebhaftes Spekulationen‘ u. ein ‚an Bestuezung grenzendes Erstaunen‘ in weiten Bevoelkerungskreisen ueber den Wechsel im Oberbefehl des Heeres, das sich im Falle der zusaetzlichen Abberufung Halders wahrscheinlich noch vergroessert haette. (69)

Halders Hoffnung, Hitler naeher an das OKH heranfuehren zu koennen zerschlug sich, denn OKH u. OKW traten nun bei **Hitler** in direkte Konkurrenz, **der zudem die militaerische Operationsfuehrung aufteilte u. Halders Generalstab nur noch fuer die Ostfront die Verantwortung zusprach**, waehrend er alle anderen Kriegsschauplaetze dem OKW unterstellte. Zudem wurden die nicht-operativen Aufgaben des Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres von Hitler dem OKW unter Keitel uebertragen, so dass mit dem Abgang Brauchitsch *eine erhebliche Beeintraechtigung der Funktionen des OKH einherging*. (70)

Von den operativen Vorschlaegen einzelner Frontbefehlshaber im Osten, in eine zurueckgenommene Defensivfront zu gehen, wollte Hitler nichts hoeren. *Auch Halder machte sich in diesen Tagen gegenueber den Armee- u. Heeresgruppen-Oberbefehlshabern die scharfe Sprache des ‚Fuehrers‘ zu eigen, da er ein Ausweichen, aufgrund der fehlenden Bewegungsfreiheit wegen des starken Kaelteeinbruchs, nicht mehr fuer moeglich haelt*. (70)

According to author, after stabilization of Ostfront in early 1942, Hitler more convinced than ever that he could conduct the *Operationsfuehrung* for the Army. Hitler also convinced that he alone responsible for overcoming the crisis before Moscow in winter 1941. (70-1)

Author points out that, after Dec 41, Halder made serious effort to improve the climate, and cooperation, between Hitler and OKH. But Hitler retained his dislike of the Generalstab, so relationship with Halder remained “gespannt.” *Taegliche, oft stundelange Auseinandersetzungen um operative Entscheidungen belasteten die Zusammenarbeit*. (71)

Author notes that, as preparations for summer campaign of 1942 got underway, Hitler once again convinced he can crush the Red Army—because Russians had consumed all their reserves in the winter counteroffensive! (71)

End of Mar 42, Halder entertaining new thoughts: holding in the centre, while advancing on Leningrad and to the Don to conquer Stalingrad and the Caucasian oil areas. (72)

In context of planning for summer offensive of 1942, author notes that **noch im Mai u. Juni 1942 ueber 700 000 Fehlstellen in der Personalbesetzung des Ostheeres vorhanden waren u. kein**

Ersatz mehr zur Auffuehlung zur Verfuegung stand. Auch die Materialausstattung entsprach in keiner Weise der Ausruestung vom Juni 1941. (72)

Halder's role in the Resistance: Bezeichnenderweise hat *Graf v. Stauffenberg* als Gruppenleiter im Generalstab des Heeres im April 1942 auf die Frage eines Besuchers, wer denn von den hoeheren Militaers fuer den Kampf gegen Hitlers Kriegspolitik zu gewinnen sei, eine distanzierende Haltung zu Halder eingenommen und erklart: ‚Halder denkt nur militaerisch u. hat immer nur militaerisch gedacht. Nein, keine Illusionen. Unsere Verbuedeten sind nicht Halder u. Keitel, sondern die militaerische Notlage und – Rueckschlage, die vielleicht der Vernunft dienlich sind...Bevor es zu spaet ist.‘ (72)

End *Ueberschaer* book notes!

Halder's adjutant, *Capt Conrad Kuehlein*: "He [Halder] was a *tireless worker* who put his health at stake, in that he was active until the early hours of the morning for months at a time. I repeatedly saw him leave his desk at 7:00 in the morning when I arrived in the barracks for the early situation briefing. Then at 9:00 he would reappear for duty." More typically, Halder arrived at work at about 8:00 a.m., worked until well past midnight, and then read for some time before retiring. In this sense he tried to personify *Moltke the Elder's dictum "Genius is diligence,"* and he expected no less from those who worked under him. (*Inside Hitler's High Command, G.P. Megargee, 152-3*)

„There is no evidence that the generals in the Army's High Command objected to Hitler's decision to turn on the Soviet Union, whose loyal fulfillment of the pact w/ Germany made possible their victories in Poland and the West. Later, *Halder* would write derisively of ‚Hitler's Russian adventure‘ and claim the Army leaders were against it from the beginning. But there is *not a word in his voluminous diary entries for Dec 40 which supports him on this.* Indeed, he gives the impression of being full of *genuine enthusiasm* for the ‚adventure,‘ which he himself, as Chief of the General Staff, had the *main responsibility* for planning.“ (*Shirer, Rise and Fall, 812; also, Halder, Hitler as Feldheer, 22*)

31.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Dabei gehe es mit *Brauchitsch* noch besser als mit *Halder*, „der sehr kaput ist,¹⁸³ mir einerseits alles ueberlaesst, andererseits aber doch immer wieder mit eigenen Gedanken dazwischen kommt.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, 154*)

4.11.41 [*Halder KTB*]: On this day, Halder noted that the German casualty figure, rising more steeply, stood at **686,000** men, of whom **145,000** were dead and **29,000** missing. Of the remainder, the wounded, about **2/3** could expect eventually to return to duty. Halder had been in the hospital, in nearly Loetzen, having injured himself a month previously in a fall from a horse, but on **4 Nov 41** he returned to his office and his diary. For the meticulous and careful Halder recorded the details of all business, visits and telephone calls, together w/ his impressions and thoughts, *in his own secret notebook* which he wrote up daily in a form of shorthand (*Gabelsberger Schrift*) and kept *secure in his safe*. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 131*)

¹⁸³ **Note:** Heusinger's letters to his wife corroborate fact that Halder was an *absolutely tireless worker*, who in fact worked himself to the bone, endangering his health.

19.12.41: Hitler takes over as C-in-C of the army, having dismissed Brauchitsch. Apparently, Halder was also at first earmarked for dismissal – so said Warlimont when interrogated after the war. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 854; also, *Richthofen Tagebuch*, **16.12.41**)

Entlassung Brauchitsch: „Bis in den Spaetherbst 1941 hatte Brauchitsch, wenn auch zusehends in eine nahezu *einflusslose Position* geratend, schliesslich von *Hitler beiseite geschoben*, immerhin noch einiges tun koennen, um dem Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres *eine gewisse Selbstaendigkeit zu bewahren*. Von nun an *fungierte* Halder auf dem oestlichen Kriegsschauplatz mit der Institution OKH/Generalstab des Heeres als einer der *Erfuellungsgehilfen* [in] immer undurchsichtiger erscheinenden *Machtgeflecht* in *direkter Abhaengigkeit von Hitler* als oberstem Kriegsherrn. (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 167)

21.3.42: Am 21.Maerz unterrichtete der Befehlshaber des *Ersatzheeres*, Generaloberst **Fromm**, seinen Chef des Stabes ueber eine Aussprache mit dem *Admiral Canaris*...Fromm gab auch *Canaris'* Eindruecke von den Persoenlichkeiten in Hitlers Umgebung wieder, der *Halder* als „**innerlich zerbrochen**“¹⁸⁴ charakterisierte, er spreche mit keinem Menschen u. sei „voellig misstrauisch.“ (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 180)

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HARDENBERG, Carl-Hans Graf v.:

“In the spring of 1918, *Carl-Hans Graf von Hardenberg* returns home from the First World War seriously wounded. He takes over management of the family estate, Neuhardenberg, in 1921, and is also active in municipal administration in the district of Lebus. He is married to Mary Renate Gräfin von der Schulenburg, with whom he has four daughters and a son. After the National Socialists take power he resigns from all his posts and refuses to join the NSDAP. At the beginning of the war in 1939 he becomes commander of a replacement unit as a reserve major, and **from the fall of 1940 on he is personal adjutant to the commander in chief of Army Group B, Fedor von Bock**. On the eastern front Carl-Hans Graf von Hardenberg witnesses the massacre of Borissov, in which thousands of Jews are murdered by an “Einsatzgruppe (mobile killing unit) of the Chief of the Security Police and the SD (Security Service)”. Together with Henning von Tresckow he already decides early on to assassinate Hitler. On the day of the planned coup Hardenberg is in the Bendler Block, the Berlin center of the coup attempt, but is not arrested until July 24, 1944. He tries to commit suicide, but fails. Carl-Hans Graf von Hardenberg is imprisoned in the infirmary of Sachsenhausen concentration camp and interrogated by the Gestapo. He is among the prisoners freed at the liberation of the camp by Soviet troops on April 22, 1945.” (German Resistance Memorial Center (<http://www.gdw-berlin.de/bio>))

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HEINRICI, General Gotthard:

* 25. Dezember 1886, Gumbinnen + 13. Dezember 1971, Endersbach	
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¹⁸⁴ **Note:** See “German High Command,” subsection “Chronology of Events” (**Mar 42**) for General *Heusinger's* highly critical perspectives on Halder – his total subservience to Hitler by early 1942; inability to challenge Hitler's ideas, etc.

By war's end, he was the *Wehrmacht's* "premier defensive specialist." (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 211)

Heinrici war ueberraschend am **20.1.42** mit der Fuehrung der **4. Armee** betraut. Der neue O.B. zeigte sich als der „wohl faehigste Defensivspezialist im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront.“ Zunaechst musste der Raum um Spas-Demensk, dem Armeehauptquartier, gegen die bis **Mai 42** anhaltenden heftigen Angriffe der Roten Armee gehalten werden [i.e., Verteidigung der „Rollbahn“]. Das gelang trotz zahlreicher Einbrueche u. im Ruecken auftauchender Feindkraefte. (*J. Huerter, Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 15-16)

“He is a small, precise man w/ a parsonical manner – he talks as if he were saying grace. Although he hardly looks like a soldier, proof of his military ability is provided by the fact that, starting as a corps cdr, he finished as Army Group Cdr conducting the final battle of the Oder in defense of Berlin.” (*B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 148)

In seiner Korrespondenz mit seiner Familie erging sich der sicher gemaessigte u. sehr religioese Generaloberst Heinrici laufend in scharfen antisemitischen Aeusserungen, wie am **16.1.39** in einem Brief an seine Mutter, nach Anhoeren einer Rede Rosenbergs: „Er sprach eine Stunde ueber die greulichen Juden.“ Ein Brief vom **22.4.41** an seine Frau: „Wanzen u. Laeuse laufen ueberall herum, ebenso schreckliche Juden mit Davidsstern am Aermel.“ (*Stein, GFM Model*, 251)

Cornelius Ryan schreibt, dass Generaloberst Heinrici, trotz wiederholter Ermahnungen von Parteikreisen, regelmassig in Uniform zum Gottesdienst ging. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 312)

Heinricis Praegung:¹⁸⁵ Der Erste Weltkrieg war fuer ihn u. seine Offiziersgeneration das entscheidende Erlebnis. Heinrici lernte die verwirrende Vielfalt des modernen Krieges an allen Brennpunkten im Westen u. Osten kennen. Heinrici sah sich im **Sep 41** mit einem Schreckgespenst seiner Kindheit, der „Russengefahr“, konfrontiert, als sein Rgt. an der Verfolgung der sich aus Ostpreussen zurueckziehenden russ. Truppen beteiligt wurde. In den befreiten ostpreuss. Gebieten zeigten sich „Bilder von blindwuetiger Zerstoerung u. sinnloser Vernichtung, wie wir sie niemals fuer moeglich gehalten hatten,“ ein schockierender Eindruck, der alle Vorbehalte gegen die „barbarischen“ Russen zu bestaetigen schien. (*J. Huerter, Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 18)

Heinricis Praegung: Dass die Schrecken des modernen Krieges nicht auf die Schlacht u. die Kombattanten beschaenken blieben, sondern auch das Hinterland u. die Zivilbevoelkerung erfassten, erlebte Heinrici nicht nur in seiner ostpreuss. Heimat. Seine Taetigkeit als Nachschuboffizier in Rumaenien brachte ihn **1917** mit grundlegenden Problemen der Besatzungspolitik in Beruehrung. Besonders beeindruckt zeigte er sich von der teilweise katastrophalen Ernaehrungslage in den von Fluechtlingen ueberfuellten Doerfer. . . In einem aufschlussreichen Tagebucheintrag beschreibt H. Eine Strasse, an der einige Tage zuvor mehrere Zivilisten erfroren waren: „*Dieser Krieg ist ja nicht zu vergleichen mit dem 30-jaehrigen. Ein Kinderspiel war es,*

¹⁸⁵ **Note:** As Huerter comments, the primary influences on Heinrici – and indeed on most all the German generals of his generation – were: a) their socialization in the “Kaiserreich;” b) World War I and the eventual collapse of the Kaiserreich (which also signified a collapse of their world); and, c) the spectre of a Communist revolution in immediate post-war years. Growing up in the Garnisonsstadt Gumbinnen, near the border w/ Czarist Russia, exercised a major influence on H.: “Das kleinstaedtische Milieu im agrarischen Grenzland nahe dem Zarenreich bestimmte seine fruehe pol. Sozialisation.“ (17)

was er vernichtete gegenueber dem heutigen Krieg.“ Der Bezug zum Dreissigjaehrigen Krieg zeigt den Rueckfall in laengst ueberwunden geglaubte Formen des Krieges. . . (J. Huerter, Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront, 18-19)

Gotthard Heinrici trat **1905** in die kaiserliche Armee ein und wurde nach mehrjähriger Dienstzeit zum Leutnant befördert. Während des Ersten Weltkriegs war er Kompaniechef im Infanterie-Regiment **95** und wurde **1916** Adjutant in der **3. Inf. Bde.** Vor Verdun schwer verwundet, wurde er nach seiner Genesung zur Generalstabsausbildung nach Deutschland versetzt und **1918** Stabschef der **203. ID.** Nach dem Krieg wurde er in die Reichswehr übernommen und Bataillonskommandeur im [Infanterie-Regiment 13](#), ehe er **1932** den Stab des Gruppenkommandos Berlin übernahm. **1933** zum Oberst befördert, wurde er Abteilungsleiter im Reichswehrministerium und **1937** zum Generalmajor befördert. Gleichzeitig wurde er Leiter des Reichswehrministeriums. Bei Kriegsbeginn war er Kommandeur der **16. ID.** Im **April 1940** zum General der Infanterie befördert, wurde er zum Kommandierenden General des [XII. Armeekorps](#) ernannt, welches er während des Westfeldzuges führte. Nach dem Westfeldzug übernahm er das [XXXXIII. Armeekorps](#), welches er ab **Juni 1941** in Rußland führte. Für seine Führungsleistungen während der Kämpfe bei Mogilew, Smolensk und Kiew wurde er am **18 Sep 41** mit dem Ritterkreuz ausgezeichnet. Am **20 Jan 42** wurde Heinrici dann Oberbefehlshaber der [4. Armee](#) vor Moskau. Am **1 Jan 43** wurde er zum Generaloberst befördert. Für seine Leistungen während der Kämpfe im Sommer und Herbst **1943** wurde er am **24 Nov 43** mit dem Eichenlaub ausgezeichnet. Für die hervorragenden Abwehrleistungen während der Kämpfe bei Orscha wurde er im **Mai 1944** erstmals zum für die Schwerter eingereicht, vom **OKW** aber abgelehnt. Am **17 Aug 44** wurde er Oberbefehlshaber der [1. Panzerarmee](#), welche zusammen mit der **1.** ungarischen Armee die "Armeegruppe Heinrici" bildete, die er während der Abwehrkämpfe in Ostpreußen, Polen und der Slowakei führte. Für seine Führungsleistungen wurde er am **3 März 45** mit den Schwertern ausgezeichnet. Kurz darauf wurde er Oberbefehlshaber der [Heeresgruppe Weichsel](#). Am **29 Apr 45** wurde er nach einem Streit mit Generalfeldmarschall Keitel über den Sinn der Fortsetzung der Kämpfe seines Postens enthoben. Martin Bormann gab Befehl, ihn vor ein Kriegsgericht zu stellen, was von Großadmiral Dönitz allerdings verhindert wurde. Am **8 Mai 45** geriet er in britische Gefangenschaft, aus der er **1948** entlassen wurde.

Ritterkreuz (**18 Sep 41**) Eichenlaub (**24 Nov 43**) Schwerter (**3 März 45**)

(Source: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/H/HeinriciG.htm>)

5.12.41: For Heinrici's own graphic (and poignant) account of final attempt by his **31. ID** to link up w/ **24. PzK** and close the trap around Tula (the attempt fell short by **8-9 km**) see, (*J. Huerter, Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront, 124-25*)

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HEUSINGER, General Adolf:

(**4.8.1897 – 30.11.1982**)

Born on **4 Aug 1896**. After receiving his commission, he was wounded at the Battle of Verdun. In **1917** the English Army captured him in Flanders. Heusinger was a cool, analytical thinker, fluent in Russian, a man of few words, and so diligent that his fellow officers called him „Little Ludendorff.“ He began his General Staff training in **1927**, doing so well that he passed on to the Operations Branch. After short stints w/ field units, he returned to the Ops Br in **1937**, becoming

its chief in **Oct 40**. On **20 Jul 44**, he was wounded while standing near Hitler during the assassination attempt, but three [3] days later was arrested by the Gestapo and saw no further service in the war. (S.J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions*, 156, f.n. 32; Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer*, 133)

Highlights:

- a. Chef des Operationsabteilung im Generalstab des Heeres (**1940-44**)
- b. Erste Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr (**1957-61**)
- c. *Gefangenschaft*: **1917-19** in englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft; nach dem **20.7.44** Wochen der *Gestapo-Haft* in der *Prinz Albrecht-Strasse* u. in der *Polizeischule Fuerstenberg*; **1945-48** Kriegsgefangenschaft u. Internierung in amerikanischem Gewahrsam; dabei insgesamt 11 Monate im *Zeugensfluegel* des Nuernberg Gerichtsgefängnis. (Meyer, Heusinger, 2)

Resistance:

Der Zeitpunkt ist nicht leicht zu bestimmen, an dem bei H. endgueltig der Widerwillen gegen die unsittliche u. verbrecherische Natur von Hitlers Herrschaft mit den fachmaennischen Zweifeln an Sinn u. Zweck des Krieges unaufloeslich verschmolz. Je laenger der Krieg dauerte, desto tiefer geriet auch er in dasselbe *Dilemma* wie sein Vorgesetzter Halder, naemlich die berufliche Leistung in einem „ueber das Sein u. Nichtsein des geliebten Vaterlandes“ entscheidenden Krieg u. in einem abgelehnten pol. System erbringen zu muessen, unter einem Kriegsherrn „ohne moralische Bindungen,“ Hitler gegenueber „von tiefem seelischen Abscheu erfuellt.“ Spaetestens in der Wende des Krieges bie *Stalingrad* festigte sich die Einsicht, dass von jetzt an bei kontinuierlich abnehmenden Kraeften die dt. Niederlage allenfalls verzoeert, aber nicht abgewendet werden koennte. Fortan tat H., *erbittert ueber den Dilettantismus der Kriegsfuehrung*, seine *Schuldigkeit* [duty] in dem Bestreben wenigstens der *Schadensminderung*. Es war nicht das Pflichtgefuehl des krummen Rueckens, eher – u. das seit der *Winterkrise 1941/42* – die Verpflichtung, ein „*Kreuz*“ *tragen zu muessen*, „in eine solche Stelle gestellt“ zu sein, „u. ihr einfach nicht entrinnen“ zu koennen. (Meyer, Heusinger, 5)

Barbarossa:

According to his biographer, H. had not supported Operation *Barbarossa* (“vor dem Ostfeldzug immer den Feldzug verworfen hatte”) (Meyer, Heusinger, 149)

Work schedule: Endlich spricht er auch einmal von seinem Tageslauf, „ein Tag wie der andere.“ Er stehe um 7 Uhr auf, nehme ab 8 Uhr die Lagevortraege der Abteilung entgegen u. trage dann von 9-11 Uhr Halder u. Brauchitsch vor, anschliessend bis 13.30 Uhr „Arbeit u. viel telefonieren.“ Nach dem Essen ruhe er bis etwa 16 Uhr, von da an Arbeit bis 21 Uhr, Telefonate, Vortraege der Abteilung, Besprechungen, danach bis etwa 23.15 Uhr abermals Lagevortrag bei Brauchitsch u. Halder, dann kurzes Abendessen u. noch einmal *Arbeit bis eine Stunde nach Mitternacht*. Jede dritte Nacht *Schlaf auf dem Buero*, was dann von 5 Uhr bis 6 Uhr morgens die Entgegennahme der Tagesmeldungen bedeute unter Verzicht auf eine Stunde Schlaf. Er bemuehe sich, „*eisern sieben bis acht Stunden Schlaf*“ einzuhalten, „**Halder** macht es mit *vier Stunden* u. sich dabei *kaput*,“ beschreibt er dessen Ueberbeanspruchung. (Meyer, Heusinger, 2.8.41, 155)

Winterkrise: H. musste sich in der Bewältigung der Winterkrise zu einer ihm eigentlich fremden Härte zwingen, wenn es darum ging, „immer noch etwas von dieser *ausgebrannten Truppe* zu verlangen, das sie selbst nicht verstehen kann u. von dem die höhere Führung hofft, dass es zum besten ausschlägt.“ Immer wieder, wenn er unmittelbare Berichte von der Front entgegennehme, „*hoert, wie es vorn aussieht, moechte man weich werden u. muss sich einen Ruck geben*, um dann doch wieder zu verlangen, dass sie angreifen muss.“ Es gebe eben keinen anderen Weg. *Bei einem Rueckzug „wuerden wir das Schicksal Napoleons erleiden.“* (Meyer, Heusinger, 175)

Early 1942: Halder's Adjutant in dieser Zeit, der *Rittmeister Peter Sauerbruch*, erinnert sich an *massvolle Vorstellungen Heusingers*, der fuer **1942** die Ansicht vertreten habe, zunaechst auch von *Halder unterstuetzt*, es koenne jetzt eigentlich nach der Ueberbeanspruchung der letzten Monate nur darum gehen, *Reserven zu bilden, Frontbegradigungen vorzunehmen, das Materiel zu ergaenzen u. aufzufrischen*, kurzum, es muesse Ruhe einkehren. Hitler dagegen beharrte mit dem OKW auf einer gleichzeitigen Operation gegen den *Kaukasus* u. auf *Stalingrad*, ein Gedanke, den Heusinger abgelehnt habe. (see, Meyer, Heusinger, 177)

21.3.42: Am 21. Maerz unterrichtete der Befehlshaber des *Ersatzheeres*, Generaloberst **Fromm**, seinen Chef des Stabes ueber eine Aussprache mit dem *Admiral Canaris*...Fromm gab auch *Canaris'* Eindruecke von den Persoenlichkeiten in Hitlers Umgebung wieder, der *Halder* als „**innerlich zerbrochen**“ charakterisierte, er spreche mit keinem Menschen u. sei „*voellig misstrauisch*.“ Heusinger hingegen erscheine als die „**tragende Saeule**.“ Er habe sogar *um seine Entlassung gebeten*, „da niemand dem Fuehrer die Wahrheit sagt ueber die Lage.“ (Meyer, Heusinger, 180)

Assessments:

Heusingers Leben u. Wirken sollten aber vor allem von den jungen Offizieren der heutigen *Bundeswehr* studiert werden, weil sie daraus Anregungen fuer *vorbildliche soldatische Haltung* gewinnen koennen u. sollten. Ich nenne dafuer vier Gruende:

- a. General Heusingers ganzes Soldatenleben war gepraeagt von der Sorge u. Fuersorge um die ihm anvertrauten Menschen u. seine Kameraden in Uniform;
- b. Sein Leben u. Wirken als Soldat waren ausgerichtet an einem *eindeutigen ethisch-moralischen Koordinatensystem*, das fuer Opportunismus keinen Raum liess;
- c. Heusinger war ein Mann der klaren Sprache u. der eindeutigen Analyse. Seine *Labebeurteilungen* folgen in verstaendlicher Sprache dem *klassischen Muster Beschreiben – Beurteilen – Folgern*;
- d. General Heusinger hat die *Westorientierung Deutschlands* u. die *Einbindung in die NATO entscheidend mitbestimmt u. gestaltet*. Er hat aber auch entscheidende Beitrage zur Entwicklung der NATO geleistet. (Meyer, Heusinger, xi-xiv)¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ **Note:** These comments come from forward by *Klaus Naumann*, General a.D. According to Naumann, „Heusinger war ein *ueberzeugter Atlantiker*, der in der *engen Bindung an die USA* die Garantie europaeischer Sicherheit sah. (xiv)

General a.D. de Maiziere: “Sein scharfer analytischer Verstand, die nüchternen Präzision seines Denkens, das frei von jedem Pathos u. Wunschdenken war, seine Integrität, seine persönliche Bescheidenheit u. natürliche Würde gaben seinem Auftreten Glaubwürdigkeit u. Überzeugungskraft. Er konnte aufmerksam u. geduldig zuhören, Ratschläge anhören u. prüfen. Immer war er beherrscht, niemals habe ich ihn laut oder erregt erlebt; ja, er verabscheute es, mit der Faust auf den Tisch zu schlagen, was dynamische u. robustere Truppenführer gelegentlich bei ihm vermisst haben moegen.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger, xiv*)

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HOSSBACH, Oberst Friedrich:

According to one source, his nickname among the troops was “alte Preussen.” (*Dr E. Bunke, 31. ID, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal, 236*)

Oberst Hossbach, der einmal Heeresadjutant bei Hitler war, hatte ein besonderes Renommee, nicht nur in der Division, sondern auch bei den Heeresführung im Korps u. in der Armee. (*Dr E. Bunke, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal, 414*)

* 21. November 1894, Unna / Westfalen + 10. September 1980, Göttingen	
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Friedrich Hoßbach besuchte zwischen 1905 und 1913 die Hauptkadettenanstalt Groß-Lichterfelde. Anschließend trat er als Fähnrich in das Infanterie-Regiment 82 ein, wo er am 19. Juni 1914 zum Leutnant befördert wurde. Bei Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs wurde er Adjutant des III. Bataillons seines Regiments. Am 15. September 1916 wurde er dann Regiments-Adjutant beim Infanterie-Regiment 419 und am 2. März 1918 Ordonnanz-Offizier beim Generalkommando des XVIII. Armeekorps. Am 20. September 1918 zum Oberleutnant befördert, wurde er im November 1918 in das Infanterie-Regiment 82 zurück versetzt und dort stellvertretender Führer der 9. Kompanie. Im Februar 1919 wurde er mit der Aufstellung der Grenzschutz-Kompanie Hoßbach beauftragt, ab März 1919 führte er gleichzeitig das II. Bataillon des Infanterie-Regiments 82. Nach Kriegsende wurde er in die Reichswehr übernommen und Führer der 1. Kompanie im [Infanterie-Regiment 20](#). Nach einem Monat übernahm er den Nachrichtenzug des I. Bataillons des [Infanterie-Regiments 20](#). Nach weiteren Verwendungen als Bataillons-Adjutant absolvierte er 1923/24 eine Führergehilfenausbildung, nach deren Ende er in das Reiter-Regiment 15 versetzt wurde. 1925 kam er zum [Infanterie-Regiment 17](#), wo er am 1. März 1927 zum Hauptmann befördert wurde. Anschließend wurde er in das Reichswehrministerium versetzt. Nach einer Kommandierung zum [Reiter-Regiment 5](#) wurde er am 1. Oktober 1937 Chef der 5. Kompanie im [Infanterie-Regiment 17](#). Am 1. Juli 1933 wurde er Führungsoffizier im Reichswehrministerium zum Aufbau des Reichsluftfahrt-Ministeriums. Am 1. April 1934 wurde er Chef der Personalgruppe im Truppenamt, nachdem er am 1. März 1934 zum Major befördert worden war. Vom 3. August 1934 bis zum 28. Januar 1938 war er **Heeresadjutant bei Adolf Hitler** und am 1. März 1937 zum Oberst befördert. Am 1. Februar 1938 wurde er dann Kommandeur des [Infanterie-Regiments 82](#), mit dem er am Westfeldzug teilnahm. Am Strand bei Dieppe zeichnete er sich besonders aus, wofür er am 7. Oktober 1940 mit dem Ritterkreuz ausgezeichnet wurde. Ab Juni 1941 kämpfte er mit seinem Regiment in Rußland, wo er am 1. März 1942 zum Generalmajor befördert wurde. Vom 20. Januar bis zum 24. Januar 1942 führte er stellvertretend die [31. Infanterie-Division](#), anschließend kam er in die

Führer-Reserve des OKH. Am 1. April 1942 wurde er Kommandeur der [82. Infanterie-Division](#), am 1. August 1942 folgte die Beförderung zum Generalleutnant. Am 16. Mai 1943 übernahm er das Kommando über die [31. Infanterie-Division](#), mit der er im Juli 1943 am Unternehmen "Zitadelle teilnahm". Am 2. August 1943 übernahm er die Führung des [XXXXVI. Armeekorps](#), am

11. September 1943 wurde er mit dem Eichenlaub ausgezeichnet. Am 1. November 1943 zum General der Infanterie befördert, wurde er Kommandierender General des [LVI. Panzerkorps](#). Vom 19. Juli 1944 bis zum 28. Januar 1945 war er Oberbefehlshaber der [4. Armee](#) in Ostpreußen. Nach der Einkesselung bei Heiligenbeil und Hitlers Verbot eines Ausbruchs wurde er von diesem seines Kommandos enthoben. Bis Kriegsende verblieb er ohne Kommando. Am 8. April 1945 widersetzte er sich mit der Pistole in der Hand erfolgreich seiner Ermordung. Der Kreisleiter der NSDAP in Göttingen wollte ihn beim Herannahen der Amerikaner durch einen Volkssturmführer beseitigen lassen. Er geriet in alliierte Gefangenschaft, aus der er 1947 entlassen wurde.

Ritterkreuz (7. Oktober 1940) Eichenlaub (11. September 1943)

<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister>

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HOEPNER, General Erich:

It was his forces which eventually got *closest to Moscow*. He too had a great reputation as an „energetic leader.“ (*Blumentritt, Moscow, in: Fatal Decisions, 44*)

Born **14 Sep 1886**. He commanded the **1. Light Div.** from **1935** to **Nov 38**; the **16. AK** from **Nov 38** through the French campaign; after which he assumed command of **4. PzGr**. A tough, imaginative leader, Hoepner was one of the best German tank cdrs. Throughout his career, he was known for his independence, a trait which ultimately led to his fall. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions, 153, f.n. 24; Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer, 139*)

Before *Barbarossa* Gen Hoepner issued directive concerning *method of warfare* in the coming battle in the east: „This war must have the smashing of modern Russia as its goal and must therefore be *executed w/ a brutality hitherto unknown*. Each battle must be planned and executed *w/ the iron will to annihilate the enemy completely and mercilessly*.“ (*H.J. Schroeder, German Soldiers' Experiences, 322*)

Mid-Nov 41: Discussing the resumption of the Moscow offensive in mid-Nov 41, *Kesselring* implies that Hoepner's heart was not in it: "Hoepner, dem, wie ich in Gesprächen *persoenlich feststellte*, fuer diese Aufgabe *das mitreissende Fluidum* [aura, air, atmosphere] *fehlte*." *Kesselring* also states that *Kluge* was not happy with Hoepner's "*zoegernde Fuehrung*." (see, *Kesselring, Soldat, 131*)

Jan 42: Hoepner, who prematurely withdrew his *panzergruppe* to the winter line on **8.1.42**, was dismissed from the army in disgrace. (He along w/ *General v. Sponeck*, who had abandoned *Kerch*, were executed **3** years later in another context.) Outraged at the loss of his "well-earned pension rights," Hoepner instigated a *lawsuit* against the Reich in the *Leipzig* courts and won. Hitler, engraed by the blindness of the legal profession to the disciplines of war, declared himself

above the law and summoned the Reichstag on **26.4.42** to endorse a decree to that effect. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 366)

Jan 42: After relieving Hoepner from his command, Hitler also ordered that he be expelled from the army w/ loss of pay, pension, and rights to wear the uniform and decorations. The military courts, however, upheld Hoepner's contention that he could not be deprived of those rights and benefits w/o a court-martial; and he continued on inactive status w/ rank and full pay until he was arrested and then tried and executed as a member of the **20 Jul 44** plot against Hitler. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 128, f.n. 19)

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HOTH, Col.-Gen. Hermann:

One of the *Wehrmacht's* "most underrated generals." (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 16)

He was a „calm, precise man.“ (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 44)

During Russian campaign in **1941**, his tanks and other vehicles have white temporary markings for his **3 Pz Gr**: a stylized "Hh" for Hoth. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 52)

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JESCHONNEK, General Hans:

The *Luftwaffe* chief of staff was "a slim, cool-headed, ruthless staff officer of an ability outstanding for his youth: at **16** he had been an infantry lieutenant in World War I, then a fighter pilot; still only **41** [in early **1941**], he had a typically Silesian mentality – an abrupt, single-minded attitude w/ neither the ability nor the inclination to argue w/ those who disagreed w/ him. It was Jeschonnek who had confidently predicted that Britain would cave in under the pressure of the *Luftwaffe's* bombing offensive. Now, not even Hitler accepted that . . ." (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 196)

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JODL, GenObst. Alfred:

As head of the *Wehrmacht Operations staff* (*Wehrmacht Fuehrungsstab*), he was Hitler's *closest military advisor*.

A. Seaton: "Behind Hitler, in the shadows, stood Jodl, probably closer to the Fuehrer than any other military officer except Schmundt, Hitler's military aide. A lean and saturnine general of the artillery, Jodl briefed the Fuehrer daily on all theaters of war and discussed at length plans and orders, so that he may unconsciously have served as Hitler's military tutor. Jodl was intelligent and able, ambitious and reserved and, although entirely under the spell of the Fuehrer, whom he regarded as a military genius, he was not afraid in these early days to speak his mind, his Bavarian speech on occasions being blunt almost to the point of rudeness." (*The Battle for Moscow*, 33)

13.5.45: ...erklärte etwa GenO. **Jodl:** „Seit Fruehjahr 42 wusste ich, dass wir den Krieg nicht gewinnen konnten.“ (Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 20)

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KESSELRING, GFM Albert v.:

At the end of **1941** Hitler had transferred the bulk of Kesselring’s **Air Fleet 2** to Sicily and North Africa for a proposed attack on Malta. Kesselring was the right cdr for the Mediterranean. He was a likeable man, a warm-hearted and cheerful optimist w/ an open manner, and for this reason found all doors open to him – an inestimable benefit in the onerous liaison he had to maintain w/ the Italians. . . Hitler had great confidence in Kesselring, which was not misplaced. (v. *Below, At Hitler’s Side*, 124)

Re: „Barbarossa:“ „Leicht wuerde der Kampf nicht werden, eine Krise konnte die andere abloesen...Aber war das Ziel, das Fernhalten des Kommunismus von West-Europa, nicht so gross, dass **das Letzte u. Aeusserte** gewagt werden musste?“ (Kesselring, *Soldat*, 114-15)¹⁸⁷

Re: “Luftlandetruppen:” “Der Luftnachschieb war nicht auf diesen Massenbedarf vorbereitet, ebensowenig war – aus mir unbekannt geliebten Gruenden – der *Einsatz von starken Luftlandetruppen* vorgesehen, die fuer derartige weitgesteckte Operationen *unentbehrlich* sind. (*Soldat*, 136)

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KEITEL, GFM Wilhelm:

“Keitel was not gifted w/ either a quick brain or clarity of vision. Burly and corpulent, monocled and handsome, the **58**-year-old field-marshal had a very imposing presence, and he struck such arrogant attitudes that Hitler found it convenient to take him round Europe w/ his retinue as a show piece, so that Keitel might impress foreign dignitaries and statesmen w/ his haughty bearing; when Keitel was admitted to a conference he could be counted upon to echo his master, for he idolized the dictator. Behind this majestic exterior there was nothing except physical bravery. For Keitel had neither character, intelligence, moral courage, nor professional ability, and he owed his rapid advancement to the fact that he was useful to Hitler. . .” (A. *Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 15)

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KLUGE, GFM Hans v.:

Halder’s opinion of: The Chief of General Staff did not rate v. Kluge’s operational talents very highly. . . The Cdr of Army Group Ctr, Halder thought, was too much influenced by the day-to-day events and the hourly crises, voicing opinions based merely on his most recent impressions. (Quoted in, A. *Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 268; see also, *Halder, Diary*, early Feb 42)

¹⁸⁷ From his memoirs, *Kesselring* appears to have fully supported Hitler’s attack on Russia—to have accepted the *Fuehrer’s* logic for doing so.

„[He] was an impulsive, energetic leader of a traditional type. His talents were those of a tactician rather than a strategist. He *did not smoke and only rarely touched alcohol*. No matter how grave the situation, he *always went to bed early and rose early*. Like Rommel, he was happiest when he was w/ the troops in the very front line. Occasionally he would himself take control of ops at the front, which did not facilitate the work of his staff, though it must be said that he always saw to it that his chief of staff [i.e., *Blumentritt*] was kept informed about any orders he might have given on the spot. The Field-Marshal was passionately fond of aeroplanes and was very proud of his ‚wings‘ which he had won during the First World War. In a joking sort of a way he frequently compared himself w/ Napoleon’s *Marshal Ney*. Like Ney, he was *quite fearless*, indeed oblivious to danger, and he never hesitated to fly or drive through the enemy’s fire. When visiting the front he always took a tent, stove, food and water as well as an armored command vehicle, wireless transmitter truck and one or more motor-cycle despatch riders. He was thus *independent* of his HQ and could doss down wherever he might happen to find himself at nightfall. He was *frequently wounded* and was involved in *numerous car and plane crashes*. As a man he was *inexhaustible*, and his mood was always one of extreme determination. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 43)

Examining our dispositions [just prior to start of campaign], Kluge remarked: „We look *very thin on the ground* and, as you see, there are no powerful reserves such as we had in the Western campaign. The farther east we go, the wider the front must become and the thinner our line will be. Therefore it is essential that our troops remain *well concentrated*, even at the risk of gaps appearing between ourselves and the flanking armies.“ (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 46)

Note: From reading of GFM v. Bock’s war diary (edited by *Gerbet*), clear that there was lots of *tension* between Kluge and his army group cdr. For example, see v. Bock diary entries for: **30.3.41** and **22.7.41**.

According to *Blumentritt (Stabschef 4. AOK)*, “von Bock was a very difficult man to serve, and von Kluge would have been glad to get out of his sphere.” *Blumentritt* told *Liddell Hart* that Kluge was strongly in favor of Hitler’s decision in **Aug 41** to turn south to encircle Soviet forces in the Ukraine: “It was his [Kluge’s] idea, and desire, that his own **4 Army** should swing south to carry out this pincer-movement along w/ *Guderian’s* panzer forces. When setting forth the arguments for this plan, he said to me, w/ emphasis: ‘It would also mean that *we* should be under GFM v. *Rundstedt* instead of GFM v. *Bock*.’” (Quoted in: *B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 151)

Note: For *Marcel Stein’s* assessment of GFM v. Kluge, see his *GFM Model*, 62-64. For example, he writes: „Die Beurteilungen des Heerfuehrers Kluge in der kriegsgeschichtlichen Literatur sind unterschiedlich, der Mensch Kluge wird ueberwiegend negativ beurteilt. . . Ueber den Menschen Kluge faellt es schwer, ein positives Bild zu zeichnen. Kluge war anscheinend der Prototyp des Kadetten, ueberheblich u. arrogant. He also notes, „*Guderian* bezeichnet den Heerfuehrer Kluge als fleissigen Soldaten, guten Kleintaktiker, der aber von der Verwendung von Panzerverbaenden in beweglicher Fuehrung nichts verstand. ‚Er war ein Meister im Zerreißen der Verbaende.‘“ (See also, *Guderian, Erinnerungen*, 330)

Fall 41: *Blumentritt*: “All the cdrs were now asking: ‘When are we going to stop?’ They remembered what had happened to Napoleon’s army. Many of them began to re-read *Caulaincourt’s* grim account of **1812**. That book had a *weighty influence* at this critical time in **1941**. I can still see v. Kluge trudging through the mud from his sleeping quarters to his office, and there

standing before the map w/ Caulaincourt's book in his hand. That went on day after day.” (Quoted in: *B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 154-55)

Nov 41: Following fierce enemy attacks after **13 Nov 41**, **4 Army** did not begin its advance. GFM v. Kluge has been accused of using the heavy defensive fighting to avoid pushing the two corps on his right wing into attack and of leaving them in their positions, which had been developed over the weeks. The same accusation was made against C-in-C of **6 Army**. Both were subjected to sharp criticism by Halder, and both eventually began their attacks against their own better judgement. (*GSMW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 695, f.n. 540; 698)

Dez 41: Eine ziemlich verwerfliche Rolle spielte Kluge im **Winter 1941**, als er, um sich selber zu schuetzen, durch Intrigen bei Hitler die Entlassung Guderians u. die Ausstossung Hoepners aus dem Heer herbeifuehrte u. noch versuchte den Abschiedsbefehl Guderians an seine Armee zu unterdruecken. Guderian hat ihm dies verstaendlicherweise nie vergeben. (*M. Stein, GFM Model*, 63-64)

18.12.41: Kluge, that „*man of iron*,” leaves **4. Armee** and took over as cdr of Army Group Ctr, whose HQ was then located in the *forest west of Smolensk*. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 66)

19.12.41: Uebernahm er die Fuehrung der H.Gr.Mitte. Kluge scheute sich nicht, Hitler gegenueber seine Auffassungen in der folgenden Zeit offen zu vertreten, aber er drueckte den Willen Hitlers zum „*Aushalten um jeden Preis*“ ruecksichtslos durch. (*Hofmann, „Schlacht von Moskau,”* 171)

Widerstand: Kluges schwankende Haltung zur Widerstandsbewegung – er war ueber vieles unterrichtet, sprach wiederholt mit Goerdeler, legte sich aber nie fest, (sie glaubten sie haetten ihn, fuenf Minuten spaeter hatten sie ihn wieder nicht [!]) u. verleugnete alle Mitwisserschaft [*collusion; complicity*] gegenueber Kameraden, die ihm vertraut hatten. Retten konnte ihn das nicht. (*M. Stein, GFM Model*, 64)

Widerstand: Kluge was involved at some level in the plot against Hitler. On 20.7.44 he was G.O.C. of the Western Front. Following *attentat* attempt at *Rastenburg*, IAW plotters' plans, key SS and Gestapo members had been rounded up in Paris. When later that night it became known that Hitler was alive and that the *putsch* in Berlin was failing, entourage around General *Beck* still urged Kluge to go ahead on his own and *sign an armistice w/ the Allies*. Kluge backed down and ordered the SS to be released. By midnight, *putsch* in Paris was over. Yet Kluge's defection on the day of the aborted *putsch* availed him little. Though one of *Hitler's favorite and most successful cdrs*, his *close contacts w/ the plotters* eventually came to light. Relieved of his command, and summoned back to Germany on **17.8.44**, he suspected that he, too, would be put on trial. He committed suicide on the way to Germany. (*M. Vassiltchikov, Berlin Diaries*, 216, 227)

Boeselager observations:¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Sources: Private Paper prepared by Philipp Freiherr v. Boeselager; P. Freiherr v. Boeselager, *Der Widerstand in der Heeresgruppe Mitte*, Beitrage zum Widerstand 1933-1945, Heft 40, 1990; E-Mail, Christoph Nehring, *Kommentar zu "Boeselager Notizen;"* 1 Apr 07. (**Note:** Boeselager was Kluge's O.O. from 1 Apr 42 – 1 Apr 43. During this time he was constantly with the *Feldmarschall*. Always ate meals

Positive:

--mit "Leib u. Seele" Soldat

War ein in den preussischen Wertvorstellungen verwurzelter General (der dem diabolischen Hitler nicht gewachsen war) (B)¹⁸⁹

--war wahrscheinlich nicht ein solcher Strategie wie Manstein, aber er hatte einen klaren strategischen Blick (B)

--hervorragender Heerfuhrer ueberall geachtet

clearly cared for well-being of his soldiers

Kluge's son served as 2. *Generalstabsoffizier* in XXXIX Pz.Kp.

--teilweise wegen seines Wissens u. seines ploetzlichen Erscheinens an der Front, gefuerchtet

--hochintelligent u. tapfer

--well educated (enorme Allgemeinbildung)

Passionierter Land- u. Forstwirt

Kannte sich am Sternenhimmel u. in der Geschichte aus

An tech. Neuerungen aller Art aeussert interessiert

--bei Meldungen verlangte er "eine voellige objektive Darstellung der Lage

--Kluge war Christ u. ein Konservativer alter Schule

Er fuehlte sich dem christlichen Sittengesetz verpflichtet

Negative:

--im Grunde seines Herzen sicherlich ein *kleinbuergerlicher Spiesser* (Nehring)¹⁹⁰

--als Vorgesetzter war er mehr als schwierig; *extreme egoistisch*

--ein sehr grosser Bewunderer Hitlers (aber stimmt kein Nazi!); er bewunderte H. u. lehnte ihn gleichzeitig ab (B).

--his nickname "der Kluge Hans," mit negativen Aspekten verbunden (see Nehring)

--war ueber sich selbst *sehr unsicher* und daher *extreme anfaellig gegen Kritik*

--auch anfaellig fuer Erfolge Dritter Untergebener oder auch Gleichgestellter, die er stets versuchte zu torpedieren order "kleinzureden;" er misgoennte den Anderen den Erfolg.

--in general, als Mensch "kleinkariert" u. mit charakterlich schweren Fehlern; schwieriger Vorgesetzter.

Kluge u. Hitler:

Kluge wehrte sich gegenueber Hitler aeussert energisch gegen Eingriffe in seine militaerischen Befugnisse u. verfocht tapfer sein Ansicht.

Conversely, he claimed to know nothing of politics („Ich verstehe nichts von Politik und da mische ich mich nicht ein.“ Aber deshalb verlangte er „dass meine Meinung in mil. Fragen ernstgenommen u. nicht von Tisch gewischt wird!“ (B)

Crux: He stood up bravely to Hitler on military matters but he was reluctant to move against Hitler politically.

Kluge u. der Widerstand:

together. Boeselager and mates in *Ordonnanzoffizierszimmer* possessed a *Lautsprecher* that enabled them to listen in on v. Kluge's telephone calls, including many with Hitler.)

¹⁸⁹ B = *Boeselager*.

¹⁹⁰ Note: Nehring's views are his own and, in part, those of his father, "der v. Kluge ablehnte."

B: Kluge war schon sehr frueh, spaetestens 1943 durch mich ueber die Plaene Tresckows zur Ermordung Hitlers orientiert worden u. hatte zugestimmt. Immer wieder war er schwankend geworden. Doch im Herbst 1943 hat er sich endgueltig Tresckow fuer „die Zeit nach Hitler“ zur Verfuegung gestellt.

Nehring: „v. Kluge hat sicherlich frueh erkannt, wann der Krieg verloren war. Lt. Meinem Vater war er der allerletzte Typ, der darum gegen Hitler agiert haette.“

Im Politischen fuehlte er sich „ueberfordert,“ da er, wie er sagte, „davon nichts verstuende.“ Er zoegerte lange, bis er sich Tresckow (Ia Hr.Gr.Mitte) u. damit dem Widerstand zur Verfuegung stellte. Aber auch dann noch musste er immer wieder geschoben werden u. blieb halbherzig. (B)

Concerning on incident in summer 1944, when Boeselager’s brother (who was also in the Resistance) met secretly with v. Kluge in Paris (HQ OB West), B. writes of Kluges *Unentschlossenheit u. letztlich Feigheit*.

Kluge Anekdote: 5 Zigeuner „sonderbehandelt:“

Incident occurred only a few days after Boeselager joined v. Kluge’s staff in spring of 1942. Kluge met with *SS-Obergruppenfueher von dem Bach-Zelewski*, who was responsible for administration of rear areas behind Hr.Gr.Mitte. Kluge learns that five gypies have been „sonderbehandelt,“ that is, shot out of hand (w/o legal proceedings, etc.). He is furious. Also learns Jews are being shot. Comes to *recht lebhaften Disput* between Kluge und Bach-Zelewski. Kluge replies that this policy will only create more partisans, violates Haage Convention, etc. Bach-Zelewski ends up threatening v. Kluge! (Boeselager Heft, 9-10).

Thus, according to B., v. Kluge was utterly shocked and furious to discover that Jews, gypsies, etc., were being murdered by SS, etc. V. Kluge—so B.—even reported the incident to OKH and demanded that it intervene. However, in following paragraph, he seems to contradict his implication that v. Kluge was unaware of such behavior. For he notes that, after much „listening around,“ it was clear to him that others on Kluge’s staff were aware of the *Judenerschiessungen* (Borissow, etc.). If that is so, how could Kluge not have been aware?

Kluge Anekdote: Weihnachten 1942:

Weihnachten 1942 hatte das OKW *christiliche Weihnachtsfeiern untersagt*. Bei der Weihnachtsfeier las Tresckow das Weihnachtsevangelium vor, und Kluge, der sonst nie das Offizierkasino betrat u. den B. von Tresckows Absicht unterrichtet hat, kam an diesem Abend *ostentativ* zur Weihnachtsfeier ins Kasino. Kluge blieb, bis das Evangelium vorgelesen worden war, dann verabschiedet er sich von den Offizieren. Kluge war nur gekommen, um Tresckow zu decken (B.)

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KUEBLER, General der Gebirgstruppe Ludwig:

Kdr XXXXIX Gebirgs-AK at start of Russian campaign.

Dec 41: General *Kuebler* wurde von Hitler zum OB der **4. Armee** vor Moskau ernannt. Es war eindeutig eine Belohnung fuer die Leistungen des **XXXXIX Korps**. Es hatte vorbildlich u. mit vollem Erfolg gekaempft. . . Sein Korps war mehr als **1.700** km unter den schwierigsten

Bedingungen marschiert u. hatte beträchtliche Verluste zu beklagen. (*Burdick, Hubert Lanz, 138-39*)

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LEMELSEN, General der Pz.Tr. Joachim:

Am **1.4.37** zum *Generalmajor* befördert, wurde er am **1.3.38** Kdr der **29. ID**. Am **1.4.39** zum *Generalleutnant* befördert, führte er seine Division 1939 in Polen u. 1940 in Frankreich. Ende Mai 1940 wurde er Kdr der **5. PD**, die er während der zweiten Phase des Westfeldzuges in Frankreich führte. Am **1.8.40** wurde er zum *General der Artillerie* befördert (ab Juni 1941 *General der Pz.Tr.*) u. am **25.10.40** Komm.Gen. des **47. AK.**, welches er ab Juni 1941 in Russland führte. (*www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de*)

Veteran *Otto Will (5. PD)*: “Von General Lemelsen wurde zu dieser Zeit [beginning of *Russlandfeldzug*] noch oft gesprochen. Ich kann mich erinnern, dass *er bei den Soldaten sehr angesehen u. sehr beliebt war.*“ (*Brief, 1 Sep 07*)

* * * *

MILCH, Ehrhard:

After moribund state of German acft industry and *Udet's mismanagement* could no longer be ignored, Goering placed acft production under the far more capable direct of *Field Marshal Ehrhard Milch of Lufthansa*. Unlike Udet, Milch had considerable experience in acft industry and was highly competent manager. He instituted an array of reforms and efficiency measures that boosted German acft production to over **15 000** in **1942** and **25 000** in **1943**. Sure measures, however, were taken far too late to meet enormous demands of a war of attrition. (*J.S. Corum, in: Why Air Forces Fail, 214*)

He was the only top German cdr to see to it that all his men had winter clothing in **1941/42**: He quietly ignored a direct order from Hitler and set about organizing winter uniforms for all **800,000** *Luftwaffe* personnel he suspected would still be needed in Russia as the snows started to fall. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia, 26*)

* * * *

MODEL, Gen Walther:

“Model was not a *philosopher*, he was a fighter...with a *solid reputation as an energetic commander and brilliant tactician* [with] the self-assured demeanor of a traditional (and monocled) old school Prussian officer. Model radiated confidence.” (*Glantz, Zhukov's Greatest Defeat, 31*)

Winter 41/42: In dark days of winter 1942, when German forces outside Moscow at their lowest ebb, [*Model's*] *quick and decisive action* had confounded victorious Russian forces as they advanced from *Rshew* deep into the German rear toward *Viaz'ma*. Within a month, his *audacious counteractions had converted German defeat into victory*, and the Russians had gone from being encircled into being the encircled. In Nov-Dec 1942, with Russians advancing across the very

same terrain in their Operation „Mars,“ he would defeat them again and save the *Rshew salient* for the second time. (*Glantz, Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 227)

„Auf meinen Wunsch hin wurde noch das ‚russische Ehrenmal‘ beim Chalinka-Bach, Ort schwerer Kaempfe, besucht. Gen Model hatte uns im **Jan 43** im Graben, **20 m** von der russischen Stellung entfernt, besucht.“ (*W. Vollmer*, **106. ID**, „14. *Rshew-Reise*,“ in: **KA 7/8-2006**).

A. Seaton: „An able rather than a popular commander, the secret of Model’s subsequent success was bound less in education and ability than in inexhaustible energy and rigid determination. He was a man who wanted to see everything for himself, and his personality was mirrored in the way he exercised command. For, having given his orders, he went to see that they had been carried out; he toured the formations and the battlefield, quizzing and prying, and often knew more of what was happening on the ground than did his staff and subordinates. Some of his methods were foreign to the German Army standards of the time, since they were inquisitorial and destructive, impatient of the niceties of mutual trust and confidence. And so on his lightning whirlwind tours he left behind him a trail of devastating confusion and countermanded orders. In choosing to act in this way he lost much of the respect of his subordinates but, in the short term, Model’s fiery leadership certainly produced results. Model’s personality and methods were to bring him to the notice and favor of the Fuehrer and, under Hitler’s patronage, he was to be promoted two ranks from lieutenant-general to colonel-general in the space of three [3] months.“ (For more details see, *The Battle for Moscow*, 268-69)

a) Marcel Stein:

Model war ein gewissenhafter u. besonders harter Heerfuehrer. . . Aeusserlich war Model in macher Hinsicht der Prototyp des dt. Offiziers, wie er weltweit karikiert wurde – “preussischer” Haarschnitt u. “eingefrorenes” Monokel. (*Stein*, *GFM Model*, 4-5)

Geyr v. Schweppenburg: In einer Stellungnahme nach dem Kriege betont Geyr die Unterschiede in den Ansichten, bezeichnet jedoch Model as brillianten Soldaten: „Model war ein brillanter Soldat. Politisch waren wir ausserordentlich verschieden eingestellt. Seine persoenliche Tapferkeit war vorbildlich, teilweise geradezu leichtsinnig.“ (*Brief an Leppa*, 20.12.54;¹⁹¹ quoted in: *Stein*, 56)

M. Stein: Nicht der erfolgreiche Angriff ist das hoechste Kriterium fuer einen Heerfuehrer. Offensiven werden meistens mit einer starken personellen u. materiellen Ueberlegenheit gefuehrt – im Zweiten Weltkrieg waren Rommels Angriffserfolge wahrscheinlich seltene Ausnahme. Der Laie ist natuerlich vorwiegend von siegreichen Angriffen beeindruckt – fuer den Fachmann ist der erfolgreiche Rueckzug der Hoehepunkt der operativen Kunst. Auf diesem Gebiet gelang es Model, als Oberbefehlshaber von Armeen u. H.Gr., eine Meisterschaft zu entwickeln, die ihm einen berechtigten Platz unter den besten dt. Generalen des Zweiten Weltkrieges einraeumt. (*GFM Model*, 60-61)

M. Stein: Von nicht geringer Bedeutung ist das Charakterbild eines widerspruchsvollen Menschen, der von einer Reihe Autoren mit den Schlagwort „Nazi-General“ bezeichnet wird. Der Verfasser weist nach, dass GFM Model ein voellig unpolitischer Soldat war, der sich nicht scheute, Hitler oft in einer Form entgegenzutreten, die keiner seiner Kameraden wagte u. der

¹⁹¹ My fourth birthday on this wonderful planet!

nachweislich keine Beruehrung mit den schwersten Verbrechen des Dritten Reiches, darunter die Judenvernichtung, hatte. (*Back cover of biography by Marcel Stein, Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model*)

Mein besonderes Interesse fuer den GFM Model wurde zunaechst durch den Begriff “Nazi-General” bedingt, der ihn wie ein Schlagwort in der Literatur begleitet. . . Logischerweise entstand die Frage, was fuer ein Mensch dieser Heerfuehrer war u. weshalb gerade er als “Nazi-General” bezeichnet wurde. . . (*GFM Model, xiii*)

In der Geschichtsschreibung hat Model nicht das, was man als eine gute Presse bezeichnen kann. Seine mil. Leistungen wuerdigen auch viele seiner Gegner, jedoch bleibt an dem Menschen Model fast durchgehend die Bezeichnung “Nazi-General” wie ein aufgeklebtes Etikett [*label*] haften. Kein Historiker hat sich jedoch die Muehe gemacht zu versuchen, sie zu naeher zu definieren oder zu relativieren. Diese negative Bezeichnung wurde vor allem durch die bald nach dem Kriege veroeffentlichten Erinnerungen einiger Kameraden Models beeinflusst. Tonangebend ist hier Speidel, dessen Buch “Invasion 1944” als eines der ersten Memoirenwerke eines dt. Generals kurz nach Kriegsende erschien. [**Note:** For Speidel’s fairly devastating portrait of Model, see p 7-8.]

Die oft schrofte Form, in der Model Hitler widersprach, hat sonderbarerweise zu seinem Ruf as Nazi-General beigetragen. Da sich kein anderer Befehlshaber Models Ton erlaubte u. Hitler das hinnahm, sahen viele Kameraden, die Model nicht mochten, in ihm einen besonderen Guenstling Hitlers, was sie dann mit Regierungstreue begruendeten. Model vermied es immer, Hitler Lehrstunden zu erteilen, er begrenzte seine Widersprueche auf konkrete Anlaesse. (*GFM Model, 69*)¹⁹²

Auch Manstein hat in seinen Erinnerungen zu einem negativen Bild Models beigetragen, insbesondere weil der inhaltlich gesehen zweite Band, “Verlorene Siege,” lange Zeit als massgebliche Quelle galt. . . Gravierend fuer das Bild Models as “Nazi-General” ist Mansteins Darstellung in “Verlorene Siege.” . . . Die bisher einzige umfassende Biographie Models verfasste Walter Goerlitz, zunaechst **1975** unter dem Titel: “Model – Strategie der Defensive.” Der Titel ist irrefuehrend. Selbst Models Bewunderer wuerden ihn kaum als Strategen bezeichnen. (See, *Stein, 9-12*)

“[Stein]. . . kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Model wahrscheinlich der haerteste Kaempfer, nicht nur gegen den jeweiligen Feind, der tapferste Feldmarschall, der das Schicksal seiner Soldaten in vorderster Front teilte u. auch der bedingungsloseste Kaempfer gegen die Fuehrungsmethoden Hitlers u. dessen Starrsinn gewesen ist, u. dass er mit dem Holocaust auch im weitesten Sinne nichts zu tun gehabt hat.” (*Geleitwort, G. Reichhelm, xvii*)

Model zaehlt neben Manstein u. Rommel zu den hervorragendsten Heerfuehrern der Wehrmacht im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Kein Heerfuehrer, verglichen mit Models Befehlsgewalt, war frontnaeher als er. Auch andere hohe Truppenfuehrer, wie Guderian, Hoepner, Hoth, Rommel, hielten sich staendig in vorderster Linie auf. Aber keinem von ihnen unterstanden Verbaende in der von Model befehligten Groessenordnung. Zweitweise fuehrte Model im Osten gleichzeitig zwei [2] Heeresgruppen u. war damit nahe der Stellung eines “Oberbefehlshaber Ost.” Er befehligte hunderttausende Soldaten, kannte dabei viele juengere Offiziere bis zu den Btn.-Kdren. persoen-

¹⁹² **Note:** Guderian, on the other hand, tried on at least one occasion to lecture Hitler on contradict the Fuehrer on a “Frage der Operationsfuehrung.” For interesting anecdote see, Stein, 69; also, Guderian, *Erinnerungen*, 343.

lich. Seine direkte Verbundenheit mit der Truppe wird bestaetigt durch zahlreiche Aussagen von Soldaten aller Dienstgrade. Natuerlich hatte diese Fuehrungsmethode auch ihre Nachteile. . . In den Staeben Models herrschte eine grosse Personalfluktuation u. sein Verhaeltnis zu manchen seiner Generalstabs- u. Stabsoffizieren war oft problematisch [!]. Nicht immer hatte er einen genauen Ueberblick ueber die grosse Lage seiner Verbaende. Hier war ihm Manstein mit seinem auf ihn persoendlich eingeschworenen Stab mit Sicherheit ueberlegen. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 1-2)

Kein anderer hoher Befehlshaber war so oft wie Model gezwungen, in verzweifelter Lage einzu-springen u. diese, soweit es die Umstaende zuliessen, zu bereinigen. Hieraus sind Bezeichnungen wie “Abwehrloewe” u. “Feuerwehrmann” entstanden. Keiner anderer hoher Heerfuehrer hat Hitler so oft u. so deutlich widersprochen wie Model. Nur Zeitler, Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres [**ab Sep 42**], kam ihm nahe. Mehrfach hat Model sich auch geweigert, ihm unsinnig erscheinende Befehle auszufuehren oder er stellte Hitler vor vollendete Tatsachen, mit der Vorgabe, er haette zwar eigenmaechtig, aber doch im Sinne Hitlers gehandelt [!]. . . Viele seiner Kameraden lagen in staendigem Streit mit Hitler. Aber Model gelang es oft, sich durchzusetzen, weil anscheinend nur er den richtigen Ton fand, in dem Hitler entgegengetreten werden konnte. Manstein, der oft versuchte gegen Hitler zu argumentieren, war unfaehig dafuer diese passende Form zu finden. Halder lag staendig im Streit mit Hitler, musste aber im entscheidenden Augenblick die Waffen stricken; Hitlers Rabulistik war er nicht gewachsen. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 2)

Bei seinen zahlreichen Temperamentsausbruechen gegeneuber Untergebenen drohte Model oft mit Kriegsgericht. Auch Offiziere, die ihm naehstand, wie sein Generalstabschef Krebs, blieben von solchen Drohungen nicht verschont. Folgen hatten diese nicht, da in solchen Faellen kein einziges kriegsgerichtliches Verfahren eingeleitet wurde u. auch nicht eingeleitet werden konnte, da die Vorwuerfe Models kein Vergehen betrafen, das der Militaerjustiz unterlag. In den wenigen Faellen, in denen Model ein Verfahren einleitete oder an solchen beteiligt war, endete diese mit einem Freispruch. . . Wahrscheinlich hat Model selber seine Drohungen nicht ernst genommen. Es gibt genuegend Aussagen von betroffenen Zeitzeugen, dass seine Wutausbrueche nur von kurzer Dauer waren u. dass Model seine Worte oft wieder zuruecknahm u. sich entschuldigte. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 286)

Model war an der Widerstandsbewegung nicht beteiligt, den **20. Jul 44** lehnte er ab. . . Sein Vorstellungswelt laesst sich auf einen einfachen Nenner bringen. Er war kein politisch denkender General. Das bestehende Staatsgefuege stellte er nicht in Frage. Hitler war sein Oberster Befehlshaber. Er war ein pflichtbewusster Soldat. Ein Gewaltaktion gegen das Staatsoberhaupt im Kriege war fuer ihn undenkbar. Sein Verhalten zu Widerstandsbewegung war eindeutig. . . Models Einstellung zum Attentat blieb auch nach dem **20.7.44** voellig negativ. (Note: At **2100 hrs** on evening of 22 July 1944, Model sent a telegram to Hitler, which began: „Mein Fuehrer! Mit Empoerung u. Hass gegen die Urheber erfuehren wir Soldaten der H.Gr.Mitte u. Nordukraine soeben von dem verbrecherischen Anschlag auf Sie.. .“ (For more details see, Stein, *GFM Model*, 257-64)¹⁹³

Exkurs – Was ist ein „Nazi-General?“ Einzelne Begebenheiten, wie eine fruehe Parteimitgliedschaft, Verleihung des goldenen Parteiabzeichens an bewaehrte Heerfuehrer, die Entgegennahme

¹⁹³ Note: Apparently, Model was the first front general to sent such a telegram to Hitler after the failed assassination attempt. Stein avers: „Models Telegramm war eben inhaltlich wie zeitlich nur eines unter vielen. Eine politische Bedeutung ist ihm nicht beizumessen, ebenso wenig wie aehnlichen Botschaften von anderen Befehlshabern.“ (262-64)

von Vergünstigungen wie Dotationen, die auch einer grösseren Anzahl hoher Befehlshaber gewährt wurden, ohne dass dabei ihre pol. Einstellung berücksichtigt wurde, duerften nicht ausreichend sein, ebensowenig wie eine allgemeine nationalsozialistische Gesinnung. Neben einer Gesinnung muss auch eine aktive Foerderung einer Weltanschauung vorhanden sein. In den Augen des Vf. ist ein „Nazi-General“ ein Befehlshaber, der den totalitaeren Anspruch des Fuehrerstaats ausdruecklich bejahte u. ihn im Rahmen seines Berufs zu foerdern suchte, oder der sich der Rassenlehre voellig verschrieb u. sich an ihren verbrecherischen Folgen beteiligte. (Stein, 213)

Note: By thorough evaluation of Model's correspondence w/ his family, his family life, statements from officers close to him, etc., Stein concludes that the „conventional wisdom“ about Model – i.e., that he was a „Nazi-General – is utterly false:

- In der Vorstellungswelt des GFMs war die Politik einfach ausgekammert. Selbstverstaendlich machte er sich Gedanken über die pol. Lage in Deutschland, insbesondere vor der Machtergreifung; jedoch danach war sie kein Gespraechsthema mehr fuer ihn;
- Wie Frau Model in ihrem Gespraech mit Goerlitz hervorhob, gab es im Familienkreis nie politische Unterhaltungen. Auch bei den haeufigen Besuchen von Kameraden – Models Heim war als besonders gastfreundlich bekannt – war Politik nie Gespraechsthema;
- Das persoenliche Verhaeltnis zu Hitler: Fest steht, dass Model Hitler als Fuehrer u. O.B. der Wehrmacht rueckhaltslos anerkannte. Ebenso wie politische Gespraechе in seinen Staeben u. in seinem Freudeskreis nicht stattfinden durften, duldete er keine der in vielen Offizierskreisen ueblichen Anspielungen oder abfaellige Bemerkungen zu Hitler. Unter anderem sagte Reichhelm zu Goerlitz in einem Gespraech mit ihm, dass Model Witze ueber das Regime oder den Fuehrer nie geduldet haette. Er haette den Betreffenden „rausgeschmissen,“ jedoch nie Meldung gemacht.
- Models persoenliche Einstellung zu Hitler u. zur NSDAP geht aus Nachkriegsaussagen von Zeitzeugen hervor. In wesentlichen Punkten sind viele vergleichbar. Sie heben hervor, dass Model Hitler als Staatsoberhaupt u. den Obersten Befehlshaber respektierte, dass Hitler seinerseits von Models Erfolgen beeindruckt war, dass Weltanschauung u. Parteipolitik keine Rolle spielten u. dass die beiderseitigen Beziehungen immer kuehl u. unpersoendlich blieben;
- General Gehard Engel, eine Zeit lang Adjutant des Heeres bei Hitler, betont, dass es keine persoenliche Bindungen Models an Hitler gab, dass er jedoch Hitler mit seinen mil. Anschauungen u. seiner Kenntnis der Lage in der vordersten Linie imponierte. Weiter unterstreicht Engel, dass Model mit Schmundt gut befreundet war, dass er sich aber auf weltanschauliche Diskussionen mit ihm nicht einliess;
- Ob.Lt. d.R. Fritz Lucke, im Kriege zeitweilig Begleitoffizier des GFMs u. PK-Berichterstatter: „Weder war Model ein Nazi noch war er ein politischer Mensch. In politischen Dingen war er voellig unerfahren, sogar unwissend. Die sogenannten Partei-Generale verachtete er. Zum „Nazi-General“ machte ihm Goebbels, wie dieser auch Rommel gemacht hat;“

- Obst.Lt. i.G. Georg Buntrock (Ic bei der 9. Armee): „An Hitler war Model menschlich durch nichts gebunden. Lob oder Tadel aus seinem Mund liessen ihn kalt. Niemals hat er mit Ruecksicht auf Hitler etwas an seinen Auffassungen geaendert.“
- Die Ablehnung von vorgesehenen Dotationen: Dotationen an siegreichen Heerfuehrer waren lagen Zeit historische Tradition [see p 229]. Unter Hitler erreichten die Dotationen ein nie dagewesenes Ausmass. Natuerlich stellten sie in Hitlers Augen ein Instrument der Korruption dar. . . Ueber die Ablehnung Models gibt es zwei Versionen. . . [See pp 230-31 for details and a great anecdote. Apparently, Schmundt informed Model that Hitler had planned to give him a Dotation. Model replied that, as far as he knew, such gifts in old Prussia were customarily given only *after* a war had been won. So Model asked Schmundt: „Haben wir den Krieg bereits gewonnen?“ Schmundt diplomatically dropped the matter!
- Zweifellos hat Models eigenes Verhalten dazu beigetragen, dass viele Kameraden ihn als regimehoerig betrachteten. Oberst v. Brunn hebt hervor, dass Soldaten die ihn nicht naeher kannten, ihn als opportunistisch dem NS-Regime gegenueber betrachteten, fuegt jedoch hinzu, dass sich Model nicht scheute, „den Nazi zu spielen“ um Vorteilhaftes fuer die Truppe u. die ihm anvertraute Sache herauszuschlagen.

(Stein, GFM Model, 218-31)

Models Fuehrungsmethoden:

Models frontnahe Fuehrung wird in den meisten Werken ueber den Zweiten Weltkrieg betont. Jedoch ist die Frage berechtigt, ob er mit der Uebernahme des Oberbefehls ueber immer groessere Verbaende nicht zu weit ging.

Man kann davon ausgehen, dass Model der Truppe gefuehlsmaessig naeher stand als vielen seiner Generalskameraden, deren oft persoenliche Ablehnung fuer ihn natuerlich kein Geheimnis war. Die Truppe hat Vertrauen zu ihm, weil sie erkannte, dass er sich besonders ihrer Belange annahm. Ausserhalb seiner Familie u. seinem Freundeskreis fiel es ihm einfach schwer, Zuneigung [affection] zu erwecken, obwohl ihm viele Zeitzeugen, auch solche, die mit ihm Zwischenfaelle hatten, in ihren Nachkriegsaussagen bezeugten, dass sich hinter dem schroffen Aeusseren ein warmes Herz verbarg. Sein Ic, Obst.-Lt. Georg Buntrock, hebt hervor, dass er immer ein einsamer Mensch blieb, dem niemand nahekommen konnte. Er betonte, dass Models Herz der Truppe gehoerte u. dass er sich laufend um Ihr Wohlergehen sorgte. Dies geht auch aus zahlreichen Dokumenten hervor.

Guenther Reichhelm, der seit der Uebernahme der **9. Armee** durch Model einen groesseren Teil (**3 Jahre**) seiner danach verbliebenen Kriegsdienstzeit in den verschiedenen Staeben Models taetig war, hat in seiner unveroeffentlichen Studie ueber den Feldmarschall eine Zusammenfassung von Models wichtigsten Fuehrungsmethoden gegeben. Reichhelm hebt folgende Eigenschaften besonders hervor. . .

Als generelle Grundsätze “Vorhalten” u. “Anschauen.” Vorhalten sei ein von Model selbst geprägtes u. häufig gebrauchtes Wort gewesen u. bedeutete sorgfältigste Vorbereitungszeit. Anschauen führte zu ständiger Wechselwirkung zwischen Truppe u. Generalstab. Hier unterstricht Reichhelm die frontnahe Führung Models, der *als Armee OB nahezu jeden Btn.-Kdr. der ueber 30 ihm unterstellten Divisionen u. seine Noete persoendlich kannte*. Er beschreibt wie Model jedes Verkehrsmittel, Storch, PKW, SPW, Reitpferd, u. Panjeschlitten benutzte, um ständig die vordersten Linie aufzusuchen. . . Das ständige Pochen auf Reserven u. wenn diese aus der strategischen Reserve nicht vorhanden waren, durch Verschiebung von Verbänden innerhalb seines Kommandobereichs.

Zu Reichhelms Kommentar muss betont werden, dass Model sich während seiner gesamten mil. Laufbahn intensive mit operativen Gedanken früherer Feldzüge befasste, um diese auf aktuelle Verhältnisse zu übertragen. . . General Niepold schreibt, dass Model **1939** die Schlacht von Koeniggratz von **1866** mit modernen Verbänden nachspielte.¹⁹⁴

Intensive u. dauernde Ausbildung der Truppe, sowohl während der Kampfhandlungen wie auch in Ruhepausen. . . Man mag Reichhelm nicht völlig zustimmen, wenn er behauptet, dass Models operatives Denken hinter seiner “Lust zum Organisieren” zurücktrat u. dass er die Gedanken eines operativ zu führenden Krieges aus der Organisation heraus entwickelte. Bei Models Operationen waren die von ihm erstrebten organisatorischen Voraussetzungen immer seltener vorhanden u. er war, wie andere seiner Kameraden, gezwungen, sich mit den zur Verfügung stehenden Mitteln organisatorisch zu behelfen:

- planmäßige Vertiefung der Verteidigungszone durch Heranziehen von Trossen u. Versorgungstruppen;
- das Zerreißen der Verbände;
- Anlage eines ausreichenden Strassennetzes, zwei [2] Strassen senkrecht zur Front u. eine Strasse **3-6** km hinter der Front fuer das Verschieben der taktischen Reserven auf der Grundlinie;
- Ausbau u. Bevorratung rueckwaertiger Stuetzpunkte,
- persönliche Ueberwachung aller Werkstattdienste.

Den von Reichhelm beschriebenen Methoden [i.e., oben] müssen noch vier [4] weitere Eigenschaften hinzugefügt werden, die das Bild des Truppenführers abrunden:

- Die Anerkennung der Leistungen des Gegners u. dessen Heerführung, die in einer Reihe von Tagesbefehlen u. Lagebeurteilen laufend hervortritt. Hier hebt sich Model von anderen dt. Herrführern ab;
- Die Erkenntnis der zunehmende Schwäche von Teilen der eigenen Truppe u. Truppenführer;
- Die wiederholte Widersprüche gegenüber der höchsten Führung [i.e., Hitler], oft in brutalschnoddiger Form, das wiederholte Verlangen nach Handlungsfreiheit u. das eigenmächtige Handeln, wenn es die Lage erzwang,

¹⁹⁴ **Note:** In other words, Model was a dedicated student of military history.

unter der diplomatisch geschickte Vorgabe, dies sei im Sinne Hitlers geschehen und,

- das Verhalten gegenüber der Zivilbevölkerung in den besetzten Teilen der Sowjetunion.

(Gleaned from *Stein*, 128-32)

Von einer Geringschätzung der Roten Armee ist bei Model nichts zu verspüren. Models Ic, Bundrock, hebt hervor, dass Model immer genaue Auskünfte über jeden Befehlshaber der Roten Armee verlangte, der ihm gegenüberstand, um sich mit dessen Führungsmethoden vertraut zu machen. Seine realistische Beurteilungen der gegnerischen Stärke u. Methoden findet man in seinen wiederholten Lagebeurteilungen zur Planung von "Zitadelle" wieder. . . (*Stein*, 145)

Beurteilungen der Führungsmethoden: Die ausländischen Beurteilungen können ausseracht gelassen werden, da sie mit Ausnahme der Erwähnungen Schukows u. Rokossowskis,¹⁹⁵ nur aus Schlagworten wie "Abwehrloewe," "Feuerwehrmann" u. natürlich "Nazi-General" bestehen. Bei den dt. Stellungnahmen ist keine durchgehend positive, jedoch selten rein negative, auch von Befehlshabern, die der Person Models ablehnend gegenüberstanden. Hierzu folgen einige Beispiele:

Professor Percy Schramm, KTB-Führer im **OKW**: "Er war unermüdetlich unterwegs, um sich an Ort u. Stelle ein Bild zu verschaffen u. scheute dabei keine Gefahr. Indem er sich selbst so einsetzte, war es ihm im Osten gelungen, erst den Zusammenbruch der H.Gr.Nord, dann der H.Gr.Mitte aufzufangen. Das hatte ihm das uneingeschränkte Vertrauen des Führers gewonnen u. dazu geführt, dass er die Führung des Westheers erhielt, als sich hier die gleiche Entwicklung anzubahnen drohte. Und zum dritten Male vollzog sich was selbst Optimisten nur noch zu hoffen gewagt hatten; auch das Westheer kam zum Stehen. Es liefen viele Erzählungen um, wie der GFM Model bis zu den Kompanien herunter eingriffen u. die mittlere u. untere Führung "auf Trab" gebracht hatte. . . Mit dieser ungewöhnlichen Tatkraft verbanden sich ungewöhnliche Klugheit u. schafe Logik. Er war aber weit mehr als ein kluger Taktiker. Vor allem hatte er selbst in den kritischsten Lagen noch Einfälle.

(Quoted in: *Stein*, 148)

Model & his staff: Bereits als junger Offizier war Model als unbequem bekannt, aber während des Krieges kultivierte er dieses Verhalten in besonderer Weise. Hier liegt eine schwer erklärliehe Schattenseite Models: Wenn Model einen hohen Befehlshaber abloeste, geschah das nicht immer unter Wahrung herkömmlicher Formen. Models erste Begegnungen mit neuen Stäben begannen häufig mit einem **Eklat** [*stir, commotion*], welcher höhere Generalstabsoffiziere veranlasste, unverzüglich ihre Versetzung zu beantragen. . . Man muss einfach sagen, dass Model sich hier oft schlecht benahm, ein erstaunenswerter Umstand, da Model gut erzogen u. privat lebenswürdig war. Models Benehmen hat ihm oft mehr geschadet als genutzt, denn der häufige Wechsel in seinen Stäben erschwerte eine ungestörte Führung. . . Model war selber nicht nachtragend. [**Note**: See anecdote from **Jan 42**, involving Oberst Reichhelm's first

¹⁹⁵ **Note**: "Allerdings bezeichnet ihn [i.e., Model] auch Rokossowski als unübertroffenen Meister der Verteidigung, besonders nach den Schlachten bei Rshew u. Wjasma." (128)

encounter w/ Model, p. 3.] Von den ueblichen Umgangsformen deutscher Offiziere war Model gelegentlich weit entfernt. In der Roten Armee haette er kein Aufsehen erregt. Hier waere Model moeglicherweise als Muster an Hoeflichkeit betrachtet worden [!]. . . In der amerikanischen Armee ist ein aehnliches Auftreten nur von Patton belegt. [Note: Stein goes on to point out that similarities between the two soldiers were more superficial than profound. As he notes: “Model war bei seinen Soldaten geachtet, waehrend Patton auf Grund seiner Ruecksichtslosigkeit oft toedlich gehasst wurde.”] (*Stein, GFM Model, 2-5*)

Model and his staff: Anlaesslich des **26.** Bundestreffens des Traditionsverbandes der ehm. **3. PD** im Fruehjahr **1983** berichtet der Ehrenvorsitzende, Brig-Gen Voss: “General Model, Kdr der Division **1940/41**, war bekannt fuer seine hohe Anforderungen, die er an Kommandeure u. Truppe stellt – aber an sich selbst auch. Er verlangte taetige u. selbshandelnde u. selbstaendig denkende Kommandeure u. konnte mit ‘nur’ Befehlsempfaengern absolute nichts anfangen. Zum Entsetzen seines Stabes brauchte er kaum Schlaf u. machte dort, so [wo?] er erschien, immer grossen Wirbel. . .” (*Stein, 131, f.n. 450*)

Model & War Crimes:

Eine eingehende Pruefung der umfassenden Literatur, die sich mit dem Holocaust befasst, fuehrte zu dem erstaunlichen Ergebnis, dass der Name Model zu den wenigen dt. Heerfuehrern zaehlt, die in diesen Werken keine Erwaenung finden u. dass er auch in Schriften, die sich mit anderen schweren Verbrechen wie dem Kommissarbefehl befassen, nicht auftaucht. Auch sah ich einen Widerspruch darin dass Autoren, die ihn als Nazi-General darstellen, ihm gleichzeitig zubilligten, dass er Hitler aktiver u. erfolgreicher widersprach als andere Heerfuehrer. Diese Faktoren waren fuer mich ausreichend, um grosse Zweifel an der Berechtigung des Schlagwortes entstehen zu lassen. . . So entstand bei mir schrittweise ein Bild eines sehr vielseitigen Menschen, der zu den herausragendsten Heerfuehrern des Zweiten Weltkrieges zaehlte u. der vielfach einer nicht gerechtfertigten Beurteilung unterlag. Die Ueberzeugung war der Ansporn, die vorliegende Biographie zu schreiben. (*GFM Model, xiii-xiv*)

Model u. die von ihm befehligten Verbaende waren an der Judenvernichtung nicht beteiligt. Diese Behauptung laesst sich beweisen. . . In keinem der massgebenden Werke ueber den Holocaust wird der Name Models erwaeht. . . [Note: Stein names the seminal works by Raul Hilberg, Gerald Reitlinger, Martin Gilbert, Lucy Dawidowicz, etc. In none of these does the name Model appear. There is also no mention of Model in the literature concerning the Einsatzgruppen.] Ein Beweis, das Model u. die Verbaende waehrend der Zeit, als sie unter seiner Befehl standen, nicht in die Judenvernichtung verstrickt waren, ergibt sich aus einem Vergleich der Daten, in denen seine Verbaenden Staedte eroberten, in welchen Aktionen der Einsatzgruppe B stattfanden u. den Daten dieser Aktionen in den Ereignismeldungen u. anderen Berichten der Einsatzgruppe B u. der ihr angeschlossenen Waffen-SS Verbaende, die im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte taetig waren. [Note: In other words, units under Model’s command were never in the same place at same time as elements of Einsatzgruppe B. Stein makes a very systematic comparison. (*Stein, GFM Model, 232-35*)

Man kann annehmen, dass Model keine Kenntnis von den Vernichtungslagern hatte. Diese wurden streng geheim gehalten u. vorsorglich nach Polen verlegt. Haette man sie in Deutschland errichtet, war mit Protesten aus der Bevoelkerung zu rechnen. . . Angesichts des verwurzelten Antisemitismus in Polen, vor allem in den kleinen Staedten u. auf dem Lande, bestanden derartige Befuerchtungen dort nicht. (*Stein, GFM Model, 248*)

Walter Model – Der Mensch:

- Der Heerfuhrer Walter Model ist fuer jeden Historiker des Zweiten Weltkrieges ein Begriff – ueber den Menschen Walter Model is nur wenig bekannt. Model war eine Sondererscheinung unter seinen Kameraden. Mit seinen Licht- u. Schattenseiten entsprach er keinem Prototyp. Hier kann man den Vergleich zu Patton ziehen, der zwar voellig verschieden war, jedoch auch eine einmalige Erscheinung in der US Army darstellte. Der GFM war ein sehr vielseitiger u. ein in vieler Hinsicht innerlich widerspruechlicher Mensch.
- Der persoenliche Mut Models, der bei keinem anderen GFM im gleichen Ausmass zu finden war. . . In seinem persoenlichen Engagement fuer die Truppe war Model jedoch einmalig unter den GFM. Sein persoenlicher Mut kannte keine Grenzen u. er teilte fast taeglich die Gefahren, die er seinen Soldaten zumutete. Er wurde mehrfach verwundet, einmal sogar lebensgefuehrlich. Er war der einzige GFM, der das goldene Verwundetenabzeichen trug.
- Persoenliche Bequemlichkeit kannte er nicht. Der Komfort seiner jeweiligen Quartiere war ihm gleichgueltig u. er kam mit wenigen Stunden Schlaf au. Was immer ihm im Feld als Mahlzeit vorgesetzt wurde, ass er ohne Beanstandung. Wie bereits erwaeht, war er in seiner Kleidung bescheiden u. trug nie den Interimsstab des GFMs.
- Das Familienleben Models verlief sehr harmonisch u. stellte einen der Eckpfeiler seiner Vorstellungswelt dar. Seine Ehe war bis zum Ende gluecklich. Er war ein beliebter Gastgeber (auch im Felde), sein heftiges Temperament schien verschwunden zu sein u. die Atmosphaere an seiner Tafel wird als locker u. zuweilen direkt lustig geschildert. Waehrend des Krieges telefonierte er fast taeglich mit seiner Frau, auch in Zeiten besonderer Anstrengung, u. er schrieb regelmaessig an seine Kinder.
- Stark war auch die religioese Bindung. Model war ein glaebiger Mensch – schon die Herkunft setzte Religiositaet voraus. Viele Offiziere, darunter auch Model, fuehrten im Felde immer die Bible mit sich. In fruheren Jahren war Model mit Pastor Niemoeller befreundet, der auch seine drei [3] Kinder taufte. (Spaeter trat eine Entfremdung ein.) Mit Sicherheit hat die religioese Bindung des GFMs zu seinem Verhalten waehrend des Krieges beigetragen. Wie bereits ausfuehrlich dargestellt, hat sich Model mit keinem der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen die Haende beschmutzt. In keinem seiner Tagesbefehle, wie auch in seiner Korrespondenz, findet man Hetzaufrufe, die zu Gewalttaten anstiften konnten u. die bei anderen dt. Heerfuhrern in nicht geringem Ausmass vorhanden sind.
- Auch gab es bei ihm keinerlei Korruption. Neben Zeitzler war er der einzige hohe Befehlshaber, von dem bekannt ist, dass eine fuer ihn vorgesehene Dotation ablehnte.
- Der GFM Model ist nicht den intellektuellen Generalen zuzurechnen, allerdings war er gebildeter als viele seiner Kameraden. An seiner Intelligenz besteht kein Zweifel.
- Er war ein miserabler Autofahrer u. seine Familie war erleichtert, als es den Generalen untersagt wurde, ihren eigenen Wagen zu lenken [!].
- Schattenseiten sind natuerlich auch vorhanden. In erster Linie war es ein politisches Unverstaendnis, das an Instinktlosigkeit grenzte. Wie viele seiner Kameraden war Model ein Ergebnis der Seecktschen Praegung des Offizierkorps. Sein pol. Verstaendnis scheint mit dem Ende des

Ersten Weltkrieges u. den Nachkriegswirren ein Ende genommen zu haben. . . Politischen Ueberlegungen versagte er sich.

- Zu den negativen Charakterzuegen gehoeren auch die haeufigen, von Model verursachten Zwischenfaelle mit Kameraden u. Untergebene. Was mit einer gewissen Schroffheit des jungen u. des Kommandeurs seinen Anfang nahm, entwickelte sich bei dem hohen Befehlshaber zu einer Gewohnheit, die sich im Laufe der Jahre so steigerte, dass Model einfach unfaeelig schein, sein Temperament zu zuegeln. Waehrend sich der Div.-Kdr. noch Grenzen auferlegte, kam es seit der Uebernahme des **XXXXI PzK** bei fast jedem Antritt eines neuen Kommandos zu Zwischenfaellen mit seinen Vorgaengern, die er, wie Strauss u. v. Kuechler, grundlos brueskierte u. deren Staboffizieren, die seinen voellig unnoetigen Ausbruechen ausgesetzt wurden. . . Viele haben ihm seine Auftritte waehrend des Krieges, die oft an Beleidigungen grenzten, nicht vergeben u. sein Benehmen hat moeglicherweise mehr zu seinem negativen Ruf beigetragen als seine angebliche Regimetreue. . . Wirklichen Schaden an seinem Benehmen hat nur Model selbst davongetragen. Da er jedoch nicht nach-tragend war, wurde die Karriere der Offiziere, mit denen er einen Zusammenstoss hatte, nicht negative beeintraehtigt. Eine Reihe von ihnen wurden dank seiner Fuersorge noch befoerdert.

- Eine graphologische Studie der Handschrift Models wurde **1986** von dem Schriftsachverstaendigen Wolfgang Schlunck durchgefuehrt. . . Zwei Punkte fallen in dieser Analyse auf. Sie enthaelt eine genau zutreffende Beschreibung der Fuehrungsmethoden [see p 316], denen sich der GFM bediente u. der Austrahlung seiner Fuehrerpersoenlichkeit. Eine Erwaeerung eines labilen Temperaments, das die haeufigen Wutausbrueche haette verursachen koennen, findet man nicht. (Stein, 306-17)

Note: Despite Models often rough exterior, those who knew him well say he had a good heart. Writes Stein: Die Wahrheit duerfte bei einer Reihe gleichlautender Stellungnahmen zu finden sein, die Model Gemuetlichkeit u. ein warmes, manchmal sogar ein weiches Herz zubilligen. General **Roettiger**: „Korrekt, wohlwollend, mit menschlichen Zuegen. Hat sein gutes Herz hinter rauer Schale verborgen. Charmanter Gastgeber u. Kamerad.“ Generaloberst **Friessner**: „Hinter seiner rauen Schale u. seinem verkniffenem Gesicht mit dem immer eingeklemmten Monokel verbarg sich ein wohlwollendes Herz. Das kam in vielen seiner Aeusserungen u. Massnahmen zum Ausdruck. Fuer seine Landser u. Truppenoffiziere sorgte er, wo er nur konnte.“ . . . Obst.Lt. **Siegfried Erfurth**, in der **9. Armee** zeitweise mit der Fuehrung des **Gren.-Rgt. 226** beauftragte: „Diejenigen, die nur seine Haerte gegen sich selbst wie gegen Andere erlebt hatten, erkannten nicht den weichen guten Kern. . .“ **Oberst Reichhelm**: „Es kaempfte sein Pflichtbewusstsein u. sein Temperament gegen sein von Natur aus weiches Herz. Aeusserlich gelang es seinem harten Willen fast immer, das Herz zu besiegen, innerlich blieb er trotz aller rauen Schale der Fuehrer mit Herz u. Verstand, wobei das Herz in allen entscheidenden Fragen die Vorhand behielt. (Stein, 317-18)

Schlussurteil: Will man ein Schlussurteil ueber Model sprechen, koennte es lauten, dass der Soldat u. der Mensch Walter Model es verdient gehabt haette, einem besseren Herren als Hitler u. einem anderen Regime als dem Dritten Reich gedient zu haben. (Stein, 319)

Chronology:

13.11.40: Wurde Model Kdr der **3. PD**. Damit erhielt er sein erstes Truppenkommando im Zweiten Weltkrieg. . . Dass Model ein unbequemer u. oft schroffer Vorgesetzter war ist hinreichend bekannt, allerdings duerften eine Anzahl von Kommandeuren aehnlich gewesen sein. Eine

Beeinträchtigung bei der Führung der Division trat trotz des gelegentlichen Aergers mit Oberst Pomtow [sein Ia] u. einigen anderen Offizieren des Stabes nicht ein. Die gravierenden Fehlritte Models, die sich auf sein Verhältnis zu seinen Stäben negativ auswirkten, fanden erst statt, als er in die höchsten Kommandos aufrückte. (Stein, 55-56)

ab Jun 41: In der ersten Angriffsphase von „Barbarossa“ befand sich die **3. PD** laufend unter den Spitzenverbänden der **2. Pz.Gr.** Guderian hebt ihren Einsatz mehrfach hervor. Bereits am **1.7.41** schrieb Generaloberst Guderian an seine Frau: „Ebenso hat sich Model glänzend entwickelt, sowohl was Führung als was persönliche Haltung anbelangt.“ (Personal Nachlass M., quoted in: Stein, 57, f.n. 215) Clemens Graf Kageneck, damals Ob.Lt. u. Kp.Chef im **6. Pz.Rgt.** der **3. PD** schreibt: „Model war ständig an der Front – er war ein Mann, der viel von uns verlangte, der aber sich selbst am wenigsten schonte. Neben seiner legendären Tapferkeit war sein Hauptanliegen die eiserne Zucht u. Disziplin der Truppe. Die zehn Gebote der dt. Soldaten wurden bei uns gelebt.“ (Brief, Graf Kageneck, 5.12.2000; quoted in: Stein, 57, f.n. 215) Als die Pz.Gr. nach Kiew abdrehte, war die **3. PD** massgeblich an der Schliessung des Kessels beteiligt. (Stein, 57)

26.10.41: An diesem Tage wurde Model Kommandierender General des **XXXXI. PzK.**¹⁹⁶ Neuer Kdr. der **3. PD** wurde General Breith. Die effektive Befehlsübernahme ueber das Korps erfolgte am **15.11.41** – bis zu diesem Datum führte General Kirchner stellvertretend das Korps. (Note: Zu diesem Zeitpunkt trat der erste ernstzunehmende Zwischenfall ein, der sich später oft zu einer Gewohnheit Models bei Übernahme eines neuen Kommandos entwickeln sollte. . . Der Zusammenstoss ereignete sich nicht mit einem relativ unbedeutenden Divisions Ia wie Pomtow sondern mit dem sehr tüchtigen Chef des Generalstabes, dem späteren ersten Heeresinspekteur der Bundeswehr, Roettiger. For details see, Stein, 57-60)

Dez 41: Zunächst unterschätzte Model die Bedeutung des sowj. Angriffs – jedoch führte er sein Korps erfolgreich, wenn auch unter schweren Materialverlusten, in eine Auffangstellung zurück. (Stein, 60; also, Goerlitz, 103)

3.1.42: Model wurde am **3. Jan 42** stellvertretender OB der **9. Armee**, nachdem sich Strauss krankgemeldet hatte. Am **16.1.42** wurde er formell OB u. verblieb in dieser Stellung bis zu seiner Versetzung in die Führungsreserve am **3.11.43**. . . Als Model den Befehl ueber die **9. Armee** uebernahm, war ihre Lage auf Grund eines herausragendes Bogen, der erst viel später durch die „Bueffel“-Operation begründet wurde, die exponierteste aller Armeen im Osten. Die Ernennung Models zum OB ist sicher darauf zurückzuführen, dass es ihm während der grossen Krise bei Moskau, als bei einigen Verbänden der Wehrmacht Auflösungserscheinungen auftraten, gelungen war, sein Korps zu retten u. in eine ausgebaute Auffangstellung zurückzubringen.

¹⁹⁶ Note: Die Beförderung zum General d. Pz.Tr. erfolgte auch am **26.10.41** (mit später erteiltem **RDA 1.10.41**) Goerlitz schrieb, dass „nun die rasante Karriere begann, die hernach gerade auslaendische Militärschriftsteller zu der Annahme veranlasst hat, Model habe eben seine Kräfte der Partei zur Verfügung gestellt u. sei dafür belohnt worden.“ Stein: „Die Bemerkung ueber die auslaendischen Militäerhistoriker trifft bei einigen zu, jedoch ist der Ausdruck „Beginn einer rasanten Karriere“ fehl am Platz . . . Rasante Beförderungen gab es bei Model, mit Ausnahme der zum Generaloberst, die, vier [4] Monate nachdem er General der Pz.Tr. geworden war, kurz nach der Übernahme des Oberbefehls ueber die **9. Armee** erfolgte, ueberhaupt nicht. (58-59)

(**Note:** Models erster Generalstabschef in der **9. Armee** war Krebs,¹⁹⁷ der am Tage vor der Befehlsuebernahme Models den schwer erkrankten Oberst Hofmann ersetzt hatte. Model hatte eine hohe Meinung von Krebs u. die Konstellation erwies sich als guenstig. Krebs wurde spaeter noch zweimal Chef unter Model. Krebs gehoert zu den Generalen der Wehrmacht, die in der Nachkriegszeit keine gute Presse hatten. . . Die Kritik an Krebs uebersieht seine positiven Eigenschaften. Bis zum Beginn von “Barbarossa” war Krebs Gehilfe des Militaerattaches in Moskau, General Koestring. Krebs sprach perfekt russisch u. hatte einen guten Einblick in die Verhaeltnisse in der Sowjetunion. . . Von Model sind drei **[3]** Beurteilungen von Krebs erhalten, saemtliche positive. **17.4.42:** “Klares Urteil, schnelle Auffassung, Wendigkeit, Tatkraft. Zum Div. Kdr. geeignet, verspricht ein guter, hoeherer Truppenfuehrer zu werden.” (*M. Stein, GFM Model, 68-69, 75-76*)

16.1.42 [Erste Begegnung mit Hitler]: Darueber berichtet Roehricht, unter Bezug auf einen Bericht von Schmundt:

Model war der einzige, der nicht nur Schwierigkeiten sah, sondern kurzerhand einen Zettel herausholte, mit einem Bleistift darauf herumfuhr u. erklarte: “Das ist doch alles ganz einfach!” worauf Hitler – perplex – antwortete: “Also, dann machen Sie es!” Hinterher habe Hitler zu Schmundt geaeussert: “Haben Sie das Auge gesehen? Dem Mann traue ich zu, dass er es schafft. Aber ich selber moechte nicht unter ihm dienen.”

In einer Stellungnahme behauptete Strauss, dass Models Operationsplan den gleichen Rueckzug vorsah u. Hitler einwilligte, jedoch lag ein gravierender [serious] Unterschied vor. Strauss hatte zunaechst den Rueckzug im Auge, Model verband ihn mit einem schnell zu erfolgenden Gegenangriff. Seinen Plan hatte er in einem kurzen Gesprach mit seinem Stabschef Krebs entworfen, auf einem Zettel aufgezeichnet u. diesen Hitler bei seiner ersten Besprechung mit ihm vorgelegt. Hitler war zu diesem Zeitpunkt mit Angriffsvorschlaegen nicht verwoehnt, Models Vorschlag ueberraschte ihn daher positive u. er genehmigte ihn, besonders weil Models Vorschlag keine wesentliche Truppenverstaerkung forderte, sondern nur Lufttransportmittel fuer seine Verbaende, die staendig verschoben werden mussten, erbat. (*Stein, 73, 159*)¹⁹⁸

Jan 42-Mar 43: Die Schlachten bei Rshew trugen Model den Namen “Abwehrloewe” ein... Saemtliche Schlachten die die **9. Armee** unter der Fuehrung Models bei Rshew schlug, endeten mit einem Erfolg. Sie fanden ihre Kroenung in der geordneten “Bueffel” Operation,¹⁹⁹ der Raeum-ung des Rshew-Bogens, die eine erforderliche Frontverkuerzung u. das Freimachen bedeutender Verbaende ermoeglichte. Die “Bueffel” Bewegung uebertraf in ihrem Umfang den Rueckzug auf die Hindenburg Linie 1917 u. wurde in enger Verbindung mit der **4. Armee** (OB Generaloberst Heinrici) durchgefuehrt. (*Stein, 155-56*)

28.2.42: Die Befoederung zum Generaloberst erfolgte am **28 Feb 42 (RDA 1.2.42)**, nachdem Model zum erstenmal namentlich im Wehrmachtsbericht vom **21.2.42** erwaeht wurde. . . Diese Befoederung erfolgte vier **[4]** Monate nach der zum General der Pz.Tr. – sie ist die einzige Befoederung Models, bei der die Zeitspanne zwischen zwei Dienstgraden sich von dem ueblichen Turnus in der Wehrmacht abhob. Der Grund fuer die vorzeitige Befoederung war mit

¹⁹⁷ **Note:** Krebs, der am laengsten bei [Model] Chef war, war in den letzten Kriegstagen im Fuehrer-Bunker in Berlin u. nahm sich dort das Leben. (128)

¹⁹⁸ **Note:** “Model hatte einen schweren Sehfehler auf dem rechten Auge u. trug ein besonders grosses Monokel. Sein Blick wirkte daher sehr kalt.” (73, f.n. 279)

¹⁹⁹ Die „Bueffel“-Bewegung wurde am **22.3.43** erfolgreich beendet. (*Stein, GFM Model, 162*)

Sicherheit der im Wehrmachtsbericht vom **21 Feb 42** erwahnte erfolg. Neben der Befoerderung erhielt Model auch das Eichenlaub zum Ritterkreuz. Am gleichen Tag [28 Feb 42?] gab es die erste scharfe Auseinandersetzung zwischen Hitler u. Model. Models Ordonnanzoffizier, ObLt von Bonin u. Ostau, war anwesend:

Es ging um die Zufuehrung eines Panzerkorps als Armeereserve u. die Auswahl der guenstigsten Einsatzposition fuer dieses Korps. Hitler wollte das Korps in die Naehede der Gshatsk-Stellung bringen, Model plaederte fuer Rshew. Beide beharrten auf ihrem Standpunkt, der Ton wurde immer schaefer. Der Generaloberst wurde immer erregter u. ploetzlich brach es aus ihm heraus: "Mein Fuehrer, fuehren Sie die 9. Armee oder ich?" Hitler, betroffen von dieser Schaefer, wollte jetzt seine Auffassung befehlen. Darauf Model, sehr laut: "Dass muss ich mir verbitten!" Ratlosigkeit auf den Gesichtern der Mitarbeiter Hitlers, die eine derartige Tonart gegenueber Hitler nicht gewohnt waren. Hitler aber gab ploetzlich nach, mit den Worten: "Gut Model, machen Sie's wie Sie wollen. Aber Sie haften mir mit Ihren Kopf dafuer, dass die Sache nicht daneben geht!" Erleichterung auf allen Seiten." (Stein, 74-75)

23.5.42: An diesem Tage wurde Model beim Ueberfliegen eines Partisanengebietes mit einem Fieseler-Storch schwer verwundet. (Stein, 74)

15.7.42: An diesem Tage erhielt General Model die "Ostmedaille," die Medaille "Winterschlacht im Osten 1941/1942," deren Stiftung angeblich auf seinen Vorschlag zurueckging. (Stein, 74)

b) S.H. Newton:

"Was Walther Model a Nazi? A staunch conservative, Model saw himself firmly in the tradition of the Prussian apolitical soldier (*nur-soldat*) and had arguably been overly impressed by the example of Erich Ludendorff during the Great War. He believed in order and an authoritarian government, and he possessed a strong sense of German nationalism. Underpinning those beliefs were many of the same racial and religious prejudices (against Slavs and Jews) common to many Germans of his generation. Moreover, in the field at moments of crisis, more than one witness has recorded images of Walther Model not only cursing but also haranguing his soldiers to have faith in their Fuehrer. There is also his acceptance of an SS aide and his repeated request to have National Socialist leadership officers attached to his commands during the last year of the war. Yet it was also possible for a German officer to see Hitler (at least in the early years) as that necessary strong leader w/o buying the entire Nazi philosophy, as the example of Walther v. Reichenau suggests. Likewise, it is critical not to forget the consistent cynicism that Model displayed in his dealings w/ Hitler. Rather than represent his acceptance of Nazi philosophy, both the SS aide and the Nazi officers assigned to him provided Model w/ cover to do as he pleased. The best (and, simultaneously, the worst) that can be said about Walther Model in this regard is that he had no more compunctions about using Hitler and the Nazis in achieving his goals than they had about using him for the same purpose." (Note: Newton draws some interesting parallels between Model and Patton.) (Newton, *Hitler's Commander*, 363-64)

Personality: Viewed up close, Walther Model does not manage to come across as likeable: He lacks the charisma of Rommel, the patrician air of Manstein, and the fast-driving flair of Guderian. On the other hand, Model emerges from the shadows as an intellectually capable soldier, a tough-minded pragmatist, and a man capable of being overwhelmed by depression and

personal fear. . . During Model's tenure as cdr **3 PD**, many of the characteristics had already emerged that would later distinguish him as an army and army group cdr. He was considered impossible to work with by his staff and overly demanding by his subordinate cdrs. Willing to take the most outrageous risks if the potential gain was high enough, Model's operations „often road the thin edge between victory and disaster,“ but he consistently retained a strong confidence in his own improvisational ability to meet any crisis. His methods of constantly regrouping divisional assets into tailor-made *Kampfgruppen* were well established and would stand him in good stead at higher levels. All in all, during five [5] months on incessant campaigning Model had justifiably earned a reputation as one of the finest panzer cdrs in the German army. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, xv, 147)

3. PD: Von Brauchitsch intervened in favor of Model, suggesting to Halder on **9 and 11 Nov 40** that the **16 Army** chief-of-staff [i.e., Model] be given command of **3. PD**. Model's credentials for a panzer command were relatively weak. It is safe to say that w/o von Brauchitsch's patronage, Model would never have been considered for **3. PD**. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 107; also, *Goerlitz, Model*, 82-85)

3. PD: The new cdr's reputation preceded him. The division ops officer, Lt-Col Klaus v. dem Borne, requested an immediate transfer (he ended up in North Africa, w/ Rommel). Major Heinz Pomtow replaced von dem Borne and quickly learned to characterize Model as a „difficult boss“ whose tongue was like a „sharp sword.“ Col. Ulrich Kleemann, heading **3. Inf.-Bde. (mot.)**, was an officer of the conservative school who found his new cdr to be undignified in manner and fond of training methods so unorthodox as to be potentially dangerous. Model immediately instituted a crash training program that exemplified two hallmarks of what would become his tactical style: ruthless disregard for both chain of command and formal tables of organization. (For details see, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 108-09)

3. PD: For attitudes of division's field commanders [among them von Mellenthin] and staff officers to Model see, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, pp 108-110). *Newton* writes of Model's staff officers that „to a man they hated him almost on sight.“ It was not so much his temper toward them (which was foul) or his language (which was frequently profane) that alienated them so much, as it was the cdr's penchant for ignoring their schedules, disdaining their advice, and holding them accountable when his own actions had hopelessly fouled up their plans. Possibly best example of this sort of behavior could be found in the division's redeployment from Silesia into Poland during **May 41** (See, *Newton*, p 110, for anecdote.)

S.H. Newton: Should history remember Walther Model as a tactical genius, a fanatic Nazi, both, or neither? That was the key question w/ which I began researching the German cdr thrown by Adolf Hitler into so many of WWII's worst crises that his contemporaries nicknamed him the „Fuehrer's fireman.“ The answer was surprisingly difficult to unearth.

Despite fact he is associated w/ the defense of Rzhev, Kursk, destruction of Army Group Ctr, Arnhem, Huertgen forest, Battle of the Bulge, the Ruhr pocket, Model has remained a shadowy figure in histories and memoirs dealing w/ Third Reich. The three [3] most famous works, penned by Guderian, Manstein and Mellenthin, barely mention Model at all, and when they do the references are not usually flattering.²⁰⁰ Most historians, introducing Model into the narrative of a given campaign or battle, make an obligatory reference to his driving energy, his foul mouth,

²⁰⁰ **Note:** As *Newton* later observes, “the men who introduced Walther Model to posterity loathed him.” He also states that, “Model's bluntness (perhaps even is coarseness) intimidated the Fuehrer, and his hardness exceeded even what the dictator demanded from his generals.” (See also, pp 358-65)

his monocle, and his supposedly blind faith in Hitler, but provide few other details. Certain stories – most of them obviously apocryphal – are repeated ad infinitum to create a „pasteboard character“ who succeeds either because of his bloodthirsty determination not to yield an inch of ground or because of his preferential treatment by the German dictator. . .

As I began to examine Model's life more closely, I immediately discovered several reasons why his contemporaries chose to present him to history in such an unfavorable light. a) First and foremost, he was dead when they wrote. b) The second reason for emphasizing Model's supposed preferential treatment at Hitler's hands was to obscure a very unpalatable fact: Far from being elevated to Army and then Army Group command because he spouted the approved National Socialist slogans, Model rose quickly because he was a highly trained General Staff officer. A third reason drove likes of Halder, Guderian, Manstein and Mellenthin to discount his intellectual prowess and tactical acumen: Model appears to have thought thru carefully the tactical problems associated w/ defense along a broad front and to have developed a tactical approach that was the direct antithesis of that propounded by Guderian and Manstein. . . Instead, Model argued for the creation of thick defensive belts and „zone defense tactics“ to prevent the Red Army from achieving operational breakthroughs. His system (which was also that of Erhard Raus'), which has yet to be thoroughly explored by military historians, actually worked quite well at Rzhev, at Orel, along the middle Dnepr River crossings, in the Carpathians, in Estonia, and even in East Prussia. (See, *Hitler's Commander*, xi-xiii)

Newton addresses Model's changing relationship w/ Hitler. Model's influence w/ the Fuehrer would undoubtedly reach its peak in **Aug 44**, when the dictator credited him w/ single-handedly putting a final stop to the Soviet summer offensive against Army Group Ctr. During his tenure of command in France and western Germany during **1944/45**, he inflicted at Arnhem and in the Huertgen Forest two of the most significant defeats that the Western Allies suffered throughout the entire campaign. During Ardenne offensive, Model stock with the Fuehrer fell badly. (*Hitler's Commander*, xiv-xv)

In “Barbarossa:”

Note: Newton describes how Model developed a rather unique defensive doctrine during his tenure as cdr on eastern front: “...Model rarely if ever called for relinquishing territory in order to conduct an “elastic defense,” a mantra Hitler began to hear too often after **1942** from officers like Hoth, Kleist and Manstein. Model's **9 Army** held a static front for over a year w/ divisions that had been repeatedly stripped of armor, artillery, and transportation assets to feed equipment into the mobile battles farther south. Usually no more than two [2] panzer divisions (often only one) constituted the army reserve, and those divisions rarely deployed more than a single tank btn. Model and his officers developed a defensive doctrine of standing fast and fighting in depth because they literally had no alternative: If the Red Army ever succeeded in breaking the front wide open (as **Jun/Jul 44** would prove), the **9 Army** would have shattered. (**Note:** For principles of Model's concept of defensive warfare see, p 197). . . There is considerable evidence that Model and his subordinates carefully thought through the details of stopping the Soviets dead in their tracks. What Model developed was an unlovely, often quite bloody doctrine of attrition that made his enemies pay for every single inch of ground. He would demonstrate his mastery of the technique to the Russians especially at Rzhev and in the Orel salient, but he would also belie the critics who said he did not understand the special challenges of the Western front by ensnaring the Americans for months in the tangled vastness of the Huertgen forest. These successes make Model a **strong candidate for the title of the best purely defensive tactician in the German army during WWII**. On the other hand, Model enjoyed far less luck when he attacked. Nor was Model by any measure a strategist. (See, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 361-63)

Jun 41 [Anecdote]: Model's record up to **Jun 41** suggests that he had managed to achieve the contrived detachment of the apolitical nur-soldat, who convinces himself that what goes on behind the lines or out of his sight is none of his business. Model certainly did not concern himself w/ the moral question raised suddenly by turning on a country w/ which the Third Reich had observed a non-aggression pact for the past two years. On the eve of the invasion, a young lieutenant in **IR 3 (mot)** asked his division cdr how he was supposed to justify the attack to his men. Model replied: „You say calmly that we need groceries for the long war against England, and we must fetch them now.“ (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 118-19; also, *Goerlitz, Model*, 90-91)

Jun-Sep 41: Model's **3. PD** consistently performed as a spearhead division for Panzer Group Guderian. Model's tenure in command [of **3. PD**] ended soon after his division closed the final gap of the Kiev pocket. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 121)

26.10.41: On this day, Model receives word that he has been nominated as the new cdr of **XLI PzK**, replacing General of Panzer Troops Georg-Hans Reinhardt, who was himself replacing Hoth in command of **3. PzGr**. Model's promotion to general of Panzer Troops quickly followed, retroactively dated to **1.10.41**. After final parting w/ his staff and subordinate cdrs, Model left Bolchow for Kalinin on **28.10.41**. Maj-Gen Hermann Breith, transferred from staff position at **OKH**, took over **3. PD**. (**Note:** Newton then writes that Model did not arrive in Kalinin until **14.11.41**.) He was met by Col Hans Roettiger, **XLI PzK** chief of staff. The two men knew each other from their work together in the Technical Branch in the mid-**1930s**, and on Roettiger's part at least there was no love lost. Aside from disliking Model, Roettiger was a fervent admirer of his former chief, G.-H. Reinhardt. Roettiger and several other senior staff officers had been denied transfers for which they had applied just after learning identify of their new cdr [!]. . . For his part, Model was becoming used to a frosty greeting. He responded to the reception as he usually did – by treating his staff in his patented brusque manner and making no attempts at all to be diplomatic or to develop a sense of camaraderie. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 146-50)

Winter 41/42: At same time, he fought vigorously against rear-area disorganization. On more than one occasion at some congested crossroads he had to issue reprimands (or restore order) himself w/ a drawn pistol. Even the staff officers who smarted under his verbal lash now admitted that Model's direct relationship w/ the men and barely harnessed brutality paid great dividends during the retreat. Many of Model's exhortations to the troops included the necessity of having faith in Hitler's leadership. His performance earned him yet another nickname (one that would follow him for rest of his career): Frontschwein – „the Frontline Pig.“ (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 162; *Goerlitz, Model*, 104-05)

16.1.42: On this day, orders come down from **3. PzGr** HQ for Model to fly immediately to Hitler's HQ in Rastenburg. He had just been appointed cdr of **9 Army**. . . Model has „lengthy consultations w/ both Hitler and Halder in which, w/ rare accord, both the dictator and Army chief of staff portray **9 Army** command organization as one that had lost its nerve. They impress upon Model that great firmness would be necessary to save the army from destruction, and his vehemence in return had so impressed Hitler that upon the general's departure he remarked: „Did you see that eye?“ meaning *the look* in Model's eye. „I trust that man to do it, but I wouldn't want to serve under him.“

(**Note:** Model had been „abruptly plucked from relative obscurity“ ahead of several dozen other officers for the critical posting. Some authors impute that Model approached army command after only three [**3**] months as a corps cdr owing to his Nazi sympathies and Hitler's personal

favor. *Albert Seaton*, for one, portrays Model as being „blindly loyal to the dictator.“ *S.H. Newton* wonders „to what influence could his sudden vaulting past at least 15 corps cdrs of greater seniority in Army Group Ctr alone be attributed?“ Newton provides a well-reasoned answer which, while agreeing „Model’s pro-Hitler, pro-Nazi sentiments certainly played a part,“ makes the case that Model’s selection had more to do w/ the tenacity and improvisational skills he had displayed in the retreat from Klin, as well as his general staff experience, which gave him the „edge“ over other potential candidates.) (See, *Newton, Hitler’s Commander*, 168, 171-77; *Seaton, Battle for Moscow*, 268-69)

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MUELLER-HILLEBRAND, Hermann Burkhart:

Born **26 Dec 1904**. Received training in the Ohrdruf Officer Candidate School in **1925**, after having served since **Apr 23** in the **16. Cav. Rgt.**, and later underwent further training at the Hannover Cavalry School in **1925/26** and at the Berlin War College in **1934/36**. Just before WWII broke out, on **15 Sep 39**, he was transferred from the Org. Div. of the Army General Staff to the **93. ID**²⁰¹ as Operations Officer [Ia].

On **1 Oct 40** he was assigned as adjutant to the Chief of the Army General Staff [i.e., Halder]; and, in **Apr 42**, was appointed Chief of Org. Div. of Army General Staff. In **1944**, after two brief spells in the OKH Officer Reserve and an assignment as Cdr of **Pz.Rgt. 24**, he was assigned as Chief of Staff to **36. PzK** in Ukraine and Poland, until transferred to the **3. Pz Army** as Chief of Staff. During the war he served in France, Italy and on the Eastern Front and was finally captured near Schwerin, Mecklenburg on **2 May 45**. (FMS P-059, vi)

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NEHRING, Walter K.:

G. Schulze: “Hinzu setzten darf ich, General Nehring nicht ein einziges Mal nervoes oder unbeherrscht gesehen zu haben. Die eigene Disziplin, ueber der Sache zu stehen, besonders in kritischen Momenten, war bewunderungswert.“ (*Gen. W.K. Nehring, „Der pers. OO. berichtet,“* 3)

He was *one of the great progenitors of anti-tank doctrine*, proposing a very sophisticated approach to the problem involving a wide array of wpns—among them, AT guns, tanks, artillery, aircraft and heavy wpns. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 93)

“Als er **1936** *eine Studie ueber die Rote Armee niederschrieb, hatte ihn deren Staerke beeindruckt*, aber auch die Kapazitaet einer Panzerproduktion im Kriegsfall. Wenn er jetzt daran dachte, dass er seine *neue, unfertige Pz.Div.* in dieses weite Land fuehren sollte, dann ueberkam ihn *eine grenzlose Ohnmacht* gegenueber der Fuehrung seines eigenen Landes, das in diesen *Alexanderzug* verwickelt werden koennte.“ (*W. Paul, Pz.Gen. Nehring*, 113)

Spring 41: Bis *Minsk*, der Hauptstadt Weissrusslands, waren es **350 km**, bis *Smolensk* **700** u. bis *Moskau* **1100** km, wenn man von den Umwegen absah. Das waren die naechsten Aussichten fuer Nehring [Cdr, **18. PD**] u. seine Division. Aber Nehring wusste auch, dass *die Angriffsziele der*

²⁰¹ **Note**: Nr. of unit difficult to make out. Confirm division designation!

drei Heeresgruppen auseinander fuehrten, was operativen Grundsuetzen widersprach, mit denen Nehring bisher gelebt hatte als Generalstabsoffizier. War sich Hitler seiner Sache so sicher, fragte er sich, dass er glaubte, diesen operativen Nachteil im Sinn einer schnellen Durchfuehrung des Feldzuges in Kauf nehmen zu duerfen? (W.Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 116)

Anfang Mai [1941] erfuhr Nehring, dass es in der Sowjetunion **einen neuen schweren Panzer, den T-34 gaebe**. Er fuhr sofort nach Berlin, sprach in der *Organisationsabteilung des Kriegsministeriums* mit dem *Oberst i.G. Buhle* u. hielt ihm vor, seine Division habe gegen den neuen Panzer nur 3,7 cm PAK. Der Oberst versprach Nehring, zur Abwehr des T 34 eine groessere Zahl der **neuen 5 cm PAK** zuzufuehren. (W. Paul, Pz.Gen. Nehring, 114)

Nehring's *Fuehrungstil*: From very start of „Barbarossa,” he led from the *tip of the spear*—up front w/ his lead tanks from first day of campaign. For several days, until his *Generalstaffel* could catch up, he was up front alone w/ his tanks (i.e., w/o his *Generalstaffel*). In opening weeks of campaign, often in close contact w/ enemy. One one occasion, his *Befehlspanzer* rammed by a Soviet tank! He led his **18. PD** by issuing “*kurze, praegnante Funkbefehle*.” His O.A., **Guenther Schulze**, remembers that Nehring was “sparsam mit Worten” during the opening *Panzerraid* across the Bug. For his actions at *Borissow*—which he captured in a *coup de main* (ca. **30.6.41**)—he is awarded *Ritterkreuz*; which he receives personally from Guderian on **27.7.41**. (See, W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 118-20)

Waehrend der Ruhepause bei Smolensk hatte Nehring am **15.8.41** das *Vorwort zur Dritten Auflage seines Buches geschrieben*. (Book now called „*Panzervernichtung*,” originally called „*Panzerabwehr*.” Published by *E.S. Mittler u. Sohn*. He received a copy of the new edition just before beginning of *Taifun*. (W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 122)

Before beginning of „*Taifun*,” Nehring had set up a *Luftlandekompanie aus Freiwilligen*, which was to take the *Strassenknotenpunkt Tula* from the air and hold it until relieved by the armor. Sie kam nicht zum Einsatz. Die waere Aufgabe der *Luftwaffe* gewesen, aber sie war dazu nicht in der Lage. (Nehring hatte in seinen operativen Studien waehrend seiner *Generalstabsjahre* in Berlin immer wieder die Zusammenarbeit von Pz.Truppe u. *Fallschirmjaegern* bearbeitet. Aber es gab keine Fallschirmjaeger im Osten, sie waren auf **Kreta** schwere zerschlagen worden. (W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 121)

Dec 41: Nehring wurde noch *schweigsamer*. Taeglich fuhr er zu seinen Soldaten in den verschneiten Erdloechern an der **Ssuscha**. (Note: Nehring always up front by his men.) (W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 124)

24.12.41: Am Heiligen Abend 1941 traf Nehring mit dem Stab in **Woina**, dem neuen Gefechtsstand, ein. Nehring, der *nur wenige Worte zu seinem Stab sprach*, er blieb weiter **wortkarg**,²⁰² es war so viel zu denken, weniger zu reden, wussten nun, dass der Krieg noch lange dauern wuerde. (W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 124)

Ssuchinitschi: (**16.1.-27.1.42**): For brief overview of Nehring's role in rescuing *Kampfgruppe Gilsa* (**216. ID**, etc.) see, (W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 124-25) Nehring erhielt ein Fernschreiben Hitlers, in dem seine Leistung u. die seiner Truppe anerkant wird. Nehring wird befoerdert u. bekommt ein neues Kommando—**Afrika Korps!**

²⁰² From Paul's biography, it appears *Nehring* was not a man of many words.

30.1.42: In der Beurteilung, die *General Lemelsen* am 30. Jan 1942 dem *Heerespersonalamt* schrieb, heisst es, ***Nehring sie durch u. durch nur Soldat***, betont korrekt, schwer zu durchschauen, *geistig besonders hochstehend*, schriftstellerisch taetig. Er sei ein guter hoeherer Fuehrer mit gutem taktischen u. operativen Verstaendnis...*Persoendlich sei er ausserordentlich tapfer* u. setzte sich in schwierigen Lagen ruecksichtslos ein. Nehring sei zum Kom.Gen. eines Panzerkorps geeignet. (*W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 126)

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PFLAUM, Karl

Born in Passau on **17 Nov 1890**. He served as cdr of **IR 19** from **1 Sep 39 – 9 Oct 41**, when he replaced the **63-year-old** Brig-Gen (Reserve) Dr. Waldemar Henrici as cdr of **258. ID**. The strain on such older officers was considerable, dictating numerous retirements during the fall and winter of **1941**. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions*, 150, f.n. 13; *Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer*, 130, 249)

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PUTTKAMER, Karl Jesko:

Nicolaus v. Below [Hitler's *Luftwaffe* adjutant]: The first person I met in the Adjutantur was the naval adjutant, Korvettenkapitaen Karl Jesko v. Puttkamer. My first impression wsa of a tall, blond, good-looking and taciturn cigar-smoker. (*Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler's Side*, 13)

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RAUS, General Erhard:

Experience: Austrian by birth. Last combat experience (before *Barbarossa*) as acting cdr of the ***Bicycle Light-Infantry Btn 1*** in *Austro-Hungarian* army in **1918**. Spent interwar years in staff and training posts; absorbed into German army in the **1938 *Anschluss***, where he continued in staff assignments (most notably as chief of staff, **XVII Corps**, during French campaign) for the next two years. Following practice of transferring General Staff ofcrs between *staff and line positions*, Raus took over **IR 243** in **Jun 40**, transferring to **IR 4 (mot.)** one month later. In **May 41**, he advanced to command of **6th Mot. Inf. Bde., 6. PD**, w/o having led his regiment in even a skirmish. At that time there would have been little reason to expect the *bespectacled, 42-year-old* Austrian to rise to army command. Aside from having no recent battlefield experience, Raus *lacked any prior association w/ the panzer corps*. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, xi)

Described by Guderian as one of the German army's finest panzer generals. He commanded **4. & 3. Pz. Armies** in succession on the eastern front, having risen from command of division and corps. His defense of **Kharkov** in **1943** w/ the **XI AK** was a *masterpiece of skill and leadership*. His subsequent command of two panzer armies when the tide had turned in the east against the Germans were *virtuoso performances* of stubborn, wily, and often brilliant employment of the defense. (*Tsouras, Fighting in Hell*, 3)

Barbarossa:

Jun 41 – Feb 42: Within days of his taking command, Raus had proved himself as *imperturbable on the battlefield* as he was at a staff briefing, and by the time **6. PD** reached the *outskirts of Leningrad*, the troops assigned to fight under him were already prone to comment in tough spots that „*Raus will get us through.*“ His keen eye for terrain, innate understanding of combined-arms warfare, and his *flair for unorthodox tactics* made him **General Franz Landgraf's** natural successor at division command. Outside *Moscow* in **Jan 42**, General Model (9th Army cdr) „showed remarkable prescience“ in turning over control of his *entire rear area and line of supply* to Raus's HQ. Raus assembled a motely force of construction units, *Luftwaffe ground crews* and other flotsam to *hold the critical railroad line leading through Sychevka* to the front lines. Had Raus not been able to defend Model's communications, 9th Army would probably have lost the entire **XXIII Corps**, which had been encircled northwest of the town. By **mid-Feb 42**, Raus had collected enough strength to initiate his so-called **snail offensive** [*Schneckenoffensive*] to push the Soviets out of key villages and create a security zone several miles wide along the length of the railroad. His performance during the Soviet winter counteroffensive earned Raus the sobriquet **Der Nochdenker** (the far-sighted one), and *cemented his working relationship w/ Model.* (Newton, *Panzer Ops Raus*, xi-xii)

General Model, as **41. PzK** cdr, began to work w/ Raus (new cdr, **6 PD**) in **Nov 41**. It was the „beginning of a collaboration and friendship that would dramatically affect both men's careers and the course of the war in Russia.“ Raus, a **52-yr-old** Austrian, was Model's opposite in many ways. Model was mercurial, Raus phlegmatic, and where Model was notoriously unpopular w/ his own staff officers, Raus was „Papa“ to most of his. Model was unfailingly and brazenly optimistic, while Raus was so thoughtful and reflective he was sometimes called „the far-sighted thinker“ (**der Nachdenker**).²⁰³ But between the two men there quickly developed a mutual confidence and chemistry that allowed them to work hand in glove over many a battlefield. (See, Newton, *Hitler's Commander*, 157)

Post-war: As war ended, Raus had established a reputation as one of *German army's foremost tacticians of armored warfare*, which made him a prized capture of U.S. Intelligence. In American captivity, Raus wrote a *detailed memoir* of his service in Russia.²⁰⁴ Newton: „In its scope and value as a historical source, the Raus memoir *rivals and potentially eclipses those of Guderian, von Manstein, and von Mellenthin.*“ Later, the U.S. Army Historical Program divided up and excerpted portions of the memoir for use in *nearly a dozen tactical manuals published during the 1950s*. Raus, in fact, is listed as the primary author of works on military improvisations, climate, small-unit tactics, and other issues. These studies have enjoyed a „long and influential life,“ most recently in a full-scale set of reproductions edited by **Peter Tsouras**. (Newton, *Panzer Ops Raus*, xiv-xv)

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REESE, Willy Peter:

Simple Private (**14./IR 279/95. ID**):

²⁰³ **Note:** Is it “Nachdenker,” or “Nochdenker?” Newton uses both terms.

²⁰⁴ **Note:** According to *Newton*, “the primary limitation – and greatest strength – of the Raus memoir is its nearly exclusive focus on tactical warfare...Yet the unrelenting concentration on small-unit combat (even when Raus was an army cdr) provides greater insight into the combined-arms tactics of the German army than almost any other account available in English or German.” (xv)

Now euphoric, now depressed, always tormented by lice and w/ an advanced craving for alcohol, Reese sets about turning his notes and memories into a *single coherent text*. In tiny handwriting, using every square centimeter of the page, he writes whenever he can, often by the light of his cigarette, as he crouches behind his gun. Repeatedly, he gets into arguments w/ the other soldiers about the single lamp. *On the run from the Red Army*, though sick w/ hunger, he saves his letter paper and leaves the butter behind. ‚That’s superfluous, but writing I need to live.’ In his diary, which he later uses as a source for his manuscript, he notes: ‚The only thing that gives me a personal will to survive is my duty to express this war, and to complete my fragmentary works.’ He did it. On home-leave at the beginning of **1944**, he types up **140 pages** on thin A-5 sheets. He is just twenty-three years old, and nothing like the young man who was *drafted into the Wehrmacht* at the beginning of 1941.“ (for more biographical details on Reese, see preface, xv-xxv, *W.P. Reese, A Stranger to Myself*)

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REINHARDT, Hans Georg (Gen. d. Pz.Trp.):

Er fuehrte das **41. PzK** immer von vorn, meist aus seinem Funk-SPW. (*R. Stoves, I. Pz.-Div.*, 138)

M. Stein: „Reinhardt muss mit Sicherheit den herausragenden Herrfuehrern der Wehrmacht zugerechnet werden. Er wurde nicht Feldmarschall, aber seine Leistungen uebertrafen die einer groesseren Anzahl der Feldmarschaelle.“ (*GFM Model*, 58, f.n. 218)

In Deutschland ist der Generaloberst Reinhardt, der zu den herausragenden Befehlshabern der Wehrmacht gehoerte, fast in Vergessenheit geraten. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 307)

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RICHTHOFEN, Wolfram Freiherr v.:

He was the cousin of WWI fighter ace *Manfred v. Richthofen*, the Red Baron. He was as the *Luftwaffe’s most outstanding proponent of army support aviation*. Came to the fore during the conflict in Spain (1936-39). His early career gave little indication of his future role as a *tactical innovator*. On subject of direct battlefield air support, Richthofen was heard to remark that the concept of acft *„diving below 6600 feet is complete nonsense.“* During his tenure w/ the *Luftwaffe’s* technical office in mid-1930s, he even attempted to discontinue development of the *Fieseler Fi 156 Storch* spotting and liaison plane, a type he would later use extensively during his service in Russia. Yet he did not allow his preconceptions to override operational reality. In a short time, he *developed the tiny Condor Legion into a formidable weapon* able to execute a wide variety of tasks, including close air support. (*Muller, German Air War*, 19; also, *Deichmann, German Air Force Operations in Support of the Army*, 35)

Since **Jun 39**, he commanded a special detachment called the *Fliegerkorps zur besonderen Verwendung* (special duties air corps), later designated *Fliegerkorps VIII*, the *Luftwaffe’s premier close support force*. His experiences in Spain had convinced him of the value of close air support. Richthofen, among other achievements, *pioneered use of radio-equipped armored car detachments* which, while accompanying army units, could send back to air corps HQ the most recent information regarding progress of the ground battle. (*Muller, German Air War*, 21-2)

The *heavy losses habitually suffered by units under his command* was a source of some concern at *Luftwaffe* HQ. General *Karl Koller* regarded *Richthofen* as „*heartless*“ and felt he paid no heed to high casualties since, „owing to his privileged position“ w/ *Goering* and *Jeschonnek*, he could always count on an adequate flow of replacements. (*Muller, German Air War, 57*)

David Irving: “The *Luftwaffe*, and particularly *Richthofen*, kept Hitler zealously briefed on the army generals’ shortcomings.” (Ref. here is to “winter crisis” 1941/42; see, *Hitler’s War, 366*)

A World War One *cavalry officer*, he was a civilian engineer during the Weimar years and transferred to the new *Luftwaffe* in **1933**, w/in two years serving as the *Condor Legion’s* chief of staff. Judging that strategic bombing would not win the war for *Franco*, he perfected [?] *close air support* instead. He would become a field marshal in **Feb 43**. He was diagnosed w/ a *brain tumor* in **Oct 44**, and died in captivity nine (9) months later. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 18*)

In the opening days of the campaign, the *Luftwaffe* had destroyed huge numbers of Soviet warplanes on the ground. Afterwards, their activities were reduced to a support role for the Army. Here v. *Richthofen’s VIII Fliegerkorps* distinguished itself. The general spent all day aloft, mostly in a *Storch*, flying from one hot spot to another, and was correspondingly often better informed about the ground situation than most senior Army cdrs. (v. *Below, At Hitler’s Side, 115*)

29.12.41: Kdr.-Gen. **6. AK** wird ploetzlich seines Dienstes enthoben. Soweit man aus Aeusserungen der H.Gr. entnehmen kann, ist der Hauptgrund darin zu sehen, dass Kdr.-Gen. **8. Fl.Korps** gegenueber dem Fuehrer fernm. geaeussert hat, er (Kdr.-Gen. **8. Fl.Korps**) *sehe die Lage beim 6. AK nicht als so bedenklich an, er habe den Eindruck, die Fuehrung des Korps sei etwas nervoes geworden*. Kdr.-Gen. **8. Fl.Korps** ist bis zum Eintreffen eines neuen Kdr. zum Fuehrer des **6. AK** bestimmt. . . (*KTB 9. Armee, RH 20-9/13b*)

5.1.42: Am **5 Jan 42** traf bei der Staffel [4.(F)/14] folgendes Fernschreiben ein: „Lage noerdlich Rshew an Spannung nicht zu ueberbieten. Ich befehle u. erwarte aeusserte Kraftanspannung, um moeglichst viele Flugzeuge in die Luft zu bekommen. Arbeiten an den Flugzeugen ohne Ruecksicht auf Dienstgrad u. Sonderausbildung. Jedes Startrisiko ist in Kauf zu nehmen. Lage erfordert Kampf-durchfuehrung *ohne jede Ruecksicht auf Verluste*. Jede Besatzung muss wissen, dass sie allein fuer Kampfentscheidung u. Waffenehre verantwortlich ist. Opfer wird Pflicht. – *Richthofen*.“ Ich frage *Jupp*, ob dieser Befehl des **VIII. Fliegerkorps** Wirkung gehabt hat. [Note: *Uffz. Knoblauch* had been on leave.] – “Er hat,” sagt *Reinardy*. “Sieh dir die Verluste an. *Richthofen* hat mit diesem Befehl *die Fernaufklaerer zu Schlachtfliegern gemacht*. Die Abwehrrfolge haben ihm recht gegeben. Ich bin ziemlich sicher, dass wir ohne diesen kompromisslosen Befehl heute nicht mehr in Smolensk waeren.“ (*K. Knoblauch, Zwischen Metz u. Moskau, 205*)

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RINGENBERG, JOBST:

Ringenberg war zuerst bei den **39er** u. dann bei den **37er** der **6. ID**. Durch Krankheit von Oberst Viehbahn [sp?] wurde er vor dem Russlandfeldzug Kdr. der **240er** der **106. ID**. Seinen Sohn, der

bei unserer **2. AR 6** [?]²⁰⁵ war, nannten wir HOSENSCHEISSER. War er auf der B-Stelle u. es knallte, bekam er Durchfall. Bei einem Angriff der Russen auf die Stellungen der **240er** fehlte Panzerabwehr. Zurueckgekommen stellten wir fest, dass vor dem Bunker von Ringenberg 7 STURMGESCHUETZE standen. Er hatte auch kein Ritterkreuz u. Sturmabzeichen, wie viele Kommandeure. (*W. Vollmer, 106. ID, Ltr to C. Luther, 18 Apr 04*)

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SCHMIDT, Gen Rudolf:

* 12. Mai 1886, Berlin + 7. April 1957, Krefeld

Note: Schmidt was a very interesting-looking man – not handsome, but w/ strong, rather exaggerated facial features (very prominent cheekbones, etc.) See his photos in *K. R. Woche's* biography.

Note: According to Seaton, he was a „hostile critic“ of the Nazi regime. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 215*)

Rudolf Schmidt trat am 25. September 1906 in die Armee ein und wurde am 27. Januar 1908 Leutnant im Infanterie-Regiment 83. Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg wurde er in die Reichswehr übernommen, am 1. April 1931 zum Oberst befördert und am 1. Oktober 1936 zum Generalmajor. Am 1. Oktober 1937 übernahm er das Kommando über die [1. Panzer-Division](#), die er auch in Polen führte. Am 1. Juni 1938 war er zum Generalleutnant befördert worden und am 1. Februar 1940 übernahm er das XXXIX. Panzer-Korps, welches er im Frankreich-Feldzug befehligte. Für die Erfolge des Panzer-Korps wurde Schmidt am **3. Juni 1940** das Ritterkreuz verliehen, am **10. Juli 1941** erhielt er das Eichenlaub. Am **15. November 1941** wurde er Kommandeur der 2. Armee und am **1. Januar 1942** zum Generaloberst befördert. Vom **25. Oktober 1941** [Dez 41?]²⁰⁶ bis zum 10. Juli 1943 führte er die 2. Panzerarmee, er wurde am 30. September 1943 aus dem aktiven Dienst verabschiedet. (<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de>)

K.-R. Woche: “Aus dem Inhalt der mir vorliegenden Dokumente war erkennbar, dass es sich bei Rudolf Schmidt um eine aufrechten, liebenswerten u. charakterlich einwandfreien Menschen handelte, der nicht zu den Maennern in der Generalitaet der Wehrmacht gehoerte, die kritiklos den Befehlen Hitlers gehorchten, um sich ihre Dotationen zu erhalten. . . hoffe ich, dass ich dem Leser das Bild eines pflichtbewussten u. aufrechten Soldaten aufzeigen kann, der seiner preussischen Erziehung bis in den Tod true blieb. Rudolf Schmidt war bei seiner Truppe beliebt u. wurde von seinen Soldaten stets der ‘Papa Schmidt’ oder auch einfach ‘Panzer-Schmidt’ genannt, der immer ein offenes Ohr fuer ihre Sorgen u. Noete hatte.” (*Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 10-11*)

During World War One, Rudolf Schmidt fought on both eastern and western fronts. He, like Guderian, was a Nachrichtenoffizier. In fact, as *K.-R. Woche* points out, his career from **1907**

²⁰⁵ **Note:** V. served – initially at least – w/ **AR 107** in **106. ID**. In his letter of **18.4.06**, however, he refers repeatedly to his **2. AR 6**. Perhaps he was transferred to this regiment after he returned to the front in late **1942**, following his bout w/ Fleckfieber.

²⁰⁶ **Note:** This date is incorrect; Guderian led **2 Pz. Armee** until ca. **25.12.41**.

on evinces many parallels to that of Guderians. (See, *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 17-24)

Following conclusion of French campaign, it was decided to *revise the manual **Richtlinien fuer die Fuehrung der Panzerdivision*** to incorporate „lessons learned“ from Polish and French campaigns. *General Rudolf Schmidt*, cdr of 39. AK, assigned the task to do this. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 94)

Schmidt im Russlandfeldzug:

Schmidt had serious doubts about Russian campaign. Writes his biographer: “Es gab viele Generale, die in dem “Unternehmen Barbarossa” die kommende Niederlage Deutschlands sahen. Auch General Schmidt stand mit seinem Zweifel ueber den Verlauf des bevorstehenden Feldzuges nicht allein. . . Der General war . . . der Ueberzeugung, dass man in den laengsten u. schwersten Feldzug dieses Krieges zog. Wie vielen seiner Kameraden aus der Reichswehrzeit war ihm bewusst, dass der russ. Soldat anspruchslos u. an grosse Anstrengungen gewohnt war. Er war an der Waffe u. in der Ausnutzung des Gelaendes zu gut ausgebildet. Dazu kamen die Unberechenbarkeit der russ. Witterungs- u. Strassenverhaeltnisse sowie die Weite des Landes, die schon Napoleon **1812** zum Verhaengnis geworden waren.” (*K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 95, 98)

“Beim **XXXIX AK. [mot.]** ist der Kom.Gen. immer ganz vorne, hinten fuehrt der Chef des Stabes. Der Kommandierende ist stets dort, wo etwas los ist. Er weiss aus den Erfahrungen des Ersten Weltkrieges, das eine Truppe nur dann intakt bleibt, wenn die Offiziere ein gutes Beispiel geben. Er ueberschreitet am ersten Tage des Russlandfeldzuges mit der Pionierspitze die Grenze, bei Panzerangriffen faehrt er im offenen Kuebelwagen vor den Panzern. Offiziere, die es auch nur im geringsten an Haltung fehlen lassen, schickt er ohne Gnade nach Hause. Alles das spricht sich sehr schnell herum, u. die Soldaten haengen mit ehrlichem Vertrauen an ihrem “*Papa Schmidt*.” Dabei ist er nicht etwa ein Draufgaenger der “Halsschmerzen” (damit ist der Wunsch nach einem Haldorden, z.B. Ritterkreuz u.a. gemeint) hat oder von krankhaftem Ehrgeiz zerfressen wird. Er ist schon garnicht etwa ein Chauvinist, eher ein Kosmopolit, aber mit echten Bindungen im Deutschtum verwurzelt.” (Ordonnanz Offizier H. Hertel, quoted in: *K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 107-08)

ab 22.6.41: From account of his biographer, it appears General Schmidt led from the forward-most frontlines. He appears to have been up front in the “thick” of the action. In this context, however, Schmidt’s biographer is critical of the general for his actions on **25.6.41**: “Die Fuehrungsgrundsaeetze Guderians, dass ein Panzer-General von vorne fuehren muss, wurden hier uebertrieben.” (See, *K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 100-07)

ab 22.6.41: Gleich zu Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges hatte sich General Schmidt – wie bereits im Frankreich – fuer den Schutz der Zivilbevoelkerung eingesetzt u. jegliches eigenmaechtige Requirieren strengstens verboten. . . Sein System hat sich hervorragend bewaehrt. Es gab keinerlei Sabotage, die Ablieferung [der Ernte] funktionierte vollkommen. . . General Schmidt vertrat schon damals die Auffassung, den besetzten Gebieten eine Selbstverwaltung u. politische Autonomie unter eigenen Selbstverwaltungsorganen zu gewaehren. . . Alle diese Massnahmen sollten der Bevoelkerung beweisen, dass die dt. Soldaten nicht als Unterdruecker, sondern als Befreier gekommen waren. (See, *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 126)

Jun-Jul 41: Schmidt war ein sehr kritischer Untergebener u. schonungslos auf Fuehrungsfehler hinwies. Hans Hertel berichtete, dass "schon in den Kesselschlachten von Minsk u. Smolensk General Schmidt staendig bewegte Klage ueber die mangelnde Koordination fuehrte. Innerhalb der **3. PzGr** war im wesentlichen eine gute Zusammenarbeit vorhanden. Das Zusammenwirken mit der **2. PzGr** (Guderian) liess aber sehr zu wuenschen uebrig. Wo der Fehler oder die Schuld lag, vermag ich nicht zu sagen. Die Tatsache ist unbestritten." Die Ursache waren vermutlich die anhaltenden Differenzen zwischen Guderian u. Schmidt, fuer die es eigentlich keine verstaendliche Erklaerung gibt. (*K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 118)

12.7.41: Am 12. Juli ueberbrachte ein Sonderkurier dem General der Pz.Tr. Schmidt ein Telegramm des Fuehrers, in dem ihm am **10.7.41** als **19.** Soldat der dt. Wehrmacht das Eichenlaub zum Ritterkreuz verliehen wurde. Diese Auszeichnung erhielt Schmidt nach Dietl u. Rommel als dritter General u. als erster General an der Ostfront. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 112)

17.9.41 [Kommissarbefehl]: An diesem Tage verlangte General Schmidt die sofortige Aufhebung des Kommissarbefehls, nachdem er seinen Truppenkommandeuren die Erschiessung von Kommissaren ausdruecklich untersagt hatte. Schmidt meinte: "Solange die Kommissare sich gemeinsam gegen den sicheren Tod wehren muessen, werden sie wie Pech u. Schwefel zusammenhalten. Wenn aber der einzelne Kommissar weiss, dass er als Ueberlaeufer sein Leben retten kann, wird die innere Geschlossenheit des politischen Fuehrungskorps aufhoeren." In der Denkschrift, die Hans Hertel im Auftrage von General Schmidt am **18.9.41** verfasst hat, u. die von Schmidt unterzeichnet ueber das **AOK 16** an das Fuehrerhauptquartier gesandt wurde, machte man den Vorschlag, die Kommissare sofort nach ihrer Gefangennahme in besonderen Lagern im Reich unterzubringen, wo man sie mit geeigneten Mitteln ueber ihr voellig falsches Bild von Deutschland aufklaeren sollte. (See, *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 127-29)

26.12.41: Am Morgen des 26. Dezember wurde Guderian mit Hitlers Einwilligung in die Fuehrerreserve des OKH versetzt. Mit der Fuehrung der **2 Pz Armee** wurde General der Pz.-Tr. Rudolf Schmidt betraut, der mit Wirkung vom 1.1.42 zum Generaloberst befoerdert worden war. Als O.B. fuehrte er nun bis **15.1.42** auch die **2 Armee**, bis Gen.Ob. Frhr. v. Weichs seine Armee wieder uebernahm. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 141)

Schmidt took over for Guderian as cdr of *2d Panzer Army* and ***stood fast as ordered***. He was the obvious choice (to command the army) because his *aggressive style of defense* had already extricated several encircled divisions and he *clearly had the stomach for this vicious, all-out fight*. Renouncing the retrograde maneuver that Guderian favored, *Schmidt* ordered his forces into positional defensive strongpoint *hedgehogs*, normally *built around villages*, in compliance w/ Hitler's orders. He then preceded to do what Guderian claimed was „impossible:“ he ***restored a new defensive front***. Soviet forces destroyed their offensive strength butting against these stubborn defensive hedgehogs that *maximized what residual fighting strength* German forces retained. Once the Soviet offensive began to ebb in late **Jan 41**, Hitler allowed S. To make *localized withdrawals*. By **Mar 42**, S. had *successfully weathered the storm* and restored a firm defensive front. (*Hart, Guderian*, 80)

Note: For Schmidt's role in Bandenbekaempfung in early **1942**, as well as his support of the local Russian population see, *Woche's* biography, pp 149-51. As *Woche* writes: "Auf jeden Fall gehoerte Generaloberst Schmidt zu den Offizieren, denen daran gelegen war, die ideologisch angeordneten Massnahmen aus dem **OKW** bzw. aus dem Fuehrerhauptquartier fuer die Kriegfuehrung im Osten zu entschaerfen." (150)

Anecdote: Schmidt war auch bemueht zu vermeiden, dass die Bevoelkerung durch die Besatzung nicht ueber ein vertretbares Mass belastet wurde. Als z.B. ein LKW des Heeres in einer Ortschaft versehentlich in das Haus einer alten Frau u. deren zwei Toechter fuhr, ordnete Schmidt sofort den Einsatz einer Baukompanie an, die den Schaden gruendlich zu beheben hatte. Er selbst soll sich darum gekuemert haben, dass der alten Frau auch das durch den Unfall beschaedigte Eigentum ersetzt wurde. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 200)

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SCHWEPPENBURG, Leo Freiherr Geyr v.:

He was a conservative who had already nearly come to blows over tactics w/ Guderian in Poland. According to Newton, v. Schweppenburg (like Hitler and v. Kluge, for ex.) was much more conservative (cautious) in his approach toward use of German armor compared to tank generals like Guderian, Hoth, Model, etc. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 114)

Sep 41: General der. Pz.Truppe, *Leo Freiherr Geyr v. Schweppenburg*, schrieb Ende September 1941 in einer *Denkschrift*, dass „*die Einnahme von Moskau auf Grund immer wiederholter Lehren russ. Geschichte nichts Entscheidendes bedeutete.*“ Es hiess darin woertlich: „*Moskau duerfe nicht zu einem zweiten Verdun werden.*“ (*Nehring, Panzerwaffe*, 245)

1933-39: Geyr war Militaerattache in Grossbritannien, Belgien u. Holland waehrend der Jahre **1933-37**. Also er besass betraechtliche Auslandserfahrung. In Polen [**Sep 39**] war Geyr Kdr der **3. PD** gewesen. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 55)

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SEYDLITZ-KURZBACH, Gen.-Lt. Walther von

Der **53** Jahre alte General [in **Mar 42**] war bereits im Ersten Weltkrieg Offizier gewesen u. hatte dann in der Reichswehr Karriere gemacht. Als Kommandeur einer Inf.-Div. hatte er am Frankreich- u. Russlandfeldzug teilgenommen u. war wegen seiner militaerischen Erfolge auch Hitler aufgefallen. Seydlitz kam aus einer der traditionsreichsten preussischen Militerfamilien – sein Vorfahr Friedrich Wilhelm (**1721** bis **1773**) war Reitergeneral unter Friederich dem Grossen. Besonderen Ruhm erlangte der Seydlitz-Urahn im Siebenjaehrigen Krieg, als er **1758** im Verlauf der Schlacht von Zorndorf mehrmals den Befehl des Koenigs verweigerte, mit seinen Kavallerieeinheiten anzugreifen – obwohl ihm gedroht wurde, „er hafte mit seinem Kopf fuer den Ausgang der Schlacht.“ Seydlitz handelte erst dann, als er durch einen Angriff in die Flanke die maximale Wirkung erzielen konnte. Dies trug massgeblich zum siegreichen Ausgang des Kampfes bei, u. auch der preussische Koenig zollte ihm seinen Respekt.

Auch Walther v. Seydlitz war alles andere als ein sturer Kommisskopf. . . „Seydlitz war ein tapferer, aufrechter, in militaerischen Dingen klar denkender Soldat,“ bestaetigt Heinrich Graf von Einsiedel, der ihn **1943** in sowjet. Gefangenschaft kennenlernte. „Politisch war er dagegen vollkommen ungebildet. Seydlitz hat zu mir selbst einmal gesagt: Mir ist an Hitler nichts aufgefallen als *schlecht sitzende Uniform u. schlechte Tischmanieren.*“ [!] Dennoch sollte Seydlitz einer der wenigen deutschen Offiziere werden, die dem Diktator offen widersprachen.

Auch bei seinen Soldaten war Sedylitz beliebt. „Er hatte wirklich fuer jeden Einzelnen, ob es nun Offizier, Uffz. oder der einfache Pionier oder Jaeger gewesen ist, ein offenes Wort,“ sagt Joachim

Sandau, der vor Demjansk mit ihm zusammentraf. . . Am **20 Mar 42** traten die Einheiten der „Stossgruppe Seydlitz“ zur Oeffnung des Kessels von Demjansk an. . . Wie Joachim Sandau berichtet, war der General dabei *stets in vorderster Linie zu finden*. . . (G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 123-24)

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STIEFF, Hellmuth (Ia 4. AOK):

Born on **6 Jun 1901** in East Prussia. He entered the **71.** Field Artillery Rgt in **1917**, remaining in the Reichswehr as a lieutenant after WWI. After serving in **AR 3** (Brandenburg), he underwent General Staff training and entered the General Staff's Organization Branch in **1938**. By fall of **1941**, he was serving as **Ia** of **4. AOK**. He returned to the Org Br to serve as its chief from **Dec 42** until **20 Jul 44**, when he was arrested for his participation in plot to kill Hitler. The SS hanged Stieff on **8 Aug 44**. (S.J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions*, 150, f.n. 12; Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer*, 328)

G. Meyer [Heusinger]: Stieff sei als [Ia] zum AOK 4 [Kluge] versetzt. Heusinger sei „ganz froh“ darueber, „denn auf die Dauer *fiel mir dieser kleine **Wichtigtu**er [pompos ass (!)] doch etwas auf die Nerven*“, schrieb H. am **20.9.41**;²⁰⁷ u. ergaenzte am **24.9.41**, Stieff sei eben „*charakterlich so unfertig u. schwankend*, dass man mit ihm noch allerlei erleben koennte!“ Dennoch schenkte er ihm zum Abschied den *Caulaincourt*. Zu Anfang des Jahres **1942** hoffte Heusinger dann, dass „der Ernst des Lebens, vor dem er jetzt taeglich steht“, Stieff zur *Raison* bringe (**11.1.42**). Er versagte ihm die Anerkennung nicht, als er ihm ein paar Tage spaeter wieder einmal begegnete. „Man merkte ihm an, was er erlebt hat“, er habe sich „uebrigens in der Front *vorzueglich* gemacht.“ (**19.1.42**) Sein *positives Urteil ueber Stieffs Leistung beim Oberkommando der 4. Armee* wiederholte er, als er ihn im **Apr 42** wiedersah, zwar „*recht herunter u. kaputt*“, er muesse wohl dringend mal ausspannen, „nachdem er seine Sache besonders gut gemacht hat“, in schweren Zeiten mit viel persoenlichem Fronteinsatz, „in seiner Armee *die Seele vom Geschaef*t.“ (**18.4.42**) Bei solcher Leistung stellte Heusinger dann seine persoenliche Vorbehalte zurueck u. schlug im Herbst 1942 Stieff zum *Chef der Organisationsabteilung im OKH* vor, zustaendig fuer alle Fragen des Aufbaus, der Gliederung u. Staerke des Heeres. Diese Aufgabe nach Stieff sich dann auch mit besonderem Engagement an...Stieff selbst sah in seiner Bestallung gar, etwas hochgegriffen, „eine Aufgabe *Scharnhorsts*.“ Sie vermittelte ihm rasch den zuverlaessigsten Einblick in die personell wie materiell absinkende Kampfkraft des Heeres. Dies liess ihn auch nach Auswegen suchen, wie die *drohende Katastrophe* abzuwenden sei. So schlug er sich *auf die Seite des Widerstandes* u. lieh ihm seine Unterstuetzung...(Meyer, Heusinger, 159-60)

Auch Gen.-Maj. Stieff, der seine Beteiligung am Widerstand mit dem Leben bezahlte u. der das Verhalten der Deutschen in Polen u. Russland mehrfach scharf kritisierte, schrieb am **21.11.39** an seine Frau: „Lodz ist eine scheusslich haessliche Stadt. Ungezaehlte Juden, die alle eine gelbe Armbinde am rechten Oberarm tragen müssen. Und was fuer Typen sieht man da. Es ist einfach unfassbar, dass so etwas vorhanden ist.“ (Stein, *GFM Model*, 251)

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STRAUSS, Col.-Gen. Adolf:

²⁰⁷ **Note:** Dates = dates of letters from Heusinger to his wife.

Commanded **9. Army**. He was a „quiet, prudent and experienced cdr.“ (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 44)

According to *S.H. Newton*, Strauss was „one of the more conservative senior generals in the army.“ (*Hitler's Commander*, 155)

He had commanded **9 Army** under v. Bock since the western campaign in **1940**. He trained his army to be the *first wave* of the stillborn Operation *Sealion* against Britain, until transferred east for *Barbarossa*. He led **9 Army** “with ability“ until **12.1.42**, when he asked to be relieved “for health reasons.“ Thereafter he sat out the rest of the war. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 16)

Goerlitz beschreibt Strauss als einen sehr vorsichtigen Befehlshaber, der das Risiko scheute u. es gewohnt war, von seinem Schreibtisch aus zu fuehren. Er sei ein alter, sehr gemuetlicher u. schlicht in altmodischen Kategorien denkender Herr gewesen.“ (*Goerlitz*, 109). *Reichhelm*²⁰⁸ widerspricht diesen Beurteilungen: „Strauss war nicht risikofreudig, aber er war ein sehr mobiler u. tapferer Mann, der fast nur bei der Truppe war.“ Im **Okt 41** wurde ihm von v.Bock vorgeworfen, dass sein Vormarschtempo bei Wjasma ungenuegend war. Die Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen Bock u. Strauss sind deutlich in den laufenden Eintragungen im KTB der H.Gr.Mitte, **Okt 41**, erkennbar. . . [Aber] auch Reichhelm betont. . .dass Strauss der Ueberblick fehlte. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 67)

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TRECKOW, Maj-Gen Henning v.:

Born **1 Oct 1901**. GFM v. Bock's Operations officer [Ia], Lt.-Col. v. Tresckow believed military ops should have stopped after the Battle of Kiev, that the German Army should not have even undertaken Operation „Taifun.“ Although only a mid-level staff officer, he was an important personality at AGC HQ by virtue of his keen intellect, strong will, and humane nature – an influence not lessened by the fact that he was **v. Bock's nephew and closest confidant**. He was an outstanding staff officer, he also was one of the leaders of the German resistance movement. He committed suicide on **21 Jul 44**. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions*, 153, f.n. 25; *Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer*, 342)

Tresckow would remark shortly before committing suicide following failure of *attentat* against Hitler on 20.7.44: “None of us can complain about his lot. Whoever joined the resistance donned the bloodstained shirt of *Nessus*. But then the *worth of a man can only be gauged by his readiness to sacrifice his life for his convictions.*” (quoted in: *M. Vassiltchikov, Berlin Diaries*, 212)

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UDET, Ernst:

In 1936, Goering made him chief of the GAF's *Technical Office*, responsible for developing and procuring acft. He was completely unsuited to serve as chief of design and production. He was a

²⁰⁸ **Note:** Guenther Reichhelm was staff officer w/ **9. Armee** (See, *Stein*, 128)

highly skilled pilot who had made his living as a stunt pilot in the 1920s and was *Germany's greatest living ace* (68 kills in WWI). He probably would have been happiest as the *Luftwaffe's* chief test pilot, but he had no experience in management or industrial production and little interest in the large amount of paperwork and planning that went w/ the job. In fact, one of his decisions *crippled German acft developments*: His decision to make *all* bombers capable of dive bombing. Thus, under his tutelage, 3rd generation *Luftwaffe* acft were either delayed in development and production or of poor design. (For details see, *J.S. Corum*, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 212)

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WAEGER, General der Infanterie Albert:

Commander, **XXVI AK**. According to *S.H. Newton*, Waeger was a „middle-aged mediocrity.“ (*Hitler's Commander*, 155)

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WEICHS, Col-Gen Maximilian Freiherr v.:

Born on **12 Nov 1881**. The Army named v. Weichs to command its first panzer division in **1935**, where he helped to develop German tank tactics, organization, and training. He commanded **13. AK** from **Oct 37 – Oct 39**, when he assumed command of **2. Army**. (*S.J. Lewis, Forgotten Legions*, 153, f.n. 23; *Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer*, 359)

He commanded the **2 Army** at beginning of the Russian campaign. In **1942**, he would lead the northern wing of Operation “*Blau*“ against Stalingrad, earning promotion to field marshal in **Feb 43**, despite his questionable leadership during the Stalingrad crisis. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 17)

Note: In a letter to his wife on **22.9.41**, Gen. Gotthard Heinrici referred to v. Weichs as “*ein stiller aber besonders anstaendiger Mann.*” (*J. Huerter, Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 88)

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WEIDLING, Helmuth:

* 2. November 1891, Halberstadt / Thüringen + 17. November 1955, Wladimir	
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Helmuth Weidling wurde **1912** im Luftschiff-Bataillon 1 zum Leutnant befördert. Zu Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges war er Artillerie-Beobachter und später Batterie-Führer. Nach dem Krieg wurde er in die Reichswehr übernommen. Am 1. September **1935** folgte seine Beförderung zum Oberstleutnant und am 1. März **1938** zum Oberst. Am 10. November **1938** wurde er Kommandeur des [Artillerie-Regiments 56](#), mit dem er am Polenfeldzug teilnahm. Anschließend übernahm er das [Artillerie-Regiment 20](#). Am 10. April **1940** erfolgte seine Ernennung zum [Artillerie-Kommandeur 128](#) beim [XXXX. Panzerkorps](#), mit dem er ab Mai **1940** im Frankreich- und ab Juni **1941** am Rußlandfeldzug teilnahm. Am **1. Januar 1942** wurde er Kommandeur der [86. Infanterie-Division](#). Am 1. Februar **1942** folgte seine Beförderung zum Generalmajor und

am 1. Januar 1943 zum Generalleutnant. Für die Abwehrerfolge seiner Division westlich von Rshew Ende 1942 wurde er am 15. Januar 1943 mit dem Ritterkreuz ausgezeichnet. Am 20. Oktober 1943 wurde er zum Kommandierenden General des XXXXI. Panzerkorps ernannt und am 1. Januar 1944 zum General der Artillerie befördert. Für seine Führungsleistungen bei den schweren Abwehrkämpfen zwischen Pripjet und Beresina wurde er am 22. Februar 1944 mit dem Eichenlaub ausgezeichnet. Während der russischen Sommeroffensive 1944 wurde sein Korps zerschlagen. Erst an der Weichsel gelang es ihm, mit den Resten seines Korps eine neue Frontlinie zu bilden. Am 10. April 1945 erfolgte seine Versetzung in die Führerreserve. Zuvor hatte er am 28. November 1944 die Schwerter verliehen bekommen. Am 12. April 1945 wurde er Kommandierender General des LVI. Panzerkorps. Am 24. April 1945 wurde er schließlich von Hitler persönlich zum Kampfkommandanten von Berlin ernannt. Am 3. Mai 1945 geriet er in russische Gefangenschaft, in der er 1955 verstarb.

Ritterkreuz (15. Januar 1943) Eichenlaub (22. Februar 1944) Schwerter (28. November 1944)

(<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister>)

Obergef. Wilhelm Dowe: „Unsere Division uebernimmt Oberst Weidling. Er soll ein scharfer Bursche sein. Das sollten wir in der Zukunft mehrfach erleben. Er bestrafte Kraftfahrer wegen Kleinigkeiten mit Strafversetzung zur Infanterie.“ (*W. Dowe, 86. ID, Kriegserlebnisse, 3.1.42*)

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WITTHOEFT, Gen. Lt. Joachim:

General der Infanterie Joachim Witthoeft.
Kdr. 86. ID von 1.9.39-1.1.42.

E. Meinecke: „Ein handgeschriebenes Exemplar wurde dem *hochgeschätzten ehem. Kdr.* der 86. ID, Herrn General d. Inf. a.D. Witthoeft aus Anlass seines 75. Geburtstages am 23 Sep 62 ueberreicht.“ (*E. Meinecke, „Ostfeldzug der 86. ID“*)

Am 21.12.41 hatte unser bewaehrter Div.-Kdr. Gen.Lt. Witthoeft fuer seine erfolgreiche Fuehrung u. die hervorragenden Leistungen seiner Truppe das Ritterkreuz erhalten. Am 3.1.42 uebernahm er das XXVII AK. Der Kommandowechsel kam fuer die Division voellig ueber-raschend, u. es war fuer sie besonders schmerzlich, *ihren hochgeschaetzten Kdr.* zu verlieren, der sie mehr als 28 Monate gefuehrt. . . An seiner Stelle uebernahm Oberst Weidling die Fuehrung der 86. ID. (*Source: E. Meinecke, „Ostfeldzug der 86. ID“*)

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1.5: Adolf Hitler:

Note: Hitler was unshakable in his belief that the very first onslaught would *topple the whole Soviet structure like a house of cards*. Views contrary to his went unheeded. Hitler could point to the victorious campaigns in Poland, France, Norway, and the Balkans; he had, up to now, *always proved to be right*, despite warnings and apprehensions of the so-called experts. *Never*

before or afterward did Hitler's prestige and mystic spell attain the heights that they reached in early 1941. (FMS T-34, Terrain Factors, 14)

Hitler's concept of *Lebensraum*, his racism and antisemitism hardly unique at the time. But there was an originality in the way Hitler combined his *pathological antisemitism* w/ the notion of *Lebensraum* – the **twin components of his singular world-view**. This was by regarding *Bolshevism as Jewish rule*, a view he had formed by 1920, probably under influence of his publicist associate *Alfred Rosenberg*. And the rabid antisemitic and anti-Bolshevik tirades of Russian exiles which fed into the German right-wing press. Hitler returned to the theme of „living space“ in innumerable speeches in the later 1920s, and in an unpublished tract of 1928, where he expounded upon his ideas of foreign policy at greater length than in *Mein Kampf*. In this tract, he defined foreign policy as „*the art of securing for a people the necessary quantity and quality of Lebensraum.*“ For Germany, this meant a *single goal*, and „in the one and only place possible: space in the East.“ Such ideas were in 1928 still „*idiosyncratic.*“, Few Germans entertained such notions. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 57)

Kershaw [*Hitler's decision to attack Russia*]: Did Hitler, in making his fateful choice in 1940 [to attack Russia], miss the opportunity to follow an alternative course of action which could have led to victory or, at the least, avoided the calamitous path to defeat that was about to follow? Hitler certainly did not think he had missed a chance. In his eyes, despite different possibilities in late summer and autumn of 1940, *none proved a practicable alternative to an attack on the Soviet Union* – to attain rapid victory before the winter and lay the ground for the wider struggle against Britain and America. The USA, he thought, would be ready to enter the war on Britain's side in 1942. He was *convinced, therefore, that time was not on Germany's side*. Continental dominance, the end of the European war and the *impregnability* this would bring, had to be attained in 1941, before any conflict w/ the United States ensued. There is no indication that he considered postponing, let alone cancelling, the invasion of Russia that he envisaged for spring 1941. *The preparations set in train at end of July 1940 were never halted.* In fact, Hitler *never deviated from his conviction that destruction of the Soviet Union in a lightning campaign was the only route to overall victory*...It seems clear that *no chance was missed in 1940*. Given the leadership which Germany had, and the very reason she was facing a strategic dilemma in summer/autumn 1940 in the first place, ***the attack on the Soviet Union was indeed the only practicable way open.*** By 1940, unable to end the war, the only option for Hitler was *to gamble further*, to take, as always, the bold, forward move, one that would sweep over the Russians „*like a hailstorm*“ and make the world „*hold its breath.*“ „It was madness, but there was method in it.“ (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 85-90)

Paul Johnson: „For Hitler the war really began on **22 Jun 41**. That was when he could begin not only his eastern clearance programme for German expansion but large-scale *genocide*. It is not known precisely when Hitler ordered the '*final solution*' to begin or exactly how he defined its scope: all his orders were verbal. In **Mar 41**, Himmler called the first *genocide conference*, announcing that one of the aims of the coming Russian campaign was '*to decimate the Slav population by thirty million.*' At the end of the same month, Hitler himself told his senior officers about the *Einsatzgruppen* extermination units which would follow in the wake of the German armies. Two days later, on **2.4.41**, Alfred Rosenberg, after a two-hour talk w/ Hitler, wrote in his diary: 'Which I do not want to write down, but will never forget.' The key document in the genocide programmes appears to be an order issued (on Hitler's authority) by Goering on **31.7.41** to Himmler's deputy and SD Chief, Reinhard **Heydrich**, whom Hitler called 'the man w/ an iron heart.' This spoke of a total solution, *Gesamtloesung*, and a final solution, *Endloesung*, 'to solve the Jewish problem.' The final solution became fact from the spring of **1942**. The first mass-gassings began at **Belzec** on **17.3.42.**" (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 414-15)

Paul Johnson: Hitler's decision to invade Russia was the *most fateful of his career*. It destroyed his regime, and him w/ it. It was also *one of the most important in modern history*, for it brought Soviet totalitarianism right into the *heart of Europe*. But it was a gamble that might have succeeded. It is vital to grasp why it did not do so. Hitler claimed early in **1945** that the *five or six weeks' delay* in launching the invasion accounted for his failure to take Moscow and destroy Stalin's regime before winter came. But at the time he did not feel constrained by so tight a timetable. The truth is, *he grievously underestimated Russian military capacity*. There is an old and wise diplomatic saying: „*Russia is never as strong as she looks. Russia is never as weak as she looks.*“ Hitler ignored it. He was not alone in his contempt for the Red Army. The British and French general staffs *rated its performance below Poland's*. This view appeared to be confirmed by the *Finnish campaign*. Partly on the basis of Canaris's (*Abwehr's*) misleading estimates, Hitler thought the Russian campaign would be *easier than the conquest of France*. The Red Army, he told the Bulgarian Ambassador, *Dragonoff*, was „no more than a joke.“ It would be „cut to pieces“ and „throttled in sections.“ In **Dec 40**, he estimated that „in three weeks we shall be in St. Petersburg.“ Though the Japanese were his allies, he made no attempt to possess himself of *their far more sober estimates of Russian fighting capability*, especially in tank warfare, based on their bitter experience in **May-Jun 39**. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times, 376-77; also, Fest, 955*)

Paul Johnson: But Hitler's personal mismanagement of the campaign was not the only, or indeed the chief, **reason for his failure in Russia**. The cause went deeper, to the *very conception of the war*, to the roots indeed of Hitler's whole political purpose. In attacking Russia, he was *trying to do two quite different things simultaneously* – to achieve a military victory and to set in motion an enormous enterprise of social engineering. The *two aims were mutually incompatible*. It is not of course unusual for a military campaign to have an accompanying political purpose, to be a „war of liberation.“ That indeed would have made sense in 1941. Stalin ruled by terror alone. His regime was *universally unpopular at home*, and hated and feared throughout Europe. There were many in Germany, and still more outside Germany, who wished to view a war against Bolshevism as a *crusade*...Hitler might have put himself at the head of such a crusade. But to have done so would have been false to himself. *Hitler was not in the business of liberation. Like Stalin, he was in the business of slavery*. The accident of race made them opponents, and pitted their regimes against each other. But in *essential aspects they were fellow-ideologues*, pursuing *Utopias* based on a fundamental division of mankind into elites and *helots*...The *military object of Barbarossa was incidental. The real aim was to exterminate Bolshevism and its „Jewish catchment area,*“ to acquire territory for colonial settlement, to enslave the Slav masses in four „*Reich Commissariats*“ (termed Baltic, Ukraine, „*Muscovy,*“ and Caucasus), and to create an *autarchic economic system* which would be proof against any blockade the Anglo-Saxon powers might impose...By **Jul 41**, the Russian nation as a whole began to grasp the horrifying fact that they faced what appeared to be a *war of extermination*. The result was the **salvation of Stalin and his regime**. (See, *Modern Times, 380-82*)²⁰⁹

Note: Aus Gesprächen mit *Brauchitsch* u. *Halder* habe *Heusinger* folgende Argumente Hitlers fuer die Auseinandersetzung mit der Sowjetunion herausgehört: a) den *unausweichlichen* Zusammenstoß zwischen Nationalsozialismus u. Bolschewismus; b) Hitlers Sorge, Stalin werde ihm die Früchte seiner Siege im Westen u. im Suedosten Europas streitig machen; c) Hitler sei es auch darum zu tun gewesen, wegen *Deutschlands Mangel an Rohstoffen* die reichen Provinzen

²⁰⁹ Ultimately, Hitler plans ranged from settling **100,000,000** Germans on the great plains to the west of the Urals to *hanging the Pope* in full pontificals in St. Peter's Square. Strasbourg Cathedral would be turned into a giant „*Monument to the Unknown Soldier,*“ etc. (381-82)

Russlands in Besitz zu nehmen. Hitler habe – so gibt Heusinger weiter dessen Motiv wieder – im Jahre 1941 die *Gelegenheit zum Krieg mit der Sowjetunion als guenstig angesehen*, weil er ueber eine starke u. gut ausgeruestete Armee verfuegte u. glaubte, der einzig auf dem europaeischen Festland verbliebene Gegner (u. ideologische Feind) *befinde sich in einer Phase des Umbaus seiner Armee*. Hitler habe auch damit gerechnet, dass eine Niederlage der Sowjetunion *England zu einem Uebereinkommen mit Deutschland bewegen werde*. (Meyer, Heusinger, 149)

Note: Insbesondere die Winterkrise vor Moskau, ja ueberhaupt das Draengen des ObdH u. seines Generalstabschef in Richtung Moskau *brachte Hitler noch Monate spaeter in Rage* u. er soll sich nur *veraechtlich* ueber Brauchitsch geaussert haben. Die *grundlegende Abweichung von Hitlers urspruenglichen Zielen des Feldzuges, verursacht durch Brauchitsch u. das OKH*, waren ein Grund warum der ObdH fuer das Scheitern des Feldzuges verantwortlich gemacht wurde.²¹⁰ (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 257)

Note: Omar Bartov writes of the *German solders,* “*remarkably widespread, quasi-religious belief in Hitler*...The average German soldier retained throughout most of the war a *strong belief in the Fuehrer* as a great political and military leader. Moreover, Hitler was viewed both as the true embodiment of the ‘little man’ and the simple soldier, and...as the only human being – or at least the only German – capable of moulding history and fate.” (Bartov, *A View from Below*, 336)

Hitler’s World (Jonathan Wright):²¹¹

1920s: Hitler saw himself as both a revolutionary theorist and a practical politician. As the first, he propounded the *racial theory of history*. There was a *hierarchy of races* w/ the Aryan race, to which the German people belonged, at the top. It was the only race which was truly creative – a founder of culture, as against a bearer or destroyer of culture. All history was a struggle between the different races for mastery. That struggle took the form of competition for *living space*. If living space was insufficient for the race – as for Germany w/, he claimed, before the war an annual increase in population of nearly **900,000** – it was its duty to expand. That was both a *law of nature* and part of the *divine plan* of the world – a scientific truth and a religious duty. *Nothing could change it*. . . (21)

Hitler echoed a *common sentiment* from the **1890s**: “Germany will either be a world power or there will be no Germany.” In his unpublished “Second Book,” written in **1928**, he argued that Germany needed another **500,000** sq. km. of land – roughly the area of France – and that only Russia and the lands between Germany and Russia could provide such an opportunity. . . Once committed to the view that Germany’s future lay in the conquest of Russian territory, **Hitler held to it unerringly**.²¹² (21)

²¹⁰ **Note:** Glaubt man der Darstellung des *Heeresadjutanten Engel*, dann hat sich Halder in aehnlicher Weise geaussert. (257, f.n. 897; also, *Engel, Heeresadjutant*, 119 (27.1.42)

²¹¹ **Note:** This entire section gleaned from Wright’s Germany and the Origins of the Second World War. 2007.

²¹² **Note:** Historians are obsessed w/ issues of “continuity and change.” In Hitler, I see a tenacious continuity of his views – racial policies, conflation of Jewish rule and Bolshevism, desire to destroy Russia and acquire living space, etc. – since at least the early **1920s**.

The need to explain public support [for A.H.] is all the more pressing because the kind of movement that Hitler represented, though present in German politics from the **1890s**, had never before the **1930s** been capable of moving from the fringe to the mainstream. (1)

Hitler was not specific about all his goals at once, enabling German conservatives to deceive themselves that he would be content w/ their aims: rearmament, frontier revision, union (*Anschluss*) w/ Austria, restoration of Germany's place as a great power in the centre of Europe. Perhaps at first Hitler had only vague ideas himself for a more radical programme for domination of the European continent and even beyond Europe. (2)

His philosophy, sometimes called Social Darwinism, was built around such a radical vision. *He saw the whole of history as a ceaseless struggle between races for domination and the purpose of international relations as the conquest of living space (Lebensraum) to sustain the expanding population of the race.* (2-3)

In leading Germany to war Hitler operated consciously on two levels. As a *revolutionary leader*, he laid out in general terms the case for conquest, living space and a racial reconstruction of Europe. These ideas may be found scattered throughout his writings from the **1920s** to the **1940s**. But Hitler was also a *highly astute politician*. He knew the dangers of acting prematurely – the failure of the Munich putsch in **1923** had taught him that revolutionary action by itself did not guarantee success. . . That does not mean that he lost sight of the radical vision or that he ceased to take risks. On the contrary, Hitler was *committed to taking risks because he believed the alternative was stagnation and decline*. Nations either expanded or contracted, rose or fell: there was no stability. (3)

If Hitler started in a strong position [after he became chancellor in **1933**], he also faced potential limits to his public support. It was far from clear that either elites or the public as a whole were willing to accept a major war, esp. a war on two fronts, w/ the lessons of the First World War less than a generation old. He had to persuade them that expansion was not only necessary and desirable but also feasible. In this he was helped crucially by the *weakness of his enemies*. . . Fortunately for Hitler, *the overriding aim of his enemies was to avoid war*. And so long as he played on their fears to extract concessions w/o war, he could be assured of popularity at home. (6)

After beginning of war in **Sep 39** he won series of easy victories over weaker opponents. Each victory added to his reputation. In **1940** after the fall of France, he seemed *invincible* having triumphed against the enemy who had remained undefeated in **1914-18**. (7)

In **Jun 41** he launched the war against the Soviet Union to *implement fully the radical vision for a racial reconstruction of Europe*, a vision whose outlines had already become apparent during occupation of Poland. . . Hitler had let loose the racial war for mastery of the European continent in which he had always believed. (7)

The *racial wars in the East* – in Poland and the Soviet Union – lay at the heart of his ideology. . . . But what of the racial policies in the east? Put simply, *two processes reinforced each other*. There was first the influence of *inherited attitudes* of superiority towards Poles and other Slav peoples and also towards the Jews, particularly towards the unassimilated Jewish populations of eastern Europe and, among army officers, against “Jewish-Bolshevik” commissars (Communist party officials) in the Soviet forces. Second, the *ideology of race* had found receptive minds after the First World War in a generation which all too easily saw history in Social Darwinian terms as the conflict of nations for survival. Such attitudes took hold not only among the crude ideologues who found their natural home in the Nazi party, but also among *highly educated university students* who later made careers in the SS. (15)

Hitler believed, for instance, that *war should be renewed indefinitely* to maintain the fighting quality of the race. Most Germans longed for peace. As Goebbels knew by **Dec 41**, morale was starting to flag. (16)

It was only after the experiences of [First World War] and the turmoil of the immediate post-war period, that Hitler *developed the dogmatic ideology from which he never again deviated*. . . . In the army he had found for the first time in his adult life a regular occupation, emotional fulfillment and purpose. Defeat was correspondingly bitter. (18)

Whatever the relative importance of the various influences on him,²¹³ Hitler developed from **1919-23** a view of the world and of the way Germany could change it that became the *fixed point of his politics* thereafter. . . . In foreign policy, he adopted Class’s idea that if Russia threw off Bolshevism it could be persuaded to allow German expansion east which would in turn make it possible for Germany to attack France and Britain, the powers which enforced the Versailles Treaty. During **1920** a *vital shift took place in his thinking* (perhaps following the Russian invasion of Poland that summer) to *identifying Russian Bolshevism w/ Jewish rule as the primary enemy and the Soviet Union as the primary object of living space*. Thereafter the images of Bolshevism, the Jew and Russia as the source of living space *fused into a single prophetic vision*. As he put in the second volume of Mein Kampf written in **1925**: “The giant Empire in the East is ripe for collapse. And the end of Jewish rule in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a state.” (20)

Hitler’s concept of the future war underwent a corresponding shift. He had already identified Italy as a potential ally in **1920**, given Italy’s dissatisfaction w/ the peace settlement. In **1923**, during the crisis caused by the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr, he saw a more important opportunity in British opposition to that extension of French power and he *projected a future Anglo-German alliance which would keep France in check*. If Germany concentrated

²¹³ Among them, the German pan-German leader Heinrich Class; the circle of racist agitators he joined in Munich, like Gottfried Feder w/ his theory of Jewish “interest slavery” and Alfred Rosenberg who as a Baltic German was inspired by hatred of the Russian revolution which he saw as “Jewish Bolshevism,” General Ludendorff, and Karl Haushofer (Professor of Geography at Munich University) who gave the idea of Germany’s need for greater “living space” academic respectability in the “science” of geopolitics. (19-20)

on a war for living space on the European continent, Hitler reasoned, it would not cut across either Italian interests in the Mediterranean or Britain's overseas empire. They would have no grounds for hostility towards Germany. . . Hitler came to the conclusion that the German empire had been wrong to try to fight a war for both continental and overseas expansion. By giving up the aim of overseas expansion, which he in any case thought less desirable than continental empire, he believed he had found a viable strategy. (20)

1.5.1: *Hitler as Feldheer:*

A. Seaton, „Hitler, however, was in his element. He was a *Feldheer*, in a field gray tunic of his own design w/o badges of rank and w/ his much prized Iron Cross First Class dangling from his left breast; black or field gray trousers, Party pattern leather calf boots and a German Army forage cap completed his uniform.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 27-28)

A. Seaton: “Although Hitler himself would have been most loath to admit it, it appears that his military ability lay only in the field of *operations*, for he showed that he had great flair for the direction of ground formations at about army group and army level. Such ability is rarely innate. It is most likely that the dictator's mind was conditioned to this particular level by his talks w/ the leading officers of the panzer troops, most of whom, because of their training and the characteristics of their arm, were proponents of this operative art. . . Hitler's military inclinations and his main strength lay, as we have said, in the field of *operations* and he tended to view the new war [i.e., the planning for “*Barbarossa*”] from very much the same command level as Guderian and Hoepner, both colonel-generals of the panzer troops. He was little interested in the sea war on the Baltic and Black Sea flanks, and for him air operations were mainly confined to the tactical support of the ground battle.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 21, 31)

H.A. Jacobsen: “So ist denn die Bildung der sog. *Antihitlerkoalition* aus dem Jahre 1941 in erster Linie als das Werk Hitlers zu verstehen. Diese Koalition, die bald ueber 75% aller personellen u. materiellen Reserven der Welt verfuete, hatte 1942/43 an allen Fronten die Initiative an sich gerissen; fuer sie war seitdem der militaerische Sieg ueber ihre Gegner nur eine Frage der Zeit.“ (intro to, *Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, viii)

H.A. Jacobsen: “Es war bezeichnend fuer die dt. Kriegfuehrung, dass eine allzu siegesgewisse, mehr u. mehr gewissenlose pol. Fuehrung den eigenen Streitkraeften Auftraege erteilte, die eine restlose Ueber-forderung der *Wehrmacht* bedeuteten. Die personellen u. materiellen Maengel liessen sich eben nicht – trotz unglaublich tapferer Einzelleistungen – durch den *Glaubensfanatismus* an den Sieg einer Ideologie kompensieren. Eine solche „Politik“ musste frueher oder spaeter in der Katastrophe muenden. Schon *Clausewitz* hat betont, dass der Politiker das Instrument wohl kennen muesse, das er handhaben wolle, d.h., er muesse die Leistungsfahigkeit der Streitkraefte u. den Umfang des aufzubietenden Wehrpotentials waegen u. beides in Relation zu den Kraeften des Gegners setzen koennen, um zu entscheiden, ob das gesteckte Ziel mittels Gewalt ueberhaupt zu erreichen sei.“ (intro to, *Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, x)

Guido Knopp: Der Sieg ueber Frankreich im **Jun 40**, der entgegen der Legende an einem seidenen Faden hing, wurde zu einem folgenschweren Triumph. Denn es war Hitler, der die Strategie eines talentierten Generals wie Erich von Manstein gegen den Widerstand der Heeresfuehrung um Halder durchgesetzt hatte u. recht behielt. Obschon der Diktator bei

Duenkirchen einen vielleicht kriegsentscheidenden Fehler beging – die Niederlage des sogenannten „Erbfeindes“ verlieh ihm wenigstens nach aussen hin die Aura der Unbesiegbarkeit. (*Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 9)

Marcel Stein: Hitler war in militaerischen Dingen sehr belesen, er hatte eingehend die Schriften von Clausewitz, Moltke u. Schlieffen studiert u. umfassende autodidaktische Kenntnisse erworben. Darueber hinaus besass er die Gabe, gelesene Texte wortgetreu zitieren zu koennen. Von den nicht rein mil. Belangen, die einen Teil der Strategie ausmachen, wie Politik u. Wirtschaft, verstand er mehr als seine Heerfuehrer. Auch hatte Hitler, wie Manstein hervorhebt, ein erstaunliches Gedaechnis u. eine fundierte Kenntnis der Wirkung eigener u. fdl. Waffen, wie auch von wirtschaftlichen Zusammenhaengen, die bei einem Befehlshaber nicht vorhanden sein konnten u. die dieser daher in einer Diskussion mit Hitler nicht widerlegen konnte. Was Hitler voellig fehlte, war die Faehigkeit, die verschiedenen Elemente der Strategie zu koordinieren u. es gab auch bei ihm kein Gefuehl fuer die physischen Grenzen seiner strategischen Gedanken. Seine vage Idee, ueber den Kaukasus u. Nordafrika durch den Mittleren Osten nach Indien vorzustossen, war pure Phantasie. Seine Kriegserklaerung an die USA war ein Wahnsinn. . . Darueber hinaus griff Hitler zunehmend in rein taktische Fragen ein, die ein Stratege gewoehlich seinen Mitarbeitern ueberlaesst. Von seiner Hybris abgesehen, war er hier stark von der Gedankenwelt des Frontsoldaten des Ersten Weltkrieges beeinflusst. Der Vorrang, den seine taktischen Eingriffe erhielten, liessen strategische Ueberlegungen voellig in den Hintergrund treten. (*GFM Model*, 225-26)

Van Creveld: „[Hitler] war kein ausgebildeter Fachmann, wusste aber mehr als seine Generale um die Probleme u. Zusammenhaenge der Kriegfuehrung auf hoechster Ebene.“ (Quoted in: *Stein, GFM Model*, 226, f.n. 743)

Note: There would be no end to the struggle in the east, that was clear [to Hitler], even after a German victory. Hitler spoke of building an “Eastern Wall” along the Urals as a barrier against sudden inroads from the “dangerous human reservoir” in Asia. It would be no conventional fortification, but a *live wall built of soldier-farmers* who would form the new eastern settlers: “A permanent border struggle in the east will produce a solid stock and prevent us from sinking back into the softness of a state system based purely on Europe.” War for Hitler was *the essence of human activity*: “What meeting a man means for a girl,” he declared, “war meant for him.” (Hitler *Monologe*, 25-26.9.41, quoted in: *Kershaw, Hitler*, 403)

Note: John Keegan writes that „Hitler was himself the survivor of a *massacre* in 1914 even more extensive than the parachutists had suffered [at Crete] in May 1941.“ Also implies that Hitler had served in the *List Rgt*, which was sacrificed in the *Kindermord bei Ypern*. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 173)

The basic idea of turning on the Soviet Union went back at least **15** years – to *Mein Kampf*, in which Hitler wrote:

And so we National Socialists take up where we broke off **600** years ago. We stop the endless German movement toward the south and west of Europe and turn our gaze toward the lands of the East . . . When we speak of new territory in Europe today we must think principally of Russia and her border vassal states. Destiny itself seems to wish to point out the way to us here . . . This colossal empire in the East is *ripe for dissolution*, and the end of the *Jewish domination* in

Russia will also be the end of Russia as a state. (quoted in: Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 796)²¹⁴

Note: Selbst wenn die Ausfuehrungen am **31.7.40** noch nicht die *letzte Entscheidung*²¹⁵ fuer den Beginn des Feldzuges bedeutet haben sollten, ***es war in jedem Fall eine Alternative, die allein Hitler in den Vordergrund rueckte***, fuer die er aber aus den Reihen der Heeresfuehrung *keinen Widerspruch erhalten hatte*. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 222)

Hitler's understanding of his position as Fuehrer meant a sense of *absolute power and responsibility that brooked no interference*; he alone could take the crucial decisions; and, while he might choose to listen to the opinion of a military cdr or relevant government minister, he had to be free and unconstrained by the views of others to decide as he chose. The decision was then simply announced to those who needed to know. Opposition was, accordingly, *extremely difficult*, if not impossible, to articulate publicly, while reservations privately expressed to Hitler had to contend w/ the possibility of a *high-decibel tirade* in response. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 60-61)

Outstanding feature in development of High Command of German Armed Forces from 1938 onwards was the *gradual extension of Hitler's personal power*, culminating in the closing stages of the war when he was intervening in matters of detail. The process, on the whole, was gradual, but there are two important points of time: a) **Feb 38**, when Hitler abolished the office of C-in-C of the Armed Forces, thus subordinating the three services directly to himself; b) **winter 41/42**, when he himself became C-in-C of the Army. There are therefore, three periods: (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 421)

- a. In first period, to Feb 38, Hitler is largely a *figurehead*, as far as purely military matters are concerned, while *von Blomberg* is the dominating military figure.
- b. Until the first Russian counteroffensive in winter 1941/42, Hitler is the *Supreme Commander*, in fact as well as theory. OKW, particularly the Armed Forces Operations Staff, has ***become his personal staff***, and he controls the three services through their C-in-Cs.
- c. In last period (after Dec 41), Hitler also has *direct control of the Army on the eastern front* and through OKW of the Army on the other fronts. He also allows far less freedom to GAF.

R. Muller: Hitler was „notorious for concealing the scope and direction of his ambitions from his military staffs...“ That said, few historians now doubt that the *cornerstone of Hitler's foreign and racial policies* was a „war of annihilation“ and territorial aggrandizement at the expense of, as he expressed in *Mein Kampf*, „Russian and her vassal border states.“ (*Muller, German Air War*, 1-2)

²¹⁴ **Note:** As Shirer writes, “this idea lay like *bedrock* in Hitler's mind ... The rapidity w/ which Stalin seized the Baltic States and the two Rumanian provinces in June **1940** spurred Hitler to a decision.” (796-97)

²¹⁵ Dagegen spricht allerdings, dass Hitler bei allen anderen getroffenen “unabaenderlichen“ Entschlussen kurz darauf eine grundlegende Weisung folgen liess. Fuer einen Feldzug gegen die Sowjetunion blieb dies jedoch zunaechst aus. (222, f.n. 765)

Ian Kershaw on start of *Barbarossa*: “The most destructive and barbaric war in the history of mankind was beginning. It was the war that Hitler had wanted since the **1920s** – the war against Bolshevism. It was the showdown. He had come to it by a round-about route. But, finally, *Hitler’s war* was there: a reality.” (*Hitler*, 388)

Purposes of *Barbarossa* in Hitler’s eyes were: a) capture of *Lebensraum* for Germanic peoples; b) destruction of the *Jewish-Bolshevist regime*; c) rooting out and destruction of the *Jewish population* (along w/ several other unfortunate nationalities); d) reduction of the Russian people to a *servile mass*; and, e) the capture of resources to conduct a war against the *Anglo-Saxon* powers. It is now clear that the German military, w/ few exceptions, *concurred w/ the ideological framework* within which Hitler determined to wage *Barbarossa*. From the first, the *Fuehrer* made clear to his commanders that the coming campaign,

Was a *battle of extermination*...Annihilation of Bolshevik commissars and communist intellectuals...The struggle must be conducted against this poison. There is *no question of the laws of war*...commissars and members of the secret police are criminals and must be treated as such [i.e., shot]. (*Halder, KTB*, 30.3.41, in: *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 77-8)

Hitler’s “personal war:” In einer ersten Niederschrift im Sommer 1945 definierte *Heusinger* den Ostfeldzug ausdruecklich als „*seinen*,“ Hitlers persoenlichen Krieg, dessen „Vorbereitung sowohl auf mil., wie pol., wirtschaftlichem u. propagandistischen Gebiet“ **Hitler sich mit aller Energie gewidmet hat**. Dabei habe er *wirtschaftliche u. pol. Interessen* den Vorrang gegeben „vor rein mil. Notwendigkeiten,“ so dass Brauchitsch mehrfach den Gedanken haette hervorheben muessen, „dass alles darauf ankomme, die russ. Wehrmacht zu schlagen, u. sich damit alle anderen Fragen von selbst regeln wuerden.“ Hitler sei aber immer wieder auf die „Bedeutung der Industriegebiete u. der *Kornkammer Suedrussland*“ zu sprechen gekommen. „Auch die Frage der pol. Behandlung der zu besetzenden Gebiete spielte eine besondere Rolle,“ die Hitler „*verknechten* u. auf diesem Wege fuer Deutschland nutzbar machen“ wollte. Daher habe Hitler alle Gedanken verworfen, ihnen etwa „eine gewisse Selbstaendigkeit unter dt. Oberhoheit“ zu geben, z.B. „der Ukraine u. den baltischen Staaten.“ Das haette „**uns sicher viel Blut erspart**,“ meint *Heusinger* mit einigem Recht. Hitlers vorrangiges Ziel sei aber nun einmal „die Vernichtung des Bolschewismus mit den *radikalsten Mitteln*“ gewesen, wobei er freilich dessen Staerke uebersehen u. damit die Notwendigkeit missachtet haette, dann auch „alle Mittel, auch die des Kampfes Russen gegen Russen, einzusetzen.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 150)

Hitler’s Russlandbild: In all probability, *General Erich Ludendorff* was among those who exercised some influence upon Hitler’s *changing views on Russia* in the early **1920s**. It was during this time that the early, conventional *Pan-German* focus of H.’s ideas on foreign policy – w/ a main emphasis on restoring Germany’s **1914** borders, recovering lost colonies and eventual revenge against the French and British victors of the war responsible for the hated *Treaty of Versailles* – gradually gave way to a new concentration on *eastward expansion* to gain territory at expense of Russia, w/ the corollary of a policy of *friendship towards Britain*.²¹⁶ In his **first known statement** of this view, in **Dec 1922**, H. stated: „*the destruction of Russia w/ the help of England would have to be attempted*. Russia would give Germany sufficient land for German settlers and a wide field of activity for German industry.“ By **1924**, the doctrine was *fixed in*

²¹⁶ **Note:** Since the mid-1920s, Hitler had wanted Great Britain as a *friend and ally*, not an enemy, in the war he envisaged, and desired, against “Jewish-Bolshevism.” But hints of an alignment, such as the *naval treaty of 1935*, offered only a “false dawn.” (62)

Hitler's mind, and he came to state it unequivocally towards the end of the second volume of his treatise, *Mein Kampf*, published in 1926. Once formed, this doctrine of „living space,“ (*Lebensraum*), remained unchanged, and was „crucial to Hitler's ,world-view' down to the Berlin bunker.“ (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 55-56)²¹⁷

Without doubt *Adolf Hitler* was the **central figure in 1940-41**. He dominated the war policy of National Socialist Germany and was master of western and central Europe. On 22 Jun 41, he launched his war against the Soviet Union. He was well aware that this campaign *had a dual face from the very beginning*, that is a military facet and an ideological one...For Hitler, his „long-standing goal [of conquering Russia] now appeared to be a useful tool for deciding the entire war...Hitler's decision of **31.7.40** to „finish off“ Russia in the spring of 1941 was not taken because of London's uncompromising attitude, but *in spite of it*...On **5.12.40**, Hitler adopted the plan of ops for war against the USSR which had been elaborated by the army command. In his *strategic analysis*, Hitler reiterated the arguments he had used on 31 July of that year. The war against the Soviet Union would *decide the question of hegemony in Europe*...In Hitler's view it was precisely because of the potential danger of a future two-front war that Germany had to attack Russia in 1941 and defeat it quickly. Britain had to be made to sue for peace by destroying her last potential major continental ally...(see, *Foerster & Mawdsley, Hitler & Stalin*, 63, 103)

Hitler had moments of *apprehension* about impending war w/ Russia. When *Goering* asserted before *Barbarossa* that his (Hitler's) greatest triumph was at hand, Hitler sharply rebuked his marshal: „*It will be our toughest struggle yet – by far the toughest*. Why? Because for the first time we shall be fighting an *ideological enemy*, and an ideological enemy of fanatical persistence at that.“ And one day at the *Wolfschanze*, he voiced unease to one of his secretaries about what lay ahead: „We know absolutely nothing about Russia. It might be one big soap bubble, but it might just as well turn out to be very different.“ (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, foreword, vii)

Hitler and air power: OKL officers interrogated after the war had started out w/ assumption that the *primary role of an air force is strategic*, that is, it should be *used independently* to attack the sources of enemy strength. *Support for the army on the battlefield is of secondary importance*. If an air force is inadequate to fulfill both tasks, then the former must have priority. Coordination at the top between branches of the armed forces is, of course, necessary but it *should be kept to an intelligent minimum and the air force given the largest possible degree of independence*. **Hitler, they said, had no conception of the right use of air power**. He was essentially an army man and thought exclusively in terms of ground fighting. *The same criticism was levelled against OKW*. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 421)

Hitler and preparations for winter 41/42: „Die jetzt gelegentlich auftauchende Behauptung, nur Hitler sei an dem Fehlen der Winterbekleidung im Heere 1941 Schuld, kann ich nicht gelten lassen, denn die *Luftwaffe* u. die *Waffen-SS* waren gut u. reichlich damit ausgestattet u. hatten sie auch rechtzeitig vorgefuehrt erhalten.“ (*Guderian, Erinnerungen*, 137)

Assessments of:

²¹⁷ **Note:** Kershaw goes on to point out that Hitler's idea was not an original one; rather, „it had been a common strand of nationalist-imperialist thinking since the **1890s**. Hitler, however, did add a further vital racial component to it: *anti-Semitism*. (56-57)

“Die *Hauptakteur des Jahres 1941*, einem ‘Wendejahr’ der Weltgeschichte (Klaus Hildebrand), war zweifellos Adolf Hitler.“ (J. Foerster, *Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 173)

Stolfi: In discussing Hitler’s strategic train of thought in summer of 1940, *Stolfi* writes that Hitler had „a *flair for grand strategy and a sure instinct for tactical openings*.“...Erich von *Manstein* and Heinz *Guderian* both held command and staff positions which brought them into close contact w/ Hitler at several of the most crucial junctures of WWII in Europe, e.g., *Case Yellow* (France) planning and execution; *Sea Lion* planning; deflection of *Barbarossa* southward; *Stalingrad*, *Kharkov* (Mar 43), *Citadel (Kursk)*, and the great defensive battles of 1944 in the east. Both officers emphasize that Hitler had *substantial military capabilities*, albeit counterbalanced by his *tendency to panic at local crises* and to meddle in details. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 29; also, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 92, 109-11, 117-19; and, *Mainstein, Lost Victories*, 121, 125, 274-5, 282-3.)

Stolfi: In the opening stages of the campaign in the east in **1941**, Hitler demonstrated a *similar pattern of indecision* (as in France in **May-Jun 40**). He enforced a halt in the advance of Army Group Ctr for a period of **39** irretrievable days of favorable campaigning weather. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 42-43)

Whether Germany was strong enough, in 1941, to defeat Russia while waging a war on two fronts may well be doubted. However, it is *difficult to see what other way was open to Hitler*, after his failure either to reach a political settlement with Britain or to render her harmless by military means. Risky the war against Russia may have been, but *there can be little doubt that it was essential for the Third Reich’s survival*, even if one does not believe that a Soviet attack was imminent. This *war was lost on grounds other than logistics*, including a doubtful strategy, a rickety structure of command and an unwarranted dispersion of scarce resources. While recognizing the *magnitude of the achievement—among other things, logistic—that brought the Wehrmacht amost within sight of the Kremlin*, the above-listed factors certain played an important role in its failure, **and for this it is OKH, not Hitler, who must be held responsible**. In logistics, as in everything else lying between minor tactics and strategy, the **Fuehrer had no interest whatsoever**. Apart from one or two points, any errors that were committed in these fields—which is said to comprise nine-tenths of the business of war—must be *laid squarely at the door of Halder and the general staff*. Even the most important decision Hitler made during the campaign of 1941—i.e., sending *Guderian* into the Ukraine instead of towards Moscow—was justified on logistic grounds and certainly had little to do w/ the postponement of the drive on the Russian capital. In war, it is often the small things that matter; and in many of these the *Wehrmacht* had ben „weighed, counted, and found wanting.“ (*Supplying War, van Creveld*, 180)

In a book review (see below), *J. Huerter* is critical because the book is often based on memoirs and post-war studies of the German generals: “In dieser ‘Rekonstruktion des Zweiten Weltkrieges aus dem Geist des Generalstabes’ *ging es vor allem darum, alle Schuld auf den mil. Dilettanten Hitler abzuwaelzen*, der die ‚Profis‘ dauernd behindert hat. *Dieser Linie folgt Frieser weitgehend kritiklos*. Certainly, it is correct that Hitler’s policy „*des starren Haltens um jeden Preis*“ led to military catastrophies, which via a mobile defense (bewegliche Verteidigung) could have been avoided. Yet, as *Huerter* points out, “die Kapitel **Bernd Wegners** ueber die Strategie der dt. Fuehrung zeichnen ein wesentlich differenzierteres Bild. Danach sind *viele mil. Fehler nicht auf den Dilettantismus Hitlers*, sondern auf Kompetenzgerangel, Ehrgeiz, Eifersucht u. schlichtweg Unfaehigkeit innerhalb der Generalitaet zurueckzufuehren.“ Thus, „*Frieser unterschaezt den originaeren Anteil der Herresgeneralitaet an der dt. Katastrophe*.“ (*J. Huerter*, review of *Die Ostfront 1943-44. Der Krieg im Osten u. an den Nebenfronten*. Das Dt. Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg, Band 8, Karl-Heinz Frieser, Bernd Wenger, et al.)

Heusinger hat sich nach dem Kriege mehrfach dazu geäußert, wie kritisch er selbst von Anfang an die durch *Brauchitschs Entlassung fundamental veränderte Spitzengliederung* betrachtet hat. „Das Heer in seiner Masse“ habe die *Übernahme des Oberbefehls durch Hitler zunächst durchaus begrüsst*, bis dann bald Enttauschung Platz gegriffen habe, schrieb er **1945** in seiner ersten Bilanz „*Kritik des Zweiten Weltkrieges*.“ Noch der geringste Vorwurf Heusingers war es, Hitler habe es nicht verstanden, „das Heer in knappen, soldatischen Worten anzusprechen u. zu begeistern.“ Seine Tagesbefehle vor Grossschlachten mit „viel zu vielem politischen Beiwerk“ seien „Ansprachen eines Politikers, nicht des Feldherrn“ gewesen. Sodann kritisierte Heusinger, es habe *voellig am persoenlichen Kontakt zwischen Hitler u. der Front gefehlt*. Hitler habe *das Schlachtfeld gemieden* u. Offiziere „u. dann u. wann auch soldaten nur in seinem Hauptquartier“ gesprochen. Dadurch sei der „trotz aller gegenteiligen Beteuerungen *frontfremd*“ geworden...Schliesslich habe sich aber das *immerwaehrende Misstrauen Hitlers gegen das Heer* ausgewirkt durch Einsetzung der „Standgerichte, Erschiessungen, Erhaengungen, Degradierungen, Entlassungen der Fuehrer, Ueberwachung durch *Gestapo* u. SS“ in Verbindung mit NS-Fuehrungsoffizieren u. Propaganda. Und das „in diesem Heer, das aus tausend u. abertausend Wunden blutend immer wieder sein Bestes gab u. bis zuletzt gegeben hat,“ empoeert Heusinger sich. *Selten habe ein Heer mehr geleistet, „nie ist es schlechter behandelt worden.“* Heusinger gelangte zu dem Schluss, das Heer habe im Dez.41 keinen Vater, „*sondern einen Stiefvater*“ bekommen. (Meyer, Heusinger, 168)

Christoph Nehring: „Es gab viele Front-Generale die Hitler umstimmen konnten, aber meistens hörte er diesen Leuten nicht zu (*Erfahrung meines Vaters*: z.B. *Gespräch Anfang Februar 1942*, keine Frage über seine Erfahrungen und Meinung zu den letzten ganz schlimmen 8 Wochen in Russland; er hielt ihm einen 30 minütigen Vortrag über die wehrpolitische Situation nach Eintritt der USA in den Krieg. (Das hatte mein Vater 1937/38 auf der Kriegsakademie selber ausgearbeitet!) und dann noch einen schönen Gruß an General Rommel, den „er bewundere“!! *Er hat H. noch dreimal getroffen und ist nie nach seiner Meinung befragt worden*; H. erzählte ruhig und über Dinge, die ihn momentan beschäftigten, aber mit meinem Vater keinen Bezug hatten. Und er war realistisch bis sogar skeptisch/pessimistisch und mein Vater ärgerte sich fast, dass ihn „sein Chef“ nicht „aufmunterte oder eine positive Richtung angab!“ (Email, C. Nehring to Dr C. Luther, 7 Oct 07)²¹⁸

Walther K. Nehring: „[Hitler] war eben ein *Amateur* auf diesem Gebiet [der Heeresfuehrung] u. daneben ein ideenreicher Phantast, der aber in der praktischen Operationsfuehrung Hemmungen unterworfen war oder auf *Intuitionen* wartete, ehe er sich entschloss, da er in *nervoeser Hast vieles gleichzeitig machen wollte*. Nur so ist seine *Entschlusslosigkeit* bei Vorschlaegen des OKH in *den kritischen Wochen von Anfang Juli bis zum 21.8.41* zu erklaren. Man waere sonst wohl rechtzeitig zu der urspruenglich vorgesehenen „*Operation Nord*“ gekommen, die im damaligen Schwaechezustand der Russen von diesen nicht leicht aufzufangen gewesen waere. (Nehring, *Panzerwaffe*, 247)

Kesselring: „In *kontenentalem Denken* befangen, hat [Hitler] die Bedeutung des *Mittelmeerraumes* unterschätzt u. damit einen weiteren *kriegsentscheidenden Fehler* gemacht. (Soldat, 115-16)

D. Irving: This author often defends Hitler's strategic thinking in the Russian campaign, while blaming the General Staff for many of the failures. For example: "The reverse suffered by the

²¹⁸ Email addresses his father's (Panzergeneral Walter K. Nehring's) personal experiences with Adolf Hitler.

1. Pz. Army on the Don at *Rostov* [28.11.41] was a bitter pill for Hitler to swallow, because now an Intelligence report confirmed that his own original strategy – of conquering Russia’s southern petroleum oil fields first – was *what the Soviets had feared most*. [See the secret speech of Marshal *Timoshenko*, quoted by Irving.] How Hitler must have cursed the General Staff for having foisted its Moscow campaign on him. With winter upon him, he had no option but to see it through, although the armies’ reserves were at an end and the physical conditions were brutal in the extreme. *How far the army faithfully called his attention to these adverse conditions is controversial even now*. The two army group cdrs, Bock and Rundstedt, believed that Hitler was *not being told the blunt facts*; so did Kleist’s Chief of Staff *Zeitzler*.” (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 348)²¹⁹

David Irving: Accuses the General Staff on several occasions in fall/winter **1941** of concealing (“suppressing”) information from Hitler. For ex., Kleist’s reports on situation at Rostov; Bock’s grave report to Brauchitsch [ca. **13.12.41**], which Brauchitsch allegedly suppressed rather than show it to Hitler. (See, *Hitler’s War*, 349, 357-58)

Fuehrerprinzip:

Hitler’s style of command, and esp. the so-called *Fuehrerprinzip*, or leader principle, was beginning to have insidious effects on the command system [following Hitler’s take over of the Army on 19 Dec 41]. According to the *Fuehrerprinzip*, every commander held sole responsibility for decisions within his command, and he was also duty-bound to obey every order he received from his superior commander. The Fuehrer himself stood, of course, at the top of the hierarchy; his will was quite literally law. Every senior cdr (and more junior cdrs as the war went on) knew that Hitler had the power to issue or change any order. More and more they began to appeal to him directly, as *Guderian* did on 20 Dec 41, and *his personal style was such that he allowed such behavior*, even though it clearly violated the chain of command...By encouraging [the urge to appeal decisions of superior officers], Hitler undermined both his *Fuehrerprinzip* and the authority of his immediate subordinates. His army group cdrs, in turn, reacted by turning on *their* subordinates, as *Kluge* would turn on *Guderian* a few days hence. This was the *natural outgrowth of a system that allowed anyone to go straight to the top w/ their complaints*. (*Inside Hitler’s High Command*, G.P. Megargee, 167)

Command Style:

As Hitler said on night of **21-22 Oct 41**: “I am the field commander against my will; I only concern myself at all w/ military things because at the moment there is no one who could do it better.” (*Megargee*, 138)

Hitler’s behavior during military briefings: As *Warlimont* pointed out, *Hitler’s personal style* was probably the factor that wore on Halder the most during their daily interaction [following Hitler’s assumption of the Army High Command on 19 Dec 41]. Not only was the Fuehrer *endlessly caught up in details*, but at any point he might launch off into a monologue on any subject old or new, important or not, constantly repeating himself, sweeping away concrete questions and suggestions w/ an unrestrained, rushing stream of talk. This side of Hitler’s

²¹⁹ Irving writes of “this lack of *Zivilcourage*.” Also accuses the High Command of withholding Kleist’s “frantic signals” from Hitler, who evidently was in the dark about the true seriousness of situation at Rostov. “Clearly the msgs had been suppressed by the General Staff.” (349)

personality shows up in the extensive notes Halder took during the briefing on this day (20.12.41). Hitler gave instructions for the defense of particular points and directed the actions of certain armies and corps. He demanded the army construct heated strongpoints between villages, and that the *Luftwaffe* destroy enemy-held towns. He directed that OKH issue orders to counteract the psychological impact of the enemy offensive. The phrase “*Russian winter*” should be stricken from everyone’s vocabulary, the Fuehrer insisted. Going on, he designated reinforcements for particular sectors and addressed problems w/ the railroads and the organization of the supply services. He gave tactical guidance on AT warfare and the construction of positions. He even pointed out the need to supply troops w/ stoves...(Inside Hitler’s High Command, G.P. Megargee, 162-3)

--From beginning of campaign, Hitler *meddled in the conduct of operations*—a behavior that became more pronounced as time went on. The Fuehrer *insisted on playing the role of field commander*. He issued directives to the army group commanders and sometimes visited their HQs. He also used *Keitel* as a go-between. On 25.7.41, for example, the chief of OKW (Keitel) met with GFM v. Bock to pass on Hitler’s message that large, operational encirclements would not work in Russia; the army need to stick to smaller, tactical encirclements. (Note: The record of this conversation is in the document appendix of the **OKW KTB**, 1:1035-36.) Halder’s reaction²²⁰ was, once again, *to resist passively to the fullest extent possible*. (Megargee, 134)

--*Brauchitsch* was the *point man in the campaign of dissemblance carried on by OKH against the Fuehrer*. He divorced himself from the nitty-gritty of operations to a large extent and instead served as *a buffer between Hitler and Halder* while the *latter ran the campaign*. Before long, however, Hitler interceded in the direction of the campaign in a way that Brauchitsch could not deflect and Halder could not ignore. Beginning w/ *Directive No. 33* (“Continuation of the War in the East”) on 19.7.41, he issued orders that redirected forces from Army Group Center to the north and south, essentially halting the drive on Moscow. For the next month various army generals—among them Brauchitsch, Halder, Bock, Guderian—attempted to change Hitler’s mind, but he remained adamant. Even *Jodl* tried, but he had no luck either. On 25.8.41, the Germans launched the great battle of envelopment in the Ukraine. The main cost for the Germans was *to delay the resumption of the attack on Moscow until Oct 2*. (Megargee, 134-35)

Winter 41/42: Hitler war – entgegen der Darstellungen in spaeteren Generalsmemoiren – durchaus bereit, oertliches Ausweichen zu genehmigen, wollte aber keinen Rueckzug akzeptieren, bevor nicht die rueckwaertigen Stellungen mit Sicherungstruppen so besetzt waren, dass sie den sowj. Angriff zum Stehen bringen konnten. Alle Vorschlaege zur Verstaerkung der Front griff er auf, doch die Heranfuhrung von Reserven aus Frankreich, Daenemark u. vom Balkan erforderte viel Zeit. Die durch den Wintereinbruch hervorge-rufene Transportkrise verhinderte eine schnelle Loesung. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 115)

Hitler’s Haltebefehl (Winterkrise ‘41/42): “Despite Halder’s outright condemnation – after the war – of Hitler’s ‘Halt Order,’ not all military experts were so ready to interpret it as a catastrophic mistake. Kluge’s chief of staff, Gen *Blumentritt*, for instance, was prepared to acknowledge that the determination to stand fast was both correct and decisive in avoiding a much bigger disaster than actually occurred. Hitler’s early recognition of the dangers of a full-scale collapse of the front, and the *utterly ruthless determination* w/ which he resisted demands to retreat,

²²⁰ Halder’s frustration w/ Hitler’s interventions evident from opening days of campaign. See, for example, diary entries for: 25.6.41, 29.6.41, 3.7.41, etc.

probably did play a part in avoiding a calamity of Napoleonic proportions. But, had he been less inflexible, and paid greater heed to some of the advice coming from his field cdrs, the likelihood is that the *same end could have been achieved w/ far smaller loss of life*. Moreover, stabilization was finally achieved only after he had relaxed the 'Halt Order' and agreed to a tactical withdrawal to form a new front line." (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 456)

(**Note:** For compelling analysis of Hitler's "Haltebefehl" – actually of his **two** "hold" orders from **16 and 18 Dec 41** – see entries for H. Magenheimer under Section **1.3.5**, "Chronology of Events," German High Command, in this notebook.)

J. Foerster, „*Hitler als Kriegs- u. Feldherr*.“²²¹

Trotz der fruhen Auesserung von Heinrich Mann, dass [Hitler] „*allein im Hinblick auf den Krieg verstanden werden*“ koenne, blieb Hitlers eigentliche „soldatische Natur“ bis heute unterbelichtet. Dabei war Krieg fuer Hitler kein abstraktes Naugesetzt oder letztes Mittel der Politik. Nein, der „Kamp in allen seinen Formen“ war *sein Leben*, im Krieg fuehlte er sich *zu Hause*. Ueber Hitler klaffen auch im Allgemeinwissen der Oeffentlichkeit noch immer grosse Luecken. (1)

Adolf Hitler, der „angry young man“ aus dem oberoesterreichischen Grenzstaedtdchen Braunau, lernte das kriegerische Handwerk im Ersten Weltkrieg. Seine mil. Sozialisation erfolgte aber nicht in der k.u.k. Armee, sondern durch das **16. Bayrische Reserve-Inf.-Rgt.** Der eigentlich *untauglich gemusterte*, oesterreichische Kriegsfreiwillige von **1914** war an der Westfront pflichtbewusst u. tapfer gewesen, *dreimal verwundet* u. *fuenfmal ausgezeichnet* worden. Hitler fuehlte sich also zu Recht als „guter Soldat“ u. Frontkaempfer. In seinem Rgt. hatte der Gefreite *keine Fuehrereigenschaften gezeigt*. (1)

Schon hinter dem ersten Vierjahresplan (1933-36), einschliesslich der ersten Aufruestungsphase einer finanzpolitisch souveraaen gestellten Reichswehr, hatte Hitlers *unbedingter Wille* gestanden, „alles fuer die Wehrmacht“ zu tun. Auch das endgueltige Abstreifen der „Fesseln von Versailles“, der Einmarsch in die demilitarisierte Zone, die Entsendung von Truppen nach Spanien sowie die Dynamik der Aufruestung durch den zweiten Vierjahresplan (1937-40) gehen auf Hitlers Konto. (2)

Mehr aus momentaner Verlegenheit heraus denn auf langfristiger Planung basierend hatte Hitler. . . im **Feb 38** die tatsaechliche Befehls- u. Kommandogewalt ueber die Wehrmacht uebernommen. Aus Blombergs eingespieltem militaerischen Stab, dem Wehrmachtamt, wurde das **OKW**, aus dessen Chef, Wilhelm Keitel, der „Sekretaer“ des Fuehrers fuer das Militaer. Die Generale u. Admirale *wurden ihrer strategischen Beratungsfunktion enthoben* u. auf die Ebene der Operateure hinuntergedrueckt. Hitler's „*Griff nach der Wehrmacht*“ brachte zwar die alte Militaerelite auf, aber weniger gegen Hitler als gegen das **OKW**. (2-3)

²²¹ **Note:** Following material gleaned from draft of Juergen Foerster's „*Ich bin der erste Soldat des Reiches, Hitler als Kriegs- u. Feldherr*.“ Courtesy of author.

Der erfolgreiche Fuehrer, Reichskanzler u. O.B. schien die nach dem verlorenen Ersten Weltkrieg in Deutschland u. Oesterreich weitverbreite *Sehnsucht nach dem „starken Mann“* u. *einem Reich ohne Fesseln u. Schande* zu erfuehlen. Hitler selbst war ueberzeugt, *fuer Deutschland unersetzlich zu sein*. Er fuehlte sich auch der Rolle des Kriegsherrn²²² gewachsen. . . Ansichten wie die von Carl v. Clausewitz u. Alfred Graf v. Schlieffen, dass man zum Feldherrn nicht ernannt werden koenne, sondern geboren u. auserwaehlt sein muesse, dass Kriegsfuehrung Handwerk *und* Kunst sei, spielten dem „Kuenstlerpolitiker Hitler“ (H.J. Eitner) in die Haende. (3)

Aehnlich einem Georges Clemenceau oder David Lloyd George hielt Hitler den grossen Krieg um Lebensraum fuer „too serious a matter to be left to the generals.“ Denn *auch Hitler hatte aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg gelernt*. Er war nicht gewillt, sich in der Kriegsfuehrung von Generalen so zur Seite druecken zu lassen, wie dies Kaiser Wilhelm II passiert war. Kriegsfuehrung war fuer Hitler eben *keine Geheimwissenschaft*, die nur neunmalklugen Generalstabsoffiziere lernen konnten, sondern auch eine *schoepferische Taetigkeit*, fuer die er das notwendige strategische Talent besass. (3)

Die Wehrmacht begann **1938**, sich als Schwert eines Fuehrers zu sehen, *der allein ueber Krieg oder Frieden entschied*. Auch Hitler sah sich in der Sudetenkrise zum ersten Mal als Kriegsheer. . . Der O.B. selbst fuehrte ab **Jan 39** einen regelrechten *geistigen Feldzug um das Offizierkorps*, als er nacheinander zu den juengsten Offizieren (**18.1.39**), den hoeheren Befehlshabern der Wehrmacht (**25.1.39**), den Truppenkommandeuren des Heeres (**10.2.39**) sowie den juengsten Generalstabsoffizieren (**11.3.39**) sprach. Damit erfuelle Hitler zugleich eine Forderung, die General Walter Reinhardt **1932** von dem idealen Kriegsherrn erwartet hatte: dieser muesse seinen unbedingten Willen u. sein *ueberdurchschnittliches Kriegertum* so auf die Soldaten uebertragen koennen, dass diese in seinem Sinne handelten. Hitler machte dem Offizierkorps klar, dass er sich in dem bevorstehenden „Weltanschauungs-, Rassen- u. Volkskrieg“ *nicht mit blosser Gehorsam zufrieden geben werde*. . . Und dieser *sozialdarwinistische Daseinskampf*. . . erforderte den „absoluten“, den „totalen“ Krieg, die fanatische Hingabe. . . (4)

Mit einem schnellen Sieg in der Tasche [i.e., Polen **Sep 39**] u. der sowj. Hilfe im Ruecken wollte Hitler wieder *ein hoehes Risiko eingehen* u. sofort im Westen angreifen. Dieses Mal opponierten die Generaale. . . Waehrend des Westfeldzuges kam es wieder zu einer „Vertrauenskrise“ zwischen Hitler u. der Heeresfuehrung, aber auch zu operativen Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen verschiedenen Truppenfuehrern sowie zwischen denen u. dem **OKH**. Der sogenannte verhaengnisvolle Halte-Befehl vom **24 Mai 40** fuer die dt. Panzerverbaende im Raum von Duenkirchen ging aber *nicht* auf einen „unruhigen“ oder „nervoesen“ Hitler zurueck, sondern auf die **H.Gr. A**. [Hitler] intervenierte naemlich erst auf dem Hoehepunkt eines Richtungskampfes innerhalb der Heeresgeneralitaet, der schon Mitte **Mai 40** begonnen hatte. Damals war der dt. Angriff schon einmal abgebremst worden. Doch auch bei diesem Eingriff in operative Vorgaenge trifft Hitler nicht die alleinige Schuld. Denn das *erste*, voruebergehende Anhalten der Pz.-Verbaende am **16 Mai 40** hatte wiederum der

²²² Kriegsherr = Generalissimo, War Lord.

O.B. der H.Gr. A, Gerd v. Rundstedt, befohlen, um die nachhaengenden Inf.-Div. „aufschliessen“ zu lassen. . . Folgenreicher als der sogenannte verhaengnisvolle Halte-Befehl Hitlers wurde ein *anderer massiver Eingriff* Hitlers in die Regalien [i.e., *prerogatives*] der Heeresfuehrung, naemlich die Verfuegung, dass die Unterstellungsverhaeltnisse von Armeen nicht ohne seine vorherige Genehmigung geaendert werden duerften. (5)

Obwohl dem ganzen Sieg ueber Frankreich der volle Friede in Europa nicht gefolgt war, *schwebte Hitler im siebten Himmel*. Sein glueckhaftes Wagen als Kriegsherr hatte sich ausgezahlt. Er hatte die Schmach vom **11 Nov 18** an gleicher Stelle ausgeloescht. Hitler genoss die *Anbetung des Volkes u. seiner Soldaten* in vollen Zuegen. Selbst Mitglieder des Widerstandes konnten ihre Genugtuung ueber Hitlers mil. Erfolg im Westen nicht verhehlen. . .

Weil der Wehrmacht die Mittel fuer eine erfolgreiche Landung in England fehlten, optierte Hitlers Stab fuer eine *periphere Kriegsfuehrung* gegen Grossbritannien. Doch Hitler ging darauf nicht ein, sondern *verkuendete* [Juergen's italics] seinen „bestimmten“ Entschluss, **1941** die Sowjetunion „erledigen“ zu wollen. Am **31 Jul 40** wagte niemand der anwesenden Militaers einen Widerspruch oder formulierte einen anderen Plan, um die dt. Herrschaft ueber Europa langfristig abzusichern. . . Auch der nachtraeglich informierte Chef des Gen.-Stabes, Franz Halder, vollzog den Uebergang von dem anvisierten operativen Schlag gegen die Rote Armee zu einem grossen Krieg um Lebensraum im Osten nahtlos. Erst nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg glaubte er, ueber Hitlers ploetzlichen Entschluss „erschuettert“ gewesen zu sein. (7)

Adolf Hitler dominierte zwar 1940/41 die Kriegspolitik des NS-Deutschland. Die operative Umsetzung seiner strategischen Entscheidung vom **31 Jul 40** ueberliess Hitler aber den mil. Planern. [Note: Concerning the different operational perspectives of Hitler – Schwerpunkte on the flanks, oil in Caucasus, etc. - and his generals – Moscow! – writes Juergen: Charakteristisch fuer den Entscheidungsprozess auf dt. Seite war, dass die dt. *Auffassungsunterschiede* zwischen Heer u. Hitler ueber den *Ansatz der zweiten Operationsphase* nicht wirklich diskutiert u. geklaert wurden. Die spaeteren heftigen Auseinandersetzungen ueber die *Vorrangigkeit* Moskaus oder Leningrad u. Kiew waren damit *vorprogrammiert*. (7)

Am **9 Jan 41** waren die Spitzen von **OKW**, Heer, Marine u. Luftwaffe in seinem Domizil auf dem Obersalzberg versammelt. *Niemand hatte Zweifel, dass es gelingen werde*, die „Masse des russ. Heeres“ westlich der Stroeme Dnepr u. Dvina zu vernichten u. die Sowjetunion bis zum Herbst zu zerschlagen. Da Stalin keine Angriffs-, sondern Defensivabsichten unterstellt wurden, waren Hitler u. die militaerische Fuehrung auch nicht durch die Kriegsfahigkeit der Roten Armee beunruhigt. Deren Massierung in den vorgeschobenen Raeumen um Lemberg u. Bialystok kam ihnen operative sogar gelegen. (7-8)

Der dt. Blitzkrieg gegen die Sowjetunion ab **22 Jul 41** trug von Anfang an ein „*doppeltes Gesicht*“ (E.v. Manstein). Militaerischer u. weltanschaulicher Kampf waren fuer Hitler nur verschiedene Seiten eines einzigen grossen Krieges, in dem Ostexpansion, Vernichtung des Bolschewismus and Ausrottung des Judentums

untrennbar miteinander verbunden waren. Jedes dieser Ziele war jeweils die inhaltliche Voraussetzung fuer das andere. (8)

Die erwarteten grossen operativen Erfolge nach dem **22 Jun 41** steigerten das hohe Selbstwertgefuehl der Wehrmacht auf allen Ebenen. **Heer u. Hitler sahen den Feldzug im Osten bereits nach zwei Wochen als gewonnen an.** Doch schon bald merkten beide Partner, dass die „Masse des russ. Heeres“ nicht westl. der Dnepr-Dvina-Linie hatte vernichtet werden koennen, das bolschewistische System weiter funktionierte, sie den sowj. Gegner unterschaetzt hatte. Auch die „intellektuelle Elite“ des dt. Generalstabes hatte sich bei ihren operativen Planungen nicht nur von „nuechternem Professionalismus“ leiten lassen. Auch in die *Lagebeurteilungen* der „damals in aller Welt hoch angesehenen“ Institution (K.-H. Frieser) waren *ideologische Elemente* eingeflossen. Die tatsaechliche Lage an der Front erzwang im **Jul/Aug 41** ein Umdenken. Dieser Prozess war – gerade nach der Euphorie der ersten beiden Wochen – fuer *alle* Beteiligten schmerzhaft, auch wenn die Ueberlebenden spaeter *das Scheitern des Blitzkrieges allein Hitler anlasteten.* (8-9)

Innerhalb der dt. Fuehrung verfochten Heer u. Hitler allerdings *unterschiedliche Vorstellung* ueber Ziel u. Durchfuehrung der zweiten Operationsphase. . . Die Haerte der Auseinandersetzung in der dt. Fuehrung um das *arcanum* des Sieges spiegelt bereits die wachsende Erkenntnis wider, dass *ihre Planungsgrundlagen fehlerhaft*, der Blitzkrieg **1941** nicht mehr zu gewinnen war u. die Wehrmacht **1942** zu einem weitem Feldzug gezwungen sein wuerde. Dennoch hofften alle, die Operationen noch vor Einbruch des Winters zu einem befriedigenden Abschluss bringen zu koennen. (9)

Neue erschlossene private Quellen aus der Operationsabteilung des Generalstabes des Heeres verdeutlichen, dass nicht nur Hitler wegen der unerwartenen Lage an der Ostfront tatsaechlich „*sehr nervoes*“ war oder „grosse Ungeduld“ zeigte, wiederholt in taktische Bewegungen eingriff u. „allzu selbtherrlich“ den Schwerpunkt der Gesamtoperation veraenderte. Diese Quellen belegen auch, dass „*niemand aus des Fuehrers Umgebung*“ Hitler wirklich Widerstand entgegengesetzte, die Heeresfuehrung *entschlusslos* war, buerokratisch agierte u. paktierte sowie Hitler die „schnellen u. harten“ Entscheidungen ueberliess. (9)²²³

Die Krise zwischen Hitler u. der Heeresfuehrung wurde durch eine persoenliche Aussprache zwischen ihm u. GFM v. Brauchitsch am **30 Aug 41** ueberwunden. Hitler schwenkte zwar auf die operative Grundidee des Generalstabes ein, die Entscheidung vor Moskau zu suchen (Operation „Taifun“), *aber ein Cannae erwog er nie.* Auch im **Nov 41** folgte Hitler dem Rat seiner mil. Berater. Allerdings hatten nur Halder u. das Oberkommando der **H.Gr.Mitte** einen erneuten, frontalen Angriff auf Moskau befuerwortet. Zu dieser sogenannten letzten Kraftanstrengung der Wehrmacht waren „Behelfe aller Art“ notwendig, auch auf „die Gefahr, dass die Truppe ausbrenne,“ obwohl **niemand mehr „eine Entscheidung des Krieges“ erwartete.**²²⁴ Zu jener Zeit klafften die Beurteilungen des Kampf-

²²³ **Note:** See also, *Tagebuch Thilo*, **24.8.41**, **6./24.9.41**.

²²⁴ **Note:** Again, see also, *Tagebuch Thilo*, zusammenfassender Eintrag der Konferenz von Orscha vom **12.-15.11.1941**.

wertes der eigenen wie der gegnerischen Kraefte zwischen den Heeresgruppen u. Armeen einerseits u. dem **OKH** andererseits weit auseinander. Hauptmann Thilo lastete Hitler zwar die Hauptschuld an der Verkennung der Lage an, aber die Heeresfuehrung trage „grosse Mitschuld.“ (9-10)

Um ihre *zwischen Euphorie u. Niedergeschlagenheit* wechselnde Gefuehlslage im Herbst **1941** analysieren zu koennen, griff die Generalitaet auf die dt. Militaergeschichte zurueck. Als Anfang **Okt 41** die Stimmung der dt. Fuehrung noch „wunderbar geloest u. bestens“ gewesen war, hatte General **Jodl** die gewonnene Schlacht von Wjasma als ein zweites Koeniggraetz angesehen. Das Steckenbleiben des dt. Vormarsches vor Moskau Mitte **Nov 41** verglich der O.B. der H.Gr.Mitte [GFM v. Bock] bereits mit der Situation an der Marne **1914**. Wenige Tage spaeter, d.h. noch vor dem sowj. Gegenschlag, befuehrchtete GFM v. Bock sogar ein „zweites Verdun.“ (10)

Die sowj. Gegenoffensive traf auf eine ueberraschte dt. Fuehrung, die ueber die Ursachen der operativen Krise u. ueber die Massnahmen zu ihrer baldigen Ueberwindung *uneins* waren. . . Innerhalb der Operations.-Abt. [des Heeres?] wurde Hitlers Halte-Befehl (16.12.41) mit dem Entschluss Friedrichs der Grossen bei Leuthen (1757) verglichen. „Es geht um Sieg oder Niederlage. Sein *sechster Sinn* sage ihm die Richtigkeit dieser Gedanken entgegen allen [anderen] Ueberlegungen.“²²⁵ (10)

Die operative Krise weitete sich zu einer Fuehrungskrise aus, als Hitler nicht nur den Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres, sondern auch mehrere Truppenfuehrer abloeste. . . Aber weder Rundstedt noch Bock, Leeb oder Guderian verloren das Vertrauen ihres Obersten Befehlshabers oder wurden so schlecht behandelt wie Hoepner u. spaeter Heim u. Zeitzler. (10)

Die Uebernahme des Oberbefehls ueber das Heer durch Hitler (**19.12.41**) wurde nach dem Krieg von interessierter Seite *scharf kritisiert*. **1941/42** erschien sie nicht wenigen Generalen u. Offizieren in verantwortungsvollen Positionen *als eine begruessenswerte „klare Loesung.“* Es waren eben nicht nur die wenig geschaezten Herren des **OKW**, namentlich Keitel u. Jodl, die das „Fuehrerprinzip“ verinnerlicht hatten. Auch anderen hohen Offizieren schien die Stellung eines **ObdH** entbehrlich zu sein. Sie waren wie Halder froh darueber, dass sie den *direkten Zugang zu Hitler hatten*, oder glaubten wie Stauffenberg, dass der Generalstab des Heeres „die ganze Kraft der Nation“ jetzt besser fuer den „Entscheidungskampf des Heeres“ einspannen koenne. „Seit Fuehrer unmittelbar befiehlt, *wird viel geschaffen*. [. . .] Halder traegt vor u. Fuehrer befiehlt alle Dinge zugleich als Staatsoberhaupt (Ersatzlage, Wirtschaft, etc.). Stellung u. Einfluss des Heeres nun *staerker als je*, - wenn Halder das zu nutzen versteht.“²²⁶ (11)

Aus Feldpostbriefen u. Frontreisen wusste die Heeresfuehrung, dass der Wechsel im Oberkommando bei den Soldaten mit der Hoffnung auf „eine grundlegende Wendung zum Besseren“ verbunden war. Dies wurde ebenso als ein Gewinn betrachtet wie die Erfahrung, dass die Soldaten zwar auf die „unfaeh-

²²⁵ **Note:** *Tagebuch Thilo, 21.12.41.*

²²⁶ **Note:** *Tagebuch Thilo, 24.12.41.*

igen Generale“ schimpften, *den Fuehrer aber von jeder Kritik ausnahmen*. Der fachlichen Kritik an seinem Halte-Befehl kam Hitler Mitte **Jan 42** insofern entgegen, als er die starre Verteidigung an der Ostfront lockerte. (11)

Obwohl sich der europaeische Krieg global ausgeweitet hatte (**11.12.41**), war Hitler – strategisch gesehen – „*sehr guter Stimmung*“ u. ueberzeugt, mit Japan als Bundesgenossen „*gar nicht verlieren*“ zu koennen. Waehrend Tokio seinen Siegeszug gegen Briten u. Amerikaner fortsetzte, wollte Berlin „*mit vollem Schwung*“ den Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion fortfuehren, um im Osten endlich „*reinen Tisch zu machen*.“ (12)

Der globale Krieg gegen die „*juedisch-kapitalistisch-bolschewistische Welt*“ war fuer Hitler eben ein *Kampf um Sein oder Nichtsein*. Dieser koenne nach dem Scheitern von „*Barbarossa*“ nur durchgehalten werden, wenn die wehrwirtschaftliche Widerstandskraft des deutschen Lebensraumes um das Donez-Becken u. die kaukasischen Erdoelfelder abgerundet werde. Deshalb spielte Hitler **1942** noch einmal *va banque* u. setzte alles auf dieselbe Karte. Die personelle u. materielle Lage der Wehrmacht erlaubte allerdings nur die Offensive *einer* Heeresgruppe in *einem* Abschnitt der Ostfront. (12)

Eigene mil. Erfolge, wie die Rueckerobering der Cyrenaica u. der Halbinsel Kertsch, der Durchbruch schwerer Ueberwassereinheiten der Marine durch den englischen Kanal sowie der blutige Vernichtungssieg bei Charkow Ende **Mai 42** *staerkten das Selbstvertrauen Hitlers u. der mil. Fuehrung in die dt. operative Kunst*. Diese wurde durch die spektakulaeren Eroberungen von Sewastopol u. Tobruk noch einmal bestaetigt. (12)

Die zweite dt. Sommeroffensive gegen die Rote Armee begann am **28 Jun 42** (Operation Blau). Die territorialen Erfolge der ersten Tage konnten aber nicht verdecken, dass das eigentliche Operationsziel, die „*lebendige Streitkraft des Gegners*“ zu vernichten, in keiner Weise erreicht werden konnten. . . Allerdings begann Hitler, *zunehmend nervoeser zu agieren*, die *operative Leitung noch staerker als bisher selbst zu uebernehmen*. Eine Schwerpunktaenderung der Gesamtoperation schien ihm der einzig moegliche Ausweg aus dem Dilemma zu sein, dass der Wehrmacht die Zeit bis zur Erreichung des strategischen Zieles, dem Gewinn des kaukasischen Erdoels, weglief. (12-13)

Am **23 Jul 42** befahl er, den Vorstoss in Richtung auf die Wolga bei Stalingrad gleichzeitig mit dem Kaukasus zu unternehmen. Diese Entscheidung traf Hitler *gegen den Rat des Heeresgeneralstabes*. Sie beruhte allerdings auf der gemeinsamen, *falschen Feindlagebeurteilung*, dass die Rote Armee *in Aufloesung begriffen sei* u. keine zusammenhaengende Front mehr aufbauen koenne. Schon wenige Tage spaeter wurde allen klar, dass die Zeit nicht mehr ausreichen wuerde, die weit gesteckten Operationsziele noch vor Einsetzen des Winters zu erreichen. Doch Hitler war nicht bereit, die Realitaet, d.h. die Ueberspannung der eigenen Kraefte angesichts der grossen Ausdehnung der Suedfront, anzuerkennen, bei gleichzeitigem Fehlen von ausgebildetem Ersatz fuer die ausgebluteten Divisionen. . . Vielmehr zog er, unter ausdruecklichem Hinweis auf die Lage **1916** im Ersten Weltkrieg, *die Zuegel der direkten Fuehrung an*. Seinen Truppenfuhrern an der Ostfront sprach er das Recht ab, von sich aus sogenannte *taktische Ausweichbewegungen* vorzunehmen ohne seine ausdrueckliche

Genehmigung. Die Summe der operativen Fehlschläge im Sommer 1942 führte zu einer weiteren *Führungskrise*. (13)

Das spätere Urteil der Generale, dass der „Führer“ *nicht operativ führen konnte*, trifft sicher zu. Dies hatten subalterne Offiziere schon lange vorher bemerkt. Sie hatten privat aber auch festgehalten, dass sich die mil. Führung trotz besserer Erkenntnis *nolens volens* Hitlers Wille gefügt habe, sich Feldmarschälle eine unwürdige Behandlung gefallen liessen, Halder *keine starke Persönlichkeit sei*, ihm u. seinem Operationschef Heusinger die Fronterfahrung fehle u. beide sich zudem kein eigenes Bild von der Lage vorn verschafften. Der neue Generalstabschef Kurt Zeitzler, der aus der Truppe kam u. Hitlers Vertrauen besass, wurde dagegen als *bullenenergisch* beschrieben. Anders als Halder u. Heusinger wage er es, dem „Führer“ zu widersprechen. (13-14)

Stalingrad war nicht nur ein operatives Debakel, sondern *die erste wirkliche Krise des NS-Systems*. „Stalingrad“ symbolisierte auch den *psychologischen* Wendepunkt des Krieges. Bei vielen Deutschen, Soldaten wie Zivilisten, stellte sich erstmals das Gefühl ein, dass der „Untergang“ der **6. Armee** *der Anfang vom Ende sein könnte*. Und dieses „kritische Raunen“ [*whispers*] schloss Hitler persönlich ein, sein „Führer-Mythos“ broeckelte. Schliesslich hatte es vorher geheissen: „*Drum haltet aus, der Führer haut uns raus!*“ (A. Schmidt) oder „*Wir werden siegen, weil uns Adolf Hitler führt*“ (Losung der Marine). (14)

1.5.2: Hitler on Russia / Geopolitics / Economy:

Note: Hitler hatte schon in Mein Kampf die Eroberung Russlands als „deutsche Mission“ ausgegeben. . . In **Feb 33** erläuterte vor führenden Militärs den Endzweck seiner Politik: die Eroberung u. „rücksichtslose Germanisierung“ des Ostraums. Das war – neber der „Vernichtung des Judentums“ – eines seiner Hauptlebensziele, *dem er alles unterordnete*. (G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 88)

J. Foerster: The starting point for an analysis of the causes of the attack on the Soviet Union must be the world-view and political goals of the man who dominated German politics between **1933-45**. Hitler took the decision to wage war as a consequence of his “living-space” program, in which expansion in the east, the destruction of Bolshevism, and the extermination of the Jews were *inextricably intertwined*. Each goal, indeed, was the precondition for achieving the others. This does not mean that the “programme” was pursued w/o regard for the course of events. Still, Hitler’s doctrinaire concepts of war, living-space, race, economic autarky, and world-power status must be regarded as forming the basis of his political conduct, despite all the tactical improvisations he made. . . The extent to which military men, economists, and diplomats agreed w/ Hitler’s views on the winning of the “Russian space,” its exploitation, and the treatment of the Slav population varied considerably. The spectrum of agreement ranged from a partial identity of interests to a genuine fusion of traditional and NS ideas.

A further starting point for the analysis of the attack on the Soviet Union must be the rapid victory over France, which had a profound psychological, political, military, and strategic significance for Hitler and the Germans. Overwhelming victory in the West not only undermined opposition to Hitler’s war policy, but achieved a high degree of unanimity between regime and

population. Hitler's unlimited authority in political and military questions was assured. (GSWW,²²⁷ Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 1245-46)

1933/41: Upon his accession to power, Hitler declared to his generals on **3 Feb 33** that the purpose of the new Wehrmacht was for: "Conquering new Lebensraum in the East and ruthlessly Germanizing it." . . . Finally, at end of **Mar 41** Hitler gathered his generals to announce the beginning of what he called "Colonial tasks!," requiring a "*Clash of two ideologies*," for which the Wehrmacht would have to partake in "a war of extermination." [Note: This entry example of Hitler's continuity of thinking.] (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 70; also, *Halder KTB*, 30.3.41)

E. Mawdsley: Hitler had a number of reasons for invading the Soviet Union, some of which were shared by his military advisers. One objective was political – the destruction of "Jewish Bolshevism." As a goal it was originally as fantastic as the Soviet Communist Party's goal of bringing about a Socialist Europe. . . The apparent feasibility of this project changed, however, w/ the Nazi military domination of western continental Europe in summer of **1940**. The political destruction of "Bolshevism" was more plausible, because strategic and diplomatic objectives of a more conventional type could be dovetailed w/ it. It was these conventional aspects that Hitler cited in his fullest attempt at self-justification, included in his Testament of early **1945**. Hitler's testament – dictated to Martin Bormann in **Feb & Apr 45** – was rambling, self-serving, and written from hindsight. Hitler was also inconsistent about when he made his decision to attack Russia. But this account of his thinking about grand strategy is consistent w/ other evidence:

We no longer had any hope of ending the war in the West w/ an invasion of the British Isles. That. . . country would balk at the recognition of our leading role and at making an honorable peace as long as there remained undefeated one European power that was inherently hostile to the Reich. The war would have gone on forever; a war in which the Americans in the background would have taken an increasingly large role. The weight of the human and material potential of the USA, the development of military technology. . . the threatening proximity of the British coast, all this compelled us to try w/ all means to avoid a prolonged war. Time – always time! – would increasingly work against us. The only way to force the English to make peace was to take away their hopes of confronting us on the Continent w/ a comparable opponent through the annihilation of the Red Army. For us there remained no other choice but to strike the Russian factor out of the European equation.

Hitler's thinking – thinking shared by key military leaders – was that the defeat of Russia would make London see reason. This roundabout route to the defeat or neutralization of the British Empire was all the more attractive to Hitler because it also fitted in w/ other military objectives. The Fuehrer envisaged eventual war w/ the USA. To compete on a global scale, to win such a conflict, Germany needed a European, continental empire. (Note: Here, author addresses Hitler's concept of Lebensraum; the need to gain direct access to the food and mineral resources of Russia (Ukraine, Caucasus, etc.) to establish a position of autarky – economic self-sufficiency. Such a strategy was all the more necessary in light of what had happened to Germany in World War One and in the Great Depression.) (See, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 6-7)

²²⁷ GSWW = Germany and the Second World War.

M. Messerschmidt: No doubt the situation following the French campaign and the subsequent defeat in the Battle of Britain confronted Hitler w/ a strategic dilemma. It would nevertheless be facile and one-sided to regard this as the sole motivation for the attack on the Soviet Union. In fact it can be seen. . . that a whole string of reflections, obsessions, misjudgements, and long-term ideas were factors in Hitler's decision in favor of war. . . Thus, an overall appreciation of the present volume could scarcely arrive at the conclusion that the war against the Soviet Union represented merely an attempt to escape from a strategic dilemma. That war was Hitler's real war. This judgement agrees w/ that of those authors who are willing to see a link between the "programme" and realities. . . (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 2)

Sommer 1940: Die sowj. Expansion im Sommer **1940** fuehrte moeglicherweise dazu, dass sich Hitler nun entschloss, mit dem Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion nicht mehr lange zu warten u. einen konkreten Termin festzulegen. Bereits im **Mar 40**, noch vor dem Westfeldzug, aeusserte Hitler die Absicht, einen baldigen Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus zu fuehren. . . Am **23.5.40** notierte Ernst von Weizsaecker, Staatssekretaer im Aussenministerium, in seinem Tagebuch zum ersten Mal Gespraechе ueber den bevorstehenden dt. Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion. Ende **Jun 40** notierte Halder in seinem Tagebuch, dass Hitlers „Augen stark auf den Osten gerichtet“ seien.“ . . . Aber auch die enorme Beute, die dt. Truppen im Westen gemacht hatten, u. das gestiegene Selbstbewusstsein infolge des geradezu sensationellen Sieges gegen Frankreich duerfte bei Hitlers Entscheidung, die Sowjetunion bald anzugreifen, eine wichtige Rolle gespielt haben. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 429)

1940 [Post Westfeldzug]: Despite the triumphalism which accompanied victory over Germany's two enemy's from the First World War, German hegemony in Europe was by no means secure. It remained dependent on the willingness of the two flanking powers, Britain and the USSR, to come to an agreement w/ Germany. This open strategic situation virtually forced actions and decisions. "Wait and see" was not an appropriate slogan for the political and military leadership of the Third Reich if it intended to retain the initiative. Hitler considered that he had now freed his rear for an attack to the East – and overcome the "reversed" front position of **1939-40**. For a short time it seemed certain the London would "climb down." As in the **1930s**, wishful thinking and ideological assumptions prevented a more realistic assessment of fundamental British interests, and led to renewed hopes of a global agreement w/ Britain. By **Jul 40** this hope, based on Hitler's dogmatic image of Britain, had disappeared. Only when his plans for a "division of the world" w/ Britain had proved to be an illusion did Hitler order the C-in-C of the Army to plan for an attack on the Soviet Union. . . In Hitler's view, Germany's flanks and rear were still clear for the conquest of the "Russian space" in **1941**. Only the acquisition of that territory would enable the Reich to pursue world policy [Weltpolitik], and "even to wage the struggle against continents in future" (*J. Foerster*, in: *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 1246-47)

Dec 40: In section of his book, "Hitler Opts for War," Gabriel Gorodetsky places Hitler's decision to make war on Russia directly in the context of Balkan politics – more specifically, German and Russian jockeying for influence. Both countries wooing Bulgaria, while Russia refused to accept German predominance in Rumania. Moreover, he discounts ideological factors in Hitler's decision. Writes G.:

In the midst of the haggling over Bulgaria the Danubian Conference resumed its sittings. The Russians persevered and in the early hours of the morning of **17 Dec 40** Berlin was informed of the deadlock. The Russians had presented a written statement which bluntly rejected the joint German-Italian mediation, further declaring their intentions of establishing exclusive control jointly w/ the Rumanians over the mouth of the Danube, effectively controlling the exit to the

Black Sea. In Berlin this was received w/ “astonishment.” The positions were “irreconcilable” and negotiations were “for the present exhausted.” Hitler brought about the immediate adjournment of the conference. Keen observers accurately judged the collapse of the negotiations to be “the first clash of vital interests between U.S.S.R. and Germany and therefore of first importance.” A similar trend was traced to Finland, where Soviet interference in the Finnish elections indicated that they were determined to keep the country under direct control.

It was no coincidence, therefore, that the *decision on the implementation of Directive No. 21, Operation “Barbarossa,”* was taken on the morning after the collapse of the negotiations. . . The specific political, diplomatic and military context in which the decision was taken *casts serious doubt on its ideological dimensions*. Though the economic advantages were taken into consideration, the operation clearly did not aim at creating *Lebensraum*, as the hinterland had already been established in the Balkans and in the rest of occupied Europe. The purpose was “to establish a cover against Asiatic Russia from the general line Volga – Archangel,” thereby eliminating the potential Russian threat but more specifically allowing the completion of the campaign against Europe, in other words securing the exclusive German domination of Europe.

(G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 85-86)

On economic matters, Hitler was a *convinced autarkist*; he wanted Germany to become self-sufficient in oil and to become a fully motorized economy; but projects such as the *autobahnen* and the production of the *volkswagen* only served to increase Germany’s oil consumption. Given importance of oil, Hitler *did try to create a strategic oil reserve*. On **24.8.34** the government set up an organization called the *Wirtschaftliche Forschungsgesellschaft (Wifo)*. Part of its mandate was to create a strategic reserve of certain raw materials, including oil. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 3-4)

Bogdan Musial: Fakt ist auch, dass sich Deutschland in dieser Zeit in einer aeussert prekaeren Treibstoff-, Rohstoff- u. Nahrungsmittellage befand. Besonders kritisch stand es um die Erdoelvorraete, dabei war Deutschland ausschliesslich auf rumaenische u. sowj. Lieferungen angewiesen. Die schwierige Rohstofflage stellte gar die Konsolidierung der dt. Macht in Europa in Frage. Ein erfolgreicher Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion wurde all diese Probleme loesen, zumal Hitler vor dem **22.6.41** an einem schnellen Sieg zu keinem Zeitpunkt zweifelte. Nach dem Sieg gegen die Sowjetunion haette Deutschland Rohstoffe u. Lebensmittel (Kornkammer Ukraine) im Ueberfluss glaubte Hitler. Am **18. Sep 41** erlaeuterte Hitler im kleinen Kreis seiner Vertrauten die wirtschaftliche-strategische Bedeutung der Sowjetunion fuer Deutschland: “Der Kampf um Hegemonie in der Welt wird fuer Europa durch den Besitz des russ. Raumes entschieden; er macht Europa zum blockadefestesten Ort der Welt.” (*Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 460-61)

Ian Kershaw: “Autarky, in Hitler’s thinking, was the *basis of security*. And the conquest of the east, as he had repeatedly stated in the mid-**1920s**, would now offer Germany that security. ‘The struggle for hegemony in the world will be decided in Europe through the occupation of the Russian space,’ he told his entourage in **mid-Sep 41**. ‘This makes Europe the firmest place in the world against the threat of blockade.’” (*Hitler*, 402)

R. Kershaw: „Hitler’s decision to invade Russia was not purely, or indeed primarily, motivated by his desire to knock Britain out of the war. *Ideological considerations* were the *imperative powering conflict*. These had been outlined in a „rambling and turgid form“ in *Mein Kampf* as early as 1925.“ (*War Without Garlands*, 10)

Hitler’s geo-political thinking: For Hitler the destruction of Russia „was not, indeed, to be the end of the story. But w/o it the *story had no meaning*.“ And until it was brought about, Germany could not perform its preordained world role. On **31.7.40**, he told *Halder* that Britain’s hope of survival lay in America and Russia. To destroy Russia was *to eliminate both*, since it would give Japan freedom of action to engage America. He seems to have thought that *Roosevelt* would be *ready to intervene* in **1942**, and he wanted Russia removed from the equation before this happened. That, as he saw it, was the proper sequence of events. He told his generals on **9.1.41** that once Russia was beaten, Germany could *absorb its resources and so become ‚invulnerable.’* She would then have the power to wage wars against whole continents. With Japan tying down American in the Pacific, he would launch a *three-pronged pincer*, through the *Caucasus*, *North Africa* and the *Levant*, which would take Germany into *Afghanistan* and then into the *British Empire* at its heart, in *India*. Such a conception was too risky w/ Russia on the flank. (*P. Johnson*, 375; also, *J. Fest*, 952-55)

K. Reinhardt: This *Blitzfeldzug* against the Soviet Union was to provide security for the „*Grossdeutsche Reich*“ w/ regard to space and raw materials, so that the Reich – now a continental empire, invulnerable to blockade, w/ coherent territory and economically *self-sufficient* – would be in a position successfully to conduct a long war against the Anglo-Saxon powers, in particular the USA. From the viewpoint of economics and power-politics, *this first step* was to form the *basis for the second stage* of Hitler’s *Weltblitzkrieg*. The latter included extensive ops against the *Middle East*, individual thrusts as far as *Afghanistan* and north-west *Africa*, as well as occupation of the *Azores*. . . During this *second phase*, Britain was finally to be “forced” to make peace. . . This planning not only shows how certain Germany was of success, but demonstrates first and foremost the *functional importance of the Russian campaign* within Hitler’s overall strategy at the time. In addition, it reveals to what extent the *destiny* of Hitler-Germany was dependent on the successful conduct of this campaign. (“*Moscow 1941*,” 207-08)

Hitler’s original idea was to launch attack on Russia in autumn of **1940**, and he was only w/ great difficulty persuaded to drop so risky a scheme. He took the *final decision to strike* in **Dec 40**, after the re-election of *Roosevelt* – to him an event of peculiar ill-omen – and after *Molotov* had presented Stalin’s list of „interests“ which Hitler said made the Nazi-Soviet pact untenable „even as a marriage of convenience.“ Thereafter, *he did not waiver from his resolve to exterminate Bolshevism at the earliest opportunity*. (*P. Johnson*, 375)

R. Kirchubel: Final straw [i.e., in terms of need to attack Russia in **1941**] came in **Nov 40**: first, *Roosevelt* won re-election as US president, thus ruling out American isolationism for much longer; and then *Molotov* visited Berlin, further convincing Hitler that accommodation w/ Russia is not possible. (*Barbarossa 1941*, 8)

R. Reuth: Der Krieg im Osten war Hitlers *rassenideologischer Vernichtungskrieg*, auf den er von Anfang an gezielt hatte. *Bolschewisten u. Juden als identisch betrachtend*, war es aus seiner vom unvermeidlichen Weltenkampf der Rassen geprägten Sicht der Dinge klar, dass dieser Feind physisch vernichtet werden musste. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 525)

Hitler considered the conquest of the East to be a „*vital and essential step*“ toward routing Great Britain and winning Germany dominant status in Europe. It was considered a stepping-stone for Germany to become the prime world power. The natural resources in the vast Russian expanses would free Germany from its dependence on imports. Hitler regarded the high population density in Germany as one of the main threats to the country and dreamed of expanding the Aryan race eastward and settling it in those regions. He perceived the struggle between the National Socialist Reich and the Soviet Union as the might battle between two empires w/ antagonistic *Weltanschauung*; but only National Socialism offered elevation and salvation of mankind. Hitler's attitude toward the Soviet Union was a *blend of two contradictory viewpoints*: on the one hand, he never tired of pointing out the great danger to Europe and to all the human race posed by the „Bolshevik-Jewish“ state. Conversely, he depicted the Russians as inferior beings and their state as a giant body resting on „feet of clay,“ a body that would collapse as soon as the superior Aryan army invaded it. This *duality of approach* underlay his conviction that it was imperative to launch an attack on the mighty Russian state at once and that victory would be almost instantaneous. (Yahil, *Holocaust*, 243-44)

Hitler's erroneous assessment of the internal strength of the Soviet Union probably also stemmed from his ideological assumption that the Communist state was „*ruled by Jews*.“ The Soviet Union, he postulated, was the first place where the Jews had succeeded in their plot to take over the world by undermining the foundations of human society. The Jews' impact, as he saw it, lay in their ability to corrupt and sunder; therefore, communism together w/ Judaism threatened to proliferate the „germs of division“ that would pollute the entire world . . . Since the entire war was perceived as a confrontation between two conflicting ideologies, w/ the Jews as the *personification* of the one that represented *the* divisive force in human society, their annihilation came to be regarded as an *integral part of the war effort*. (Yahil, *Holocaust*, 244)

“The USSR presented Hitler w/ a problem which was not only different in scale from his British problem but, militarily, diametrically opposite to it. Stalin had resources – of manpower, raw materials and space – which were greatly superior to Germany's. Against them Hitler had to pit superior skill and superior organization in a bid to win a quick victory. He had to break the USSR, not wear it down. In the west, he could lose the Battle of Britain but still hope to win the long drawn out Battle of the Seas. In the east, *time was not on his side*. He not only hoped to win in six (6) months, but needed to win in not much more.” (Calvocoressi & Wint, *Total War*, 457)

Oct 41: At start of Operation “*Taifun*” the War Economy and Armaments Office submitted to Hitler and his chief military advisors a study entitled, “*Voraussichtliche Entwicklung der wehrwirtschaftlichen Lage Russlands mit Fortschreiten der Operationen nach Osten*,” assessing developments in the Russian war economy as the war progressed. On the basis of four [4] possible stretches of front, conclusions were drawn about the consequences for armaments. In all four cases arguments were based on Russia's loss of sources of raw materials and industrial areas, which had in fact already been captured, and the capture of Kharkov, Kursk, Tula and Moscow . . . Even while AGC was attacking in the direction of Moscow, Thomas made it clear that the capture of the Russian capital would in no way bring about the imperative economic collapse of the USSR, but rather the Soviet Union would certainly be able to continue producing armaments. However, not just Hitler, but also Jodl, seemed to be skeptical about this assessment. . . Thomas' analysis proved that Hitler was wrong in thinking that by capturing western Russia he could

precipitate the collapse of its economy. For more details see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 130-32)²²⁸

Japan: In mid-Apr 41, the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact was signed. Moscow's worst strategic fear, a simultaneous attack by European enemies and the Japanese, was not realized, and Soviet ground and air forces could be concentrated in Europe. . . The Japanese military decided to "wait until the persimmon ripened and fell" rather than take offensive action against the USSR. Hitler's own grand strategy initially supported this decision. Because he underestimated the USSR, he believed Japan would make a greater contribution to Axis victory in the war by attacking the British Empire and by tying down American forces in the Pacific than by attacking Siberia. Near the end of his life the Fuehrer changed his mind:

It is certainly regrettable that the Japanese did not enter the war against the Soviet Union alongside us. Had that happened, Stalin's armies would not now be besieging Breslau and the Soviets would not be standing in Budapest. We would together have exterminated Bolshevism before the winter of 1941.

(Source: Hitler's *Politisches Testament*, 18.2.45, quoted in: *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 16-17)

David Stahel: The fanatical ideas contained w/in Hitler's "total war" philosophy formed a radical departure from his past campaigns and necessitated a degree of brutality and harshness hitherto unseen in Europe since the genocidal campaigns of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48). (*And the World held its Breath*, 70)

Motives for War: In his dissertation, David Stahel succinctly lays out Hitler's motives for war with Russia; they included: ideology, economic concerns, experience of WWI, and the putative geo-strategic advances [i.e., elimination of Russia would have dire consequences for England] of such a war. For example, Stahel writes: "Economic requirements weighed heavily in Hitler's consideration. . . His abiding economic advisors had fed this ambition w/ baseless optimism. . . The State Secretary in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Herbert Backe, assured Hitler in **Jan 41** that "the occupation of the Ukraine would liberate us from every economic worry." By the spring of **1941**, such emphatic guarantees were assuming an acute importance given dwindling food stocks and the worrying forecast that, after **Jul 41**, Germany would be reliant, for better or worse, on the summer's harvest yield. . .

Not only did such factors direct Hitler's attention to the economic solution that Barbarossa proposed to offer, but it also accounts, in large measure, for his fixation w/ grand strategic objectives of a war-economic kind, over the purely military and operational considerations which attracted Halder. Along w/ the grain shortage, Germany's limited access to basic raw materials essential to the war economy formed a growing component of the economic quandary consuming Germany by the spring of **1941**, and driving Hitler's conception of the forthcoming campaign. Foremost among these was the supply of Rumanian oil, which proved insufficient to the demands of occupied Europe and the German war economy, prompting Hitler in **May 41** to slash domestic consumption and foreign exports to Axis allies. . . The crippling shortages convinced Hitler to seek his remedy through direct control over the Caucasian oil fields, reinforcing further the role

²²⁸ **Note:** Hitler also refused to believe Thomas' predictions in another study prepared later in **Oct 41** addressing the economic efficiency of the Western powers, and their ability to provide material support to Soviet Union. (see, pp 128-30)

of economic considerations in Hitler's strategic deliberations, ultimately designed to alleviate industrial bottlenecks and fulfill his long-desired goal of *economic autarky*. (See, *And the World held its Breath*, 73-74)

1.5.3: Hitler & Personnel Issues:

Hitler's philosophy on personnel matters differed from that of the army's elite. The old *Reichsheer* of the interwar years was an organization in which an *exclusive leadership group*—the General Staff—dominated. They chose their personnel as much for specific views and attitudes as for ability; hence, *the Reichsheer never became an institution that represented all of Weimar society*. Instead, it stood as “the modern model of the standing army from the *age of absolutism*. That was the model which the army's senior leaders were most familiar, but it was *not the model Hitler wanted*. He wanted a *people's army*. To that end, he demanded, among other things, that *promotion into the officer ranks rest on performance alone*, w/ no prerequisites. In war, that meant that a candidate's combat record was most important. This idea *went against more than a century of emerging professionalism in the army*, and reversed the stand that *Seeckt* had used in building the *Reichswehr* officer corps, but in **1937** *Blomberg* accepted it as a guide for the Wehrmacht, thus replacing the *army's traditional elitism w/ Nazi egalitarianism*.

One of the key attributes Hitler demanded was *personal loyalty*. He wanted obedient servants w/in the context of the *Fuehrerprinzip*, not independent thinkers. He got that loyalty, first and foremost, through his control of senior officer selection, promotion, and postings. The rewards for good behavior were obvious, as when, on **19.7.40**, Hitler promoted no fewer than 12 full generals to rank of field marshal. On top of such rewards, **Hitler also introduced systematic bribery that July**, using money from a Chancellery discretionary fund. Army and Luftwaffe officers w/ the rank of full general or field marshal, as well as naval officers of equivalent rank, *began receiving secret monthly tax-exempt payments* that more than doubled their salaries. Hitler also made monetary gifts to various generals on special occasions—gifts that sometimes amounted to hundreds of thousands of *Reichsmarks* at a time. Impact of these bribes hard to determine, but after the war generals who received them attempted to hide the fact that they had received such payments. (*Megargee*, 125-26)

Note: Beginning in the Summer of **1940**, at Hitler's direction, a special sum (*Aufwandsentschaedigung*) of **4000 RM** / month was paid – tax free – to all German field marshalls. Writes *Loeffler*: “Da diese Verguetung ausserhalb der regulaeren *Reichsbesoldungsordnung* aus einem *Sonderfonds* des Reichsministers *Lammers* gezahlt wurde u. jederzeit von Hitler grundlos widerrufen oder ausgesetzt werden kontte, wird sie als *besondere Schenkung des Diktators* angesehen...Da diese Zahlung allerdings *fast dem doppelten Monatssold eines GFMs entsprochen hat*, ist der *Verdacht von Kaeuflichkeit u. Bestechlichkeit* nochmals verstaerkt worden. Dies gilt vor allem, wenn diese Zahlung als reine *Dotation* gewertet wird. (*Loffler, Brauchitsch*, 91, 270)

Hitler: „Wie *Rolf-Dieter Muellers* Forschungen belegen, war dieses Expansionsprogramm [i.e., Hitler's *Kriegsziele im Osten*] weder dem Begriff („*Lebensraum*“) noch dem Inhalt nach eine Erfindung Hitlers, sondern es stand in einer aelteren *Kontinuitaet*. Bereits unter den *Annexionisten* des Ersten Weltkrieges war die Vorstellung dominierend, dass Deutschland den Weg der ueberseeischen Kolonialpolitik verlassen u. sich auf Kosten der Nachbarn im Osten eine *autarke, blockadefeste Weltmachtstellung* schaffen muesse. Hitler griff diese Ideen auf u. wurde zu ihrem Vollstrecker. (*Ueberschaer, Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 19)

Hitlers Entschluss [am **19.12.41**, das Oberbefehl ueber das Heer selbst zu uebernehmen] hatte die unmittelbare Folge, dass er ausser dem „bisschen Operationsfuehrung“ direkt, massgeblich unterstuetzt von seinem Wehrmachtadjutanten *Oberst Schmundt*, auf Personalangelegenheiten einwirkte, grundsatzlich ebenso wie im Detail. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 169)

1.5.4: Hitler's Personality, Habits, etc.

Hitler's monologues: “His rambling, discursive outpourings were the purest expression of unbounded, megalomaniac power and breaktaking inhumanity. They were the face of the future in the vast new eastern empire, as he saw it.” As *Kershaw* notes, “elements of Hitler's thinking were unquestionably modern. He looked, for instance, to the benefits of modern technology... He looked, too, to modern transport to open up the east...But for all its essential modernity, the *social vision was in essence atavistic*...The *central tenet* remained *race*, to which all else was subordinated. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 400. See, *Kershaw*, 400-05, for examples of Hitler's monologues during summer 1941)

Hitler remained to the end a *socialist*, though an eccentric one. Like Stalin, he *lived in hideous discomfort*. *Ciano* was horrified by his *Rastenburg headquarters*, callings its inhabitants *troglo-dytes*: „Smells of kitchens, uniforms, heavy boots.“ It was a *concentration camp-monastery* – the *Escorial* w/o its palatial splendour. Indeed, Hitler came to resemble *Philip II* in his isolation and remoteness, his resolution, above all in his *cartomania*, spending hours studying maps already rendered out of date by the march of war, and issuing orders for the taking of a tiny bridge or pillbox, often by imaginary soldiers. His closest companions were his *Alsatian, Blondi*, and her pup *Wolf*. Professor *Morell*, a smart Berlin doctor, gave him *sulfanilamide* and glandular injections; he took glucose, hormones, anti-depressent pills. One of his doctors, *Karl Brandt*, said that he aged „four or five years every year.“ His hair went grey. But his *capacity for work* remained impressive to the end. ((*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 412)

7.2.42: Am 7. Februar meldet sich *Nehring* bei Hitler im Fuehrerhauptquartier „*Wolfsschanze*.“ Anwesend sind die Generale *Jodl, Schmundt* u. *Buhle* sowie ein Adjutant. Hitler redet 50 Minuten auf ihn ein, *er kommt nicht zu Wort*, die ganze Weltlage wird ihm in der Hitlerischen Version vorgefuehrt. Dann spricht Hitler ueber seine Absichten fuer die Sommeroffensive auf dem Suedfluegel der Ostfront....Mit den Worten: „Sagen Sie dem Generalobersten [Rommel], dass ich ihn bewundere“ ist *Nehring* entlassen. Ihm faellt auf, dass er keine Weisungen fuer das Verhalten gegenueber den Arabern oder gar der arabischen Bewegung bekam. (*W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 126-7)

1.5.5: Hitler's East Prussian HQ (Wolfsschanze)

E. Ziemke:

Situated astride the Rastenburg-Angerburg railroad, the *Wolfsschanze* consisted of painstakingly camouflaged, and mostly concrete buildings and bunkers sealed off from the outside by rings of steel fences, palisades, and earthworks. Hitler lived and worked w/ his intimate military and political advisors in one compound; another, a short distance away, housed a detachment of the **OKW** Ops Staff and a communications centre. About a dozen miles away and also on the railroad, which was closed to general traffic, the **OKH** maintained a compound in the Mauerwald

just outside Angerburg. Elaborate as they were, the *Wolfsschanze* and *Mauerwald* compound[s] could only accommodate a fraction of the OKW and OKH staffs; the rest stayed in and around Berlin and kept in contact w/ the *Wolfsschanze* by air and courier train. (*Moscow to Stalingrad*, 4)

Lageatlas des Op.Abt. des Heeres:

Am **15 Nov 40** befahl Hitler fuer die bevorstehende Auseinandersetzung mit der Sowjet-Union drei [3] sogenannte Kommandozentralen aufzubauen. Es waren die Anlagen „Sued“ bei Krosno (am Fuss der Waldkarpaten), die Anlage „Mitte“ bei Tomaszow (im Raum Litzmannstadt) u. die Anlage „Nord“ bei Rastenburg. Waehrend die Anlagen „Sued“ u. „Mitte“ mehr oder weniger als behelfsmaessig anzusehen waren (nur die Anlage „Sued“ wurde am **28.8.41** anlaesslich des Besuches von Mussolini genutzt), fiel die Wahl auf die Anlage „Nord“ als zukuenftiges Fuehrerhauptquartier.

Die hierfuer vorgesehene Gelaende, der Rastenburger Stadtwald – genannt „Die Goerlitz“ – erstreckte sich beiderseits der Bahnlinie u. befestigten Strasse Rastenburg – Angerburg mit dem Bahnhof Goerlitz. Der dichte Waldbestand aus ***Kiefern, Fichten, Buchen*** u. ***Eichen***, bildete eine natuerliche Tarnung, die umliegenden Seen u. Suempfe ein natuerliches Hindernis gegen angreifende Bodentruppen.

Den Bauauftrag erhielt die „Organization Todt“, die unter dem Tarnnamen „Chemische Werke Askania“ die Baumassnahmen ab **Nov 40** begann. Das Vorhaben war bis **Apr/Mai 41** fertigzustellen. Das gesamte Baugelaende war ab diesem Zeitpunkt hermetisch abgesperrt u. durch Soldaten abgesichert. . .

Etwa **5 km** suedwestlich des Kurhauses Goerlitz, auf dem Gut Wilhelmsdorf, befand sich der Flugplatz des Fuehrerhauptquartiers. Dieser Fliegerhorst, seit **1935** von der Luftwaffe benutzt, wurde nun fuer Start u. Landung der viermotorigen „Focke-Wulf **200 Condor**“ u. der „**Ju 52**“ erweitert. Da die Landebahn erst im **Dez 41** fertiggestellt werden konnte, musste der etwa **35 km** entfernte Flugplatz Gerdauen benutzt werden.

Am **24 Jun 41** um **01.30** Uhr wurde die Anlage bezogen. Hitler taufte sie auf den Namen „Wolfsschanze.“ Diese in den Jahren bis Ende **1944** ausgebaute Bunkerstadt war bis **20 Nov 44** Hitlers Kommandozentrale. An diesem Tage verliess Hitler die „Wolfsschanze“ u. fuhr nach Berlin. Bis **22 Nov 44** verliessen auch alle anderen Dienststellen u. Einheiten das Fuehrerhauptquartier. . . Die Anlage „Wolfsschanze“ wurde am **24 Jan 45** gesprengt. (*K.-J. Thies, Der Ostfeldzug 1941, H.Gr.Mitte, Lageatlas der Op.Abt. des Generalstabes des Heeres, vii-ix*)

C.G. Sweeting:

Months before beginning of “*Barbarossa*,” a small group of engineers and planners from the Todt construction organization, and a few officers from **OKW** and the **SD**, journeyed to East Prussia to locate a site suitable for a new *Fuehrerhauptquartier*. The site for Hitler’s new supreme HQ had to be secluded, located inland, easily concealed, but near a railroad line. There also had to be an airfield nearby or a flat area that could be converted into an airstrip. A suitable location was found in the dense **Goerlitz forest** near the town of Rastenburg. Around-the-clock work began immediately to construct roads, a railway spur, and the required buildings, bunkers, and utilities. The compound was soon surrounded entirely by high barbed wire fencing and was hardly visible from the air or even from the road. Minifields were laid outside the fence line to prevent intruders entering the restricted area. The HQ area inside was divided into two **(2)** special, fenced

sectors, half a kilometer (**0.31** mile) apart. Guard posts were established, and everyone was checked before being allowed to enter the main compound and again prior to entry into *Sperrkreis I or II*.

The special sector, Sperrkreis I, was located inside the larger fenced compound. Here was located Hitler's reinforced concrete bunker and living quarters in a wooden hut. Similar huts and bunkers were built in this sector for the personnel of the field detachment of the Wehrmacht operational staff of **OKW** and the party leadership. Hitler's immediate state, party and **OKW** colleagues numbered only **21**. Each branch of the Wehrmacht and semimilitary organizations had at least one liaison officer at the HQ. Reinforced concrete and small prefabricated wooden buildings had been designed and built for use in Sectors I and II, including offices, communications center, mess (dining) hall, utilities, and eventually even a movie theater. . . Effort was made to retain the trees and foliage for camouflage.

In this rustic, wooded setting, most officers lived and worked in windowless concrete bunkers w/ steel doors, some lined w/ wood, which were partially above ground and connected by underground passageways. Hitler's bunker and hut lay at the northern end of Sector I, and all windows as usual faced north, since he disliked the sun. Hitler's quarters, at his direction, had Spartan furnishings. The only real decoration in his office was his favorite portrait of Frederick the Great,²²⁹ which he always had Baur [his personal pilot] personally bring to each HQ. The staff conference and situation room was located in this *Fuehrerbunker*.

The Wehrmacht command elements – their offices and other facilities – were located mainly in the larger Sector II, south of the road and railway. In addition to the field echelon of the staff, elements of the Fuehrer Guard Btn [*Begleitbataillon?*] of the army were in the larger sector, and their cdr was also the HQ commandant. **OKH HQ**, Mauerwald, was about an hour away at Angerburg, and Goering and his **OKH** staff established a nearby field HQ as did Himmler and the SS. Goering also had an office in Sector I. **OKM** remained in Berlin, but an admiral soon arrived as the Navy representative to OKW.

The bunkers in the compound had roofs over four [4] meters (13.123 feet) thick and were capable of withstanding any air raid. The buildings were almost invisible from the air because of the thick forest and careful camouflage. Trees were soon planted on the bunker roofs, which were covered w/ soil, and the walls were hung w/ moss. The railroad spur and road inside the compound were camouflaged w/ green and gray netting. For defense, there were anti-aircraft guns and a triple ring of guards deployed around the area. . . Life at *Wolfsschanze* proved to be anything but pleasant. The forest was dark and oppressive, a gloomy, dismal, isolated area that was quite warm and prone to insects in summer and cold and damp in winter. The thick-walled bunkers were always damp, and there was a constant hum from the airpumps use for ventilation. (C.G. Sweeting, *Hitler's Personal Pilot*, 158-62)²³⁰

24.6.41: Hitler's personal pilot Hans Baur flew [?]²³¹ the Fuehrer from Berlin to the airfield at Rastenburg in a **Ju 52/3m** on **24 Jun 41**, so he could take up residence in his new supreme HQ and direct "*Barbarossa*." (*Hitler's Personal Pilot*, 163)

Hitler's Routine at "Wolfsschanze:

²²⁹ According to Sweeting, Hitler "often paused to gaze at the portrait of Frederick." (160)

²³⁰ **Note:** Sweeting's book includes a terrific map of the entire "*Wolfsschanze*" complex. (161)

²³¹ **Note:** Is this accurate? Nicolaus v. Below, in his memoir, says Hitler took the train from Berlin to Rastenburg; see, *At Hitler's Side*, 104-05)

a) Fuehrer rose late, had lunch in the afternoon, dinner at night, and finally a long succession of tea and cakes, generally long after the midnight conference.

b) Daily strategy or situation conferences were held at **12.00** noon and **12.00** midnight.

c) Not long after his arrival at “*Wolfsschanze*,” Hitler became ill. His stomach pains increased, perhaps caused by, or exacerbated by stress or psychological reasons. He was already overmedicated on drugs prescribed by Dr Morell, including sulfonamide and up to **150** antigas pills a week. Despite normal precautions and sanitary measures, Hitler soon contracted dysentery, along w/ some other staff members. This was a common problem in the swampy forest around Rastenburg, but if further weekend Hitler’s health and stamina and made him even more difficult to get along with. (*Hitler’s Personal Pilot*, 164-66)

Note: Sweating implies that the “*Wolfsschanze*” was situated in a pine forest. (See, *Hitler’s Personal Pilot*, 175)

End Sweating text.

24.6.41 [*Wolfsschanze*]: „*Security Zone One*“ was in **1941** a cluster of wooden barracks and single-story concrete block-houses, which were divided into smaller compartments. „Cold and clammy bunkers,“ wrote one civil servant, „in which we freeze to death at night, can’t sleep for the constant rattle of the electric ventilation system and its frightful draft, and wake up every morning w/ a headache.“ The whole compound was invisible from the air, concealed by camouflage netting suspended from the tree-tops. A few hundred yards away, on the other side of the road leading from *Rastenburg* to **Angerburg** (*General Staff HQ*), **Jodl’s** operations staff occupied a similar encampment, „*Security Zone Two*.“ When Hitler predicted that „this whole headquarters will one day become a historic monument, because here is where we founded a New World Order,“ **Jodl** had drily replied that it would be better suited as a garrison detention center for *Rastenburg*. It had in fact been built in one of the marshiest places in *Masuria*. **Jodl’s** staff diarist complained in a private letter on **27.6.41**: „We are being plagued by the most awful mosquitoes. It would be hard to pick on a more senseless site than this – deciduous forest w/ marshy pools, sandy ground, and stagnant lakes, ideal for these loathsome creatures.“ One of Hitler’s two private secretaries wrote a closely observed account of her impressions of the Wolf’s Lair on **28.6.41**. (See, *Irving, Hitler’s War*, 278-81, for additional details of this fascinating account)²³²

(Excerpt from Megargee) **16.12.41 (Tuesday)**: Early in the morning, Hitler’s special train²³³ pulled through *Rastenburg* and into the little station of *Goerlitz*, which was now part of his HQ,

²³² **Note:** For another detailed description of the Wolf’s Lair see, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 396-97. He notes: “The centre-point consisted of ten bunkers, erected over the winter, camouflaged and in parts protected against air-raids by two metres thickness of concrete. Hitler’s bunker was at the northern end of the complex. All its windows faced north so that he could avoid the sun streaming in. There were rooms big enough for military conferences in Hitler’s and Keitel’s bunkers...” Kershaw also describes the Wolf Lair’s *daily rhythm* for opening weeks of Russian campaign.

²³³ **Note:** According to Hitler’s Luftwaffe adjutant (v. Below), “Hitler was very keen on living in his train. The train was not luxurious but practical. Outwardly it consisted of two [2] locomotives pulling **8** coaches of uniform shape and dark green colour. The first was a machinery and luggage coach. Next came Hitler’s car w/ a long table and eight chairs forward.” (v. Below, *At Hitler’s Side*, 18-19)

code-named *Wolfsschanze*...²³⁴ Jodl once described the atmosphere inside the Fueher's compound as "a mixture of cloister and concentration camp." Moreover, Hitler's *isolation* here allowed him to fully understand neither events at the front nor developments in the homeland. Moreover, Hitler, Keitel and Jodl were *cut off not only from the outside world but also from the Armed Forces Command Staff [Wehrmachtsfuehrungstab] itself*. Days would go by w/o any personal contact at all between Jodl and *Warlimont*...Physical environment in OKW compound also a hindrance. The *Wolfsschanze* was *hot and humid in the summer, cold and damp in the winter*...Overall the setting was *not conducive to good work*...(G.P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, ca. 148)

Hitler had a dinner party each evening at his HQ in East Prussia (*Wolfsschanze*). At one point, Schmudt decided that a staff officer from the Armed Forces Command Staff should join Hitler's dinner party each evening. At first the officers—esp. younger ones—were very keen on the idea. Later, however, Schmudt had to direct officers to go, since there were *hardly any volunteers*. Hitler's table offered only *vegetarian dishes*, smoking was prohibited, the atmosphere could be icy if the news from the front were bad, and the Fuehrer's *hours-long after-dinner monologues* were famous for their somnolent effect. (G.P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 153)

Nicolaus v. Below: At the heart of the [*Wolfsschanze*] complex were **10** bunkers with a **2-metre** thick concrete roof over the rear section where the sleeping quarters were located. The forward part housed the military planning rooms and offered splinter protection only. The daily situation conferences were held in a large room in Keitel's bunker. The corresponding room in Hitler's bunker was set aside for small-scale conferences. . . The **OKH** quarters were located a few kilometers to the NE, close by the Rastenburg – Angermund railway line, while Goering and the OKL were accommodated in trains in sidings near Goldap and in the Johannesburger Heide. . .

The daily routine in FHQ **Sperrkreis I**, as the core area was known, differed little from the usual pattern in Berlin. Each day at **1200** Hitler would make his way to Keitel's bunker for the main situation conference, which would normally last about **90** minutes. Once or twice a week Brauchitsch, Halder and Heusinger would attend these briefings. In the afternoons Hitler would have conversations and dealings w/ non-military callers, but the subject was always to do w/ the war. The evening situation conference, chaired by Jodl, followed at **6:00 p.m.** Hitler usually ate punctually at 2:00 p.m. and at **7:30 p.m.** If no special visitors were expected, he would take his time at table – often up to **2** hours. . .

Meals were Wehrmacht catering and consisted of soup, meat and a dessert. Hitler had his own vegetarian menu which he drew up at breakfast time. The seating arrangement never varied. Hitler sat in the middle w/ his back to the windows. To his right sat Press Chief Dr Dietrich, to his left Jodl. Directly opposite him was Keitel, to his right Bormann and to his left Bodenschatz. If there were any guests they would sit between Hitler and Dietrich or between Keitel and Bodenschatz. The atmosphere at table was free and unforced. Conversation was spontaneous and there was no kind of compulsion about what could be discussed. . . The extended mealtimes

²³⁴ For details of Hitler's East Prussian HQ see, *Megargee*, pp 148, 152. Except for a few weeks spent at another compound in the Ukraine in 1942 and 1943, *Wolfsschanze* would be Hitler's HQ from Jun 41 to Nov 44. (**Note:** Megargee notes that location & layout of Hitler's HQ were "problematic." By retreating to this "remote compound," Hitler cut himself and his staff off from critical gov'm't and military organs still in Berlin, etc. (148-9)

often forced many younger diners to excuse themselves from table for duty. Hitler never took this the wrong way. (*Below, At Hitler's Side*, 105-06)

1.5.6: Chronology of Events:

1936: While anti-Bolshevism had played little *overt role* in shaping Hitler's foreign policy during early years of his regime, this *began to change from 1936 onward*. Beginning of the *Spanish Civil War* in that year but Bolshevism back in the spotlight from Hitler's vantage point. Later that summer, his memorandum for the **Four-Year Plan** rested on the premise that „*the showdown w/ Russia is inevitable*.“ By **1937**, Hitler was expecting major war within Europe in the next 5 or 6 years, thought Stalin was „*sick in the brain*,“ and spoke of Bolshevism as „*the danger that we will have to knock out sometime*.“ Hitler, therefore, *never lost sight of the ideological aim he had developed in the 1920s*, even if adjustments to the changing constellation of practical foreign policy in the years before the war meant that it faded for time being into the background. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 62-63)

1937: In his **1937** “Great Contemporaries,” Winston Churchill wrote, “Whatever else may be thought about (Hitler's) exploits, they are among the *most remarkable in the whole history of the world*.” Churchill was referring not only to Hitler's political triumphs – the return of the Saar and reoccupation of the Rhineland – but his *economic achievements*. By his fourth year in power, Hitler had pulled Germany out of the Depression [something even Roosevelt could not do], cut unemployment from **6 million** to **1 million**, grown the GNP **37%** and increased auto production from **45,000** vehicles a year to **250,000**. City and provincial deficits had vanished. In material terms, Nazi Germany was a startling success. And not only Churchill and Lloyd George but others in Europe and America were marveling at the exploits of the Third Reich, its fascist ally Italy and Stalin's rapidly industrializing Soviet state. (*Patrick J. Buchanan, “Democracy – A Flickering Star?”* at: <http://www.humanevents.com>)

Late 1930s: By this time, Hitler fully cognizant of fact that *time was not on Germany's side*: England, w/ a world empire behind it, was starting, if belatedly to rearm w/ urgency; beyond the Atlantic, lay the „vast potential of America, which while locked in isolationism was a likely future enemy of the Reich. Germany had built up an advantage w/ her early and speedy rearmament programme, but that advantage would not last. This *fed Hitler's gambler temperament*. The risk, he invariably argued, would be greater by waiting than by acting. The *imperative for early action* was driven by another factor: *economics*. The entire rearmament drive, once past the initial stages, could only be undertaken at *reckless cost to state finances* and an ordered running of the economy. Germany *simply lacked the resources* to produce or import all she needed, for arms manufacture and to sustain a modest standard of living for her *growing population*. Money for arms meant less for food. Guns and butter were possible only for a limited time. By the later 1930s, that *time was starting to run out*. Alarm bells were starting to be heard across the economy. War, when it came, was *not the result of economic crisis*. Rather, the **looming economic crisis** was a result of *ideological imperatives* to restructure the economy for war. But it did mean that, by late 1930s, *Hitler was under pressure to act*. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 62)

Aug 39: In move of „*breathhtaking cynacism*,“ Hitler signs **German-Soviet non-aggression pact**. Yet even then, days before this dramatic pact, he allegedly remarked to the Swiss Commissioner to the *League of Nations*, **Carl Burckhardt**: „*Everything that I undertake is directed against Russia*. If those in the West are too stupid and too blind to understand this, then I shall be forced

to come to an understanding w/ the Russians to beat the West, and then, after its defeat, *turn w/ all my concerted force against the Soviet Union.*“ (trans. Klaus Hildebrand, *The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich*, London, 1973, p 88; in: *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 63)²³⁵

Sep 39 – Jan 40 [Hitler wants to attack France]: Before Poland had been defeated, Hitler was *already planning to carry the war to the western powers*. He knew he would face opposition from his military cdrs whom he had led to expect that *war in the west would not happen before 1943*. They regarded an immediate attack as *madness*. They doubted the possibility of success against the French fortification of the Maginot Line. They also remembered how the violation of Belgian neutrality had been turned into effective propaganda against Germany in WWI. Above all, they understood that war in the west, against France and Britain, would change what was still in terms of actual fighting a local war against Poland into a war for control of western Europe. And they could see that if even only Britain could hold out, in time a war of attrition could lead to Germany’s defeat as in WWI because of the greater resources of the British empire, esp. if it was backed by the USA. *They wanted Germany to remain on the defensive and look for a diplomatic solution.*

Hitler was prepared to offer Britain and France a peace which left Poland and Eastern Europe in the hands of Germany and the Soviet Union. But if that was rejected, he intended to attack in the west ASAP. . . On **27 Sep 39**, Hitler started to work on his military chiefs, presenting them w/ an array of political and technical arguments for an assault on the west *ideally in a month’s time*. [!] His basic message was that the war was likely to continue and that ***time was working against them***. Treaties (in other words the pact w/ the USSR) would last only so long as they were in line w/ a state’s interests; the great powers had no love for Germany as it threatened the European status quo. The present situation was thus *unstable* and could be exploited by Britain. In addition, the economic resources of the other side were greater w/ their international transport links. And militarily, both in psychological and armament terms, *time was working against Germany*. The prestige of their victory over Poland would soon fade; the French army would improve over the next six [6] months and the British would be able to deploy a considerable number of divisions over the next one to two years. . . Hitler moved to set the date for the attack and on **22 Oct 39** he settled on **12 Nov 39**. . .²³⁶

There was no escape for Hitler’s service chiefs. Opposition was not to be expected from Raeder or Goering. . . The responsibility therefore fell on the army command. *Here there was a sense of desperation*. On **14 Oct 39**, Halder discussed in detail w/ Brauchitsch what he (Halder) saw as the three [3] alternatives: “attack, wait, fundamental changes.” This bare summary was the only note of a discussion between the two most senior army officers of whether they should carry out Hitler’s orders to attack, wait for the other side to attack, or ***overthrow Hitler***. It was clear that Brauchitsch saw little hope in any of them, particularly the last since it would create instability which might be exploited by Britain and France. Still, as Kershaw points out, it was an “extraordinary fact that in the early stages of a major war the two highest representatives of the army were airing the possibility of a form of ***coup d’etat*** involving the removal of Hitler as head of state.”

²³⁵ **Note:** Apparently, there are some doubts about the *authenticity* of Bureckhardt’s statements. See, *Kershaw*, 496, f.n. 29)

²³⁶ **Note:** On **10.10.39**, Hitler had ordered the army to produce a plan for an offensive; they responded five days later w/ a proposal to attack through Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. . . This initial response was little more than a hasty improvisation at a time when Brauchitsch and Halder were still hoping to persuade Hitler that the risks were too great. Hitler was not impressed. (163)

Brauchitsch was not prepared to organize a coup. Instead, he tried to persuade Hitler, and to get other senior cdrs to persuade Hitler, that the *army was not ready*. Hitler dismissed these arguments w/ contempt telling Goebbels that “an army will never be ready” but what mattered was “whether we are more ready than the others. And that is certain.” After a *furios confrontation w/ Hitler* on **5 Nov 39**, Brauchitsch was reduced to a nervous wreck though he is reported to have told Halder that, if others took action, he would not resist. Unlike Brauchitsch, Halder *did think seriously of taking the awesome responsibility for a coup*, if all other methods failed. He sounded out sympathetic army cdrs and by end of **Oct 39** contact had also been established w/ the group of younger officers in the military intelligence department [*Abwehr*] under Canaris. Halder was also in touch w/ Weizsaecker at the Foreign Ministry, who was himself part of a circle of like-minded civilians including Goerdeler, the Prussian Finance Minister Johannes Popitz, Ulrich v. Hassel, and Schacht. These were significant people, representative of those *conservative elites* who had become disillusioned and saw Hitler as leading Germany on “an unstoppable journey into the abyss.” (*Hassel diary entry, 22.10.39*). . . Yet ultimately the doubts of the army cdrs killed the possibility of a coup and by mid-**Nov 39** Halder gave up the idea. Even had the army been willing to act, there would still have been major obstacles. Indeed, the situation was now *less favorable* than it had been in **Sep 38**. Hitler was more popular after his bloodless triumph over Czechoslovakia and easy victory in Poland. . .

Hitler did not suspect a conspiracy though he lashed out at the “*spirit of Zossen*,” where the army HQ were located, south of Berlin. To strengthen the will of the military, he addressed a group of some **200** generals and representatives of the other services on **23 Nov 39**, showing complete confidence in his own judgment and his ability to win them over. . . Hitler’s main theme was that “*time is working for our adversaries*.” . . .

Brauchitsch offered to resign [after Hitler’s speech, with its implied criticism of the German army]. But Hitler brusquely dismissed the idea, telling B. to do his duty. Halder tried once more to persuade B. to act but he was not to be moved saying that they could not create “rule by force of the bayonet.” Doubts and resentment among the generals persisted but they were *now resigned to following Hitler’s orders*.

Hitler was lucky as well as shrewd. He had been lucky that the French had not attacked during the Polish campaign when they could have mobilized *forces superior to the German defenses in the west*. He was also lucky that his plan to attack in **Nov 39** had been *repeatedly postponed by bad weather*, which would have impeded the *Luftwaffe*, by worries about the transport situation, etc. The delay, which led to the final postponement of the invasion in **Jan 40**, until the following spring, was vital in allowing German forces time to re-equip the substantial losses – up to **50%** in some armored divisions [!] – sustained in the campaign in Poland. The delay was also vital in allowing development of the plan that was to lead to victory [i.e., Manstein’s plan].²³⁷ (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 156-63)

Sep 39-Dec 41: Hitler did not, as was previously thought, *try to spare consumption to sustain civilian morale in the first two [2] years of the war*. Rather, he wanted the economy mobilized for a *total but a short war*, calculating accurately that Germany could not win a long war against enemies and potential enemies (including the USA) w/ greater resources. Driven on by the need for a decisive victory, he kept increasing the stakes until he was at war w/ all the great powers apart from Italy and Japan. (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 148)

²³⁷ Which Hitler apparently had also suggested earlier, on **25.10.39**! Manstein’s plan was eventually adopted on **24.2.40**. (163)

18.10.39: Less than two months after the non-aggression pact w/ Stalin had been signed, and had been used to destroy Poland, the Fuehrer instructed the Army that the conquered Polish territory was to be regarded „as an assembly area for future German ops.“ (Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 796; also, *Halder KTB*)

23.11.39: When Hitler harangued his reluctant generals about attacking in the West, Russia was by no means out of his mind: „*We can oppose Russia*,“ he declared, „*only when we are free in the West*.“ (Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 796)

Late 39: Sense that *time favored his enemies*, and that to strike early meant to seize the initiative, to retain the whip-hand – as we had noted, a *constant feature of Hitler’s psychology* – left him impatient w/ the easy triumph in Poland. He was now anxious to attack in the West w/o delay.²³⁸ With the war in the West won, he could turn his attention to *preparing for the war he had always wanted to fight*: the showdown in the east w/ „*Jewish-Bolshevism*,“ to destroy Stalin’s Russia and secure Germany’s long-term future by acquiring „*living space*“ and unlimited material resources. ***This was Hitler’s thinking in autumn 1939.*** (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 64)

May 40: Attack on France was an “immediate and astonishing success.” . . . With the success of the western offensive, Hitler *reached the height of his popularity*. One official reported that for the first time there was “real enthusiasm for the war.” . . . With most of the continent under its control, or at least its influence, Germans could dream of a new world. (J. Wright, *Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 165-66)

ca. Jun 40: Intoxicated by the grandeur of the victory in the west, Hitler had told his chief military advisors at the time of the French capitulation that „*a campaign against Russia would be child’s play*.“ He justified the war as necessary to *remove Britian’s last possible major ally on the Continent*. Victory over the Soviet Union would also *free Japan* to undertake her ambitious southern expansion, w/o fear of Soviet power in the rear, w/ the combined effect of undermining British power in the Far East, tying down the USA in the Pacific, and deterring her involvement in the Atlantic or Europe. The projected short eastern campaign offered, thus, the *prospect not only of complete hegemony on the European continent*, but even of *overall final victory in the war*. After that, at some undetermined future date, would come the *showdown w/ the United States*. There was no contradiction between ideology and mil-strategic considerations in Hitler’s thought of invading the USSR. They went *hand in hand*. The *essential motivating force*, as ever, was *ideological*. But in the actual decision-making, the *strategic imperative dominated*. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 68; also, *Speer, Erinnerungen*, 188)

Jun 40: Andeutungen Hitlers uber die kommende Auseinandersetzung mit der Sowjetunion waren bereits *Anfang Juni 1940* gefallen. Je schwieriger sich dann die Lage um die geplante Landung in England gestaltet hatte, desto mehr rueckte dieses Ziel seiner Kriegspolitik in den Vordergrund. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 219, f.n. 751)

14.6.40: Less than five weeks after the offensive had been launched, German troops entered ***Paris***. Several days later, French sue for peace. Hitler’s revenge over the French was complete. The scale of the triumph took his *incipient megalomania* onto a new plane. And his self-glorification (embracing a sense of infallibility) was magnified by the *plaudits of his generals*, who had, sometimes reluctantly, to concede not only the magnitude of what had been possible under Hitler,

²³⁸ In fact, he first asked his generals to attack in **Nov 39!**

but also *his direct role in the extraordinarily successful strategic plan of attack.* (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 65)

25.6.40: GFM v. Brauchitsch, in an order of the day to the troops, praised Hitler's "unique greatness" and GFM Keitel referred to him as "the greatest warlord of all time." Even some members of the opposition were moved. (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 166)

Jul 40: Hitler issues first instructions for attack on Russia. The *Wehrmacht* had defeated and partially occupied France and *neutralized* Britain. The Soviet government had been *bold and aggressive in its drive into eastern Europe toward the Baltic* and had become an *immediate threat to Rumania* after **28.6.40**, esp. as concerns the oil resources of that state. The strategic question of Germany fighting a war on two fronts was solved in 1941 by the neutralization of British influence on the continent. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 28-29)

6.7.40: Hitler received an ecstatic reception in Berlin on this day. (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 166)

13.-23.7.40: Hitler hesitated about the tactics to pursue against Britain. His objective [w/ victory in the West] had been to deliver a "knockout blow" to force Britain to accept its exclusion from the continent. He still hoped his victory in the west might be enough to bring that about. He had *no desire to see the break-up of the British empire* which, he thought, would benefit mainly other powers – Japan, the USA and the Soviet Union. But Churchill (who became PM on **10 May 40**) was determined to continue the war. . . Hitler faced a *dilemma of his own making*. He did not have the naval force for a successful invasion of Britain, at least not until he had control of the air. He therefore considered every possible option for bringing Britain to accept peace. After mulling it over in his *alpine retreat* for a week, he made *one last appeal* to Britain to see reason in his victory speech to the Reichstag on **19 Jul 40**. . . Despite the negative reaction from Britain, he continued to hope for several days that the speech would bring about a change of attitude. Only on **23 Jul 40** after a broadcast by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, did he accept that the British rejection was final.

He now cast around for alternative ways of forcing Britain to submit. Already on **16 Jul 40** he had issued a directive for preparations to be made for a *cross-Channel invasion* by the middle of **Aug 40** but w/ the qualification that it would be carried out "if necessary" and on condition that the British air force had first been neutralized. But he remained doubtful about a landing and was soon persuaded by the naval chiefs that the earliest possible date would be mid-**Sep 40**. He started to consider other ideas, including taking Gibraltar in cooperation w/ Franco in Spain to close the western entrance of the Mediterranean to the British navy. However, he was also attracted by a very different plan. Puzzling over why Britain would not make peace even though its position was, in his view, "militarily hopeless," he had already suggested to Halder on **13 Jul 40**, that "*Britain still has hopes of Russia*." . . . In a meeting w/ the commanders-in-chief on **21 Jul 40**, Hitler referred to the difficulty of an invasion of Britain and *British hopes of Russia*, and the army command started to address the specific objectives of a possible campaign against the Soviet Union. (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 167-68)

21.7.40: [Ed. Note: In fact, the *conquest and colonization of Eastern Europe and the USSR* had been one of Hitler's themes since *Mein Kampf*; *all his other political moves had been mere stepping-stones to this end*. The campaign in the West was barely over when on 21 Jul 40—the day after Stalin annexed the Baltic states—Hitler had informed his generals

of his intention to destroy the USSR, “the sooner the better.” None of them raised any objections. That summer the first German divisions were transferred to the East.] (*Berlin Diaries*, *M. Vassiltchikov*, 52)

21.7.40: Hitler raises w/ his commanders-in-chief the prospect of invading the Soviet Union *that very autumn* [!]. His underlying reasons were *ideological*, as they had been for almost two decades. Through attack on USSR, he would destroy the power of the Jews, embodied in his world view by the Bolshevik regime, and at same time gain „*living space*“ for German settlement. Victory would make Germany *masters of Europe* and provide the base for a *racially purified empire* which would be equipped eventually to *challenge the United States for world domination*. But it was now obvious that the war to destroy Bolshevism would *not be fought as he had envisaged it*, with *Britain’s support* (or at least tolerance). Britain was refusing even at this stage to fit inot the concept he had devised all those years ago. Somehow, she had to be compelled to do so, or at least removed from the equation as a hostile force. „The Fuehrer is greatly puzzled by Britain’s persisting unwillingness to make peace,“ *Halder* had noted on **13.7.40**. „He sees the answer (as we do) in *Britain’s hope on Russia*, and therefore counts on having to compel her by main force to agree to peace.“ However strong the *ideological motivation*, therefore, the urgency implicit in the startling suggestion that the Soviet Union should be *attacked that autumn* was not ideological but *military-strategic*. And that was how Hitler presented it to his commanders-in-chief on **21 Jul 40**. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 66-67; see also, *Halder KTB*, 22.7.40)²³⁹

29.7.40: When prospect of attacking the Soviet Union that autumn rapidly ruled out as impractical, Hitler postponed it until May 1941. This was the date he had fixed in his meeting w/ *Jodl* on **29.7.40**, and which he announced to his military leaders two days later. It was a „*momentous decision, perhaps the most momentous of the entire war*.“ And it was *freely taken*. That is, it was not taken under other than self-imposed constraints. It was *not taken to head off an immediate threat of attack by the Soviet Union*. There was no suggestion at the time – the justificatory claim would come later – of the need for a *pre-emptive strike*. Hitler himself had acknowledged 10 days earlier that the *Russians did not want war w/ Germany*...The pressure upon Hitler was *subjective*: his sense that *not time could be lost* before striking the Soviet Union if the overall initiative in the war were not to drain away from Germany towards Britain and, ultimately, the United States. This subjective pressure was, however, reinforced by the *economic logic* of Germany’s war. This in turn was rooted in the ideology of „*living space*“ and the closely related notion of *Grossraumwirtschaft*: sphere of *economic domination*. (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 68-69; also, *Halder KTB*, 21.7.40)

29.7.40: Hitler privately tells Artillery General Alfred *Jodl* that he had decided to attack the Soviet Union in **May 41** and that preparations should begin. (*Germany and Second World War*, Vol IV, 253)

31.7.40: At a conference at the *Berghof* on the last day of July 1940, the receding prospects of an invasion of Britain prompted Hitler to announce for the first time to his Army chiefs his decision on Russia. *Halder* was personally present this time and *jotted down his shorthand notes* of exactly what the warlord said. They reveal not only that *Hitler had made a definite decision to attack Russia in the following spring* but that he had already worked out in his mind the major strategic aims. (See, *Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 796; also, *Halder KTB*)

²³⁹ **Note:** Apparently, Hitler thought at this time it would take only 4-6 weeks to assemble an army to invade Russia in fall of 1940! (*Kershaw*, 67)

31.7.40: As it became clear that the navy would not be ready for an invasion of Britain before the spring of **1941**, Brauchitsch and Halder *drew back from the idea of attacking the Soviet Union*, which would bring Germany into the dreaded situation of a two-front war. They preferred to maintain good relations w/ Russia and harass Britain by attacking Gibraltar, supporting the Italians in North Africa against the British stronghold in Egypt, attacking Haifa where the British oil pipeline from Iraq reached the Mediterranean, attacking the Suez Canal and encouraging the Soviet Union to expand into the Persian Gulf. Taken together, they argued, these ops would deliver a *decisive blow* to the British in the Mediterranean, drive them out of Asia, build up the Italian empire in the Mediterranean and enable Germany w/ Soviet help to extend its empire in western and northern Europe. . .

Hitler, however, *had come to the opposite conclusion*. On **31 Jul 40** he again met his military and naval chiefs. They agreed to start air attacks on Britain and decide within **8-10** days whether the effect had been sufficient for a landing to be risked; if not the operation would be put off until the spring. After Raeder had left the meeting, Hitler *expressed skepticism about a landing*, and added that although air and submarine attacks on Britain could be decisive they would take one to two years. He then launched into what he saw as the *crucial issue*, as recorded in Halder's notes:

*England's hope is Russia and America. If the hope in Russia is removed then America is also out of the picture [H.'s italics] because the removal of Russia means an enormous increase in the power of Japan in East Asia. . . If. . . Russia is smashed, then England's last hope is extinguished. Germany is then the master of Europe and the Balkans. Decision: In the course of this conflict **Russia must be destroyed**. Spring 1941 [H.'s italics].*

Hitler was, as always, determined to seize the initiative. . . He calculated that he needed the whole continent under his control to face the wars w/ Britain and the USA that would follow. Eliminating the Soviet Union would remove the danger of an attack in the rear as Germany became drawn into war w/ Britain and the USA. It would also give Germany direct control of vital *raw materials* where in **1940** it still depended on trade agreements w/ its Soviet partner. In addition, **a land war w/ the Soviet Union was the only war which Germany was equipped to fight**, as was shown by its inability to launch an invasion of Britain. At the same time, Hitler and his military chiefs underestimated the Red Army, a common mistake after Stalin's purges and its poor performance against Finland in **1939-40**.

All these factors are sufficient to explain Hitler's instinct that war w/ the Soviet Union was the *logical next step* and he presented it to his military chiefs in these terms. Yet it was also the *realization of what had been his ultimate aim since the 1920s* – the war for living space in the Soviet Union against “Jewish Bolshevism.” That was to give it a new character as a *racial war*, more explicit and systematic and no less terrible than the occupation of Poland. Hitler's language in discussing the attack on the Soviet Union betrays the *excitement* he felt at the prospect. *Alternative proposals never had the same attraction*. He was seized by the idea as the **fulfillment of his destiny**, even if it was no longer to be the final stage of German expansion, but only a *step on the way to global war*. (J. Wright, *Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 169-71)

Jul-Dec 40: [Hitler's calculations]: „Ian Kershaw is the author of a *magisterial biography* of Hitler, in which he showed how the will-power of that solitary malign character was enough to overthrow the European state system, and lead to the deaths of tens of millions...Impersonal demographic, economic, and cultural forces were of course in operation, but for Kershaw these

are not the controlling factors that *Marxists* think they are. He holds the good old traditional view that the personality of those making the decisions for their state and society *ultimately determines events*...In the strange hiatus after the fall of France, an *alternative strategy was available to Hitler*: to attack Britain through the *Mediterranean*, seizing *Gibraltar, Malta, and Egypt*, cutting off its oil supplies, and weakening its hold on the Empire. Kershaw wonders whether this might not have worked to his advantage. As it turned out, however, *General Franco* was shrewd enough to reserve his position. It was impossible to reconcile the rival demands of Spain, Italy, and France, and in any case *Hitler's heart was not in it*. By the end of 1940, he had *convinced himself that Britain was holding out only in the hope that eventually the Soviet Union would come to the rescue*. Fulfillment of his long-cherished fantasy of rooting out Bolshevism and the Jews was irresistibly appealing. The *logic that the road to London lay through Moscow* was a tribute to his psychological perversity. Kershaw is particularly good at describing the *real or perceived constraints operating on each of the wartime leaders*. Hitler assumed that **he had only a limited time in which to conquer the Soviet Union, and then Britain**. The *United States*, he appreciated, would not permit the defeat of Britain but nonetheless needed another year or two in which to bring its forces up to strength, and intervene militarily. That *calculation* prompted the timing of the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.“ (David Pryce-Jones, book review of Kershaw's *Fateful Choices*, 49-50)

6.-26.9.40: The idea of a cross-Channel invasion was finally abandoned on **17 Sep 40** after the Luftwaffe failed to gain control of the air. Ideas for a “*peripheral strategy*” in the Mediterranean against Britain now engaged Hitler's interest. In **Aug 40** he approved plans to take Gibraltar by early **1941** and support an Italian advance from its colony in Libya through Egypt to the Suez Canal. The fear that the USA might enter the war sooner rather than later gave an additional impetus – on **6 Sep 40**, Roosevelt agreed to provide Britain w/ **50** destroyers in exchange for the right to bases in the West Indies. . . Admiral Raeder pressed the urgency of a Mediterranean strategy in a private briefing of Hitler on **26 Sep 40**, stressing that the British had always regarded the Mediterranean as “*the pivot of their world empire*” and suggesting that, apart from Gibraltar and Suez, there should be an advance from Suez through Palestine and Syria which would neutralize Turkey and perhaps also increase Russian fear of Germany, making an invasion of Russia from the north unnecessary. . . During the autumn of **1940**, Hitler took [such ideas] seriously. There is no indication, however, that he regarded them as a substitute for the attack on the Soviet Union but rather as a useful addition, unlike the naval chiefs who wanted a more prominent role and *dreamt of an overseas empire*. (J. Wright, *Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 171-72)

Oct-Nov 40: On his way back from meetings w/ *Franco* (**23.10.40**) and *Pétain* (**24.10.40**), Hitler indicated to both *Keitel* and *Jodl* that the *war against Russia* had to take place in the coming year. On **4.11.40**, Hitler told his military leaders that Russia remained the „great problem of Europe“ and that everything must be done to be ready for the *great showdown*.“ (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 83; *Halder KTB*, 4.11.40; *KTB OKW*, 4.11.40)

Nov 40 [Molotov in Berlin]: Hitler was highly incensed by the Russian claims and expressed his displeasure at length during the Berlin conversations. . . The conclusion he drew from Molotov's visit and its results was a belief that war w/ the Soviet Union must sooner or later be inevitable. He was to describe to me repeatedly the course that the Berlin conference took. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 141)

Nov 40 [Molotov Besuch]: Der spektakulaere Besuch des sowj. Aussenministers Molotov am **12./13 Nov 40** in Berlin bedeutete fuer die Vorbereitungen zu einem moeglichen Ueberfall auf die UdSSR *keine grundlegende Wendung*. . . Der „bestimmte Entschluss“ zum Ueberfall auf die

UdSSR war laengst gefasst, Zeit u. Umstaende aber noch nicht genau festgelegt. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 85)

12.-13.11.40: As *Vyacheslav Molotov* made his way to Berlin for talks w/ Hitler on 12-13 Nov, *German war strategy was still unclear and undetermined*. On the very day discussions w/ Molotov began, Hitler put out a *military directive* which ranged widely over potential fields of combat. The taking of *Gibraltar* was the dominant item. Also addressed efforts to bring *Spain* into the war, role of *France*, preparations for occupation of Greece north of the Aegean, etc. But perhaps most crucial consideration came towards the end of the directive: „*Political discussions w/ the aim of clarifying Russia’s position in the near future are in progress. Whatever the results of these discussions, all preparations verbally ordered for the east are to be continued.*“ Though no mil. option closed off at this point, there is every indication that Hitler had become so skeptical about progress in the *Mediterranean* that he was returning, his ideas confirmed, to the strategy he had already favored in the summer: the attack on Russia. The ***unease prompted in his mind by the Molotov visit was the final determinant.*** (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 84)

12.-13.11.40: A serious deterioration German-Russian relations had set in during weeks preceding the talks between Molotov and Ribbentrop. Talks go nowhere; mutual suspicion and underlying antagonism pervaded the talks. Hitler felt *wholly vindicated in his view that the conflicting interests of Germany and Soviet Union could never be peacefully reconciled. A clash was inevitable.* „Hitler saw Molotov’s visit as confirmation that the *attack envisaged since July could not be delayed.* By mid-December, a military directive had been devised, scheduling the invasion for the coming spring. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 262)

Nov-Dec 40: The Molotov visit convinced Hitler that the USSR would not join – as Ribbentrop hoped – a global alliance w/ Italy and Japan against Britain. There was now *no alternative in his mind to destroying the Soviet Union* to achieve mastery of the continent and force Britain to admit defeat. On **5 Dec 40** he discussed the situation w/ Halder and Brauchitsch. He told them to go ahead w/ plans for the seizure of Gibraltar, at the latest in **Jan 41**, and to make preparations to support the Italians against Greece in **Mar 41**. On the other hand, they could forget about an invasion of Britain and also an operation in Libya. Preparations for the Soviet war, however, were to *proceed “in full gear” to be ready to start at the end of May 41.* (J. Wright, *Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 174)

Nov-Dec 40: A brief time after *Molotov visit to Berlin* in mid-Nov., Hitler dispatched his adjutants to *find a field headquarters in East Prussia*. On **5.12.40**, he told *Brauchitsch* and *Halder* to prepare the army for an attack on Russia at the end of the coming May. Three days later, he learned that renewed attempts to win over *Spain* had failed. Hitler promptly called off preparations to take *Gibraltar*; the operation was abandoned on **9.1.41**. Before this, on **18.12.40**, Hitler issued a *formal directive* for Operation „*Barbarossa.*“ The decision reached *in principle* on 31 July was now *enshrined in a military directive*. There would be no turning back. The possibility fo any *alternative strategy* – briefly examined in late summer and autumn – could now definitely be ruled out. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 84-85)

Nov-Dec 40: Molotov’s negative reply to Hitler’s proposals at the end of **Nov 40** dispelled whatever hesitations Hitler still had about attacking Russia. Visiting the sick General von *Bock* again briefly on **3.12.40**, the field marshal’s 60th birthday, Hitler warns that the “eastern problem” is now coming to a head. To *Brauchitsch* two days later Hitler announces, “the hegemony of Europe will be decided in the fight w/ Russia.” Hitler’s strategic timetable takes

shape. He would execute “*Marita*” early in **Mar 41**; then he would attack Russia during May. “*In three weeks we will be in Leningrad!*” Schmundt heard him say. (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 188)²⁴⁰

ab 18.12.40: Relieved to have made up his mind at last [w/ *Barbarossa directive* issued on this day], as he later revealed, he went off to celebrate the Christmas holidays w/ the troops and flyers along the English Channel. (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 812)²⁴¹

ca. 31.12.40: At end of 1940, Hitler made speech, saying 1941 would be marked by realization “of the greatest victory in our history.” (*Flannery*, 129)²⁴²

8.-9.1.41: Hitler holds council of war at the *Berghof* above Berchtesgarden, which now lay deep in the winter’s snow. He notes, among other things, that „Germany must make herself so strong on the Continent that we can handle a further war against England (and America).“ The parentheses are *Halder’s* and their enclosure is significant. This is the *first mention* in the captured German records that Hitler – at the beginning of **1941** – is facing up to the possibility of the entry of the U.S. into the war against him. About the Soviet leader the Fuehrer tells his top military chiefs: „Stalin is clever and cunning. He demands more and more. He’s a cold-blooded blackmailer. A German victory has become unbearable for Russia. Therefore: she must be brought to her knees as soon as possible.“ (See, *Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 810, 819-21; also, *Halder KTB*, 16.1.41)

9.1.41: Hitler again discusses the general situation w/ military chiefs on **9 Jan 41**. By then, the idea of seizing Gibraltar had been *effectively abandoned* because Franco refused his support. On the other hand, Hitler was concerned at the way in which Italian forces were being driven back by the British in Libya and by the Greeks in Albania. The first, he considered not of much strategic importance but he thought it could have a *damaging psychological impact*. He therefore decided to send a tank force to block the British advance (a decision which would be confirmed in **Feb 41** when Rommel was dispatched to lead what became the Afrika Korps.) The second was more of a problem. Hitler wanted the Balkans secure before he attacked Russia and feared British intervention in Greece from which it could threaten Italy and the Romanian oil fields from the air, and also open a route to assist Soviet forces. The main discussion on **9 Jan 41** was, however, again about the invasion of Russia. (See, *J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 174-75)

19.-20.1.41: Mussolini is summoned by Hitler to the *Berghof* for **19-20 Jan**. To his relief, Mussolini finds Hitler tactful and cordial; there are no reproaches for the Italian dictator’s debacles in Egypt and Greece. He also finds his host, as *Ciano* noted in his diary, in a *very anti-Russian mood*. For more than **2** hours on the second day, Hitler lectures his Italian guests and an assembly of generals from both countries; while the Fuehrer is anxious to be helpful to the Italians in Albania and Libya, his principal thoughts were on Russia:

²⁴⁰ **Note:** For Hitler’s proposals to the Russian’s see, p 182 (bottom).

²⁴¹ D. Irving: “Something distantly resembling the spirit of Christmas overcame Hitler. He instructed the *Luftwaffe* to suspend bombing missions against Britain until Christmas was over . . . Keitel, Halder, and much of Jodl’s staff had gone on leave. Protected by extra anti-aircraft trains, Hitler set out w/ his personal staff on a Christmas tour of the Western front. He wanted to inspect the big gun batteries which Todt’s organization had installed to command the Channel coast . . . and he wanted to celebrate the holidays w/ the aircrews of Goering’s fighter and bomber squadrons.” (*Hitler’s War*, 192-93)

²⁴² Eliptical reference to *Barbarossa*?

I don't see great danger coming from *America* even if she should enter the war. The much greater danger is the gigantic block of Russia. Though we have very favorable political and economic agreements w/ Russia, I prefer to rely on *powerful means* at my disposal.

Though he hinted at what he intended to do w/ his „*powerful means*,“ he did not disclose his plans to his partner. (Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 822)

1.2.41: GFM v. *Bock* reports to Hitler. They discuss coming war w/ Russia, among other things. At one point, Hitler states, “I am glad that we carried on w/ arms manufacture so that we are now strong enough to be a match for anybody. We have more than enough material and we already have to begin thinking about converting parts of our industry. Our *Wehrmacht* manpower position is better than when war broke out. Our economy is absolutely firm.” Later he says: “I am going to fight. I am convinced that our attack will *flatten them* [i.e. the Russians] *like a hailstorm*.” (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 203-04)

3.2.41: „Wenn *Barbarossa* steigt, haelt die Welt den Atem an,“ aeusserte Hitler in einer Ansprache vor Generaelen in der *Reichskanzlei* am 3.Feb.41. (Buchbender, *Das Andere Gesicht des Krieges*, 68)

18.2.41: Hitler had called for his own first *tank-design symposium* at the *Berghof* on this day. Hitler “considered himself an expert [in area of tank design], and he was indeed far ahead of the professionals.” At symposium he demands the modification of the **Mark III** and **Mark IV** tanks to mount much heavier caliber long-barreled guns – **50** and **75mm**, respectively – despite the design objections raised by the experts. (See, Irving, *Hitler's War*, 341)

27.3.41: To address coup in Yugoslavia, Hitler summons his mil. chieftains to the *Chancellery* in Berlin. He rages about the revenge he would take on Yugoslavia. The Belgrade coup, he said, had endangered both *Marita* and, even more *Barbarossa*. He was thus determined to destroy Yugoslavia militarily and as a nation. Yugoslavia was to be crushed w/ „unmerciful harshness.“ He orders *Goering* then and there to „destroy Belgrade in attacks by waves,“ w/ bombers operating from Hungarian bases. He issues *Directive No. 25* for the immediate invasion of Yugoslavia. And then, according to an underlined passage in the top-secret OKW notes of the meeting, Hitler announces *the most fateful decision of all*. „The beginning of the *Barbarossa* operation,“ he tells his generals, „will have to be *postponed up to four weeks*.“ (Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 824)²⁴³

30.3.41: Hitler speaks to select audience at Reich *chancellery* for over two hours. The large meeting of field marshals, generals and admirals had been postponed twice, but Hitler did *not* address between **200-250** senior officers, a figure suggested by *Walter Warlimont* in **1962** and repeated by many historians ever since. Only the C-in-Cs of the army groups, armies, air fleets and the naval command, the cdrs of panzer groups and air groups, and their chiefs of staff, as well as the services' cdrs and senior officers from the high commands, were present in the chancellery on 30 Mar 41. Hitherto, Hitler's speech has only been cited from the published diary of General

²⁴³ **Note:** According to Shirer, “this postponement of the attack on Russia in order ... that [he] might vent his personal spite against a small Balkan country which had dared to defy him was probably the *most catastrophic single decision* in Hitler's career. It is hardly too much to say that by making it that March afternoon in the Chancellery in Berlin during a moment of convulsive rage he *tossed away* his last golden opportunity to win the war and to make the Third Reich . . . the greatest empire in German history and himself master of Europe.” (824)

Franz Halder. But meanwhile there existed *another version of the long speech* of 30 Mar, produced by Col Gen **Hermann Hoth**. He left handwritten notes, the *calligraphy* of which had been a hard nut to crack, within the official files of his *Pz.Gr.3*...Concerning the *Soviet tank force*, there is a striking difference between the two texts. Though Halder does mention a new giant tank, he personally evaluates the bulk of Soviet tanks as „obsolete.“ Hoth records Hitler’s *reference to a new model* (heavy Russian tank w/ a **7.5 cm gun**) and, what is *even more striking*, the **Fuehrer’s respectful assessment of the Red Army as a „tenacious adversary.“** This was a substantial development since **5.12.40**. Then, discussing the army’s operational planning, Hitler was quoted as saying: „The Russian is inferior. The army is w/o leadership...The internal restructuring of the Russian Army will not be better in the spring. [At that time] we will have a perceptibly better position in leadership, materiel, troops, while the Russians will be at an unmistakably low point. Once the Russian army is beaten, then disaster cannot be forestalled...“ (*Foerster & Mawdsley, Hitler & Stalin, 66-68,*)²⁴⁴

4.5.41: Hitler gives a very long speech at the *Reichstag*. He gives the deputies a detailed account of how Poland was smashed, followed by Norway, Belgium, Holland, France, Yugoslavia and Greece. In his expansive speech, he endlessly reviles Winston Churchill, resorting to crude imprecations and insults. In the closing part of the speech, Hitler declares that in the course of the subjugation of Europe,

the German armed forces have truly surpassed even themselves. Infantry, armored and mountain divisions, as well as SS formations, competed without a rest, in bravery, endurance and stubbornness to achieve their goals. The work of the General Staff has been outstanding. The air force has added to its historic glory, new heroic deeds. . . Nothing is impossible for the German soldier!

In his conclusion, Hitler assures the deputies that he “looks at the future w/ tranquility and utmost confidence.” Those listening to the speech were not yet aware that his words about “the utmost confidence in the future” related directly to Directive No. 21, known under the code-name *Barbarossa*. (*Voelkischer Beobachter*, no. 125, 5.5.41; quoted in: *Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 76)

4.5.41: On the evening of Sunday, 4 May 41, Hitler made the usual speech to the Reichstag at the conclusion of a successful campaign, emphasizing the strength and achievements of the Wehrmacht. “The year **1941** will go down in history as the greatest year of our revival,” he said. He was not thinking of the Balkans but of “*Barbarossa*.” (*Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler’s Side, 97-98*)

26.5.41: Hitler holds another *tank-design symposium* at the *Berghof*. He demands an even heavier gun in future tanks and instructs both the *Henschel* tank works and Prof. *Ferdinand Porsche* to produce prototypes mounting the **88-mm** heavy gun. The designers were *aghast*. (*Irving, Hitler’s War, 342*)

²⁴⁴ For *Hoth’s* notes of 30 Mar 41 meeting in chancellery see, pp 70-78. Concerning Hitler’s remarks about Red Army, Hoth writes: “strong air force, strong tank force. Our air force cannot eliminate enemy air force...*Heavy Russian tank w/ long 7.5 cm gun*...Masses of troops. *Tenacious adversary*. Without leadership. Armaments capacities not very good.” Hoth also notes: “*Fight for our survival*. It has to be fought once. Now we have a tremendous lead on all sectors. Cannot be maintained at all times...Decision was not easily made, [he] wrestled w/ himself for a long time. Not heavier than for *Frederick the Great*. [His] task insoluble. How much easier we have it today!”

29.5.41: „'Barbarossa' is a gamble like everything else,“ said Hitler – following a meeting w/ the foreign ministry's Dr. Julius Schnurre – „If it fails, then it will all be over anyway.“ (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 260)

Jun 41: At the beginning of **Jun 41**, Dr. Brandt traveled to Munich, where Hitler received the Romanian leader, Ion Antonescu, to inform him of the imminent military campaign against Russia. Hitler made it plain to his Romanian ally that he would wage a war of annihilation; he anticipated that the German Army would be victorious in about six [6] weeks. . . (U. Schmidt, *Karl Brandt: The Nazi Doctor*, 159)

5.6.41: In a *Berghof* conference on this day, Hitler again warns his staff of the extensive use the Russians would make of tactics not sanctioned by international convention. He anticipates that the Russians, might, for ex., contaminate long stretches of their roads of retreat w/ poison gases, or use poisonous additives to spike the food stocks and fresh-water supplies or kill livestock in the areas overrun by the *Wehrmacht*. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 264)

8.6.41: On this day, *Hewel*²⁴⁵ enters in his *Berghof diary*: „A long conversation alone w/ the Fuehrer about Russia. Says it will be a ‚tough proposition‘ but he trusts in the *Wehrmacht*. [Russian] air force: numerical superiority in fighters and bombers. He is a bit frightened of air raids on Berlin and Vienna. ‚The area we are to occupy will not be much bigger than from Denmark to Bordeaux in size. Russians have massed their entire strength on their western frontier, the *biggest concentration in history*. If ‚Barbarossa‘ goes wrong now, we are all lost anyway.“ (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 264-65)

14.6.41: Hitler erklarte schon frueher u. auch in seiner *Schlussansrpache an die Generale*, dass der *Ostfeldzug unvermeidlich sei*, dass jetzt angegriffen werden muesse, *wenn man sich einem russ. Angriff zur Unzeit entziehen wolle*. (Kesselring, *Soldat*, 113)

14.6.41: ...versammelte Hitler noch einmal die Fuehrer der Armeen, der Heeres- u. Panzergruppen zu einer Besprechung in der *Reichskanzlei*, an der auch der *ObdH* [Brauchitsch] u. der *Generalstabschef* [Halder] mit Vertretern des OKH teilgenommen haben. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 244)

ca. 15.6.41: For Hitler, the „old familiar bouts of *insomnia*“ began to attack him as the last days before „*Barbarossa*“ dragged by. By night he lay awake and asked himself what loopholes in his grand design the British might yet exploit. He believed he had plugged them all . . . Yet Hitler could only go to sleep w/ *sedatives*, even after staying up until **3-4:00 a.m.** each morning discussing *Turkey*, *Russia*, war, and warfare w/ dutiful but wearily henchmen like Himmler, Ley, Hewel, Ribbentrop and Seyss-Inquart. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 268)

18./21.6.41: By 18 Jun 41, **200,000** pamphlets had been printed for distribution to the troops. On 21 June, Hitler dictated the proclamation to the German people to be read out the next day. Hitler was by this time looking over-tired, and was in a *highly nervous state*, pacing up and down, apprehensive, involving himself in the minutiae of propaganda such as the *fanfares* that were to be played over the radio to announce German victories. Goebbels went to see him that evening. They marched up and down his rooms for three hours. They tried out the new fanfares for an hour. Hitler gradually relaxed somewhat. „The Fuehrer is freed from a nightmare the closer the decision comes,“ noted Goebbels . . . At **2:30 a.m.** (22 June), Hitler finally decided to

²⁴⁵ Ambassador Walther Hewel, Hitler's diplomatic liaison ofcr.

snatch a few hours sleep. *Barbarossa* was due to begin within the next hour. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 386-87)

20.6.41: *Hewel* writes in his diary: „A long conversation w/ the *Fuehrer*. Expects a lot of the Russian campaign. Wishes he was **10** weeks on from hence. After all there must always be a big element of risk. We are standing outside a locked door. [Will we run into] secret wpns? The tenacity of the fanatic? He now has to take *sleeping pills* to fall asleep. He is still dictating. He told me that this morning [20.6.41] he again poured over every minute detail, but found no possibility for the enemy to get the better of Germany. He thinks Britain will have to give in – and he hopes it will be before the year is over.“ (quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 269)

21.-22.6.41: His thoughts far from the Chancellery, Hitler sits up w/ his private staff far into the night. Then he briefly retires to bed, remarking to his adjutants: „Before three (**3**) months have passed, we shall witness a collapse in Russia the like of which world history has never seen!“ (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 273)

21.-22.6.41: Am Abend des **21 Jun 41** musste sich Goebbels seinen italienischen Gaesten in Schwänenwerder empfehlen, denn er wurde in die Reichskanzlei beordert. Dort traf er auf einen voellig uebermuedeten Hitler, der sich jedoch im Verlaufe seiner Ausfuehrungen am bevorstehenden groessten Aufmarsch der Weltgeschichte berauschte. Der „Fuehrer“ sei von einem Albdruck [sic] befreit, je naeher die Entscheidung komme. Das sei immer so bei ihm. Alle Muedigkeit sei von ihm gewichen, registrierte Goebbels, waehrend er drei [3] Stunden lang mit ihm im grossen Saal der Reichskanzlei auf- u. abging u. dabei wieder einmal einen „tiefen Einblick in sein Inneres“ zu tun glaubte.

Er [sic] war halb drei [2.30] Uhr morgens, als Goebbels schliesslich durch die Nacht zu seinem Ministerium ging, um seinen wartenden Mitarbeiterstab ins Bild zu setzen. Nach fieberhafter Arbeit zog er sich gegen halb vier [3.30] . . . in sein Zimmer zurueck. In sein Tagebuch trug er ein: „Nun donnern die Geschuetze. Gott segne unsere Waffen! . . . Ich gehe ruhelos im Zimmer auf u. ab. Der Atem der Geschichte ist hoerbar. Grosse, wunderbare Zeit, in der ein neues Reich geboren wird. Unter Schmerzen zwar, aber es steigt empor zum Licht.“ (*R.G. Reuth, Goebbels*, 479-80)

22.6.41: Hitler's diplomatic liaison officer *Walther Hewel* noted in his private diary the “calm, mellow mood” in the Reich Chancery building. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 81)

22.6.41: In the last few days before the commencement of the Russian campaign, Hitler was increasingly nervous and troubled. He was garrulous, walked up and down continuously and seemed to be waiting anxiously for news of something. Not until the early hours of 22 June did I hear his first observation about the opening of the campaign when he said, “It will be the most difficult battle which our soldiers will have to undergo in this war.” (*Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler's Side*, 103)

22.-24.6.41: What *Hewel* described as a „tranquil, self-possessed mood“ descended on the Chancellery during the morning of **22 Jun 41**. It was almost like any other Sunday, except that Hitler and Ribbentrop fell asleep after lunch. By time Hitler awoke late in afternoon, his armies were already many miles inside the Russian frontier . . . Again he sat up late w/ his staff listening to the military reports. Of this day *Hewel* wrote: „I accompany the Fuehrer; he is in a *brilliant mood* on account of the huge successes in Russia (*Luftwaffe*) and *Sollum* (tanks).“ As so often before, Hitler and his staff drove through the sun-drenched streets of Berlin to his *special train* at the *Anhalt station*. At **12:30 p.m.** [23d?] he left for East Prussia – the twin locomotives hauling

his throughout the afternoon and evening across *Pomerania*, those fields and cities so recently „liberated“ from the Poles. Over tea he reminisces w/ *Hewel* and others. „Russia,“ he says at one point, „*is still a big question mark.*“ Long after midnight he is being driven in a column of cars past cordons of sentries guarding a wood about **10** miles outside the dreary East Prussian township of *Rastenburg*. Deep inside the wood is his new HQ – during the train journey he *decides to call it the Wolfsschanze* (Wolf’s Lair). It is **1:30 a.m.** when he first sets foot inside the forbidding compound. From here he plans to command the defeat of the Soviet Union. At age of **52**, he sets out to conquer Russia. (*Irving, Hitler’s War, 274-77*)²⁴⁶

23.6.41: W. Hewel: “The Fuehrer is in the best possible spirits because of the gigantic successes in Russia (air force).” But that same evening, after tea with the Fuehrer, he added: “Russia: there still are big question marks.” (*Walther Hewel, quoted in: Private Diaries of Dr Morell, 81*)
D. Irving: “The question marks remained, and the uncertainties of these first months of Hitler’s eastern war generated illnesses in him that were to have momentous consequences.” (81)

23.6.41: At midday on the 23rd, Hitler boarded his private train for the new **FHQ** in East Prussia, where he arrived late that evening. (v. *Below, At Hitler’s Side, 104-05*)

24.6.41: Hitler leaves Berlin and traveled on night of 24 [or 23?] June to his new HQ—the Wolf’s Lair. It had been hastily built on unhealthy swampland outside Rastenburg in East Prussia. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell, 81*)

24.6-4.7.41 [*Anxieties at start of campaign noted in Halder KTB*]:

24.6.41: 15.30 Uhr ObdH kommt vom Fuehrer zurueck. a) Fuehrer hat *Sorge*, dass wir den Kreis um Bialystok nicht eng genug schliessen. . . (10)

25.6.41: Abends geht ein Befehl des Fuehrers ein ueber Fuehrung der Operation der H.Gr. Mitte u. Sued, aus dem die *Sorge* spricht, dass wir zu weit in die Tiefe operieren. *Das alte Lied!* An unserer Fuehrung wird dadurch nichts geaendert. (15)

29.6.41: Durch die *Sorge* des Fuehrers von weiterreichender Aktion der Panzerkraefte hat sich der **ObdH** ja leider dazu bewegen lassen, in seiner Besprechung mit der H.Gr.Mitte *Bobrujsk* nur als Ziel einer Sicherung zu bezeichnen. Tatsaechlich geht Guderian – u. zwar operativ gesehen mit vollem Recht – mit **2 Pz.Div. [3. u. 4. PD]** auf *Bobrujsk* u. klaert gegen den Dnjepr auf, sicherlich nicht nur um zu sichern, sondern um den Dnjepr zu ueberschreiten, sobald sich Gelegenheit dazu gibt. Wuerde er das nicht tun, so waere es ein grosser Fehler. . . Es ist zu hoffen, dass die mittlere Truppenfuehrung auch ohne ausdrueckliche Befehle, die wir wegen der Willensaenderung des Fuehrers an **ObdH** nicht geben duerfen, von selbst das Richtige tut. (24-25)

29.6.41: Gespraech mit *Keitel (OKW)* zeigt wieder *Besorgnis des Fuehrers*: a) um die gespannte Lage der **PzGr 1** suedlich Dubno, b) ueber Bedrohung aus den *Rokitno Suempfen* heraus, c) um zu fruehes Losbrechen der H.Gr.Mitte ueber die Linie *Minsk – Brobrujsk*, bevor der „Kessel“ endgueltig ausgeraemt ist. Ich beschwichtige diese Sorgen. (25)

²⁴⁶ **Note:** According to Kershaw, Hitler and his accompaniment arrived at Rastenburg late in the evening of **23.6.41**. (*Hitler, 395*)

2.7.41: Mittags wird **ObdH** zum Fuehrer gerufen: *Sorgen* wegen des Kessels von *Nowogrodek*. Der Fuehrer haelt engere Umschliessung u. Abdichtung u. Reserven hinter den Abdichtungslinien fuer notwendig. Ueber das Antreten der **PzGr 2** u. **3**, das wir schon freigegeben haben, scheint noch verhandelt worden zu sein. Also wieder einmal besorgte Stimmung [i.e., *there they go worrying again*]. . . Nach diesem Gespraech [*Ferngespraech mit Fm. v. Bock*] kurzer Bericht an **ObdH** u. Ruecksprache mit Jodl (**OKW**), um *Sorge des Fuehrers* zu mildern. (34-35; also, *Halder War Diary*, 442)

3.7.41: 12.00 Uhr: Ueber **ObdH** u. Op.Abt. kommen wieder die ueblichen *Nebengeruesche* [i.e., *rumors*] aus dem Fuehrerhauptquartier. Es herrscht wieder einmal „Gross-Zustand“ [i.e., *state of jitters*], weil der Fuehrer *Angst* hat, dass der nach Osten fortschreitende Keil der Hr.Gr. Sued von Norden u. Sueden durch Flankenangriff bedroht wird. Diese Besorgnis ist natuerlich taktisch nicht unberechtigt. Aber dafuer sind ja die Armeefuehrer u. kom.Gen. [corps cdrs] da. Das Vertrauen auf die ausfuehrenden Organe, was eine unserer staerksten Fuehrungsseiten ist, kennt man an oberster Stelle nicht. . . (39; also, *Halder War Diary*, 448)²⁴⁷

27.6.41: OKW war diarist *Helmuth Greiner* complains in a letter to his wife about Hitler's new HQ in **Rastenburg**: “We are being plagued by the most awful mosquitoes. It would be hard to pick on a more senseless site than this—deciduous forest with marshy pools, sandy ground and stagnant lakes, ideal for these loathsome creatures. On top of that we have cold, damp bunkers, in which we freeze to death at night, can't get to sleep because of the humming of the electric air conditioning which makes a terrible draft as well, and then wake up in the morning with a headache. Our underwear and uniforms are always cold and clammy.” (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 81) (Note: For more on unhealthy atmosphere at *Rastenburg*, see Morell's diary comments for 18.7.41, 90-91)

27.6.41: When *Ribbentrop* came on **27 June**, Hitler laughingly exclaimed that he felt like the legendary horseman who having unwittingly ridden across the frozen *Lake Constance* died of horror when he learned what he had done: „If I had had the slightest inkling of this gigantic Red Army assemblage *I would never have taken the decision to attack.*“ (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 268)

28.6.41: One of Hitler's two private secretaries at his *Wolfsschanze* HQ records in her diary on this day:

...Shortly after **10:00 a.m.** we two [secretaries] go to the mess bunker, No. 1 Dining Room – a long whitewashed room sunk half-underground so that the small gauze-covered windows are very high up...A table for **20** people takes up the entire length of the room; here the Chief [i.e., Hitler] takes his lunch and supper w/ his generals, his General Staff officers, adjutants, and doctors. At breakfast and afternoon coffee we two girls are also there. The Chief sits facing the maps of Russia hanging on the opposite wall, and this naturally prompts him to make repeated references about Soviet Russia and the dangers of bolshevism

²⁴⁷ **Note:** While translations of Halder in Burdick/Jacobsen volume are for most part good, I don't always agree with them or find them completely accurate.

...Now he makes a clean breast of his apprehensions, again and again emphasizing the enormous danger bolshevism is for Europe and saying that *if he had waited just one more year it would probably have been too late*...Breakfast for him, I might add, is just a *glass of milk* and a *mashed apple*...(quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 279-81)

30.6.41: Hitler writes to Mussolini on this day: "The might and resources of the Red Army are far in excess of what we knew or even considered possible." Even so, few observers see any end to *Barbarossa* other than an overwhelming German victory. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 47)

Jul 41: In that *brief historical moment* in which the Soviet Union seemed to have been eliminated as an international power factor, Hitler began to make plans for the time after "*Barbarossa*." In his view, the world then would be dominated by the conflict between Germany and the United States, a struggle between *continental empires* in which Hitler hoped to have not only Japan as an Asian junior partner but also Great Britain as a European ally. He assumed that the defeat of the Soviet Union would also mean the political end of *Churchill* and his anti-German "war party." Indicative of the *new orientation of German war policy* in this period of expected triumph in the East was Hitler's order of **14.7.41** for a *change in armament priorities*. The main emphasis was to be shifted away from army armaments to the *Luftwaffe* and the Navy. Six months later, Hitler was forced to reverse this decision. (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 111)

Jul 41: Hitler is *noticeably uncertain* about how high to rank Moscow on his list of objectives. To him it was just a place name, he said, while Leningrad was the very *citadel of bolshevism* – the city from which the evil creed had first sprung in **1917**. Strategically, he was right to emphasize that victory would not hinge on the capture of Moscow, but on the destruction of Soviet military strength; but the General Staff disagreed w/ him noisily, and this problem, of how best to employ his tanks after the *Dnieper* and *Dvina* rivers had been crossed, continued to beset him throughout July. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 283)

Jul-Dec 41: While the tumultuous developments on the eastern front unfolded, the Reich was gradually turning into a Fuehrer state w/ an *absentee Fuehrer*. Once the eastern campaign had started, and esp. once it was realized that this was to be no repeated rapid military triumph, his *absence became prolonged* and then, in effect, *permanent*. Whereas Churchill was concerned to speak to the British people and let himself be seen as often as was practicable, *Hitler practically disappeared from the public eye*. During the remaining months of **1941**, and w/ the popular mood in the Reich far from buoyant, he *scarcely left his field HQ* to appear in public in Germany. Pressed by Goebbels to give a speech to rouse sagging morale, he deigned to spend **6** hours in Berlin on **3.10.41**. A month later, on **8.11.41**, he travelled to Munich, gave his customary address to the „Old Fighters“ of the Movement to commemorate the Putsch, spoke next day to the Reichs- and Gauleiter, and left immediately for the Wolf's Lair. And he attended on **21.11.41**, the funeral in Berlin of General Ernst Udet, returning **6** days later (**27.11.41**) for the ceremony prolonging the Anti-Comintern Pact and using the occasion to receive a number of foreign dignitaries before departing again for the FHQ in East Prussia after a stay of **2** days. Otherwise, the German people saw him only in occasional newsreel clips, usually in the company of generals. His continued absence in 1941 was the start of a process which, as the war progressed and final victory became a mirage, would transform the most *notable populist leader* of the 20th Century...into a *remote and distant figure*. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 420)

4.7.41: By this day, the Russians had lost 4,600 tanks and countless airplanes. In a "breezy mood," Hitler often lingered until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. talking with his staff about the future—and

above all about his plans for colonizing Russia for the Germans. "I will go down in history as the destroyer of bolshevism," he bragged. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 82)

4.7.41 [Hitler]: „Ich versuche mich dauernd in die Lage des Feindes zu versetzen. Praktisch hat er diesen Krieg schon verloren.“ (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1050)

5.7.41: Confident of victory, Hitler speaks to his private staff of making the „beauties of the Crimea“ accessible by *Autobahn* from Germany: “for us Germans, that will be our Riviera.” Croatia, too, he says, will become a “tourists’ paradise for us.” (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 207)

5.-14.7.41: In der Nacht vom **5.-6.7.41** erklarte Hitler erstmals, die *Ural-Grenze* fuer sein Reich anzustreben. Am **8.7.41** bekundete er seine „*grundsatzliche Entschlossenheit*“, *Leningrad* u. *Moskau* „dem Erdboden gleichzumachen, um zu verhindern, dass Menschen darin bleiben, die wir dann im Winter ernahren muessten. Er wolle eine „*Volkskatastrophe*“ herbeifuehren, die nicht nur den Bolschewismus, sondern auch das *Moskowitertum* der Zentren beraube. Am **14.7.41** gab Hitler bereits eine *Weisung* heraus, dass der Schwerpunkt der Ruestung vom Heer weg auf die *Kriegsmarine* u. vor allem auf die *Luftwaffe* u. damit auf den gleich jetzt anschliessenden grossen Krieg gegen die USA u. Grossbritannien zu legen sei. Ebenfalls am **14.7.41** empfing Hitler den japanischen Botschafter *Oshima* u. schlug ihm in knappster Form ein umfassendes *Offensivbuendnis* zwischen Deutschland u. Japan gegen die USA vor...Hitler schaltete sich damit zugleich in die nach dem **22.6.41** eingeleiteten Bemuehungen *Ribbentrops* ein, *Japan zu einem Vorgehen gegen die Sowjetunion zu bewegen*. (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 442-43)

8.7.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: „Mittags gegen 12 Uhr landen wir auf einem Flugplatz in der Naehue von *Rastenburg*. Es herrscht eine bruetende Hitze. Das ganze Gebeit ist von *Muecken-schwaermen* uebersaet, die sehr unangenehm wirken...Eine halbe Stunde Autofahrt, u. wir befinden uns im Hauptquartier...Dann kommt der Fuehrer von den mil. Besprechungen. Sein Aussehen ist ueber Erwarten gut, u. er macht einen durchaus *optimistischen u. glaeubigen Eindruck*. Er entwickelt mir zunaechst in kurzen Zuegen die mil. Situation, die er *ueberraschend positive ansieht*. Nach seinen handfesten u. bewiesenen Unterlagen sind zwei Drittel der bolschewikischen Wehrkraft bereits vernichtet oder doch sehr schwer angeschlagen. Fuenf Sechstel der bolschewikischen Luft- u. Tankwaffe koennen auch als vernichtet gelten...“ (*Joseph Goebbels, Echolot*, 298-99)

8.7.41: Two-thirds of the Russian armed forces and 5/6 of their tanks and acft have been destroyed or severely damaged, Hitler tells Goebbels on the latter’s first visit to Rastenburg. After assessing the military situation in detail w/ his *Wehrmacht* advisors, Goebbels noted, the Fuehrer’s conclusion was “that the war in the East was in the main already won.” (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 398)²⁴⁸

8./13.7.41: When victory seemed certain, Hitler’s mind turned to future campaigns. On **8 Jul 41**, he instructs *Brauchitsch* not to send any new tanks to the eastern front; the *panzer* divisions are to be reduced in number, and idle tank crews sent back to Germany to train fresh tank divisions. On **13.7.41**, he confirms this in an OKW order: in addition to the **20** existing panzer divisions, the army was to establish **16** more by **1.5.42** – **12** for the east and **24** for other tasks. (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 284)

²⁴⁸ **Note:** On other occasions, even at this early stage, Hitler was less ebullient, betraying signs of uncertainty about the Soviet Union, about which, he said, they knew so little. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 398; also, *Christa Schroeder, Er war mein Chef*, 113)

9.7.41: Am **9. Jul 41** erklarte Hitler Goebbels gegenueber, „dass der Krieg im Osten in der Hauptsache gewonnen ist. Wir werden noch eine Reihe von schweren Schlachten zu schlagen haben, aber von den bisherigen Niederlagen wird sich die Wehrmacht des Bolschewismus nicht mehr erholen koennen.“ (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 457-58; see also, *Goebbels, Tagebuch*)

10.7.41: According to *Walther Hewel's* private diary, on this day, Hitler sat up until **3:00** a.m. “in a boiling hot bunker.” (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 82)

10.7.41: Hitler tells *Hewel*: „I was forced into this fight step by step, but Germany will emerge from it as the *greatest national power on earth*.“ *Hewel* adds in his diary: „He [Hitler] is infinitely confident of victory. The tasks confronting him today are as nothing, he says, compared w/ those in the years of struggle; particularly since ours is the biggest and finest army in the world.“ (Quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 284)

12.7.41: OKW diarist *H. Greiner* observes: “We didn't discuss this [the fighting in the East] at all yesterday. At first the Fuehrer just brooded silently to himself. Then he livened up and expatiated for well over an hour about our courageous, dare-devil Italian allies, and the headaches they're giving him. I can only marvel at his insight and perception. Apart from this, *he's looking good and seems in good health although he hardly ever goes to bed before 5:00 or 6:00 a.m.*” (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 82)

14.7.41: By this date, Hitler convinced the *war was won*, and gave orders for war production to be switched from army to naval and air force orders. Tank production slowed [so says Johnson; confirm!]. He hoped to start pulling back some infantry divisions by end of **Aug 41**, w/ armor following in **Sep 41**, leaving only **50-60** divisions to hold a line *Astrakhan – Archangel*, and to conduct punitive raids to and over the *Urals*. Then he would begin his descent on the *Middle East* and into *India*. (*P. Johnson*, 378)

Mid-Jul 41: Hitler vacillated in mid-Jul 41, w/ victory in the east *comfortably at his fingertips*, and then made the **most significant decision of WWII in Europe** – to deflect elements of AGC into the Ukraine. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 36; also, *Clark, Barbarossa*, 98-113; and, *Blau, Campaign in Russia*, 69-70, 89 [para C].)

16.7.41: An diesem Tage hatte Goebbels mit Hitler eine Unterredung, anschliessend notierte er in seinem Tagebuch Hitlers Argumente fuer den Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion: „Wir muessen handeln. Moskau wird sich aus dem Krieg heraushalten, bis Europa ermuedet u. ausgeblutet ist. Dann moechte Stalin handeln, Europa bolschewisieren u. sein Regiment antreten. Durch diese Rechnung wird ihm ein Strich gemacht. [...] Russland wuerde uns angreifen, wenn wir schwach werden, u. dann haetten wir den Zweifrontenkrieg, den wir durch diese Praeventivaktion verhindern.“ Mit dieser Einschaeztung traf Hitler den Kern, die Grundprinzipien u. Ziele der Aussenpolitik Stalins in den betreffenden Jahren gegenueber Europa im Allgemeinen u. Deutschland in Besonderen. Hier ist jedoch Bernd Wegner zuzustimmen, der in diesem Zusammenhang fragt, „wo in derartigen Aeusserungen die Grenze zwischen persoenlicher Ueberzeugung u. propagandistischem Legitimationskalkuel verlaeuft.“ (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 459-60)

19.7.41: [Fuehrerweisung 33]: Betr: Die *Fuehrerweisung 33*, die am 23. Juli ergaenzt wurde: „Mit diesen beiden Weisungen wurde **der bisherige Schwerpunkt vor Moskau zerschlagen**; sie enthuellten Hitlers *Wunschtraum*, seinen beiden weit auseinanderliegenden Zielen *Leningrad* u.

Kaukasus nachzujagen...Hitler befahl als *operativer Theoretiker ohne Praxis* nach der Landkarte, auf der es scheinbar keine Schwierigkeiten u. keine Entfernungen gab.“ (*Nehring, Panzerwaffe, 224*)²⁴⁹

20.7.41: The *complete failure* of his intelligence agencies rattled Hitler. An *Abwehr* colonel apprehensively recorded on **20 Jul 41:** „C[anaris] has just returned from the Fuehrer’s [HQ] and describes the mood there as *very jittery*, as it is increasingly evident that the Russian campaign is not „going by the book.“ The signs are multiplying that this war will not bring about the expected internal collapse, so much as the invigoration of bolshevism . . .“ (Quoted in: *Irving, Hitler’s War, 286*)

21.7.41: *Helmuth Greiner, OKW* war diarist, notes of Hitler: „He looks in the best of health and seems well although he seldom gets to bed before **5-6:00 a.m.**“ (Quoted in, *Irving, Hitler’s War, 286*)

29.7.41: Fuehrer betont wiederholt, dass die bis heute erzielten Erfolge im Osten weit ueber das hinausgingen, was er vor Beginn des Feldzuges erhofft haette, sowohl raeumlich als noch hinsichtlich der Vernichtung des Feindes...(„*Hitler waehrend der ersten drei Monate des Ostfeldzuges 1941,*“ **KDC**, Microfilm „E;“ also, *KTB OKW*)

30.7.41: OKH and, so it appeared, Army Group Ctr had certain reservations about the operation which Hitler did not share. The arguments were still going on at the end of July when Hitler fell ill for a few days. He failed to appear for meals and the daily situation conferences: it was quite obvious from his appearance how miserable he felt. Dr Morell said it was probably a slight apoplexy. Hitler’s heart and circulation were not in good order, but w/in a short while he would return the Fuehrer to his former self. After a few days there was a noticeable improvement. We were ordered to observe the strictest silence about Hitler’s condition. This was a health crisis w/ potentially serious consequences, however, and it worried me sufficiently to confide it to my brother on 30 July. (v. *Below, At Hitler’s Side, 109*)

Late July 1941 [Hitler’s health collapsed]: He had a row with his foreign minister *von Ribbentrop*, who screamed at him at one stage: “God doesn’t let people take a look at the cards he’s holding!” Hitler suddenly paled, stopped in mid-retort, slumped into a chair and clutched his heart. Ribbentrop was petrified and promised never to lose his temper again. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell, 82*)²⁵⁰

Jul/Aug 41: Hitler was clearly stunned by what he had soon learned about the advanced levels of Soviet preparation for war, their massive buildup of armaments, their excellent – even superior – new wpns (i.e., **T-34** and **KV** tanks). He intimated that, had he known this, his decision to attack Russia would have been a much more difficult one to make. He made such comments to Goering, Goebbels, Admiral Canaris, etc. For details see, *H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 33-34*)

²⁴⁹ Nehring also writes of a „exzentrischen Zersplitterung der Kraefte durch Hitler.“ (224)

²⁵⁰ As D. Irving notes, *Hitler was aging*. Dr *Hasselbach* would say under interrogation in 1945: “Prior to 1940 Hitler appeared to be much younger than he actually was. After that date, however, he aged quite rapidly. From 1940 to 1943 he actually looked his age, while after that time he gave the appearance of having grown old.” (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell, 97*)

30.7.-18.8.41: Hitler *succumbs to doubt* even before his generals. As early as end of July he began to consider the possibility that the Red Army might not be destroyed in **1941**. On his instructions, the *Wehrmacht* high command issued a strategic directive openly acknowledging this possibility. Indeed, Hitler's *moment of strategic realism* appears to have gone further than this. When *Goebbels* visited *Rastenburg* on **18.8.41**, he was shocked to find his Fuehrer talking of a *negotiated peace w/ Stalin*. For Hitler, moreover, the possibility of a *stalemate in the east* had immediate *operational implications*. Ever since the first staff studies of *Barbarossa*, Hitler and the *Wehrmacht* high command had assumed that, if the initial assault failed to destroy the Red Army, *strategic considerations would take priority*. If Germany was to face a long war on two fronts, it was essential to secure full control of the grain and raw materials of the Ukraine, as well as complete command of the Baltic, w/o which Germany could not guarantee its deliveries of iron ore from Scandinavia. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 489)

Jul-Sep 41 [Hitler's *table talk*]: Hitler's „conversations“ were *monologues*, delivered in a *rich Austrain dialect* to a handful of cronies assembled in his *bunker*, or over lunch or dinner at the long oblong table w/ *Jodl* at his left, an outside guest like *Speer* or *Goebbels* at his right, and his HQ staff – the liaison officers, the younger adjutants, and secretaries – at their allotted places. Hitler would talk about the Party and *Christianity*. One of Hitler's devoted secretaries recorded in her diary in **mid-Jul 41** the milieu of these „discussions,“ which could drag on until the first light of day! (For quote see, *Irving, Hitler's War*, 284)

Jul-Sep 41 [*Summer*]: Adolf Hitler's own *health was poor*, for the first time in five (5) years. The influence of this on military events that summer „cannot be ignored.“ After the conclusion of the French campaign a year earlier, he had complained of *breathing difficulties* and had been X-rayed in Munich. Dr *Morell* had feared *pleurisy*. The stress of the Russian campaign, coupled w/ the hot, malarial climate in which *Wolf's Lair* had been sited, told severely on the dictator. Worse, the brackish waters of *Masuria* had infected him w/ *dysentery*; and for **14** days until **mid-Aug 41** he was afflicted w/ *diarrhea, stomach pains, nausea, aching limbs, shivery feelings, and high temperatures*. As the crucial strategic controversy developed in these weeks between Hitler and his generals, his ability to overrule them was *impaired by his own physical weakness*. Hitler was still very weak when *Goebbels* visited him on **18.8.41**: “Unhappily, he looks somewhat *strained and sickly*. This is probably a result of his *dysentery*, and perhaps also of the drain on his strength these last few weeks.“ On **14.8.41**, Dr *Morell* performed an *electrocardiogram* study of Hitler's heart. The graphs were sent to a leading authority on heart conditions, Prof. *Karl Weber*, director of the heart institute at *Bad Nauheim*. From them, *Weber* diagnosed beyond a doubt that „*Patient A*“ was *suffering from virtually incurable heart disease* – rapidly progressive coronary sclerosis. (For more details, *Morell's* treatment plan, etc., see, (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 293-95)

Aug 41: At the *Wolf's Lair*, Hitler begins holding *war conferences* each morning and evening. These were to become *nightmares* for their regular participants. – theatrical performances dominated by the insistent monologues of the *Fuehrer*, rambing discourses on generalities intermingled w/ *sudden snap decisions* intervening in even the lowest echelons of the army's command. The conferences lasted for *hours on end*, sapping the energy of his generals . . . (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 298)

Aug 41: According to *Robert Citino*, one of the „*most interesting books ever written on Barbarossa*“ is **R.H.S. Stolfi's** „*Hitler's Panzers East: World War II Reinterpreted*.“ Writes *Citino*: „*Stolfi* argues, w/ a *great deal of documentation to back him up*, that a drive on Moscow was certainly within the power of the *Wehrmacht* in August, that it had the logistics and combat

strength to get there, and that Hitler's *fundamental underestimation of the offensive capabilities of the German army* and his interpretation of the war as a '*siege*' were the real problems of the campaign. Hitler's turn to Kiev, for Stolfi, is *nothing less than ,the most important judgement' of the 20th Century.*" (Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 328, f.n. 76; Stolfi, *Hitler's Panzers East*, 201)

4.8.41: Hitler visits HQ of Hr.Gr.Mitte at *Borisov*. Tells both v. Bock and Guderian: "Had I known they had as many tanks as that, I'd have thought twice before invading." (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 221)

4.8.41: [*Hitler* an *Guderian*] „Wenn ich gewusst haette, dass die von Ihnen in Ihrem Buch frueher genannten Panzerzahlen der Russen tatsaechlich stimmen, dann haette ich...diesen Krieg nicht angefangen!“ Aehnlich aeusserte er sich am selben Tage bei der Hr.Gr.Mitte. (*Guderian*, *Errinerungen*, 172; *Warlimont*, 201.)

5.8.41: Hitler weakly warns the Army's C-in-C, *Walther v. Brauchitsch*, "If this frontal fighting goes on as at present, things are going to seize up solid as they did in WWI." (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 83)

6.8.41: Hitler flies from *Borisov* [where he had visited Hr.Gr.Mitte] to *Berdichev*, to visit the HQ of Hr.Gr.Sued. With him is Walther Hewel, who notes in his diary: "Ruined monastery church. Opened coffins, execution, ghastly town. Many Jews, ancient cottages, fertile soil. Very hot. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 221)

6.8.41: Hitler flies to the *Ukraine* for military conference. Hewel recorded his impressions: "Four A.M., took off for Berdichev, flew on three hours across Russia, to Bialystok. At a school there (Rundstedt's army HQ) met w/ *General Antonescu*...Strolled through Berdichev. Ruined monastery church. Opened coffins, execution, ghastly town. Many Jews, ancient cottages, fertile soil." The heat wave was still bearing down on them as they flew back to the *Wolfsschanze* that evening. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 83-4)

7.8.41: *By morning Hitler was ill.* It was a little sensation in the Fuehrer HQ. *Hewel* wrote in cryptic language in his diary, using Indonesian, as he had been a rubber planter in his youth in Java: "Fuherer *sakit* [ill]"—he had not turned up for lunch or the war conference, and was unable to sleep because of his affliction." *Hitler had contracted dysentery.* For three vital weeks [i.e., through most of August 1941] he would be weakened by diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea, aching limbs, shivery feelings and fever. What had caused it? The climate, the insanitary conditions, and his eccentric life-style certainly contributed...

The *military consequences were serious.* The sudden illness forced Hitler to bed—now of all times, in the thick of the heaviest fighting on the eastern front. Naval adjutant *Karl-Jesco von Puttkamer*, a tall, cigar-smoking navy captain, observed how Hitler's *growing feebleness* left him incapable of outarguing the dynamic army generals who came to the war conference each day that summer, determined on scrapping the original encirclement strategy of Hitler's *Barbarossa* directive, and converting the campaign's main thrust into a traditional frontal assault on the Soviet capital, Moscow. According to D. Irving, the illness worsened and the generals got their way. GFM v. Bock's armies would still be struggling outside Moscow when the Russian winter arrived. Reichmarschall *Hermann Goering* said under interrogation: "I still believe that had Hitler's original plan of genius not been diluted like that, the eastern campaign would have been decided by early 1942 at the latest." (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 82-84)

7.8.41: (*diary Dr Morell*): “Saw Fuehrer at 1:30 p.m. in map room. Said he’d been sitting down when he suddenly felt dizzy, with attacks of nausea and retching. Had flown to *Berdichev* yesterday, three hours out and three hours back. Of late he’s been looking pretty bad all the time, and pale... This bunker atmosphere has been getting him down for 5 or 6 weeks now. Then *Junge* suddenly telephoned for me to come *immediately* to the Fuehrer, says he suddenly felt giddy and is over in his bunker. Hurried over w/ *Junge*! [Hitler’s] face deathly white.” “I feel very bad now,” he said, “much worse than I was earlier...” (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 84-5) (Note: See Morell’s diary entries for details his treatment of Hitler, which included a dizzying array of medications, injections, etc. Among other things, Hitler had *elevated blood pressure and pulse rate of 90*. Also suffered from *constant buzzing in left ear*. To fight buzzing in Hitler’s ears, Morell would resort to one of history’s most ancient remedies, *leeches*. Hitler was fascinated by the leeches. 87)

8.8.41: (*diary Dr Morell*): Fuehrer sent word over by valet this morning that he has *never had a day in bed since being gassed in the World War*, so he thinks he’s a rotten patient... Fuehrer was very irritable, is feeling a lot worse than yesterday, hasn’t slept a wink... Fuehrer then got out of bed, dressed and went over to the map room. I sent word over at midday that he should only have tea and a biscuit, with no sweetening in the tea. He ordered spaghetti and strawberries. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 86)

8.-11.8.41: Hitler’s musings on the prospect of a German equivalent to *India* continues on three successive days and nights from 8-11 Aug 41. India had given the English pride. The vast spaces had obliged them to rule millions w/ only a few men. “What India was for England, the eastern territory will be for us,” he declares. For Hitler, India was the heart of an empire that had brought Britain not only power, but prosperity. Ruthless economic exploitation had always been central to his dream of a German empire in the east. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 402)

13.-18.8.41 [*Goebbels at Rastenburg*]: Upon his arrival at the *Wolfsschanze* on **18 Aug 41**, Goebbels found Hitler in an exhausted state, both physically and mentally. Hitler was apparently suffering from another bout of dysentery and from the stresses and strains of the last four [4] weeks which, as Goebbels noted, had “*given him a hard time*.” The military developments on the eastern front, the high number of German casualties and the ongoing food and fuel shortages had made the *German population weary* and the Nazi leadership tense and nervous. “*That was a difficult time for all of us*,” Goebbels noted. “*We had not expected military problems to that extent*.”

Hitler asked for a detailed report from Goebbels about the mood in the population and about the situation in Berlin. Goebbels’ report made it clear that the Germans were unhappy about the progress in the war, especially about the prospect of spending yet another winter in the air-raid shelters. The constant British air raids gave reason for widespread concern among the general public. On **13 Aug 41**, a severe bombing raid had hit the capital; on **16 Aug 41** more than **300** bombers had attacked the cities of Hanover, Braunschweig and Magdeburg. . . (*U. Schmidt, Karl Brandt: The Nazi Doctor*, 165)

14.8.41: Midday, Dr Morell performs an *electrocardiogram* and blood count on the Fuehrer. Morell would have it assessed by the well-known heart specialist Prof. Dr. Weber of Bad Nauheim. Weber’s diagnosis was that Hitler had contracted *coronary sclerosis*. As D. Irving notes, the “defect was not abnormal in a man of Hitler’s age, 52. At first, Morell kept this news from Hitler. Meanwhile, Hitler’s *late teaparties* continued. For example, on evening of 14th *Hewel* noted that he sat up “from nine P.M. to 3:15 A.M. w/ the Fuehrer.” (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 90)

15.8.41: Hitler at his HQ in *Vinnitsa*? (confirm!) (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 90)

Mid-Aug 41 [Goebbels bei der Wolfsschanze]: Zu dieser Zeit machte Goebbels seinen ersten Besuch in Hitlers ostpreussischem Hauptquartier „Wolfsschanze.“ Dort gestand ihm ein von den Ereignissen der vergangenen Wochen immer noch schockierter u. „sehr reizbarer“ Oberbefehlshaber, dass die sowj. Stosskraft u. vor allem die Ausrüstung der Sowjetarmeen *dramatisch unterschätzt worden seien*. Auf Goebbels' Frage, ob Hitler bei Kenntnis dessen vor einem Angriff gegen die Sowjetunion zurueckgeschreckt waere, gab dieser zu verstehen, dass er sich zwar grundsatzlich „niemals“ haette davon beeinflussen lassen, ihm jedoch in diesem Falle der Entschluss „viel schwerer“ gefallen waere. (*R.G. Reuth, Goebbels*, 484)

16.8.41: [Showalter commentary] 7 PD, w/ rest of 39. Pz.Kps, transferred to Hr.Gr.Nord to support attack on *Leningrad*. Hr.Gr.Mitte was to shift to defensive, w/ most of its remaining armor assigned to Hr.Gr.Sued to expedite capture of Donetz Basin and the Crimea. *This decision, made by Hitler over the strenuous objections of the Army High Command, reflected the dictator's growing conviction that a decisive victory in 1941 was no longer possible.* (*R.H.S. Stolfi, Hitler's Panzers East*, argues it cost Germany the campaign and the war.) (*K. Fuchs*, 126).

17.8.41 (*diary Dr Morell*): One A.M. Arrived back at headquarters. Fuehrer claims to be “right as rain.” (Note: During this period in August when sick, Hitler often eating potatoes and strawberries at midday meal. (90-92)

18.8.41: A beautiful day at the *Fuehrer's* HQ. Hitler's *dysentery* had passed, so he spent the four (4) hours of his talk w/ *Goebbels* strolling in the woods – the first time he had done so in five (5) weeks. Goebbels detected the strain in Hitler's features, but for a man of 52 the *Fuehrer's* vitality and application were remarkable. The *Wehrmacht's* big push southward would shortly begin. „The *Fuehrer* is not concerned w/ occupying particular regions or cities,“ wrote Goebbels. „He wants to avoid casualties if at all possible. Therefore, he does not intend to take Leningrad [*Goebbels* wrote „*Petersburg*“] or Kiev by force of arms, but to *starve them into submission*; once Leningrad has been cut off, his plan is to destroy the city's lifelines w/ his *Luftwaffe* and artillery.“ The exhausted German *panzer* divisions would shortly recuperate, continued Hitler to Goebbels. He hoped to be *beyond* Moscow by the time winter set in – presumably in **mid-Oct**. He put Stalin's losses at **3 million dead** already. Perhaps, he mused wistfully, Stalin might even now *sue for peace*. . . (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 304)

18.8.41: Probably Hitler's *ill-health in August*, at a time when he was **stunned by the recognition of the gross underestimation by German intelligence of the true level of Soviet forces**, temporarily weakened his resolve to continue the war in the east. Goebbels was astonished, on his visit to the FHQ on **18 Aug 41**, to hear Hitler entertain thoughts of *accepting peace terms* from Stalin; and even stating that Bolshevism, w/o the Red Army, would be no danger to Germany. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 412)

18.8.41: Entsprechend schlecht war die Verfassung des von *Ruhranfaellen* gepeinigten Hitler. Goebbels, der ihn am **18. Aug 41** in der „Wolfsschanze“ aufsuchte, notierte: „Er ... sieht ... angegriffen u. kraenklich aus.“ Hitler raemte bei dieser Gelegenheit freimuetig ein, dass es aufgrund der Fehleinschaetzung der Roten Armee „in den vergangenen Wochen ... manchmal etwas kritisch gestanden“ habe. Er war sich dabei des Ernstes der Lage bewusst, denn die vier [4] Tage zuvor verkuendete *Atlantikcharta* musste ihm unmissverstaendlich klargemacht haben, dass der *Kriegseintritt der USA* bedrohlich naeherrueckte. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 532)

19.8.41: In his diary, Dr Morell notes: “Did not give the Fuehrer a checkup today *as he felt fine.*” Yet according to David Irving, Morell contradicted by *Goebbels*, who wrote in his (“unpublished”) diary on the same day: “He [Hitler] unfortunately looks rather weak and sickly. That’s probably attributable to his attack of dysentery and to the fact that the last few weeks have taken their toll on his health.” (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 92)

20.8.41: Determined to plan the style of his victory, on this day Hitler instructs Albert Speer that, in the monumental centre of the new Berlin, **30** captured Soviet heavy artillery pieces are to be placed between the remodeled south station and the yet to be erected triumphal arch. Any “extra large” Soviet tanks that were captured would be reserved for setting up in front of the important public buildings. Both the artillery pieces and the tanks would be placed on granite pedestals. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 225)

25.-26.8.41: *Mussolini* arrived at the Wolf’s Lair in Rastenburg. After a joint war conference and a meal in the mess bunker, the two dictators drove off the next morning (the 26th) for *Brest-Litovsk* to inspect their troops. That evening they returned, only to depart at 8:00 p.m. by special train to the *alternative Fuehrer HQ South at Vinnitsa*, in the Ukraine. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 94)

27.8.41: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Waehrend eines Besuchs von *Mussolini* [to *Rastenberg*] fiel ihn auf, wie „*abgespannt u. muede*“ dabei Hitler erschien im Vergleich zu seinem Besucher, der „*frisch u. ganz Pose*“ daherstolziert sei. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 158)

27-28.8.41: At *Vinnitsa*, Hitler and *Mussolini* dine with Italian troops. The next day (28th) the journey continued—this time in a four-engined *Condors* that flew for 3 hours onward to *Uman*, where they were briefed by ground and air commanders, *Gerd v. Rundstedt* and *Alexander Loehr*. They then drove on through the endless expanses and the still unharvested fields; visit Italian troops at the front; then fly back to *Vinnitsa* in magnificent weather. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 94)²⁵¹

ca. 30.8.41: At end of **Aug 41**, *Christa Schroeder* [one of Hitler’s secretaries] writes from the Wolf’s Lair:

Our stay here at the [HQ] gets longer and longer . . . This protracted bunker existence can’t be doing us any good. The Chief [Hitler] *does not look too well either*, he gets too little fresh air and now he is oversensitive to sun and wind the moment he goes out in his car for a few hours. I would have loved to stay in *Galicia* [*Rundstedt’s HQ in Uman?*] – we were all in favor of it – but security there is not good enough. They say there are incidents there every day . . . The countryside down there has a surprising charm, w/ woodland on one side and gentle slopes on the other and the cattle silhouetted against the blue sky while the farmers plod behind their plows. How romantic the peasant cottages look, all battered and windblown, w/ their *thatched roofs* and scarcely a window in them, a wishing-well in front of them w/ a bucket on a rusty chain and a few *sunflowers*; the women are suntanned and *barefoot* w/ large dark cloths wrapped

²⁵¹ Note: **6.9.41** is the *final entry* in Morell’s diary for 1941. The diary entries don’t begin again until mid-June 1942. Thus, some 9 months missing. (Unless they’ve been found since David Irving’s book was published in 1983.)

around their heads and reaching down to their waists . . . It reminds me somehow of home. (quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 309)

6.9.41: At beginning of September, the *first indications of a sudden change in Hitler's strategy* were noted. In the north, the *isolation of Leningrad was imminent*; between *Lakes Ladoga and Ilmen*, the **18th Army** was gradually pushing its way into the *Volkov River sector*; south of *Lake Ilmen*, the **16th Army** had reached the area west of the *Valdai Hills*. In the south, the movements ordered by Hitler to effect an *encirclement at Kiev* were progressing favorably. On **6.9.41** – this time in agreement w/ the proposals of *Brauchitsch* – Hitler issued **Directive No. 35**, which ordered a rapid buildup of Army Group Center to launching a *decisive offensive*. When Hitler issued this new directive, he desired to *commence the new offensive within 8 to 10 days*; that is, by the middle of September. This, however, proved impossible; the troops were still engaged in carrying out ops of the directive of 21 August and had to be regrouped for their new assignments. (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 318-19)

6.9.41: As late as this date, Hitler wanted the attack on Moscow fixed for the first third of September, which clearly reveals to what extent he had already come under the *pressure of time*. (*K. Reinhardt, "Moscow 1941,"* 212)

10.9.41: At his HQ in East Prussia, Hitler waited impatiently for news from the eastern front. To provide the German public w/ the image of a leadership in charge, Hitler started to do some sightseeing. On **10 Sep 41**, Dr Karl Brandt accompanied Hitler to the Tannenberg Memorial, the place of Hindenburg's military victory in the First World War. After having stage-managed Hindenburg's funeral at the memorial in **1934**, Hitler returned to the scene w/ his entourage to promote the image of the victorious warlord amidst growing fears that the German Army had underestimated Russian resolve and resources. (*U. Schmidt, Karl Brandt: The Nazi Doctor*, 167-68)

17.9.41: In an optimistic mood, Hitler tells his guests at *Rastenburg* of the future demise of Russia. The Crimea would provide Germany w/ its citrus fruits, cotton and rubber: „We'll supply grain to all in Europe who need it.“ The Russian's would be denied education: „We'll find among them the human material that's indispensable for tilling the soil.“ The German settlers and rulers in Russia would have to constitute among themselves „a closed society, like a fortress. The least of our stable-lads must be superior to any native.“ (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 236)

17.-19.9.41: On the 17th, the ring around *Kiev* began to close; on the 19th, the first German troops entered the city. When this great encirclement was subsequently cleared out, **665.000** prisoners were taken as well as immense quantities of materiel. Hitler called this battle “the *greatest battle in the history of the world*.” Halder termed it “the *greatest strategic blunder of the eastern campaign*.”²⁵² [!](*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 319)

19.9.41: Hitler thought the Russian people fit for nothing but hard work under coercion. “The Slavs,” he declares, “were a rabbit-family (*Kaninchenfamilie*) who would never proceed beyond the family association if not forced to do so by a ruling class. Their natural and desired condition was one of general disorganization.” (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 400-01)

²⁵² The juxtaposition of these two contrary quotes provides a marvelous indication of just how far apart Hitler and OKH were in their strategic thinking!

23.9.41: Basking in the glow of the great victory at Kiev, Hitler is in an *ebullient mood* when Goebbels speaks alone w/ him at the FHQ. After bitterly complaining about the difficulties in getting his way w/ the “experts” in the General Staff, Hitler expressed the view that the defeats imposed on the Red Army in the Ukraine *marked the breakthrough*. “The spell is broken,” Goebbels recorded. Things would now unfold quickly on other parts of the front. All in all, the prospects at this point, in Hitler’s eyes, were rosy. One remark indicated, however, that an early end to the conflict was not in sight. Hitler tells Goebbels in passing – his assumption would soon prove disastrously misplaced – that *all necessary precautions had been made for wintering the troops in the east*. (Kershaw, Hitler, 415-16)

23.9.41: In a lengthy talk w/ Hitler on this day, Goebbels took the opportunity to describe the *state of morale* w/in Germany. Hitler, remarked the Propaganda Minister, was well aware of the „serious psychological test“ (*Belastungsprobe*) to which the German people had been subjected over the past weeks. After the *notable slide in morale*, Goebbels pressed Hitler, who had not appeared in public since the start of the Russian campaign and had last spoken to the German people on **4.5.41**, following the victorious Balkan campaign, to come to Berlin to address the nation. This, Hitler would do on **3.10.41**. (Kershaw, Hitler, 430-31)

Early Oct 41: According to David Irving: Hitler again “succumbed to a *mysterious, plagueslike illness*”...Again the “fat physician [Dr Morell] waddled over.” He was at a loss for an explanation, but by **October 10** this renewed affliction had fortunately for him passed over. “Spent evening with F.,” *Hewel* wrote in his diary. “Wonderfully relaxed and in best of spirits. Completely carefree.” Three days later he added: “Fuehrer in best of possible spirits, very relaxed.” What had happened. Apparently, Hitler had been attacked by *severe nausea* and heartburn (*uebles Aufstossen*). (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 95-6)

2.10.41: „*Taifun*“ begins. Lunch begins **50** minutes late at Hitler’s HQ as he listens to the first reports on this last battle . . . At **11:30 p.m.**, after having supper w/ *Heydrich*, Hitler takes his *special train to Berlin*, where he was to speak to the German people. (Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 317-18)

3.10.41: At **1:30 p.m.**, Hitler’s train arrives in Berlin. He lunches w/ his staff, then drives through streets of cheering crowds to the *Sportspalast*, where he now delivers on of the *most stirring speeches of his life* – wholly *ex tempore* and hence „enormously devout,“ as *Hewel* afterward reported. Hitler is exhilarated by the welcome the capital gives him . . . Within an hour, Hitler’s train is bearing him back to his HQ. Victory in Russia seemed *certain* . . . A grim *jocularity* overcomes Hitler [during these days] – he begins to talk freely again at mealtimes. (Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 319-20)

3.10.41: Around **1:00 p.m.**, Hitler’s train [*Amerika*] pulls into Berlin. Goebbels is immediately summoned to the Reich Chancellery. He finds Hitler looking well and full of *optimism*. In the privacy of Hitler’s room, he is given an overview of the situation at the front. The advance is proceeding better than expected. Big successes are being attained. „The Fueher is convinced,“ comments Goebbels in his diary the next day (**4.10.41**) „that if the weather stays moderately favorable the Soviet army will be essentially smashed w/in fourteen [**14**] days.“ (Kershaw, Hitler, 431)

3.10.41: Waehrend die Divisionen der Hr.Gr.Mitte den ersten gegnerischen Widerstand brachen u. planmaessig in Richtung Moskau vorgingen, verkuendete Hitler in *Berlin*, im *Sportspalast*, triumphierend: „Ich spreche das erst heute aus, weil ich es heute aussprechen darf,

dass *dieser Gegner bereits gebrochen ist u. sich nie mehr erheben wird.*“ („*Voelkischer Beobachter*,“ Berlin, 4.10.41, quoted in: *Gosztony, Entscheidungsschlacht*, 102)

3.10.41 [*Sportpalast*]: Cheering crowds line the streets as Hitler is driven in the afternoon to the *Sportpalast*. A rapturous reception awaits him in the *cavernous hall*. The first part of his speech is spent blaming the war on Britains warmongering clique, backed up by international Jewry. He goes on to justify the attack on the Soviet Union as *preventive*. He said German precautions had been incomplete on only one thing: „We had no idea how gigantic the preparations of this enemy were against Germany and Europe, and how immense the danger was, how by a hair’s breadth we have escaped the annihilation not only of Germany, but of the whole of Europe.“ He describes the threat as „a second Mongrol storm of a new *Gengis Khan*.“ But, he claimed, at last coming out w/ the words that his audience was anxious to hear: „I can say today that this enemy is already broken and will not rise up again.“ He goes on, to delight of audience, to pour scorn on British propaganda and heap praise on the *Wehrmacht* and efforts of the home front. Almost every sentence toward the end is interrupted by *storms of applause*. The audience in the *Sportpalast rises as one in an ecstatic ovation* at the end. Hitler is thrilled w/ his reception. But he is in a hurry to get away. He is driven straight back to the station. By **7:00 p.m.**, a mere **6** hours after he had arrived, he is on his way back to the FHQ. Goebbels had been w/ Hitler on his way to the station as the latest news came in from the front. The advance was going even better than expected; and the Fuehrer had reached the conclusion, so Goebbels, „*that victory can no longer be taken from us.*“ (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 432-33)

8.-11.10.41: On evening of the 8th, Hitler spoke of the decisive turn in the military situation over the previous three (**3**) days. Werner *Koepfen*, Rosenberg’s liaison at FHQ, reported to his boss that „the Russian army can essentially be seen as annihilated.“ Hitler’s view is that Bolshevism was heading for ruin through *lack of anti-tank defenses* (*Monologe*, **10.-11.10.41**) ”The rapid collapse of Russia would have a *disastrous impact on England*,“ he assured. Churchill had placed all his hopes in the Russian war-machine. „Now that too is past.“ (*Koepfen*, **16.10.41**) (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 433)

9.10.41:²⁵³ Halder is optimistic about chances of encircling Moscow. For a few hours, the odds against this seem to lengthen dramatically, as Hitler toys w/ the idea of sending Guderian and v. Weichs south toward Kursk. While he scraps the idea within hours, this is further proof of the minimal importance the Fuehrer placed on Moscow, and the corresponding value he attached to destroying the Red Army. After all, many German leaders assumed they had eliminated the enemy forces defending Moscow at Viazma and Bryansk, and should therefore concentrate on the flanks. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 75)

12.10.41: Am 12. Oktober entschied Hitler, „*dass eine Kapitulation von Moskau nicht anzunehmen sei...Das Chaos in Russland wird um so groesser, unsere Verwaltung u. Ausnuetzung der besetzten Ostgebiete um so leichter werden, je mehr die Bevoelkerung der sowjetrussischen Staedte nach dem Innern Russlands fluechtet.*“ (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 455; also, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1070)

13.10.41: The Russian front is „cracking in every joint.“ Hitler is still fired w/ optimism. On the 13th, he and Ribbentrop first begin laying the foundations for a Nazi version of a *united Europe*. He unfolds his economic ideas – based on European self-sufficiency – to his own minister of economic, Walther *Funk*, the same day. Hitler has a vision in which the *Danube*, which is linked

²⁵³ Check Halder *Tagebuch* to confirm date!

by the Black Sea to the Dnieper and the Don, would now be joined by canals to the Main and Oder. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 328)

Mid-Oct 41: Tatsaechlich scheint Hitler, der die Hr.Gr.Nord ueber den Wolchow gehen liess, um die Verbindung mit den Finnen am Swyr aufzunehmen, die Hr.Gr.Mitte auf Moskau u. die Hr.Gr.Sued auf die Krim, Rostov u. Maikop jenseits des Kuban marschieren liess, das strategische Geschehnis als endgueltig erledigte Angelegenheit angesehen zu haben, die es ihm gestattete, sich alle Arten von *Verfolgungsoperationen in divergierenden Richtungen* zu ueberlegen. Er war seiner Sache so sicher, dass er die **1. KavDiv**, die zur **24 PD** wird, und das **VIII AK** mit der **8 u. 28 ID** aus der Front zieht, um sie auf den westl. Kriegsschauplatz zu verlegen. (Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 133)

ca. mid-Oct 41: Because of their enormous initial successes, Hitler orders Army Group Ctr, which up to that time had been limited in the encirclement of Moscow, to undertake still further objectives. These extend to *Vologda* in the north to encircle the enemy in front of Army Group North and to make contact w/ the Finns, and up to *Voronezh* in the south to establish closer contact w/ Army Group South. This new allocation of effort, *resisted* in vain by von Bock, results in an *excentric splitting-up of the armored elements* and hence in a decisive weakening of units which might have successfully conducted a rapid pursuit toward Moscow. (K. Reinhardt, "Moscow 1941," 213-14)

17.10.41: Hitler dines w/ Todt and Fritz *Sauckel* – the Fuehrer's manpower commissioner. Again, the Nazi warlord dreams aloud of the *vast construction projects* whereby he would open the east in a manner similar to the way the Americans had colonized the west . . . Hitler speaks of a highway to the Crimea and also of one to the Caucasus, etc. Where the big rivers are crossed, German cities are to arise, as centers of the *Wehrmacht*, police, administration, and Party authorities. Along these roads will lie German farmsteads, etc. In **10 years 4,000,000** Germans will have settled there; and in **20 years at least 10,000,000**. All Europe shall play a part in the opening up of Russia . . . (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 329)

17.10.41: *Rzhev, Belgorod, Stalino* and *Taganrog* have all fallen to the *Ostheer* in the past **48** hours; in the south, Manstein has broken into the Crimea. That evening at Rastenburg, Hitler tells his guests, including Dr. Todt, of his plans for motor roads to the Crimea and the Caucasus. „These roads,“ he says, „will be studded along their whole length w/ German towns, and around these towns our colonists will settle“ – not only Germans, but Scandinavians, and even people from „Western countries and America.“ As for the local inhabitants, „we'll have to screen them carefully. The Jew, the destroyer, we shall drive out.“ (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 245)

21.10.41: On this evening, Hitler's private talk was entirely of the architectural future of Berlin. „Nothing will be too good,“ he says, „for the beautification of Berlin. When one enters the Reich Chancellery, one should have the feeling that one is *visiting the master of the world*. One will arrive there along wide avenues containing the Triumphal Arch, the Pantheon of the Army, the Square of the People – things to take your breath away!“ The new Berlin, Hitler explains, will be built of *granite*: „Granite will ensure that our monuments last for ever.“ (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 248)

25./29.10.41: Despite fact that pace of German offensive had slowed down considerably and was at an almost complete standstill by end of **Oct 41**, Hitler, mindful of the victories at Vyaz'ma and Bryansk and elated by the enormous quantity of prisoners and booty, believed that the war had really already been won. In a conversation w/ the Italian foreign minister, Count Galeazzo Ciano, on **25 Oct 41**, while he could not say "anything precise" about when Moscow would be captured,

still believed that Russia was beaten. . . and claimed that “this winter Russia would probably suffer the same fate as Napoleon.” Hitler’s objectives were beyond Moscow – focusing now on the Caucasus and even on India. . . He promised Ciano that Italian troops “might possibly be able to take part in the fighting against India. . .” He regarded the Russian campaign as more or less finished, believing that Russia could never recover from its losses and “was at the end of its tether.” . . .

Hitler believed that Russia was beaten and that not only had the campaign in the east been won, but “essentially had finally been decided,” as he wrote to Mussolini on **29 Oct 41**. He wrote to Mussolini that he did not consider himself to be “a rash prophet” when he stated that whatever measures Stalin took, the Bolshevik regime was beaten. These statements cannot simply be regarded as boasting to Mussolini and Ciano, but rather as evidence of what [Hitler] really believed. This assertion is also borne out by his plan to withdraw a substantial part of **Luftflotte 2** and to transfer them to the Mediterranean. . . Hitler did not realize the seriousness of the actual situation on the eastern front at the end of **Oct 41**. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 128; 132)

26.10.41: Hitler asks the army’s quartermaster general, Eduard *Wagner*, to what extent he had provisioned the eastern armies w/ winter gear. Both the *Luftwaffe* and the SS had prepared for their winter campaign in Russia in **Feb or Mar 41**, and during the summer Hitler had *continually reminded Wagner* to see to army winter needs. However, Wagner’s private letters indicate that he had only addressed himself to the problem on **19.10.41**. Now he assures Hitler that, by **30 Oct**, both Leeb and Rundstedt would have received half their winter equipment, while the numerically far larger Army Group Ctr would have received only one-third. (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 333)

26.10./1.11.41: Hitler, on **26 Oct**, directly asks the Quartermaster-General *Wagner* about winter provisions for the troops. Wagner promises that army groups North and South would have a half of their necessary provisions by end of month, but Army Group Ctr, would only have 1/3. A few days later (**1 Nov 41**), Hitler visits the HQ of Army High Command to look at the exhibition of winter clothing which Wagner has assembled. Once more the army Quartermaster assures Hitler that provision of the troops w/ sufficient clothing was in hand. Hitler accepts the assurance. When Wagner speaks to Goebbels, he gives him the impression that „everything had been thought of and nothing forgotten.“ In fact, Wagner appears to have become seriously concerned by this vital matter only w/ the rapid deterioration of the weather in **mid-Oct**, while Halder had been aware as early as **Aug 41** that the problem of transport of winter clothing and equipment to the eastern front could only be solved by the defeat of the Red Army before the worst of the weather set in. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 435; also, *Halder KTB*, 9.7.41, 2.8.41; *E. Wagner*, 206-07)

27.10.41 [Goebbels bei Hitler]: Die im Osten hereinbrechende Schlechtwetterperiode, die Strassen u. Wege ueber Nacht in Schlammbahnen verwandelte . . . liess nach dem Sieg ueber die Rote Armee bei Wjasam u. Brjansk die Kampfhandlugnen gar abebben. Gegen Ende **Okt 41** stand deshalb nicht nur fuer Goebbels die Frage im Mittelpunkt, ob die Sowjets tatsaechlich geschlagen seien, wie es ihre gewaltigen Verluste an Menschen u. Material u. die Uebersiedlung der sowj. Regierung von Moskau nach Kujibyschew an der Wolga nahezulegen schienen. Als er am **27 Okt 41** abermals mit Hitler zusammentraf, floesste ihm dieser mit seiner ausserordentlich positiven Einschaetzung der militaerischen Lage Optimismus ein: „Wir warten nur auf Trockenheit oder gar Frost. Koennen unser Panzer ihre Motoren wieder anwerfen, sind die Strassen von Schlamm u. Schlick befreit, dann wird der Sowjetwiderstand in relativ kuerzer Zeit gebrochen sein,“ glaubte Goebbels. (*R.G. Reuth, Goebbels*, 488)

31.10.41: Snow settles in at the Wolf's Lair. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 334)

Nov 41: Oblt. Dr. Scheidt²⁵⁴ related following story to *Marianne Feuersenger* (*Sekretarin* in WFSt/WKrGesch): „Scheidt erzahlt mir ueber die Fuehrungsrolle Hitlers ein Beispiel aus dem November. Als da die *Reichsbahn in Russland so katastrophal versagt*, liess der Fuehrer *Staatssekretaer Kleinmann* kommen, machte ihm eine *Riesenszene*, fasste ihn an der Krawatte, schmiss ihn raus.“ (*Im Vorzimmer der Macht*, M. Feuersenger, 94)

Nov 41: According to *David Irving*, there are signs that Hitler is willing “to envisage offering peace terms to the enemy . . . By early **Nov 41**, Ribbentrop's diplomatic seismographs detected other signs that the Fuehrer wanted peace [w/ England, it appears] . . . For Hitler, the thrills of warmaking had long palled. (*Hitler's War*, 338-39)

1.11.41: Hitler spends an hour at General Staff HQ, inspecting for himself the *winter equipment* Wagner had organized. He made no comment, but Wagner noted: “He looked at and listened closely to everything; he appeared fresh and lively and was in a good mood.” But a mood of restlessness, of uneasiness and annoyance, beset him. The war might now go on for two more years, he realized. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 334)

2.11.41: „If Russia goes under in the war,“ Hitler tells his guests at Rastenburg on this day, „Europe will stretch eastwards to the limits of Germanic colonization. In the Eastern territories, I shall replace Slav geographical titles by German names. The Crimea, for example, might be called *Gothenland*.“ (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 253)

8.11.41 [context: Nazi leaders becoming increasingly concerned about potential internal opposition]: In a speech to old party comrades, Hitler decried how he would deal w/ any internal opposition: “I will keep an eye on him for a certain period,” he said. “You know my methods. That is always the period of probation. But then there comes the moment when I strike like lightning and eliminate that kind of thing.” The Nazi organization, “reaches into every house and zealously keeps watch that there shall never be another Nov. 1918.” (*Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 528)

8.11.41: In his Munich speech of **8 Nov 41**, Hitler claimed great successes, while being ambivalent about the Blitzkrieg concept: „I have never used the word Blitzkrieg, because it is a completely idiotic word. But it it can be applied to any campaign, it can be applied to this one. Never has a giant state been defeated and overthrown in such a short time as Soviet Russia.“ (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 117; for original quote see, *Domarus, Hitler: Reden*, 1776)

8.-9.11.41: Despite the serious situation at the front, or perhaps because of it, Hitler had his personal pilot, Baur, fly him to Munich in Immelmann III [i.e., a Focke-Wulf Fw 200A “Condor” acft (confirm!)] on **8 Nov 41** so he could speak the next evening at the annual meeting of old party stalwarts at the Buergerbraeukeller. Hitler also gave an impassioned speech to the Reichsleiters and Gauleiters earlier on the 9th, and in the speech it was obvious to intimates that he was depressed by the stalemate on the eastern front. As always, the cavernous Buergerbraeukeller was gaily decorated w/ red and white swastika flags and a large banner that said: “*Fuehrer befiehl* [sic], *wir folgen!*” (an old party motto). (For more details see, *C.G. Sweeting, Hitler's Personal Pilot*, 176-78)

²⁵⁴ Chef “Gruppe 1” in *Kriegsgeschichtlichen Abtl. des OKW* (WFSt/WKrGesch), one of M. Feuersenger's superiors in this Abteilung.

8.-9.11.41: On the 8th, Hitler gives his traditional speech to the Party's old guard, assembled in the *Loewenbraeukeller* in Munich (the anniversary of the **1923** Putsch); the next day, after the usual ceremony at the „Temples of Honor“ of the Putsch „heroes“ on the *Koenigsplatz* in Munich, Hitler addresses his *Reichsleiter* and *Gauleiter*. (For details of speeches see, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 436)

9.11.41: Hitler was “strongly impressed by the mounting difficulties” of his assault on Moscow. On this day he said, in words that were strange to him, “that the recognition that *neither force is able to annihilate the other* will lead to a *compromise peace*.” (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 322)²⁵⁵

11.11.41: Forderte Hitler in seinem letzten Offensivbefehl des Jahres 1941, dass „vor Eintreten starken Schneefalls es einen aeussersten Einsatz rechtfertigen wuerde, im Sueden durch einen Vorstoss auf Stalingrad bzw. durch baldiges Gewinnen von *Maikop* u. im Norden durch die Besitznahme von *Wologda* (an der *Bahnlinie* nach *Archangelsk*) die beiden Einfuhrlinien fuer englisch-amerikanische Kriegsmaterial (ueber das seit dem **25.8.41** von sowjet. u. brit. Truppen besetzte Iran u. ueber die Eismeerhaefen *Murmansk* u. *Archangelsk*) zu durchschneiden bzw. unsere Erdoelversorgung zu verbessern u. zu sichern.“ (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 456)

Mid-Nov 41: Spaetestens Mitte November sah Hitler den noch wenigen Wochen zuvor als sicher geglaubten Sieg „wie Sand durch die Finger rinnen“ – gegen einen Feind, der immer wieder in der Lage war, neue Divisionen an die Front zu werfen. Mit *den Nerven nahezu am Ende*, ueberliess er Halder die Initiative bei der Operationsfuehrung. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 545-46)

19.11.41: Obwohl Hitler am 15. Nov 41 noch einmal den Angriff in Richtung Moskau aufnehmen liess...*resignierte er* wenige Tage spaeter, am 19. Nov, *erstmal*s. In Hitlers Ausfuehrungen im kleinen Kreis kam – wie Halder notierte – seine „Erwartung“ zum Ausdruck, dass die Erkenntnis, dass es keinem der beiden Hauptgegner (gemeint war offensichtlich Deutschland u. Grossbritannien) gelingt, den anderen „vernichtend zu schlagen oder entscheidend niederzuringen,“ „zum *Verhandlungsfrieden*“ fuehrt. (see, *Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 455-57)

19.11.41 [Hitler's meeting w/ Halder]: After the meeting at Orsha and the unexpected problems encountered by GFM v. Bock in his advance on Moscow, Hitler was forced to recognize that all the goals beyond the Russian campaign would initially have to be postponed. He realized that the Vologda-Gorky-Caucasus line could not be reached until **1942**. Even if he considered the successes attained hitherto to be of great “political significance” and believed the Russians would not “restore their war economy very quickly,” none the less he realized that it was now impossible to destroy Russia completely. He even said to Halder that he expected negotiated peace, as the “two enemies could not annihilate each other.” Despite this realization, he allowed the offensive to continue towards Moscow and the Caucasus, while in his opinion Army Group North had reached the ultimate line for **1941** as early as **mid-Nov 41**. . . However, as early as **19.11.41**, Hitler had been forced to admit that all further goals for **1942**, extending beyond Russia, would have to remain in abeyance. . .

²⁵⁵ **Note:** Unclear whether Hitler made these remarks on 9 or 19 Nov 41. See *Hillgruber* entry for the latter date.

The idea that England would make peace if Hitler decided against capturing British positions in the Middle East and North-West Africa was illusory. Hitler's conversations w/ the Chief of Staff of the Supreme Naval War Staff [26.10.41] and w/ Halder on 19.11.41 made it quite clear to what extent the Fuehrer was clinging to this straw. They also reveal, however, that he was aware of the futility of his situation. He had "slid" into an imminent war w/ the United States, although the preconditions he had repeatedly demanded had not been met. . . Hitler had reconciled himself to the idea of war w/ the USA, although he had made no plans for it. Even before war had been declared on America he knew that his plans for war were doomed to failure and that a military victory was impossible²⁵⁶. . . (See, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 254, 258-59; also, *Halder KTB*, 19.11.41)

19.-20.11.41: Hitler and OKH stick resolutely to their ambitious plans. Despite reports from AGC about the alarming situation, Hitler had become convinced that Bock should "encircle and wipe out" the enemy divisions facing him in "several encirclements." Hitler expressed these ideas at a meeting w/ Halder on 19 November. He was against "repulsing the enemy head on," as he wished to compete the operation quickly. He had not yet abandoned the ultimate objectives of Yaroslavl and Rybinsk, possibly even Vologda in the north and Voronezh in the south. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 219; 233, f.n. 58)

21.11.41 [Hitler hofft auf Japan!]: Als verlasse er sich ganz auf die ihm bisher so wohlgesonnene „Vorsehung,“ ignorierte [Hitler] jedwede nüchterne Lagebeurteilung u. fluechtete sich statt dessen in die Vorstellung, Japan werde alsbald in den Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion eintreten, wodurch sich die Lage Deutschlands entscheidend verbessern wuerde. Gegenueber Goebbels auesserte er sich so zuletzt am **21 Nov 41**, worauf dieser in seinem Tagebuch vermerkte, dass er „seines Fuehrers“ Hoffnung nicht teilte – seit langem zum ersten Mal. (*R.G. Reuth, Goebbels*, 492)

21.11.41: Albert Speer asks Hitler for **30,000** Soviet prisoners to help w/ the building of Berlin's new monumental buildings. Hitler agrees. The building, he says, can begin before the war is over. Among the projects, of which Speer shows Hitler miniature models that day, were a Great Hall for the Chancellery, and an Office for Goering. Hitler also draws for Speer, in ink on lined paper, the design for a Monument of Liberation to be built at Linz, on the Danube, near Hitler's own birthplace. The monument, an imposing arch, is to be the centerpiece of a stadium holding thousands of spectators. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 260-61)

22.11.41: Goebbels asks Hitler if he still believes in victory. Typically, he replies that "if he had believed in victory in **1918** when he lay w/o help as a half-blinded corporal in a Pomeranian military hospital, why should he not now believe in our victory when he controlled the strongest armed forces in the world and almost the whole of Europe was prostrate at his feet?" He played down the difficulties; they occurred in every war. "*World history was not made by weather*," he added. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 439)

25.11.41: One of Hitler's adjutants, Major *Engel* writes: "In the evening a further lengthy debate on future ops. The Fuehrer explains *his great anxiety about the Russian winter* and weather conditions, says we started *one month too late* . . . Time is his greatest nightmare now." (Quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 343)

²⁵⁶ Is Reinhardt's assessment of Hitler's thinking accurate? Perhaps it was at the time. But did not Hitler become much more optimistic after the great initial successes of the Japanese against the Anglo-Americans in Pacific Theater?

27.11.41: Hitler gegenüber dem dänischen Außenminister *Scavenius* bei dessen Besuch in Berlin: „Wenn das dt. Volk einmal nicht mehr stark u. opferbereit genug sei, sein eigenes Blut für seine Existenz einzusetzen, so soll es verschwinden u. von einer anderen, stärkeren Macht vernichtet werden. Es verdiene dann nicht mehr diesen Platz, den es sich heute errungen habe.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa“,* 171-72)

27.11.41: On this day, Hitler tells *Scavenius* (Danish Foreign Minister) that the German people ought to perish and be destroyed by another power if they are not sufficiently strong and willing to make sacrifices. This statement clearly shows that Hitler had realized that the war in the east according to his original concept was *no longer feasible*, and that the conduct of the war had shifted from the purely military level to the level of *moral and economic endurance*. In other words, a *long-term war* was now beginning to develop. (*K. Reinhardt, „Moscow 1941,“* 220)

29.11.41: Am 29. Nov 41 forderte *Fritz Todt*, der Reichsminister für Bewaffnung u. Munition, Hitler auf, *den Krieg politisch zu beenden*, da er rüstungswirtschaftlich verloren sei. (*Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau,* 184)

29.11.41: Even if Hitler claimed to *Ciano* on **29 Nov 41** that “operations had run according to plan,” he himself knew full well that his claim did not reflect reality. He was forced to admit to Ciano that the “liquidation of the east” had not been a success, but remained the most important task for **1942**. His optimistic figures and disparaging remarks about the Soviet Union could not conceal Hitler’s realization that his “programme” could no longer be carried out. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point,* 255)²⁵⁷

29.11.41: Hitler is once again briefly in Berlin, and Goebbels has another chance to talk w/ him at length. Hitler appears *full of optimism and confidence*, brimming w/ energy, in excellent health. He professed still to be positive, despite the reversal at *Rostov*...There was no doubt, Hitler went on, that the enemy had lost most of their great armament centers. That, he claimed, had been the aim of the war, and had been largely achieved. He hoped to advance further on Moscow. But he acknowledged that a *great encirclement* was impossible at the present. The weather uncertainty meant any attempt to advance a further **200** kilometers to the east, w/o secure supplies, would be madness...So the offensive had to take place on a smaller scale. Hitler still expected Moscow to fall...“What cannot be achieved now, will be achieved in the coming summer,” were Hitler’s sentiments, according to Goebbels’ notes. Hitler saw **1942** as difficult, but a far better situation developing in **1943**. Foodstuffs and raw materials were now available from the occupied European parts of the Soviet Union. Once the exploitation of the area was properly organized, “our victory can no longer be endangered.” Hitler’s show of optimism was put on to delude Goebbels – or himself. (Quoted in: *Kershaw, Hitler,* 440)

29.11.41: On same day he spoke w/ Goebbels, Hitler told by *Walter Rohland* – in charge of tank production and just back from a visit to the front – in the presence of Keitel, Jodl, Brauchitsch, Leeb, and other military leaders, of the *superiority* of Soviet tank production. Rohland also warned, in light of his own experience gleaned from a trip to the USA in **1930**, of the immense armaments potential which would be ranged against Germany should America enter the war. Fritz Todt, one of Hitler’s most trusted and gifted ministers, who had arranged the meeting about armaments, followed up Rohland’s comments w/ a statement on German armaments production. Whether in the meeting, or more privately afterward, Todt added: “*This war can no longer be*

²⁵⁷ **Note:** Hitler had already stated a month previously that the only objective now was to crush Russia once and for all. (256, f.n. 8; also, *KTB I. SKL,* 28.11.41)

won militarily.” Hitler listened w/o interruption, then asked: “How, then, should I end this war?” Todt replied that the war could only be concluded politically. Hitler retorted: “I can scarcely still see a way of coming politically to an end.” (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 441)

29.11.41: Much has happened since the **Feb 41** symposium on *tank design*. The enemy’s **T34** was vastly superior to the newest German **Mark IV**. At an arms conference on this day, Hitler again warns Todt and Brauchitsch that the *age of the tank would soon be over*. He asks them to concentrate on three basic designs: a light tank for reconnaissance, like the present **Mark III**; a medium tank, the **Mark IV**; and a heavy tank (like the *Panther*) to outclass the Russian **T34**. A superheavy tank was also to be blueprinted by *Porsche* for the future. (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 342)

29.11.41: In evening, Hitler returns to his FHQ in East Prussia. Immediately upon his return, he falls into “*a state of extreme agitation*” about the position of Kleist’s *Panzerarmee*, thrown back from Rostov. Kleist wants to pull back to a secure defensive position at the mouth of the *Bakhmut river*. Hitler forbids this and demands the retreat be halted further east. Brauchitsch is summoned to FHQ and subjected to a *torrent of abuse*. Incident ends in *Rundstedt* being sacked the next day. (See, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 441)

30.11.41: On top of the considerably worsened military position of Third Reich, at end of **Nov 41** Hitler began to fear that war against the USA, which should not have started until after the second stage had been successfully completed – according to his timetable – was imminent and could not now be avoided. Hitler’s original objective, after the “continental empire” in Europe had been conquered, was to capture additional colonies in Africa; but he had to postpone these plans as early as end of **Aug 41**. The territorial gains, together w/ the build-up of a strong Luftwaffe & Navy, were initially to confer “world power” status on Germany, putting her on an equal footing w/ the British Empire, “Greater” Japan and the United States. A later generation would thus be in a stronger position, territorially and economically, to win a future fight against the United States for “world supremacy.” The surprisingly quick victories and Hitler’s overrating of the successes in the east led him to shelve this idea, as he believed he could, along w/ Japan, go to war w/ the USA as soon as the Russian campaign had come to an end. However, as early as end of **Jul 41**, the military situation led Hitler to abandon these ambitious aims and return to his earlier idea that a “later generation would have to deal w/ the Europe-America problem.” However, after **mid-Nov 41**, Hitler had to admit that war w/ the United States could not be avoided in the foreseeable future. (See, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 257-59)

Nov/Dec 41: Auch im Nov 41 folgte Hitler dem Rat der Heeresfuehrung, als nur *Halder* u. das Oberkommando der Hr.Gr.Mitte *einen erneuten, diesmal frontalen Angriff auf Moskau befuerworteten*. Diese so genannte letzte Kraftanstrengung der *Wehrmacht* sollte mittels „Behelfen aller Art“ u. „*auf die Gefahr, dass die Truppe ausbrenne*“, unternommen werden, obwohl *niemand von ihr eine „Entscheidung des Krieges“ mehr erwartet*. Zu jener Zeit klafften auch die Beurteilungen hinsichtlich des Kampfwertes der eigenen u. gegnerischen Kraefte zwischen den Heeresgruppen u. Armeen einerseits u. dem OKH andererseits weit auseinander. Deshalb meinte ein Mitarbeiter der Operationsabteilung [i.e., *Tagebuch Thilo*, 8.12.41], **Hitler trage zwar die Hauptschuld an der Verkennung der Lage, die Heeresfuehrung habe aber „grosse Mitschuld**.“ „Der *Kulminationspunkt* lag Anfang November u. wurde von den Armeen erkannt u. gemeldet. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 176)

Dec 41: Die operative Krise an der Ostfront weitete sich zu einer **Fuehrungskrise** aus, als Hitler nicht nur den Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres, sondern auch mehrere Truppenfuehrer abloeste. Zum einen hielt er den schwer *herzkranken Brauchitsch* nicht mehr fuer faehig, der Truppe den

erforderlichen „fanatischen Widerstand“ einzuimpfen. Zum anderen duldeten H. im Falle von *Rundstedt* nicht, dass ein Heeresgruppen-Oberbefehlshaber einen gegebenen Befehl gleich mit der *Vertrauensfrage* beantwortete. Aber weder er noch Bock, Leeb oder Guderian verlor das Vertrauen ihres Obersten Befehlshabers oder wurde so schlecht behandelt wie *Erich Hoepner*, *Heim* u. später *Zeitler*. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 177-78)

Dec 41: Die *Wehrmacht* hatte sich zwar im Osten operativ u. taktisch ans Ende ihrer Kräfte gesiegt, *strategisch* aber war Hitler seit Anfang Dez. 1941 „*sehr guter Stimmung*.“ Obwohl sich der europäische Krieg global ausgeweitet hatte, war er *ueberzeugt*, *Deutschland koenne mit Japan als Bundesgenossen „gar nicht verlieren.“*²⁵⁸ Während *Tokio* seinen Siegeszug gegen Briten u. Amerikaner fortsetzte, wollte Berlin „*mit vollem Schwung*“ den Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion fortführen, um in Osten „*reinen Tisch zu machen*.“ (So Hitler am 23.12.41, quoted in: (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 179)

Dec 41: Given the firmness of his ideological framework and his fatalistic willingness to gamble, Hitler was *not unnerved by the global constellation of Dec 41*. The alliance of Britain and the Soviet Union backed by America was the *strategic nightmare* w/ which General *Ludwig Beck* had tried to scare him in **1937**. But since then, he had marched from triumph to triumph. The Red Army was severely weakened, if not destroyed. Germany did now face the USA as a combatant, but, unlike the *Kaiser* in **1917**, Hitler had Japan as a firm military ally. As we have seen, Hitler since **1939** had repeatedly and emphatically *stressed the time-factor*. His decision to declare war on the USA was one more *calculated gamble against time*. And there were those in the German mil. leadership who shared Hitler's *optimistic outlook*. The relief clearly felt by both the *Wehrmacht* high command and the German navy in the wake of *Pearl Harbor* confirms retrospectively the *strategic anxieties* that we highlighted as the driving force behind Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union **12** months earlier. In **Dec 40**, Hitler had justified the urgency of *Barbarossa* precisely by pointing to the risk that, unless Germany acted *fast*, the *strategic initiative* might pass to Britain and America in **1942**. *Barbarossa* had failed, but now, in a strategic assessment of **14.12.41**, the *Wehrmacht* credited the dramatic Japanese offensive w/ robbing the Western Allies of their chance. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 504-05)

Dec 41: Despite suspicions of Guderian, Bock and others, Hitler was *fully aware of the realities at the front in Dec 41*. Guderian, for one, „entertained a fantasy that the officers around Hitler were *hiding the truth from him*. Nothing could be further from the truth.“ Hitler simply believed that *willpower alone* could surmount the obstacles and wrest victory [?]. (*Hart, Guderian*, 78)

Dec 41 [*Hitler's routine at Wolf's Lair*]: “Something of the loneliness of absolute power must have gripped him in these weeks . . . There was nobody to whom he could unburden himself . . . The women on his staff occasionally glimpsed the inner man. A few days earlier a record player had been installed in the *Fuehrer bunker* – the *concrete blockhouse* in which he lived, in case of an enemy bombing raid or paratroop assault – and every evening he listened to *Richard Strauss* and *Hugo Wolf Lieder* – and of course to *Wagner* . . . With the command of the German army, an avalanche of work descended on him . . . For weeks on end Hitler knew no regular routine. His midday meal used to start at **2:00 p.m.**; not it was taken hours later – once as late as **6:00 p.m.** This in turn dislocated the supper times, and the *tea-party routine* which previously had begun regularly in his bunker at **10:00 p.m.** . . .” (For rest of this fascinating narrative see, *Irving, Hitler's War*, 361)

²⁵⁸ *Tagebuch Hewel*, 8.12.41, *IfZ, Muenschen* (quoted in *Foerster*, 179, f.n. 106)

ca. Dec 41: Even after the failure of „*Taifun*,“ Hitler remained *convinced that the Wehrmacht could win the battle against the Red Army alone* [i.e., w/o Japanese help]. Though the full extent of the Moscow debacle did not become apparent until late **Dec 41**, Hitler retained this confidence even in **1942**. The failure of the *Ostheer* in the winter of 1941 was principally a *failure of leadership* that Hitler would now personally put right...If Japan were ready to throw her considerable mil. weight into the scales against Britain and the USA, that would buy enough time for the *Wehrmacht* to destroy the Red Army, consolidating Hitler's grip on the European continent. Given Hitler's assumption that *war w/ America was inevitable*, the essential thing was simply to finish the war in the East in **1942**. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 502-03)

2.12.41: Hitler flies to southern Russia to view Kleist's positions for himself. He is put fully in the picture about the reports – which he had not seen – from the army group prior to the attack on *Rostov*. The outcome had been accurately forecast. He exonerates the army group and the *Panzerarmee* from blame. But he does not reinstate *Rundstedt*. That would have amounted to a public acceptance of his own error. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 441)

4.-11.12.41: Als sich die japanische Seite bereit erklart hatte, eine Klausel in das angestrebte Militaerbuendnis aufzunehmen, die jeden *Separatfrieden* eines Partners ausschliessen sollte, war damit fuer Hitler am **4 Dec 41** die Voraussetzung fuer die Kriegserklaerung an die Vereinigten Staaten erfuellt. Erleichtert wurde sein Entschluss dadurch, dass Roosevelts Amerika zu diesem Zeitpunkt bereits *de facto im Krieg gegen das Reich stand*, denn am **23 Okt 41** hatte der amerikanische Kongress die Voraussetzungen geschaffen, um die Sowjetunion, die inzwischen der Atlantikcharta beigetreten war, in das grosse *Leih-u.-Pacht-Unterstuetzungsprogramm* einzubeziehen, was Roosevelt einige Tage darauf verkuendete. . . In dieser „*Flucht nach vorn*“ sah Hitler den Ausweg aus seiner verfahrenen Situation, redete er sich doch ein, eine *Zersplitterung* der amerikanischen Ressourcen auf einen *Zwei-Ozean-Krieg* wuerde deren Engagement auf dem europaeischen Kriegsschauplatz hinauszogern u. ihm die Zeit geben, im darauffolgenden Jahr den sowjet. Koloss aus den erreichten Stellungen heraus in einem zweiten Anlauf niederzuwerfen. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 549-50)

5.12.41: The opening of the Soviet counteroffensive marked the *point at which Hitler lost control of the war*. He had *dominated world politics* since he marched into the *Rhineland* in **1936**, always keeping the initiative in his solitary hands. Now, suddenly, he was the „servant of events rather than their master.“ Perhaps in unconscious recognition of this sombre fact – or rather to conceal it – he took six days later (**11.7.41**) „a decision of such *insensate folly* as to stagger belief.“ [i.e., he declared war on USA] (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 386)

7.12.41: Hitler authorizes the seizure of all persons deemed “dangerous to state security.” Victims of this decree were not to be publicly executed, but to vanish “into the night and fog,” hence the term “Night and Fog [Nacht und Nebel] Actions.” (*Voices from the Third Reich*, 534)

7.12.41: According to D. Irving, Japan's entry into the war “evoked something like euphoria in Hitler—“Now there's no way we can lose this war!” Yet a few days later, “he began to brood on Germany's darkening future. “Strange,” he said, “that we are destroying the positions of the white race in East Asia with the help of Japan, while Britain has joined the Bolshevik swine in the fight against Europe!” (*Hewel diary*, quoted in: (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 96; see also, *Irving, Hitler's War*, 352-54)

7.12.41: Hitler delighted by Japanese attack on America and Britain: “We can't lose the war at all,” he exclaimed. “We now have an ally which has never been conquered in **3000** years.” This rash assumption predicated on view Hitler had long held: that Japan's intervention would both tie

down the United States in the Pacific theater, and seriously weaken Britain through an assault on its possessions in Far East. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 442)

7.12.41: Die Meldung [ueber *Pearl Harbor*], die von einem Rundfunksender aufgezeichnet worden war, traf gegen Mitternacht in der „*Wolfsschanze*“ ein u. versetzte Hitler in eine regelrechte *Euphorie*, wertete er sie doch als „*Fingerzeig der Vorsehung*.“ Zu Hewel meinte er: „Wir koennen den Krieg garnicht verlieren. Wir haben jetzt einen Bundesgenossen, der in dreitausend Jahren nicht besiegt worden ist u. einen“ – so fuhr er in Anlehnung an einen Ausspruch Napoleons ueber die Italiener fort – „der immer besiegt worden ist, aber immer auf der richtigen Seite stand.“ (*Reuth, Hitler*, 551)

8.12.41: Die *Fuehrerweisung 39* ordnete nun endlich den sofortigen Uebergang zur Verteidigung an, um „dadurch die Voraussetzungen fuer die Wiederaufnahme groesserer Angriffsoperationen im Jhare 1942“ schaffen zu koennen. *Der Ernst der Lage war immer noch nicht erfasst worden.* (*Nehring, Panzerwaffe*, 237)

9.12.41: On morning of this day, Hitler’s train pulls in at the *Anhalter Bahnhof* in Berlin. [Hitler to give a speech, declaring war on USA.]²⁵⁹ He tells Goebbels, who sees him at midday, of his surprise and initial incredulity at the attack on Pearl Harbor, though he had always expected that Japan would be forced to act before long if she did not want to give up her claim to world-power status. “The Fuehrer is beaming again w/ optimism and confidence in victory,” Goebbels remarks. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 445)

ca 9.12.41: The day of my return [v. Below had been to Constance for several weeks to take a „cure“ for his „nervous stomach condition] was one of turmoil. Many visitors gathered in the Chancellery in the hope of obtaining from the horse’s mouth the latest about the war situation, but the matter was not for discussion. After lunch, Hitler spoke w/ Ribbentrop, Himmler, Todt and Goering. The rooms emptied. Schmundt supplied me w/ the business of the day. Then I was left alone w/ Hitler and we talked. In the evening we strolled the winter garden. He was wrestling w/ the question of the Army High Command. He had had no confidence in Brauchitsch for some time and was looking for a replacement. Schmundt had recommended that he assume supreme command of the Army himself, at least temporarily. Hitler had bristled at the very suggestion, but after the declaration of war on the United States he saw a new situation developing and began to incline more and more towards Schmundt’s suggestion.

Hitler was very concerned at the situation w/ Army Group Ctr. He assumed that the Russians were planning a major counter-attack. GFM v. Kluge spoke of nothing but drawing back. „How far back does he want to come?“ Hitler asked. „We have no prepared positions to the rear. The Army must stop where it is.“ Then he reproached the Army supply organization. The Army had no winter clothing, no protection against the bitter cold and no efficient means of catering. **Hitler was outraged.** How could the Army not have prepared for it? The Luftwaffe had managed to provide its units w/ all their winter requirements. . . (v. *Below, At Hitler’s Side*, 118-19)²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ **Note:** Hitler had been certain for many months, that Roosevelt was just looking for a chance to intervene in the European conflict; he thought his declaration of war was “merely anticipating the inevitable and, in any case, formalizing what was in effect already the situation.” (445-46)

²⁶⁰ **Note:** Not all that v. Below describes here is from his conversation that evening w/ Hitler.

11.12.41: Hitler spoke again to the *Reichstag*:²⁶¹ “At a time when thousands of our best men, the fathers and sons of our people are falling, no individual at home who blasphemes the sacrifice of the front, can reckon w/ remaining alive.” (*Faust’s Metropolis*, A. Richie, 528)

11.12.41: As was his *wont* at fateful moments, Hitler convened the *Reichstag* and delivered a speech in which he tried to answer various urgent questions while *declaring war* on the United States. Analysis of this speech suggests that Hitler felt a strong urge to explain and justify his actions and to bolster the confidence of his followers. As always, he claimed that his *only desire was peace* and that his enemies had forced war on him. . . He described the triumphs of the German army in all the war arenas, but felt the need to *cite climatic conditions* as the reason for his *postponment of the attack on Russia* from May to June 1941. He had launched the war, he said, because otherwise the Russians would have attacked first and conquered all of Europe. Hitler’s main verbal onslaught, however, is directed at Roosevelt, whom he describes as a slave of Jewish warmongers . . . Roosevelt, Hitler claimed, together w/ Great Britian, was aiming at „untrammelled dictatorial rule over the world.“ The force behind him was the „eternal Jew.“ (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 316-17)²⁶²

11.12.41: Hitler declares war on America. *Ribbentrop* summoned the U.S. Charge, *Leland Morris*, kept him standing, harangued him furiously and finally screamed: „*Ihr Praesident hat diesen Krieg gewollt; jetzt hat er ihn!*“ Then he stamped off..On 22 Jun 41, Hitler took a tremendous gamble which did not come off, and thereafter the best outcome of the war he could hope for was a *stalemate*. But on **11 Dec 41**, he ***took a decision which made his defeat certain***. The only short-term advantage he gained was the chance to launch a *U-boat offensive* in the Atlantic before America was organized to meet it. He said to *Ribbentrop*: „The chief reason [for war] is that the US is already shooting at our ships.“ But Hitler’s failure to create the **100**-strong fleet of ocean-going submarines his admirals had demanded in **1939** blunted this preemptive blow; only **60** were available in **Dec 41**, the rest were not ready until the end of **1942**, by which time Allied countermeasures had made a German Atlantic victory impossible. In every other respect, short- and still more long-term, the war w/ America was to Germany’s *overwhelming disadvantage*. Hitler’s gesture was no more than a piece of bravado. (See, *P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 387-88)²⁶³

11.12.41: Hitler had “become absolutely certain” by **mid-Nov 41** that war against the USA was unavoidable in the foreseeable future. . . He had slipped into a war against the USA w/o having established those prerequisites which he himself had demanded again and again [i.e., defeat of Soviet Union, hegemony over all Europe to the Urals, accumulation of requisite economic and material resources, switch in armaments production to acft, U-Boats, etc.]. . . Hitler had accepted the war against the USA w/o having any plans to show how this armed conflict could be conducted in reality. . . When . . . he declared war on the USA, this decision was not made deliberately but meant nothing but “a seizing of the bull by the horns.” It was a gesture designed to *conceal that the initiative* for all subsequent strategic decisions of major importance had *gone over to the enemy*. (*K. Reinhardt, “Moscow 1941,”* 220-21)

²⁶¹ **Note:** See also, Kershaw’s account in his *Hitler*, 446-47. According to Kershaw, the speech “was not one of his best.”

²⁶² “That he [Hitler] would declare war [on America] was a foregone conclusion; not even Goering, Hitler’s second man, was consulted on that point.” (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 353)

²⁶³ **Note:** According to Johnson it was, in fact, “most unlikely Roosevelt could have persuaded Congress to make war on Germany had not Hitler taken the initiative, still less to give the defeat of the Nazis priority.” (387)

11.12.41: Against the background of the “blank cheque” given to Japan in **Apr 41**, and confirmed in December of that year to cover the eventuality of war against the USA, the German declaration of war on the United States appears more as a calculated decision than as a forced reaction or “flight forwards.” Yet Hitler did not know how the United States could be defeated. The declaration of war was intended as a demonstration of strength to disguise the fact that, w/ the failure of “Barbarossa” and the extension of the European war into a world war, Germany’s bid for world power status, or world supremacy, had failed. Though the defeat of the Third Reich was to be expected [?], it could hold out longer in alliance w/ Japan, so long as the USA was compelled to divide its forces between Europe and East Asia. Hitler was therefore anxious to eliminate the possibility of a separate peace between the United States, Britain, and Japan. (*J. Foerster, GSWW, Vol IV: Attack on the Soviet Union, 1255*)

11.12.41: „Sodann der zweite Anlauf zur ‚endgueltigen‘ Zerstruemmerung der Roten Armee **1942**: eine Entscheidung, die um so dringender heranreifte, da Hitler u. Mussolini in leichtfertiger Ueberschaetzung der japanischen Staerke u. des eigenen Wehrpotentials den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika am **11.12.41** den Krieg erklart u. damit **75%** aller personellen u. materiellen Reserven der Welt gegen sich vereint hatten.“ (*Halder KTB, Bd III, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen Vorwort, p vii*)

12.12.41: On this afternoon, for the second time in little over a month, Hitler addresses his *Gauleiter*. (See, *Kershaw, Hitler, 448-49*)

13.12.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier / Mittags Gaeste Reichsminister v. Ribbentrop, Rosenbert, Dr. Goebbels, etc.*]: [Hitler:] „Der Krieg wird sein Ende nehmen, u. ich werde meine letzte Lebensaufgabe darin sehen, das *Kirchenproblem zu klaeren*. Erst dann wird die dt. Nation ganz gesichert sein. Ich kummere mich nicht um Glaubenssaetze, aber ich dulde nicht, dass eine *Pfaffe [cleric]* sich um irdische Sachen kummert. Die organisierte Luege muss derart gebrochen werden, dass der Staat absoluter Herr ist...Erst im sechsten, siebenten, achten Jahrhundert ist unseren Voelkern durch die Fuersten, die es mit den Pfaffen hielten, das Christentum aufgezwungen worden. Vorher haben sie ohne diese Religion gelebt. *Ich habe sechs SS-Divisionen, die vol-staendig kirchenlos sind u. die doch mit der groessten Seelenruhe sterben...*“ (*Adjutant H. Heim, Echelot, 427*)

13.12.41: Zuversichtlich erklarte Hitler dem japanischen Botschafter *Oshima* am 13.12.41, im Fruehjahr wuerden an der Ostfront die „Operationen im grossen wieder aufgenommen.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa“, 164*)

15.-16.12.41: As his special train leaves Berlin in the evening, Hitler drafts his first **Halt Order** to the eastern front. The **4. Army** is ordered not to fall back one foot. This controversial order was hotly debated during the night. Its critics argued that what mattered now was not clinging to frozen territory but preserving the army’s fighting power for **1942**. Others, among them *Jodl*, replied that only such a holding order made sense. It was **11:00 a.m., 16 Dec**, when Hitler arrived back at the Wolf’s Lair. His Halt Order was dictated to Bock over the telephone by Halder at **12:10 p.m.** (*Irving, Hitler’s War, 357*)

16.12.41: After Schmudt had been sent to Army Group Ctr to discuss the situation first hand (**14.12.41**), Hitler responded *immediately*, neither awaiting the report from Brauchitsch, who had accompanied Schmudt, nor involving Halder. Col-Gen Fromm, Cdr of the Reserve Army [*Ersatzheer*], was summoned and asked for a report on the divisions that could be sent straight away to the eastern front. Goering and the head of the *Wehrmacht* transport, Lt Gen *Rudolf Gercke*, were to arrange the transport. Four and a half (**4 1/2**) divisions of reserves, assembled

throughout Germany at breakneck speed, were to be rushed to the front. Another nine (9) divisions would be drummed up from the western front and the Balkans. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 450; *DRZW*, Bd. 4, 610)

16.12.41: That night, Guderian, who two days earlier had struggled through a blizzard for 24 hours to meet *Brauchitsch* at *Roslavl* and put his case for a withdrawal, is telephoned over a *crackly line* by Hitler: there is to be no withdrawal; the line is to be held; replacements would be sent. Army Group North is told on the same day that it had to *defend the front to the last man*. Army Group South is also to hold the front and would be sent reserves from the Crimea after the imminent fall of Sevastopol. Army Group Ctr is informed that extensive withdrawals cannot be countenanced because of the wholesale *loss of heavy wpns* which would ensue. Hitler's decision that there should be no retreat, conveyed to Brauchitsch and Halder in the night of **16.-17.12.41**, was *his own*. But it seems to have taken *Bock's assessment* as the justification for the high-risk tactic of no-retreat. (See, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 451)

16.12.41 [Haltebefehl]: Hitler, erkennen wir es an, stemmte sich mit *wilder Energie* gegen diese Krise, u. es kann mit einiger Sicherheit unterstellt werden, dass ein allgemeiner Rueckzugsbefehl sich zu einer strategischen Katastrophe in den ersten Monaten des Jahres **1942** ausgewirkt haette. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 137)²⁶⁴

16.12.41: [Haltebefehl]: According to *Russell Hart* it was the correct policy: „Given the immobility of the German army..the only viable action was to *stand fast in fortified village hedgehog defenses* and weather the Soviet storm as Hitler demanded. Any time German forces had fought delaying withdrawals they had found it difficult to disengage from the enemy...w/o *suffering appreciable losses, particularly heavy wpns* that had to be abandoned for lack of transport and fuel. Hitler was usually poor at strategic decision making, but **he was right this time**, although this would have *disastrous consequences for the future*...The „stand fast“ orders Hitler gave thus helped save the Second Panzer Army from destruction.“ [as well as all of Army Group Ctr, of course] (*Hart, Guderian*, 80)

16.12.41: [Haltebefehl]: If Army Group Center did not disintegrate in face of Red Army's counteroffensive, then Hitler deserves „some share of the credit.“ His *Haltebefehl*, usually translated as „**stand-fast order**,“ ordered each German soldier and formation to hold their position and defend it to the last, even if bypassed or surrounded. It almost **certainly was the right thing to do**. Any attempt to retreat under such pressure, not to mention winter conditions, would have been *courting disaster*, and once again the *Napoleon comparisons are instructive*: it wasn't the advance to Moscow that had destroyed the *Grande Armee*, but the retreat from it.²⁶⁵ It wouldn't have been a mobile retreat. Even the *panzer divisions were straight leg infantry* by this time. Indeed, events would *prove Hitler's intuition correct*. By **Jan 42**, Soviet momentum had worn down. The Red Army was „*not ready to go deep on the Germans*.“ Even so, the Germans had suffered a *devastating blow*. (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 47-48)

16.12.41: [Haltebefehl]: Wahrscheinlich ist durch Hitlers Eingreifen *eine Panik u. Aufloesung des Heeres* unterbunden worden. Nur durfte dieses „*Halterezept*“ nicht zu einem spaeteren *Allheilmittel* Hitlers werden, von dem er sich unter Aufgabe ganzer Armeen (wie bei *Stalingrad*

²⁶⁴ **Note:** For a thoughtful – and very different – perspective on validity of Hitler's *Haltebefehl* see, *Hofmann*, „*Schlacht von Moskau*,“ 181-82 (Section **2:30** below).

²⁶⁵ Is this assertion accurate? My understanding is that Napoleon's army had melted away to well under half of its original establishment by time it reached Moscow.

u. in *Tunesien* 1943) Wunder versprach u. dabei taktisch wie operativ unverstaendlich u. starrsinnig handelte. (*Nehring, Panzerwaffe*, 238)

16.12.41 [Haltebefehl]: The German generals have long debated the merits of Hitler's stubborn stand – whether it saved the troops from complete disaster or whether it compounded the inevitable heavy losses. Most of the cdrs have contended that, if they had been given freedom to pull back when their position became untenable, they could have saved many men and much equipment and been in a better position to re-form and even counterattack. As it was, whole divisions were frequently overrun or surrounded and cut to pieces when a timely withdrawal would have saved them. And yet some of the generals later reluctantly admitted that Hitler's iron will in insisting that the armies stand and fight was *his greatest accomplishment of the war* in that it probably did save his armies from completely disintegrating in the snow. This view is best summed up by General *Blumentritt*. General von *Tippelskirch*, a corps cdr, agreed: "It was Hitler's *one great achievement*." (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 867-68; *Blumentritt in Fatal Decisions*, 78-79; also, *Liddell Hart, German Generals Talk*, 158)

16.12.41 [Haltebefehl]: Whether Hitler was right in insisting on a rigid defense in front of Moscow, none can be sure. A withdrawal made under heavy enemy pressure, particularly in the terrible winter conditions then experience, could easily have deteriorated into a rout, ending w/ the destruction of AGC. Yet it is certain that this military factor carried less weight w/ the Fuehrer than considerations of prestige and loss of countenance. Many, probably the majority, of the German cdrs, were of the opinion that Hitler was right in ordering a standstill, and in this way saved Germany a heavy defeat. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 227)

16.12.41 [Haltebefehl]: Hitlers Haltebefehl wird von vielen militaerischer Experten als richtig bezeichnet. Es gibt jedoch Gruende einer solchen Ansicht zu widersprechen. Die Praemissen, die bei Hitler dem Haltebefehl zu Grunde lagen, koennen in wenigen Saetzen zusammengefasst werden. Wenn der Befehl nicht ergangen waere, haette sich die Wehrmacht, durch den Einbruch des harten Winters u. den Gegenschlag der Roten Armee bei Moskau ueberrascht, in Panik ueber hunderte von Kilometern zurueckgezogen u. die Befehlshaber haetten dem nicht Einhalt gebieten koennen. Die Rote Armee haette mit einer Grossoffensive nachgesetzt. Die Vermutung einer allgemeinen Panik bei der Wehrmacht traegt nicht genuegend der Kampfkraft der dt. Truppen Rechnung, die sich noch bis in die letzten Kriegstage bewaehrte. Mit Sicherheit gab es Erscheinungen von Panik, die auch bei spaeteren Schlachten auftraten, jedoch waren die Oberbefehlshaber der dt. Heeresgruppen u. Armeen von hoher professioneller Qualitaet. Sie haetten sicher die Disziplin wieder hergestellt u. ihre Verbaende auf guenstigere Stellungen als die durch den Haltebefehl entstandenen zurueckgefuehrt. Flucht u. Erscheinungen von Panik entstehen in jeder Armee nach einer grossen Niederlage. . . Jedoch war auch die Rote Armee von den Kaempfen im Sommer **1941** u. der Schlacht um Moskau mitgenommen. . . Die Rote Armee war noch nicht in der Lage eine Grossoffensive zu fuehren. . . Aus dem Haltebefehl, von Argumenten aus seiner Erinnerungen des Frontsoldaten 1914-18 untermauert, entwickelte sich eine zunehmende Hybris u. das Festhalten an ihm sollte der Wehrmacht im Laufe der folgenden Jahre eine kaum uebersehbare Anzahl von Divisionen kosten. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 156-57)

18.12.41 [Haltebefehl].²⁶⁶ „[Hitlers] Haltebefehl fusste auf falschen Voraussetzungen.“ Er bewies gleichzeitig mangelndes Verstaendnis fuer die Notwendigkeiten der mil. Fuehrung u. fehlendes Einfuehlungsvermoegen [trans. as *empathy*?] in soldatischen Erleben u. Empfinden. Hitler, der immer sein Mitgefuehl mit dem einfachen Soldaten aufgrund eigener Erlebnisse im **Ersten Weltkrieg** betonte – auch in seinem Haltebefehl! – setzte gleichzeitig diesen selben Soldaten den

²⁶⁶ **Note:** Was the "Halt Order" issued to the field on **16.** or **18.12.41**?

staerksten u. ruecksichtslosesten Anstrengungen aus, die wahrscheinlich je von einer mil. Fuehrung gefordert worden sind. Und dies geschah dazu unter Hintanstellung [disregard] jeglicher sonst selbstverstaendlicher Fuersorge. Der Haltebefehl legte die eigene bewegliche u. aktive Fuehrung durch sture Gaengelung von oben lahm. Dabei war nur noch durch sie, die der russischen ueberlegen geblieben war, ein gewisser Ausgleich im Kampf zu erzielen. Waehrend bisher die eigene personelle Unterlegenheit durch geschicktere Zusammenfassung ausgeglichen werden konnte, wurde jetzt der einzelne Kaempfer in einen aufreibenden Kampf Mann gegen Mann gezwungen, in dem der zudem besser ausgeruestete Russe mit seiner Ueberzahl im Vorteil war. Das Grundprinzip deutscher mil. Fuehrung, die Freizuegigkeit des Handelns in Durchfuehrung des erteilten Auftrages zu gewaehrleisten, wurde aufgegeben. Mit diesem Prinzip waren die bisherigen grossen Erfolge errungen worden u. sie konnten auch nur so errungen werden. Mit der Freizuegigkeit des Handelns war allerdings auch eine gesteigerte Verantwortlichkeit des betreffenden Fuehrers verbunden. An die Stelle der „liberalen Weisung,“ ebenfalls einer Eigentuemlichkeit der oberen dt. mil. Fuehrung, u. des „Auftrages“ trat der sture „Befehl,“ der, da von weit hinten erteilt, meist zu spaet kam u. selten einer schnell wechselnden Kampfentwicklung gerecht werden konnte. Die Folgen zeigten sich sehr bald. Der Haltebefehl Hitlers bedeutete den beginnenden Niederlage der dt. mil. Fuehrung. . .“ (*de Beaulieu, Sturm auf Moskau*, Teil II, 434)²⁶⁷

19.12.41: With his takeover of the Army High Command (OKH), Hitler, as supreme cdr, „*now issued orders to himself*.“ (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 31)²⁶⁸

19.12.41: Hitler fires von Brauchitsch and takes over directly as C-in-C of the Army. The Fuehrer saw his chance to blame the emerging debacle in the east on Brauchitsch and the OKH (and on the three army group cdrs and other senior officers he would relieve during this period), while *he could appear as the savior of the situation*. (*Megargee*, 138)²⁶⁹

19.12.41: In seinem Aufruf an die „Soldaten des Heeres u. der Waffen-SS vom 19.12.41, in dem er die Uebernahme der Heeresfuehrung mitteilte, forderte er zum zaehen Ausharren bis zum Fruehjahr 1942 auf. Dann werde der offensive Kampf wieder aufgenommen, um den Gegner endgueltig zu vernichten. Geschickt pries er es als „Glueck,“ dass mit Japan „eine Weltmacht als Freund u. Kampfgenosse“ nunmehr an der Seite der dt. Soldaten stehe. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa*,“ 163)

19.12.41: „...Der Fuehrer ist daher entschlossen, eine Reihe von personellen Umaenderungen vorzunehmen. GFM v. Brauchitsch muss die Fuehrung des Heeres niederlegen. Der Fuehrer will sie selbst uebernehmen. Ich bin davon ueberzeugt, dass er mit seiner gewohnten Energie u. mit der Faehigkeit, *im entscheidenden Augenblick brutal durchzugreifen*, dem Heer wieder eine feste, klare Spitze gibt...Ich spreche mit dem Fuehrer auch von hoeheren Gesichtspunkten noch einmal die ganze Situation durch. Was haben wir in unserer Partei nicht schon an Krisen u. Belastungen durchgemacht! Wie klein erscheinen sie uns heute, nachdem sie hinter uns liegen! So wird es

²⁶⁷ **Note:** Chales de Beaulieu makes an excellent point here concerning the tactical consequences of Hitler's „Halt Order.“

²⁶⁸ **Note:** According to Hitler's *Luftwaffe* adjutant, Nicolaus v. Below, it was in the night of **16.-17.12.41** that Hitler finally decided to take the supreme command of the Army himself. The names of Manstein and Kesselring were temporarily considered; but Hitler didn't like Manstein, and Kesselring was earmarked for command of the *Luftwaffe* in the Mediterranean. (See, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 452)

²⁶⁹ **Note:** According to David Irving, it was Col. Rudolf Schmundt “who [had] persuasively urged Hitler to become his *own* Commander in Chief, issuing orders directly through Halder to the army. Hitler said he would think it over.” (*Hitler's War*, 351)

auch einmal mit dieser Belastung sein...Ihrer Herr zu werden, wird nicht schwer sein, wenn wir die Nerven behalten. [...] Es ist auch gut fuer die Moral unseres Volkes, dass wir diese harte Zeit durchmachen muessen. Haetten wir ueberall so gesiegt wie in Polen u. in Frankreich, so waeren die Deutschen *groessenwahnsinnig* geworden...Der Fuehrer ist vollkommen meiner Meinung, dass wir jetzt daran gehen muessen, die *Heimat haerter zu schmeiden*. Ich werde das fuer meine klassische Kriegsaufgabe halten, Schmied der dt. Seele zu sein.

Die *Gesamtlage* beurteilt der Fuehrer weiterhin *ausserordentlich optimistisch*. Es ist gar nicht gesagt, dass eine Ausweitung der Dimensionen dieses Krieges auch eine laengere Dauer verursacht. Es kommt darauf an, wann wir die *Englaender* mit toedlichen Hieben treffen koennen.“ (Goebbels, *Berlin, Echolot*, 522-23)

ab 19.12.41 [Hitler becomes C-in-C of Army] Henceforth, Hitler was to view himself first and foremost as a soldier. From **Dec 41** onwards, the Fuehrer's control in ops was paramount and he began to interfere in the most trivial details [like haggling over placement of several MGs w/ v. Kluge for several hours!]. His mistrust of his personal military staff assumed such proportions that he was eventually to keep his own set of battle situation maps locked in his drawers and insist that stenographers should make a shorthand and typescript record of all his conversations. (Because of an argument between Hitler and Halder about what was really said between them, the Fuehrer introduced stenographers to record all meetings and conferences. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 230; also, *Warlimont, Inside Hitler's HQ*, 199)

20.12.41: Hitler publishes an appeal to the German people to send warm winter clothing for the troops in the east – another sign of the crisis. Goebbels lists all the items of clothing to be handed in during a lengthy radio broadcast that evening. The population responds w/ *shock and anger* – astonished and bitter that the leadership had not made provision for the basic necessities of their loved ones fighting at the front and exposed them to the merciless, polar winter. (Kershaw, *Hitler*, 453; also, *Domarus*, 1815)

20.12.41: Also on this day, Hitler sends a strongly-worded directive to Hr.Gr.Mitte, reaffirming the order issued four days earlier to hold position and fight to the last man. Where a systematic withdrawal was to take place, Hitler orders the most *brutal scorched-earth policy*. (See, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 453-54)

20.12.41: (Note: For account of the daily military conference—and Hitler's extraordinary meddling in military events on this day—see, Section **2.10.1**, “*Command Style*.” See also, *Halder KTB* for this day.)

20.12.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: Nachstehend Zusammenstellung der vom Fuehrer am **20.12.** dem Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres erlaeuterten Aufgaben des Heeres fuer die naechste Zeit:

1. *Halten u. Kaempfen bis zum Aeussersten. Keinen Schritt freiwillig zurueckgehen.* Durchgebrochene bewegliche Teile des Feindes muessen rueckwaerts erledigt werden.

2. Dadurch *Zeitgewinn* erzielen fuer: a) Verbesserung der Transportleistung; b) Heranbringen von Reserven; c) Abschub wertvollen noch instandzusetzenden Materials; d) Stuetzpunktartiger Ausbau einer rueckwaertigen Linie (Verlauf festlegen).

3. Energische Offiziere einsetzen, um: a) an den Eisenbahndpunkten die Zuege zu beschleunigen u. voll auszunuetzen; b) den Abschub zu organisieren; c) Versprengte zu sammeln u. nach vorne zu fuehren; d) die Versorgungsstuetzpunkte zur Verteiligung einzurichten.

4. Alle in der Heimat u. im Westen verfuegbaren Verbaende nach dem Osten bringen...

5. Gefangene u. Einwohner ruecksichtslos von Winterbekleidung entbloessen. Die preisgegebenen Gehoefte niederbrennen. . .

(Halder KTB, 538-39)

22.12.41: Hitler learns from *Kluge* that the General Staff were sending hundreds of half-frozen troops by air to *Smolensk* w/o wpns or winter gear. He had shouted into the telephone: “Another *Schweinerei!* I was told that everybody going to the eastern front was being equipped w/ MGs and rifles.” Hitler confidently gives Kluge authority to withdraw sectors of his army group if need be – a measure of his trust in this field marshal. More important, Hitler also *lifted the embargo on the Redhead hollow-charge AT shells.* (Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 362-63)

23.12.41: On the 23rd, Hitler called Fromm in from Berlin to report on manpower and armaments. . . Hitler talked to Fromm for hours about rebuilding the army for a **1942** offensive . . . As far as the eastern front was concerned, he expected to be „over the hump“ in **10** days to **2** weeks. He said „there had been a hole near Tula,“ but elsewhere, the front would hold. (Note: Around this time, Hitler, worried about a loss of prestige at Leningrad, discussed w/ Halder the possibility of using poison gas to end the resistance in the city fast.) (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 87)

24.-25.12.41 [*Christmas at Wolf’s Lair*]: “Christmas at Hitler’s [HQ] was always a cheerless affair, very different from that celebrated at the Berlin ministries, for ex.” Hitler received his staff in turn, handed them an envelope containing a small sum in *Reichsmarks*, and sometimes sent them a packet of coffee w/ a typed note of good wishes. *Hewel* wrote in his diary on the 24th: “A dejected Christmas. Fuehrer’s thoughts are elsewhere. No candles lit.” (Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 362)

End Dec 41: The year before, Hitler had *seemed to control the European chess-board*, as Japan controlled that of East Asia. Yet once united in common global predation, they rapidly shrank to the status of *two medium-size powers*, flailing desperately against the creeping force of economic and demographic magnitude. The *imbalance was really apparent by the end of 1941.* (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 396)²⁷⁰

31.12.41: On New Year’s Eve, while the newly acquired *gramophone* blared out *Lieder* by Richard Strauss and, of course, Wagner, the inhabitants of the FHQ got tipsier and merrier, Hitler spent three (3) hours on the phone w/ von Kluge, insisting that the front be held. When he was eventually finished, he summoned his secretaries for tea in the middle of the night. Their good spirits soon evaporated. Hitler swiftly dampened the mood by nodding off to sleep. The merry-

²⁷⁰ The “imbalance” is certainly apparent to us *now*, but was it *really* so clear to the Axis powers in December 1941? Germany may have had a crisis on its hands in Russia, but the Japanese were enjoying their *Siegeszug* through SEA and the Pacific. And w/ Japan now in the war, there is some indication Hitler was not displeased by the new *correlation of forces*. (confirm!)

making palled. His entourage, coming in to congratulate him, removed their smiles and put on serious faces. It was so dreadful that *Christa Schroeder* went back to her room and burst into tears. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 455; for Hitler's conflict w/ Kluge during this period see, *Halder KTB*, 30.12.41-14.1.42)

31.12.41: "The year's end had come. They had attained none of their strategic objectives. Almost hourly Hitler was to be seen *clinging to the long-distance telephone* linking him w/ Kluge and the eastern front.²⁷¹ Kluge was again asking for minor withdrawals, and Hitler was grimly observing that they might just as well fall back on the Dnieper or even the Polish frontier. Hitler related to the field marshal how as a simple infantryman in *Flanders* he and his comrades had withstood **10** days of ceaseless bombardment and nevertheless held the line. Kluge rejoined that Hitler had not been fighting at **25** degrees below zero. "My corps cdr has told me that if the **15. ID** is ordered to stand fast, the troops are so exhausted they will not obey." Hitler angrily said, "If that is so, then it is the end of the German army," and he ended the conversation. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 364)

Winter '41/42: *Goebbels* wrote, Hitler „*very much aged*.“ (*P. Johnson*, 379)

Winter 41/42: Hitler hat auf Andeutungen in seiner naeheren Umgebung, den Krieg vorerst defensiv weiterzufuehren u. ihn danach durch eine pol. Loesung zu beenden, nicht reagiert. Deutlicher als seine mil. Berater hat er erkannt, dass seine Weltherrschaftsplaene u. Kriegsziele im Osten **keine pol. Loesung** gestatteten. Gegenueber der UdSSR war Hitler zu einer Verstaendigung nicht bereit, waehrend er noch im **Nov 41** auf einen Verstaendigungsfrieden mit Grossbritannien spekuliert hatte. Als *Ribbentrop* waehrend der Neujahrsgratulation fuer **1942** die Moeglichkeit eines Friedensschlusses mit Stalin sondierte, erwiderte Hitler sogleich „*dass im Osten nur eine klare Entscheidung zwischen Sieg oder Niederlage in Frage kommen koennte*.“ Wie General *Jodl* ueberlieferte, war Hitler „klar, als die Katastrophe des Winters 1941/42 hereinbrach, dass von diesem *Kulminationspunkt* des beginnenden Jahres **1942** an *kein Sieg mehr errungen werden konnte*," u. dass ferner „mit einer schnellen Beendigung des Krieges nicht mehr zu rechnen war.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa*, 171; also *KTB OKW*, Bd. 4, 1503)

Winterkrise: *Heusinger* schrieb in seiner ersten Nachkriegsbilanz nieder, dass Hitler „den in diesem Falle erfolgreichen Versuch, seinen Willen, *unbedingt stehen zu bleiben, ruecksichtslos in der Front*„ durchgesetzt u. „*ruecksichtslos*“ *Fuehrer, die nicht gehorchen wollten u. es besser zu wissen glaubten, „von heute auf morgen“ entlassen habe*. Er bezeichnete es als „**zum grossen Teil**“ *Hitlers „Verdienst*“, dass *die Front bald wieder zum Stehen kam*: „*Sein Fuehrungsapparat zog mit ihm am gleichen Strang*“, belegt mit *Halder's* ihm unvergesslichen Worten aus diesen Tagen: „*Und ich werde trotz allem nicht die weisse Fahne ziehen!*“ Im Rueckblick war sich *Heusinger* natuerlich darueber im klaren, dass *diese Uebereinstimmung* zugleich **die endgueltige Unterwerfung unter Hitlers Willen bedeutete**. (see, *Meyer, Heusinger*, 173)

Winter 41/42: Hitler "seized upon the weather as an excuse for his failure—'I've always detested snow, *Bormann*, you know. I've always hated it. Now I know why. It was a presentiment.'"...It is still an eerie experience to journey to Moscow over land and to stand at the memorial on the edge of the city which marks the point where, in Nov 41, the exhausted *Wehrmacht* troops were forced to a grinding halt. It is chillingly close to the city center. Hitler was *so convinced of his imminent victory that he ordered huge blocks of red granite to be*

²⁷¹ **Note:** From text, I'm not sure if *Irving* is referring *specifically* to **31 Dec 41**, or simply to final days of the year.

transported to the outskirts of Moscow for the construction of a monument to the Third Reich. (Faust's Metropolis, A. Richie, 502-03)

Winter 41/42: Aus *Feldpostbriefen* u. Frontreisen konnte die Heeresfuehrung entnehmen, dass sich bei den Soldaten mit dem Wechsel im [OKH] auch die Hoffnung auf „eine grundlegende *Wendung zum Besseren*“ verband. Dies wurde ebenso als ein Gewinn betrachtet wie die Erfahrung, dass die Soldaten zwar auf die „*unfaehigen Generale*“ schimpften, aber **Hitler von jeder Kritik ausnahmen**. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 178-79)

Winter 41/42: Obwohl Hitler aus vielen Berichten hoerte, dass die Soldaten „*ostmuede*“ waren u. an der Front wie im Hinterland die *Parole* verbreitet wurde: „*Wir wollen heim, uns reicht's*,“ zweifelte er nicht am „*kaempferischen Geist*“ der Truppe gegen den Bolschewismus u. dessen Rote Armee. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 179)

Jan 42: Japan an der Seite des Deutschen Reiches zu haben bestaerkte Hitler in seinem Glauben, seine Mission nun doch vollenden zu koennen. Mit der Landung japanischer Streitkraefte im Norden *Malayas*, mit deren Vormarsch auf *Singapur* u. der Bedrohung *Indiens* – so kalkulierte er – wuerden sich die mil. Moeglichkeiten Grossbritanniens erschoepfen u. London zur Beendigung des Krieges gegen Deutschland gezwungen sein. Kaum ein Tag verging nun, an dem er dieser Hoffnung nicht Ausdruck verlieh. Das eine Mal meinte er, es gebe wohl keinen Englaender, der jetzt nicht ununterbrochen an Indien daechte. „Stuenden sie vor der Wahl: Deutschland den Kontinent zu lassen u. dafuer Indien zu behalten, so wuerden **99** von **100** Englaendern sich fuer Indien entscheiden,“ denn Indien sei fuer den Englaender das Fundament seiner Weltherrschaft. Ein anderes Mal ging er auf Churchill ein, den er als Vertreter einer ueberholten Auffassung bezeichnete: „Die Herstellung eines europaeischen Gleichgewichts liegt nicht mehr im Bereich des Moeglichen. Dafuer aber hat er England in diesen Krieg gehetzt. Wenn *Singapur* faellt, wird er abberufen, das ist meine heiligste Ueberzeugung. Interessiert sind an dieser Linie nur die Juden.“ (*Reuth, Hitler*, 558; see also, *Monologe im Fuehrerhauptquartier*, 10.1.42 & 12.-13.1.42, pp 193-94)

3.1.42: Hitler bezeichnete den Kriegseintritt Japans als „eine grosse Erleichterung“ fuer Deutschland, obwohl er gegenueber den japan. Botschafter **Oshima** am 3.1.42 zugeben musste, dass er noch nicht wisse „wie man die USA besiege.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa*, 170)

3.1.42: Hitler admits to the Japanese ambassador, *General Hiroshi Oshima*, that he did not yet know „how America could be defeated.“ That made the two of them: the Japanese did not know either. In **1945** General **Jodl** claimed that, „from the start of **1942** on,“ Hitler knew „victory was no longer attainable.“ What he did not then grasp, but what 1942 made painfully clear, was that the huge coalition he had ranged against himself and his two allies had a *decisive superiority* not merely in men and materiel but in *technology*. In launching war, the Germans and Japanese had *pushed the world over the watershed into a new age*, outside their or anyone's control, full of marvels and unspeakable horrors. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 396-97; also, *H.A. Jacobsen, Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 290)

15.1.42: Hitler's thoughts are not on Russia alone: „I must do something for *Koenigsberg*,“ he tells his guests. „I shall build a museum in which we shall assemble all we've found in Russia. I'll also build a magnificent opera house and library.“ He would also build a „new, Germanic muuseum,“ in *Nuremberg*, and a new city at *Trondheim*, on the coast of Norway. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 291)

18.1.42: Long before the passing of the old year, Hitler's thoughts had been w/ the coming *spring offensive*. He hoped to begin advancing Army Group South into the Caucasus as soon as the weather cleared – perhaps late in **Apr 42**. A southern thrust – rather than a renewed advance on Moscow – offered many advantages: it would cure the oil problem; it would keep *Turkey* neutral; and if all went well the autumn of **1942** might see the *Wehrmacht* advancing on *Baghdad*. He disclosed his strategic plan to GFM v. Bock on **18 Jan 42**, before Bock flew to take command of Army Group South at *Poltava*. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 369; see also, *Gerbet, Tagebuch Bock*)

19.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Hitler fand eine eigene Art, *sich von dieser Krise an der Front abzulenken*. Gelegentlich eines Mittagessen „im kleinen Kreise“ gemeinsam mit Halder u. dem GFM v. Bock, dem neuen Oberbefehlshaber der Hr.Gr.Sued nach dem jaehen Tod Reichenaus, *sprach Hitler von seinen Bauplaenen fuer Berlin*, „dass der *Flugplatz Tempelhof* ein grosses Volkspark werden solle, weil man in heutiger Zeit ueber einer so grossen Stadt ueberhaupt auch im Frieden keine Flugzeuge dulden duerfe.“ Die dortigen neuen Gebaeude koennen grosse Sporthallen werden. Ein „*Triumphthor am Halleschen Tor*, als Parallele zum *Brandenburger Tor*“ sollte nach Hitlers Worten 150 Meter hoch werden. Es mutete Heusinger „recht eigenartig“ an, „wie der Mann mitten im ernstesten Ringen sich mit solchen Gedanken beschaefigt.“ Vermutlich brauche er wohl eine Entspannung, meinte Heusinger, „gerade weil er den Ernst der Lage voll erkennt“ u. sich „nun seiner Gewohnheit entsprechend“ *Wunschtraeumen* hingebe, „die ihn wengistens fuer einige Zeit die rauhe Wirklichkeit vergessen lassen.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 174)

20.1.42 [*Goebbels Tagebuch*]: Gestern: [. . .] Gegen Mittag habe ich dann die erste Unterredung mit dem Fuehrer. Gott sei Dank sieht er glanzend aus u. befindet sich in bester Form. Er freut sich sehr, dass ich wieder einmal ins Hauptquartier gekommen bin, u. gibt mir gleich einen ausfuehrlichen Lagebericht. Er ist der Meinung, dass es nun seiner . . . lischen Arbeit gelungen ist, allmaechlich *im Osten eine Stabilisierung der Front herbeizufuehren*. Diese kann zwar noch nicht als endgueltig angesprochen werden, aber er glaubt doch, dass *ernste Krisen nun kaum noch auftreten werden*. . .

Der Fuehrer erzaehlt mir, dass er *drei [3] Wochen barbarischer Arbeit hinter sich hat*. An den meisten Tagen hat er von morgens frueh bis in die tiefe Nacht hinein im Kartenzimmer gestanden, so dass *ihm direkt die Fuesse angeschwollen sind*. Seine Hauptarbeit bestand darin, das Nachschub- u. Transportproblem zu loesen u. die sinkende Moral vor allem der fuehrenden Maenner wieder aufzurichten. Er sagt mir, er waere sich manchmal vorgekommen wie einer, dessen hauptsaechliche Arbeit darin besteht, *Gummimaenner, denen die Luft ausgegangen ist, wieder neu aufzublasen*. [!] . . .

Das Versagen der hoechsten Generalitaet ist nicht so schlimm, wie es zuerst den Anschein hatte. Die alten Herren sind wohl etwas unter den physischen Belastungen zusammengebrochen. Fuer sie war es hoechste Zeit, einige Wochen Urlaub zu machen. Das ist auch geschehen, u. zwar mit einem ueberraschenden Erfolg. Generalfeldmarschall Bock hat schon nach vierzehn [14] Tagen telegraphisch mitgeteilt, dass er sich *absolut wieder in der Lage ist, eine Gruppe zu fuehren*. Dieses Telegramm kam gerade zurecht, da Reichenaus Tod die Suedgruppe fuehrerlos gemacht hatte u. Bock nun sofort einspringen konnte. . .

Sehr bitter aeussert sich der Fuehrer ueber Brauchitsch. Es kommt jetzt mehr u. mehr heraus, dass er die *Quelle allen Defaitismus* gewesen ist. Er hat seinen Stab mit seiner penetranten Gesinnung der Nachgiebigkeit vollkommen angesteckt. . .

Der Fuehrer erklart mir jetzt auch, warum er Guderian abberufen hat. Guderian hat einem Befehl nicht gehorcht, hat es besser wissen wollen als seine vorgesetzte Dienststelle, u. der Fuehrer steht auf dem Standpunkt, der m.E. ganz richtig ist, das *in einer Krise Gehorsam das oberste Gesetz ist*. (R.G. Reuth (ed.), *Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, 1735-38)

27.1.42: Anfang des Jahres **1942** bekraeftigte Hitler diese Einschaeztung des *apokalyptischen Endes* fuer das Dt. Reich. In vertraulicher *Tischrunde* erklarte er am 27.1.42: „Ich bin auch hier eiskalt: Wenn das dt. Volk nicht bereit ist, fuer seine Selbsterhaltung sich einzusetzen, gut: dann soll es verschwinden.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa*,” 172; also, *Picker, Tischgespraeche*, 171)

29.1.42: [*Heusinger an seine Frau*] Hitler selbst habe „sich wohl auch noch in keiner Situation seines Lebens *so hilflos gefuehlt wie jetzt*, wenigstens *stehen auch ihm manchesmal die Traenen in den Augen*, u. er weiss, dass er oft *Uebermenschliches verlangt*. Die Vortraege bie ihm seien „viel ruhiger geworden als zu Anfang, wo er ploetzlich *im Zimmer herumrasen* konnte u. *wild schimpfte*, oftmals in dem Glauben, er koenne es besser machen.“ Jetzt sei er Ratschlaegen „*sehr zugaenglich*“ geworden. (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 175)

30.1.42: On this day, Hitler presented a first accounting of the previous weeks [in Russia] in a speech in the Berlin *Sportpalast*: “Any weakling can handle victories. But only the mighty can endure the blows of fortune! Providence will give the ultimate and highest prize only to those who are capable of dealing w/ the blows of fortune.” (quoted in: *H. Heer, War of Extermination*, 339)

30.1.42 [*Heusinger an seine Frau*]: Nach Hitlers *Rede im Sportpalast* am **30. Jan.**, jener Rede, in der er seine Drohung wiederholte, „dass *das Ergebnis dieses Krieges die Vernichtung des Judentums*“ sein werde, bemerkte *Heusinger* kuehl, dass Hitler die „*augenblickliche Lage*“ an der Ostfront richtig geschildert, aber fuer das Fruehjahr „zu guenstige“ Hoffnungen erweckt habe. „*Wir werden leider fuer laengere Zeit noch nicht an eine Offensive denken koennen*.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 175)

30.1.42: Hitler gives speech on the anniversary of his rise to power. This time he is not addressing the Reichstag, as was the tradition, but a popular meeting in the largest auditorium in the *Berlin Sports Palace*. He feels the need to appeal to the people directly to instill new spirit in them and strengthen their faith in him and in the future of the Reich. Again, he spoke of „international Jewry“ that backed the misdeeds of all his enemies. Yet main brunt of his attack this time is leveled at Great Britian . . . His main theme is the war, which had been brought about, so he asserts, by the hatred of others, mainly the British and Americans . . . He also says, „It is evident to us that this war can end only in the elimination of the Aryan peoples or the disappearance of Jewry from Europe.“ He then repeated his „*prophesy*“ of **30.1.39**:

This war will not end as the Jews imagine, namely, in the liquidation of all the European and Aryan peoples; the outcome of this war will be the extermination of Jewry. For the first time it will not be other nations who will bleed to death. For the first time we will practice the ancient Jewish law: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!

Hitler goes on to rant and boast, but again felt the need to justify the fact that the attack on Russia had been checked not, he claims, by the Russians, but by the *winter cold*. At the end of the speech, he promises that the coming year will again be one of great victories, although he does *not* promise that it will bring an end to the war. Hitler delivers this address **10** days after the

Wannsee Conference. Just as his speech of **30.1.39** had provided official sanction for the appointment of Heydrich to run the *Emigration Ctr*, he now endorses the *Final Solution* as an integral part of his war policies and even set up a yardstick for success. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 317-18)

30.1.42 [Hitler at Sportpalast]: As the anniversary of the seizure of power approached, Hitler contemplated whether he should fulfill the annual engagement of addressing the German people from the Berlin Sportpalast on 30 January. Goebbels pressured him to do so, but Hitler was **so involved in his plans for the summer offensive in Russia** that not until the last moment, at midday on the 29th, did he board his train for Berlin. He spoke at **5:00 p.m.** on **30 Jan 41**. Goebbels made the introduction. It was a skillfully arranged event w/ an extraordinarily responsive audience, mostly Berlin armaments workers, military nursing sisters and wounded servicemen. . . He drew much enthusiastic applause, which buoyed him up in his planning for the summer. (v. *Below, At Hitler's Side*, 126)

7.2.42: On this day, Munitions Minister Fritz Todt reported to Hitler and dined w/ him at the Wolf's Lair; by **9:45 a.m.** the next morning he was dead – his charred remains lying in the wreckage of his *Heinkel* which had crashed on takeoff at Rastenburg field. Hitler was *desolate* at the loss of this old friend. Hitler immediately selects Albert *Speer* as Todt's successor. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 370-71)

13.2.42 [Goebbels Tagebuch]: Gestern: [. . .] . . . Der Fuehrer ist zum Trauerakt fuer Reichsminister Dr. Todt in Berlin eingetroffen.²⁷² Ich gehe gleich mittags zu ihm hin u. stelle fest, dass der Verlust Dr. Todts ihn *auf schwerste erschuettert hat*. [. . .] Er war einer der Naechsten beim Fuehrer. [. . .] Der Fuehrer sagt mir unter vier Augen, wie schwer ihn der Verlust getroffen habe u. wie wehmuertig ihm ums Herz sei bei dem Gedanken, dass nun allmaehlich ein Freund nach dem anderen aus unserem Kreise scheidet. . . Um **3 Uhr** findet im Mosaiksaal der Reichskanzlei der Staatstrauerakt fuer Dr. Todt statt. Er ist ausserordentlich ergreifend. Die gesamte Prominenz von Staat, Partei u. Wehrmacht ist versammelt. . . Der Fuehrer ist bei seiner Ansprache so erschuettert, dass er zeitweise kaum zu reden in der Lage ist. . . (*R.G. Reuth* (ed.), *Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, 1754-55)²⁷³

14.-15.2.42: Hitler speaks to **10,000** newly commissioned [„minted“] lieutenants assembled in Berlin's *Sportpalast*. He made every officer present believe that in this hour of crisis he alone could turn the tide. Normally such speeches ended in silence, but as he left the platform a thunderous cheering broke out, and out of the clamor swelled **10,000** voices united in the national anthem. Despite the reverses in Russia, *his prestige was at its height*. The next evening, **15 Feb**, his train bore him back toward his HQ in East Prussia. Toward midnight, *Ribbentrop* came along the swaying corridor w/ news that *Churchill* had just broadcast the fall of *Singapore*: Lt Gen A.E. *Percival* had capitulated that evening w/ his **70,000** men to Gen *Tomoyuki Yamashita*, cdr of the Japanese **25. Army**. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 372)

27.2.42: In her diary, Hitler's secretary vividly described the mood at Hitler's Wolf's Lair headquarters at this time:

²⁷² **Note:** Dr. Todt perished in a plane crash on. **8 Feb 42** (confirm date!) , when leaving Rastenburg after visiting Hitler's HQ. Notes Reuth: "Ursache fuer den Absturz des Flugzeuges war moeglicherweise ein Sprengsatz. Dies spielte im Zuge eines Nachlass-Spruchkammerverfahrens nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg eine Rolle. (f.n. 28, 1752)

²⁷³ **Note:** Die Rede Hitlers ist abgedruckt in: Domarus, Reden, Bd. II, S. 1836 ff.

After two days of warmer weather the temperature suddenly dropped again. Although by day it is only about zero, the biting east wind makes the cold far far worse. . . The Chief is always *dog tired*, but he won't go to bed, and this is often a torment for the rest of us. We used to play records most evenings, and then you could fall back on your own thoughts; but since *Todt's* unfortunate end the music evenings have been few and far between, and as his *tea circle* always consists of the same faces, there is no stimulus from outside and nobody has any personal experiences to relate, so the conversation is often tedious and indifferent to say the least. In fact, the conversations run around and around in the same circles. Thank goodness we have a *cat* that often sits up w/ us. Its playful antics...are a welcome relief. . . (quoted in: *Irving, Hitler's War*, 374)

13.3.42:²⁷⁴ (*Notizen, Beobachtungen des Fuehrers*, prepared by Obst. Scherff): "F. [Fuehrer] absolut Fehldherr. Hat Ob.d.H. schon immer dazwischengeredet, ihn 'untergebuttert',²⁷⁵ was B. [Brauchitsch] quaelte u. seine Energie verzehrte...'Ich beschwoere Sie,' Formel ist staendig diese. Ferngespraech in der *Sylvesternacht* mit *GFM Kluge*, der zurueckgehen wollte, F.: ich uebernehme volle Verantwortung. Die Anfuehrer werden einfach gezwungen. Bis zum Korpsfuehrer herab wird jeder vom F. ,bearbeitet.'

„Zum Umschwung [in Russian campaign]: ...Winter sehr frueh (Kaelte, auch nach Aussagen von Kennern, wie des Gesandten *Schulenburg* u. des Moskauer Militaerattaches) erst im Januar erwartet. Bis dahin 8-10 degrees, gut genug, um operieren zu koennen...Ansicht des Fuehrers: Kulminationspunkt. Dabei hat der Ueberlegene nicht wuchtige Massen einzusetzen. Wie bei einer Waage, bei der auch oft nur ein Gramm genuegt, um Ausschlag zu geben.

Umschwung bedingt durch:

1. Fruehen Einbruch des Winters. Waffen funktionierten nicht mehr. Dt. Ueberlegenheit der *Waffentechnik* damit ausgeschaltet...
2. Traf mit *Nervenkrise des dt. Heeres* u. vor allem der Fuehrung zusammen. *Angriffselan* hatte Kraefteverbrauch verdeckt; im Augenblick des Winterkriegs trat er voll zu Tage.

Woertlich: hing am seidenen Faden, dass kein 1812 entstand...

Als Meldungen kamen von Div.: Gefechtsstaerke 6-800 Mann, liess sich F. Verpflegungsstaerke melden, die wesentlich hoeher waren, da Verluste, auch durch Erfrierungen, nicht so stark, wie angenommen, auf Grund der ersten Meldungen. **F. ganz brutal: wer frisst, soll auch kaempfen!..**

²⁷⁴ **Note:** This is date when *M. Feuersenger* received the *Notizen* from Oberst Scherff "zur Abschrift." Feuersenger: "Ich machte fuer mich einen Durchschlag u. versteckte ihn." In this manner, this document—which provides intriguing insights into Hitler's thoughts and conduct during winter of 41/42—survived the war. (*M. Feuersenger*, 106)

²⁷⁵ C. Nehring: "...untergebuttert' heißt, daß ein Mensch gegen seinen Willen organisatorisch oder räumlich oder überhaupt "nach unten reduziert wird"; er wird "kleiner gemacht." Sehr schwierig zu erklären." M. Mieth: "Der bei uns übliche Ausdruck 'untergebuttert' ist schlecht zu erklären. Man könnte vielleicht sagen: 'Er hat ihn klein gemacht.' Vielleicht ist dieser Ausdruck so zustande gekommen: 'Beim Buttern (also Sahne rühren, bis Butter entsteht) sind die Zutaten des Untergebutterten in der fertigen Butter nicht mehr zu merken.' Die Arbeit des Untergebutterten ist also zunichte gemacht. Wenn das ständig passiert, geht die Energie verloren und so wird das bei Brauchitsch gewesen sein. Ich kann es leider nicht besser erklären."

Form des Krieges: Voellig anders wie *das deutsche Schema*. Begann bereits anfangs mit Fehlen fester Fronten (die es nur 1914-18 gab) u. gesicherter Flanken; erst dem Heer unangenehm, heute ist es ‚flankenfest.‘...Kein Anhalt mehr ueber eigene u. russ. Staerke. Alles unsicher. Sicherheit des F. keineswegs absolute. **Gibt zu, mitunter Hundeangst gehabt zu haben**. Wenn es hart auf hart kommt, aber immer kraftvoll...

Zusammenfassend: Pessimist bei guter, Optimist bei schlechter Lage. *Trotz Weichheit (wenn Meldung kommt, dass wieder einige Hundert Verwundete in russ. Hand fallen, muss er sich oft setzen u. die Traenen kommen ihm.)*, hat sich dann aber sofort wieder in der Gewalt. So kommt es zu Entschlussen, die direkt brutal erscheinen, wie das Opfern ganzer Divisionen, die nicht zurueckgehen duerfen (**290. [ID]** suedl. *Ilmensee*). Darin viel von Russen gelernt.

Wollsammlung: *Rein politische Massnahme*...Man war sich im Klaren darueber, dass von der Wollsammlung nichts nach vorne kommt. Muss eingemottet werden...Im Osten Ausstattung sehr unterschiedlich. Vor Leningrad gut ausgeruestet, woanders heute noch nichts da...

Fuehrerwechsel: Grundsatzlich waren *die Heerfuehrer am Ende ihrer Kraft*. *Guderian besonders*. Leeb zu alt, bat um Abloesung waehrend der Krise. *Rundstedt* in Frieden geschieden. *Reichenau* hat sich in seinem Alter uebernommen...

Propaganda: ...Bei Propaganda volle Fuehrerverantwortung. *Dietrich Rede auf seinen Befehl*...Entscheidend war aber, dass man Japan bei der Strange halten musste. *F. bei Eintritt der Krise **Himmelangst** gehabt, dass sie abschrecken...*“ (*Im Vorzimmer der Macht, M. Feuersenger, 106-110*)

15.3.42 [Heldengedenktag]: Hitler returned to Berlin for *Heldengedenktag* on **15 Mar 41**. In his speech he described the fierceness of the Russian winter and the enormous difficulties which our soldiers had had to overcome. But he praised the German fighting men, who, despite the violence of the enemy and the severe weather, had helped to keep the front solid. Full of reverence – and this seemed to me to be no empty pathos – he spoke of the fallen, who had not sacrificed their lives for Germany in vain. (*v. Below, At Hitler's Side, 128*)

19.3.42 [Mobilisierung der Heimatfront]: An diesem Tage ging es zwischen Hitler u. Goebbels nicht nur um die Ostfront . . . sondern auch um die von Goebbels verfochtene totale Mobilisierung der „Heimatfront.“ Vieles wurde zwischen beiden Maennern eroertert, etwa die Einfuehrung der „Frauenarbeitspflicht.“ in vielem stimmte Hitler seinem Minister zu, ohne dass es jedoch zu konkreten Schritten gekommen waere. . . Fuenf [**5**] Wochen nachdem Goebbels . . . das Hauptquartier verlassen hatte, um nach Berlin zurueckzukehren, liess sich Hitler am **26 Apr 42** vom Reichstag hierfuer eine Blankovollmacht geben. (*R.G. Reuth, Goebbels, 500*)

19.3.42: For all Dr. Morell's endeavors, visitors to Rastenburg that spring found Hitler *gray, drawn, and ailing*. He confided to Goebbels that he suffered attacks of *giddiness* [?]; and as he described the winter crisis he seemed to *age visibly*. "The Fuehrer describes to me," wrote Goebbels of a conversation on **19 Mar 42**, "how close we were these past few months to a Napoleonic winter. Had we weakened for just one instant, the front would have caved in and a catastrophe ensued that would have put Napoleon's far into the shade...Most of the blame for this is *Brauchitsch's*. The Fuehrer has only words of contempt for him: a vain, cowardly wretch, unable even to grasp what was happening, much less master it. By his constant interference and

disobedience he completely wrecked the entire plan of campaign in the east, which had been devised in crystal clarity by the Fuehrer...“ (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 375)

20.3.42 (*Goebbels diary*): “The Fuehrer’s looks belie his health. From just a fleeting look at him one might get the impression of a man in the best of health. But that is not the case. In an intimate conversation he told me that of late he has felt somewhat ill. Now and again he has to struggle with the *most violent dizzy spells*. He says the long winter upset his spirit so much that it has taken its toll on his health.” (quoted in: *Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 97; see also, R.G. Reuth (ed.), *Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, 1768)

20.3.42 [*Goebbels Tagebuch*]: Gestern: [. . .] . . . Der Fuehrer hat fuer ihn [Brauchitsch] nur Ausdruecke der Verachtung. Ein *eitler, feiger Wicht*, der nicht in der Lage war, die Situation ueberhaupt zu ueberschauen, geschweige sie zu meistern. Er hat den ganzen Feldzugsplan im Osten, der vom Fuehrer kristallklar entworfen war, durch sein dauerndes Dazwischenreden u. durch seinen dauernden Ungehorsam vollkommst verkitscht u. verdorben. . . Der Fuehrer schildert ihn als einen Feigling u. Nichtskoenner. . .

Fuer den kommenden Fruehling u. Sommer hat der Fuehrer wiederum einen ganz klaren Plan. Er will nicht ins Uferlose hinein Krieg fuehren. Seine Ziele sind Kaukasus, Leningrad u. Moskau. Sind diese Ziele von uns realisiert, dann will er Anfang des kommenden Oktober unter allen Umstaenden Schluss machen u. rechtzeitig in die Winterquartiere gehen. Eventuell hat er die Absicht, *eine riesenhafte Verteidigungslinie aufzubauen* u. dann den Ostfeldzug auf sich beruhen zu lassen. Ein neuer Winter wie der vergangene wird nicht mehr ueber uns kommen. Eventuell kann es im Osten zu einem hundertjaehrigen Kriege kommen, der uns dann aber keine besonderen Sorgen mehr zu bereiten braucht. Wir stehen dann dem uebrigbleibenden Russland gegenueber, wie England Indien gegenuebersteht. [. . .] Die Offensive wird wahrscheinlich nicht vor Ende **Mai**-Anfang **Juni** [42] beginnen koennen. . .

Im uebrigen hat der Fuehrer fuer die sowj. Kriegsfuehrung eine ziemliche Hochachtung. Das brutale Durchgreifen Stalins hat die russ. Front gerettet. Wir muessen aehnliche Methoden in unserer Kriegsfuehrung anwenden, um uns demgegenueber behaupten zu koennen. Diese Haerte hat uns manchmal gefehlt, u. sie muessen wir zu ersetzen suchen. Der Fuehrer macht diesmal auf mich einen erschuetternden Eindruck. Ich habe ihn *niemals so ernst u. so verhalten gesehen wie diesmal*. Ich erzaehle ihm, dass auch ich mich gesundheitlich durchaus nicht in bester Verfassung befinde. Wir sprechen uns dabei menschlich sehr intim aus. Der Krieg greift uns allen hart an die Nerven. . . (R.G. Reuth (ed.), *Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, 1772-74)

28.3.42: Hitler issues *secret directives for the summer offensive in Russia*, Operation “*Blau*.” But that was just one worry: almost at once the British bombing offensive began. *Luebeck* was firebombed, and 300 people lost their lives in the ancient *Hanseatic port*...Hitler adopted the habit of *never going to bed until he was sure the last enemy plane had left German airspace*. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 97)²⁷⁶

Apr 42: Hitler came out better from these winter battles than Stalin did, at least w/in his own short-range terms. The „stand-fast“ policy **saved his Eastern Front**. Ironically, the disaster at

²⁷⁶ Around this time (late Mar/early Apr 42), Hitler described the winter fighting in all its cruelty to *Goebbels*. “It was really quite touching,” wrote *Goebbels*, “to hear him complain about how this last winter inundated him with worries and difficulties. *I couldn’t help noticing that he’s gone quite gray*. And as he started talking about the winter’s problems he seemed even older.” (quoted in: *Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 97)

Moscow probably enhanced in the short term his reputation (and his self-estimation) as a war leader. He could claim to have saved the German Army from its own errors. There was a degree of truth in this, as the foolhardy exposure of AGC (and the related intel/supply failures) had been as much the responsibility of the German Army High Command as it had been that of the Fuehrer. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 148)

5.4.42: Fuer 1942 plante Hitler neue Offensive an der Ostfront, die nun im Sueden in Richtung *Kaukasus* zielen sollten. Dabei war Hitler nach wie vor von der *fixen Idee* beherrscht, auch die Sowjetunion habe im Winter ihre *Reserven weitgehend verbraucht* u. es sei daher moeglich, im Sommer 1942 deren verbliebene Wehrkraft endgueltig zu vernichten, wie seine *Weisung Nr. 41* vom **5.4.42** in unverbesserlichem *Optimismus* bestimmte. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa*, 171)

24.-27.4.42: On **24 Apr 41** we travelled to Berlin for a Reichstag speech on the 26th. The reason for it was the pending action involving Hoepner. A trial of strength was in the offing between Hitler and the Wehrmacht judiciary, which did not want to proceed, w/ the harshness demanded by Hitler, against either Hoepner or any other generals who had been deemed out of step during the winter crisis. In a long speech, his last to this forum, Hitler depicted the struggles of the past and outlined his plans for **1942** before delivering to great acclaim a declaration subsequently published in the law journal *Reichsgesetzblatt* on **27 Apr 41** under the heading *Uebermaechtigungsgesetz* – Law of Supreme Empowerment. . . This decree formally bestowed on Hitler unlimited power. (For details see, v. *Below, At Hitler's Side*, 146)

26.4.42: Hitler has his rubber-stamp *Reichstag* pass a law giving him *absolute power of life and death* over every German and simply suspended any laws which might stand in the way of this. Truly, Adolf Hitler had become not only the Leader of Germany but the Law. Not even in medieval times nor further back in the barbarous tribal days had any German arrogated such tyrannical power, nominal and legal as well as actual, to himself. (See, *Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 867)

24.5.42: Hitler reflects to *Speer* and *Milch* on the winter campaign of **1941/42**: “I had to act ruthlessly. I had to send even my closest generals packing . . . In winter one of them came and announced, ‘Mein Fuehrer, we can’t hold on any longer, we’ve got to retreat.’ I asked him, ‘Srrrr, where in God’s name are you thinking of retreating to? How far?’ ‘Well,’ he answered, ‘I don’t really know.’ – ‘Do you plan to drop back **30 miles**? Do you think it isn’t all that cold there then? . . . And if you retreat, do you intend to take your heavy wpns w/ you, can you take them?’ This man answered, ‘No, it can’t be done.’ – ‘So you’re planning to leave them to the Russians. And how do you think you’re going to fight further back if you haven’t got any heavy wpns?’ . . . (See, *Irving, Hitler’s War*, 355-56, for remainder of quote.)

4.7.42: Am **4. Jul 42** unterhielt sich Hitler mit Marschall Mannerheim, dem finnischen O.B., in seinem Sonderzug. Hitler besuchte Mannerheim ueberraschend anlaesslich desses **75.** Geburtstages. Durch Zufall wurden die ersten elf [**11**] Minuten dieser Unterredung aufgezeichnet, wofuer ein finnischer Tonbandtechniker verantwortlich war. In dem aufgezeichneten Gespraech erklaerte Hitler u.a.:

Wir wussten das selber auch nicht so genau, wie ungeheuerlich dieser Staat [die Sowjetunion] geruestet war. [. . .] Die haben die ungeheuerste Ruestung, die Menschen denkbar ist. [. . .] Wenn mir jemand gesagt haette, dass ein Staat mit **35 000** Tanks antreten kann, dann haette ich gesagt: Sie sind wahnsinnig geworden! [. . .] Wenn mir ein General von mir erklaert haette, dass hier ein Staat

35 000 Panzer besitzt, dann haette ich gesagt: Sie, mein Herr, Sie sehen alles doppelt oder zehnfach, Sie sind wahnsinnig; Sie sehen Gespenster. Das habe ich nicht fuer moeglich gehalten. [. . .] Haett' ich's gehnt, dann waere mir noch schwerer zu Herz gewesen, aber den Entschluss haette ich dann erst recht gefasst, denn es blieb ja keine andere Moeglichkeit. Ich war mir schon klar schon im Winter 39 u. 40, dass die Auseinandersetzung kommen musste.²⁷⁷

In diesem Tonbandgesprach mit Mannerheim behauptete Hitler auch, er haette 1940/41 gefuerchtet, die Sowjetunion wuerde Rumaenien ueberfallen:

Weil ich immer eine Angst hatte, dass Russland im Spaetherbst ploetzlich Rumaenien ueberfaellt u. sich in den Besitz der Petroleumquellen setzt, und wir waren ja im Spaetherbst 1940 noch nicht fertig gewesen. Wenn nun Russland die rumaenischen Petroleumquellen besetzt haette, dann waere ja Deutschland verloren gewesen. [. . .] mit 60 russ. Divisionen war die Sache zu machen.

Stalin machte gegenueber Hitler keinen Hehl daraus, dass er ganz Rumaenien haben wollte. (B. Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 459-60)

16.7.42: Hitler flies to *Vinnitsa*, where he had established a field HQ code-named *Werewolf*, to track progress of Operation *Blau*—the summer offensive in the south. Here he is once again taken ill. (*Private Diaries of Dr Morell*, 98)

Sep 42: As in December of the previous year, the *inner crisis* of **Sep 42** was triggered by an external crisis. Hitler reacted to both in the well-known fashion: he attempted to master the inner crisis by *shifting the blame*, removing inconvenient generals (such as List and Halder) and by concentrating additional military functions (in this case command of Army Group “A”) in his own hands. To meet the *external crisis*, he fell back on the simple “*hold-the-line*” tactic which had become basically the only acceptable form of defensive warfare for him at the latest after the experiences of the winter of 1941/42. (B. Wegner, *Road to Defeat*, 121)

1.6: Weapons/Equipment/Clothing/Rations:

Note: For terrific details on all German/Czech tanks in service on eve of “Barbarossa” see, D. Stahl, *And the World held its Breath*, 76-82)

1.6.1: Weapons & Equipment:

German Soldiers' gear: German infantry equipment had *altered little since the turn of the century*. Each soldier still wore traditional calf-high jackboots and fought w/ a modified 1898 rifle. He carried in excess of 30 kg of gear, on top of which might be added rations, reserve ammunition and components for MGs and mortars. Soldiers on the march quickly discarded extraneous items or left them in regimental transport. The *pack*, usually transported separately, would hold a blanket, stove, tent poles, rope, spare underwear and clothes, toiletries, a „fat“ box (for cooking) and personal effects. Standard marching equipment weights would be about 14 kg.

²⁷⁷ **Note:** In Wirklichkeit verfuegten die sowj. Streitkraefte im Juni 1941 uber 25 508 Panzer, 18 700 Flugzeuge u. 5 774 000 Soldaten. (459)

The leather harness would hold together pouches for **60** rifle rounds, a spade, gas mask (often discarded, but its carrier utilised to carry other effects), water bottle, bread basket containing some bread and meat or sausage, a small fat tin and bayonet. The *helmet*, weighing **1.5** kg, was not worn marching, but would be attached by its chin strop to the harness equipment. The rifle, another **4** kg weight, would be slung on or across the shoulder. Every soldier carried an *aluminum identity disc* around his neck pressed into two halves, which were snapped off if he became a casualty. One half would go to the unit chaplain if the soldier were killed, or to the administrative unit. Small bread bags and tunic pockets bulged w/ all the other necessities and comforts each soldier felt he needed to carry. These items became fewer as march distances increased. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 90)²⁷⁸

German infantryman allotted **60** rounds of ammunition (as basic issue). (*A. Freitag* [6. ID], *Aufzeichnungen*, 55, f.n. 4)

AT guns: During campaign in France (1940) German AT weaponry – and tank guns – had proven ineffective against heavy allied armor – the *French Char B2* and the *British Matilda*, in particular. Germans got a really fright at *Arras* on **21.5.40**, when the British *7th Royal Tank Rgt.* launched a major counterattack w/ *74 Matilda tanks* into the flank of Rommel's **7. PD** and rapidly overran his AT coys. Rommel eventually had to *personally* take command here to restore situation. (see, *Hart, German Soldier*, 53)

AT guns (37mm Pak): Called „*doorknockers*“ by Germans w/ great contempt; next to useless against the **T-34**, except at point-blank range. The 37s were no more than another of the many and various hideous tools of man/tank combat at close range; other ways to destroy tanks in close combat included: *grenade bundles*, *Teller mines*, *various other explosives* that must be laid upon the tank by a single human being climbing up and exposing himself. (*Schneider, Siege*)

AT guns (37mm Pak): One German Leutnant in a PzJgAbt. writes that his unit's **37mm AT** guns could easily handle the Soviet **T-28** tank. At start of Russlandfeldzug his unit found an abandoned **T-28** and performed a fire trial on it: „Wir brachten sofort ein Geschuetz in Stellung, um. . . aus **800** Metern Entfernung auf diesen Panzer zu schiessen. Dann sahen wir nach, um die Wirkung unserer Granaten einmal anschaulich kennenzulernen. Zwei Granaten waren in der Wanne eingeschlagen u. eine im Turm. Die Granate im Turm war innen krepieret, waehrend die Granaten, die durch die Wanne in das Fahrzeug eingedrungen waren, auf der anderen Seite, ohne zu krepieren, das Fahrzeug wieder verlassen hatten. Diese russ. Panzerwagen bildeten also keine Gefahr fuer uns. . . Mit der Gefuehl der Ueberlegenheit gegenueber diesen russ. Panzern ging der Weitermarsch noch besser vonstatten als vorher. (*Dr E. Bunke, PzJgAbt 31 / 31. ID, Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 233-34)

AT guns (37mm Pak): Aufgrund unserer Uebungen in Krotoschin hatten wir Erfahrungen mit unseren Panzergranaten im Waldkampf. Sie waren durch ihre Querschlaeger, die im ganzen Wald umhersausten, eine unwahrscheinliche Waffe. (**Note:** Apparently, the armor-piercing shells of this AT gun – **50 mm** and **88 mm** as well, as assume? – were simply devastating when employed in a forested area, due to their ricochet effect. See, *Dr E. Bunke, PzJgAbt 31/31. ID, Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 245-46)

Do-Geraet 38: War zuerst fuer die Fallschirmtruppe vorgesehen. Do-Geraet hiess es deshalb, weil es unter Aufsicht von *General Walter Dornberger* entwickelt wurde. Mit dieser Waffe, einem einfachen, *gitterfoermigen Rahmen*, „*Schiessrinne*“ genannt, wurde die **40 kg** schwere

²⁷⁸ One soldier remarks about having to carry a “**30lb** ammunition box.” (93)

15-cm Wurfgranate verschossen. Der Schwarzpulververtriebsatz fuehrte nicht nur zu zahlreichen Fruehdetonationen, sondern auch die Streuung war bei einer Schussweite von **5 500 m** mit **230 m** viel zu gross. (*H. Stiess, Briefe, Anmerkung 8, 232*)

Do-Geraet: Photos of German **32 cm „Do-Geraet“** rocket launchers. One is firing and shows the rockets trailing long, thick plumes of smoke: Schwere Wurfrahmen an **SPW** montiert gaben die Moeglichkeit, durch Raketenantrieb 32 cm Wurfkoerper ueber **4 Kilometer** zu ‚werfen.‘ Beim Landser hiessen sie ‚Heulende Kuh‘ oder ‚Stuka zu Fuss.‘“ (*H. Scheibert, 6. Pz.-Div., 60-61*)

Do-Werfer: This wpn called “Stuka zu Fuss” by the Landser. Equipment consisted of a standard APC equipped w/ externally mounted pivoting racks for launching heavy rockets against ground targets. (See photo in, *Steinzer, 2. Pz.-Div., 122*)

Field glasses: According to *Guy Sajer, Zeiss fieldglasses* were a part of an officer’s equipment. (*Sajer, Forgotten Soldier, 275*)

Flakartillerie: „...Flakgeschuetzen (das ist mit unsere beste Waffe)...“ (*H. Stieff, Briefe, 22.12.41*)

Flakartillerie [Aug-Sep 41]: As in sector of Army Group South, anti-aircraft units were used primarily against ground targets by AGC. The high velocity and flat trajectory of the heavy AA guns and their relatively high rate of fire made them a feared and successful wpn against armor and bunkers. In the Yelnya salient, batteries of **I AA Corps** formed the main defense of the army units fighting there for more than four [4] weeks. By 30 August, this corps had shot down **259** enemy acft in the east. On 9 September, the AA units of AGC, which were under the Luftwaffe cdr w/ the army group,²⁷⁹ shot down their **500th** enemy acft; they had also destroyed **360** Soviet tanks. (*GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 774-75*)

Flakartillerie (88mm Flak): In ihrer Ausfuehrung von **1941** hatte die **8,8 cm-Flugabwehr-Kanone** ein Rohr von **6,55 m** Laenge, sie jagte ihre Granaten mit einer Muendungsgeschwindigkeit von **1.020 m/sec** bis zu **14.930 m** hoch oder **19.700 m** weit. Da die Flak Patronenmunition verwendet, bei der wie bei Gewehrmunition das Geschoss u. die Kartusche mit Treibladung zu einem Stueck verbunden waren, erreichte sie die fuer ein solches Geschuetz enorm hohe Feuer-geschwindigkeit von **15 – 20** Schuss pro Minute. Aber nicht nur in der Luftabwehr erwies sich die **8,8 Flak** als ein hervorragendes Geschuetz, sondern auch im Erdkampf, insbesondere gegen fdl. Panzer. . . Durch ihre ungeheure Rasanz durchschlugen die Geschosse der **8,8 cm-Flak** auch schwere Panzerung. (*A. Schick, 10. Pz.-Div., 265*)

Flakartillerie (88mm Flak): After taking Orel, on **22 Oct 41**, the commander of **4. PD**, Freiherr v. Langermann, wrote the following report on fighting against heavy Russian tanks [i.e., **T-34 & KV** model]: “. . . Combating the Russian tanks w/ the **8.8 cm Flak** or the **10 cm** guns *can never by themselves be sufficient. Both guns are ponderous in comparison to the fast tanks and in most cases are already spotted, taken under fire and destroyed as they try to get into firing position.* Alone in the one tank engagement between Orel and Mzensk, two **8.8 cm Flak** guns and a **10 cm** gun (all of the heavy defensive wpns that were employed) were *shot up and overrun*. In addition these big as barn door, unarmored guns present much too large and easily acquired targets.” (Quoted in: *T. L. Jentz, Panzertruppen, 205-08*)

²⁷⁹ Were not some of the Flak units organic to the army?

Flammenwerfer: It was not an easy wpn to handle. Strapped to the operator's back was a cumbersome tank of inflammable liquid weighing over **21 kg**. This contained an adhesive mixture of viscous fuel which on spraying was designed to enmesh the victim in flame. The strength of the wind and its direction could transform it into a double-edged wpn, which was, in any case, *highly vulnerable to enemy fire*. The operator needed to be part of a team protected by infantry. As one operator explained: „The equipment itself produced a flame about **30** meters long at a temperature of **4000 C**. When one came up to an angled trench system the flame could be directed around corners, of course liquidating anything in there.“ The inflammable fuel was launched by compressed gas through a nozzle incorporating an igniter to produce a spray of flame against which there was absolutely no defense. Each tank carried sufficient [fuel] for **10** single-second bursts of fire. They sucked out the oxygen in confined bunkers, scorching and collapsing lungs in cumulative pressure waves of intense heat. „Most were burned immediately or at least blinded. These things were dreadful.“ Even today, in the preserved ruins of *Brest-Litovsk*, bunkers remain scarred by the characteristic starred-effect of molten stone. Black or dark red, they resemble a form of lava paste. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 66)

Flares: Turned “night into day” with their *magnesium* light (*Verton*, 90)

Flares: According to German training video, flares were especially important in street fighting. (*Frontschau Nr. 5/6*)

Flares [*White Verey lights*]: German soldier notes in his diary that white Verey lights provide light for **9** seconds: „For **9** seconds it's like broad daylight, you can see the whole ground in front of us.“ (*Diary of a German Soldier [W. Pruessler / 9. PD]*, 17.12.41, *Landon*, 127)

Flares: White Verey (Very?) Lights: “White signals always meant: ‘Germans here!’“ Red meant: enemy attack. Green meant: Artillery fire to be moved forward. Blue meant: Enemy tanks. (*P. Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 70, 126)

Funkgeraet (Art.): Es dauert sehr lange, bis mein guter Funker endlich Verbindung mit meiner Batterie bekam u. ich die ersten Feuerbefehle durchgeben konnte. Hier ist zu sagen, dass wir ein Funkgeraet hatten, das nicht nur schwer war, man trug es als *Tornistergeraet* [portable radio set], sondern es fiel auch sehr oft aus. Entweder war die Batterie leer, oder ein Berg oder sonst etwas stand in der Funklinie. (*Memoiren, W. Heinlein, AR 74/2. PD*, 67)

Grenades: Standard German grenades were the *egg-shaped Model 39* and the more familiar *Model 24* „*potato masher*“, whose wooden handle afforded *greater throwing range*. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 25)

Inf.Geschuetz: Neben dem leichten (**8 cm**) Infanterie-Geschuetz waren speziell die **s.I.G.** (schweres Inf.-Geschuetz) mit Kaliber **15 cm** eine erhebliche Feuerkraft in der Hand eines Rgt.-Kdrs der Schuetzen (von ihnen auch „Hausartillerie“ genannt). (*H. Scheibert, 6. Pz.-Div.*, 76)

Kanonen (10 cm): Neben den bekannteren **10,5 cm** Feldhaubitzen u. den schweren (**15 cm**) Haubitzen verfuegte das **Art.Rgt. 76** noch ueber **10 cm** Kanonen, deren lange Rohre weite Schussentfernungen ermoeglicherten. (*H. Scheibert, 6. Pz.-Div.*, 76)

Kanone 18 (170mm): Best German heavy artillery weapon of WWII. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 51)

LFH 18: “Unsere **LFH 18** Haubitzen hatten eine Reichweite ueber **10 km**, Schussfolge **6** Schuss pro Minute.“ (*W. Vollmer*, [AR 107/106. ID], *Ltr to C. Luther*, 2.5.08)

Mauser Kar 98K: Bolt-action rifle; standard German infantry wpn throughout war. Virtues included: *range, accuracy, stopping power, reliability*. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 24)

Moerser 18: This source has photo of a winter-camouflaged **21cm Moerser 18** sitting on its firing table: “Note the chains hanging from its wheels. It was time consuming to set up the gun for firing, but probably worth the effort as it could fire a **113 kg** high explosive shell almost **17 km**.” According to the author, the weapon had a maximum range of **16,725 meters**. The gun was broken down into two pieces for transportation. Few were built, as the range was only about half that of the **17 cm K18** and production was cancelled in **1942**. (See, *R. Michulec*, *4. Pz.-Div.*, 15, 18)

MG 34 [in winter]: The Russians, even when being cut up by fire of German **MG34**, would keep coming, knowing that during some point of continuous firing the German gun would *almost always jam or seize up from the cold*—that being the time when the attackers might surge on through and overrun the crews. (*Schneider, Siege*)

MG 34: The LMG 34 was light enough to rest on the shoulder of an infantryman. (*Frontschau Nr. 5/6*)

MG 42: Gave the *Landser* a crucial edge in firepower. Though similar to the **MG 34**, the new design made it simpler to change barrels when they began to overheat. With a *very high cyclic rate of fire of up to 1500 rounds per minute*, the MG 42 sounded more like *tearing fabric* than the „tap-tap-tap“ of other MGs. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 31)

MG 42: Was of simpler construction and rarely jammed, nor was it as sensitive to the cold as was the **MG34**. (*Schneider, Siege*)

Mortars: According to *S. Knappe*, these wpns of little value in wintertime, because their explosion was muffled in the deep snow. (*S. Knappe, Reflections*, 232)

Mortars: *Schneider* writes of motor crew assembling wpn on its mount and leaning over the *range screws* and then dropping shells down the tube in a single burst of activity. (*Schneider, Siege*)

Mortars: A number of German training videos show infantry mortars in action. Movement of crews is *always* the same – load, duck, fire! (*Frontschau Nr. 7*, etc.)

Mortars: Photo from **22.6.41** shows German infantry firing a *light infantry mortar*. The mortar shells are in a small case; the mortar crew is crouching to *avoid concussion* from the mortar on firing. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 42)

Nebelwerfer: Unser Nebelwerfer haben grosse Verluste. Ihre St[ellung] wird bei jeder Salve *durch die enorme Rauchentwicklung der Raketen verraten*...(Tagebuch *Kreuter*, 8.7.41, **SR 101/18. PD**)

Nebelwerfer: From **1942** on, the German army increasingly used the *Nebelwerfer* multi-barrelled rocket-launcher for *indirect fire support*. It soon proved to be one of the *most effective wpns* in the German arsenal as it could quickly bring down considerable firepower. Enemy troops

everywhere came to dread the *Nebelwerfer* „stonks“ – w/ the *demoralising* „wail“ of the projectiles in flight – which often stopped enemy assaults and frequently routed the enemy. Yet the weapon’s *short-range, ravenous munitions consumption, and tell-tale dust cloud on firing*, which made it vulnerable to detection, were significant *tactical limitations*. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 57)²⁸⁰

Nebelwerfer: In his historical novel, *Schneider* states that salvos from German *Werfer* did not have to hit Russian tanks to disable them; if salvos landed close enough, tank crews would be killed by the concussion (by *immeasurable atmospheric forces*). Small trickles of blood left dried around noses, ears, mouths and assholes of the tank crewmen. (*Schneider, Siege*)

Nebelwerfer: On the fourth [4] day of the siege at *Brest-Litovsk*, *Nebelwerfer* rocket launchers were in support. Helmut Boettcher, an assault engineer, recalled their bizarre impact on the enemy:

A type of rocket was used. They didn’t go far, but their impact was terrible. The [worst] possible there was, I think, at that time. *Everything within a circle of about 3 ½ meters was dead*, caused by the *air vacuum created*, which *collapsed all the lungs* of humans and animals alike. It was awful. Generally one saw the people simply sat there, immovable, frozen like dolls – Ja! – many had marks, but some simply sat still on a chair or bench. Death was certain, and came very quick. Ghastly. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 65)

Pak (5 cm): --Und noch etwas geschach kurz vor Kriegsbeginn. Die ungeheuer grosse Zahl von Panzern beim Russen u. auch die Tatsache, dass **KW 1** Typen in Finnland aufgetaucht waren, ermoglichten es, dass eine neue Pak konstruiert u. geliefert wurde. Das Kaliber war **5 cm**, der ganze Bau war leichter, die Kanone war nicht so schwer. Da wir aber eine Inf.-Div. waren u. die Inf.-Kdr. bei uns in der Division den Ton angaben, kamen diese **16** neuen Geschuetze zu je **4** in die Inf.-Rgtmer zu den **14. Pz.Ja.Kp.** Wir durften mit den „alten Spritzen“ von **3,7 cm** in den Krieg ziehen. (*Dr Bunke [Pz.Jg.Abt. 31], Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 200-01)

Pak (5 cm): Da sich die **3,7 cm**-Pak schon im Frankreichfeldzug als relative schwach erwiesen hat (schwere franzoesische Panzer konnte sie nicht durchschlagen), so wurde beschleunigt die **5 cm**-Pak zur Truppe gebracht. Bei einer Muendungsgeschwindigkeit von **835 – 1.040 m/sec** (je nach Art der verschossenen Munition) durchschlaegt die Granate auf **900 m** Entfernung noch eine **80 mm** dicke Panzerplatte, allerdings nur bei senkrechten Auftreffwinkel; wenn sie auf eine **60 Grad** geneigte Platte trifft, durchschlaegt sie bei gleicher Entfernung nur noch **55 mm**. Und das ist zu wenig fuer die russ. Panzer, denen die Truppe bald begegnen wird. (*A. Schick, 10. Pz.-Div.*, 264)

Pz I [4.7.41]: *Gen. v. Thoma* berichtet ueber seine Reiseeindruecke an der Front der **3 PzGr.** a) Bekaempfung der fdl. Riesenpanzer. **10 cm K, Flak, 5 cm Pak** sind wirksam. b) **Pz I** belasten die Truppen u. sollten herausgenommen werden fuer Heimatschutz, Kuestenschutz u. fuer Ausbildungszwecke. (*Halder KTB*, 40-42)

Pz IV: “Each panzer had a radio and a transmitter. The coy cdr’s panzer, and his standby panzer [?], had two radios. The first one was to have contact w/in the company. The second receiver

²⁸⁰ See, *Hart, German Soldier*, p 57-8, for vivid account of awesome impact of the German heavy **210mm** rocket-launchers at *Voronezh* on the Don in summer **1942**.

kept him in contact w/ the btn. The transmitter could be switched, so the cdr told the radio operator to either transmit to the company or to the battalion. The frequencies and code names were switched daily.” (R. Hertenstein [tank cdr in **Pz IV w/ 13. PD**], *Experiences of a German Panzer Cdr*, 31)

Pz IV: “We normally turned the turret w/ the help of an electric generator which was run by a little, water-cooled, **DKW two-stroke engine** which supplied the electric current. This current turned the turret horizontally. Vertically, we easily turned the turret by hand w/o a problem.” (R. Hertenstein, *Experiences of a German Panzer Cdr*, 36)

PzKw 35t: Light tank – an older vehicle of Czech manufacture that was *no longer in production* and whose frontal armor had a maximum thickness of only **25mm**. Only the 4th Coy of each btn. was provided w/ some **PzKw IVs** and a few **PzKw IIIs**. From the outset, his awareness of the weakness of his tank rgt. all but forced *Maj.Gen. Franz Landgraf*, the division cdr, to forbid the commitment of all panzers *en masse* and instead to employ them in conjunction w/ our infantry btns. Alone our PzKw 35ts would have been *grossly inferior* even to the Russian tanks and AT wpons about which we were already aware. The **6. PD** was the only one in the German army still equipped w/ those obsolete tanks (which entailed different combat methods on part of the division). Also, because production of the PzKw 35t had been *discontinued for some time*, providing for *spare parts* became increasingly difficult. Thus the number of servicable tanks *sank steadily* despite only small losses due to the enemy. By contrast, it should be admitted that the PzKw 35t did *possess certain advantages for operating on Russian terrain* – light weight, good maneuverability, and the ability to cross bridges w/ a load capacity of only 8.5 tons. (Newton, *Panzer Ops Raus*, 11)

Rotkopf-Munition: In the fall, the Germans had tested what they called **Rotkopf** („redhead“) ammunition – a hollow-charge artillery shell that could penetrate the Soviet armor; but Hitler had recalled the shells in **Nov 41**. The thought had struck him that if the Russians learned the secret, the hollow-charge would be vastly more effective against his own lightly armored tanks. Almost daily pleading by the army group and armies had not persuaded him to release the Rotkopf ammunition. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 92)

Rotkopf-Munition: In **Dec 41**, Hitler released the Rotkopf ammunition for use at the front. The German **88mm** guns and field howitzers w/ this munition could knock out Soviet **T-34** tanks. A direct hit w/ a Rotkopf shell could generally be counted on to kill the whole tank crew and any infantry riding on the vehicle. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 126)

Rotkopf-Munition: Der Russe fuehrt fortgesetzt *neue* frische Kraefe...heran...Dagegen sollen unsere armen Kerle, fuenffach unterlegen u. seinen modernen Panzern hilflos priesgegeben (den Einsatz der einzigen dagegen wirksamen neu entwickelten *Rotkopf-Munition der leichten Feldhaubitze* hat der Fuehrer zweimal ausdruecklich verboten u. die Zurueckziehung dieser Geschosse angeordnet, damit im *kommenden* Jahr eine Ueberraschung unsererseits moeglich ist!) in ihren duennen Faehnchen standhalten...(H. Stieff, *Briefe*, 7.12.41, 139-40)

Rotkopf-Munition: The most effective AT wpn, the „Redhead“ shell w/ a hollow-charge warhead – which Hitler had first seen demonstrated on **25.11.41** – had immediately been *embargoed* by him to keep it secret from the enemy. Hitler *lifted the embargo* on the new AT shells ca. **22.12.41**. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 356; 362-63)

Rotkopf-Munition: Der seelische u. koerperliche Zustand der dt. Soldaten hatte einen Tiefpunkt erreicht. Dazu kam die Furcht vor den sowj. Panzern, denen die dt. Panzerabwehr nichts

anhaben konnte. Die bereits entwickelte panzerbrechende “Rotkopfgranate” wurde von Hitler trotz laufenden Draengens der Truppe angeblich aus Geheimhaltungsgruenden zurueckgehalten u. erst am **22.12.41** zur Frontverwendung freigegeben. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 139)

Infanterie-Spaten: Zum Graben stehen uns nur der kurze Infanterie-Spaten zur Verfuegung, neben dem Karabiner das wichtigste Geraet. Bei Feindberuehrung steckt er griffbereit hinter dem Koppel, *sein Stahlblatt wirkt als Panzerschutz fuer den Herzbereich*. Die geschaerften Kanten dienen als Beil zum abhacken von Straeuchern u. duennen Baeumen, auch Balken lassen sich damit zu Brennholz spalten. Er zaehlt zu den Nahkampfwaffen. (*F. Belke, „Infanterist*, 36)

Sturmgeschuetze: Der Russe am 23. raus...die *Sturmgeschuetze haben allgemeine Bewunderung geerntet!* (*Tagebuch Kummer*, 20-30.10.41, **18. PD**)

Sturmgeschuetze: Es war das Panzer-Vierfaehrgestell ohne Turm mit einer **7,5** Kanone Kurzrohr vorne eingebaut. Zur Gelaendebeobachtung hatten sie jeweils ein Scherenfernrohr, das eine ausgezeichnete Sicht ermoeglichte. . . Mit ihren Scherenfernrohren hatten sie eben eine bessere Sicht als die Panzer. (*Dr Bunke, Pz.Jg.Abt. 31/31. ID, Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 205-06)

Sturmgeschuetze: Pre-war plans had called for each inf. div. to receive a **6-gun** battery of assault guns which mounted a short **75mm** gun on the hull of a **Pz.III**, but there were only **3** or **4** such batteries ready for the **1940** campaign. By **1941** there were **8 28-gun** btns and a number of independent **9-gun** batteries. A total of **642 Sturmgeschuetz III** (w/ 75mm L/24) built between **1940-42** were still in service in **Jul 42** when production switched to a new version w/ the 75mm L/48, offering much greater AT capability. Production = **StuG III** (75mm L/24) **822** from **1940-42**; **StuG III** (75mm L/48) **699** in **1942** and **3000** in **1943/44**. (*C. Winchester, Hitler’s War on Russia*, 134-35)

Sturmgeschuetze: Am **22.6.41** befinden sich davon etwa **250** bei den **11** Abteilungen u. **5** Batterien der Frontverbaende. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 113)

Sturmgeschuetze: Clear from many accounts that this wpn deeply appreciated by the infantry. It saved lives. As one account put it: “Die Sturmgeschuetze. Unsere treuen Begleiter bei manchem Angriff.” (*F. Vetter, 78. Inf.- u. Sturm-Div.*, 51)

Sturmgeschuetze [260 ID]:²⁸¹ Abwehrkaempfe suedl. der Protwa (*Troitzkoje – Gosteschewo*). Absetzbewegung nach Westen. Am **18.12.41** werden in Radenki durch zwei [2] Sturmgeschuetze 12 T-34 u. zwei [2] Stalin-Panzer (**52** Tonnen) abgeschossen, die durch unsere HKL gebrochen waren. (*Kameradenhilfswerk, 260. ID e.V.*, 90)

Tauchpanzer III: This source contains photo of a “rather rare” *Tauchpanzer III* Ausf. G – one of **168** build on **Pz III** Ausf. F, G & H chasis in **1940**. According to author, they are “identifiable by the bolt flange around the mantlet and MG ball mount that the waterproof fabric cover attached to. There is a snorkel tube attached over the wood beam on the right mudguard.” (*R. Michulec, 4. Pz.-Div.*, 13)

Tank destroyers: To compensate for its lack of armor, German army improvised an incredible variety of tank destroyers, which were issued to the AT btns of Panzer and Panzergrenadier divisions. Obsolete French and Czech tanks formed the basis for many of the conversions. The

²⁸¹ **Note:** Example of impact even a couple of these wpns could have on the battlefield.

turret was removed and a more powerful AT gun substituted in an open mounting w/ limited traverse. German tank chassis were used to, some to create formidable tank killers w/ enclosed fighting compartments. These wpns included following:

- a) **Marder II:** 75mm gun on Pz. II chasis (1217 built)
- b) **Marder III:** 75mm gun on Skoda THNP-S/Panzer 38(t) (799)
- c) **Hetzer** (full conversion of Pz. 38(t) w/ enclosed fighting compartment (2500)

(Source: C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 134)

VW-Kuebelwagen: Standard German *small personnel vehicle* of the war and equivalent to the U.S. jeep. There were two types: the *Volkswagen Type 82* and, in an amphibious variant, the *Volkswagen Type 166 Schwimmwagen*. (For Germany, *Skorzeny*, 112, f.n. 2)

Wurfrahmen 40: (Schweres Wurfgeraet 40/41): Unmittelbar nach Feldzugsbeginn werden 6 SPW der 3. Kp. [Pz.Pi.Btn. 49] mit dem schweren Wurfgeraet 40/41, Kaliber 28/32 cm, ausgeruestet. Jeder dieser SPW wird mit 6 Rahmen zum Abschuss von 28 cm-Sprenggranaten oder 30 cm-Flammoelgranaten versehen, die aussen an den Seitenwaenden des SPWs angeschraubt werden. . . Die Schussweite betraegt etwa 2000 m, u. da die Geschosse rasch nacheinander abgefeuert werden, ergibt sich bei Einsatz mehrerer oder aller 6 SPW eine verheerende Wirkung im Ziel. Die Soldaten nannten das schwere Wurfgeraet deshalb bald „Stuka zu Fuss.“ (A. Schick, 10. Pz.-Div., 264)

Wurfrahmen 40: The *Wurfrahmen 40* (literally "Launch Frame 40") was a [German World War II multiple rocket launcher](#). It combined a vehicle such as the [SdKfz 251 halftrack](#) or captured ex-French [Renault UE Chenillette](#) with [rocket artillery](#) to form a more mobile and slightly more protected artillery piece than the towed [Nebelwerfer](#). It was nicknamed *Stuka zu Fuss* ("[Stuka](#) on Foot" or "Walking Stuka") and "Bellowing Cow".[\[1\]](#)

The weapon consisted of frames attached to the sides or rear of the vehicle holding 300 mm [high explosive](#) (HE) rockets; 280 mm HE and 320 mm [incendiary](#) rockets were also used. As with all contemporary rocket artillery, the rockets tended to be inaccurate and therefore a large quantity of them were launched at a target whenever possible. The shock effect of a large quantity of HE arriving on target all at once was devastating. When used on the most common mounting, the Sdkfz-251 halftrack, six frames were used, with three on each side. The Chenillette UE employed either two per side or four frames on the rear. The [Hotchkiss H35](#) mounting used two per side also. (Wikipedia)²⁸²

Wurfrahmen 40: “After the Battle of France in 1940, the J. Gast KG factory in Berlin were ordered to develop a launcher for the Wurfgeraet 40 which could be fitted on top of the Sd.Kfz 251 armored vehicle. The result was a simple tubular frame serving as a vehicle-carried launcher for these heavy rocket projectiles. Vehicle-carried *Wurfgeraete 40* gained a nickname *Stuka zu Fuss* due to their qualities similar to that of aerial bombing – high explosive power coupled w/ mobility of deployment. Because of the very limited accuracy of the weapon the system was mostly used for area targets. . .

²⁸² **Note:** Writes ex-soldier („Sori“) in a web forum: “Der Stuka zu Fuss, war eine geheime Waffe in Erprobung in Russland. Man sagte, es war wie eine riesengrosse Granate, die man fliegen sah. Wurde bei Truppenansammlungen angewandt. Zerstoerte das Leben nicht aber Waffen u. Geraete. Der Russe drohte mit Gas zu antworten. Daraufhin wurde diese Waffe nicht mehr angewandt.“

As for the Sd.Kfz. 251, the steel frame w/ six *Wurfrahmen* could be mounted w/ simple tools on top of all versions of the vehicle. The official name of the resulting vehicle was *SdKfz 251 Mittlere Schuetzenpanzerwagen mit "Wurfrahmen 40."* The launcher could be used for both the **28 cm** high-explosive rocket using a wooden crate and a **32 cm** napalm projectile using a metal crate. Aiming was done by turning the entire vehicle into desired direction. Launchers could then be angled from **5** to **40** degrees. The maximum range was about **2000** meters. Because of the open body of the vehicle, the rockets could only be launched w/ the crew outside and at a safe distance. A control box connected w/ the launchers w/ cable was used for firing." (<http://www.ipmsstockholm.org>)

Zimmerit anti-magnetic mine paste: This explains the *ripple-effect* seen on the armor of some German tanks (see, *Hart, German Soldier*, 42-43)

1.6.2: Clothing:

General:

The clothing worn by the German soldier proved *too heavy* for summer. As a result, men *perspired too easily*, became very *thirsty*, and were soon caked w/ dirt. (*CMH, Pub. 104-6, Effects of Climate*, 58)

K.-G. Vierkorn: „Als Grundausrüstung empfing jeder Soldat 2 Garnituren Unterwaesche, Struempfe u. Fusslappen; fuer Waeschewaschen musste jeder selbst sorgen waehrend der Feldzuege (!), Uniform stand nur eine (nebst Mantel) zur Verfuegung (die man trug).“ (*Ltr to C. Luther, Jan 04*)

Adequate *logistical and support services* were vital to maintaining morale. Troops, for ex., regularly required new clothes, but given the enormous supply needs of the troops, *new clothes were a luxury that only arrived periodically* after more essential supply requirements had been met. In the **12. ID**, for ex., troops received on average a new pair of socks every two months, a change of underwear and a new shirt every six months, and a new uniform just *once a year*. Thus, *uniforms disintegrated in the field* and, after heavy combat, many troops looked more like *gypsies* than soldiers. (*Hart, Soldier*, 16)

Sajer: Observes that the German uniforms were **grey-green**; while he calls the Russian uniforms **violet-brown**. (*Sajer*, 240)

German helmets: “All our helmets were the *same grey-green.*” (383). Earlier writes that the steel helmets in theory had a *dull finish* (229). (*Sajer*)

Greatcoats [Autumn 1941]: Greatcoats were a problem. Not all soldiers even had the temperate issue. During the attack it hampered movement. On dismounting, infantrymen left them behind in their vehicles. Jackets had to suffice. Lt. Koch, serving w/ **18 PD** recalled that, just prior to the second (**Nov 41**) phase of Operation “*Taifun*,” his btn cdr ordered all greatcoats to be left behind w/ the logistics train in Orel. Unlike many other formations, their issue had arrived, but they were not allowed to take them. Wilhelm Prueller [**9. PD**] wrestled w/ the *greatcoat dilemma*: „Which is better?“ he reflected at the beginning of **Oct 41**, “to be moving and to sweat more *with* a greatcoat and then to shiver less when you’re quiet, or to go on as we’ve been doing, w/o one?” His cdr ofcr, like Lt. Koch’s, said, “we can’t move as well in a coat.” There was little

debate. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 188-89; W. Paul, *Schlacht um Moskau*, 139; W. Pruessler, *Diary of a German Soldier*, ca. 111)

Winter 1941/42:

Klaus Reinhardt: Planning for Operation “*Barbarossa*” envisaged that the eastern campaign would be completed at the latest by autumn. Most of the divisions in the east were to be disbanded or sent home and re-equipped. When fighting had ceased, only **58** divisions²⁸³ were to remain in the USSR, and these were to receive winter equipment. . . Although, as a result of these plans, the question of winter equipment had been clarified on 29 Jul 41 in “detailed discussions” w/ the Quartermaster General of the Army, and provisioning began on 3 Aug 41, only these **58** occupation divisions were to receive winter equipment. No provision was made for other troops. Transport problems during the various operations led to the postponement of delivery of the little winter equipment there was in favor of ammunition, fuel and food, so that when the cold spell began, there was hardly any winter equipment at the front. The really catastrophic state of affairs on the railways at the time prevented rapid delivery of stocks that had already been allocated, as it would have taken 255 transport trains to deliver winter clothing to the **58** occupation divisions alone. (*Moscow – The Turning Point*, 170-71; see also, Eckstein in: *Wagner, Generalquartiermeister*, 289)

Note: The matter of winter clothing and accommodation had been raised by Halder as early as **Jul 41**, and planning and provision action was taken during **Aug/Sep 41**. Some stocks were eventually dispatched to the troops by rail, but these came to a halt in the provinces of Western Russia, unable to move forwards or backwards because of the catastrophic rail situation. . . The responsibility for the failure to provide winter clothing remains unclear. On **9 Jul 41** Halder discussed in general terms w/ Heusinger the provision of winter items in connection w/ the organization of the troops which were to be left in Russia after the defeat of the Soviet Union. On **25 Jul 41** the matter was discussed again, probably w/ v. Brauchitsch. Four days later (**29.7.41**) Halder seemed satisfied that all was at hand. On **2 Aug 41** the position appeared to be not so satisfactory and the difficulty of transport presented itself. Halder discussed the question repeatedly thereafter, but on **10 Nov 41** the conclusion was reached that the troops were unlikely to see the winter clothing and equipment before **Jan 42**. On **19 Dec 41**, Hitler blamed the Army for its own misfortune in this respect. On **20 Dec 41**, according to Guderian, Hitler believed that winter clothing had already been issued. The scale of the provision and the type of clothing ordered was quite inadequate, and could not be compared w/ the clothing of the Red Army. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 219; *Halder KTB*; *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 266)

9.7.41: Obwohl der Chef der Operationsabt. im Generalstab des Heeres [*Heusinger*] am **9 Jul 41** die rechtzeitige Bereitstellung der Winterausrüstung fuer den Osten gefordert hatte u. dem Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres [*Halder*] am **2 Aug 41** vorgetragen worden war, dass die Ausstattung bis **Okt 41** bereitgestellt sei, verhinderte die schlechte Transportlage der Eisenbahn u. der Mangel an Zugmitteln ihr rechtzeitiges Eintreffen. (*B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. III, S. 30; quoted in: *A. Freitag [6. ID], Aufzeichnungen*, 88, f.n.23)

H. Guderian: „It is frequently maintained nowadays that Hitler and only Hitler was responsible for the lack of winter clothing in the army in **1941**. I can in no way subscribe to this belief. Proof

²⁸³ **Note:** According to estimates of the **OKW**, which Hitler had expressly approved, after fighting had ended in the east, there should have been **37** infantry divisions, **3** light infantry divisions and **6** motorized infantry divisions and **12** panzer divisions left. (177, f.n. 7)

of this is that the Luftwaffe and the Waffen-SS were well and adequately equipped and had laid in the necessary stocks in plenty of time. But the supreme command was sunk in its dream of defeating the Russian Army in eight [8] to ten [10] weeks; this defeat would result, they thought, in the political collapse of the Soviets. . . The **OKW** and **OKH** were so serenely confident of victory before winter set in that winter clothing had only been prepared for every fifth man in the army.“ (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 151)

Winterbekleidung: Obwohl das OKH bereits im Vorfeld des Feldzuges auf die Notwendigkeit der Beschaffung von *wattierter Winterbekleidung* fuer das Ostheer hingewiesen hatte, war **dies von Hitler abgelehnt worden**. Schliesslich hatte man auf dt. Seite damit gerechnet, dass der Feldzug im Winter beendet sein wuerden u. die vorgesehenen Besatzungsdivisionen im wesentlichen *in festen Gebaeuden untergebracht werden koennten*. Winterbekleidung war daher *nur fuer diese vergleichsweise kleine Zahl von Divisionen beschafft worden*. Und selbst diesen unzureichenden Bestand, mit dem vielleicht ein Drittel des noch immer im Kampf stehenden Heeres haetten eingekleidet werden koennen, kam durch die *angespannte Transportlage* nur spaerlich an die Front. Dass **Halder bereits im August** dem ObdH einen *Vorschlag fuer die Sammlung von Winterkleidung* fuer die Front gemacht u. Brauchitsch diesen unterstuetzt hatte, war von den Spitzen der Partei bald vergessen. Eine entsprechende *Denkschrift Brauchitschs war von Hitler beiseite gelegt worden* u. es ist bezeichnend, dass erst nach Einbruch der Kaelteperiode, dann aber fuer die Oeffentlichkeit auf Initiative der Partei, mit der Sammlung begonnen wurde. Die *fruehzeitige Initiative der Heeresfuehrung* zeigt ausserdem, dass die Engpaesse bei der Materialversorgung schnell erkannt worden waren u. zudem **im August [!] schon mit einer Fortsetzung der Kaempfe im Winter gerechnet wurde**. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 254)

Winter 41/42: [re: winter clothing]: Cdrs at all levels attempted to meet the emergency through *improvisation*. Several divisions helped themselves by *organizing large sewing workrooms* in nearly Russian cities and towns. From used blankets and old clothing, local workers produced *flannel waistbands, earmuffs, waistcoats, footcloths, and mittens w/ separate thumbs and index fingers*. We also managed to requisition *fur garments and felt boots* from local inhabitants for a small number of men, while also acquiring some winter clothing from dead Red Army soldiers. Any troops possessing extra underwear wore one set on top of the other; division and army supply dumps immediately issued all supplies of underclothing. Eventually, most men were able to protect their heads and ears, at least partially, by using *rags and waistbands*. Needless to say, the severe cold *drastically reduced the efficiency of our soldiers and their wpns*. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 90)

Winter 41/42: As one soldier outside Leningrad noted: White sheets were stolen from Russian houses for use as camouflage „to produce covers, not so much for warmth, but so one was not so starkly visible in the snow.“ Chalk was used to whiten helmets. During the heat of the summer campaign, most infantry soldiers had cut off the legs of their „long johns,” the only type of *Wehrmacht* underwear issued. As a result, soldiers froze w/ only shorts beneath their trousers, supplemented by a thin issue *temperate* coat and a poncho, a waterproof sheet that could be joined w/ others to make a bivouac tent. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 203)

39. PzK: Um die Truppen vor Kaelte u. Schnee zu schuetzen, hatte das **39. PzK** schon im Spaetsommer beim **OKH** eine komplette Winterausruestung angefordert. Das OKH teilte daraufhin mit, dass auch ihm bekannt sei, dass in Russland der Winter kommen werde. . . Im uebrigen wuerden bis zum Beginn des Winters in Russland die Entscheidungen gefallen sein. Es ist wohl kaum anzunehmen, dass auch nur ein vernuenftiger Mensch im Generalstab solchen Unsinn wirklich glaubte. Die obige Antwort an das Korps stammte vom Generalquartiermeister des

Heeres, General Wagner. Die Winterausruestung kam jedenfalls nicht. . . Im Auftrag des General Schmidt erreichte sein Ordonnanzoffizier Hertel, dass in Thueringen von der NS-Frauenschaft u. dem **BDM 30,000 Schneehemden** fuer das Korps genaecht wurden, die dann in Sondertransporten bis zur richtigen Stelle im Bereich des **39. PzK** geleitet wurden. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 123)

German helmets: German training videos – taken in **1941/42** – show some soldiers who have attempted to crudely camouflage their helmets w/ what appears to be either white paint or chalk;²⁸⁴ the coverage of the paint/chalk (or?) is very uneven and in no case is helmet completely covered. Others have found a better solution: white cloth completely covering the helmet and secured w/ a band. (*Frontschau Nr. 7*)

Kopfschuetzer: Gray-Green in color (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 258)

Die Bekleidung war ein truebes Kapitel. Good description of shortages in **6. ID**. The division managed to get some winter clothing (about 10 % of its requirement) from a depot in *Smolensk*. Notes that: *Die Schwierigkeiten waren ausschliesslich im Transport begruendet.* Die vorschriftsmaessige Ausstattung war hinten vorhanden und waere unter normalen Verhaeltnissen—Uebergang zum Stellungskrieg im Herbst—herangewesen. Author (Grossmann) on to say that „die normale Winterbekleidung kam bis Dez. heran.“ (?) (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 87)

At least one German *sentry* used a *large washtub*—set on its end and propped up by two tree trunks—[!] to protect himself from icy wind while on guard duty. (see, photo in: *CMH Pub. 104-22, Small Unit Actions*, 17)

Schneehemd (parka) vs. **Schneeanzug**: See *F. Strienitz* for fundamental differences between the two. “Robben im Schnee” nearly impossible w/ former (which which his unit outfitted in Winter 41/42.) (*Strienitz, Sonderfragen*)

From many veterans’ accounts, it appears that the article of winter clothing most wanted—and missed!—by German soldiers was **felt boots**: “We only had summer clothing, and worst of all, no felt boots.” (*Hugo Volkheimer*, in: *Voices from the Third Reich*, 146)

Luftwaffe units apparently much better equipped with *Winterbekleidung*. German infantry mistreated by German authorities: “Behandelt wurde sie trotz aller Vorstellungen miserable, gleich, ob es sich um Bekleidung, Verpflegung, Bewaffung handelte.“ (See, *Grossmann Tgb*, 74)

Nov 41: A number of photographs of men from **SS “DR,”** in the Istra River sector during the mid-**Nov 41** actions against Rokossovsky’s **16 Army**, show them wearing white hooded smocks and trousers as well as the more common, long, snow-camouflage coats. Such clothing would not become general issue until the second winter of the Russo-German war. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 21)

18.12.41: According to *Megargee*, by this date, winter clothing had reached one-third of the troops. (*Inside Hitler’s High Command*, 156) (**Note:** Unclear if he is referring to entire eastern front, or just Center.)

²⁸⁴ **Note:** According to R. Kershaw (War Without Garlands), chalk was used.

28.12.41, By this date 3rd Btn. / 18 IR (**6. ID**) had gathered enough winter clothing to outfit entire battalion (what was left of it). Winter clothing (felt-line boots, fur caps, etc.) stripped from dead Russian troops. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 254, 257).

Jan 41: For *Verton's* SS-unit, at end of January, beginning of February 1942, winter clothing began arriving from the homefront (109)

Jan 41 [*Dubrovka*]: “Our quarters were wrecked [following combat] and there were corpses littered about everywhere. We covered the German dead w/ tarpaulins; w/ the *Cossacks* we took of their felt boots and caps, as well as their pants and underpants, and put them on. We now moved closer together in the few houses still standing. One soldier had been unable to find any felt boots, which were an excellent protection against the cold. The next day he found a *Red Cross* corpse frozen stiff. He tugged at his legs, but in vain. He grabbed an ax and took the man off at the thighs. Fragments of flesh flew everywhere. He bundled the two stumps under his arm and set them down in the oven, next to our lunch. By the time the potatoes were done, the legs were thawed out, and he pulled on the bloody felt boots. Having the dead meat next to our food bothered us as little as if someone had wrapped his frostbite between meals or cracked lice.” (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, 55-56)

Jan-Feb 42: *Rhein's* unit first received some winter clothing from the *Winterspende* about Jan/feb 42. Of course, they removed the boots, caps, etc., from dead *Rotarmisten*. (*Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID*)

10.2.42: Die warmen Sachen aus der *Sammelaktion* in der Heimat, trafen erst ab 10.2. bei den Fronttruppen ein. (*Siegfried Risse, SR 101 / 18. PD*)

26.3.42: Winter clothing for **6. ID** finally arrives! All collected from civilians following Goebbels appeal to the nation in Dec 41. German civilians had sacrificed their clothing, “little knowing that *we should all have frozen to death had we not been able to shoot the enemy down and pillage their dead bodies to warm our own.*” (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 359)

1.6.3: Rations:

Note: [Apr 42]: Da inzwischen die raeudekranken Pferde des Kdrs wiederhergestellt waren, musste ich zum Rgt.-Gefechtsstand nach Malachowo. . . Ich verstand mich sehr gut mit den Offizieren u. misste oft mit ihnen ausreiten. Ich konnte ueber alles mit ihnen sprechen. Oft unterhielten wir uns auch ueber das Hauptkapitel Verpflegung u. was man vor dem Kriege so am liebsten gegessen hatte. Waehrend in Frankreich das Tagesgespraech die Frauen waren, unterhielt man sich in Russland vornehmlich ueber Verpflegung. Zu Fuehrers Geburtstag u. am **1 Mai 42** gab es unter anderem pro Mann zweieinhalb Flaschen Likoer u. Kognak als Marketenderwaren. Das brachte Stimmung in die Buden. (*A. Freitag [6. ID], Aufzeichnungen*, 91)

Even during the first summer of the Russian campaign, the Germans were *able to obtain part of their cereals and forage from local sources*, although the retreating Russians *burned large quantities of grain and destroyed many agricultural implements*. Some grain and almost all cattle of the collective farms were *carried away in the Russian retreats*. Local procurement improved in direct ratio to the ability of the German civil government detachments to regulate cultivation and harvests. *Local potato supplies were sufficient until the autumn of 1941*, and thereafter they ran short. Vegetable cultivation was generally limited to small garden plots which *barely covered needs of the civilian population*. **Fruit** was available only in the south. **Forage** is plentiful in

summer; sufficient pasture land is available in almost all parts of the country. Local procurement improved after the first year of the war, and the Germans were independent of grain and flour shipments from Germany. (CMH, Pub. 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 58)

Die „**Eiserne Ration**“ bestand aus *Hartbrot* u. einer Dose mit *Schmalzfleisch* oder *Wurst*. Das ganze war in einem Zellstoffbeutel verpackt. Ein kleiner Buechsenoeffner war zum Oeffnen der Dose dabei. (*Anmerkung Dr Tauber* in: *Loewer Memoiren*, f.n., 32)

In his book, *Moscow Tram Stop*, Dr Haape often talks of the ubiquitous ***goulash-cannon***—i.e., the large iron stew pot of the field kitchens. From the text, it is evident they ate this stew virtually every day during the first months of the war (during the *Vormarsch*), when they received a warm meal from the field kitchen. He said it was “delicious.” (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 32, 67, 92, 134, etc.)

In diese Zeit [ca. **Nov 41**] fiel ein Befehl, dass *Requisitionen* erlaubt seien aufgrund des Ausfalls des Nachschubs. Das *Haager Kriegsrecht* liess keine Requisitionen zu. Es handelte sich hier um eine Ausnahme. Nachdem die Versorgungsprobleme geloest waren, wurde der Befehl zurueckgenommen...Dem Russen hatten wir nichts weggenommen, denn nur in den ***Sowchosen*** war requiriert worden. (*Erinnerungen*, F. Nebe, 31-2, **IR 37 / 6. ID**)

29.11.41: Seit dem 29.11.41 gab es nur noch 400 gr Brot taeglich. Ab **1.12** gab es kein Mehl mehr, u. die Einheiten sollten das Mehl selbst mahlen. Ab **5.12** erlag wegen der heftigen Schneefaelle jeglicher Nachschub. (*Siegfried Risse*, **SR 101 / 18. PD**)

Dec 41: *Verton* discusses *daily rations of his unit* at front in Dec 41 (94).

Winter 41/42: Bei der grossen Kaelte musste die Butter mit einem Beil zerteilt werden [!]. Die gefrorenen Brote musste man in irgendeinem Wohnhause aufzuwaermen u. aufzutauen versuchen. Amusing photo of a soldier using a hatchet to chop butter. (*R. Hinze*, 19. Pz.-Div., 73)

Winter 41/42: Thank God for the potato. We weren't prepared for a long stay in these parts, and *what would have become of us w/o it?* How could a whole army survive a Russian winter w/o this humble vegetable? Tonight, as always, we have peeled off the skin, broken it reverently, and sprinkled it w/ the rough Russian salt. Now it's morning. We have finished breakfast, and again it was the potato which has made us feel satisfied. All the house has to offer is potatoes, tea and a bread pie, which is served hot and steaming and is filled w/ a sticky mixture of rye, barley and onions. Perhaps there were a few *brown cockroaches* in it; at least, I cut one of them out w/o saying anything. (*H. Pabst*, *The Outermost Frontier*, 39-40)

1.7: Armored & Mot./Infantry/Artillery/Waffen-SS:

1.7.1: Armored & Mot. Forces:

„*That's what I need! That's what I want to have.*“ This statement supposedly made by *Adolf Hitler* in 1933, after he saw tanks on maneuver for the first time. (See, *Guderian*, *Panzer Leader*, 20)

Note: Hitler effectively had *two armies*: A small mechanized core of some **35** armored and mot. divs., and a large unmechanized mass of old-style infantry divisions dependent on horse transport. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 25)

Note: In his book, *Panzertruppen*, T.L. Jentz includes at back ca. 30 pages of appendices w/ virtually everything one would want to know about German tank production, technical specifications, etc. Also has technical specs for Russian tanks. (See, T.L. Jentz, *Panzertruppen*, pp. 254-87)

Note: Most important advantage enjoyed by German *panzer* divisions was that every tank had an *excellent radio*, whereas only one Soviet tank in three (the platoon cdr) did. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 169)

Note: „Wir Panzersoldaten haben **1941/42** um **100 Grad** Temperaturunterschied hinnehmen muessen. Im Winter **-40** [Grad], im Sommer bei sehr heissen Tagen im Panzer waehrend eines Gefechts mindestens **50/55** [Grad]. Es gab weder eine Heizung noch eine Klimatisierung im Panzer!“ (L. Bauer, **3. PD**, Ltr to C. Luther, 9 Nov 08)

Note: Vast majority of German Army's *tractive power* based on horses—tanks and motor vehicles had to be concentrated into a few special divisions, which in turn were concentrated into corps. To have done anything else would have been *foolish in the extreme*. In the end, it is *obvious that Germany did not possess the type of economy necessary for the creation and maintenance of a large armored force*. Their **steel and oil industries** were incapable of providing for the needs of three services. Germany's synthetic oil production and importation of Romanian oil was *insufficient to support its armored force*. The inability of the German economy to keep the Army as a whole modernly equipped forced the Army into the *unsatisfactory expedient* of using foreign equipment as well as a heavy reliance on horses for transport. This dependence increased as battlefield reverses created shortages. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 25, 29)²⁸⁵

In the reorganized *panzer* divisions of **1941**, there were less than **300** tracked vehicles in all, while there were nearly **3000** wheeled vehicles, mostly of a road-bound type. The super-abundance of such vehicles had not mattered in the Western campaign, when a badly disposed defense suffered a far-reaching collapse and the attacker could profit by a network of well-paved roads in exploiting every opportunity. But in the East, where proper roads were scarce, it proved a *decisive break* in the long run. (L. Hart, *History of Second World War*, 158)

Motorized Infantry: The physical and psychological demands placed on mot. infantry were “immense.” One soldier complained: “motorized transport is only there to make certain we poor *Panzergrenadiers* are brought up against the enemy more often than our fellows in the infantry divisions. . . so that we have the dubious advantage of *being in action more often*.” (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 88)

Col. Horst Zobel: „German mot. troops were organized to fight in *battle-groups w/ constantly changing organizations* – sometimes even daily.“ (Col. H. Zobel, „**3. PD Operations**,” in: Glantz, *Initial Period of War*, 238, 243)

ab May 1940 [Reorganization of the Panzerwaffe]: Even before the end of the campaign in the West, the **OKH** started to plan a reorganization of the armored and motorized divisions. The first

²⁸⁵ **Note:** In latter years of war, *Wehrmacht* experienced what some have called a “demodernization” process. See, for example, *Bartov*.

figure of **24** Panzer and **12** motorized infantry divisions drafted at the end of **May 40** was reduced by mid-**Jun 40** to **20** Panzer and **10** mot.-inf. divisions, though in **Apr 41** a new plan for the post-“Barbarossa” army envisaged the creation by the following autumn of another **4 to 6** new Panzer divisions, four of which were actually formed during the year. Although no overall establishment was laid down, the reorganization of the **10** old Panzer divisions and the creation of **10** new ones followed the guidelines dictated by the experiences made during the campaign in the West, in addition to an attempt to obtain uniformity.

As a result, every Panzer division now had one two-battalion Pz.-Rgt.; one Schuetzen-Bde w/ two regiments, each w/ two battalions; plus a Kradschuetzen-Battalion and a three-battalion artillery regiment. . . As before, every division also include a reconnaissance unit, AT, engineer and communications units, plus a field replacement battalion and divisional supply and service units.

However, *complete uniformity was not attained*. By **Jun 41**, **4** Panzer divisions still retained the Pz.-Bde. Stab (HQ), Panzer regiments had either **2** or **3** Abteilungen and **6** divisions had a schwere Inf.-Geschuetz Kompanie attached to their Schuetzen-Bde. . . Lacking overall establishments, and given that several war establishment charts (*Kriegsstaecke Nachweisungen*, or **KStN**) were lost, it is extremely difficult to assess the Panzer division’s overall strength. By **Jun 41** it stood at c. **13,300** for the standard two-Pz.-Abt. division, though it eventually rose to **15,600** including the third Pz.-Abt., the Heeres-Flak-Abt. and the full-strength *Feldersatz Bataillone*. AFVs apart, *overall weaponry increased dramatically between 1941 and 1943*. Additionally, since **1942** [**Note:** actually, earlier.] foreign personnel, mostly of Soviet origin, were added as *Hiwi*, or *Hilfswillige* (auxiliary volunteers). . .

The basic organization of the Panzer regiment did not undergo major changes between **1940** and **1943**. . . Changes mainly affected the number and organization of the Panzer Abteilung in the Panzer regiment. In **1941** the basic organization of a Pz.-Abt. was similar to that of the **1 Sep 39** establishment. . .

A comparison between established tank strengths of **May 40** and **Jun 41** shows that the *overall reduction in strength was not only smaller than often reported, but that it mainly affected light tanks*. **1. PD** shrank from **118** to **45** light tanks (Pz I & II), **101** to **71** Pz III and **42** to **28** Pz IV. But **2. PD** only saw a reduction from **145** to **45** light tanks and **32** to **28** Pz IV, while actually increasing the number of Pz III (from **60** to **71**). (**10. PD** increased even further – from **60** to **105**.) **3. PD** saw only a dramatic reduction in the number of its light tanks, from **234** (**64** of which were Pz I) to **65**, while actually increasing its allowance of Pz III (from **16** to **106**) and Pz IV (from **24** to **42**). [**Note:** All figures quoted here are “allowances,” – i.e., „Sollstaerke,“ I assume, not actual numbers of tanks available on **22.6.41**. For example, **1. PD**, w/ an “allowance” (“established strength”) of **28** Pz IV, only had **20** available on “Barbarossa-Tag.”

Finally, five [**5**] of the **3-Abteilung** tank regiments were equipped w/ the old Czech 38 (t) tanks (Pz.-Rgts. **10**, **11**, **21**, **25** and **27**), while **PzRgt 25** was equipped w/ the older **35 (t)**. (*P.P. Battistelli, Panzer Divisions: The Eastern Front, 1941-43*, 10-14)

Jun 40-Jun 41: “...wenn man am **25.6.40** ueber **35 Panzerabteilungen** verfuegte, so wurden bis zum Fruehjahr 1941 nur **22** weitere aufgestellt, wovon **6** Heerestruppen waren. So erhaelt man also **9** Pz.Div. mit nur **2** Abteilungen (etwa **150** Panzer), waehrend die durchschnittliche Panzerzahl pro Division im Frankreichfeldzug **258** betrug. Freilich waren von den etwa **3600** Panzer in Russland u. Afrika nicht mehr als **180 Pz I** u. **746 Pz II**; zu dieser Zeit bildete die *Skoda M 38* u. der **Pz III** mit ihrer neuen Kampfwagenkanone vom Kaliber **50mm/60**

das Gerippe der deutschen Panzerwaffe; es waren **772** von den ersten u. **965** von den letzteren vorhanden. Schliesslich wurde die Anzahl der **Pz IV** von **278** auf **517** erhoelt, von denen **439** am **22.6.41** eingesetzt waren. Wenn man sich daran erinnert, dass die Zahl der mittleren Panzer im vorhergehenden Jahr [1940] nur **677** betrug, so muss daraus geschlossen werden, dass die *Panzertruppe ihre Feuerkraft beträchtlich erhoelt hat.*“ (Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 112)

1941: Ausstattung u. Bewaffnung einer Pz.-Div.:

Kopfstärke = **16 000** Offiziere, Uffz., Mannschaften

Kraftfahrzeuge = **3500**²⁸⁶

Feuerkraft: **620** automatische Waffen + **260** Rohren aller Kaliber (ohne die Granatwerfer von **50-** u. **81mm** einzuschliessen.) Zum Vergleich erinnern wir uns daran, dass das dt. Armeekorps von **1914** nur **160** von **77mm** u. **105** von **150mm** besass.

Es muss jedoch bemerkt werden, dass die neue Pz.-Div. mit **150** oder selbst mit **210** Panzer an der äussersten Grenze des zulaessigen Minimums u. sogar ein wenig darunter angelangt ist: Sie nutzt sich in Russland sehr schnell ab. (Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 113)

Spring 41: What is certain is that the Balkan campaign [i.e., Greece/Yugoslavia] added significantly to the wear and tear on the panzers. Almost **1/3** of Germany's tanks had participated in the Balkan campaigns and the going was so taxing that the tank units involved required a complete overhaul – but events in the East did not allow for this. It is hardly surprising that when Operation “*Barbarossa*” was underway these same panzers suffered a particularly high attrition rate. But this factor too can be overstated as these tanks were all part of Army Group South, which only had a secondary role in the invasion of Russia. (P. McCarthy & M. Syron, “*Panzerkrieg*,” 95-96)

Jun 41: The Panzer divisions fielded a total of **3648** tanks (as opposed to **2445** in 1940), but only **1000** were **Pz.III**s and there were only about **450 Pz.IV**s. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 21)

22.6.41 [“Barbarossa” tank force]: **17** Panzer divisions were concentrated in four [4] *Panzergruppen*. The tank inventory (for entire Army) on **1 Jun 41** was:

Pz I:	877
Pz II:	1074
Pz 35(t):	170
Pz 38(t):	754
Pz III (3.7 cm):	350
Pz III (5.0 cm):	1090
Pz IV:	517
Pz.Bef.Wag.:	330

- All four [4] of the Pz.-Div. in **3 PzGr** were outfitted w/ **Pz 38(t)** in their three [3] Pz.-Abtl. Of the four [Pz.-Div.] only **7. PD** had any combat experience. Its Pz.Rgt. had a total of **9** leichte u. **3** mittlere Pz.-Kp., giving it *more tanks than any other unit*.

²⁸⁶ **Note:** Die Kolonnenlaenge der Pz.-Div. **1941** betraegt auf einer einzigen Strasse **130** km. (113)

- The five [5] Pz.-Div. under Guderian in **2 PzGr** were the strongest formations. Three of the **5 Pz.-Div.** had **3 Abteilungen w/ Pz IIIs**. The other two – **4. PD** and **10. PD**, w/ only two Abteilungen – still had a full complement of **105 Pz IIIs** in **6 leichte Pz.Kp.**
- In addition to the Tauchpanzer that had been given to **PzRgt 18** and the **III./PzRgt 6** in **1940**, **PzRgt 35** had received some Tauchpanzer (modified **Pz III** Ausf. G & H and **Pz IV** Ausf. E) in the Spring of **1941**.
- Tank forces allocated for “Barbarossa” included three [3] flamethrower tank battalions: **Pz.Abt. (F) 100, 101, 102**. Data provided from the first two of these battalions indicates that each had a complement of **42 Flammpanzer**, as well as **25 Pz II** and **5 Pz III**.²⁸⁷

[**Note:** For the tank strength of each of the **17 PDs** on **22.6.41** see table, pp. 190-93.] (*T.L. Jentz, Panzertruppen*, 186-93)²⁸⁸

Jul/Sep 41: In mid-**Jul 41** Hitler released only **70 Pz IIIs** and **15 Pz IVs**, plus the available Czech tanks, to the eastern front as replacements – and this despite reports that showed how tank losses were as high as **50%** of the actual strength (though this figure probably included tanks in repair). The decision was made to preserve tank production for the new Panzer divisions being raised. Thus, despite the gloominess of the situation, by **Sep 41** only **137 replacement tanks** had made their way to the eastern front. (*P.P. Battistelli, Panzer Divisions: The Eastern Front 1941-43*, 67)

Sep-Oct 41 [Panzer replacements]: The status of the Pz.-Div. on the eastern front was assessed in an **OKH** report of **15 Sep 41**. The operational status of each Pz.-Div. was reported as shown on the chart. [See, p. 206.] Up to this time, comparatively few replacements had been sent to the Panzer units.²⁸⁹ On **12 Sep 41**, there were **35 Pz 38(t)**, **71 Pz III**, and **20 Pz IV** in the **OKH Reserve Sagan** available in Orscha/Duenaburg ready to be issued as replacements. **OKH** also requested the release of the **56 Pz 38(t)**, **95 Pz III**, and **30 Pz IV** for replacements that were currently available in the ordnance depots in Magdeburg and Wien. These replacements actually arrived at the Pz.-Rgts. during **Sep-Oct 41**. In addition, the **2. PD** and **5. PD** had been refurbished and sent to the front. This brought the total number of Pz.-Div. on the eastern front to **19**. (*T.L. Jentz, Panzertruppen*, 205)

22.12.41 [Panzer Status]: The tank strength reported by the **16 Pz.-Div.** in Army Groups North and Centre on this day amounted to:

<u>Pz II</u>	<u>Pz 38(t)</u>	<u>Pz III</u>	<u>Pz IV</u>
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²⁸⁷ **Note: Pz II (F):** The flame-thrower nozzles were mounted in pivoting heads on each hull side and a **MG 34** was installed in the standard ball mount in the turret. See photo, p. 198.

²⁸⁸ **Note:** I randomly cross-checked Lentz’ tank figures for **4. PD** on “Barbarossa-Tag” w/ those furnished by J. Neumann (Die 4. PD 1938-43); both sets of figures agree = **177 tanks**.

²⁸⁹ **Note:** In fact, the **OKH** report shows that fully **8** of the **17** tank divisions on the eastern front had received no replacements at all! Nine (9) divisions had received replacement tanks: **6. PD (2)**, **7. PD (21)**, **9. PD (3)**, **11. PD (9)**, **12. PD (7)**, **13. PD (3)**, **14. PD (5)**, **18. PD (25)**, **20. PD (14)**. Hence, by early **Sep 41**, the entire Ostheer had received – **89** replacement tanks! Of these, **60** were allocated to tank divisions w/ H.Gr.Mitte at start of “Taifun.” Of course, H.Gr.Mitte received additional replacement tanks before start of fall offensive, as well as **2. and 5. PD**. (206)

Operational:	66	84	180	75
Repairable:	188	202	254	136
Total:	254	286	434	211

(T.L. Jentz, *Panzertruppen*, 209)

Jun 41: Each Panzer division included **2-3** battalions of tanks (w/ an average total strength of about **150** vehicles); four (sometimes six) btns of truck-mounted infantry; an artillery regiment w/ **36 105mm** guns; three SP AT companies w/ a dozen or so **37mm** or **50mm** guns mounted on obsolete tank chassis; one recon btn on motorcycles; plus armored recon squadrons, engineer and anti-acft coys. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 21)

„While the rise of Hitler changed the map of Europe more quickly than even Napoleon had done—though for a shorter period—it was the *rise of the armored forces* in the German Army that mainly enabled him to achieve his run of conquests. Without them, his dreams would never had turned into realities.“ (B.H. Liddell-Hart, quoted in: *Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, ix)

Showalter: ***Death's-head uniform***—The German armored forces *adopted a black uniform for no more sinister reason than the color's relative tolerance for grease spots*. The death's-head collar patches also owed nothing to National Socialism. Instead they harked back to the use of similar insignia by several famous *Hussar regiments* of the Imperial Army and reinforced the Panzers' self-image as “death-and-glory” boys. (K. Fuchs, 49)

The combat effectiveness of the German *panzer divisions* owed much to fact that they *constituted well-balanced all-arms formations* rather than just a mass of tanks. In **1935** the German army formed its *first 3 panzer divisions*. These included, in addition to two regiments of tanks, *motorized infantry, artillery, engineers, signallers, anti-tank and reconnaissance elements*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 35)

After recruits had nearly completed their *standard infantry basic training*, they put themselves forward for selection by the specialist arms. The panzer force only accepted those soldiers who had *excelled during the preliminary phase*. Panzer arm recruits next moved on to specialised instruction at dedicated *armored schools*. German tank crews, esp. gunners, received substantial training and instruction in *the art of gunnery*, and honed their skills – even late into the war – through extensive field exercises on *armored training grounds* like those at **Putlos** in northern Germany. As a result of these efforts, German tank crews achieved a *superior standard of gunnery* throughout much of WWII, though this was also aided by the *high quality of optical equipment mounted in German tanks*. An experienced German tank crew operating at typical combat ranges might expect to hit a target on their *second or third shots*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 40)

1939: Germany goes to war w/ an ***armored force that had a large number of obsolete tanks***. About **80 %** of the German *tank park* in 1939 consisted of obsolete models. In 1939, vast majority of Army's tank part comprised either **Pz Is** or **Pz IIs**. Even before *French campaign* of 1940 General *Halder* rated the Pz I as being good only against a weak or demoralized enemy and the Pz II as being but slightly better. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 9)

1940 [Frankreichfeldzug]: Rolf Hertenstein was a young lieutenant commanding half a platoon in a heavy tank coy (**Pz IVs**) of **2 PD**. In his oral history interview, he recalls that, “we ran into the heaviest French tanks once, I believe they were **Char IIs**. It was a huge monster, the biggest

tank we had ever seen. The armor looked very thick, and our gun just could not penetrate it. (R. Hertenstein, *Experiences of German Panzer Cdr*, 15, 18)

DiNardo: Germans **never employed any kind of standardized divisional organization** [ref. here is to *panzer* divisions]. This was true even during the period before the 1941 Russian campaign, when the Germans undertook a reform precisely to standardize their divisional organization. In the field, it is fairly clear that the *division was used only as an administrative organization*. The basic elements of the division were broken down into *combined arms Kampfgruppen*. These were consistently mixed and matched to fit existing situation. The German ability to do this constituted a *great advantage over their opponents.* (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 137)

Measures to upgrade tank forces before Barbarossa:

Germany's tank forces went through a *plethora of reorganizations* from 1933 through the end of the war; the most important of these was carried out in the *autumn of 1940*. Beginning at this time, the *number of panzer divisions was doubled*. To do this, however, Germans forced to significantly reduce quantity of tanks/division and to press large numbers of captured enemy vehicles into service. The number of *French vehicles* pressed into service was *vital to the expansion of the panzer and mot. inf. divisions*, as well as to the Army as a whole. According to one German officer: „**French motor vehicles were indispensable to the invasion of Russia.**“ The **20. PD**, as well as the **14. ID (mot.)**, **18. ID (mot.)** and **20. ID (mot.)** were all equipped w/ French motor vehicles. These vehicles would prove to be completely unsuited to Russian conditions; large numbers quickly broke down. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, x, 14-15; See also; MSS #P-103, p 7; and *Hoth, Panzer-Operationen*, p 45)²⁹⁰

Expansion of panzer divisions: Conquest of Soviet Union would require unprecedented strength and a *major expansion of the armored forces*. Yet Hitler and Nazi leadership, w/ mixture of *racist overconfidence, intoxication of previous victories*, and a *pragmatic reluctant to unduly burden the German people*, was unwilling to take the steps necessary to ensure success. Instead, Hitler's solution was to *reduce significantly the number of tanks per panzer division and thereby double the number of panzer divisions*. Guderian, who was never consulted about this policy, *strenuously opposed it*. His opposition reflected his *continued preference for tank-heavy*, rather than well-balanced combined-arms, mechanized forces. Virtually every mil. historian since has *sided w/ Guderian*. Yet Hitler's organizational initiative ***actually created more and better-balanced armored formations***, something that was an obvious necessity given the scale and scope of envisaged campaign. Moreover, German armored force did *acquire enhanced combat power through additional Panzer III and Panzer IV tanks* which partially replaced the increasingly obsolete *Panzer I and Panzer II light tanks*. A few additional armored half-tracks also became available, but they remained in very short supply. Limited production meant keeping the Pz. I and Pz. II in front-line service and substituting captured ***Czech Pz. 35 (t)*** and ***38 (t)*** tanks for the missing mediums. Newly activated tank units *formed from the large French arsenal captured in the West* assumed occupation duties in Nazi-controlled Europe allowing Hitler to commit bulk of Germany's ***meager tank strength*** – some ***3417 tanks*** – to Operation *Barbarossa*. (*Hart, Guderian*, 66; also, *Jentz, Panzer Truppen*, 1:188-93)

²⁹⁰ **Note:** Most of the *panzer* and motorized divisions equipped w/ French vehicles were assigned to General *Hermann Hoth's Panzergruppe 3.* (*Panzer-Operationen*, 45)

26.9.40: OKH issues decree to increase the number of *panzer* and motorized divisions prior to attack on Russia. Most of the new *panzer* and mot. infantry divisions were *reorganized infantry divisions*. In addition, all of the existing *panzer* and mot. infantry divisions were refitted and reorganized. Changes resulted in *most German panzer divisions having a standard organization*. It was based on *one panzer regiment* of two battalions and *two infantry regiments* (also of two battalions). The support elements were also standardized around an *artillery regiment* of three battalions, a *reconnaissance* battalion, plus *engineer, signal, anti-tank* and *anti-aircraft* battalions, as well as minor elements, including ordnance, supply and medical units. There were *three panzer divisions*, however, the **6.**, **17.**, and **20.**, which had three tank battalions. In any case, the end result was that the Germans were able to *double the number of panzer divisions*, even though their total tank park remained virtually static.²⁹¹ (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 110-12, 129*)

1940/41: To upgrade quality of German armored force before *Barbarossa*, most of the **Pz Is** and some of the **Pz IIs** were withdrawn from active service and replaced by more modern **Pz III** and **Pz IV** models (although the older machines were still kept in the total park). The result was that while Germany's *total tank park increase in size over period from 1.4.40 – 1.6.41* from **3,387** to **5,694**, some **2,034** tanks (**36%**) were obsolete models. To make matters worse, deliveries of the newer Pz IIIs and IVs lagged well behind the „planned“ figures announced by Hitler and *Todt*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 9*)

Russlandfeldzug: This was *blitzkrieg*, but not as it had been in Poland and France, where the whole front advanced quickly. *In Russia, the mech. forces were like arrows that went out ahead of the rest of us.* (*S. Knappe, 87. ID, Reflections, 206*)²⁹²

According to Dr Showalter: *Skin diseases were an increasingly common affliction among tank crews in the summer of 1941—products of water shortages, crowded conditions, dust laden with unfamiliar bacteria, and, more obviously, insects.* Karl was almost certainly lousy by this time. (*K. Fuchs, 3.8.41, 7. PD, 119*)

22.6.-31.12.41 [*Panzer u. Fahrzeuge Ab- u. Zugaenge*]: This document (*Anlage 4 zu OKH /GenStdH/GenQu/Abt. I v. 5.1.42*) shows numbers of armored vehicles and motor vehicles lost during this six-month period and replacements provided. For example, by **31 Dec 41**, status for **Pz IV** tank was as follows:

Pz IV:

Abgang = **348**
Zugang = **80**
Fehlbestand = **154**

²⁹¹ **Note:** The **1941 Panzer** division had proportionately more infantry to tanks, helping to give it more “staying power.” Also, the division’s *artillery support* was increased to a three-battalion artillery regiment. (129)

²⁹² **Note:** Knappe’s simile is pleasing, and appropriate. To expand on it: The mechanized forces of the *Wehrmacht* were like arrows flung out into a *strong headwind*, given the *ferocious friction* they had to contend with—harsh natural environment (terrible roadways, weather, etc.), wear and tear on equipment, poor logistics support, tenacious enemy resistance, etc. Not to mention their misuse and abuse by a fumbling German High Command.

(**Note:** One doesn't arrive at „Fehlbestand“ by subtracting „Zu-„ from „Abgang.“ Don't quite know how to interpret this. See, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1104-05)

ca. 20.7.41: The C-in-C of the Army [*Brauchitsch*] advanced the argument that the fast forces of Army Group Center...*urgently needed a 10–14 day rest period to restore their combat effectiveness.* (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 315)

Sep. 41: By this point, even motorized formations were beginning to acquire horses locally to supplement the trucks that so quickly became hopelessly bogged down in the mud, and to spare their overworked tracked vehicles. (Showalter commentary, *K. Fuchs*, 133)

Sep 41: The *tank situation* was serious by late summer. At the beginning of **Sep 41**, **30%** had been destroyed and **23%** were under repair. About ½ of the tank divisions foreseen for Operation „*Taifun*“ had only **34%** of their tanks in service. Guderian's renamed **2 Pz Army** had been reduced to a **45%** average even before the Kiev encirclement battles; after the battle his force was reduced to **25%**. It's **9 PD** – having begun the campaign w/ **157** tanks – had only **62** w/ **67** under repair. Overall, the three [**3**] tank corps forming **2 Pz Army** (w/ **5** panzer divisions) mustered **252** tanks. General Hoth's **3 PzGr** was down to an average of **45%** of its strength at the beginning of **Sep 41**; and Hoepner's **4 PzGr** to between **50** and **75%**. A feverish period of repair and transfer of reserve tanks forward to the front was undertaken (**125** of the **181** tanks available were already positioned at *Orscha* and *Daugavpils*). Repair was slow because major overhauls were still being conducted in the Reich. Logistics difficulties further stymied the transfer process, so that the readiness states of the severely pressed Panzer force could only be raised a further 10%. Guderian, for example, had been promised **100** new tanks; he received only **50** in time; the remainder being dispatched to *Orscha*, **200**km away, by mistake. By **15 Sep 41**, Army Group Centre had **1346** serviceable tanks for the forthcoming offensive; this was from the **2,609** the divisions [of **3** Pz.Gr.] theoretically had at their disposal at the outset of the campaign. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 168-69; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, 657-58)

2.10.41: Mobile divisions in a “*perilous state*” on even of Operation “*Taifun*.” They had been conducting operations almost continuously since 22 June, and many of their vehicles in poor condition. The **24 Pz.K.**, for example, *had not been able to perform one day of maintenance on its vehicles since 22.6.41*” (*DiNardo*, 47, f.n. 81)

2.10.41: Although German tank strength fell during the *Kiev Kesselschlacht*, the *Panzergruppen* were able to recover a fair degree of strength by *strenuous maintenance efforts* prior to onset of Operation „*Taifun*.“ (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 16)

6.10.41: Die *Panzergruppen 1 bis 4* wurden mit Wirkung vom 6.10.1941 umbenannt in 1. bis 4. Panzerarmee. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien*, 18)

6.10.41: *Panzergruppen 1 & 2* redesignated as *Panzer Armies*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 124; also, *KTB OKW*, Vol. 1, 681).

10.12.41: As early as this day, *Halder* realizes that it will not be possible to fully refit all of the *panzer* divisions in the east (after winter crisis had passed). (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 17; see also, *KTB Halder*, 10.12.41)

ab Nov-Dec 41: German tank crews feel increasingly vulnerable against the heavier Russian **T-34s**. One **Pz III** crew reported striking a **T-34** four [**4**] times at **50m** and again at **20m** w/ special upgraded **50mm Panzergranate 40** projectiles, which “did not penetrate but srpayed off

the side.” By contrast, a strike from the 76mm gun of a T-34 could be devastating. “Time and time again our tanks have been split right open by frontal hits, complained a panzer cdr. Cdr’s cupolas on both Pz III and Pz IVs “have been completely blown off,” read a report, “proof the armor is inadequate and the attachments of the cupolas faulty.” Panzer crews were reduced to firing carefully aimed shots against the rear drive sprockets, along w/ chance strikes on the turret ring, rather than a rapid shot into the centre of the mass. German tank crews had to light fires beneath their hulls to cold-start engines. A T-34 driver had a pair of compressed air bottles at his feet to help turn the diesel engine in particularly cold weather. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 201; also, S. Zaloga, *T34/76 Medium Tank*, 14, etc.)

Nov 41-Jan 42: Referring to combat attrition before Moscow, *General Balck* commented: “We wound up w/ valuable tank crews fighting in black uniforms in the snow as infantrymen – and being totally wasted.” Tank crews performed as best they could fighting as infantry, but as the division history of **20 PD** noted, “they lacked the training basis required to fulfill their task.” [The division had formed a “tank-crew btn.” from men in the its tank rgt. who no longer had tanks or wheeled vehicles. It had four [4] coys w/ no heavy wpns.] By the beginning of **Jan 42**, only **18** soldiers from one company had survived from the **160** men that had formed up in the middle of **Nov 41**. . . **70%** of the losses were from frostbite. As Balck noted: “Casualties in the tanks themselves were almost always quite *light*.” Yet once the crews were employed as infantry “we took unheard-of losses among the tank crews because they had no infantry skills.” (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 200; also, R. Hinze, *Hitze, Frost u. Pulverdampf. Schicksalweg der 20. PD*, 87, 119)

2.1.42: *Panzergruppen 3 & 4* redesignated as *Panzer Armies*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 124; also, *KTB OKW*, Vol. 2, 187).

Panzertruppen Zustand 1942:

“Man darf sich allerdings keiner Illusion hingeben, denn die von der Panzertruppe im Winter **1941/42** erlittenen Verluste sind *nicht ersetzt worden*. Ja, man ist weit davon entfernt. So besitzt im **Jun 42** die **4. PD** bei der Hr.Gr.Mitte keinen einzigen Panzer u. beim **XXXX PzK** verfuegen die **3.** u. **23. PD** nur ueber je **90** Panzer. Am folgenden **15.10.42** enthueellt uns ein offizielles Dokument den wahren Zustand der Panzerwaffe am Vorabend der Katastrophe von *Stalingrad*. Es sind darin zu finden:

- je 1 Pz.Abt. mit 3 Kompanien bei der **1., 2., 4., 17., 18.** u. **20 PD** sowie bei den **4 Pz.Div.** der Waffen-SS;
- je 1 Pz.Abt. mit 4 Kompanien bei der **8., 25., u. 27. PD**; 1 Pz.Abt. mit 5 Kompanien bei der **19. PD**;
- je 2 Pz.Abt. (6 Kompanien) bei der **22.** u. **26. PD**;
- je 2 Pz.Abt. (8 Kompanien) bei der **5., 6., 7., 9., 10., 15., u. 21 PD**;
- 2 Pz.Abt. (9 Kompanien) bei der **12. PD**;
- je 3 Pz.Abt. (9 Kompanien) bei der **3., 11., 13., 14., 16., 23., u. 24. PD**.

Von 31 Pz.Div. waren damals nur 8 nach der Gliederung von 1941 aufgefüllt, die 9 Kompanien mit 20 Panzer, also 180 Pz III/IV vorsah. Unter solchen Umständen muss zugegeben werden, dass die Aufstellung von 7 neuen gepanzerten Grossverbänden keineswegs erforderlich war u. sie im Gegenteil einen schweren Fehler darstellte, denn man hätte das dafür hergestellte Material den alten Verbänden geben sollen, die vollkommen ausgebildet u. bemerkenswert gut aufeinander eingespielt waren, wie es ihre Taten von 1942 zeigen. Wenn bedacht wird, dass vier (4) dieser neuen Divisionen aus der *Waffen-SS* hervorgingen, sieht man, dass die Verantwortung für diesen Fehler Adolf Hitler u. Himmler trifft, die bemüht waren, sich ein Heer im Heere zu bilden.“ (Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 200)

1.7.2: *Infantry*:

Note: „Die durchschnittliche Zeit eines Infanteristen an der Ostfront betrug 10 Wochen. Die Verwundeten, auch nach drei-, vier- oder fünfmaliger Verwundung, kamen immer zu ihrer Kompanie zurück u. die wurde von Anfang bis Ende nicht aus Russland abgelöst, immer im Einsatz.“ (Ltr, F. Belke to C. Luther, 30 Jul 05)

Note [*Slang term for infantry*]: Mittags kommen Offiziere einer „*Fusslatscher-Einheit*“ – wie wir hochnaesig als „voll motorisiert“ die pferdebespannten Einheiten nennen, zur Einweisung. (Dr H. Rehfeldt, *Mit dem Eliteverband des Heeses* „GD“, 29)

Overall, *German infantry* entered WWII better prepared than any of their opponents. **Klaus v. Bismarck** – a descendant of the famous chancellor – was a *young infantry officer* in 1939. He later wrote that his comrades were neither ecstatic about the war, nor did they really believe all the propaganda they’d heard. At same time, he admitted, „we were all captivated by the situation. We were highly impressed w/ ourselves – our vitality, our strength, and our discipline.“ (Hart, *German Soldier*, 25)

German infantry fought w/ *impressive tenacity and effectiveness* throughout World War II, even after their units had sustained extreme losses. *Statistical analyses* have concluded that German troops *typically inflicted 50% greater casualties on their opponents* than they suffered in return, regardless of whether they were attacking or defending, even in the face of overwhelming Allied numerical advantages and air superiority later in war. One of the most basic elements of this *phenomenal fighting power* was **unit cohesion**. German soldiers also evinced a remarkable capacity to *regroup and form ad hoc battle groups* composed of stragglers and survivors of various units. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 21)

Two-thirds of the inf. divs. that took part in the invasion of Russia relied on *horse-drawn transport*. [Is this accurate? Didn’t virtually *all* of them rely on horses to haul supplies?] Most field artillery batteries were horse-drawn, too; so the infantry marched at the same pace as their fathers did in 1914. In fact, the *strategic mobility* of most German units was no greater than that of Napoleon’s *Grande Armee* of 1812. German inf. divs. consisted of three (3) inf. rgts., each of three btns, and an artillery rgt. w/ 36 105mm guns and 12 150mm guns. The inf. btns. had four (4) companies – three inf. coys (each of about 180 men) and one MG company (w/ 7.92mm general-purpose MGs and 81mm mortars). (C. Winchester, *Hitler’s War on Russia*, 20-21)

Inf. Divs (mot.): The inf. divs. (mot.) were *smaller* than the standard divisions, with six (6) instead of nine (9) inf. btns, but all mounted in trucks. Their artillery pieces were towed by lorries

or half-tracked prime movers. Their recon units included motorcycles and armored cars. In 1942 a btn. of SP guns or tanks was added, and half-track armored personnel carriers appeared in greater numbers, but in the initial campaign they were essentially inf. units w/ greater mobility. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 21-22)

Training of infantry recruits was *rigorous and relentless*. The process began w/ **16 weeks of basic training** (later reduced to eight, as Germany's situation became increasingly desperate). Advanced training added *real danger to mere hardship*. (Note: Authors quote *Guy Sajer* in this section.) *Gustav Knickrehm* [?] later concluded that the German soldiers' main advantage was his „*monstrous training*,“ which prepared him to carry out „all orders automatically.“ German companies often *took on the character of an extended family*. **Karl Fuchs** suggested as much when he wrote in a letter to his parents that he had become such an integral part of his coy that he *doubted his ability to leave it ever again*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 22-24)

The commanding officer became a *father figure*. Rounding out the *analogy to family life* was the unit's **senior NCO or warrant officer**, traditionally called the **Spiess**, but also known as „mother.“ In German Army, his role had *more to do w/ morale than discipline*, and he routinely acted as an intermediary to convey grievances up the chain of command and generally promote the men's welfare. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 24)

Campaign in *Poland* had revealed a *serious flaw* in their lack of training for *night engagements*. Recognizing such shortcomings, and taken steps to overcome them, even after a resounding victory, was a *hallmark of German mil. effectiveness*. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 25-26)

Bicycle infantry still made up a significant part of the strength of German inf.-div. reconnaissance units in 1941. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 11)

Advent of the **Einzelkaempfer: T-34** and **KV-1** proved almost impervious to standard German 37mm AT gun or the obsolescent **Model 39 AT rifle**. Prior to *Barbarossa*, **German infantry seldom had to face enemy armor on their own**, but the experience soon became all too familiar...In the Battle for Moscow, **Hans Werner Woltersdorf** received a bizarre surprise when he climbed on to the deck of a Soviet tank and attempted to drop a grenade down the turret, only to find that the hatch was *secured w/ a padlock*, apparently to *prevent the crew from escaping*. He finally destroyed the tank by firing a signal flare in through a smaller opening. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 31)

Anti-Tank Weapons: German infantry AT wpn vulnerability was officially recognized at end of the French campaign, but not resolved. Shortfalls became apparent again in front of Moscow. The previously effective combined arms support, which had compensated for weaknesses during the summer, was annulled w/ the onset of winter weather. Infantry felt naked when faced w/ tanks, as one graphic veteran assessment testified: “Use your rifle? You might as well turn round and fart at it [the tank]. Besides it never comes into your head to shoot; you just have to stay still as a mouse, or you'll yell w/ terror. You won't stir your little finger, for fear of annoying it. . . (See, *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 201-02, for remainder of this fascinating quotation.)

Note: For most part, German infantry fought bravely and w/ great discipline. Admiration for them comes through loud and clear in many accounts written by German veterans of other *Waffengattungen*. However, as following account reveals, even the German infantry failed to do its job on occasion:

German Landser behaving badly!

1.8.41 [*Kaempfe an der Duena im Raum Welish*]: For ca. **1** week, elements of the **14. ID (mot.)** have been involved in bitter fighting w/ Russian forces apparently lavishly equipped w/ artillery. Major Dr. M. Beyrich, Kdr. **II./AR 14 (mot.)**, and his batteries play major role in this fighting. In his *Tagebuch* entry for **1 Aug 41**, he is *scathing in his criticism of behavior of the infantry (IR 53)*. Among other things, he writes:

Die Infanteristen hatten sich dicht bei meinem Gef.-St. leicht eingegraben u. trotz der gefaehrlichen Situation alle dem Schlaf hingegeben. Hauptmann Kueckens war von mir nicht zu bewegen, fuer eine ordnungsgemaesse Sicherung nach dem rechten Waldstueck hin zu sorgen. Ich liess mit meiner Batterie systematisch die ganze Nacht hindurch das Waldstueck mit Stoerungsfeuer belegen. Der Russe rueckte unbegreiflicherweise nicht aus dem Wald heraus. Er haette die ganze Front durch einen Stoss in unsere rechte Flanke ins Wanken bringen koennen. Wie spaetere Gefangenenaussagen ergaben, hatte ihn unser Artilleriefuerer muerbe gemacht.

Schliesslich waren auch meine Maenner vor Uebermuedung eingeschlafen. Die ganze Infanterie grunzte, einschliesslich Btl.-Kdr. Die beiden Adjutanten u. Major Jeschke [i.e., one of the inf. Btn. Kdrs] waren seit Stunden bei ihrem Rgts.-Kdr. zur Besprechung. *Es war eine unglaubliche Situation*. So entschloss ich mich dann mit Lt. Lehmann u. Oblt. Sentner die ganze Nacht hindurch zu wachen, damit wir wenigstens nicht ueberrascht werden konnten. *Alle ½ Stunde rief ich mein Rgt. an u. meldete, dass Btn.-Kdr. u. Adjutanten immer noch nicht bei ihrem Rgt. seien u. hier kein Infanteriefuehrer vorhanden sei*. Endlich frueh nach **3.00** Uhr kam Major Jeschke mit dem Adjutanten zurueck.

Es war ein Skandal, das ein Btn.-Kdr. bei dieser Situation sein Btn. 5 Stunden in Stich liess. Es war ein Glueck fuer uns, dass die Russen den Angriff nicht fortsetzten. Es haette sonst eine Katastrophe gegeben. Tagsueber ereignete sich nichts weiter, als das wir stundenlang unter heftigem Beschuss lagen. Zum Glueck hatten wir nur ganz geringe Ausfaelle, weil sich meine Leute diszipliniert verhielten u. waehrend des schweren Beschusses in den Deckungsloechern aushielten. Einen Volltreffer gab es nicht.

Die Infanteristen hingegen benahmen sich unglaublich. Wenn das Artilleriefuerer einsetzte, liefen [sie] aus ihren Loechern heraus, um aus den Feuerbereich zu kommen. Bei dieser Gelegenheit hatten sie erhebliche Verluste, kummerten sich aber nicht einmal um ihre Verwundeten sondern liessen sie einfach liegen. Selbst ihren schwer verwundeten Kp.-Fuehrer nahmen sie nicht mit zurueck, so dass schliesslich meine Maenner die herumliegenden, stoehrenden Infanteristen einen nach den anderen bargen u. unser Arzt sie verband.

Schon seit der vergangenen Nacht redete Oblt. Schubert davon, dass heute die Abloesung komme, die wir alle sehnsuechtig erwarten. Die Stellung ist zu ungemuetlich u. das Vertrauen zu der Infanterie hat nachgelassen. . .

Gegen Abend besucht uns der Rgts.-Adjutant Oblt. Schubert. Er bringt mir vom Rgt.-Kdr. eine Flasche Rotwein u. drei Zigaretten als Geschenk mit, fuer das zweijaehrige Kriegsdienstjubilaeum.

Gerade als Schubert ankommt geht ein sehr kurzes aber wirksames Artilleriefeuer ein. *Von der Infanterie werden einige Verletzte, was das ganze III. Btn. veranlasst zu tuermen. Einzelne Offiziere versuchen mit der Pistole in der Hand die Leute zurueckzuhalten.* Demgegenueber bleiben meine Maenner fest. Bei uns gibt es keine Panik, im Gegenteil, die Maenner der 5. Batterie bergen trotz Feindfeuers verwundete Infanteristen, darunter einen Kp.-Chef, den die eigenen Leute einfach liegen gelassen hatten.

(Tagebuch, Major d.R. Dr. M. Beyrich, Kdr. II./AR (mot.) 14/14. ID (mot.))

1.7.3: Artillery & Rocket Wpns:

a) Artillery:

Note: Artillery was a *technical service*; apparently attracted many of the best technical minds in German officer corps. Many (most?) of the high-ranking Generals in OKW/OKH were former artillery officers—Jodl, Brauchitsch, Halder, etc.

Artillery was, next to infantry, the second largest combat arm of the German army during WWII. That said, the German artillery branch *never reached the scale – in terms of resources and importance – as artillery did in the wartime American, British and Soviet armies*. The reason for this lay in the preceived lessons the German military derived from WWI. The German examination of the Great War ***raised doubts about the ability of artillery to win modern wars*** as they concluded that such wpns had proven unable to break the stalemate of trench warfare on the western front. Therefore, between the wars, the German military directed considerable resources into novel new instruments of war – armor and air power – that it hoped would *revolutionize warfare*, rather than to artillery. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 49)²⁹³

The 1919 *Treaty of Versailles* placed further obstacles in the war of German artillery research and design between the wars. The treaty limited the number of such wpns German could field and forbade deployment of mobile heavy artillery pieces entirely. Despite such restrictions – indeed because of them – the Germans *intensively reseached and designed innovative new artilley wpns during the 1920s*. The result of this technical innovation was the development of ordnance that would remain the *mainstay of German artillery arm throughout WWII*. This ordnance included a horse-drawn ***105mm light field howitzer*** (rugged, maneuverable and reliable wpn) that became the *mainstay of German field artillery in WWII*. The Germans also produced a ***robust 150mm heavy field howitzer*** and a long-range ***100mm heavy gun***, both of which served throughout the war. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 49-50)

German artillery *suffered from several deficiencies* at start of WWII: a) German Army *lacked heavy motorized artillery*; b) the Versailles restrictions ensured that the artillery arm constantly struggled to meet expansion needs during the **1930s**; c) German Army was *slow to motorize*, had

²⁹³ **Note:** According to *Russell Hart's* biography of Guderian, the latter developed an *aversion* to artillery due to his perception of its perceived failure at *Verdun* in **1916**. See, **Section 2.9**, "Guderian biography," for details.

too little heavy artillery,²⁹⁴ and the bulk of the artillery remained *horse-drawn*. These deficiencies reflected the *widespread scepticism w/in the higher ranks of the army that artillery could be a decisive wpn in future wars*. Instead, the light field howitzer standardized in the 1930s was geared toward the fast, mobile operations the German army envisaged. An appropriate emphasis on manoeuver and speed, many gunners mistakenly believed, would obviate the need for a powerful, centralized artillery arm. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 50)

“The capabilities of German rocket and recoilless wpns warrant serious study by U.S. soldiers, not only because they are highly effective and mobile but because they are being used increasingly, in view of Germany’s raw material shortages, as substitutes for conventional artillery and antitank wpns. When the Germans began this war, they believed their *Stuka* bombers – the *Ju 87* and the *Ju 88* – would take over a high percentage of direct infantry-support missions from the field artillery. No matter how well these acft may have accomplished their missions during the campaign in Poland, Norway, the Low Countries, and France, their inability to take over a field artillery role became evident after Germany had attacked Russia and had encountered masses of Russian artillery. However, by the time the attrition of the war w/ Russia had its cramping effect on German industry, it was too late for Hitler to build up his artillery arm sufficiently to gain the necessary superiority.” (*Intelligence Bulletin*, “*Germany’s Rockets and Recoilless Wpns*,” at: <http://www.lonesentry.com/articles>)

Training: Another strength was the quality of German training as gunners underwent *rigorous and realistic instruction*. After having completed their three months of *basic training*, recruits who volunteered for the artillery progressed to another three months of branch instruction. One of the *key characteristics of German training was overlap*: recruits were taught to perform a variety of roles. For example, all gunners in horse-drawn units, like *Alfred Knappe* of the *24th „Leipzig“ AR*, learned to ride and to look after the regiment’s horses, as well as how to operate their howitzers. Knappe also vividly recalled the *intensity of his pre-war artillery officer training* at the *Kriegsakademie*. Although he complained in letters to his parents about the rigorous training schedule – he estimated after the war that he never worked less than 10 hrs a day, sometimes 12 or more and even had to train on Saturday mornings – when war came he began to appreciate the true value of his training. He came to see that one of the strengths of his instruction was its *commitment to inter-arms cooperation* as the key to effective artillery support. Thus Knappe and his fellow gunner officer candidates actually undertook *extensive infantry training* to acclimatise them to infantry thinking and procedures. He learned to view combat from the infantry officer’s perspective; to appreciate the difficulties they faced in order to support them more effectively in combat. The result was the *instilling of intimate inter-arms cooperation* which became one of the *cornerstones of German mil. effectiveness* in WWII. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 50)

Artillery in Barbarossa:

Note: According to *Rolf Hinze* (who, I believe, served w/ German artillery unit), the Russian artillery had a range advantage over that of the German “*leichte u. schwere Feldhaubitzen*.” (R. Hinze, *19. Pz.-Div.*, 78)

Note: „Close ahead, we saw the hits of our batteries, which were raking a hillside and village w/ *ricochets, impact and delayed-action fuses*.” (H. Pabst, *The Outermost Frontier*, 18)

²⁹⁴ During French campaign, the shortcomings of German heavy artillery – failure to destroy fortified defenses – would become apparent. (53)

Here the German artillery arm encountered its most profound challenges. The defensive experiences of the thinly stretched German infantry ultimately *transformed Wehrmacht artillery practices*. Combat quickly showed that infantry lacked AT capability and had no effective counter to Soviet heavy armor. **Bruno Wiesemann** recollected that infantry divisions thus often had to *deploy forward their field artillery in a direct-fire role* to support infantry and halt enemy penetrations, even though this brought heavy loss of guns through close range *line-of-sight* engagements...Extensive swampy, primeval forest limited observation and *reduced artillery effectiveness*. Artillery columns also faced ambushes from *partisans*. During winter, the cold *froze guns* and deep snow *immobilized many pieces*. Even horses proved unable to survive. Artillery thus lost the vital mobility for both its survival and its effective employment. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 55)

S. Knappe notes, after Russians had been devastated during a daylight attack: If they had waited until night they would have had a better chance, *but they did not stand a chance in daylight when we could use artillery against them*. (*S. Knappe*, **87. ID**, *Reflections*, 233)

Jun 41-Mar 42: Die Bestaende an *leichter u. schwerer Artillerie* hatten im **Jun 41** einen Hoehstand erreicht. Von **Jul** bis **Nov 41** war der *Frontverbrauch* [i.e., the losses] etwa eben so gross wie die Produktion; im **Dez 41** u. im **Jan 42** ging aber der Frontverbrauch weit ueber die laufende Erzeugung hinaus. Noch entscheidender war der *Abfall* der *Bestaende* an *Artilleriemunition*. Hier setzte binnen neuen Monaten, vom **Jun 41** bis **Mar 42**, ein so starker Entzug [*deprivation*] ein, dass der *Munitionsbestand auf ein Drittel sank*. Damit wurde die Kampfkraft der deutschen Artillerie entscheidend beeintraehtigt. (*Donat, Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 8)

Winter 41/42: The “Mehner” Geheime Tagesberichte contain many references to German artillery successfully disrupting Soviet attacks in their assembly areas before they occur. Apparently a very successful tactic.

Winter 41/42: See, *Lt W. Heinlein* for interesting & detailed account of activities and challenges facing a “VB” [forward observer] during winter of 41/42. He explains how particularly demanding his job was—he had to move in terrible cold from one unit to next, to provide support—and how he was able to prepare his artillery unit beforehand to provide effective fire: “Wie eigentlich immer, suchte ich im Niemandsland bestimmte Punkte und schuss meine Batterie auf diese Ziele ein...Diese Massnahme war sehr wichtig, denn beim Angriff des Gegners brauchte ich mich nicht erst auf sei einzuschiessen, sondern konnte sofort das entsprechende Kommando geben...Besonders bei Nacht hat sich diese Vorgehensweise bewaehrt. (*W. Heinlein Memoiren*, **AR 74/2. PD**, 76-77)

24.-31.12.41: Throughout the winter battles, **6. ID** received excellent support from its handful of heavy wps, particularly the *artillery*. Repeated references in Grossmann’s book to vital role of artillery in supporting the withdrawal and holding front together during the winter battles. For example, from **24.-31.12.41**, the **I./AR 42** “zerschlug 26 Angriffe u. Bereitstellungen mit **3284 Schuss**, die unter schwierigsten Verhaeltnissen durch tiefen Schnee herangebracht werden mussten.“ (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 113)

--**ca Jan 42:** Nach einem sowj. Angriff aus dem „Dreieckswaeldchen“ auf die Rollbahn bei Bardeno – Barssuki. Dieser Angriff blieb im Direktfeuer der **5./AR 19** liegen. (Brutal photo showing destroyed Soviet tanks – the area strew w/ dead bodies of Rotarmisten. Example of how

profligate Soviets were w/ lives of their soldiers; also demonstrates devastating impact of German artillery.) (See, *R. Hinze, 19. Pz.-Div., 77*)

Jan-Feb 42: Artillery played a *vital roll* in repulsing Russian attacks on the *Koenigsbergstellung* (NE *Rshew*) during this period: “Viele Angriffe konnte der Russe ueberhaupt nicht beginnen, weil bereits seine Bereitstellungen durch unsere Ari-Feuer zerschlagen wurden. Hierbei half uns auch ein 21 cm *Moerser* und eine 15 cm Haubitzbatterie.“ (*H.J. Dismer, AR 6/6. ID, 92*)

German artillery vs. Soviet armor: In his major study of Soviet tank ops, *Tankovyi udar*, Army General *Radzievskii* notes that the losses inflicted on Soviet armor by German artillery ranged from **58** to **94.8%**. Air strikes accounted for up to **17%**; AT mines **14%**; and in **1944** the *Faustpatrone* (the German “bazooka”) and hollow-charge munitions inflicted losses ranging from **30 – 80%**. (*J. Erickson, Soviet War Losses, 268*)

4.3.-15.4.42 [35 ID]: Am **4 Mar 42** begann der neue Grossangriff, der von den Russen mit 7 Schuetzendivisionen, 6 Schuetzen-Bde u. 2 Pz.-Bde gefuehrt wurde. Mehrere Einbrueche in die HKL konnten durch Gegenangriffe bereinigt werden. Heftiges fdl. Artilleriefeuer u. laufende Fliegerangriffe erschwerten die Verteidigung. Mehrere Gelaendeabschnitte wechselten mehrmals den Besitzer. Am **19 Mar 42** flauten die Kaempfe ab. Bis auf kleine Gelaendeverluste konnte die Stellung gehalten werden. Der Gegner hatte Tausende von Toten verloren, aber auch die eigenen Verluste wog schwer. Mehrmals mussten Trosse u. rueckwaertige Dienste an der Front eingesetzt werden. Einen besonderen Anteil am Abwehrerfolg hatte auch unsere Artillerie. Bis zu **5000** Schluss taeglich stieg der Munitionsverbrauch. Am **15 Apr 42** war der grossangelegte Durchbruchsversuch, der den Durchbruch bis Gshatsk bringen sollte, endgueltig gescheitert. Es fanden statt: **221** Angriffe [der Russen] in Kompanie- bis Divisionsstaerke, davon **78** mit Panzerunterstuetzung von zwei [2] bis zu **10** Panzer. Feindtote etwa **10 000**, Gefangene zwei [2] Offiziere, **651** Mann. (*Kameradendienst 35 e.V., 35. Inf.-Div., 104-05*)

b) Rocket wpns:

“Before the war the Germans, like the Russians, had been experimenting w/ rocket developments. When the need for artillery substitutes became apparent, the Germans naturally turned to rockets and rocket launchers since these were relatively inexpensive and could be produced quickly. In contrast to artillery, rockets do not require electric-furnace steel, carefully forged tubes, or heavy carriages w/ delicately machined recoil and counterrecoil mechanisms. The first German rockets were those launched from the *Schweres Wurfgeraet 40* (“heavy throwing apparatus”) and the *Schweres Wurfgeraet 41*. These fire either **180-lb.** high-explosive or **196-lb** incendiary rockets. These rockets are **280-mm** and **320-mm** in diameter, and weight **180** and **196** pounds, respectively. The *Schweres Wurfgeraet 40* consists merely of a wooden frame (*Wurfgestell 40*) which fires rockets from wooden shipping crates; the *41*, of a steel frame (*Wurfgestell 41*) holding either wooden or steel shipping crates . . .

In **1941** there appeared the now-famous *15-cm Nebelwerfer 41*, or rocket projector, which U.S. soldiers have nicknamed the “*Screaming Meemie*.” . . . This wpn launches its rockets from six (**6**) grooved tubes, which are **5.9** inches in diameter. Although the tubes are mounted on a two-wheeled carriage w/ a split trail, the whole apparatus is so light that two men can manhandle it easily. The *15-cm Nebelwerfer 41* is supposed to fire in batteries of six (**6**) pieces, w/ each piece launching a six-round salvo every **8** minutes. (Misfires are common.) The crew takes shelter in a slit trench before firing, and discharges the six rockets by *remote*

control, following a prescribed sequence. The rockets' maximum range is about **8000** yards.

Similar to the *15-cm Nebelwerfer 41* is the five (5)-tube *21-cm Nebelwerfer 42*. This launcher fires **8-inch** rockets as far as **8600** yards. Its high-explosive rockets are shaped like artillery shells and the Germans consider these rockets their most effective long-range rocket projectiles." (*Intelligence Bulletin*, "Germany's Rocket and Recoilless Weapons," at: <http://www.lonesentry.com/articles>)²⁹⁵

1.7.4: Flak (Army/Luftwaffe):

Note: Both the Army and Luftwaffe possessed large numbers of **2-cm Flak 30** and **38** by the beginning of Operation "Barbarossa." The Army received deliveries following deliveries of these wpsn from **1939-42:**

1939: 95
1940: 863
1941: 873
1942: 2,502

Conversely, the Luftwaffe received deliveries of more than **40,000** of these **2-cm Flak 30** and **38** through **1942** (including over **22,000** in **1942** alone). (See, <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>)

Both the **8.8-cm Flak 18** and **Flak 36** were in operation at the outbreak of World War II. As of **Sep 39**, the Luftwaffe possessed **2,459** **Flak 18/36** in its inventory; conversely, through **1941** the Army had only received **126** **Flak 18/36** (from Luftwaffe stocks). In **1942**, the Army received only an additional **176** of these guns from the Luftwaffe. (For details on effectiveness of these wpsn, rates of fire, etc., see, <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>; see also, *J. Piekalkiewicz, Die 8.8 Flak im Erdkampf-Einsatz*, 174 ff.)

Note: From various accounts (i.e., H. Freter's Fla nach vorn, etc.) it appears that the Flak units of the Army fought mostly (entirely?) as independent battalions and companies. Usually, a Flak company was attached to an Army division (mostly tank and motorized divisions) to provide support. The Flak units of the Luftwaffe appear to have been mostly (exclusively?) of regimental-size, w/ "Abteilungen" at times attached to various army units. The Luftwaffe Flak units were thus larger, and shot down many more planes than did their smaller Army counterparts. The Army Flak units, however, were from the beginning *much more involved in supporting German ground operations*.

Note: "Auch der Einsatz der Flakartillerie wurde durch die grosse Ausdehnung der Operations-raeume u. der besetzten rueckwaertigen Gebiete erschwert u. es konnte immer nur wenige Objekte *schwerpunktsmaessig* geschuetzt werden. Im allgemeinen gestaltete sich der Flakeinsatz folgendermassen: Die Verbaende der den *Luftflotten* unterstellten Flakkorps u. die dem Heere unterstellten Flakeinheiten wurden zum Schutz der Vormarschstrassen, frontnaher Objekte wie Bereitstellungen, Artillerieaufmarschraeume, Bruecken, usw. u. in grossem Umfange im *Erdeinsatz* zur Bekaempfung von Bunkern u. Stuetzpunkten u. zur Abwehr von Panzerangriffen verwendet. Ausserdem wurden Flakverbaende von den Luftflotten zum Schutz von Flugplaetzen u. von den *Luftgaukommandos* zum Schutz rueckwaertiger Verkehrsknotenpunkte, Versorgungs-

²⁹⁵ **Note:** Compare accuracy of this intelligence report w/ more recent material.

stuetzpunkten mit besonders wertvollen Nachschubgut u. wichtigen Bruecken im Zuge grosser Nachschubstrassen eingesetzt. („*Unterstuetzung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe*“,“ KDC, Microfilm „E“)

22.6.-15.9.41: Das **I. Flakkorps** [Army Group?] vernichtet im Osten in der Zeit vom **22 Jun 41** bis etwa Mitte **Sep 41** ueber **3000 Panzerfahrzeuge**. (*J. Piekalkiewicz, Die 8.8 Flak im Erdkampf-Einsatz*, 61)

22.6.-12.12.41 [Fla-Btn. 605]: During this period, the battalion fought w/ **41. PzK** as far as Kalinin. Battalion records **40** kills of enemy acft over this period. According to Hermann Freter: “Gemaess KTB-Eintragungen feuerte **Fla 605** vom **22.6.-12.12.41** (d.h., bis zum **40. Abschuss**) insgesamt **82.480** Schuss 2-cm-Granaten auf den Luftfeind, sodass im Durchschnitt auf jeden Abschuss **2.062** Schuss entfielen. . . Den bis zum **12.12.41** abgefeuerten **82.480** Schuss gegen den Luftgegner standen **77.350** Schuss gegenueber, die **Fla 605** in der gleichen Zeitspanne im Erdkampf verschossen hatte. Nichts charakterisiert die Doppelrolle der Heeres-Fla eindeutiger als dieses Beispiel fuer den Munitionsaufwand von praktisch **1:1** gegen den Luft- u. Erdgegner!“ (*H. Freter, Fla nach vorn*, 391-92)

2.10.41 [Heeres-Fla-Einheiten – Kp./Btl. – bei H.Gr.Mitte]:

Den Pz.Gr. wurden folgende Heeres-Fla-Einheiten (mot.) unterstellt:

3. PzGr:

41. PzK: 1. PD: 3./Fla 59
36. ID (mot.): Fla-Btl. 601

56. PzK: 6. PD: 3./Fla 46
7. PD: 2./Fla 59

4.PzGr:

40. PzK: 2. PD: 2./Fla 47
10. PD: 3./Fla 55

46. PzK: 5. PD: 2./Fla 55

57. PzK: 3. ID (mot.): 5./Fla 48

2. PzGr:

24. PzK: 3.PD: 6./Fla 59
4.PD: 5./Fla 66

47. PzK: 17. PD: 1./Fla 66
29. ID (mot.): 1./Fla 59

48. PzK: 9. PD: 3./Fla 47
16. ID (mot.): 6./Fla 31

(**Note:** Text also states that **1./Fla 46** was supporting the **6. ID**; and that **6./Fla 47** was supporting the **26. ID**.

F.K. Scharffetter: Eine Kompanie der Heeres-Fla verfügte neben den ueblichen leichten Inf.-Waffen (1.MG, Karabiner, MPi, Pistole, Stiel- u. Eierhandgranaten) ueber:

- a) **12** Maschinenkanonen **2-cm-Flak 30** oder **38** auf **1t-Zugmaschine** (Sfl) in **3** Zuegen / **6** Halbzuegen; oder,
- b) **8** Maschinenkanonen **2-cm-Flak 30** oder **38** und **2** Vierlings **2-cm-Flak 38** auf **8t-Sfl**; oder,
- c) **9** Maschinenkanonen **3.7-cm-Flak 36/37** oder **43** auf **8t-Sfl**.

Geschuetzfahrzeuge bis auf Ausnahmen ungepanzert, Geschuetze frontal mit Schutzschild u. Schutzblende fuer das Erdzielfernrohr. Eine Fla-Btl. hatte normalerweise **3** Kompanien, in Ausnahmefaellen **2** oder **4** Kompanien.

Fla-Waffe Schussfolge:

Theoretisch u. (praktisch):

2-cm Flak 30: 280 (120)

2-cm Flak 38: 480 (220)

3.7-cm 36: 150 (80)

3.7-cm 43: 200 (120)

(*H. Freter, „Fla nach vorn,“* Bd. 1, 386, 393-95; *Ltr, F.K. Scharffetter to C. Luther, 29 Nov 02*)²⁹⁶

Nov 41 [Flakkampftrupp]: Der Berichterstatter [i.e., A. Stamm] war mit seinem Flakkampftrupp, bestehend aus einem **8.8** cm Geschuetz, Bedienung, Zugmaschine u. **2** Versorgungs-Lkw den **IR 111 [35. ID]** u. **240 [106. ID]** zur Panzerabwehr u. allgemeinen artilleristischen Unterstuetzung zugeteilt. (*A. Stamm, „...noch 29 Kilometer bis zur Kreml-Mauer! Erlebnis- u. Tagebuchaufzeichnungen eines Flakkampftruppfuehrers,“* in: *Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch, 447-50*)²⁹⁷

1942: “Die ab **1942** eingesetzten gepanzerten Schlachtflugzeuge fuehrten bei der Fla-Schule zu Versuchen, das **3.7-cm-Kaliber** auch bei der Heeres-Fla einzufuehren.“ Conversely, both **3.7-** and **8.8-cm** Flak was in the Luftwaffe inventory in **1941/42**. (*H. Freter, Fla nach vorn, Bd. I, 416*)

1.7.5: Waffen-SS:

During WWII, the *Waffen-SS* changed into a force w/ little in common w/ the embryonic organization of 1939. The million-strong *Waffen-SS* of **1945** comprised a *heterogeneous*

²⁹⁶ **Note:** According to Herrn F.K. Scharffetter, there were also two Fla-Btns (Nrs. **601** and **605**) – both w/ **3 PzGr** – which took part in “Taifun.”

²⁹⁷ **Note:** The author belonged to Flakkampftrupp **3** of **I./FlakRgt 52** (mot), a Luftwaffe unit. Apparently, these Flakkampftrupps were tiny units.

collection of varying races and formations. The half-dozen „classic“ *Waffen-SS* units – i.e., *SS Leibstandarte*, *Das Reich*, *Totenkopf*, *Wiking*, etc. – usually performed impressively on the battlefield and did constitute a *military elite*. In the east between **1941/42**, these divisions forged the military reputation of the *Waffen-SS*, and consequently Hitler ordered further expansion and mechanisation of its forces. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 74)

Eligibility: Until **1942**, acceptance into the *Waffen-SS* as a recruit or an officer cadet was far from easy: *height restrictions* applied, and favorable interviews and references were required; as was a lengthy proven *Aryan ancestry*. From 1942 on, these requirements were increasingly relaxed, as Himmler tapped new sources of recruits from *ethnic German* and *non-Aryan* sources to avoid direct competition w/ the *Wehrmacht* over scarce manpower resources. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 74)

Training: At least in pre-war and early war years, *Waffen-SS* recruits endured a *brutal training regime*. SS training, pioneered before **1939** by officers such as **Felix Steiner** at the Officer Cadet Schools at **Bad Toelz** and **Brunswick**, was based on the *principles of iron discipline*, imbuing an elite *esprit de corps* and political indoctrination. Training was also based on *realistic, live-fire, combat simulation* – so realistic, in fact, that SS cdrs accepted a **10% casualty rate during training** as a matter of routine.

Waffen-SS elite: Ihr irrt uebrigens, wenn Ihr der SS nichts zutraut. *Das in meiner Armee eingesetzte SS-Inf.Rgt. 4 ist unsere Elite*, die sich weitaus am besten schlaegt u. *alle* schwierigen Aufgaben loesen muss u. auch loest. Dasselbe Zeugnis kann ich der **SS-Div. „Reich“** ausstellen, die uns bis Ende Dezember gehoerte. Das muss man gerade ihnen lassen, sie sind von einer Idee u. einem Glauben getragen, die ihnen eine *unwahrscheinliche Einsatzbereitschaft* verleiht. (H. Stieff, *Briefe*, 152)

1.7.6: German Tank Maintenance:

CMH Pub 104-7:²⁹⁸

Note: More than any other motor vehicle, the tank is subject to defects. Some part is always in need of attention, even if it is only a loose nut or bolt that needs tightening. For this reason, the drivers as well as the tank crews were instructed to *constantly check even apparently serviceable tanks for defects and repair them immediately*. When even a minor defect was overlooked, it eventually developed into a major repair job. German field maintenance personnel *made every effort to repair disabled vehicles within the tank rgt.* (17)

Even before outbreak of WWII, German experts in armored warfare realized a well-functioning tank maintenance system would be essential. Initially, a *centralized system* was planned in which only minor repairs would be carried out in the field, and tanks that had sustained more serious damage would be returned to the factory of origin in the *zone of interior*. During *Polish campaign* in Sep 39, this system worked well and very few difficulties were encountered. As soon as Poland was conquered, the tank units returned to their peacetime garrisons in Germany, where all vehicles were quickly repaired and restored to maximum efficiency at *depot maintenance installations* and tank production plants. (p 1)

²⁹⁸ **Note:** These notes gleaned from CMH 104-7, “*German Tank Maintenance in World War II*,” by General *Mueller-Hillebrand*. Hillebrand served as aide to Chief of Army General Staff; later command an armored regiment in Russia, etc.

The *French campaign* of 1940 presented only a few maintenance problems. Minor organizational deficiencies that had first cropped up during the Polish campaign were corrected and the strength of the organic maintenance personnel was increased. A large tank spare parts depot, from which the armored forces drew their supplies, was established in northern France. At the end of the campaign, which lasted but six weeks, most of the tank units returned once more to their garrisons in Germany. Those divisions remaining in France were able to utilize services and facilities of former *French Army repair shops*. Moreover, the distance to the tank factories in Germany was relatively short. As a result, all armored divisions were *combat-ready shortly after conclusion of the French campaign*. (1)

During the campaigns in the *Balkans* in spring of 1941, the Germans committed numerous panzer divisions. These campaigns were also short and involved few tank losses, most of them caused by bad road conditions and accelerated march movements during which it was not always possible to perform preventive maintenance. After conclusion of ops against Yugoslavia and Greece, the tank units were rehabilitated in the *zone of interior* and transferred to assembly areas for campaign against Russia. (1)

For the Russian campaign, the Germans intended to apply a *slightly modified, but essentially centralized system of tank maintenance*. Most of the tank repairs were *still to be performed in the zone of interior*. Conversely, each of the three army groups in Russian theater was to have a spare-parts depot. Improved maintenance vehicles, recovery vehicles, and better shop equipment were issued to the maintenance units in the field. No further planning was considered necessary, because both the military and political leaders assumed that military ops would reach their climax during the autumn of 1941 and that most of the armored forces would *return to Germany before the winter*. (2)

Once the Russian campaign began,²⁹⁹ *the need for tank maintenance installations and the demand for spare parts increased by leaps and bounds*. German tank losses in Russia were far heavier than during the preceding campaigns. For the first time, large numbers of tanks were put out of action by enemy fire and mines. With ops being conducted over great distances under unusual conditions, such as extreme heat and dust in summer and subzero temperatures in winter, *the mechanical operation of tanks was greatly affected*, resulting in an *unexpectedly high attrition rate*. The tank maintenance services were handicapped because only the larger towns contained buildings that provided even minimum shop and billeting facilities. Despite strenuous efforts, the maintenance personnel were *unable to cope w/ the ever-increasing volume of repair work*. The German Army's requirements for all types of supplies, particularly ammunition, fuel, and medical supplies, exceeded all expectations. The inadequate road and rail nets made it impossible to [effectively!] support the rapidly advancing armored columns. Since very little rolling stock was captured, the railroad tracks had to be converted from the wide Russian to standard European gage [sic]. Moreover, the Russians demolished most railroad bridges and locomotive maintenance shops during their withdrawal. The unsatisfactory rail transportation situation had a *disastrous effect on the tank maintenance system* at a time when the number of disabled tanks reached an alltime high. Obviously, the *centralized system of maintenance was no longer practical*, and major changes had to be introduced w/o delay. (2-3)

²⁹⁹ *Mueller-Hillebrand*: "In Russia the difficulties of tank maintenance were aggravated by the scarcity of hard-surface roads, the limited capacity of the railroad net, and the almost complete lack of technical facilities. In addition, the German armaments industry was overtaxed, and deficiencies in war production planning led to a shortage of spare parts." (41)

Decentralization: Most of the repair work that had hitherto been performed in the zone of interior had to be undertaken by maintenance units in the field. Following measures were thus initiated:

- a. Strength of the maintenance units in the field was *considerably increased* and replacements given better technical training.
- b. Improved equipment and more efficient recovery vehicles were made available; some new special-purpose equipment developed.
- c. New *depot maintenance installations* were established in the Russian theater to take over those repair functions that formerly had been performed in Germany.
- d. The manufacture of spare parts in Germany was stepped up to meet the increased demands of units in the field.
- e) The parts supply organization was radically changed in order to afford a more rapid and efficient distribution of spare parts.
- f) Qualified officers were given specialized tank maintenance training before being assigned to commands in the field and to technical staff positions.
- g) Central functions hitherto accomplished by top-level agencies in zone of interior were transferred to HQs in the field.

Since such a *comprehensive reorganization program* could not materialize overnight, the new system *did not become fully effective until the summer of 1942*. During the interim period, new tank models were developed and those in service were improved...The measures designed to increase personnel strength and provide better equipment were carried out w/o much trouble, but the rest of the program was more difficult to execute. Large quantities of *spare parts* stored in the zone of interior were *hurriedly loaded on trains and shipped to the Russian theater*. Since the average staff officer was not acquainted w/ the intricacies of tank maintenance, *many of the trains were misdirected*. Army Group South, for instance, received several shipments of spare parts for tank models it did not have, whereas Army Group North was in urgent need of the very same parts. (3-4)

During the summer offensive of 1942, the Germans discovered that the tank maintenance personnel *were still inadequately trained*. Supplementary on-the-job training and refresher courses were given to officer and enlisted personnel. Manuals stressing the importance of safeguarding equipment and the responsibilities of *first and second echelon maintenance* were given wide distribution. Additional personnel and equipment were provided for the maintenance units to assist in reducing the accumulated backlog of repairs. Most of the difficulties encountered in 1942 arose because *decentralization was not consistently applied*. (4)

Maintenance Units:

Note: Maintenance of track-laying vehicles was the function of *organic and non-organic units*. The organic units were established *exclusively at the company and regimental levels*, while the nonorganic ones were attached—either as entities or in part—to the maintenance detachments or companies in the field. (5)

a. Tank Maintenance Detachment:

The smallest organic unit was the maintenance detachment of the tank company, which was composed of **19** enlisted men. It was responsible for on-the-spot repairs of disabled tanks, including soldering and welding. It was highly mobile and capable of operating in any terrain. The personnel were trained to determine the extent of damage and either perform necessary repairs or arrange for evacuation by the recovery platoon of the tank regiment's maintenance company. (See document for chart and breakdown of assigned maintenance personnel.) (5)

Tank maintenance detachment personnel were responsible for effecting any repair that did not require more than half a day's work. Damages of greater magnitude could be repaired by detachment personnel on condition that they were staying in one location for an extended period. When necessary, a maintenance detachment *could replace an engine* by means of an improvised hoist, even though this work went beyond the scope of its normal duties. (17)

b. Tank Maintenance Company:

The primary function of the maintenance company of a tank regiment was to perform those repairs which could not be conducted by the detachments in the tank companies (or, if necessary, to transfer them to the *depot maintenance shops* in the rear [18]). The company's mission was to eliminate technical defects, repair electrical equipment, radio sets, tank weapons, optical instruments, damage resulting from direct hits, recover and remove disabled tanks from the battlefield, and maintain stocks of spare parts...The personnel strength of the company depended on the type of armored vehicles issued to the tank regiment and varied between **120** and **200** men. (See document for chart and breakdown of assigned maintenance personnel, activities of maintenance platoons, recovery platoon, various repair sections, etc.) (6-14, 17-18)

c. Non-organic tank maintenance units:

The maintenance platoon was the lowest-echelon, non-organic tank maintenance unit; it was usually attached to a tank battalion operating separately. Its strength varied between **50** and **120** men...(See, p 14)

d. Depot Maintenance Installations:

*Until the autumn of 1941, disabled tanks that could not be repaired by the maintenance units in the field were usually shipped to a **tank ordnance depot** in Germany, before being returned to the original manufacturer. Upon completion of repairs at the factory, the vehicles were dispatched to a tank ordnance depot for the installation of radio equipment and armament before being reissued to the combat units. However, since the production of new tanks took up their full capacity in late 1941, manufacturers were *unable to handle tank repairs*, and it was not long before an *enormous backlog of repair work had accumulated.* (26)*

Fixed Installations in Russia: When this matter was brought to Hitler's attention, he ordered *three major depot maintenance installations*—one for each army group—*established in the Russian theater.* The mission of these installations was to perform a general overhaul of badly

damaged tanks and thus obviate need to ship them back to Germany for repairs. A civilian agency was put in charge of this project, because Hitler expected a higher degree of efficiency from civilians using modern engineering methods than from military personnel...To guarantee a sufficient supply of spare parts, a tank spare parts depot was set up near each of these installations. In addition, a stockroom carrying the most important tank parts was attached to each installation. Though sound on paper, the *plan failed from the outset because of the confusion created by the sudden decentralization efforts*. Moreover, the civilian personnel engaged in constructing the depot maintenance installations were unable to adapt themselves to the conditions in Russia and [unable to] give up the high standards to which they were accustomed. This gave rise to such *delays in construction* that the unfavorable turn meanwhile taken by military events prevented the installations from operating at full efficiency. Due to differences in civilian and military mindsets and operating procedures—eg., what the military considered repairable, the civilians regarded as scrap—there was also *constant friction between the civilian managements and the military staffs*...Because the depot maintenance installations took so long to come on line and performed in such an unsatisfactory manner, the Army High Command decided in **1944** to establish its own depot maintenance installations along purely military lines. (26-28)

Spare-Parts Supply:

Note: In the German experience, **7** out of every **10** tank repair jobs involved the replacement of parts. (44)

An adequate supply of spare parts is essential for the efficient operation of a maintenance system. During initial campaigns of WWII, Germany's supply of tank spare parts was satisfactory. In **Mar 40**, Hitler created the *Ministry of Armaments and Ammunition*, headed by a *civilian* directly responsible to the Fuehrer. Even though the activities of this civilian agency tended to curtail the influence of the military, its creation was welcomed by the latter because it fulfilled an urgent need. *Friction between the Army and the Ministry of Armaments arose during the Russian campaign*, when the production of new tanks was stepped up and that of spare parts neglected. (21)

During the initial phase of the Russian campaign—June to December 1941—manufacturers in the zone of interior *shipped parts either to tank ordnance depots in Germany or directly to the three army groups* on the eastern front. Each army group *maintained a separate tank spare-parts depot* and established advance dumps at army level. The tank maintenance companies requisitioned and drew the spare parts for the entire tank regiment from an army advance dump or army group depot. (22)

During the first three (3) months of *Barbarossa*, the *German armored units had sufficient spare parts*. In autumn of 1941, however, *parts grew scarce in the Russian theater* [i.e., due to overextended supply lines; advent of the muddy season, making roads impassable a shutting down ops of truck columns etc.]. At same time, the *railroads* proved incapable of carrying the entire supply load. Damaged tanks could not be repaired for lack of spare parts and could not be evacuated to the zone of interior because of the *transportation bottleneck*. Throughout this period, the *Ministry of Armaments pushed the production of new tanks to the detriment of the manufacture of spare parts*. Not until **May 42** did the Ministry decide to curtail new tank production and increase output of spare parts. Yet this change failed to remedy the situation because the total quantity of spare parts thus gained amounted to no more than the loss in new tank production, but in disassembled form. In other words, for each tank that was not assembled,

only 1 engine, 1 transmission, and 1 steering mechanism, etc. were made available as spare parts. This solution was very unsatisfactory and *did little to alleviate the spare-parts problem*...During summer offensive of 1942, w/ more than 75 percent of German tank strength deployed in southern sector, hundreds of tanks soon became disabled and a *major backlog of repairs accumulated as necessary spare parts were not available*. Indeed, the spare-parts problem became so critical that it had a paralyzing effect on the simultaneous thrusts toward **Stalingrad** and into the **Caucasus**. (23-24)

The failure of the armament industry to provide sufficient spare parts *forced the tank maintenance personnel to improvise*. One of the most widespread expedients was the *practice of cannibalizing* disabled tanks, especially those destined for return to the zone of interior. The cannibalization crews were so thorough that the manufacturer rarely received more than the empty hull by the time the tank reached his plant [!]. Disabled tanks awaiting engine replacements at field repair shops were also subject to being stripped. (25)

1.7.7: Individual Units:

2. Pz.Gr.:

--**30.9.41**:³⁰⁰ Die personellen Staerken der Pz.- u. mot.-Divisionen betragen durchschnittlich **75%** der Ausrueckestaerken vom **22.6.41**. Die Zahl der am **30.9.41** einsatzbereiten Panzer betrug – einschl. einer kurz vor Angriffsbeginn eingetroffenen Neuzuweisung von 85 Panzern – rund **400 Panzer**, das sind **40%** der Ausrueckstaerke vom **22.6.41**. Von den fehlenden **60%** waren **20%** Totalausfaelle, **40%** waren wegen Ersatzteilmenge ausgefallen. [!] Die Ausfaelle der Kraftfahrzeuge bewegten sich im gleichen Verhaeltnis. („*Operationen der 2. Pz.-Armee*“, **RH 21-2/910**, p. 9)

3. Pz.Gr.:

--**22.6.41**: Die **3. Pz.Gr.** verfuegte in ihren beiden Pz.-Korps ueber vier [4] Pz.-Div. Von diesen war die **7. PD** bereits im Westfeldzug hoch bewaehrt; die **12. PD** war aus einer mot. Division, die **19.** u. **20. PD** aus einer Infanteriedivision umgewandelt worden. Alle Pz.-Div. hatten statt bisher einer Pz.-Bde nur ein Pz.-Rgt. zu je drei [3] Pz.Abt. Allerdings waren sie jetzt vorwiegend mit **Pz III** u. **Pz IV** ausgestattet. So verfuegte das Pz.Rgt. der **19. PD** z.B. ueber **42 Panzer IV**, **102 Panzer III**, **9 Panzer III (Nachr.)** u. **20 Panzer II**. Die Schuetzenfahrzeuge der neuen Pz.-Div., besonders die der **20. PD**, waren fuer oestl. Wege wenig geeignet, da sie aus ziviler franzoesischer Lieferung stammten. Im besonderen fehlte es an gelaendegaengigen Kraftwagen. Die Kompaniefuehrer mussten ihre Truppe aus geschlossenen Kleinlimousinen [?] fuehren. Nicht anders sah es bei den mot. Divisionen aus. Alle drei [3] mot. Divisionen – **14.**, **18.**, **20.** – waren im Winter **1940/41** aus Inf.-Div. umgebildet worden; sie erhielten ihre Fahrzeuge erst im Laufe der letzten Monate vor Beginn des Ostfeldzuges, die **18. ID** erst einige Tage vor dem Abmarsch in den Aufmarschraum [!]. Diese fuer oestl. Gelaendeverhaeltnisse wenig geeignete Kraftwagenaustattung muss bei der Beurteilung der Operationen beruecksichtigt werden. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 109; also, *Hoth, Panzeroperationen*, 44)

³⁰⁰ **Note:** For “Gliederung der 2 PzGr am 30.9.41“ see, pp. 164-65. „Heerestruppen der Pz.Gr.“ included **Nebelwerfer-Rgt. 53** (3 Abteilungen), **M.G.-Btn. 5** and **Fla-Btn. 602**.

VIII AK:

--Apparently, on **22.6.41**, this corps had **14** artillery btns and **8** engineering btns assigned directly to corps' HO. No other corps, or army, of the *Ostheer* had more than **7** artillery btns directly assigned. **VIII AK** also had **2** Nebelwerfer Btns assigned. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 20)

XII AK:

--On **22.6.41**, this corps had **3** Nebelwerfer btns – the largest number assigned to any army or corps HQ. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 20)

XXIV PzK:

--On **30.9.41**, the **24. PzK** possessed total of **184** tanks (operational number, I assume): **3. PD** = **91** tanks; **4. PD** = **93** tanks. (For „Gliederung des Pz.Korps“ on **30.9.41** see, „*Operationen der 2. Pz.-Armee*,“ **RH 21-2/910**, Anlage 1c, p. 166.)

XXXIX PzK:

--In text, I refer to this corps alternately as **XXXIX AK (mot.)** or as the **39. PzK**. Actually, it did not become **39. PzK** until **9 Jul 42**. (See, *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 126)

XXXXI PzK:

--**26.10.41**: An diesem Tage wurde Model Kommandierender General des **XXXXI. PzK**. Neuer Kdr. der **3. PD** wurde General Breith. Die effektive Befehlsuebernahme ueber das Korps erfolgte am **15.11.41** – bis zu diesem Datum fuehrte General Kirchner stellvertretend das Korps. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 57-58)

XXXXIII AK:

--For a detailed “Gliederung des Korps” in **Oct 41** see, „*Operationen der 2. Pz.-Armee*,“ **RH 21-2/910**, Anlage 1d, p. 167)

LIII AK:

--For a detailed “Gliederung des Korps” in **Oct 41** see, „*Operationen der 2. Pz.-Armee*,“ **RH 21-2/910**, Anlage 1d, p. 167)

LVI Pz.K:

--Remained a Mot. Army Corps until *renamed as a panzer corps on 1.3.42*. (*Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 357-58)

Inf-Rgt “Grossdeutschland:”

--Opel Blitz **3**-tonner Lkws waren fuer das vollmotorisierte Rgt. das Haupttransportmittel. (*Dr. H. Rehfeldt, Mit dem Eliteverband des Heeres „GD*,“ 81; for organization of “GD” by btn. see, pp 115-16)

--This elite army formation began as a Berlin guard company w/ ceremonial duties; by war's end, it had grown into a complete mechanized corps. Its name, "Greater Germany," indicated that its soldiers were selected from *all over the country* rather than from a specific *Wehrkreis* as w/ the rest of the army. In **1941**, it was much stronger than its official designation suggests: "**GD**" had three (3) inf.-btns, each with 3 line companies, a MG company and a heavy company. A **4th** btn grouped a light infantry gun, an antitank, a heavy infantry gun and an assault gun company; a reconnaissance, pioneer, signal and Flak companies made up the **5th** btn; and the regiment also had an artillery btn and a logistics column. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 24)

--Ohne Teilnahme am Polenfeldzug tritt das Rgt an der Spitze der Pz.Gr. v. Kleist innerhalb des **XIX AK**, Guderian, am **10.5.40** zum Westfeldzug an. Der Stahlhelm wird das Verbandsabzeichen an den Fahrzeugen. Im Balkanfeldzug **1941** besetzten Teile des Rgts Belgrad u. setzen dort den spaeteren als Soldatensender Belgrad beruehmt gewordenen Sender Belgrad in Betrieb (Lili-Marleen). Beim Unternehmen Barbarossa fuehrt der Ostfeldzug diese Eliteeinheit – immer verschiedenen Panzerdivisionen im Rahmen der Pz.Gr. Guderian unterstellt – ueber Slonim, Minsk, Borisow, Orsha u. Smolensk zunaechst bis Jelna. Die Kesselschlacht bei Kiev ist durch die Gefechte bei Konotop, Putiwl u. Romny gekennzeichnet. Der Angriff auf Moskau sieht das Rgt bei Orel, im Angriff auf Tula u. beim Versuch, Tula durch ostwaertige Umfassung von Norden her zu nehmen. Die Winterschlacht uebersteht das Rgt nach haertesten u. schwierigsten Rueckzugskaempfen im Raum Orel. Nach hohen Verlusten werden die noch verbliebenen zwei [2] Grenadierbataillone zu einem Bataillon zusammengelegt. Ab **1.4.42** erfolgt die Umgliederung u. Auffrischung des Rgts zur Inf.-Div. (mot) „*Grossdeutschland*.“ Gleichzeitig damit entsteht als erster Panzerverband die "Panzer-Abteilung Grossdeutschland." Die Abteilung wird mit **Pz III** u. **Pz IV**. . .ausgestattet. Im **Mai 42** tritt die Abteilung zu ihrer neuen Division, nachdem sie **1941** als I. Flammpanzerabteilung 100 schon mehrfach das Inf.-Rgt. „*Grossdeutschland*“ begleitete. (*H.-J. Jung, Pz.-Rgt. Grossdeutschland*, 7-8, 15)

Lehr Bde 900 (mot):

--In order to keep army branch-of-service schools current w/ developments in the field, instructors needed combat experience; thus, the Replacement Army cdr agreed to requests from these schools to create a unit to participate in *Barbarossa*. The bde consisted of a HQ, two (2) btns from the *Doeberitz* Infantry School, one each Panzer (using captured French tanks) and AT btns from the *Wuensdorf* Panzer School, an artillery btn and an assault gun battery from the *Jueterbog* Artillery School, plus medical and logistics support. Its supposed 3-month deployment in fact lasted until **Mar 42**, by which time it had been worn down to 2 companies and a few heavy wpns. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 24-25)

1. PD:

--**Gen.Fm. Model**, ueber 15 Monate Vorgesetzter der [**1. PD**] **1941/42**, bemerkte Ende **1942**: "...Die (**1. Pz**) Division wird in der Geschichte der **9. Armee** fortleben als die Pz.Div., die auch in schwerster Lage nie versagt hat." (*R. Stoves, I. Pz.-Div.*, 105)

--**1. PD** [Kriegsgliederung vor Russlandfeldzug]: The Division underwent reorganization between French and Russian campaigns. For example: Stab **1. Pz.Brig.**, **1940** aufgeloeset, trat mit **5./Pz.Rgt 1 1941** zur neuaufgestellten **18. PD** (Nehring). Weiter war

eines (1) der Pz.Regt'r an die neue **16. Pz.Div.** (Oberst Hube) abzugeben. Die Losentscheidung fiel auf das tapfere **2 Pz.Rgt.** Das Rgt verliess Herbst **1940** die **1. Pz.Div.** . . In Zinten [in Ostpreussen, where division's **1. Pz.Rgt.** stationed from **Sep 40**] erhielten die mittl. Pz.Kp. einheitlich je **17 Pz.Kpfgn.III (5 cm Kwk/Kz)**. **1 Pz.Rgt.** verfügte jetzt ueber rd. **145** [Panzer]: **68 Pz.III, 28 Pz.IV** and **8 Pz.Bef.Wg. III**.³⁰¹ Neuaufgestellt wurde **Schtz.Rgt. (mot) 113**. Neben **K. 1** gab es damit ab **Nov 40** zwei [2] mot. Schtz.Rgt'r zu je **2 Btn.** u. Regimentseinheiten (**SPW**). (*R. Stoves, 1. Pz.-Div., 105*)

--**1. PD** began „Barbarossa“ attached to Hoepner's **4 Pz.Gr.** (H.Gr.Nord) and **41. PzK.** In a Panzerschlacht on **25.6.41**, the division first encountered heavy Soviet tanks (Typ „**Kw II A**“ [52 t] and „**Kw II B**“ [57 t]: „Viele der „52-t“-Panzer – frontal von unseren Panzerkanonen nicht zu knacken – wurden von Einzelgeschuetzen, oft aus offener Feuerstellung, im direkten Beschuss ausser Gefecht gesetzt. . .Am **26.6.41** war aller Widerstand vor der Angriffsfront des **41. PzK** zusammengebrochen. Die ueberschweren sowj. Panzer hatten jedoch dem Selbstbewusstsein der Panzermaenner einen erheblichen Daempfer verpasst! Denn hier wurde klar, dass mit den vorhandenen Panzer- u. [Pak] des Heeres wenig Staat zu machen war! In **Jul-Aug 41**, division advances across the Duena and the Luga to the gates of Leningrad, storming the Duderhofer Hoehe on **9.9.41** and capturing Pkt. **167,2**: „Die Hoehe Pkt. **167,2** erlaubte mit Scherenfernrohren einen Blick ins Zentrum Leningrads. But the fighting between the Luga and Leningrad had cost the division heavy losses. In late **Sep 41** (map gives dates of **26.-27.9.41**) division transferred to sector of AGC to support attack on Moscow. (*R. Stoves, 1. Pz.-Div., 104-09*)

--Als die **1 PD** ab **25.12.42** nach **18** Monaten fast ununterbrochenen Einsaetzen zur Wiederauffrischung beim OB West herausgezogen wurde, rief ihr der OB der **9 Armee** zu, sie „habe auch in aussichtsloser Lage nie versagt!“ (*R. Stoves, 1. Pz.-Div., 111*)

2. PD:

--Division in area of Augsburg when war w/ Soviet Union begins. In **Jul 41**, divisions moves by rail transport across Prague to Galicia. At beginning of **Aug 41** division shifted to south France, north of Bordeaux: “Es wurde geraetselt, was diese Massnahme zu bedeuten haetten. Spanien? Gibraltar? Umruestung fuer Afrika?” In **Sep 41** decision to transfer division to Russia: “Aus Frankreich kommend, wurden die Raederteile der Division im Raum Grodno u. die Kettenteile vor Smolensk ausgeladen.“ Division then took part in Operation „Typhoon.“ (see, *Steinzer, 2. Pz.-Div., 109*)

3. PD:

--Tactical emblem of this Berlin division was a **bear**. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander, 106*)

--**22.6.41**: **3. PD** entered the Soviet Union w/ **198** battleworthy tanks – **58** Mark IIs, **108** Mark IIIs, and **32** Mark IVs – and **11** armored command vehicles, which was almost exactly the average strength of the other **16** Pz.-Divs. moving forward at the same time. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander, 112*)

³⁰¹ **Note:** Division also apparently had ca. **40 Pz IIs**. (112)

4. PD:

--The **4. PD** was much weaker than **3. PD** and my company [i.e., **1./SR 12**] w/ its **16** APCs was the only armored rifle coy in the whole division. Shortly before **22.6.41** the coy received, in addition to its normal equipment, three [**3**] AT guns (**3.7** cm) which were mounted on the APCs of the three platoon cdrs. This made the vehicles somewhat noseheavy, but it was a very welcome addition to our firepower. With the half-track and light armored APCs the coy was better off than the other coys of the regiment, especially in view of the bad road conditions. This resulted in a lower rate of losses, even though the coy had more combat days than the other coys. . . During the early months of **1941**, **4. PD** remained in the area of Bordeaux, where all units had to undergo rather rough training involving, in part, long foot marches for days w/ full equipment, etc. This turned out to be very fruitful for us given the conditions we would encounter in Russia. (*Brig.-Gen. R. Koch-Erpach, "4. PD's Crossing of the Berezina River," in: Glantz, Initial Period of the War, 398-400*)

5. PD:

--This unit had been earmarked for the North Africa campaign. According to *Skorzeny*, when they arrived at front in Russia they "had not even time to change the sand color of their vehicles to the *spotted camouflage common in the east.*" (*For Germany, Otto Skorzeny, 112*)

--It looked as if we would see action soon; there was *talk of our going to Africa*. This rumor was confirmed the day we were issued tropical uniforms, helmets, and tents. Our tanks got tropical paint jobs and new cooling systems. But then, one fine day in June 1941, we got news on the radio that Germany was taking on the Russians, too. (*Karl Rupp, in: Voices from the Third Reich, 127*)

--**5. PD** used horses and sleds for transportation in the winter. (As did virtually all of the panzer/motorized units). In fact, horse-drawn columns considered the only certain means of supply during the winter. (*DiNardo, 48*)

6. ID:

--**Dec 43**: Der Generalstabschef des Heeres, Gen.Obst. Zeitler, hat dem zu unserer Division gehoerenden **G.R. 18** als einem Regiment der drei besten Divisionen des Feldheeres im Osten **250** Weihnachtspakete als Anerkennung zugewiesen. (*F. Belke, 6. ID, „Infanterist, 99*)

6. PD:

--**1939-45**: Fuer den Zeitraum bis zum **27.11.42** gibt es nur die geschaeztzte Zahl von rd. **6000** Mann [Verluste seit **1939**], so dass die Gesamtverluste der Division im Kriege rd. **41,000** betragen. (Gesamtverluste vom **27.11.42** bis **30.4.45** = **34,962** = Tote, Verwundete, Vermisste, Kranke). Werden die Kranken davon abgezogen, ergibt sich fuer Verwundete, Tote u. Vermisste die Zahl **30,000** – sie liegt vermutlich noch hoeher, da die Verluste der letzten Tage nicht mehr gezaehlt werden konnten. Die durchschnittliche Divisionsstaerke betrug **10,000**. (*H. Scheibert, 6. Pz.-Div., 159*)

--**6. PD: 22.12.41-15.1.42**: Abwehrkaempfe in der Rusa – Wolokolamsk – Stellung.

16.1.-14.3.42: Abwehrkaempfe in der Winterstellung Juchnoff – Gshatsk – Subzoff
5.3.-18.4.42: Winterschlacht um Rshew u. Sytschewka. Abwehrkaempfe in der Winterstellung der **9. Armee**. **19.4.-10.5.42:** Stellungskaempfe im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte.
Fruehling '42: Verwendung im Operationsgebiet Oberkommando West: Auffrischung um Paris u. in der Bretagne. (H. Scheibert, 6. Pz.-Div., 90)

--This division had a single tank regiment – **Pz. Rgt. 11**, consisting of three btns of four coys each. The predominant tank model was the light **PzKw 35t** – an older vehicle of Czech manufacture that was *no longer in production*. Only the 4th Coy of each btn. was provided w/ some **PzKw IVs** and a few **PzKw IIIs**. From the outset, his awareness of this weakness all but forced *Maj. Gen. Franz Landgraf*, the division cdr, to forbid the commitment of all panzers *en masse* and instead to employ them in conjunction w/ our infantry btns. The **6. PD** was the *only one in the German army* still equipped w/ those obsolete tanks (which entailed different combat methods on part of the division). (Newton, Panzer Ops Raus, 11)

--**31.10.41:** *General Raus* reports on state of **6. PD's** armor: „The average distance driven by our Panzers was **11,500 km** for PzKW II; **12,500** for PzKw 35t; **11,000** for PzKw IV; and **3,200** for command tanks. The special situation in regard to repair of the PzKw 35t is well known. It is indeed deemed necessary to point out that repairs can be accomplished only by *cannibalizing* other Panzers because there are *no longer any spare parts* for the PzKw 35t. This means that after retrieval of the Panzers that are scattered around the terrain, a *maximum of 10 can actually be repaired* out of the **41** PzKw 35ts reported as needing repair. The PzKw 35ts can no longer be rebuilt. All the components are worn out. (Newton, Panzer Ops Raus, 88)

7. PD:

--[Showalter commentary: “The German tanks depended for their early successes on *mobility, maneuverability, and accurate shooting* far more than on armor or firepower. The 25th Pz.Rgt was at this stage of war still equipped largely with **PzKpfw38(t)**, a Czech design taken over by the *Wehrmacht*. Weighing only ten tons and armed w/ a 37-mm gun, it was fast, handy, and mechanically reliable. The regiment had a few Mark IVs, whose 75-mm gun was a close-support wpn w/ a barrel so short it was *derisively dubbed the “cigar butt.”* But the German crews were superbly trained...Their commanders imbued with the spirit of *mission tactics* and conditioned to taking the initiative instead of waiting for orders. A month of unbroken victory *had generated confidence amounting to arrogance at all levels.*” (K. Fuchs, 118)

--**7 PD**, which had been commanded by Erwin Rommel during campaign in the west in **1940**, spearheaded drive of Hoth's Panzer Group in opening weeks of *Barbarossa*. Its tanks (vehicles) bore the division's *yellow runic symbol*. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 52)

9. PD:

--**Jun-Sep 41:** The division fought in the Ukraine w/ **1 Pz.Gr.** Pushes thru the Stalin Line in early **Jul 41**. Takes part in encirclement battle of Uman. In **Aug 41** in oppressive heat advances into the great Dnieper bend SE of Kiev: „Die andere Seite dieses **Aug 41** zeigt in wogenden Kornfeldern eine schier unendliche Weite – Sommer, Sonne u. blauschwarze Erde . . . Durch diese Stille droehnt der Vorstoss der **1 Pz.Gr.**“ End of **Aug**

41 – 9 PD attacks northwards toward Dnjepropetrowsk: „Am **25.8.41** nimmt die **9. Schtz.Brig.** den Suedteil der Stadt.“ Thereafter, takes part in Kiev Kesselschlacht: „Sie vereinigte sich am **15.9.41** als Spitze der **1 PzGr** mit der von Norden entgegenstossenden **2 PzGr** u. vollendete die Einschliessung von **5** sowjet. Armeen. (C.H. Hermann, 9. Pz.-Div.,73-87)

--**Oct 41-Mar 42**: Following battle of Kiev, **9. PD** advances north to play a roll in Operation „Typhoon.“ Die Division sollte – jetzt im Verband des **XXXXVIII PzK** – nach einem Scheinangriff auf Sumy die rechte Flanke der auf Moskau stossenden **2 Pz Armee** sichern. Doch die Herbstschlamperperiode erschwerte diesen Auftrag, bis die Gesamtentwicklung Anfang **Nov 41** zum Abdrehen der **9. PD** aus nordoestlicher in ostwaertige Richtung zum Sprung auf Woronesh verfuehrte, nachdem Kursk am **2.11.41** in ihre Hand gefallen war. Doch dieser „letzte Sprung“ lief sich am Monatsende in unueberwindbarem Feindwiderstand am Tim fest. Erbitterte Winterkaempfe ostw. Schtschigry waren bis Anfang **Mar 42** die Folge. Aber unerschuetterbar hielt die Div. ihren Verteidigungsabschnitt. (C.H. Hermann, 9. Pz.-Div., 87)

11. PD:

--**11. PD** Kommandeur. Div.-Gef.Std., **8.8.41**. Durch die Komp.-Chefs bekanntzugeben! „Soldaten der **11. PD**! Der erste Abschnitt des russ. Feldzuges ist beendet. Nach schweren, harten Kaempfen, z.T. gegen die besten Truppen der roten Armee, ist in der Ukraine ein grosser Sieg errungen. An diesem Erfolg ist die **11. PD** massgeblich beteiligt. In den ersten Wochen meist **70 km** der uebrigen Front voraus, hat die Division die Umfassungsbewegung, die zur Einschliessung u. Vernichtung der roten **6. u. 12. Armee** gefuehrt hat, eingeleitet [i.e., Kesselschlacht bei Uman]. . . Der grosste Erfolg bleibt aber unser Angriff auf die Stalinlinie, die wir als erste Division des dt. Ostheeres bei Miropol durchbrochen haben. . . Ein jeder von Euch hat durch Tapferkeit u. treueste Pflichterfuellung an diesen Erfolgen seinen Anteil. Wuerdig reihen sich Eure Taten an die Eurer Vaeter im Weltkrieg an. . . Heil dem Fuehrer,“ gez. Cruewell, Generalmajor. (G. Schrodek, 11. Pz.-Div., 216)³⁰²

14. ID (mot.):

--**17.9.41**: Am 17. Sep. wurde die [**14. ID mot.**], die in den letzten Wochen *erhebliche Verluste erlitten hatte*, aus der HKL herausgezogen u. zur Auffrischung in den Raum bei Welisch verlegt...25 Tage ununterbrochenen Einsatzes lagen hinter uns.³⁰³ Wir hatten waehrend dieser Zeit keine Gelegenheit gefunden, uns zu rasieren oder umzuziehen. Ein Teil der Kameraden, vor allem die aelteren Jahrgaenge, trugen einen *Vollbart*. Unsere oft durchnaessten, dreckigen Uniformen waren immer wieder am Koerper getrocknet. Die *Stiefel* hatten sich dadurch ganz dem Fuss angeglichen u. waren so erhaertet, dass wir grosse Muehe hatten, sie von den Fuessen abzustreifen...Die 10 Tage Ruhe [for *Martin's coy* in the village of Nowonytschi] dienten durchweg der Ueberholung von Maschinen, Waffen, Geraet u. Bekleidung...Ich erhielt das EK 2 u. wurde zum *Gefreiten* befoerdert. (H. Martin, *Weit war der Weg*, **14. ID (mot.)**, 57-59)

³⁰² **Note:** A reminder that the German *Landser* in summer of **1941** was indeed following in his father's footsteps.

³⁰³ **Note:** Here I believe the author is referring specifically to his own company of the *Panzerjaegerabt. (mot.) 14*, but probably applies to entire division.

--**4.-19.10.41:** *Panzerjaeger* coy of **14. ID (mot.)** quartered in *Nowonytschi* (near *Welisch*) since 17 Sep 41. On **4.10.41**, they begin to advance in support of Operation „*Taifun*“ as part of the **56. Pz.Kp.** On **19.10.41**, in the morning, they reach the city of *Sytchewka* and cross the railline *Wjasma-Rshew*; in early afternoon they pass the city of *Subzow* on the Volga. Eventually, they reach village of *Pokrow*, where they take up quarters and remain for some time (*Schlammperiode* has finally brought advance to a halt). From 4-19 Oktober, company had advanced some **300 km.** (*H. Martin, Weit war der Weg, 14. ID (mot.)*, 60-66)

18. ID (mot.):

--„Die mot. Infanteriedivision damaliger Gliederung trug ihren Namen zu Recht. Sie verfügte noch nicht ueber gep. Fahrzeuge. Die Infanterie wurde auf Lastwagen transportiert, Gleiskettenmaschinen zogen die Geschuetze der Artillerie und Panzerabwehr. *Gelaendegaengige Fahrzeuge gab es nur in bescheidenem Umfang.*“ (Ulrich de Maiziere. *In der Pflicht*, 64)

--„Die Division musste sich *mit mehr als hundert Kaffahrzeugtypen unterschiedlicher Herstellerfirmen plagen*, meist in *handelsueblicher Ausstattung* fuer dt. oder franz. Strassen gebaut. Sie waren den russ. Verhaeltnissen nicht gewachsen. (In April 1941, division to receive some 2000 vehicles from french manufacturers in area of Paris—*Renault, Citroen, Peugeot, Simca*, etc. (Ulrich de Maiziere. *In der Pflicht*, 65-7)

18. PD:

--In his *Tagebuch*, Lt G. Kreuter describes aquisition of vehicles for his Inf.Gesch.Zug prior to start of *Barbarossa*. Vehicles not acquired until May-Jun 41. To pull his s.IG. he got two 6-ton Renaults—*die reinsten Moebelwagen* [furniture or removal vans!]. Vehicles then modified in workshop so that “*sie einigermassen fuer uns brauchbar sind.*” See entries for 3.5.41, 23.5.41, 27.-28.5.41, 9.-12.6.41. (*Tagebuch G. Kreuter, SR 101/18. PD*)

--**Apr/May 41:** According to *Wolfgang Paul*, both *Panzergenerals Guderian* and *Nehring* deeply concerned about the lack of motorization of **18. PD** on eve of *Barbarossa*. About April 1941, Guderian visited the 18. PD at *Truppenuebungsplatz Milowitz* (near Prague), where Nehring reported on the “*unerhoert schlechte Ausstattung mit Kraftfahrzeugen.*“ (Bisher war nur eine *Schuetzenkompanie*, die **2./S.R. 52**, behelfsmaessig motorisiert.) In Mai, Nehring visited Guderian, „*der ueber die fehlenden Kraftfahrzeuge ‚geradezu erschuettert‘ ist.*“ Dann laesst Guderian Nehring wissen, der wieder nach *Milowitz* gefahren ist, dass die Division bis **30. Mai** die Kraftfahrzeuge haben werde. Sie seien allerdings *in Frankreich abzuholen* u. kaemen aus der *franzoesischen Automobilproduktion*. Nehring malt sich aus, dass er diese *handelsueblichen Fahrzeuge* erst fuer den Truppenegebrauch herrichten u. auf eine Divisionsuebung u. sonstige mot. Uebungen in groesseren Verbaenden solange verzichten muesse, bis die Division voll motorisiert sei...Die Nervositaet im Div.-Stab wuchs. Nehring war bekannt, dass *andere neue Panzerdivisionen laengst mit Kfz ausgestattet waren.* Aehnlich erging es nur der neuen **20. Pz.Div.**...Anfang Juni erhielt die **18. PD** die Masse ihrer Kfz in *Paris*, es waren *franzoesische Typen*, die fuer Russland ungeeignet waren. Auf ihnen fuhr die Truppe aus ihren Aufstellungsraeumen sofort in die Bereitstellungsraeume ostwaerts von Warschau. (*W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 114-15)

--**17.6.41:** Besprechung beim Kp.-Chef. Es soll bald fort u. losgehen!! *Ich habe starke Bedenken wegen der nicht gelaendegaengigen Fahrzeuge!* (Tagebuch Kreuter)

--**22.6.41:** Gen.Maj. Nehring ging mit **17 174** Mann seiner Division in diesen Feldzug; sie kamen vor allem aus *Sachsen* u. aus dem *Sudetenland*; die **II./Pz.AR 88** stammte aus *Rostock*, die **III./Pz.AR 88** aus dem *Rheinland*; die Panzerbesetzungen kamen aus ganz Deutschland. (W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 117)

--**Jun/Jul 41:** Division is at the „Spitze“ of Guderian’s Pz.Gr. 2. Battles at *Slonim, Baranowitschi, Nieswicz, Wolma*. Advances to *Minsk* in 2 *Kampfgruppen*. Advances w/ tanks and mounted infantry over **100** km to take *Borissow* on the *Beresina* in a *coup-de-main* (by **1.7.41**). Advanced to *Dniepr* by *Orscha*. Then shifted southward, crossing *Dniepr* at *Kopys*. (Noch immer als Spitze des Panzerkorps u. der *Panzergruppe 2 Guderians*.) Then sees difficult combat in forests near *Gusino* and *Krassny*, on the *Autobahn* directly SW of *Smolensk* (**15.-20.7.41**). **Nehring** faehrt im Befehlspanzer immer wieder nach vorn, um der Truppe nahe zu sein. Damit ist aber die Aufgabe der **18. PD** als *Speerspitze* vorlaeufig beendet. Die **29. ID (mot.)** wird vorgezogen u. auf *Smolensk* angesetzt. Waehrend der Kaempfe im *Jelnja-Bogen* in der zweiten Haelfte des Juli 1941 deckte die **18. PD**, verstaerkt durch das Rgt. „*Grossdeutschland*“, selbstaendig die Flanke der Panzergruppe 2 gegen eine Umfassung von *Roslawl* her. Die **18. PD** bezog am **28.7.41** einen *Auffrischungsraum* bei *Potschinok* auf dem *Hoehenruecken* von *Smolensk*. (W. Paul, Pz.-Gen. Nehring, 118-21)

--**17.7.41:** *Von meinen 53 Kfz. die in meiner Kp. liefern sind 20 in der Werkstatt*, 15 davon sind nicht mehr zu reparieren. Der Rest mach aber auch nicht mehr lange mit! (Tagebuch Kreuter)

19. PD:

--**22.6.41:** Das Pz.Rgt. der **19. PD** verfuegte ueber **42** Panzer IV, **102** Panzer III, **9** Panzer III (Nachr.) u. **20** Panzer II. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 109; also, *Hoth, Panzeroperationen*, 44)

20. PD:

--**22.6.41:** Die Schuetzenfahrzeuge der neuen Pz.-Div. [bei der **3. Pz.Gr.**], besonders die der **20. PD**, waren fuer oestl. Wege wenig geeignet, da sie aus ziviler franzoesischer Lieferung stammten. Im besonderen fehlte es an gelaendegaengigen Kraftwagen. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 109; also, *Hoth, Panzeroperationen*, 44)

--**22.6.41:** Mit welcher Panzerausstattung zog das **Pz.Rgt. 21** in den Russlandfeldzug? Es war wie folgt: **Pz. I (35), Pz. II (25), Pz. III (105), Pz. IV (25) = 190** insgesamt. Alle mit Benzinmotoren. **Pz. IV** Reichweite = **320** km. (*K.W. Andres, Panzersoldaten im Russlandfeldzug*, 21)

29. ID (mot.):

--**29. ID (mot.):** Guderian is fulsome in his praise of this division’s performance in opening weeks of „*Barbarossa*.“ Writes in his memoirs that it was „magnificently led“ (p 174). Division cdr was General von Boltentstern.

--Division known as „the Hawks“ from its divisional tactical sign. (*P. Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 49)

--**29. ID (mot.):** Die Division wurde **1941** im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront eingesetzt u. nahm nach Sperr- u. Sicherungsaufgaben bei *Zelwa*, *Bialystock* u. *Kojdanow/Stolpce* u. dem Durchbruch durch die *Stalinlinie* die erbittert verteidigte Stadt *Smolensk*. Nach dem Vorstoss ueber die *Desna* u. harten Kaempfen am Brueckenkopf von *Nowgorod-Ssewersk* sowie am Kessel v. *Brjansk* stoppte die Schlammperiode im **Okt 41** jede weitere Bewegung. Nach der erzwungenen Ruhe im Raum *Karatschew* stiess die Division im **Nov/Dec 41** bis ostwaerts *Tula* vor u. zog sich dann nach Scheitern des Grossangriffs auf Moskau unter schweren Verlusten bei bitterer Kaelte in den Raum u. *Mzensk* zurueck, wo eine Verteidigungsstellung an der Suscha bezogen u. bis zur Abloesung im **Mai 42** gehalten wurde. Dann verlegte die Division nach Sueden in den Raum *Charkow-Bjelgorod*, erzwang nach sturmischen Vormarsch den Uebergang ueber den *Don* bei *Zymljanskaja* u. stiess durch die *Kalmueckensteppe* in Richtung Kaukasus vor. Die Division wurde dann auf Stalingrad angesetzt. Ende **Jan 43** gingen die Reste der **29. ID (mot.)** befehlsge maess mit der **6. Armee** unter. Die Reste der Division traten den bitteren Weg in jahrelange Gefangenschaft an, aus der nur wenige in die Heimat zurueckkehrten. (*F. Goette, Die 29. Falke-Division*, 64-65)

31. ID:

--Und noch etwas geschach kurz vor Kriegsbeginn. Die ungeheuer grosse Zahl von Panzern beim Russen u. auch die Tatsache, dass **KW 1** Typen in Finnland aufgetaucht waren, ermoeeglichten es, dass eine neue Pak konstruiert u. geliefert wurde. Das Kaliber war **5 cm**, der ganze Bau war leichter, die Kanone war nicht so schwer. Da wir aber eine Inf.-Div. waren u. die Inf.-Kdr. bei uns in der Division den Ton angaben, kamen diese **16** neuen Geschuetze zu je **4** in die Inf.-Rgtmer zu den **14. Pz.Jg.Kp.** Wir durften mit den „alten Spritzen“ von **3,7 cm** in den Krieg ziehen. (*Dr Bunke [Pz.Jg.Abt. 31], Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 200-01)

35. ID:

--[Re: Origin of divisional symbol: a fish!]: “Nach dem Westfeldzug im Herbst **1940** wurden die Nummern der Divisionen aus Geheimhaltungsgruenden abgeschafft; sie waren durch Symbole zu ersetzen. Hierzu Anweisung des **Ia** der Division an Ia/Mess: Sofortige Schaffung eines entsprechenden Zeichens: Bedingung: Jeder Soldat, auch der ungeschickteste, musste es im Einsatz zuwegen bringen koennen, gleichgueltig, was ihm dazu zur Verfuegung steht: Farbe, Kreide, Kohle, ein Stueck Lehm oder sonst etwas!

Angaben: Marschrichtung der Division oder Richtung zum Divisionsgefechtsstand u. den Gefechtsstaenden der Einheiten. Warum nun aber gerade ein Fische? Das Symbol ergab sich zwangslaeufig aus dem gerade stattfindenden Wechsel in der Fuehrung der Division von General Reinhard auf General „Fischer“ v. Weikersthal. (*Kameradendienst 35 e.V., 35. Inf.-Div.*, 72)

--**35. ID** would fight with H.Gr.Mitte to the bitter end – until at least **Feb 45**: Smolensk, Wiasma, Moscow (Klin), Gshatsk, Jelnja, Mogilew, Bobruisk, Brest, Modlin, etc. In **Apr 45**, russ. Gefangenschaft bei Danzig u. auf Hela. (see, www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de)

78. ID:

The Swabians of **78. ID**, whose tactical sign was Ulm Cathedral and the iron hand of Goetz v. Berlichingen. (*P. Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 328)

86. ID:

--**86. Infanterie-Division** was formed **26 Aug 39** as part of the **3. Welle** (wave). It was disbanded **Nov 43** after suffering heavy losses on the Eastern Front. The divisional staff, signals and supply units were used to form the [361. Infanterie-Division](#) while other surviving elements formed **Divisions-Gruppe 86** which was assigned to [Korps-Abteilung E](#).

--**Commanders:**

Gen. d. Inf. Joachim Witthoeft (**1 Sep 39 – 01 Jan 42**)
Gen. d. Art. Helmuth Weidling (**1 Jan 42 – 15 Okt 43**)

--**Order of battle**

167. Infantry Regiment
184. Infantry Regiment
216. Infantry Regiment
186. Artillery Regiment
186. Panzerjäger Battalion
186. Reconnaissance Battalion
186. Signals Battalion
186. Pioneer Battalion
Supply Troops

--**Notable members**

Rudolf-Christoph Freiherr von Gersdorff (Active in the resistance against Hitler and also the one who in 1943 discovered the mass graves from the Soviet massacre of Polish officers in the Katyn forest)

--**Reference material on this unit**

? - *Der Ostfeldzug der 86. Rheinisch-Westfaelischen Inf.Division (28.VI.1941 - 4.XI. 1943)*³⁰⁴

131. ID:

--Die Division hatte einen ausgezeichneten Kampftruf. . . Allerdings hatte sie einen Div.-Kdr., der kampfestoll war. Sein allgegenwaertiger Ausspruch im Kampfgetuemmel lautete: “*Es ist noch kein Brisen im Bett gestorben.*” Dieser Satz stimmte, den all

³⁰⁴ **Note:** This is E. Meinecke’s unpublished memoir, I assume. Actual source for this entry on **86. ID** is the “Axis History Factbook,” at: <http://www.axishistory.com>.

seine Vorfahren waren in irgendwelchen Kriegen gefallen. Auch er fiel in diesem Winterkrieg spaeter noerdlich von Kaluga. (Dr E. Bunke, *Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 475)

252. ID:

--The „Oak Leaf“ division from Silesia. (P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 329)

--**Okt 41:** Die **252. ID** wurde dem **IX AK** unterstellt u. blieb fuer die naechsten **3** Jahre im noerdl. Teil der H.Gr.Mitte. Das Schicksal, das sie weiter suedlich ereilt haette, ist inzwischen bekannt [*Zusammenbruch der H.Gr.Mitte*]. Am **30 Okt 41** meldete die Division folgende Gefechtsstaerke:

1) Durchschnittsgefechtsstaerken der Schuetzenkompanien:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| a) Gewehrtraeger | 54 | |
| b) l.MG mit voller Bedienung | 8 | |
| c) l.GrW mit voller Bedienung | 2 | (Anm.: Kal. 5 cm) |

2) Zahl der SchtzKpen: je Rgt **9**

3) Einsatzfaehige schwere Inf.-Waffen

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------|
| a) s.MG mit voller Bedienung | 30) | |
| b) s.GrW mit voller Bedienung | 14) | |
| c) l.IG mit voller Bedienung | 6) | <i>je Inf.Rgt.</i> |
| s.IG mit voller Bedienung | 2) | |
| d) Pak 3,7 cm | 11) | |

(**Note:** Figures in „3“ are per inf.-rgt!)

4) Zahl der einsatzfaehigen Geschuete der Div.-Artillerie

- | | |
|---------|-----------|
| a) l.FH | 34 |
| b) s.FH | 11 |

252. ID Ia

(Source: [BA-]MA RH 26-252/92; courtesy of A. v. Garn)

--**Okt/Nov 41:** Inzwischen hatte das **OKH** am **15 Okt 41** die Aufloesung eines Rgts nach Entscheidung der Division, u. ebenso der **28. ID** die Abgabe eines Rgts an die **252. ID** befohlen. Das **IR 452** wurde aufgeloeset u. ueberwiegend dem **IR 7** eingegliedert, das Anfang **Nov 41** nach Gshatsk zugefuehrt wurde. Zum **IX AK** gehoerten (von rechts) die **78., 87. u. 252. ID**. Hier einige Zitate aus dem Buch seines Kom.-Gens. (Hermann Geyer: Das IX AK im Ostfeldzug 1941):

Am besten dran war die uns neu unterstellte **252. ID** unter Gen. v. Boehm-Bezing. Nur ein kleiner Teil der Division kam vor Angriffsbeginn (d.i. der **19.11.41**) in Beruehrung mit dem Feind. . . Hatte sie seit dem **22. Jun 41** „nur“ **1500** Mann Verluste gehabt u. wurde durch Zufuehrung eines aktiven Rgts. verstaerkt.

(Source: H. Geyer, 154; courtesy of A. v. Garn, **252. ID**)

1.8: German Losses (Personnel/Weapons/Equipment):

Note: Rund **5.3** Millionen Maenner [i.e., Soldaten] sind nach neuesten Schaetzungen durch die Kampfhandlungen ums Leben gekommen. (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 333)

Militaerische Verluste (Tote)

1939-40	102 000
1941	357 000
1942	572 000
1943	812 000
1944	1 802 000
1945³⁰⁵	1 674 000

(*R. Overmans, Deutsche militaerische Verluste*, 241; gleaned from, *R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 124)

1.8.1: Previous Campaigns (1939-41):

Sep 39 – Jun 41: *Wehrmacht's* losses in **21** months of war had, by standards of 20th Century bloodletting, been *inconsiderable*: in Poland **17,000** dead and missing; in Scandinavia **3600**; in France and Low Countries **45,000**; in Yugoslavia **151**; in Greece and Crete less than **5000**. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 173)

***Poland* (37-day campaign):**

8 082 KIA
27 278 wounded
5 029 missing

40 389 / 1090 per day³⁰⁶

***France* (42-day campaign):**

29 640 KIA
163 213 total casualties

3886 per day³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ **Note:** This final figure for **1945** and after the war.

³⁰⁶ Source: *Oxford Companion to World War II*. Keegan gives figure of **13 981** for German killed in action (KIA) in Poland. William Shirer gives figures of: **10 572 KIA / 30 322 wounded / 3 400 missing**. Shirer says these were the *official German figures* at the time. Thus, figure of about 10 000 for KIA seems reasonable.

Total German Army casualties for French campaign were **26,972** killed; **113,152** wounded; **13,152** missing. This was a very modest cost compared to fearful bloodletting of WWI. *Panzer* divisions in particular were spared heavy losses. (*Das Deutsche Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Vol. 2, p 307; quoted in: *Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 109)

1.8.2: Aggregate Losses (Barbarossa):

Note: According to *David Glantz*, **80%** of German military losses in World War II were on the Ostfront. Glantz gives figure of **10,758,000** for German losses in the east, but not clear how he arrives at this figure. (*Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 10-11)

Note: From compiled data, it *appears* that German daily losses were actually *much higher* in first few months of campaign (daily ave. of well over 7000 men) that during the fall/winter of 1941/42 (daily ave. of less than 3000). See below. (See also, *R. Overmans, Deutsche militaerische Verluste*, Tab. **60**, 279.)

Note: Vom Beginn des Ostkrieges bis Ende **Jan 42** war rund ein Drittel der Mannschaften des Ostheeres ausgefallen: eine Million Tote, Verwundete, Kranke u. Vermisste. Nur die Haelfte konnten ersetzt werden. Der Panzerbestand war zu **90%** ausgefallen (**3254** Fahrzeuge). Die Luftwaffe hatte **130%** der urspruenglich vorhandenen Flugzeuge verloren. Aus der laufenden Produktion konnten die Verluste nur teilweise wieder aufgefuellt werden. *Die Wehrmacht war insgesamt erheblich geschwaecht worden u. wuerde ihre alte Staerke nie wieder erreichen.*

Auf der anderen Seite war die Rote Armee schwer angeschlagen. Sie hatte Verluste durch rund **3.3** Millionen Gefangene u. eine unbekante Zahl [?] von Toten. **2.2** Millionen Verwundete u. Kranke kamen hinzu. . . Das Verhaeltnis der Verluste auf deutscher u. sowjetischer Seite laesst sich grob auf **1:10** schaezten. Die Wehrmacht *hatte den Sieg in greifbarer Naeh*,³⁰⁸ obwohl sie meist aus einer personellen u. materiellen Unterlegenheit heraus kaempfen musste. (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 115-17)

22.6.-31.12.41: Losses of *Ostherr* as determined by OKH/GenQu/Abt. I – broken out by month (KIA, wounded, missing) w/ totals for entire period. (Compare w/ figures in *R. Overmans*.) Total losses (all categories) thru **31 Dec 41: 830 903**, of whom **26 755** were officer casualties. Overall losses were highest in **Jul-Aug 41**; lowest in **Nov-Dec 41**. (For details see, *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1120-21)³⁰⁹

22.6.41-31.3.42: In the five [5] months from **22 Jun – 26 Nov 41**, **187,000** men had been permanently lost to the German armed forces over the whole of the Eastern Front in killed and missing. The wounded for this period amounted to **555,000**, of which **2/3** might be expected to return to duty. The killed and missing for the whole of the theater during during the period of the

³⁰⁷ Source: *Oxford Companion to World War II*. *Keegan* gives figure of **27 000** German KIA in France. *Martin Gilbert* says **45 000** KIA. A German source gives ca. **30 000** KIA. So, ca. 30,000 seems reasonably accurate. Figure of 163,000 casualties over 42 days—or 3886 per day—close to German losses per day during first six months of *Barbarossa*.

³⁰⁸ **Note:** I might seriously question this assumption.

³⁰⁹ **Note:** Compares losses in East w/ those of six-week campaign in the West in **1940 = 154 754** all categories. (1121)

retreat, from **27 Nov 41 – 31 Mar 42**, were put at **108,000** and the wounded at **268,000** – a total of **376,000** men. To this figure, however, must be added **268,000 frostbite cases** and over ¼ million other sick, mainly from exhaustion, exposure, typhus, scarlet fever, jaundice, diphtheria and stomach and skin complaints. These were caused by the terrible conditions under which the forward troops lived, for nearly all these casualties occurred not in the rear areas, but among the divisional and corps formations. . . The figures tell the story for themselves. The actual battle casualties of **376,000** for the four [4] months of the winter withdrawal were significantly lower than those for the five [5] summer and autumn months of **1941**. But for every battle casualty during the great retreat two men were evacuated on account of frostbite or serious sickness, and this brought the total fallout for the period to over **900,000** men – more than the German Army could afford. Only ½ of the **900,000** could be replaced and the overall deficiency in the East still stood at **625,000** men at the beginning of **Apr 42**. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 291-92; also *Halder KTB; KTB OKW*, Vol. I, 489; *Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer*, Vol. 3, Table 65)

Jun 41-Aug 44: In the three (3) years between Jun 41 and May 44, the average rate of loss for the *Wehrmacht* was almost **60,000** men killed every month on the eastern front. In the final **12** months of the war, the blood-letting reached truly extraordinary proportions. In **Jun–Jul–Aug 44** the fatal losses were, respectively: **140,000+**, **170,000** and nearly **280,000**. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 514; also, *Overmans*, 277)³¹⁰

Jun 41-Mar 45: The German Army suffered **6.1** million casualties on the Russian front through Mar 45; twice the number of men who took part in the initial invasion and **80%** of German casualties over that period. (*O. Bartov, Hitler's Army*; quoted in: *C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 205, f.n. 1)

Gesamtverluste an der Ostfront

Monat/Jahr	Tote
06/1941	25,000
07/1941	63,099
08/1941	46,066
09/1941	51,033
10/1941	41,099
11/1941	36,000
12/1941	40,198
Summe =	302,000
01/1942	48,165
02/1942	44,099
03/1942	44,132
04/1942	23,066
05/1942	38,099

³¹⁰ **Note:** Tooze gleaned these figures from R. Overmans's *Deutsche mil. Verluste*. Since the figures record only *fatal* casualties, they seriously underestimate Germany's actual losses due to injury, illness and capture. (755, f.n. 1)

(Overmans, *Deutsche militaerische Verluste*, 277. Figures includes “Gefallene“ and “Verscholen.“ Does *not* include those who may have perished in Soviet captivity, a number which, in any case, would have been small in this period. **Note:** Compare Overmans’ figure of **KIA for Jun 41** to those of Halder below!)

22.-30.6.41: Verluste 22./30.6 insgesamt **41 087 = 1,64%** (bei 2,5 Mill. Iststaerke). Tot: **524** Offz., **8362** UOffz. und Mannschaften; Verw. **966** Offz., **28 528** UOffz u. Mannschaften. Offz. Vergl: Verwund. **3,3%** (Westfeldzug 3,1), tot **6,2%** (Westfeldzug 4,85), vermisst **1,5%** (Westfeld-zug 2%). (Halder *KTB*, 3.7.41)

Jun-Sep 41: By third week of campaign, total German casualties had *exceed those of the entire French campaign of 1940*. Officers were perishing during this initial period at the rate of **500** per week (**524** died between **22.6.41** and the beginning of July), w/ **1540** officer casualties occurring in the first 7 days of the offensive. This figure represented the combined officer establishments of three [3] German inf.-divs. (The establishment of one inf.-div. was **518** officers). By the end of **Sep 41**, the Germans had lost **518,807** casualties, or over three [3] times the losses suffered during the six-week French campaign. (R. Kerhsahw, *War Without Garlands*, 169; also, *KTB OKW*, Vol. II, *Anlage Jan 42*, „Personelle Verluste,“ 1120-21)

Jun-Aug 41: Die Verluste an Menschen u. Material ueberstiegen alle Erwartungen. In den *ersten acht (8) Kriegswochen* zaehlte die *Wehrmacht* mehr als **100,000** Gefallene u. Vermisste, ebenso viele wie in allen vorangegangenen Feldzuegen zusammen. Anfang **Aug 41** fehlten in **14** Divisionen mehr als **4000** Mann; in **40** Divisionen mehr als **3000** Mann; in **30** mehr als **2000** Mann; u. in **58** knapp **2000** Mann. Der eintreffende Personalersatz konnte diese Verluste nicht ausgleichen. (F. Seidler, *Hilfstruppen*, 56)

Jun-Sep 41: There were ca. **16,860** men in a German inf.-div. By end of **Jul 41**, casualty figures show that the equivalent of **10** full divisions had been lost. **Aug 41** was even worse, w/ **11.6** divisions, and a further **8.3** divisions removed from the order of battle before the end of **Sep 41**. the *Ostheer* was indeed “*victoring itself to death.*”³¹¹ Before the onset of Operation “Typhoon,” nearly **30** divisions’ worth of casualties had been lost. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 172)

Jul 41: Losses from very start of campaign quite heavy, well in excess of Poland, France, etc. *Marie Vassiltchikov*, a 24-year-old Russian émigré and White Russian princess living in Berlin, saw four of her closest friends killed in battle in the initial weeks of the Russian campaign. (*Berlin Diaries*, M. Vassiltchikov, 60).

3.7.41: Die Verluste [des Ostheers] bis 3.7. betragen: Verwundete: **38 809 (1403** Offiziere); Tot: **11 822 (724** Offiziere); Vermisst: **3 961 (66** Offiziere). Gesamtverluste: etwa **54 000 = 2,15%** von 2,5 Mill. (Halder *KTB*)

16.7.41: Accurate OKH casualty figures for the *Ostheer* show losses from 22 Jun 41 to this date (killed, wounded, mission) of **102,588 – substantially fewer** [?] *than for the campaign in the west* for a similar operational time of about 4 weeks. Figure embraced **97,253** killed/wounded, and **5,335** MIA. (See, Halder *KTB*, Vol. II, 95). (Stolfi, *Barbarossa Revisited*, 35)

31.7.41: Hatte es am 31. Juli 1941 den Anschein, als haette man mit **213 301** Gefallenen, Verwundeten u. Vermissten in **40** Tagen Russlandfeldzug mehr Menschen verloren als vom

³¹¹ **Note:** Ca. late **Jul 41**, the cdr of **18 PD** (Gen. Nehring) had warned that such high losses could not continue, “*Wenn wir uns nicht totsiegen wollen.*” (170)

1.9.39 bis zum **21.6.41 (205 304)**. Taeglich fielen etwa **200** Offiziere aus. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 130)

Aug 41: *Halder* musste mittlerweile erkennen, dass auch er den ‚Koloss Russland‘ unterschaezt u. sich erheblich geirrt hatte, als er annahm, Stalin habe den Krieg schon im Juli verloren, denn **die Verluste des dt. Heeres konnten bereits ab August nicht mehr ersetzt werden**. (*Ueberschaer, Gen.Obst. Franz Halder*, 67)

4.8.41: The *Ostheer* has already suffered **213, 301** casualties in the east; by **17.8.41**, this number had risen to **318,333** (almost **10%** of the total eastern army). (*Citino, Death of the Wehrmacht*, 328, f.n. 72; also, *Halder KTB*)

13.8.41: Der taegliche Durchschnitt der Gesamtverluste betrug in der Zeit der grossen Anfangserfolge (22.6.–13.8.41) **7338**. (*Assmann, Schicksalsjahre*, 285; see also, *Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 325)

23.8.41: Unsere blutige Verluste betragen immerhin schon ueber **300 000** Mann, und die Gefechtsstaerken sind auf die Haelfte u. mehr herabgesunken. (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 123)

31.8.41: Verluste bis 31.8.41: rund **100 000 tote**, rund **300 000 Verwundete**. (*Tagebuch Thilo*, 10.9.41)

31.8.41: Since beginning of Russlandfeldzug, German army in the east has suffered total of **409,998** losses, or **11.05%** of the average strength figure of **3.78** million men employed in the Russian theater [too high an estimate?]. These losses include: **87,489** KIA, **19,688** MIA; among the dead are **4006** officers. Total officer casualties = **14,457**. To compensate for these losses, Army High Command assigned **317,000 replacements** from the Zone of Interior to the Russian theater; as of **31 Aug 41**, however, only **217,000** men had arrived in the Russian theater to compensate for the losses. Thus the personnel shortage in the theater amounts to about **193,000** men. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 71)

5.9.41: Allein unsere Verluste im Ostfeldzug (*monatlich 180 000* Mann, davon 1/3 – 1/4 tot) mit rund **600 – 800 000** Mann erfordern to Aufloesung von rund 15 Divisionen, um die andern wieder auf Normalstaerke zu bringen... (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 127)

12.9.41: An diesem Tage kann festgestellt werden, dass die dt. Panzerwaffe (durch Abnutzung oder Feindeinwirkung) **40%** ihrer Panzer, **22%** ihrer Transportfahrzeuge u. **30%** ihrer Zugmaschinen verloren hatte; bei Guderian stand es wegen der **400** zusaetzlichen Kilometer in Richtung Suedosten noch schlimmer; seine **3., 4., 17., u. 18. PD** besassen nur noch **20** oder **30%** ihrer Normalausstattung. Und Hitler verweigerte der Fronttruppe Panzer, um vier (**4**) neue Pz.-Div. aufstellen zu koennen. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 130)

26.9.41: On day Army Group Center issues order to resume drive on Moscow (26.9.41), the German army in the East was already **200,000** men under strength. It was doubtful if these missing men could ever be replaced. While it was possible to mobilize **80** divisions w/ total strength of almost **2,000,000** men for Operation “*Typhoon*,” this meant that, in contrast to situation of Red Army, the *last German researves were exhausted*. From this point on the German forces used up their resources faster than they could be replaced, w/ the result that the *Wehrmacht’s* fighting power in the east *declined rapidly*. (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 113; also, *Halder KTB*, 26.9.41)

30.9.41: Das gesamte *Ostheer* (ohne AOK Norwegen) hatte vom 22. Juni bis Ende Sep 41 bereits rund **685 000** Mann verloren, rund **22%** seiner urspruenglichen Staerke. Fast **112 000** von ihnen waren tot, ueber **390 000** verwundet, gut **24 000** galten als vermisst. Die Zahl der aus den Heeresgruppenbereichen abtransportierten *Kranken* betrug etwa **158 000** Mann. Von diesen Gesamtverlusten von rund **685 000** Mann konnten etwa **337 000** durch das Ersatzheer u. durch Genesene „ausgeglichen werden.“ (Errechnet nach *Das Deutsche Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Bd. 5/1, Grafik S. 885; quoted in: *Latzel, Deutsche Soldaten*, 64)

2.10.41: Bis zum Beginn der Operation „*Taifun*,“ hatte das deutsche Feldheer ca. **16% seines Personals** durch Verwundete, Tote u. Vermisste verloren. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 251; see also, *Halder KTB*.)

Nov 41: Troop losses of the *Osheer* by the first week of Nov 41 stood at **20%** of the June strength, **686,000** out of **3.4** million men – the equivalent of *one regiment in every inf. div.* Of half a million motor vehicles on the eastern front, a third were worn out or damaged beyond repair, and only a third were fully serviceable. In tanks and vehicles, the Panzer divisions were running at **35%** of their original strength. The General Staff Organization Branch rated the **136** divisions on the eastern front as equivalent to just **83** full strength divisions. (*E. Ziemke, Franz Halder at Orsha*, 174)

Nov 41: Total German *truck losses* for this month alone were **5 996**, slightly more than double the production of **2 752** for the same month. The difference had to be made up by horses, even in the tank and motorized divisions. (*DiNardo*, 48)

6.11.41 [German losses on eastern front]: For a breakdown of losses of “*Ostheer*” to this point see, *KTB OKW, Teilband II (Studienausgabe)*, Anlage 106, pp 1074-75. Document is produced by Buhle’s *Organisationsabteilung* (I) and is called: “*Beurteilung der Kampfkraft des Ostheeres (ohne die in Finnland eingesetzten Kraefte)*.” Buhle’s assessment of strength of German forces on eastern front includes following:

- Die Fehlstellen der *Inf.-Div.* durch blutige Verluste betragen im Durchschnitt etwa **2500** Mann. Die Ausfaelle bei der Infanterie (**80%** hiervon) entsprechen damit nicht ganz der Gefechtsstaerke eines Inf.Rgts. Die infanteristische Kampfkraft der *Inf.-Div.* ist also, Krankheitsverluste eingerechnet, um **1/3** abgesunken;
- Die Ausfaelle bei der Artillerie sind wesentlich geringer. Hier kann, einschl. dem durch Pferdeausfaelle bedingten Ausfall von Geschuetzen, mit einer Verringerung der Kampfkraft von etwa **1/4** gerechnet werden;
- Die Fehlstellen der *Pz.Div.* (ausser **2.** u. **5. PD**) sind im Durchschnitt denen der *Inf.-Div.* gleich, das bedeutet eine Schwaechung ihrer inf. Kampfkraft um etwa **50%**. Die Gefechtsstaerke der *Pz.Rgter.* ist durch Materialausfaelle um etwa **65-75%** gesunken. . . Insgesamt kann also die Kampfkraft der *Pz.Div.* nur mehr mit etwa **35%** ihrer normalen Staerke als *Pz.Div.* geschaetzt werden;
- Die Verluste der *Inf.Div.* (mot.) u. der selbstaendigen *Inf.Rgter.* (mot.) (**IR „GD,“ SS, AH, Brig 900**) entsprechen etwa denen der *Inf.Div.* . . Sie koennen nur mehr auf etwa **60%** ihrer vollen Leistungsfahigkeit geschaetzt werden.

Die Kampfkraft des Ostheeres ist nach obigen Zahlen wie folgt einzuschätzen:

a) **101** vorhandene Inf.-Div. (einschl. Geb. = u. 1. Inf.-Div.) entsprechen etwa **65** voll kampfkraeftigen Inf.Div.

b) Die **17** seit Operationsbeginn eingesetzten Pz.-Div. sind als **6** voll verwendungsfaeihige Pz.Div. zu bewerten. Hierzu kommen die **2** noch voll einsatzfaehigen Pz.Div. (**2** u. **5 PD**).

c) **13** Inf.-Div. (mot.) einschl. **SS Div.** u. **3** selbstaendige Inf.Rgter. (mot.) entsprechen **8** verwendungsfaeihigen Inf.Div. (mot.) u. **2** verwendungsfaeihige Inf.Rgtmer. (mot.).

Hieraus ergibt sich folgende Gesamtstaerke des Ostheeres:

65 Inf.Div.
8 Pz.Div.
8 Inf.Div. (mot.)
2 Inf.Rgter. (mot)

= Kampfkraft von **83** Verbaenden bei **136** vorhandenen Verbaenden. (Source: *KTB OKW, 1940-41*, Teilband II, 1074-75)

9.11.41 (*Tagebuch Thilo*):

Kampfkraft des Ostheeres

InfDiv – 65% der normalen Staerke

PzDiv – 35%

101 InfDiv = 65 ID Kampfkraft

17 PzDiv = 6 Pz und 2 [i.e., **2**. u. **5. PD**]

13 mot Div = 8 mot Div

136 Verbaende = **83** Verbaende Kampfkraft³¹²

10.11.41: According to Halder's diary, personnel losses of the *Ostheer* amounted to **22,432** officers and **663,676** enlisted men killed, wounded, and missing. (*Halder KTB*, 3:286)

15.11.41: By about this date, only **75 000** of the **500 000** motor vehicles w/ which the *Wehrmacht* had begun Barbarossa (i.e, **15 %**) were in good working order. While the Germans had captured some **80 000** Russian vehicles, only 40 percent of those were in operating condition and replacing them was not possible. (*DiNardo*, 50)

30.11.41:...Am selben Tage gab es im *Ostheer* **340 000 Fehlstellen**. Das war die Haelfte der Gefechtsstaerke der Infanterie. *Kompanie-Gefechtsstaerke 50 bis 60 Mann*. An *Kraftfahrzeugen* laufen hoechstens (noch) **50 Prozent**. (*Halder KTB*)

³¹² **Note:** Figures don't add up precisely.

30.11.41: By this date, *Ostheer* has sustained **743,000** casualties, of whom **200,000** are dead. By comparison, German losses in the invasions of Belgium, Holland and France were **44,000** dead and **156,000** wounded. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 73)

30.11.41: Bis Ende **Nov 41** waren **740,000** Mannschaften, Uffz. u. Offiziere ausgefallen, u. nur **400,000** Mann waren als Ersatz eingetroffen. (*F. Seidler, Hilfstruppen*, 56-57)

30.11.41: At end of **Nov 41**, the German ground forces in Russian theater are short **340,000** replacements.³¹³ With infantry coys at half strength, the average number of men available for combat duty vary from **50** to **60** per coy. Day-to-day losses are about equal to the number of convalescents returning to duty. The shortage of replacements could not be compensated for by transfers from the Zone of Interior, where only **33,000** trained replacements were available. The only solution was to disband a number of units and use their personnel as replacements. Hitler, however, refuses any such suggestion. The official casualty reports as of **26 Nov 41** read as follows: **743,112** total; of these, **156,475** KIA, **555,685** wounded, **30,952** MIA. Total losses = **23.5%** of average strength (**3.2** million men) employed in Russian theater from **22.6.-26.11.41**. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 88)

30.11.41: Total casualties sustained by *Ostheer* as of **30 Nov 41** = **753 046**. Between **15-30 Nov 41** a further **300** tanks were lost, bringing total number of panzers lost in the east to **3290**. In the same period [**15-30 Nov 41**], **533** more acft were lost, bringing total number of acft lost by the *Luftwaffe* in the east to **5585**, of which **3189** were completely destroyed. Losses of horses brought the total number of horses unavailable for service to **151,251** (there were **120,494** dead and **30,757** sick horses). Since 11 November, the number of vehicles had fallen by a further **12,000**. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 243; 248-49, f.n. 1, 6-8)

Dec 41-Jan 42: From the Baltic to the Black Sea, the *Wehrmacht* lost **380,000** soldiers in two months of intense fighting – **150,000** killed, wounded or missing in action, the rest from illness and frostbite. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 500; quoting, *Koerner*, in *DRZW 5/I*, 885)

Dec 41–Feb 42: Weist eine dt. Zusammenstellung der gesamten Verluste (Tote, Verwundete, Gefangene, Vermisste) vom Dez 41 bis Feb 42 (*Org.-Abt./Genst. d. Heeres*) fuer die **3** Monate **357.200** Mann aus; Ersatz **129.600**, daher nicht gedeckte Verluste = **227.600** Mann. (*Stoekelle, Unternehmen „Taifun“*, 112)

Dec 41-Feb 42: Zusammenstellung der Ausfaelle:

<i>Monat</i>	<i>Verluste</i>	<i>Ersatz</i>	<i>nicht gedeckte Verluste</i>
Dez 41	103 600	40 800	62 800
Jan 42	144 900	19 100	125 800
Feb 42	108 700	69 700	39 000
Gesamt:	357 200	129 600	227 600

(Source: *Statistische Zusammenstellung der Org. Abt./Genst. d. Heeres*; quoted in: *Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau,"* 181. Figures must be for *entire* eastern front.)

³¹³ Most of this shortfall would have been combat infantry – the „tip of the spear“ which had been badly blunted by this time.

3.12.41: Verluste bis 3.12. betragen...insgesamt **760.132** Offz., Uo., Mannsch., d.h. täglich im Durchschnitt **4607**. (*Gyldenfeldt Tgb*, 3.12.41)

10.12.41-20.3.42: Nach der von OKH *alle zehn (10) Tage* aufgestellten Statistik sollen vom 10. Dez 41 bis zum 20. Mar 42, **62 760** Gefallene, **216 721** Verwundete oder Erfrierungskranke u. **17 457** Vermisste – also **296 938** Offiziere, Uffz. U. Mannschaften – zu beklagen gewesen sein, was die dt. Verluste seit **22.6.41** auf **1 073 066** Mann brachte, also auf **33,52%** der am Tage X eingesetzten Kräfte, von denen **276 540** gefallen oder vermisst waren. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, p. nr.?)

14.12.41: Verluste (**22.6.-10.12.41**): Gesamtverluste (ohne Kranke) **775,087** = **24,22%** des Ostheeres bei Durchschnitt 3,2 Mill. (*Halder KTB, Echolot*, 450)³¹⁴

31.1.42: Bis zum **31.1.42** verlor das *Ostheer* etwa **6000** Flugzeuge, **3254** Panzer u. Sturmgeschuetzte sowie fast **918,000** Mann an Verwundeten, Gefangenen, Vermissten u. Gefallenen; dies entsprach etwa **28.7%** der Durchschnittsstaerke von **3.2** Millionen Soldaten des Heeres. Als Folge der schweren Niederlage im Winter 1941/42 musst man feststellen, dass das dt. Heer nicht wieder auf das materielle u. personelle Niveau wie zu Beginn der Schlacht vor Moskau gebracht werden konnte. (*Halder KTB; DRZW*, Bd. 4, 977, 1024 (Beitrag Mueller), dort die korrigierten Verlustzahlen abweichend von Reinhardt, *Wende*, s. 258. f., der die Gesamtverluste aller gepanzerten Kraftfahrzeuge angibt)

Jan-Mar 42 [*Status of Ostheer*]

- By **31.1.42**, casualties of the *Ostheer* have reached a total of **917,985** men, including **28,935** officers. Army Group Ctr alone is short **396,000** men at this time.
- In spite of increasing replacements in ensuing months, the vacancies in the *Ostheer* “could not be filled even approximately.” An **OKW** study on “the defense strength of the *Wehrmacht* early in **1942**” states that “full replacement of the casualties sustained in the winter . . . was impossible.”
- Reserves are no longer available. Available personnel can only be assigned as replacements to Army Group South, because in **1942** this army group would have to bear the brunt of ops. To withdraw more workers from industry and allot them to the *Wehrmacht* was impossible, for German industry would then have *collapsed*.
- The **16 Pz.-Divs.** on the eastern front report a total strength of just **140** combat-ready tanks on **30.3.42**.
- Losses of wpns and equipment prohibitive, especially losses in small arms, MGs, heavy wpns and guns. As early as **mid-Jan 42**, the **OKH** is forced to announce that losses of heavy wpns and guns in particular could *not be replaced* any more [?] “because **BdE** [?] does not presently have any stock.”

³¹⁴ **Note:** Figures for officers were: **18,220** (wounded), **6,827** (killed), **562** (missing) = **25,609** officer casualties. (450)

- Losses of horses in the east are heavy and, by end of **Jan 42**, have reached a figure of almost **207,000**. (*K. Reinhardt, "Moscow 1941,"* 216-17)

Jan-Jun 42: German deaths on the eastern front have been estimated as **48,000** in **Jan 42**; they were **44,000** in both **Feb** and **Mar 42**; dropped to **23,000** in **Apr 42**; **16,000** in **May 42**; and **13,000** in **Jun 42**. Total German losses [over this period] came to **188,000** – on the face of it one-seventh (14%) of Soviet ones [which came to **1,400,000** over same six-month period]. Stalin's **Jan 42** strategy of wearing down German reserves before the spring did not work. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East,* 147)

Feb-Mar 42: The *Ostheer* suffers another **190,000** battlefield casualties as well as **150,000** from illness and frostbite. All told, the winter crisis claimed more than **700,000** fighting men. It was not until **Apr 42** that reinforcements exceed monthly losses, enabling the *Wehrmacht* to rebuild. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction,* 501; also, *DRZW 6,* 780-81)

20.2.42: Von Beginn des Unternehmens *Barbarossa* bis zum **20.2.42** verlor das mit **3,2** Millionen Mann angetretene Ostheer **30,68 Prozent** seiner Staerke. Diese Verluste liessen sich nicht mehr vollstaendig ausgleichen. (*Anmerkung Dr Tauber* in: *Loewer Memoiren,* 39. Vgl. *Schramm, KTB,* 2. Bd., S. 300.)

28.2.42: Die Verluste an der *Ostfront* betruagen in der Zeit vom 22.6.41 - 28.2.42: **210.572** Gefallene; **747.761** Verwundete; u. **47.303** Vermisste, d.h. insgesamt **1.005.636** Offiziere, Uffz., u. Mannschaften. (*Assmann, Schicksalsjahre,* 285)

28.2.42: The *daily average losses* on the *Moscow front* from 11.12.41 – 28.2.42 was “only” **2883**; this compares w/ a figure of daily average losses of **7,338** for the period 22.6.-13.8.41.³¹⁵ Hence: “In a survey of the bloody losses which the *Wehrmacht* suffered in the eastern campaign to the end of Feb 42, one is struck by the *fact that the losses suffered by the troops in the hard winter fighting were far less than those sustained in the victorious, rapid advance into Russia during the first weeks of the war.*” (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow,* 325)

28.2.42: The field armies of the *Ostheer* have lost **3240** tanks and assault guns [since beginning of *Barbarossa*] but received only **840** replacements. This leaves the panzer divisions w/ fewer than **900** vehicles [tanks?], of which only **465** are operational. The supply and logistic services have lost **74,000** motor vehicles since **Oct 41**, yet received only **7500** replacements. The already inadequate motor pool has been reduced to less than ¼ of its June **1941** complement. Since beginning of Operation „Typhoon,“ the *Ostheer* has also lost **180,000** horses but replaced only **20,000**. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin,* 218)

Mar 42: Tank losses in east had reached **3 486** from a tank force numbering **3 350** in Jun 41. Only **873** replacement tanks had been received by the *Ostheer*. Number of tanks ready for action on **30.3.42** was **140**. Losses in artillery, trucks and support vehicles were comparable. (*Blau, The German Campaign in Russia,* 41; *Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau,* 258)

³¹⁵ **Note:** This comparison by *Assmann* is not valid: The figure of **7,338** has to be for the *entire* *Ostheer* in the opening weeks of *Barbarossa* (not, of course, just for Army Group Center). However, according to A., the figure of **2883** is simply for Army Group Center (not the entire eastern army). Hence, it is an “apples to oranges” comparison.

Mar 42 [Ostheer]: Der Kampfwert der im Osten eingesetzten **162** Divisionen war bis Maerz derart gesunken, dass nur noch **8** Divisionen als „voll angriffsfaehig,“ **3** erst nach Auffrischung als „angriffsfaehig,“ u. **47** gar nur als „begrenzt angriffsfaehig“ galten; alle uebrigen konnten nur Aufgaben der Verteidigung erfuehlen. . .

Die Verluste an Panzern u. Stugs waren bereits Ende **Jan 42** auf **4241** gestiegen, so dass die **16** Pz.-Div., die an der Ostfront kaempften, Ende **Mar 42** ueber insgesamt **140** einsatzbereite Panzer verfuegten. Die Stosskraft des Heeres hatte ihren Tiefststand erreicht. Wie bald ersichtlich wurde, konnte man nur mehr **9** Pz.-Div. vollstaendig auffuehlen, waehrend sich alle anderen mit nur einer Pz.-Abt., d.h. mit rund **50** Kampfwagen, begnuegen mussten. Bei den motorisierten Divisionen konnten nur **7** vollstaendig ausgeruestet werden. Besonders schwer wog der Ausfall an Kfz. Die Luftwaffe verzeichnete an der Ostfront bis Ende **Mar 42** **2700** Totalschaeden. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 224; also, Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau, 258*)

15.3.42: Since **1 Jan 42**, the Ostheer has incurred **240,000** casualties, an average loss rate of **3200** men per day. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 219*)

20.3.42: As of **20 Mar 42**, the army had suffered *net* losses of over **115,000** transport vehicles, **3100** armored vehicles, and **10,400** artillery pieces in the east. In addition, in the winter months the army lost over **180,000** horses killed, wounded, or sick and could bring in only **20,000** replacements. In that period it also expended nearly **572,000** tons of munitions and over **176** million gallons of fuel. (*Megargee, Inside Hitler's High Command, 174*)

20.3.42: Losses of Ostheer: Nach Angaben des OKH hatte das Ostheer am 20.3.1942 Gesamtverluste von **1 073 066** Mann (Tote, Verwundete, Vermisste) und einen Fehlbestand von 2097 Panzer (3319 Abgaenge, 732 Zugaenge). Nach Overmans, fielen u. verstarben bis Ende Maerz 1942 an der Ostfront **438 891** dt. Soldaten. Bis Ende Januar 1942 stand den hohen personellen Verlusten lediglich ein Ersatz (einschliesslich der Genesenen) von etwa einer halben Million Mann gegenueber. (*J. Huerter, Hitlers Herrfuehrer, 346-47; for somewhat different figures see, Greiner Aufzeichnung, „Notizen fuer das Tagebuch,“ „Verluste u. Verbrauch 22.6..41-20.3.42,“ in: OKW KTB, Band I, 489*)

20.3.42: Kampfwagen **III, IV** u. Sturm-Gesch. (Osten) [from **22.6.41**]: Abgang = **1630**. Zugang = **497**. (*Greiner Aufzeichnung, „Notizen fuer das Tagebuch,“ „Verluste u. Verbrauch 22.6.41-20.3.42,“ in: OKW KTB, Band I, 489*)

25.3.42: On this day, *Halder* recorded German losses in the east as **32 485** officers and **1 040 581** NCOs and men from forces that had numbered **3 200 000** at start of the campaign (**33.52** percent). This total did not include those reporting sick. Considering that those totals included support troops, *attrition of combat units* had undoubtedly exceeded **50** percent. (*Halder KTB*)

30.3.42: By end of Mar 42, OKH reported that out of **162** divisions in the east, **8** were suitable for offensive action; **3** could be brought up to full offensive capability after a short rest; and **47** could perform limited offensive tasks. The rest were only suitable for defensive warfare. (See, *H.A. Jacobsen, Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik u. Dokumenten, 690*) In effort to upgrade combat capability of deficient units, the *army reorganized itself*. Results were unsatisfactory—

Army Groups North and Center *lost virtually all their motor vehicles* so that their divisions were no longer capable of even limited ops.³¹⁶ (*Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 259)

30.3.42: On the eve of the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 (according to fighting-value estimates produced by Army General Staff) **134** divisions, or **64%** of all participating units [?], were classified as completely ready for attack. Nine months later (end of Mar 42), the number of divisions “suited for all tasks” had shrunk to a total of **8** – that is, **5%** of all available units. (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 115)

30.3.42: Between **22 Jun 41** and the end of **Mar 42**, the Germans lost over **1.1** million men killed, wounded, or missing. (*Megargee, Inside Hitler’s High Command*, 174)

31.3.42: Since June **1941**, the *Panzerwaffe* in the East has lost a total of **3486** tanks yet has replaced just **873** of them. The German tank strength stands at **1503**. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 221)³¹⁷

Apr 42: The *Ostheer* had lost *one-quarter of the artillery* with which it had begun the campaign. Even more catastrophic were the loss of *towing tractors* and *horsed limber teams*, significantly curtailing mobility. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 55)

ca. early Apr 42: Nach **289** *Tagen Feldzug* hatte das Ostheer **1.107.830** Mann Verluste! (Ohne Kranke). (*Siegfried Risse*, 6)

20.4.42: Die Front is *duenn u. abgekaempft*. Es wird m.E. nach der „Schlammperiode“ aller Anstrengungen beduerfen, zu halten...Wir duerfen keinen Zweifen haben, dass alle Ost-Divisionen voellig abgekaempft sind...Bewunderswert bleibt Haltung u. Stimmung der Truppe, im Gegensatz zur Heimat, die lau ist. Leider muss der Frontsoldat die Stimmung der Heimat stuetzen, als umgekehrt. Natuerlich steht der beste Mann im Feld. Daheim ist Ausschuss [rubbish], Druেকেberger, Partei u. Bonzen...(Tagebuch Thilo)

21.4.42: Halder gave a contemporary and comprehensive picture of German losses in the winter in a presentation to Hitler on **21 Apr 42**. This includes a breakdown of losses of equipment items (motor vehicles, AFVs) and men and horses. For example, from **1 Oct 41** to **15 Mar 42**, **74,000** motor vehicles had been lost but only **7400** replacements received. Over same period, **AFV’s** sustained losses of **2300** (from all causes) yet only **1800** had been replaced. Losses of horses from **15.10.41-15.3.42** was **180,000** (only **20,000** replacements received). Officers and men lost from **1.11.41-1.4.42** = **900,000** (only **450,000** replacements received). Deficiencies in equipment on Eastern Front in **Apr 42** included: **625,000** personnel, **14,000** MGs, **7000** AT guns and **1900** guns.

The average daily battle casualty figure for period from **30.11.41-1.4.42** was consistent, varying from about **2800** to **3500** w/ a slightly greater loss (**3700**) in the period from **31 Dec 41** – **10 Jan 42**. These figures indicate that German battle casualties were not particularly high during the winter withdrawal. In addition to the **376,000** battle casualties during the winter period, there were however over **500,000** sickness casualties, of which **228,000** were frostbite cases, making a

³¹⁶ **Note:** Army Group Center *never fully recovered* from the beating it had taken in first 8 or 9 months of the war. Still, it gave a good account of itself in a *defensive role* until Jun 44. Greatest defensive victory came in Nov-Dec 42, when it smashed *Zhukov’s Operation “Mars.”*

³¹⁷ Does the “calculus” add up? After all, the Germans began *Barbarossa* w/ just **3500** tanks and assault guns.

total of about **900,000**. On the other hand [?], Mueller-Hillebrand, quoting as authority *Saemtliche Angaben nach Abt WVW des OKW*, gives the total army and SS loss for the three [3] months from **Dec 41 – Feb 42** as **127,000** dead and **24,000** missing. (See, *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 228; also, *Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer*, Vol. 3, Table 65)

30.4.42: Personelle Ersatzlage schlecht, insgesamt bisher im Osten **1,6 Mill[ionen]** **Ausfaelle (schon 500 000 Tote)**. Jahrgang 22 u. 23 unter den Waffen u. bis Juni im Feld – insgesamt **100 000**. Dazu **480 000** Genesene. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

30.4.42: During **Apr 42**, the Germans withdraw **1** panzer and **1** inf.-div. from the eastern front, leaving a total deployment of **20** panzer, **15** motorized and **126** inf.-divs. The Ostheer is now short **625,000** men, **7000** anti-tank wpns and **200 [2000?]** artillery pieces. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 226-27)

Losses of Ostheer:

Jun-Nov 41: (*Monatsdurchschnitt*):

Gefallen = **27.000**
Vermisst = **5.000**
Verwundete = **94.000**
Ave./month = **126.000**
Total = **755.500**

Dez 41-Apr 42: (*Monatsdurchschnitt*):

Gefallen = **17.400**
Vermisst = **5.000**
Verwundete = **61.000**
Ave./month = **83.000**
Total = **416.500**

Note: Diese Aufstellung belegt, dass die *Personalverluste des Heeres* waehrend der Winterkaempfe *durchaus deutlich geringer waren*, als dies aufgrund der Vielzahl der dazu vorliegenden Darstellungen vermutet werden koennte. (For additional details see the table in: *Jagdfliegerverbaende 9/1, Prien*, 9)

ca. Apr 42: Von den im Osten eingesetzten **162** Inf.-Div. waren nur ganze **8** voll einsatzbereit. Die insgesamt **16** Pz.Div. verfuegten zusammen noch ueber **140** einsatzfaehige Panzer,³¹⁸ mithin nicht einmal ueber die vorgesehene Ausstattung einer einzigen Pz.Div! Die dt. Verluste im Osten seit Beginn von *Barbarossa* erreichten bis zum Ende Apr 42 die Zahl von **1.167.835** Mann an Gefallenen, Vermissten, Gefangenen u. Verwundeten, mithin *ein Drittel der Kraefte*, die

³¹⁸ Neben den genannten 140 einsatzfaehigen Panzern befand sich eine erhebliche Anzahl weiterer Panzer in der Ueberholung u. technischen Neuaufrestung in *ruekwaertigen Instandsetzungseinrichtungen*, um nach kurzer Zeit wieder an die Frontverbaende abgegeben zu werden. (8)

am 22.6.41 zum *Ueberfall* auf die Sowjetunion angetreten waren. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 9/1, Prien, 8*)

1.5.42: Alone in the eastern army (*Ostheer*), the **OKH** calculated that it lacked no fewer than **625,000** men as of **1 May 42**, most of them in combat units. (*Megargee, Inside Hitler's High Command, 174; also, DRZW, Bd. 6: 778-79*)

May/Jun 42: At this time (while planning for summer campaign underway), *ueber 700 000 Fehlstellen in der Personalbesetzung des Ostheeres vorhanden waren u. kein Ersatz mehr zur Auffuehlung zur Verfuegung stand.* Auch die *Materialausstattung* entsprach in keiner Weise der Ausruestung vom Juni 1941. (*Ueberschaer, Gen.Obst. Franz Halder, 72*)

1.8.3: Unit Losses:

Army Group Center:

--**1.10.41:** Die personellen Verluste der Hr.Gr.Mitte (seit dem 22.6.41) betragen bis zu diesem Tage etwa **229 000 Mann**. Bis zum **6.10.41** erhoelten sie sich auf **277 000**. Den Verlusten stand ein *Gesamtersatz* von **151 000** Mann gegenueber. (*Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion, S. 586, cited in H. Stieff, Briefe, Anmerkung 4, 230; see also, Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau, 315*)

--**16.10.41:** Hr.Gr.Mitte has suffered **277,000 casualties** and received only **151,000 replacements**. Companies and battalions were at less than half, sometimes less than a third, of their authorized strength. (*K. Fuchs*)

--**16.10.41 [Tank losses]:** In period from start of "Taifun" up to mid-October panzer losses rose quickly. Thus, **6 PD**, which still had over **200** tanks on 10 October, reported that it was left w/ only **60** operational tanks on 16 October. The **20 PD**, which was one of the first units to start to pursuit toward Moscow, was left w/ **43** total wreckages³¹⁹ [?] on 16 October out of the **283** panzers they had at their disposal on 28 September. In the same period, **4 PD**, stuck in the fighting for Mtsensk, was left w/ only **38** panzers. . . On 16 October, **2 Pz Army** was left w/ a total of **271** panzers; **3 PzGr** with **259**; and **4 PzGr** with **710**. These figures give the "strength" and give no indication about the actual "operational capability" of the panzers, which was much lower. All told, AGC still had more than **1240** tanks. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 91-92; 115, f.n. 100*)

--**17.10.41:** Infantry of AGC had also sustained heavy losses. In period from **1-17 Oct 41** AGC lost roughly **50,000** men. During this period casualties amounted to **1,791** officers and **47,430** NCOs and men. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 92; 115, f.n. 101*)

--**15.11.41:** Seit Beginn der Operation „*Taifun*“ stiegen die personellen Verluste der Hr.Gr.Mitte auf **87 455 Mann** u. erhoelten sich auf insgesamt **316 569 Mann** (*KTB OKW (WFS), Band I, S. 761.*)

--**15.11.41:** On this day, the exact casualty figure for Army Group Ctr since the start of Operation „*Typhoon*“ was **87,455**. Between **16 Oct – 15 Nov 41**, there were about **40,000** casualties, a clear indication of the intensity of the fighting after the encirclement

³¹⁹ Must be muddy translation. Check original German text.

battles. These losses brought the total to almost **316,569** casualties for AGC since 22 June 1941 (**12,852** officers / **303,717** NCOs and men) This was almost **50%** of all the casualties in the *Ostheer*. (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 201; 203, f.n. 19/20; see also, *KTB H.Gr. Mitte*, 15.11.41)

--**21.11.41**: In his diary, GFM v. Bock notes that *some companies have only 20 and 30 men left* ; he also notes the heavy officer losses (*Gerbet*, 366)

--**Oct 41-Feb 42**: Von *Anfang* Okt 41 bis zum Ende der sowjet. Winteroffensive *Anfang* Feb 42 verlor die Hr.Gr.Mitte weitere **378 000** Mann, von denen nur noch **60 000** Mann „ersetzt“ wurden. Zu diesen „*blutigen Verlusten*“ kamen wieder die Verluste durch Krankheiten u. nun auch in hohem Masse durch Erfrierungen, deren Zahl vor allem im Dez. u. Jan. diejenige der ersten Kategorie *deutlich uebertraf*. (*Das Deutsche Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Bd. 5/1, 885, quoted in: *Latzel, Deutsche Soldaten*, 65; also, *Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 315)

--**Dec 41-Jan 42**: Fighting outside Moscow costs the *Ostheer* an additional **55,000** dead and **100,000** wounded during these two months. Panzer divisions are lucky to have **20** operational tanks by early **1942**. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 73)

--**4.12.41**: **75%** of the ca. **1000** tanks assembled for Operation „*Taifun*“ have been lost by this date. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 73)

--**28.2.42**: Der *taegliche Durchschnitt der Gesamtverluste* betrug *vor Moskau* in der Zeit vom **11.12.41–28.2.42** nur **2883** Koepfe (compare w/ losses thru 13.8.41). (*Assmann, Schicksalsjahre*, 285)³²⁰

2. Panzer Army:

--**30.9.-1.12.41** Zahl der voll einsatzbereiten Panzer:

30.09.41:	340 (+ 60 der 9. PD)
28.10.41:	235 (9. PD aus dem Armeeverband ausgeschieden)
01.11.41:	210
09.11.41:	201
23.11.41:	108
01.12.41:	105

Neuzuweisung im ersten Oktoberdrittel: **65** Panzer. (*Operationen der 2. Pz Armee, RH 21-2/910, Tabelle*, 172)³²¹

--**16.10.41**: Guderian's Panzer Army now has **248** operational tanks. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 223)

³²⁰ *Assmann*: “Ob in den Verlustlisten, auf Grund deren diese Durchschnittszahlen errechnet sind, die Ausfaelle durch *Erfrierungen* miteinbegriffen sind, habe ich nicht feststellen koennen.“ (Note: If figure of 2883 above does *not* include (schwere u. mittlere) Frostbite cases, one would have to add figure of **979** to that of 2883. (285)

³²¹ **Note**: For breakdown by type – **Pz I, II, III, IV** – see, pp. 173-78.

--**Oct-Dec 41** [Confirm dates!]: According to information from the then Chief of the General Staff of Guderian's **2. Pz. Army**, Obst-Lt Frhr. v. Liebenstein, the panzer army lost **242** tanks in the fighting around Bryansk and the breakthrough at Mtsensk [and] **34** tanks in the battle for Tula, a total of **276** panzers. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 158, f.n. 76; also, *Liebenstein, Operationen der 2 Pz Army* (30 Sep – 5 Dec 41))

--**Nov 41**: *Panzer Army 2* down to just **150** tanks (had set out in Jun 41 w/ ca. **1000**). (*Bartov, A View from Below*, 327; *Mueller, Das Scheitern*, 967-89)

--**Mid-Nov 41**: At beginning of second phase of Operation „*Taifun*“, Guderian's tank group numbers ca. **150** tanks (it had numbered **400** at the end of **Sep 41**). (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 198)

--**23.11.41**: Guderian's tank army is now reduced to **38** tanks. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 223)

--**16.12.41**: *Panzer Army 2* was down to **40** tanks in operable condition. (*Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 206-10)

--**25.12.41**, Guderian had fewer than **40 servicable tanks** in his 2nd Panzer Army. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 125)

--**mid-Feb 42**: The panzer army has a total of **45** combat-ready tanks and an additional **44** undergoing repairs. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 731-32, f.n. 647; *KTB, 2. Pz. Armee* [**13.2.** or **19.2.42**])

3. Pz.Gr.:

--**16.10.-23.11.41**: Over this period, **3. Pz.Gr.** is reduced from **259** to **77** operational tanks. (See, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 223)

--**30.11.41**: On 30 November, Reinhardt's **3 PzGr** still had the following panzer strength: **1 PD: 37** tanks; **6 PD: 4** tanks; **7 PD: 36** tanks. A total of only **77** tanks, against the **259** they still had on 16 Oct. 41. (*KTB PzGr3*, quoted in: *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 236, f.n. 95)

4. Army:

--**Late Oct 41**: In der Front hatten sowohl die Inf.Div., wie die Pz.-Div., an personeller u. materieller Staerke weiterhin nachgelassen. Namhafter *Ersatz* war nicht gekommen u. es gab viele Inf.-Kompanien mit einer Gefechtsstaerke von nur noch **50-70** Mann. (*Blumentritt, Ueberwindung der Krise*, 107)

--**Early Dec 41**: Die Kampfstaerken der Infanterie waren bereits auf **50-60** Mann je Kompanie herabgesunken u. die Stellungen waren eigentlich nur *Sicherungslinien*. (*Blumentritt, Ueberwindung der Krise*, 110-11)

--**Jan 42**: Our losses in equipment equalled if they did not surpass our losses in men. An example of this is the state of the **4. Army's artillery** early in Jan 42. This is the artillery which was *not* part of the divisions or corps but was *directly subordinate* [i.e.,

organic] to the army cdr. Its original strength had been as follows: **48** heavy howitzers, **36** mortars, **48** 100mm guns, **9** 150mm guns, **84** assault guns and **252** heavy/light tractors. It had now been reduced to the following: **5** heavy howitzers, **8** mortars, **17** 100 mm guns, **2** 150mm guns, **12** serviceable assault guns and **22** tractors. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 69)

--**1.1.-24.2.42**: Die Armee verlor in [dieser Zeit] bei einer durchschnittlichen Kopfstaerke von etwas ueber **200.000 Menschen**:

Durch blutige Verluste	22 290 Soldaten
Durch Erfrierungen	12 274 “
Durch Erkrankungen ³²²	11 118 “
	<hr/>
	45 682 Soldaten

Erhalten hat sie in der fraglichen Zeit an Ersatz u. Wiedergenesenen nur: **12 228** Soldaten.

Auch die Pferdeverluste waren gross. Die haeufige Sperrung der Rollbahn verursachte vorn schweren Futtermangel, die eingesetzten Transportflugzeuge konnten wohl Futterkonserven, aber kein Rauhfutter zufuehrrn. [Why?] Die *Pferde fielen in Massen*. . . Von rund **70 000** Pferden gingen im **Jan** u. **Feb 42 9871** durch Feindeinwirkung, Futtermangel, Erschoepfung u. Unbilden der Witterung ein. (*Kaempfe der 4. Armee, RH 20-4/337*)

--**1.1.-31.3.42**: **214.000** “*Koepfe*” hatten **97.000** Ausfaelle = **45%**. (*Blumentritt, Ueberwindung der Krise*, 115)

--**1.1.-31.3.42**: 4th Army suffered **96,535** casualties between **1.1.-31.3.42**, of which **14,236** were frostbite cases. (*CMH Pub. 104-6, Effects of Climate*, 6)

--**5.1.42**: **4. Army**, said Kuebler, was not commanding corps or divisions, it was down to siting individual rifle coys. The small arms ammunition in **43. AK** had been fired off or lost; all but one rifle clip had been collected from every man w/ a rifle and handed over to the troops actually in close combat; there was no more. *If help did not come soon to 4. Army there would be a catastrophe*. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 224)

--**21.1.-16.2.42**: In his Tagebuch, General Heinrici (C-in-C **4. AOK**) writes: “selbst umfasst, fast eingekesselt mit Divisionen, deren Regimente **100-200** Mann stark sind u. die sich nur mit aeusserster Kraftanspannung der wuetenden Angriffe des Gegners erwehren, Beispiel: **31. ID**, **17** km breit, **73** Feindangriffe, **131. ID**, **11** km breit, **53** Feindangriffe ueber Komp.-Staerke innerhalb Zeit vom **21.1.-16.2.42**, eigene Verluste **530** Tote, **1400** Verwundete, **1100** Erfrierungen) . . .“ (*Tagebuch, 16.2.42*, in: *J. Huerter, Ein Deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 145)

--**Feb 42**: Ende dieses Monats meldeten **5** Divisionen der **4. Armee** Grabenstaerken (ohne Staebe) von **1410**, **1288**, **1111**, **801** u. **306** Soldaten. (*Kaempfe der 4. Armee, RH 20-4/337*)

³²² Note: Davon **581** Fleckfieberfaelle.

9. Army:

--mid-Jan 42: Of the **9 Army**'s assigned strength of **262,215** men, **864** guns, and **165** AFVs, there remained only **59,582** men, **369** guns, **4** assault guns, and a single **Pz III** [!]. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 175-76)

--**10.5.42**: Steady decline in **9 Army** infantry strength: By **10 May 42**, the army controlled **13** inf.-divs., two [2] mot.-divs., one [1] Pz.-Div., and several improvised Kampfgruppen ranging from regimental to bde strength. The authorized strength of Model's infantry divisions called for **117** inf. btns., each of which should have mustered between **400** and **500** men. He could actually deploy along the front only **97** such btns., most of which contained only **250** to **300** men. The reported infantry shortfall in those divisions during May approached **28,400**, leaving him at about **46%** of his authorized infantry strength. Some divisions had shrunk to mere skeletons. The **256 ID** was reduced from **9** to **4** infantry btns., its artillery rgt. was cut from **12** to **6** batteries, and its engineer, anti-tank, and reconnaissance elements were consolidated into a four-coy fusilier btn. Still, w/ a single attached inf. btn. from another division, Col. Friedrich Weber's depleted division remained responsible for an **11-mile** defensive sector. . . Virtually all of the army's tiny supply of AFVs had been consolidated in two units: Pz.-Btn. Herschel and **Assault Gun Btn 189** – which were farmed out in platoon- and coy-sized packets to the infantry divisions.³²³ (The “definition” of “AFV” at the front lines near Moscow had, by May 1942, come to include everything from captured Soviet **T-26** and **T-34** tanks to armored cars, obsolete French tanks hastily imported from the West, and weaponless command vehicles placed ostentatiously near the front for a deterrent effect.) (**Note**: For details on status of other **9 Army** divisions at this time see, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 195-96)

5. AK:

--**25.12.41**: Between Christmas and New Year, the corps cdr and staff are juggling w/ little groups of men and single artillery pieces trying to plug gaps, cajoling, threatening and court-martialing officers. Btns. are down to a strength of **50** men w/o any AT wpns, except the few artillery howitzers capable of engaging the attacking **T-34s**. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 232)

--ca. **27.1.42**: **35. ID** of **5. AK** had only two [2] **50-mm** AT guns and six [6] field howitzers and, in the six weeks following Hitler's standstill order, it lost over **2500** men (of whom over **1000** died of frostbite), more than **1/3** of its casualties since the war began in **Jun 41**. Yet these casualties were light compared w/ those of other divisions. **23. ID** (the Potsdam Division), another of Ruoff's formations, lost a good divisional commander whose health could not stand up to the rigors of the campaign and climate. It had reformed its nine [9] battalions into three [3]. In all, it had hardly **1000** infantrymen left, while its divisional artillery consisted of only one [1] **50-mm** AT gun and three [3] howitzers. **106. ID**, once a first-class formation, had hardly any of its original

³²³ According to Newton, **9 Army** “deployed no more than **60** armored fighting vehicles” in May 1942. (200)

leaders and was down to **500** infantrymen. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 229-30*)³²⁴

7. AK:

--**21.11.41:** The Commanding General has been *visibly affected by the heavy fighting* and described the *pitiful state of his divisions*, whose strength is spent. Losses among the officer[s], in particular, are making themselves felt. Many second lieutenants are leading battalions, one first lieutenant leads a regiment, regimental combat strengths of **250** men, also the cold and inadequate shelter, in short: in his opinion the corps can do no more. (*Bock War Diary, 365-66*)

24. Pz.K.:

--**Late Nov 41:** The ability of the troops, even of **XXIV PzK**, to attack had suffered heavily as a result of the months of fighting. The corps artillery could now muster only eleven [11] pieces. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader, 255*)

41. Pz.K.:

--ca. **10.12.41:** Fighting on left flank of Army Group Center (w/ **3. PzGr** near Klin) the corps „now controlled exactly **4** tanks.“ Corps at this time comprised **6 PD** and **23 ID**. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander, 160; also, Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau, 317*)

47. Pz.K.:

--**25.7.41:** Denn die Verluste sind sehr schwer, die Divisionen haben so durchschnittlich je **2200** Offz. u. Mannschaften verloren u. bis zu **50 %** ihres Kfz.-Bestandes. (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*)

53. AK:

--**22.11.41:** Losses suffered by **112.** and **167. ID** were so heavy that their total exhaustion had to be expected. According to report by **LIII AK** on 22 November, the two divisions suffered losses of about **200** dead and **500** wounded within three [**3**] days. On 23 November, **112. ID** reported **20** rifles as the average fighting strength of its companies. (*GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 694, f.n. 536*)

56. Pz.K.:

--**mid-Dec 41:** Entire panzer corps manned by **1,821 Kaempfer** (fighters). (*Bartov, A View from Below, 328; Reinhardt, Wende, 206-11*)

1. PD:

--**1 Oct 41:** On eve of Operation „*Taifun*,“ **1 PD** is down to **90** tanks, having begun the campaign w/ **154**. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 169; also, H. Roettiger, XXXXI*)

³²⁴ **Note:** Source used by Seaton for this information – addressing status of **35. ID**, **23. ID** and **106. ID** – is “correspondence of Rudolf Schmidt,” **27.1.42.** (f.n. 17, 308)

Pz. Corps during Battle of Moscow, in: *S.H. Newton, German Battle Tactics*, 16-17)

--**10.12.41**: **1. PD** reduced to a handful of tanks. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 16; see also, *R. Stoves, Die 1. Pz.Div*, 302)

--**ca mid-Dec 41** [Klin]: Maj-Gen Franz Landgraf, cdr **1 PD**, reports to Model that situation around town was growing increasingly critical. The last handful of operational tanks of **1 Pz Rgt (1 PD)** had been dispatched to Col Eduard Hauser of **7 PD's 25 Pz Rgt (LVI PzK)** remaining tanks were consolidated under Hauser's control.) Of the division's two mot. inf.-rgts. only a btn.-sized Kampfgruppe in APCs retained the tactical mobility usually attributed to a mech unit. The rest of the formerly mot. infantry along w/ crews from burnt-out and broken-down tanks, mechanics, and cooks, was formed into an improvised two-btn. rgt. of marching infantry. **Pz Pi Btn 37** had been forced to haul its remaining equipment on panje sleds, while **Pz AR 73** had been reduced to using not only horses but sometimes columns of Russian prisoners harnessed together w/ rope to move its guns. The „trench“ strength of the division had been whittled down to fewer than **2000** men, and there were nearly **1000** wounded in a makeshift hospital in center of town. Under these conditions, Landgraf and Lt Col Walther Wenck (Ia of **1 PD**) told Model they might be able to hold the town for another **36 to 48** hours. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 163)

3. PD:

--**9.7.41**: On **22 Jun 41**, the **PzRgt 6** had started action w/ **199** tanks – **58** Mark II, **109** Mark III, **32** Mark IV. By **9 Jul 41**, **45** of these tanks were totally lost. On same day, **9** tanks were sent to the workshops for repair. Thus, as of **9 Jul 41**, the regiment had **145** tanks ready for action. (*Col. H. Zobel, „3. PD's Advance to Mogilev,“* in: *Glantz, Initial Period of the War*, 395)

--**30.7.41**: On this day **PzRgt 6** had **86** tanks ready for action – **35** Mark II, **35** Mark III, **16** Mark IV. (**Note**: Apparently, on this day **50** tanks were in the workshops undergoing repair.) (*Col. H. Zobel, „3. PD Battles in the Smolensk Area,“* in: *Glantz, „Initial Period of the War, 435-36)*

--**24.8.41**: As division is about to begin drive south into rear of Soviet armies defending Kiev, it only as **41** tanks of its original complement of **198** in running order. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 136)

--**15.9.41**: The **PzRgt 6** had numbered about **198** tanks at the outset of Operation „Barbarossa.“ On this day, it was down to one [1] **Pz IV**, three [3] **Pz III** and six [6] **Pz II** tanks – that is to say ten [10] tanks were all that was left of the rgt. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 219; also, *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 158)

--**5.12.41**: Gef.-Staerke der **3. PD** = insgesamt etwa **14** Sch.-Komp zu je **50 – 60** Mann; **20** Pak; **22** Pz. mit **1** V.S. fuer **30** km. Korpsartillerie des **24. PzK** = **12** Gesch. (*Operationen der 2. Pz Armee, RH 21-2/910)*

--**mid-Feb 42**: The **3. PD** now consists of a btn. of **11** tanks, an inf.-btn. of two [2] coys, a sapper btn of two [2] coys, an artillery btn. of **6** guns, **4** AT guns (self-propelled), and a

motor-cycle rifle btn. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 732, f.n. 647; *KTB*, 2. *Pz. Armee* [probably **19.2.42**]).

4. PD:

--**16.10.41**: **4. PD** down to just **38** operational tanks. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 133)

--**4.12.41**: Gef.-St. **4. PD** nach Meldg. v. **4.12.41** (*KTB 24. PzK*) = **S.R. 12**: **5** Komp je **160** Mann; **S.R. 33**: **11** Komp je **100** Mann; **AA7** u. **K 34** zus. **3** Komp je **117** Mann. Div. **AR 103**: **17** Geschuetze; **PzRgt 35** etwa **30** Pz. (*Operationen der 2. Pz Armee, RH 21-2/910*)

5. PD:

--**Jan 42**: Maj-Gen Gustav Fehn's **5. PD** had taken considerably less "wear and tear" in Russia than almost any other **PD**. Even late in January 1942 the division still boasted over **1500** mot. infantrymen, its artillery rgt. retained **27** functioning guns, and its **PzRgt 31** could put **70** operational tanks into the battle. By standards of mid-winter, therefore, [the division] represented potent striking force. (*KTB Ia, AOK 9, 22.-25.1.42*; quoted in: *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 184)

6. ID:³²⁵

--**22.6.41**: Der erste Tag im Feldzug gegen Russland. Die *Verluste unseres Regiments an diesem einen Tage sind groesser als beim ganzen Frankreich-Feldzug*. (**21** Tote u. **48** Schwerverwundeten) Wir hatten den Schwerpunkt des Angriffes. (*Tagebuch Haape, 6. ID*)

--**22.6.-1.11.41**: Division lost **3000 men**, about *20 percent of its strength*. Losses small compared to many other divisions; losses primarily among the infantry. Losses of horses very small, due to excellent care provided by the troops: Am staerksten war die **I./A.R. 42**, die schwere Art.-Abteilung, betroffen. Die Pferdebespannung war wenigstens fuer den Osten bei diesen Wegeverhaeltnissen und der Schnelligkeit des Vormarsches voellig unzureichend. Bei den Russen wurden derartige Geschuetze durch *Trecker* gezogen. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 84)

--**1.9.41**: **3** Wochen Stellungskrieg waren beendet. Im Vorfeld befanden sich unzaehtig viele Tote. Das **IR 37** hatte **773** gefallene, verwundete u. vermisste Soldaten zu beklagen. (*W. Buddenbohm, Das Leben des Soldaten*, 62)³²⁶

--**16.9.-11.15.41**: Von dem **16 Sep** bis zum **15 Nov 41** waren folgende Offz.-Verluste zu beklagen: **14** Offiziere gefallen, **34** Offiziere verwundet. Verluste an Uffz. u. Mannschaften waehrend der Berichtszeit: **336** Gefallene, **1060** Verwundete, **43**

³²⁵ "Die Ausfuehrung der Spaehtrupps u. Sturmangriffe mussten die *Schuetzenkompanien* machen, waehrend die **13.** (Inf.-Gesch.) Kompanie u. die **14.** (Panzerjaeger) Kompanie...*kaum oder gar nicht betroffen waren*. Daher waren die Ausfaelle an Toten u. Verwundeten auch *wesentlich hoeher*, als bei der **13.** u. **14.** Kompanie eines Inf.Rgts." (*Ltr, H. Stockhoff, 6. ID*, 12.10.07)

³²⁶ **Note**: Unclear if author means **773** casualties over this three [**3**] week period, or since the beginning of the campaign. Check Grossmann!

Vermisste. . . Fehlstellen an Uffz. u. Mannschaften waren am **15.11.41** wie folgt vorhanden:

2096 Fehlstellen bei der Infanterie;
208 bei der Artillerie;
83 bei der **AA 6**;
34 bei der **Pi.Btn. 6**;
25 bei der **Pz.Jg.Abt. 6**;
26 bei der **NA 6**

Die Fehlstellen bei den Inf.-Rgtern. machen sich besonders bemerkbar. So gibt es z.B. Schuetzenkompanien mit einer Kampfeinsatzstaerke im Durchschnitt von **50** Mann. (*Taetigkeitsbericht der Abteilung Ila*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 51, 12*)³²⁷

--**1.-31.10.41**: According to the report of the Divisionsarzt for month of **Oct 41**, the **6. ID** incurred following losses in **Oct 41**: gefallen: **267**; vermisst: **35**; verwundet: **941**; erkrankt: **501**. (*Bericht des Div.-Arztes*; gleaned from: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 52, 28*)³²⁸

--**2.10.41**: Advancing thru often difficult terrain—marshy, forested, etc.—division sustains **500** dead and wounded on first day of the Operation “*Taifun*.” (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID, 68-70*)

--**Dec 41**: The Rhine-Westphalian 6. ID was on the northern periphery near Kalinin, on the line of the River Tma in the area of Staritsa, when it began to fall back to the SW. Its first equipment to be lost was its heavy howitzer battery as there were no horses to drag the guns. The companies of **III/IR 18** were down to **5** MGs, **1** mortar and **7** rifles each. (*Seaton, Russo-German War, 232-33*; also, *Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. Inf.-Div., ca. 92*)

--**19.12.41-12.1.42**: Verluste des **II./IR 37** [during said period]: **3** Offz. gefallen, **3** verw., **3** Lazarett; **6** Uffz. gefallen, **36** Uffz. verw., **3** Uffz. vermisst, **24** Frost; **32** Mannsch. gef., **158** verw., **37** verm., **163** Frost. Am **12.1.42** wurde das Btn. mit den Resten zum **III. Btn.** ueberfuehrt, das waren noch rund **40** Mann. (*Aus einem Brief Oblt. Dunker vom 18.1.42*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 16-17*)

--**22.-25.12.41**: Verluste der **6 ID** vom 22. bis 25. Dez 41: Ausfaelle an Offz. **20**, an Uffz. u. Mannschaften **586**. Gefechtsstaerken des **IR 58** [28.12.41]: **350** Koepfe, **15** LMG, kein Pak. (Source: *Meldungen der H.Gr.Mitte an OKH vom 28.12.41*; quoted in: *Hofmann, “Schlacht von Moskau,” 175*)

³²⁷ **Note:** The **6. ID** did receive over **1000** replacements in late **Sep 41** and in **Oct 41**. Most of these men (from a replacement battalion that had marched on foot from Wilna) arrived completely exhausted at the front. The report also noted: “Der Ersatz ist, wie die Truppe durchweg meldet, in Bezug auf Ausbildung u. innere Einstellung nicht so gut wie der Ersatz, den die Division zu frueheren Gelegenheiten bekommen hat.” For interesting details see, p. 12)

³²⁸ **Note:** In the Ia KTB of the **6. ID**, one can follow the losses of the division day-by-day throughout month of **Oct 41**, and see how division slowly “bled to death.” These entries from the divisional war diary are posted in Rundbrief No. **52**.

--**25.12.41**: Die Btl.-Staerken betragen etwa **100 Mann**. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6.ID, 97*)

--**27.-28.12.41**: Die Frontstaerke der Einheiten wiesen erschuetternde Zahlen auf, z.B. **III./IR 18** am **27.12** je Kompanie **7** Gewehrtraeger, **5** besetzte M.G. u. **1** besetzten le. Granatwerfer; oder **2. u. 3./Pi.B. 6** am **28.12** je Kompanie **30** Mann (**1** Offz., **4** Uffz., **25** Mann) (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID, 99*)

--**10.1.42**: Am **10. Jan 42** meldet die **6. ID**: Gesamtzahl der als infanteristische Kaempfer im Hauptkampffeld eingesetzten Soldaten: a) einschl. Luftwaffe 1286 Soldaten, b) davon Luftwaffe: **308** Soldaten.³²⁹ Anmerkung: es handelt sich nicht um einen Schreibfehler, es waren wirklich nur **1286**. Aus einer Aufstellung des **H.V.PI. Pleschki** ist zu entnehmen, dass vom **3.-10.1.42** an Ausfaellen an Verwundeten u. Kranken **716** Soldaten zu beklagen waren. (*Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 6*)

--**13.1.42**: Die derzeitigen Ausfaelle durch Artilleriebeschuss sind so hoch, dass die Verteidigung der H.K.L. bei Anhalten des Feinddruckes in kurzer Zeit nicht mehr moeglich ist. Im ganzen wurden abgewehrt: **1** Angriff auf Krupzowo; **4** Angriffe auf Guschtschino; u. **6** Angriffe auf Ranimza. . . Verluste: Offz. **1** gef., **5** verw. Uffz. u. Mannschaften: **36** gef., **113** verw., **1** verm. (*KTB 6. ID*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 9*)

III./IR 18 (6. ID):

--By late **Jul 41**, it had marched more than two-thirds along road to Moscow—**600** miles from East Prussia to *Lake Schutsche* in five weeks! Btn still virtually intact, having suffered only minor losses.

--Battalion casualty list shows **118** names as of early **Nov 41**—i.e., **118** dead and wounded. Just under 15 percent. (*Moscow Tram Stop, p 169*)

--Battalion suffers **182 casualties** on **14.12.41**. (See anecdote above, re: the “suicide battalion.”) Hence, in one afternoon, suffers more losses than in entire Russian campaign to that point. (*Moscow Tram Stop, 226*)

--Battalion strength down to **141 men** (4 officers, 31 NCOs and 106 men) as of **29.12.41** (*Moscow Tram Stop, 282*)

--By **start of Jan 42**, Battalion had **99 men** left. (*Moscow Tram Stop, 299*)

--**3.1.42**: Das dem **IR 37** unterstellte **III./IR 18** musste am linken Fluegel der Division bei Gridino am **3. Jan 42** schwere Angriffe abwehren. Es war nur noch **99** Mann stark u. wurde am naechsten Morgen durch das **III./37** abgeloeest. Der Vorbeimarsch der Reste des **III./18** vor Oberst „Corle“ Becker war ein tiefbewegendes Ereignis. (*Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 6*; also, *Haape, 313-19*)

³²⁹ **Note:** These apparently are „Einheiten des Luftw.-Gefechtsverbandes **VIII. Flieger-Korps**.“ See p. 11 (bottom) of this *Rundbrief*.

--Began campaign with ca. **800** men. Had only **28** of *original men in unit* remaining after first Russian winter (as of about **25.3.42**). Division had also received handful of replacements by this time. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 11, 343, 359.)

--ca. **30.3.42**: Haape's 3. Btn. had grown to strength of **160 men** as a result of receiving some reinforcements (360).

6. PD:

--**6. PD**: Fuer den Zeitraum bis zum **27.11.42** gibt es nur die geschaezte Zahl von rd. **6000** Mann [Verluste seit **1939**], so dass die Gesamtverluste der Division im Kriege rd. **41,000** betragen. (Gesamtverluste vom **27.11.42** bis **30.4.45** = **34,962** = Tote, Verwundete, Vermisste, Kranke). Werden die Kranken davon abgezogen, ergibt sich fuer Verwundete, Tote u. Vermisste die Zahl **30,000** – sie liegt vermutlich noch hoeher, da die Verluste der letzten Tage nicht mehr gezaehlt werden konnten. Die durchschnittliche Divisionsstaerke betrug **10,000**. (*H. Scheibert, 6. Pz.-Div.*, 159)

--**Early Dec 41**: [from divisional KTB]: “The combination of the heavy battle casualties over the past few days w/ the falling temperatures (at noon averaging 25 F; at night averaging -32 F) have caused a severe decline in the division's combat strength. The current combat strength is as follows: (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 89)

IR (mot.) 4: 12 officers / **556** men
IR (mot.) 114: 9 officers / **332** men
K. Btn. 6: 3 officers / **149** men
Total infantry: **19** officers / **784** men
Ave. inf. coy.: 1 officer / **30** men

--**5.12.41**: The **6. PD** has lost almost all of its tanks in **Nov-Dec 41** and has **30-35** men in its panzer companies and **600-700** men in its regiments. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 229, f.n. 19)

--**13.12.41**: **6. PD** possessed only **350** riflemen and no tanks. (*Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 206-10)

--**mid-Dec 41**: **6. PD** had only **180** soldiers left. (*Bartov, A View from Below*, 328; *Reinhardt, Wende*, 206-11)

--**17.1.42**: On this day at *Karmonovo*, the remnants of **6. PD** regrouped; it had lost 80% of its infantrymen; 100% of its tanks and heavy wpns; and the bulk of its motor vehicles. All that remained of combat troops, collected together in *Kampfgruppe Zollenkopf*, were following: a) **IR 4 (mot.)**: two consolidated coys; b) **IR 114 (mot.)**: two consolidated coys; and, c) **Pz.AR 76**: four consolidated coys (fighting as infantry under **II/76** headquarters. The remainder of Panzer **AR 76** had been consolidated under its I (light) and III (heavy) Btns into batteries manning the *division's surviving 24 pieces of field artillery*. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 95)³³⁰

³³⁰ **Note:** These details by General Raus are in part contradictory – says that 100% of heavy wpns have been lost and that remnants of division's AR 76 fighting as infantry; then, writes that the AR 76 still had 24 field pieces available. What seems most likely, is that remaining guns of division were consolidated under

--Feb 42: By mid-Feb 42, returning stragglers and replacements had brought the **6. PD**'s total *combat strength* (*Gefechtsstaerke*) to about **3000** men and a handful of operational tanks. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus, 97*)

7. PD:

--**21.7.41:** **7. PD** had begun the campaign with **255** tanks. By **21.7.41**, **166** had been knocked out and one battalion of its **25. Pz.-Rgt.** was temporarily broken up to keep the other two approaching effective strength. Most of the crews, however, survived; a shortage of tanks might have accounted for Karl's temporary removal from the front line. (Showalter commentary, *K. Fuchs*, 115)

--**21.7.41:** **7. PD** reports a strength of **118** tanks, which indicated **166** had been knocked out (although **96** of these were under repairs). One btn. of **Pz.Rgt. 25** was temporarily broken up to keep the other two at effective strength. (*Manteuffel, 7. Pz.-Div.*, 167)

--**13.12.41:** **7. PD** had a combat strength of barely **200** men. (*Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 206-10)

--**mid-Dec 41:** **7. PD** has only **200** soldiers left. (*Bartov, A View from Below*, 328; *Reinhardt, Wende*, 206-11)

--**27.1.42:** Das Pz.-Rgt. meldet am 27. Januar nur noch vier [4] **Pz 38 (t)** u. einen [1] **Pz IV** einsatzbereit! (*Manteuffel, 7. Pz.-Div.*, 101)³³¹

9. PD:

--**31.10.41:** At **9:00** a.m., **9. PD** reported „ueber Lage u. Absicht;“ among other things, it noted that it was down to just nine [9] „einsatzfaehigen Panzer.“ (*K. Knoblauch, Kampf u. Untergang der 95. ID*, 127)

--**23.11.41:** In his diary, GFM v. Bock notes that this division “currently has no serviceable tanks!” (*Gerbet*, 368)

--**23.11.41:** According to account by Klaus Reinhardt, **9. PD** had grand total of one [1] tank left as of this day. (*Moscow – The Turning Point*, 226; see also, *KTB AOK 2*, 23.11.41)

--**ca 1.12.41:** Der von Hitler gewuenschte Vorstoss der **2 Armee** auf Woronesch scheiterte einfach daran, dass die hierfuer noch in Betracht kommende **9. PD**, die in der Gegend von Tim stand, nur noch ueber einen [1] einsatzbereiten Panzer verfuegte[!]. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 134)

10. PD:

two btns, while artilleryists w/o guns were shepherded into the four consolidated coys to fight as infantry, led by the regiment's II Btn.

³³¹ **Note:** The “Manteuffel” sources cited here are one in English, the other in German.

--1.10.41: General Fischer setzt noch hinzu: „Der jetzt zugeführte Ersatz³³² wir der letzte Ersatz in diesem Jahre sein. Winterbekleidung wird herangeführt werden, sobald dieser Einsatz durchgeführt ist.“ Was den personellen Stand angeht, so steht die Division im Augenblick besser da als je zuvor. An diesem **1.10.** meldet sie eine Verpflegungsstaerke von **18.923 Mann** u. eine Gefechtsstaerke von **16.252 Mann**. Vermutlich sind die hohen Zahlen auf die zahlreichen Unterstellungen zurueckzufuehren, aber ohne Zweifel ist die **10. PD** personell aufgefuellt. (A. Schick, *Die Geschichte der 10. Pz.-Div. 1939-43*, 360-62)

--16.10.41: **10. PD**, which had possessed **200** tanks on 10 Oct., was down to **60** by 16 Oct. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 133)

--15.11.41: Das stolze **7. Pz.Rgt.**, das am **22.6.41** mit 175 Panzer angetreten war, verfuegt an diesem Tage noch ueber 28 Pz III b, 14 Pz IV, also nicht einmal ein Viertel der Ausruecksstaerke; daraus werden **3** Kompanien gebildet. . . Die **Pz.Jg.Abt. 90** verfuegt noch ueber 22 einsatzfaehige Pak von **33**; es sind vorhanden: 6 Pak **5** cm statt **9**, 16 Pak **3.7** cm statt **24**. Das **Art.Rgt. 90** besitzt noch 28 voll einsatzbereite Geschuetze von **36**, kann aber wegen des Ausfalls von Zugmaschinen nur **24** Geschuetze bewegen. (A. Schick, *Die Geschichte der 10. Pz.-Div.*, 413-14)

--15.11.41: Balance of **10. PD's** strength consolidated in *Kampfgruppe Baumgart*, consisting of a motorcycle coy, a tank coy, an inf. coy, and two troops of 88mm guns. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 65; 173, f.n. 77)

--20.11.41: Die Verluste bei der **10. PD** nach den zahlreichen Kaempfen – insbesondere in der letzten Zeit – haben die Division so weit geschwaecht, dass ein alleiniger Einsatz gegen staerkeren Feind keinen grossen Erfolg mehr verspricht. Die Division, die am **2.10.41** mit einer Gefechtsstaerke von **16.252 Mann** (Offz., Uffz., Mannsch.) zum Unternehmen „Taifun“ angetreten ist, wies nur noch eine Gefechtsstaerke von **8958 Mann** auf. Sie ist fast auf die Haelfte zusammengesmolzen. . . wobei die immer vorne eingesetzten Infanteristen u. Pioniere am schwerstens betroffen sind. (A. Schick, *Die Geschichte der 10. Pz.-Div.*, 1939-43, 424-25)

--3.12.41: Das mit 180 Panzer am **2.10.41** angetretene Pz.-Rgt. . . ist zahlenmaessig in den letzten Tagen wieder etwas staerker geworden durch Wiederherankommen liegengebliebener Panzer u. verfuegte am **3.12.41** ueber: 11 Pz II; 17 Pz III; 8 Pz IV. (A. Schick, *Geschichte der 10. Pz.-Div.*, 450)

--7.12.41: Das **Pz.Rgt. 7** besitzt insgesamt 12 Pz II, 19 Pz III, 8 Pz IV. Das **Art.-Rgt. 90** verfuegt noch ueber alle seine l.F.H. **10.5** cm, von **24** Geschuetzen sind aber nur **13** einsatzbereit. Auch alle **8** s.F.H. **15** cm sind zurueckgebracht worden, davon sind **6** einsatzbereit. Von den **10** cm Kanonen ist eine verlorgen gegangen, u. von den restlichen **3** Kanonen sind noch **2** einsatzbereit. Ganz schlimm sieht es bei den Zugmitteln aus, welche die Geschuetze beweglich machen: Von urspruenglich **45** Zugmaschinen sind nur noch **24** uebrig! . . . Die **Pz.Jg.Abt. 90**, die wohl mit **36** Pak-Geschuetzen ausgerueckt ist, besitzt noch **6** Pak **5** cm u. **9** Pak **3.7** cm, also insgesamt **15** Geschuetze. Davon sind **10** einsatzbereit, **5** bei der Instandsetzung. . . [Note: See text for many more details, including personnel losses of the division's two rifle-rgts.] (A. Schick, *Die Geschichte der 10. Pz.-Div.*, 1939-43, 459-61)

³³² Note: In late Sep 41, the division received **500** personnel replacements. (360)

--10.12.41: Die Gefechtstaerke der ganzen Div. betrug:

01.10.41: 410 (Offz.) / 52 (Beamte) / 2.530 (Uffz.) / 13.260
(Mansch.)

10.12.41: 158 (Offz.) / 33 (Beamte) / 999 (Uffz.) / 5.011
(Mansch.)

(A. Schick, *Die Geschichte der 10. Pz.-Div., 1939-43*, 461)

--21.12.41: Das **Pz.Rgt. 7** meldet am **21.12.41** folgende Bestand: Einsatzbereit sind **11 Pz II**, **11 Pz III**, **4 Pz IV**, **1** kleiner u. **2** grosse Befehlswagen! Bei der Einsatzkompanie Schnelle, von der man hoffte, dass sie heute wieder zum Rgt. zurueckkaeme, die aber inzwischen von der **5. PD** vereinnahmt wurde, befinden sich weitere **4 Pz II**, **7 Pz III** u. **3 Pz IV**, aber die werden so bald nicht wieder auftauchen. Darueber hinaus befinden sich noch **5 Pz II**, **12 Pz III** u. **3 Pz IV** bei der Instandsetzung. . . Tatsaechlich ins Gefecht schicken kann das Rgt. also nur **11 Pz III** u. **4 Pz IV**, denn die schwachen **Pz II** koennen nur fuer Aufklaerungs- u. Sicherungsaufgaben verwendet werden. (A. Schick, *Geschichte der 10. Pz.Div., 1939-43*, 475)

--21.12.41: **7. Pz.Rgt. (10. PD)** had a total of **40** tanks, of which **25** were operational (of its **25** operational tanks, **11** were obsolete **Pz IIs**). As of **20.12.41**, division's main strength concentrated in *Kampfgruppe von der Chevallerie*; it comprised infantry, tanks, artillery, engineers and other elements, and was manned by men *combed out of the division's rear services*. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 16, 122-23)

11. PD:

--22.6.-31.12.41: Im Ostfeldzug fielen von der **6.** / **SR 110** vom 22 Jun – 31 Dez 41: **79** Soldaten (meistens Gefr., Schtz., etc.) Ausserdem wurden bis **Dez 41** **210** Maenner teils leicht u. teils schwer verwundet. (Note: Interesting compilation showing date each soldier killed, how he was killed – *Bauchschuss, Gr. Splitter, Kopfschuss* – etc. Worst month was **Jul 41**, when **28** were KIA. During these six months, the company also received replacements on three occasions [dreimaligen Ersatz]). (See, G. Schrodek, *11. Pz.-Div.*, 308-09)

14. ID (mot):

--31.7.41: Die Verlustberichte machen deutlich: bis Ende **Jul 41** hat die Division insgesamt **86** Offiziere, **365** Uffz. u. **1.412** Mannschaften verloren. („*Geschichte des IR 53*“, Verfasser unbekannt)

--16.11.-20.12.41: Die Verluste der Division in der Zeit vom **16 Nov** bis **20 Dez 41** sind sehr hoch: **53** Offiziere, **309** Uffz., **1.473** Mannschaften an Toten, Verwundeten u. Vermissten. Etwa **1.200** Kraftfahrzeuge sind verloren gegangen. („*Geschichte des IR 53*“, Verfasser unbekannt)

--31.12.41: Damit betragen die Gesamtverluste der Division vom **22 Jun** bis zum **31 Dez 41** insgesamt: **216** Offiziere, **1.114** Uffz., **4.432** Mannschaften. Im gleichen Zeitraum konnten als Ersatz nur **40** Offiziere, **306** Uffz. u. **4.864** Mannschaften zur Verfuegung gestellt werden. Das Werturteil des Div.-Kdrs. lautet: „Die Krankenausfaelle sind

besorgniserregend, die Stimmung ist gut, die Truppe ist im Stellungskrieg einsatzfähig. Sie bildet ein hartes u. zuverlässiges Instrument u. besitzt ein wertvolles Ueberlegenheitsgefühl.“ („*Geschichte des IR 53*“, Verfasser unbekannt)

--**31.1.42**: Auf Grund der verheerenden erneuten Verlusten verzeichnet die Division Ende **Jan 42** ein Fehl von **65** Offiziere, **312** Uffz. u. **1.958** Mannschaften. Ueber den Zustand der Truppe urteilt der Div.-Kdr.: „Die Truppe ist nach ihren Abwehrerfolgen wieder aufgelebt u. fuehlt sich dem Feind ueberlegen. Der Gesundheitszustand ist ernst. Als Fusstruppe im Stellungskrieg einsatzbereit.“ Ein Btn.-Arzt stellt fest, dass die Mannschaften voellig erschoeft sind. **50%** haben eitrigue Geschwuere an den Beinen, alle Soldaten sind stark verlaust. Von **220** Mann sind nur **6** voll einsatzfähig u. gesund! („*Geschichte des IR 53*“, Verfasser unbekannt)

--**19.3.42**: Der Div.-Kdr. meldet dem Kom.Gen. des **56. PzK**: „**14. ID [mot.]** nicht mehr einsatzbereit. Die Leistungsfähigkeit der Truppe ist am Ende.“ Der Divisionsarzt, Oberst Dr. Monski, meldet: „**14** Tage Ruhe noetig. Leichenoeffnung ergab voellige Ermattung u. groesste Fettarmut.“ („*Geschichte des IR 53*“, Verfasser unbekannt)

17. ID:

--**5.1.42**: On this day, **17. ID** was holding an eight [8] mile frontage w/ a divisional strength of **1400** men, of which **900** were fighting as infantry. The division would never have been able to break up the attack launched against it that day, said Kuebler, *had not the attackers been completely drunk.* (A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 224)

17. PD:

--**24.11.41**: On this day, the **17 PD** had only **5** tanks left. (KTB AOK 2, 24.11.41; quoted in: K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 237, f.n. 108)

18. ID (mot.):³³³

--During Winter '41, “die Verluste durch Krankheit u. Erfrierungen ueberstiegen die durch Feindeinwirkung um ein vielfaches. Die Notdurft konnten wir nur im Freien verrichten, jedes Mal ein schwerer Entschluss. *Darm- u. Blasenerkrankungen* waren an der Tagesordnung. Die Division hatte vom **11.11.–10.12.41** (= 30 Tage) **2.123 Erkrankungen** (taegl., 70), davon **1.216** oder **57%** mit Frostschaeden!!!“ (de Maiziere, *In der Pflicht*, 72)

--By **late Dec 41**, the combat strength (*Gefechtsstaerke*) of the division's infantry *war zeitweise unter 1.000 Mann* gesunken. (de Maiziere, *In der Pflicht*, 72) Also breakdown of personnel/equipment losses as of **26.12.41** (72-3)

18. PD:

--**7.7.41**: **18 PD** hat noch **30%** der Panzerstosskraft, starke Verluste der Schtz.-Brig. (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 171)

³³³ Note: This division was fighting with *Hr.Gr.Nord* after mid-Aug 41. But illustrates how units of *Hr.Gr.Nord* faced same challenges as those of *Hr.Gr.Mitte*.

--**9.7.41:** v. Goephardt hat in seiner Kp. von **150** Mann nur noch **65** uebrig!...(Tagebuch Kreuter, **SR 101 / 18. PD**)

--ca. **9.7.41:** Ersatzbedarf des **SR 101** nach **18** Tagen Feldzug: **350** Mannschaften, **52** Unteroffz. u. **18** Offz. Notiz des Stabes der Div.: „Die Truppe macht *einen abgespannten Eindruck*. Es fehlt an Ruhe. Die hohen Verluste machen sich bemerkbar. *Kampfkraft stark eingeschaenkt und Waffen ueberholungsbeduerftig.*“ (Friedrich Risse, 5)

--**11.7.41:** As early as **11 Jul 41**, **18. PD** has been reduced to **83** operational tanks representing **39%** of its initial start state. It lost **2279** men, **13.3%** of its strength, in almost **20** days. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 169)

--**28.7.41:** Vom 22.6.41 – 28.7.41 hatte sie **765** Gefallene (darunter **63** Offiziere), **1968** Verwundete u. **377** Vermisste einschliesslich der ihr unterstellten Einheiten. Von **212** Panzer, die durch den Bug gefahren waren, kamen noch **12** einsatzbereit bei Smolensk an. (W. Paul, *Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 121)

--**30.7.41:** Stand 18. PD zwar wie vorgesehen auf den Hoehen von Smolensk, aber sie musste *stark zerschlagen* aus der Front genommen werden. Es fehlten: **153 Offz.**, **593 Uffz.**, **2.607 Mannschaften**. An Geraet: **156 Panzer (von 212!)**...Es waren **755 Gefallene**, **377 vermisst**, **1.968 verwundet**, der Rest krank oder verunglueckt. Die *Infanterie-Teile hatten noch 20% der Gefechtsstaerke*...(Friedrich Risse, 5)

--**1.8.41:** Jetzt ist die Lage noch geklaert! Das Rgt. behaelt nur noch einen Stamm. Meine Kp. besteht nur noch aus dem Chef, Hptfw., 2 Ordonnanzen, Geraeteverwalter, Schirrmeister. Alles andere soll versetzt werden! Vorlaeufig kommen sie zum Feldersatzbtl. Auch die Fahrzg. u. alles Geraet wird abgegeben. (Note: Apparently, remains of SR 101 transferred for the most part to SR 52. SR 101 to be rebuilt. Confirm!) (Tagebuch Kreuter)

--**Nov 41:** By this time, the **18. PD** fielded only **14** tanks. (Bartov, *A View from Below*, 327; W. Paul, *Geschichte der 18. PD*, 110, 125)

--**25.12.41:** [Weihnachten 1941]: Die **18. PD** hatte nur noch **30 % ihrer Kampfstaerke**. (W. Paul, *Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 124)

--**1.1.-24.2.42:** Gab es **764** blutige Verluste aber auch **1.397** Kranke mit mehr als drei Wochen Ausfall [here = absence]. Die Krankheiten nahmen immer mehr zu. Das lag neben der Winterkaelte auch an der *Erschoepfung der Truppen*. (Siegfried Risse, 6)

--**1.2.42:** Uebergab Nehring die **18. PD** mit einer Kampfstaerke von **3149** Mann dem *Generalmajor Frhr. v. Thuengen*. (W. Paul, *Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 125)

--over three month period (**Dez 41 – Mar 42**), 18. PD had following losses: **353** Gefallene, **40** Vermisste, **1.431** Verwundete u. **4.362** Kranke (Erfrierungen, Fleckfieber, allgemeine Erschoepfung). Das **SR 101** hatte davon nur in dem letzten Monat: **119** tote, **318** verwundete, **221** Kranke. Davon wieder das **II/101** in nur 14 Tagen **233** Ausfaelle. Ausserdem war die 18. PD mit noch **12% einsatzfaehige KFZ** aber mit 1.119

Panjeschlitten u. 268 Pferdegespannen praktisch von mot. wieder „hott“ geworden!
(Siegfried Risse, 6)

20. PD:

--**Aug-Sep 41:** Das **Pz.Rgt. 21** war waehrend der Ruhetage vom **2. bis 17. Aug 41** gezwungen, von drei [3] Pz.-Abt. eine aufzuloesen. Vier [4] Wochen spaeter musste eine weitere Pz.-Abt. aufgeloeset werden, da bei einer Ausrueckstaerke am **22.6.41** von **195** Panzerfahrzeugen nur noch rund **60** einsatzfaehig waren. (K.W. Andres, *Napoleon vs. Hitler*, 5)

--**6.-7.9.41:** Anfang **Sep 41** waren die Panzer u. Radfahrzeuge des **Pz.Rgts. 21** so zusammengeschmolzen, dass sie gerade noch zur Ausstattung einer Abteilung ausreichten. So waren z.B. nach den Unterlagen ueber die Pz.-Staerke der **III. Abt.** von der Ausrueckstaerke am **22.6.41** von **69** Panzer am **6 Sep 41** nur noch **26** einsatzbereit, u.a. von den **12** fuer den Einsatz im Ostfeldzug voellig ungeeigneten **Pz I** nur noch einer. In einem Divisionstagesbefehl vom **7 Sep 41** heisst es u.a.: „Infolge der durch siegreiche Gefechte u. schwierigste Maersche verursachten Kfz-Ausfaelle ist eine Umgliederung der Division notwendig geworden, welche der Aufloesung der“ . . . es folgt die Auffuehrung von sieben [7] einzeln bezeichneten Verbaenden u. Einheiten. . . (K.W. Andres, *Panzersoldaten im Russlandfeldzug*, 102)

--**5.10.41:** Das **Pz.Rgt. 21** bestand aufgrund der grossen Verluste an Panzern u. Radfahrzeugen nur noch aus dem Rgts.-Stab u. der **III. Abt.** (K.W. Andres, *Erlebnisbericht*, 1)

--**31.12.41:** Die personellen Ausfaelle im **Pz.Rgt. 21** in der Zeit vom **22.6.41** bis **31.12.41** einschliesslich des Panzerschuetzenbataillons³³⁴ fuer die gesamte Zeit seines Einsatzes waren, gemessen an der Ausrueckstaerke von rund **2.200** Mann u. der jeweiligen Zufuehrung von Soldaten aus den Ersatzabteilungen, erschreckend hoch: **330** Gefallene, **962** Verwundete u. Erfrierungskranke, **304** Kranke u. eine unbekannte Zahl von Vermissten. . . Bereits am **3 Dez 41** meldete die **4 Pz.Gr.**, dass die Angriffskraft am Ende sei. . . Als Beispiel fuer die Ausfaelle das **Pz.Rgt. 21**, das mit am weitesten auf Moskau vorgedrungen war: Von **195** Panzerfahrzeuge zu Beginn des Feldzuges am **22.6.41** waren Ende **Dez 41**, trotz mehrfachen Einsatzes, gerade noch **6** Panzer einsatzbereit. (K.W. Andres, **20. PD**, *Erlebnisbericht*, 8; for tank losses see, Andres, *Panzersoldaten im Russlandfeldzug*, 110)

--**3.2.42:** Am **3 Feb 42** war folgender Befehl gekommen: Die **III./Pz.Rgt. 21** stellt aus den Resten eine (!) Panzerkompanie zusammen, Fuehrer Oblt. „K.,“ alles uebrige formiert sich zu zwei [2] Schuetzen-Kompanien. (*Tagebuch Oblt. „K.,“ 15.2.42*; quoted in: K.W. Andres, *Panzersoldaten im Russlandfeldzug*, 114)

23. ID:

--**ca 26.7. 41** [Nach dem Fall Mogilevs]: Die Verluste des **IR 9** seit Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges betragen **88** Gefallene, darunter **5** Offiziere; **309** Verwundete,

³³⁴ **Note:** This was an inf.-btn. formed in **Nov 41** from tank crews w/o tanks. Germans were desperate for infantry by this time.

darunter **10** Offizier; u. **31** Vermisste. (*Nayhauss-Cormons, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen*, 163)

--**6./IR 67** ist noch **65** Mann stark. (Date?) (*Gefr. Hans Joachim C., 23. ID, BfZ*)

--**ca. Dec 41**: The Potsdam **23. ID**, already w/o its divisional cdr, whose health could not stand up to the rigours of climate and campaign, had reformed its **9** btns [of inf.] to three [**3**] on account of losses, and had hardly **1000** infantry left; its divisional artillery had been reduced to one [**1**] **50mm** AT gun and **3** howitzers. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 232)

--**ca. 6.12.41**: Die Verluste der Division seit Beginn des Russland-Feldzuges hatten sich auf **4956** Mann erhoehet, davon waren **1415** gefallen, **3377** verwundet u. **164** Soldaten vermisst. (*Nayhauss-Cormons, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen*, 204)³³⁵

--**31.1.42**: German **23 ID** has around **1000** men left at its disposal. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 211)

--**Feb 42**: Im Februar 1942 hatte das **IR 9** einige Ruhetage hinter der Front erhalten. Es war durch den schweren Winterfeldzug so dezimiert, dass ihm **27** Offiziere, **210** Uffz. u. **1516** Mannschaften fehlten. Ersatz kam nur schleppend heran. Das Rgt. wurde am **26.2.42** zurueck nach Wjasma verlegt u. voruebergehend der **5. PD** unterstellt. (*Nayhauss-Cormons, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen*, 241)

--**15.5.42**: Dem **IR 9** fehlten am 15. Mai 42: **48** Offiziere, **355** Uffz. u. **1972** Mannschaften. Das ausgeblutete Rgt. musst zur Auffrischung aus der Ostfront herausgenommen u. in den Westen verlegt werden. (*Nayhauss-Cormons, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen*, 241)

26. ID:

--**15.8.41** (approx.): IR 37 (6. ID) dispatched to 26. ID to relieve its **IR 39**. According to *Stabarzt Lierow*: "Die Division [26.ID] hatte sehr schwere Verluste...Ihre Verluste waren selten hoch, ca. **2000 Mann** Ausfall. Ein Bataillon der **77er** hat den **8. Kommandeur**, die anderen sind tot oder verwundet. (*Tagebuch Stabarzt Lierow, IR 37 / 6. ID*, 15.8.41)

29. ID (mot):

--**9.12.41** [Foto]: Die letzten drei [**3**] Geschuetze unseres stolzen **Art.-Rgts.** bei Podossinki in Feuerstellung. (*F. Goette, 29. Falke-Division*, 84)

31. ID:

--**IR 82** had crossed the Bug on **22 Jun 41** with its full authorized strength (*Sollstaerke*) of ca. 3000 men. (*Hossbach*, 137)

³³⁵ **Note:** Some **1250** of these casualties had come during the first six (**6**) days of Operation "Taifun," from **2.-.7.10.41!** (See p. 178)

--By **10 Nov 41**, **IR 82** had lost one-third of its personnel (800 to combat; 200 to sickness); about a third of these losses had been made up via the return of recovered sick/wounded to the unit. Thus, regiment had ca. 2200 men on **11 Nov**. Hossbach notes that these losses were hardly atypical: states that Guderian set the combat strength of the German infantry on **13 Nov** at about *50 men per company*. If his assessment accurate, it would mean that Guderian's 2. Panzerarmee had lost more than 50 percent of its infantry before the onset of the winter. (*Hossbach*, 137)

--On **7 Dec 41**, cdr of **31. ID** reports to XXXXIII. AK that due to losses his division is no longer capable of resisting a major Soviet attack. Average strength of nine rifle companies in each of the division's three regiments (**12.**, **17.**, **82.**) is reported as follows to the AK:

IR 12: 1 Offizier / 7 Uffz. / 33 Mann

IR 17: 1 Offizier / 3 Uffz. / 14 Mann

IR 82: 1 Offizier / 6 Uffz. / 25 Mann

Losses force **I.R. 82** to reorganize—eliminate *six* of its nine rifle companies. Each battalion now consists of *one* rifle company and two platoons from their M.G. companies; other regiments follow suit. Also, the rear services (Trosse, Handwerker, Schreibstuben) combed thru to find more fighters. (*Hossbach*, 168-9)

--**30.12.41-2.1.42**: Elements of **IR 12**, defending the key point in the line of **31.ID** near Kaluga (the village of *Krutizy*) suffered ca. **400** losses; among them, the regimental cdr, who was severely wounded. Regiment would successfully defend this village until the general withdrawal continued on the 9th of January. (Note: Losses of already depleted German forces often prohibitive during the winter fighting.) (*Hossbach*, 181)

--**early Jan 42**: Strength of **IR 82** down to *2 1/2 reinforced companies*. (*Hossbach*, 189)

--**20-27.1.42**: **IR 82**, while subordinated to **LVII. PzK.** and **52. ID**, conducts five (5) attacks. Fighting in several villages (*Das "Namenlose" Dorf, Bokscheno and Aksenowo*) "uebertreffen alle vorherigen Erlebnisse an Haerte." Rgt returns to **31. ID** on **29 Jan** with a *Kampfkraft* of **177 Mann!** Rgt now consists of a single battalion (**I./82**), that is actually a weak rifle company with a handful of heavy wpns. Other two battalions (**II.** and **III./82**) are disbanded.³³⁶ (*Hossbach*, 199-200)

--Hossbach lists remaining strength of battalions of **IR 17** (most companies now under 50 Mann); and of **II./449** (which had been attached to **31. ID**) (*Hossbach*, 202)

35. ID:

--**Oct 41**: By mid/late **Oct 41**, many of the division's rifle coys down to little more than **30** men. (*Seaton, Russo German War*; also, *Baumann, Die 35. Inf.-Div.*, 114-17)

--**Nov 41**: By November, „*Gefechtsstaerke der Schuetzenkompanien waren auf 25 bis 30 Soldaten abgesunken.*“ (*Kameradendienst 35 e.V.*, *35. Inf.-Div.*, 96).

³³⁶ Following arrival of some replacements, in mid-Feb 42 a company of the **II./82**, the **5./82**, was reestablished. (200)

--5.12.41: **35. ID**'s infantry companies number **50-60** men. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 229, f.n. 19)

--6.12.41-10.1.42: From **6 Dec 41**, this German division [**35. ID**] had lost **80** officers and over **2000** men, ½ of these thru frostbite; and, on **10 Jan 42**, the weakest inf.-rgt. had a strength of **270** men, while the strongest numbered no more than **390**. Yet compared w/ other formations these strengths were not low [!]. Although the troops were exhausted, the *efficiency and morale of the division remained tolerably good*. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 253-54; also, *Baumann, Die 35. ID*, 141-45)

--6.12.41-11.1.42 [approx.]: Seit Beginn des Rueckzuges am **6. Dec 41**, verlor die Division **80** Offiziere u. **2047** Uffz. u. Mannschaften, dazu viele Ausfaelle durch Erfrierungen. (*Kameradendienst 35 e.V., 35. Inf.-Div.*, 104).

--11.1.41: Im KTB der Division sind unter dem **11. Jan 42** folgende *Gefechtsstaerken* enthalten:

	<u>IR 34</u>	<u>IR 109</u>	<u>IR 111</u>
I. Btl:	153	92	164
II. Btl:	107	102	115
III.Btl:	108	86	116

(Source: *Kameradendienst 35 e.V., 35. Inf.-Div.*, 104).

--ca. **Jan 42**: Eines Tages ging 'die' Artillerie der **35. ID**, bestehend aus **2 I.F.H.**, etwa **400** m hinter meiner Btl., genau in der Hauptschussrichtung, in Stellung. . . Beim Rueckzug von Moskau hatte die Division fast ihre gesamte – *pferdebespannte* – Artillerie verloren, weil z.T. die *hydraulisch* verriegelten Holme [*trails*] der Spreizlafetten [*split trail gun carriages*], da eingefroren, nicht mehr geschlossen werden konnten. Eine der haeufigen komplizierten Fehlkonstruktionen. Im Kampf bewaehrte sich immer nur das Einfache! (*C. Hamann, (2./ Pz.Art.Rgt. 119 / 11.PD)*, "Im Osten – Anfang 1942," in: *Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch*, 1998)

--mid-**Jan 42**: Auch die Lama-Stellung konnte nicht lange gehalten werden. Erst Mitte **Jan 42** wurde der russ. Vormarsch gestoppt. Die **35. ID** bezog Stellung ostwaerts von Gshatsk. Das KTB der Division verzeichnete fuer das **I./IR 34** nur noch eine Gefechtsstaerke von **153** Mann; beim **II.** u. **III./IR 34** waren es sogar nur noch **107** u. **108** Mann. Allein seit dem Beginn des Rueckzuges am **6 Dez 41** hatte die Division Ausfaelle von **80** Offiziere u. **2.047** Uffz. u. Mannschaften gehabt. (*I. Moebius, Ritterkreuztraeger Georg Bleher erzaehlt*, 67-68)

--ca. **1.2.41**: In the six [**6**] weeks following Hitler's standstill order, **35. ID** lost over **2500** men, more than **1/3** of its casualties [since **22.6.41**]. Of these losses, over **1000** are due to severe frostbite. The division has only **2 50mm** AT guns left and **6** field howitzers. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 232; also, *Baumann, Die 35. Inf.-Div.*, 143)

--**4.3.-15.4.42**: Die Kaempfe im Raum Gshatsk dauerten noch bis zum **15 Apr 42** an, dann gestanden die Sowjets ihre Niederlage ein. Kleine oertliche Erfolge waren mit hohen Verlusten erkauf worden. Der erhoffte Durchbruch war ihnen jedoch nicht gelungen. Aus der Chronik der **35. ID** geht hervor, dass im Zeitraum vom **4 Mar – 15 Apr 42**, **221** Angriffe in Kompanie- bis Divisionsstaerke, davon **78** mit Panzer-

unterstuetzung abgewehrt worden waren. Der Gegner hatte dabei etwa **10.000** Tote zu beklagen gehabt. Aber auch die **35. ID** hatte schwere Verluste erlitten. **12** Offiziere u. **411** Mannschaften u. Uffz. waren gefallen; **26** Offiziere u. **1.251** Mannschaften u. Uffz. verwundet; und **1** Offizier u. **134** Mannschaften u. Uffz. galten als vermisst. (*I. Moebius, Ritterkreuztraeger Georg Bleher erzaehlt, 73-74*)

78. ID:

-- **14.11.41:** Durch die erheblichen Verluste, die **IR 238** bei Wjasma erlitten hat, wird das Rgt. am **14 Nov 41** aufgeloeset. Die **Pz.Jaeg.Abt. 178** u. **Aufkl.Abt. 178** werden zur "Schnellen Abteilung **178**" zusammengefasst. (*F. Vetter, 78. Infanterie- u. Sturm-Division, 57*)

--**28.10.-11.12.41:** This division, part of **9. AK**, had suffered **2400** casualties between **28 Oct** and **11 Dec 41** and had disbanded two [2] of its infantry btns. to reinforce the remainder. This brought the infantry coys up to **50** men each, but these were in poor physical shape and were suffering wretchedly from the cold, second-degree frostbite, bowel disorders, boils and suppurating sores. The horses were so weakened that nothing could be asked of them. (For more details see, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 207-08*)

86. ID:

--**15.12.41:** Die Division, die bei Beginn der fdl. Offensive *noch fast volle Kampfstärke hatte, schmolz durch blutige Verluste, vor allem aber durch Erfrierungen so stark zusammen*, dass das **IR 167** am **15 Dez 41** zu einem Batl. zusammengelegt werden musste u. **I./184** nur noch ueber **5** Offiziere, **21** Unteroffiziere u. **81** Mann verfuegte. . . Die Ausfaelle waren so stark, dass viele Kompanien von *Feldwebeln* gefuehrt werden mussten, da alle Offiziere ausgefallen waren. . . (*Source: E. Meinecke, „Ostfeldzug der 86. ID“*)

95. ID:

--**13.12.41:** Die **95. ID**, die am **4 Jul 41** mit **12.655** Mann den Vormarsch nach Osten angetreten hatte, verfuegte am **13 Dez 41** nur noch ueber rund **1.800** Gewehrtraeger. Die Substanz der kaempfenden Teile war auf **14%** des Solls geschrumpft u. der Divisionsabschnitt nach u. nach auf ca. **55** km Breite [!] ausgedehnt worden. [**Note:** Shortly thereafter, division begins to withdraw towards and ultimately behind the Tim.] (*K. Knoblauch, Kampf u. Untergang der 95. ID, 167*)

98. ID:

--**27.9.41:** Rifle companies had only **30** to **40** of the original men left and from 31 July to 10 August a single inf. rgt. lost **37** officers and **1200** men. The division was **3800** men understrength on **27 Sep 41** when the first reinforcements arrived, and of these one btn. received **37** men and reported the replacements as a drop in the ocean. . . Gradually, the

most simple necessities were missing: razor blades, soap, tooth paste, shoe materials, needles and thread. (*Gareis, Kampf u. Ende der 98. Inf.-Div.*, ca. 125-130)³³⁷

--**Oct/Nov 41**: *Albert Seaton* notes that, by late Oct / early Nov, some of the inf. coys of the division were only **20** men strong. They were led by 2nd lieutenants or sergeants. (*Seaton, Russo- German War*, 187; also, *Gareis, Kampf u. Ende der 98. Inf.-Div.*, ca. 142-60)

--**Nov 41**: One regiment [of **98 ID**] had lost **50** officers and **1673** NCOs and men – **2/3** of its officers and over half its men – since the beginning of the campaign. Overall, **98 ID** had lost **5881** men – **1/3** of its total strength but more than half of its actual fighting men. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 198; also, *M. Gareis, Kampf u. Ende der 98. ID*, 160-62)³³⁸

--**Early Jan 42**: **IR 289**, which at full establishment should have had a strength of nearly **2000** men, was reformed as a btn., since it numbered only **120** men and was commanded by a captain. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 222)

106. ID:

--**ca Dec 41**: The Westphalian Rhineland **106. ID**, once a first class formation, had hardly any of its original leaders and disposed of only **500** infantry. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 232)

--**5.12.41**: **IR 240 (106. ID)** is now down to ca. **600** men. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 229, f.n. 19)

--**27.12.41**: Die Gefechtsstaerke der **106. ID** besteht nur noch aus **300** Gewehrtraeger. (Source: *KTB PzGr 4* vom 27.12.41; quoted in: *Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau,"* 175)

--**31.1.42**: **106 ID** has **500** men left in the combat line. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 211)

110. ID:

--**31.12.41 (I/IR 254)**: Die Kampfstaerke der Schuetzenkompanien betraegt je Einheit ca. **30** Mann, die **4.** (M.G.) **Kp.** hat noch **50** Mann zur Verfuegung. (*M. Drews, 110. ID, Erlebnisbericht*)

112. ID:

--**26.6.-20.11.41 [II./IR 256]**: Ausfaelle des Btns. Gefallen: **106**. Verwundet oder vermisst: **275**. Zusammen: **379** Mann, darunter **18** Offiziere, **64** Uffz., **297** Mannsch. Krank: **206** (darunter **40** Offz., **27** Uffz., **175** Mannsch.) Somit Gesamtausfaelle des Btns. **585** Mann gegenueber eine Anfangsstaerke von [ca.] **700** Mann. (*Dr. E. Willich, 112. ID, „Bericht ueber die Erfahrungen auf dem Gebiet des Sanitaetswesens“*)

³³⁷ **Note:** On 14 Sep 41, **98 ID** left the Pripet Marshes and **6 Army** of AGS and began its long march NE following in Guderian's wake to AGC, ready for the thrust on Moscow. For interesting details of its march to AGC see, *Seaton*, 174.

³³⁸ Check M. Gareis for exact date of this entry.

--26.6.-31.12.41: Gefallen = **1 368 (54)**; Vermisst = **400 (4)**; Verwundet = **3 956 (164)**. Abgaenge durch Feindeinwirkung = **5 946**. Abgaenge durch Krankheit in dieser Zeit = **3 560**. Zusammen = **9 506**. Aus Lazaretten kehrten in dieser Zeit zurueck: ca. **1 000**. Ausfaelle insgesamt = **8 506**. (Note: By far the greatest losses were in the **3** Inf.-Rgts. of the division. In fact, over **4500** of the total KIA, missing and wounded – out of just under **6000** total – were from the **3** inf.rgts. See document for precise figures of losses for all three inf.-rgts.) (BA-MA, RH 26-112/95: „Taetigkeitsbericht Divisionsarzt 112. ID“)

--31.10.41 [IR 256]: Verlustzahlen: Ausfaelle des Rgts im Monat **Okt 41** (Schlacht v. Brjansk, Dauer **9** Tage): **97** tot; **178** verwundet; **13** vermisst; **58** krank = **348** (total). (Dr. E. Willich, **112. ID**, „Bericht ueber die Erfahrungen auf dem Gebiet des Sanitaetswesens“)

--1.-20.11.41 [IR 256]: **24** tot; **116** verwundet (davon **10** Offiziere); **2** vermisst; **14** krank. Zusammen **220**.³³⁹ E. Willich, **112. ID**, „Bericht ueber die Erfahrungen auf dem Gebiet des Sanitaetswesens“)

--13.11.41: Die Gefechtsstaerken der Inf.-Kompagnien waren auf **50** Mann abgesunken. (Guderian, „Vorstoss auf Tula [Schluss],“ 824)

--23.11.41: On this day, **112. ID** reported **20** rifles as the average fighting strength of its companies. (GSWW, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 694, f.n. 536)

--ca. 26.11.41: Gesamt Gef.-Staerke der Infanterie = **800** Mann. Blutige Verluste **22.6. - 21.11.41** = **5070**; davon in den Kaempfen um Bogorodizk **630**; am **23.11.** weitere **230**. (Operationen der **2. Pz. Armee**, RH 21-2/910)

--25.12.41 [approx.]: Liwny wird von Teilen der **3./Fla 602**, von der **4./Fla 46** sowie der **4. u. 5./Flak 231** bis zum **24 Dez 41** gehalten. Kurz darauf schickt Hitler ein Telegramm u. spricht den Verteidigern von Liwny Dank u. Anerkennung aus. Gleichzeitig befiehlt Hitler aber der **112. ID**, die Susha-Oka – Stellung unter allen Umstaenden zu halten. Dabei hat diese Division insgesamt keine **1000 Gewehre** mehr, aber einen Gefechtsstreifen von **30 km**, in die sich frueher beinahe **10** Divisionen teilten! Sie besitzt von:

87 Panzerbuechsen noch **15**
452 l.MG noch **170**
100 s.MG noch **25**
75 l.Gr.W. noch **15**
48 s.Gr.W. noch **20**
67 Pak noch **33**
an leichter Artillerie noch **50%**
an schwere Artillerie gar nichts mehr!

(H. Freter, *Fla nach vorn*, 422)

³³⁹ Note: Figures only add up to **156** not **220**. In fact, figures don't entirely agree for most of the entries from Dr Willich.

134. ID:

--26.12.41: **2 Armee:** ...Gefechtsstaerke der Btl. der **134 ID** teilweise auf **80** Mann gesunken. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 101)

167. ID:

--13.11.41: Die Gefechtsstaerken der Inf.-Kompagnien waren auf **50** Mann abgesunken. (*Guderian, „Vorstoss auf Tula [Schluss],“* 824)

197. ID:

--25.12.41: Seit **2.8.[41]** sind wir nun *in dauerndem Einsatz mit nur wenigen Tagen Unterbrechung*. Die Kompanie [8. MG], so wie wir in *Bammental* ausgezogen sind, besteht fast nicht mehr, *wir haben rund 90% Ausfaelle zu verzeichnen*, Tote, Verwundete u. Vermisste mit eingerechnet. (*Scheuer, Briefe aus Russland, 8./IR 321, 56*)

252. ID:

--24.10.-31.12.41: Nach dem Buch „Das **IX. AK** im Ostfeldzug **1941**,“ von Hermann Geyer, dem Kom.-Gen. des Korps, hatte die **252. ID** vom **24 Okt – 31 Dez 41** **2700 – 3000** Verluste. Ein ehemaliger Sanitaets-Gefreiter der Division, Pater Michael Buegers OSB, schrieb, dass vom **24 Nov** bis **14 Dez 41** die **2. Sanitaetskompanie 252 ueber 2800 Soldaten** versorgt habe! (*„Angriff auf Moskau,“ A. v. Garn, 252. ID*)

--16.-30.11.41: Gegen neue sibirische Truppen begann am **19 Nov 41** der Angriff auf Moskau. Trotz taeglich zunehmender Schwierigkeiten bei Wetter, Versorgung u. Sanitaetsdienst war er erfolgreich, aber *sehr verlustreich*. Am **30 Nov 41** meldete das **IX AK** u.a.: “Die noerdlichste Division (= **252**) des Korps hat vom **16-30 Nov 41** rund **1600** Mann verloren.“ (*H. Geyer, Das IX. AK im Ostfeldzug; courtesy of A. v. Garn, 252. ID*)

--19.-21.11.41: Aus der Meldung der **252. ID** an das **IX AK** vom **22 Nov 41**: “Eigene Verluste vom **19-21 Nov 41** (= 3 Tage!) **25** Offz. U. **1044** Mann.“ (*Erinnerungen an Herbst u. Winter 1941/42, A. v. Garn*)

--10.1.42: Staerkemeldung der Division vom **10 Jan 42**: Gesamtsollstaerke: **16.623** / derzeit. Gef.-Staerke: **6.040** / Abgestellte Trosse mit Kranken/Leichtverw.: **2.323** / Vers. Truppen: **1.941** / Verluste seit dem **22.6.41**: **8.204** / darin enthalten die vom **19.11.-31.12.41**: **2850 + 3000** Kranke. (Source: *A. v. Garn*)

--30.6.42: Am **30 Jun 42** zaehlte das DivKdo die Verluste ab **22 Jun 41** () = Offz.: gefallen: **1571 (65)**; verwundet: **5317 (125)**; vermisst: **324**; Erfrierungen: **1937 (22)**; gesamt: **9149**. (*statistics courtesy of W. Werner, provenance unclear but in context looks reasonably authoritative, perhaps from BA-MA*)

260. ID (11./IR 480):

--5.11.41: ...Wir haben in der Kompanie bis jetzt **49** Tote u. **91** Verwundete. (*O'Fw. Emil K., 11./IR 480, BfZ*)

--7.11.41: Wir [his company] ruecken in Staerke von 2-9-68 in Stellung ein.“ (Weller Tgb)

--15.11.41: „II. Btl. hat Komp. mit nur noch 20 Mann! Divis.Befehl geht ein: Belehrung ueber das Verhalten in der Stadt Moskau!!!. (Weller Tgb)

--„Kp.Staerke vorne 56! (statt 100). (Weller Tgb, 17.11.41) By 19./20.11, his company down to “1 Offz., 2 Uffz!!!, 32 Mann!” By 23.11.41, his company has *Gefechtsstaerke* von 1-1-12. Remnants of II.Btn (10 Uffz./66 Mann) used to rebuild Weller’s 11. Kompanie (26.11.41)

--27.1.42: Gefechtsstaerke des IR 470 = 5 Offiziere u. 100 Uffz. u. Mannschaften. (Kameradenhilfswerk, 260. ID e.V., 90)

292. ID:

--31.12.41: On New Year’s Eve, the 292. ID was holding a divisional sector about eight [8] miles wide w/ rifle coys which, although down to only 30 men, were still stronger than those of its neighbors. (A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 227-28; also, Nitz, *Die 292. ID*, 78)

--1.1.41: On New Year’s night 292. ID holding a divisional sector about 8 miles wide w/ rifle companies which, although down to only 30 men, were still stronger than those of its neighbors. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 231; also, Nitz, *292. Inf.-Div.*, 78)

IR “GD:”

--20.-21.2.42: Drei [3] Offiziere u. 30 Uffz. u. Mannschaften – Das ist der Rest des einst so stolzen „Verstaerkten Inf.-Rgts. Grossdeutschland“ – Ohne schwere Waffen u. Trosse! Ich bin einer von diesen 30 Mannschaften. [Note: According to author, the „GD“ consisted at this time of five [5] btns., and included nine [9] rifle coys among its total of 20 coys – including Inf.-Geschuetze-, Pz.Jaeger-, Pioniere-, Kradschuetzen-, Sturmgeschuetze- u. Fla-Kompanien.] Von 9 reinen Schuetzenkompanien (Soll-Staerke 150 Mann), das sind 1.350 Mann, kaempfen an diesen Tagen (20-21 Feb 42) noch 30 Mann! Dabei sind wir (8. MG-Kp.) mit 2 schweren MG u. eine Gruppe (2 Werfer) schwerer Granatwerfer. (Dr H. Rehfeldt, *Mit dem Eliteverband des Heeres „GD“*, 115-16)

1.8.4: Officer & NCO Casualties:

a) Officers:

Note: According to British Army colonel, *Robert Kershaw*, the “equivalent of three [3] divisions’ worth of officers were killed in the first seven [7] days of the campaign.” (*War Without Garlands*, 145)

From all accounts, clear that *officer losses were prohibitively high*. In early August 1941, the *Ordonnanzoffizier* to General *Heusinger* (Chef Op.Abtl. des Heeres) complained of the high losses of officers. (see, *Tagebuch Muenchhausen*). See also, *Tagebuch Lemelsen* (16.8.41) for

his lamentations about officer losses of **29. ID (mot.)**, including the son of GFM Keitel (Lt Keitel, AR 29)

From **1941** onwards, *junior officers* in the German army suffered *disproportionate casualties*; so bad that an *infantry subaltern's* chances of returning home in one piece from the Russian front compared *unfavorably* w/ those of a U-boat crewman or fighter pilot. Command of companies frequently devolved on non-commissioned ofc's. Even the NCOs, the *backbone* of the German army, were disappearing much faster than they could be replaced. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 118)

--**Jun-Jul 41**: By third week of campaign, total German casualties had *exceed those of the entire French campaign of 1940*. Officers were perishing during this initial period at the rate of **500** per week (**524** died between **22.6.41** and the beginning of July), w/ **1540** officer casualties occurring in the first 7 days of the offensive. This figure represented the combined officer establishments of three [3] German inf.-divs. (The establishment of one inf.-div. was **518** officers). German officer casualties in first five [5] weeks of *Ostfeldzug* represent **5.9%** of the total. They could not be easily replaced. Officer training lasted **14-18** months. By end of **Jul 41**, **2433** officers have been killed and **5464** wounded – an equivalent casualty rate of more than **15** divisions' worth of officers [!]. (R. Kerhsahw, *War Without Garlands*, 169-71)

--**Jun-Jul 41**: General Halder remarks on the “remarkably high officer casualties” only three [3] days into the campaign, compared to the “moderate” losses of wounded and killed [for NCOs and men?]. In early **Jul 41** he remarks again on the higher proportion of officer losses, which by then were **6.6%** of total deaths compared to the previous experience of **4.85%** in France and **4.6%** in Poland. (Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 171; also, *Halder KTB*, 24.6. & 6.7.41)³⁴⁰

--**27.8.41**: *Allein 24 Offiziere sind ausgefallen, davon sind 9 tot.*³⁴¹ Aus den 14 Kampftagen hat mein Btn. noch die Staerke einer starken Kompanie...Es war ein schwerer Tag, der 27.8. (*Stabarzt Lierow, II./IR 37/6. ID*)

--**2.10.41**: On eve of the Moscow offensive, the *Ostheer* has lost **1/3** of its officer strength (a total of **37** division equivalents from **117** divisions) which had started the campaign. (R. Kerhsahw, *War Without Garlands*, 171)

--**31.10.41**: Our losses have become *quite considerable*. In the army group's area, *more than 20 battalions are under the command of lieutenants*. (*Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 347)

--**15.11.41 [6. ID]**: [Der Offizierbestand] ist bei den Inf.-Rgtern. nach **5** Monaten Ostfeldzug sehr zusammengeschrumpft. Besonders empfindlich waren die Ausfaelle an Kompanie- u. Zugfuehrer. Ueber den Notetat [?] hinaus (Schtz.-Kp. = 1 Kp.-Fuehrer u. Zugfuehrer, schw.Kp. = 1 Kp.-Fuehrer u. 2 Zugfuehrer) waren bei den Inf.-Rgtern am **15.11.41** insgesamt nur noch **6** Offiziere vorhanden. Aus dieser Lage heraus musste die Division erstmalig Offiziere aus der Fuehrerreserve der H.Gr.Mitte anfordern. . .

³⁴⁰ Kershaw: “There is no logical reason for this beyond the spirit of sacrificial patriotism” and youthful idealism. (172)

³⁴¹ Running like a thread throughout the “*Tagebuch Lierow*” are the constant references to officers killed or wounded. Losses of officers in his Btl., etc., extremely high.

(*Taetigkeitsbericht der Abteilung IIa*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 51*, 12)

--**19.11.41**: Die letzten 3 Tage waren besonders schwer. [Note: The Russians attacked 4th Army's *Ostflanke* west of *Sserpuchow* w/ 5 divs., causing a major crisis.] Es waren sorgenvolle Stunden...Nur mit Hilfe einiger beherzter Fuehrer, der Artillerie u. der Stuka's ist es nochmal gerade so abgegangen. Aber wieder sind Kommandeure u. Chefs ausgefallen (*in einer Division 13 Kompanie-Chefs tot!* das ist fast die Haelfte, da kein Rgt. noch mehr als 2 Bataillone zu je **150 Mann** hoechstens hat.) (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 135)³⁴²

--**25.11.41**: *Wir haben Kompanien, die schon ihren neunten Fuehrer haben.* Von meinem alten Regiment sind von **43** Offiziere **18** gefallen...(Oblt. *August D.*, **Kdo. 131. ID**, *BfZ*)

--**Dec 41**: *Nun bin ich noch der letzte Offiziere des Bataillons* seit seiner Aufstellung am 1.2.1940. (*Stabarzt Lierow*, **II./IR 37/6. ID**)

--**Dec 41** [**IR 12/31 ID**]: Photo taken in **Apr 41** – at Kutno in occupied Poland – shows **60** of the rgt's **73** officers. By **Dec 41**, the rgt would be on its fourth (**4th**) cdr since start of the eastern campaign; its losses would include the two (**2**) majors shown in the photo, two (**2**) of its three (**3**) captains, one (**1**) of the five (**5**) physicians, and **27** of the **56** lieutenants. (See, *Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 21)

--**ca Dec 41**: “Im **XXXIX AK** [mot.] hatte das Offizierkorps bis zum Eintritt des Winters **1941** *prozentual* [i.e., proportionally] doppelt soviel Gefallene zu beklagen wie die Mannschaften. Solche Verluste konnten auf Dauer nicht ersetzt werden, vor allem nicht qualitativ. Im Hinblick auf eine zu erwartende lange Kriegsdauer waren sie objektiv nicht zu verantworten, aber sie waren das tiefe Geheimnis fuer die vorbildliche Disziplin u. die bewunderungswuerdige Leistung der Truppe.” (Ordonnanz Offizer Hans Hertel, quoted in: *K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 107)

--**3.12.41**: **4 Armees**: **LVII** u. **XX AK** konnten die Angriffserfolge der Vortage infolge der heftigen Gegenangriffe des Feindes (insbesondere gegen **15 ID**, **20 PD** u. **3 ID (mot)**) nicht erweitern. Wegen des zunehmenden Feinddruckes u. der absinkenden Gefechtsstaerken (**1 Rgt** der **15 ID** verlor am **3.12.41** **8 Komp.-Chefs** u. **160 Mann**) wurde die Zuruecknahme aller Teile auf das Westufer der Nara befohlen. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 790-91)

--**29.12.41**: Death of *Oblt Franz v. Kageneck* (**12./III./IR 18**) on **29.12.41**. His brother, **Oblt Erbo Graf v. Kageneck**, Luftwaffe fighter pilot credited w/ **67** victories, had been severely wounded on **28.12.41** in N.Africa. Died on 12 Jan 42. Franz Kageneck had just lived long enough to learn of birth of his twin sons in early Dec 41. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 289, 327-28).

--By **mid-Jan 42**, 3rd Btn, **IR 18 (6. ID)** had had **6 commanders in four weeks** (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 316)

³⁴² Note: See also *Stieff* letter to his wife of **7.12.41** (p 139), for another example of high losses among *Kompaniechefs*—in this case involving **IR 88**.

b) NCOs:

NCO losses were also „fearsome.“ A typical German inf.-div. numbered **518** officers, **2573** NCOs and **13,667** men. NCOs represented **18.8%** of the whole. Evident suggests that NCO casualties were *much higher* than soldiers. By the start of the Moscow offensive, nearly **39** division manning strengths [i.e., div.-equivalents] had become casualties or about **1/3** of all NCOs (from **117** divisions) who had started the campaign. Thus, about **1/3** of the veteran leaders of the *Ostheer* had perished³⁴³ even before the final offensive of the year. Such an abrupt changeover has implications for tactical flexibility and operational effectiveness. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 172)

1.8.5: Friendly Fire Incidents:

From various accounts, these appear to have been quite common. Below some examples are illustrated:

--**22.6.41**: Um 3.15 Angriffsbeginn...In dem ungeheureren Feuer aller Waffen habe ich meine Einschlaege nicht beobachten koennen. *Ein Stuka wird von eigener Art. Getroffen u. stuerzt ab.* [i.e., first casualty he saw was „friendly fire“ incident] (*Tagebuch Kreuter, SR 101 / 18. PD*)

--**22.6.41** [*Friendly fire incident opposite fortress Brest*]: Lt Kremer's amphibious *coup de main* force of mixed infantry and assault pioneers from **IR 130** and **Pi Btn 81** had barely manhandled their nine [9] assault boats into the water when they were engulfed by the same hurricane of fire that was plastering the opposite bank. A carpet of crackling detonations spurted multiple geysers from the river intermingled w/ fountains of mud and huge clods of damp earth which were ejected into the pale sky. Bitter-smelling *clouds of grey cordite smoke* wafted along the riverbank in the deathly calm that followed. Four [4] of the nine [9] boats were a complete wreck, floundering and settling in shallow water. . . German artillery, likely the newly employed secret *Nebelwerfer* mortar rgt, had dropped short: **20** men were dead or hideously mutilated. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 48)

--**23.6.41**: Die gestrigen Verluste (Rgt?) betragen 1. Offz., 23 Mann Tot u. 5 Vermisste (ertrunken). Ausserdem gab es noch 46 Verwundete; *ein hoher Prozentsatz davon wurde von eigener Art. getroffen...*(*Tagebuch Kreuter*)

--**1.-3.8.41** [*Roslavl*]: On 1 August, **XXIV PzK** and **VII AK** began their attack on Roslavl. . . On my way to **3 PD** I became involved in a bombing attack by our own planes on the **23 ID**'s march route which resulted in heavy casualties. The first bomb burst **5 ½** yards from my car. Insufficient training and lack of combat experience on part of the young aviators were the cause of this unfortunate occurrence; and this despite clear recognition signals on the part of the troops on the ground. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 186)

³⁴³ Had they *all* perished? That would mean overall NCO casualty rates (KIA, wounded, missing, sick) would be even much higher!

--ca. **24.8.41**: Generaloberst Guderian's **2 PzGr** begins its move south on 23 August, a blisteringly hot summer day. On 24 August, an advanced battle group from **3 PD** captures the **700m**-long bridge spanning the River Desna at Novgorod Seversk. **SS "DR"** captures another bridge [date?] on the division's right flank at *Makoshim*, after a daring assault by its motorcycle infantry reconnaissance btn. *Stuka* dive bomber air support had been frustratingly delayed. As the SS soldiers began to prepare the bridgehead against inevitable Russian counterattacks, the missing Stukas appeared and howled into the attack, dive-bombing their own troops. **40** Waffen-SS soldiers were killed. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 155)

--**Sep 41** [*friendly fire*]: „Die Kampfhandlungen erstickten sich in Wasser u. Schlamm. Nur leichte Artillerietaetigkeit herrschte auf beiden Seiten. Dabei legten die *Werferbatterien* einen Feuerschlag *in die eigenen Stellungen*, wobei das II. Btn. von **IR 11** mehrere Tote u. Verwundete zu beklagen hatte.“ (*H. Martin, Weit war der Weg*, **14. ID (mot.)**, 55)

--**27.11.41**: [near *Kaschira*]...Gegen 11 Uhr grosse Aufregung, der Russe ist durchgebrochen, man sieht ihn in Scharen die Hoehe herueberkommen... Wir nehmen die Russein mit 2 Gewehren unter Feuer u. draengen sie zurueck, ziehen aber ein ungeheueres Feuer auf uns...rechts gelingt es, den Gegner in die Mulde zurueckzudraengen. Aber die Kompanie hat etwa 14 Verluste...Heiss J. ist verwundet worden durch eigene Artillerie, auch Bauer ist durch eigenes Feuer gefallen. (*Tagebuch Rupp*, **17. PD**)

--**10 Jan 42**: H. Haape and elements of 3rd Btn. (**IR 37**) bombed in *Gridino* by the *Luftwaffe*. Nine (9) men killed. That same day, eight (8) German soldiers wounded by middirected German mortar fire. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 314)

1.9: Luftwaffe:

Note: The *confidence* which the infantry placed in the *Luftwaffe* was *absolute*, and on innumerable occasions the familiar shapes of the *planes w/ the black crosses* restored faltering courage and frustrated a Russian attack. (*Sajer, Forgotten Soldier*, 72)

Note: Die enttaeschende Erfahrung des Feldzuges bezueglich unserer Luftwaffe ist, *wie schwach sie doch ist u. schnell abgenutzt*. Englands u. Amerikas Luftwaffe waechst zur Prioritaet u. darueber hinaus. . . (*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*, **Okt 41**)

The *Luftwaffe General Staff* retained, as long as the GAF was successful, *a large measure of independence in operational matters*. There was no GAF officer of any importance—i.e., no influential member of the *Luftwaffe*—w/ OKW or at Hitler's HQ.³⁴⁴ Thus, OKL could, therefore, only receive from OKW or Hitler broad instructions, and it elaborated plans and orders itself. The personality of Goering seems here to have played an important part. In early years of war he enjoyed considerable prestige and was able to suppress any attempt on part of OKW to take charge of the *Luftwaffe*. He received orders, or rather suggestions, direct from Hitler, and passed

³⁴⁴ *Air Ministry* study refers in this context to „defective composition“ of OKW. The army-trained officers who dominated OKW have been described by a member of OKL as „sand-table minded.“ Thus, there was an increasing tendency to misuse the GAF, and to look upon it as an adjunct of the Army. Crux: **Heavy bias in favor of Army at OKW**. (421)

them on to OKL. This situation changed in later war years. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 415, 421)

Air Ministry study of *Luftwaffe* notes the great efficiency of its *ground organization, supply and signals elements*, which were well knit over the vast extent of occupied territory in Europe and western Russia. „It was largely this *administrative efficiency* which formed an important element in ability of the German Air Staff to make an air force, numerically insufficient to meet its full commitments, go a long way towards doing so. This was achieved by dint of exploiting its **remarkable flexibility** between different fronts by the rapid moves of units, or even entire operational commands, w/ the utmost speed. Many of the senior GAF officers, both in OKL and in operational commands, were *men of outstanding ability* who succeeded in extracting the maximum possible results from forces at their disposal. Among such men were: *Milch, von Richthofen, Kesselring, Korten, Koller, Kammhuber* and *Student*, together w/ a number of younger officers (*Galland, Peltz, Hitschold, Herrmann*, etc.). The General Staff officers, particularly the chiefs of staffs of commands in the field, were also fo a *universally high standard of excellence*. But would be wrong to infer that senior staff appointments were consistently good: *Jeschonnek*, as Chief of Air Staff until 1943, was *probably too immature for the tasks entrusted to him*, and he undoubtedly showed much short-sightedness in appreciating the problems which the air force in due course would come to face. Also, the appointment by Goering of *Udet* as *General Luftzeugmeister*, responsible for technical developments of the GAF, appears to have been made on purely personal grounds; he had neither experience nor competence for such a position. Significant that both these men came to untimely ends by suicide. Choice of *Schmid* as Chief of Intelligence Branch in vital years 1938-42 was „also not a happy one.“ Appointments such as these were made by *Goering* to keep as much power as possible in his own hands by installing his favorites. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 401)³⁴⁵

Hermann Plocher: Tells us that the *Luftwaffe* generals made serious mistakes, of which he stresses two of major strategic proportions: a) failure to carry out strategic bombing attacks on Russian armaments industry; and, b) dispersion of the slender air strength at the extreme northern end of the front, so that *Murmansk* and *Archangel* remained in Russian hands, as ports through which the western Allies could help the Russians recover, following their nearly disastrous losses in opening months of campaign. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, introduction by Telford Taylor*)

Note: What the Germans failed to reckon w/ was the *recuperative powers* of the Russians. Most of their acft were destroyed on the ground rather than in the air, so that personnel losses were not high. The armaments industries were rapidly moved eastward, and an early winter hampered *Luftwaffe* ops and gave the Russians a badly needed respite. By the winter of **1941/42**, new Russian air units, better equipped, were beginning to appear at the front. Still vastly superior in operational capability, the *Luftwaffe* remained dominant in **1942**, but in **1943** Russian numerical superiority, and techniques improved by experience, began to tell. During the last two years of the war, general *air superiority passed to the Russians*. But superior German technique enabled them to operate and achieve local successes right up to the end of the war; the Russians never achieved the total superiority enjoyed by the Allies on the western front. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, introduction by T. Taylor*)

1.9.1: Background to Barbarossa:

³⁴⁵ See pp 402-3 for brief synopsis of reasons for overall failure of *Luftwaffe* in Second World War.

Note: According to British *Air Ministry* publication after war (1948), Hitler's decision to attack Russia *came as a surprise to most of the Luftwaffe's senior officers*. They had "firmly believed that Hitler would have avoided a war on two fronts..." That is was generally *held to be a mistake* even greater than that of involving Great Britain in a war w/ Germany over the attack on Poland is unquestionable; that it encountered any real opposition, however, is less certain. One who opposed attack on Russia was *Milch*: "On hearing of the decision, which to him [Milch] was a *catastrophic error and meant that the war was lost*, [he] went to Goering and urged him to prevent the Russian war, declaring that this was the opportunity of Goering's life to exercise an historic influence on events." *Goering*, who had by that time *seen Hitler and had tried in vain to dissuade him from attacking Russia*, based his arguments on Hitler's denunciation in *Mein Kampf* of a war on two fronts. "There is *no doubt that Goering was inwardly convinced that the plan was madness*. Goering had earlier tried to divert Hitler's attention away from Russia by suggesting alternative employment for the *Wehrmacht* on the Continent not involving war w/ Russia; in this case an attack on *Gibraltar* thru Spain. Goering himself admitted that Hitler's decision made his "despair." (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 161)

Despite his misgivings, in a speech to his commanding officers in the West, Goering gave the probably duration of the Russian campaign as *six weeks*. This statement was to some extent the result of the *findings of the head of Air Intelligence, Josef Schmid*, who, in his estimates of the strength of the Red Air Force (which, in his calculations, was *numerically equal to the GAF but greatly inferior both technically and in expertise*) had not taken into consideration either the ability of the Russian Army to combat acft w/ all possible wpns, or the extent of Russia's productive capacity. Contributing factors to this *miscalculation* were the isolation for the last 20 years of the Soviet State, German propaganda, and the jaundiced views of Russian emigrants. Conversely, the *favorable reports of a German Industrial Commission*, consisting of engineers working under *Udet*, which had visited factories in the Urals and on the Volga as late as the Spring of 1941, *were not believed by Schmid*, who suspected Udet's engineers to being victims of a Russian bluff. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 161)

1933-36: During this first phase of rearmament, *General Wilhelm Wimmer* led the GAF's *Technical Office*, which was responsible for developing and procuring acft. *Wimmer*, considered by colleagues to have the *best technical mind in the Luftwaffe*, oversaw development and production of first two generations of GAF acft. (Second generation = He 111, Do 17 bombers; Me 109 fighter; Ju 87 dive bomber, etc.) As such, he *laid foundations for German's early successes in air war*. In 1936, however, *Goering* removed him and replaced him w/ his old friend and WWI flying ace *Ernst Udet*—*an action that would be decisive in GAF's ultimate failure*. (*J.S. Corum, in: Why Air Forces Fail*, 211)

31.8.39: *Luftwaffe* force structure included: fighters (771), *Zerstorer* (408), *Stukas* (366), long-range [?] bombers (1 176). 90 % of this force was serviceable on first day of the war (a state of affairs not often repeated). *Luftwaffe* in Poland was *ideally suited for operativer Luftkrieg*: the acquisition of air superiority, followed by *deep interdiction* missions combined w/ attacks on vital centers of national resistance. *Luftwaffe* did provide some close air support during the Polish campaign, but it was far from primary focus. Bulk of army units did not report any significant cooperation w/ the air force at all. (*Muller, German Air War*, 21)

France: In planning for the campaign, the *Luftwaffe*, not the army, made the final decisions as to how or where the air force would take part in the ground battle. Rather than binding the *Luftwaffe* closer to the ground forces, the victory in France seemed to bear out the principles of *operativer*

Luftkrieg: that successful air ops required *coordination* with, not *subordination* to, the activities of the other services. (Muller, *German Air War*, 22-3)

Battle of Britain: The *Luftwaffe's foray into independent air action*, the series of raids from Jul-Nov 40, did not end happily for the GAF. It *improvised an air strategy which ignored the principles of force concentration* in all but the most general terms. The constantly shifting and indecisive target selection procedure employed by *Luftwaffe intelligence* rendered even the occasional operational success of little consequence. Various phases of German air assault poorly coordinated („had little to do w/ one another“). The RAF *undeniably defeated the Luftwaffe* and frustrated it at every turn. (Muller, *German Air War*, 23-4)

The spring 1941 campaign heralded the return of major air ops for the *Luftwaffe* after a period of relative calm lasting from Dec 40 through Mar 41. However, the onset of this new campaign [i.e., against Greece, Yugoslavia, in Mediterranean, N. Africa] differed from that of the year before. This time, the *Luftwaffe* would *face increasing commitments w/ no recuperative periods until its final defeat in 1945*...Even before *Barbarossa*, acft losses were *rising ominously*. Thus, the strain on resources was already mounting before ops in the east began. Moreover, the extension of the war to Russia meant that the *Luftwaffe* now faced the prospect of *war on two fronts* (three fronts if one considers the Mediterranean a separate theater). What should have alarmed senior German military and civilian officials was that, *despite a drastic increase in commitments, there had been virtually no change in the number of acft in the force structure from the previous year*. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 75-7, 80)

Between **Jul 40-Dec 41**, the Germans *lost the air war over Europe for 1943 and 1944*. Ignoring the *severe attrition that had occurred even during Battle for France*, they paid little attention to fact that their aircraft industry and changed neither its approach nor its *production rates* substantially from what they had been during opening months of the war. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 88)

Basic cause of *Luftwaffe's* production problems (crisis!) in 1941 lay not only in the *dilettantism* of the higher Nazi leadership, but also w/ a military leadership that *did not understand the difficulties involved in producing modern weapons*. Production figures for fighters and bombers remained *virtually stationary* in 1940/41. In 1940, **10 826** acft of all types produced; in 1941, the figure had only climbed to **11 776**. Much of the *malaise* in the German acft industry due to **Ernst Udet's poor administration**, w/ a sizable portion of blame also going to *Goering, Jeschonnek*, and the acft industry itself. At one point, *Udet* admitted that he understood nothing of industrial processes and even less about the engineering of large acft. *Goering's* placing *Udet* in control over production and technical aspects of the *Luftwaffe* in late 1930s was a *disaster*. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 100-1)

The *crisis* came to a head in summer of 1941. *Udet's* office could no longer hide the growing disparity between planned and actual production totals when *Luftwaffe* strength in the field reached *scandalously low levels*. To help overcome this industrial shortfall, *Goering* *reinserted Milch* into the production process. Shortly before start of *Barbarossa*, *Goering* granted the *State Secretary* wide powers over the acft industry. As w/ previous orders from the *Reichsmarschall*, *Milch* was to *quadruple production*. This time, however, *Goering* had given the brief to a man who did understand modern production methods and industrial practices. Over the summer of 1941, *Milch* *supplanted* *Udet* and assumed control of the technical offices that *Udet* had controlled. The gradual exclusion of *Udet* from the centers of power within the *Air Ministry* as well as *Milch's* less-than-tactful behavior *contributed to the former's suicide in the fall of 1941*. But before his death, *Udet*, w/ *Milch's* backing, *produced a plan in Jul 41 calling for a radical*

restructuring of German industry to accelerate production. A more detailed, longer-range plan came out in September under Milch's guidance. Based on a change in priorities after completion of *Barbarossa*, Milch's production projection demanded nearly **50 000 acft** from industry by **Mar 44**. For **1942**, the so-called *Goering Plan* asked for ca. **33 percent** more acft than had been produced in 1941. (Note: Fortunately for the allies, the change in responsibility within the Air Ministry—i.e., handoff from Udet to Milch—came too late. In summer of 1941, Germans had begun to change their approach, but it was only *after* Udet's suicide in Nov 41 that Milch gained *general authority* over German acft production.) (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 102-3)³⁴⁶

What is *almost incomprehensible* is fact that the Germans paid so little attention to the attrition that had occurred in France and over Britain. Not until the *Wehrmacht* was deep in the Soviet Union did Goering finally authorize *Milch* to bring order to the acft industry. By that time, it was too late. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 302)

Hitler, despite an occasional interest in technical matters, hardly *intervened at all in Luftwaffe production* during the early years of the war. Contrary to his relations w/ the army, he delegated much authority over air force matters to *Goering*; and while he did set industrial priorities, he was poorly informed about what was going on w/ *Luftwaffe* production. While it suited Goering to keep the Fuehrer uninformed, he himself also possessed little knowledge through the spring of 1941 of what was happening. The crisis would come to a head in the summer of 1941. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 101-2)

German acft industry: Germany's acft industry was *world-class*. Acft firms like *Junkers, Dornier, Heinkel, Focke-Wulf* and *Henschel* had a cadre of experienced designers and engineers; Germany itself had a large, well-educated technical workforce. That said, the acft and engine industry was *poorly structured to fight a long, total war*. Before the war, even the newest German acft factories were small compared to British and USA. Although a large number of small factories made the industry less vulnerable to strategic bombing, it also *prevented the Luftwaffe from employing the most efficient methods of mass production*. Another problem was simply *to many programs w/ too little guidance*. Acft and wps were developed and produced in small batches, while early in the war, a large part of the German engine and heavy industry plan *lay virtually idle*. As early as 1940, Britain was producing more acft than Germany, but neither Goering nor *Udet* nor *Jeschonnek* saw any urgent need to reform the acft industry and dramatically increase production. Although the *huge industrial potential of America* was well known, Hitler, Goering and Nazi inner circle considered it *irrelevant*. They believed Germany was sure to beat both Britain and the USSR by 1941; after that, the U.S.A. would have to face Germany alone, with the latter possessing the entire industrial potential of Europe. (*J.S. Corum, in: Why Air Forces Fail*, 211-214)

After *moribund state of German acft industry* and *Udet's mismanagement* could no longer be ignored, Goering placed acft production under the far more capable direct of *Field Marshal Ehrhard Milch* of *Lufthansa*. Unlike Udet, Milch had considerable experience in acft industry and was highly competent manager. He instituted an array of reforms and efficiency measures that boosted German acft production to over **15 000** in **1942** and **25 000** in **1943**. Sure measures, however, were taken far too late to meet enormous demands of a war of attrition. German acft

³⁴⁶ **Note:** Delays imposed by the *search for quality* were a major factor in minimizing acft production. Indeed, the *quality vs. quantity dilemma* was a factor Milch never succeeded in reconciling w/ the German industrial system. Through 1944, German acft possessed the finest upholstered crew seats; thousands of man-hours were wasted in machining bulkheads and minor fittings, while parts taking no strain or requiring no precision were finished to close tolerances. (102)

production peaked in **1944** at **40 000**. But in same year, USA alone produced **96 000** acft! All told, Allies then outproducing Germany by factor of **four to one**. (J.S. Corum, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 214)

Luftwaffe (Goering Programm):

26.6.41 [*Besprechung Staatssekretaer Milch*]: Feldmarschall Milch: „Heutige Staerke der Luftwaffe genuegt in keiner Weise, um den Sieg zu erringen. Der Krieg muss durch den Einsatz der *Luftwaffe* entschieden werden. Die *Luftwaffe* ist deshalb zu *vervierfachen* [!]. Hierzu wird das *Goering-Programm* befohlen, mit der Durchfuehrung ist Feldmarschall Milch beauftragt, der hierzu mit besonderen umfassenden Vollmachten ausgestattet ist.

Stand der *Luftwaffe*:

1. *Personell*: monatlich **22-25%** Totalverluste. Heutige Fertigung genuegt nicht, um den bisherigen Stand zu halten. . .
2. *Materiell*: Im Westen heute nur noch ein schwaches Fliegerkorps von halber Staerke, ausserdem **2** Jagdgeschwader. Heute ist ein Angriff gegen die englische Ruestungsindustrie u. die Bodenorganisation nicht mehr moeglich. . .
3. *Arbeitseinsatz*: Heute stehen etwa **1,3** Mill. Arbeiter im Dienst der Luftruestung. Fuer die Durchfuehrung des Goering-Programms muessen mindestens **3 ½** Millionen Arbeitskraefte neu eingesetzt werden.

Erstes Ziel ist die *Verdoppelung* um **1 200** Kampfmaschinen. Davon ist mindestens **1/3** in den gut eingerichteten Firmen im russ. Raum herzustellen. . . Der Befehl fuer **3** neue Fabriken ist bereits gegeben. . . Fuehrer hat der *Luftwaffe* die sofortige Aufloesung von drei Ost-Divisionen zum Einsatz in der Luftruestung angeboten. In der Masse muessen die fuer die *Luftwaffe* notwendigen Arbeitskraefte aus der Heeresruestung herausgenommen werden. . . (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 1016-18)

1.9.2: GAF Doctrine/Tactics:

Luftwaffe Doctrine:

Only in Russia did the GAF's offensive doctrine undergo such a *protracted trial*. For the *Luftwaffe*, the venture promised to be „a proper war“ (*Jeschonnek!*) indeed. In Russia, the GAF had the opportunity to put much of its prewar doctrine and theorizing about air power to the test. If the eastern campaign turned out to be something other than *Jeschonnek's* „proper war,“ then at least it *proved to be the most revealing campaign the Luftwaffe ever fought*. For German air force doctrine, in a manner *not duplicated in any of the other theaters*, was laid bare, w/ all its strengths and weaknesses exposed, in the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1944. (Muller, *German Air War*, xvi)

The nature of **German air doctrine**, both before and during WWII, is one of the most complex—and most **misunderstood**—historical problems to emerge from that conflict.³⁴⁷ Years of

³⁴⁷ Muller notes that recent (ca. 1990) research by both American and German authors has *substantially altered the historical perception of German air power doctrine*. These authorities have effectively

emotional, personality-oriented historiography, fueled by reports supporting the *U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey*, skewed interpretations of captured *Luftwaffe* officers, and narrowly focused studies produced for the USAF, *have combined to portray the Luftwaffe as an auxiliary weapon or Hilfswaffe* linked doctrinally and technically to the support of the army. There is, however, little in original *Luftwaffe* sources to bear out this hypothesis. German air war doctrine, as it evolved in late 1930s, was as *ambitious and far-reaching as any developed during the heyday of air power prophesizing*. The *Luftwaffe*, in fact, developed a concept known as „operational air warfare“ (*operativer Luftkrieg*)³⁴⁸ which seemingly accomplished the difficult task of integrating an independent air force into the conduct of modern „total war.“ Any analysis of the eastern campaign that views the enterprise as merely an aggrandized army support venture by the *Luftwaffe* fails to provide a rationale for the *fluctuations of German air strategy in the east*, esp. the *1943-44 attempt to employ bomber forces in independent operations against the Soviet war economy*.

The nature of German air power doctrine also ensured that ops designed to support the army *played a major role in the war against Russia*. The development of an army support capability, a task which many of the air forces of the other powers eschewed during the interwar period, *is one of the more notable accomplishments of the Luftwaffe leadership*. Few air forces in **1941/42** could provide ground forces w/ decisive assistance at a critical juncture of a land battle. In fact, however, the vaunted close air support capability was a mission for which the bulk of the *Luftwaffe* was *ill-prepared*, and one for which the *attendant technical problems were not really solved until early 1944*. (Muller, *German Air War*, 1-3)

Dec 41: Under growing Soviet pressure, esp. after the German army went over to the defensive on the entire eastern front in **Dec 41**, the principles of an operational air war, which had been made all the more necessary by the loss of forward momentum, were virtually discarded in favor of direct support of the army. Hitler's assumption of command on **19.12.41** also contributed to this development. As supreme cdr of the *Wehrmacht* he now not only co-ordinated the requests of the army and the tasks of the *Luftwaffe* in a general way in the decisive ground battles but also, as C-in-C of the Army, increasingly directed tactical air support to overcome the crisis. His main military interest, however, had always been in the land war. . . The use of the *Luftwaffe* to provide direct support for the army was in agreement not only w/ the views of many army cdrs even before the war, but also w/ those of many *Luftwaffe* leaders who were former army officers, e.g., the C-in-C of **Air Fleet 2**, GFM Kesselring [until Nov 41], who ordered the generals of his flying and anti-aircraft units to „consider the wishes of the army as my orders.“ . . . In this way, the *Luftwaffe* in the east was made completely subordinate to the army. . . Under the pressure of circumstances the *Luftwaffe* in the east became the „flying artillery“ of the army, at first w/ the approval of the chief of the *Luftwaffe* General Staff, who was devoted to Hitler but who later realized the absurdity of using bombers in this manner. (See, *GSSW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 821-23)

Aerial Tactics:

demolished the ideas that the *Luftwaffe* functioned as an airborne adjunct to the army, and embodied a narrower mentality than the strategic bombardment-oriented air forces of the Western Allies. In fact, the *Luftwaffe* leadership's theoretical concept of its role and mission was, if anything, *more sophisticated, realistic, and comprehensive* than that of its later adversaries. (3)

³⁴⁸ For this concept see, Muller, 3-15. According to Muller, concept of *operativer Luftkrieg* was the *central tenet of German air power theory*. (10)

Jaeger Taktiken im Osten: Prien describes how the tactics of the *Jagdflieger* would differ significantly from that of Battle of Britain. Basically, they would operate in *much smaller groupings* (*Schwarm* or *Rotte* vs. *Gruppen-* or *Staffelstaerke*) due to huge areas to be covered, rapidly increasing losses, etc. Also: Kennzeichnend fuer die Einsaetze im Osten war auch der Umstand, dass sich *die meisten Luftkaempfe in Hoehen bis zu 3.000 m abspielten*, wohingegen die Englandsaetze in immer groessere Hoehe gefuehrt hatten; damit befanden sich die Jagdflieger regelmaessig im *Wirkungsbereich der leichten u. mittleren russ. Flak*, die sich dank ihrer Feuerdichte u. Treffsicherheit sehr schnell erheblichen Respekt bei den dt. Jaegern verschaffte.

Neben der freien Jagd u. dem *Begleitschutz* fuer eigene Kampf- u. Stukaverbaende sowie dem *Jagdschutz ueber den eigenen Heeresverbaende* wurden die Jagdflieger im Osten von Beginn an zu *zahlreichen Jabo- u. Tiefangriffen* eingesetzt; dies gilt sowohl fuer die *Jabostaffeln* als auch fuer die reinen *Jagdstaffeln*, die vor allem zu Tiefangriffen auf sowjet. *Flugplaetze, Kraftwagenkolonnen u. Truppenansammlungen* sowie *Eisenbahnziele* eingesetzt wurden. Die Einsaetze im Tiefflug erwiesen sich wegen der starken russ. Erdabwehr als *ausgesprochen unangenehm*. (Note: In this context, authors discuss the *Beschussempfindlichkeit der Bf 109 im Kuehlerbereich*. See, *Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 21, 26*)

Close Air Support:

Close Air Support: During 1920s, Capt *Helmut Wilberg*, Chief of the *Truppenamt's Air Organization Section*, developed a **Reichswehr air doctrine** that envisioned acft being employed in a number of roles—air superiority, interdiction, strategic and tactical bombing. *Close air support was not a top priority*. German Army officers often argued that acft were more useful for *interdiction* than serving as *flying artillery*. *Guderian* argued in **1936** that air power could facilitate an armored assault by attacks on enemy communications, HQs and assembly areas, aside from front line positions. But it was also argued as late as **1934** that the use of air power for ground attack was *impractical*. Germans, however, did take steps toward effecting *air-ground cooperation*, through the untiring efforts of *Luftwaffe* generals *Wolfram v. Richthofen* and *Hugo Sperrle*, as well as through valuable experience gained in the **Spanish Civil War**. Still, the sections of the **1938** manual, ***Richtlinien fuer die Fuehrung der Panzerdivision*** dealing w/ artillery make clear that the Army *did not expect immediate cooperation from the Luftwaffe in a tactical sense*. In most attack scenarios, *panzer* division cdrs were told they *would have to do w/o air support*. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 92-93*)

“Not until **1936** did a series of maneuvers, known as *Grosse Herbstuebung 1936*, take place w/ the express purpose of coordinating armored troops and acft. Yet results of these maneuvers were less than satisfying. The gestation of a true close air support capability for the *Luftwaffe* began w/ its participation in the *Spanish Civil War, 1936-39*. Still, when the conflict w/ Poland opened on **1 Sep 39**, the *Luftwaffe* possessed only *one specialized ground attack Gruppe in its entire force structure: II.(Schlacht) LG 2*, equipped w/ obsolescent *Henschel 123* biplanes. The bulk of the **JU-87** dive bombers were at the time of the war's outbreak *considered part of the strategic bombing force*. The *Luftwaffe* general staff's attitude towards the close support mission was *ambivalent* on the eve of the Second World War; emphasis of *Luftwaffe* command on high altitude level bombing *persisted up to the outbreak of the war*. (See, *Muller, German Air War, 15-24*)

1941: “Despite efforts of v. Richthofen and others, German air-ground co-ordination was still *rudimentary*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 23*)

From Muller's book, it is clear that vast majority of *Luftwaffe* support of the army did *not* involve close support; rather, it was *indirect in nature*. Only *Fliegerkorps VIII* was really suited to the CAS mission. As Muller writes: "Contrary to many postwar accounts, *the bulk of the Luftwaffe's missions during this time were geared to indirect army support.*" This was not a misuse of the German bomber force, he notes. Finally: "There can be little doubt that *Luftwaffe* participation during the opening weeks of the campaign was one of the major reasons for the unprecedented success of German arms. (see, Muller, *German Air War*, 50-1)

Direct GAF intervention in army ops had been on occasion *decisive in the early campaigns* in Poland, France, etc. Extending the conflict to the third dimension did not, however, commit the bulk of the *Luftwaffe* to the CAS role. The *Luftwaffe's own conception of its mission after 25.6.41 was to perform a "vertical envelopment" (vertikale Umfassung) of the enemy forces* while protecting the flanks of the fast-moving *Panzer groups* and attacking Soviet formations and installations far to the rear. This choice of missions reflected both *doctrinal preference* and the state of German air armament. *Fliegerkorps VIII* own delineation of its mission serves to emphasize this point: *Richthofen's* command could still lay claim to being the only "specialized Close Battle Corps" in the entire *Luftwaffe* during summer of 1941. Still, "direct cooperation w/ the armored forces" *ranked well down on its list of priorities*. "Attacks on airfields to neutralize enemy air power during the initial attack; destruction of lines of communication; isolation of higher command staffs; bombing attacks on principle points of troop concentration and reserves of material" absorbed much of the air corps' combat power during the movement phase. (Muller, *German Air War*, 45-6)

Following the *strategic strikes* against the VVS, the *Luftwaffe* was free to carry out its *second mission*: support of the advancing German army. As in Poland, the support comprised a *preponderance of „indirect“ (primarily interdiction) missions* against the Soviet rear areas and communications zones. In certain cases, and w/ deployment of certain formations (particularly *Fliegerkorps VIII*), the GAF *rendered direct support to the Ostheer* as it drove deep into European Russia. The combat history of *Fliegerkorps VIII* is instructive here. The rapid transfer of *Richthofen's* close support corps from army group to army group indicates: a) the high premium the *Ostheer* placed on *Luftwaffe* close support; but also, b) the *very restricted ability of the GAF to conduct this type of mission*. The bulk of the combat units of the eastern air fleets could not, except under exceptional circumstances, readily carry out this task. And once the *Luftwaffe* turned from destroying the Red Air Force to other levels of its operational tasks, its ability to concentrate its forces, and thus maximize effectiveness, fell victim to the *vagaries of the overall German strategy in Russia* (which constantly shifted the *Schwerpunkt* of the German effort—from center, to north (Leningrad), to the south (Ukraine), then back to Moscow w/ start of „*Taifun*.“) Yet when the German command managed to concentrate the *Luftwaffe's* air corps, „[their] appearance signified victory.“ Time and again, air power contributed materially to German success in the great *Kesselschlachten* of summer/fall 1941. (Muller, *German Air War*, 28-30)

Throughout the 4 years of the eastern campaign, German air force methods for cooperation w/ the army *improved markedly* in both the technical and operational spheres. Although *equipped w/ acft designs ill-suited for the task*, the *Luftwaffe* gave a good account of itself in support of ground operations from 1941 through 1943. (Muller, *German Air War*, xv)

Air to Ground Cooperation:

Ground forces—esp. in *Richthofen's* command area—used *large white fabric visual panels* which troops placed in their own forward positions. Various combinations of panels indicated location of the front line, as well as direction and location of centers of enemy resistance. The new methods (compared to earlier campaigns) often appeared in conjunction w/ *Swastika flags, flares, and smoke cartridges* previously employed. Despite *crudeness of the system* (little different from that used in conjunction with the *Schlachtstaffeln* in WWI), units reported good results as long as the *Luftwaffe* had local air superiority. However, problems persisted when supporting a rapid advance. ***Army and Luftwaffe did not as yet possess common radio frequencies***, and the firm control over air strikes which the air corps command maintained tended to make the system excessively cumbersome. Even *Richthofen's* specialized force ***could not guarantee a response time of under two hours*** “from request for air support to carrying out of bombing,” because of weather, enemy air activity, distance to targets and other variables. For units other than *Fliegerkorps VII*, the *ability to carry out direct army support missions was minimal*. Since the *Luftwaffe* would make its contribution in other ways, its cdrs did not see this as a serious shortcoming. Common during the rapid German drive across European Russia was the phenomenon of the *Luftwaffe sealing off the battlefield, blunting Soviet counterattacks, and striking communications lines, particularly the vital rail network, far behind the front*. Tactically, the dual battle of ***Bryansk-Vyazma*** did not occasion introduction of any new *air-ground cooperation procedures*. Both *Richthofen's Fliegerkorps VII* and *Loerzer's Fliegerkorps II* referred in after-action reports to the *familiar system of colored markers, swastika flags, and smoke signals* to indicate front-line positions of German troops. Even so, ***incidents of air attack on German troops by Luftwaffe acft continued to occur***. (Muller, *German Air War*, 49-50, 59)

Training:

Training—The Luftwaffe's greatest failure: It takes 18-24 months, and a few hundred flight hours, to train a fighter or bomber pilot to the point of effectiveness in combat. The GAF began the war with *well-trained pilots*. In 1940/41, German pilots went to operational units with ca. ***250 hours of total flight time***, about ***100*** hours of which were in the acft they would fly into combat. This compared favorably with the RAF, which sent pilots into action w/ about 200 hours of training (only 60-75 hours in operational acft). Yet, while Allies eventually embarked on a vast aircrew training program, the GAF, impressed by relative ease of its early victories and confident that Britain and Russia would soon fall, *carried out only a small expansion of its training program in 1940/41*. By 1941, the *Luftwaffe was already suffering for a shortage of trained pilots*. (For details see, (J.S. Corum, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 220-21)

Lack of Independent Strategic Power:

Note: For good discussion of this issue – its impact on war against Soviet Russia – see, *Horst Boog's* section in, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 802-14. Among other things, Boog notes following:

- Failure of the *Luftwaffe* to prevent recovery of the Soviet air forces by strategic attacks against its aircraft factories;
- Fact that the “*Barbarossa*” directive did not provide for a strategic air campaign – bulk of *Luftwaffe* forces in east were to support the ground forces for duration of mobile ops; only after the general line Volga-Archangel-Astrakhan had been

reached were independent strategic air attacks to be conducted “if necessary” by bomber formations to eliminate the last industrial area remaining to Russia in the Urals;

- Soviet air armaments potential was underestimated; the scale of industrial relocation beyond the Urals not recognized (here, Boog provides figures on Soviet acft production);

- Luftwaffe leaders conducted no forward-looking planning for a systematic, centrally directed, independent strategic bombing campaign against the Soviet war economy, should it become necessary after the completion of the war of movement; evidently, it was not even envisaged in such an event to combine and train long-range bomber units under a single command (all flying units were and remained under the individual air fleets, which were themselves organized for cooperation w/ the ground forces);

- A long-range bomber unit under the direct command of the C-in-C of the Luftwaffe would have been independent in the choice of its targets, but even this organizational preparatory measure was not taken.

- Boog provides examples comparing level of German “strategic” air attacks against Leningrad and Moscow w/ those of the Anglo-American bomber offensive in **1944/45** (they are very illustrative!)

- Boog notes that in **1941**, Luftwaffe was occasionally forced to undertake strategic ops. The resulting bombing attacks, however, were not of a strategic nature in the true sense of the term, as they were carried out w/ inadequate forces, were not sustained, and were not based on an overall plan. They were rather unsystematic isolated actions, while the bulk of the acft continued to be used in indirect and increasingly direct support of ground forces.

- Although in terms of its personnel and technical superiority over the Soviet air force the *Luftwaffe* would have been in a position to conduct a systematic, independent, long-range air war in the east for a certain time, only isolated missions were flown against strategic targets in **1941**, and only when bomber forces could be temporarily spared from the ground fighting and the weather for a limited time offered a favorable opportunity for a successful strategic attack. But there was no planned, independent air war against the sources of Soviet strength in **1941**. The reasons were to be found, among other places, in **Luftwaffe doctrine**. Other reasons were the lack of a strategic bomber fleet large enough for all theaters of war, the lack of an appropriate strategic plan and an appropriate organization of the strategic bomber forces, the increasing use of bombers in direct support of the army and the resulting heavy attrition, the lack of a suitable large bomber, and last but not least the failure of the German attack on Moscow in **Dec 41**, which required the use of almost all Luftwaffe units in the east for ground fighting.

- Because of the lack of sufficient close-support forces – **VIII Air Corps** was the only close-support corps in the Luftwaffe – the twin-engine bomber, the backbone of the Luftwaffe and better suited to an operational and strategic air war, was increasingly employed in direct support of the army, sometimes under *ad*

hoc close-support cdrs. This kind of operation, as a rule at low level by medium bombers, which were too large and ponderous for the purpose, resulted in heavy losses and frequent damage, as Soviet ground forces used infantry wps for unexpectedly strong opposition to such easy targets. (p. 820)

1.9.3: *Plans & Preparations:*

German air force's preparations for *Barbarossa* "represent an extraordinary mixture of thorough planning, realistic formulation, and *almost unbelievable insouciance*. There is little to indicate that the *Luftwaffe* staffs regarded the campaign as anything more than an operation—albeit a wide-ranging and geographically immense one—that was to last only a few months. Once they had adopted this outlook there was little reason not to abdicate strategic direction of the campaign to the Fuehrer and the OKH. (Muller, *German Air War*, 44)³⁴⁹

20.2.41: The *Luftwaffe* completed its plans for *Barbarossa* on this day. The *Luftwaffe* possessed the same strategic [doctrinal] concepts of *Vernichtungskrieg*, *Auftragstaktik* and *Schwerpunkt* as the army. It also shared the army's weakness for having *very junior officers* plan such a massive undertaking as *Barbarossa* (who provided sealed orders to *Luftwaffe* crews that were to be opened only **8** hours prior to H-Hour!) Air superiority was the first priority. Assisted by *Lufthansa* pilots gathering data during civilian flights over the USSR, the Germans developed very good intelligence on Soviet dispositions. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 13-14)

Luftwaffe order of battle: OKL detailed *three air fleets* to cooperate directly w/ the three army groups in Russia. **2770** acft, or *65 percent of the frontline strength of the Luftwaffe*, was committed to the campaign. Like the army, the *Luftwaffe* believed that after the first day's operations had broken the back of the Soviet air forces, the Russians would not recover. Moreover, Russia seemingly offered an opportunity to replicate the victorious effort against France, w/ none of the frustrations of the aerial assault on the British Isles. Thus, *Jeschonnek's* remark, "*at last a proper war*" represented more than just the relief of an air staff that had suffered the only German defeat thus far in the war. Flight crews were also glad to terminate increasingly dangerous and ineffective night missions over Great Britain. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 80)³⁵⁰

Luftwaffe had also contributed to the *pre-invasion deception plan*: The last minute deployment of air units to operating bases in East Prussia and along the frontier also helped to deceive the Soviets. Not until **19 Jun 41** did *Fliegerkorps VIII* move to East Prussia from deep inside Germany where it had replenished supplies and drawn new acft and crews. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 81)

³⁴⁹ For the *Luftwaffe's* operational planning for *Barbarossa*, see Muller, 30-44. He notes that the "one consistent element of the *Luftwaffe's* pre-*Barbarossa* planning is the refusal to accede to the army's wishes for immediate and concentrated air support of the attacking divisions at the expense of the counter-air [air superiority] mission." Emphasis on the *air superiority mission* was a characteristic of *Luftwaffe* planning that had survived virtually unchanged from the theory of the 1930s to its incorporation into operational practice in 1939-40. As *Jeschonnek* noted before the Polish campaign: "The most proper and essential task is the battle against the enemy air force..." (36)

³⁵⁰ By fall 1941, losses in night ops by *He 111's* had reached the point where they were pulled off of operations even at night in the west. (W. Murray, f.n. 69, 110)

Deception measures for coming operation were immense: Two workers observing German activity around *Maringlen* airstrip in Poland had already guessed the likely reason. Jews and Poles had been obliged to build the runways by *forced labor* in **1940**. The sinister implication of measures taken to disguise progress was not lost on them: When the Germans finished the runway they *let grass grow and grazed cattle on it*. It looked more like a pasture than an airfield. The hangars were constructed by driving tree trunks into the ground. Hanging over this was wire or a green net overlaid w/ foliage. As leaves dried out they were replaced w/ fresh. Over **100** airfields and **50** dispersal strips were built in Poland alone as part of the eastern buildup. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 9)

Kesselring: "Die operativen u. taktischen Ueberpruefungen ergaben, dass mit den vom Oberbefehlshaber der *Luftwaffe* vorgesehenen Kraefte *der Angriff der Hr.Gr.Mitte nicht in wuensenswertem Umfang unterstuetzt werden konnte*. In einer **heftigen Aussprache im Befehlszug Goerings noerdlich Paris** setzte ich mich mit Unterstuetzung meines lieben *Jeschonnek* (Generalstabschef der *Luftwaffe*) durch, so dass mir die erbetene **Mindestverstaerkung** an Fliegern u. Flakkraefte in Aussicht gestellt wurde." (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 112)

Kesselring: Ich beabsichtigte, mich in diesem Feldzug mit den vielen *Unwaegbarkeiten* noch *naeher an das Hauptquartier der Hr.Gr. [Mitte]* heranzuhalten u. durch einen aus dem Heer hervorgegangenen *Luftwaffen-Generalstabs-Offizier* **staendig engste Verbindung aufrecht zu halten**. *Obstlt. i.G. Uebe* hat die Aufgabe taktvoll u. erfolgreich durgefuehrt. Jeden Abend musste er zur „Abendlage“ auf meinen Gefechtsstand kommen, die „Heereslage“ des Tages u. die in Aussicht genommenen Massnahmen fuer den folgenden Tag vortragen u. in gleicher Weise die „Luftwaffenlage“ mit anh hoeren, um das Heeresgruppen-Kommando eingehend hierueber ins Bild zu setzen. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 118)

Kesselring: „Nach dem Befehl des Oberbefehlshabers der *Luftwaffe* hatte die *Luftflotte* in erster Linie die **Luftueberlegenheit**, wenn moeglich die **Luftherrschaft**, zu erkaempfen u. das Heer, mit *Schwerpunkt die Pz.Gruppen*, in ihrem Kampf gegen das russ. Heer zu unterstuetzen. Weitere Aufgaben haette zu einer *schaedliche Zersplitterung* gefuehrt u. mussten vorerst zurueckgestellt werden. Ich war mir klar darueber, dass auch dies Aufgaben nicht sofort in vollem Umfang, sondern *nur nacheinander* erfuellt werden konnten.“ (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 119)

12./13.6.41: „Am 12. oder 13. Juni 1941 verliess ich die Kanalkueste, um der abschliessenden Besprechung Hitlers ueber „*Barbarossa*“ beizuwohnen. *Offiziell blieb ich noch einige Zeit im Westen*; damit wollte man der *Weltoeffentlichkeit* vorspiegeln, *die Masse der dt. Luftstreitkraefte sei nach wie vor unter dem Befehl des GFM Kesselrings gegen England eingesetzt*.“ (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 112)

No Strategic Air War: For the operational tasks of the *Luftwaffe*, as laid out in *Weisung Nr. 21*, see: *Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien*, 6-7. Prien, et al., note, among other things: „Auf einen auch nur ansatzweise strategisch gefuehrten Luftkrieg gegen Ziele im Hinterland der gewaltigen Front wurde dagegen *von Beginn an verzichtet*...Hier lag zweifellos *ein wesentlicher Mangel des Luftwaffeneinsatzes*, doch war mit den vorhandenen geringen Kraefte u. wegen des Fehlens eines einsatzbereiten schweren Bombers ein grossangelegter Luftkrieg gegen die im sowjet. Hinterland gelegenen Ruestungs- u. Industrieanlagen ohnehin nicht moeglich. Nach der *Weisung Nr. 21*, sollten Angriffe gegen Ziele der Ruestungsindustrie, namentlich im *Uralgebiet*, erst nach Abschluss der Bewegungsoperationen des Heeres erfolgen. (6-7)

1.9.4: *Luftwaffe* Logistics:³⁵¹

When war began in 1939, *Luftwaffe* had a *highly-developed mobile logistics system* geared toward supporting short *blitzkrieg* campaigns. In Sep 39, it possessed **117 airfield and engineering companies and motorized supply columns** to support the air fleets and corps. Gave GAF ability to support mobile army ops by jumping forward quickly, putting captured airfields into operation, keeping its planes supplied w/ fuel and bombs. As armies advanced, short-ranged *Luftwaffe* acft could cover the front units, assure air superiority and provide CAS. Moreover, operating from airfields near the front lines maximized sortie rates. After Polish campaign, *Luftwaffe* expanded its logistics organization. In France in 1940, GAF fighter and Stuka units averaged an impressive *four to six sorties a day*, while the French air force fighters averaged only one per day.

The *major flaw* in this *mobile logistics system* is that it was *designed only for short campaigns*. Although the GAF's airfield units could keep forward units supplied w/ fuel and bombs, the groups and wings *had only a minimal capability to repair and rebuilt acft*.³⁵² If an acft needed major repairs, it had to be loaded onto a truck or railcar and *shipped back to Germany*, to be repaired or rebuilt at the factory. This ***lean repair and maintenance infrastructure*** save the GAF money, but it also meant that damaged acft were out of action for a long time. The system worked in the short campaigns of 1939/40. However, if the campaign ever became a *war of attrition*, the lack of forward maintenance and repair units guaranteed that *acft serviceability rates* would drop precipitously. Starting w/ *Barbarossa*, this is *precisely what happened*. (J.S. Corum, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 207-8)

Wehrmacht's planning for campaign in Russia is a *prime example of strategic hubris*. German High Command assumed massive Soviet armed forces would simply collapse in a matter of weeks. *Wehrmacht* assumed that the *supply arrangements* already in place were adequate for a short campaign, so there was *no planning for possibility that the Soviets might hold on into the winter* and force the army and *Luftwaffe* to fight more than 1000 miles from their home bases, backed by a *tenuous supply line*. „Professional soldiers should have known better.“ Indeed, even before start of *Barbarossa*, *Luftwaffe logistics and repair system* had proved barely capable of handling the campaigns in the Balkans and North Africa. (J.S. Corum, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 208-9)

Prien writes of the „bereits kurz nach Beginn des Ostfeldzuges *nahezu zusammenbrechende Nachschub an Motoroen u. Ersatzteilen*, die das ihre dazu beitrugen, dass die Einsatzstaerken der Jagdfliegerverbaende schnell *besorgniserregend absanken*; schon nach wenigen Wochen zaehlten eine Reihe der Jagdgruppen nur noch ein knappes Dutzend einsatzklarer Maschinen...“ (Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 26-27)

1.9.5: *Force Structure/Strength & Losses*:

Note: In 1936, when Francisco *Franco* asked Hitler for help in moving his forces from Africa to Spain, **Ju-52s** were sent to do the job. Nine years later (1945), as the Third Reich crumbled, Ju-52s – what was left of them – were still the standard *Luftwaffe* transport acft, and in this circumstance the *Luftwaffe's intrinsic weakness* is strikingly reflected. **Me 109s & 110s, Dornier 17s, He 111s, Ju-87** “Stukas,” and **Ju-88s** were all on hand before the war began. With the sole

³⁵¹ **Note:** *Chronology items* pertaining to GAF logistics can be found in Section: **1.9.9:** “Chronology of Events.”

³⁵² Apparently, the *Luftwaffe* did not perform in the field what USAF logisticians now refer to as *depot-level maintenance*.

exception of the *Focke-Wulf 190* – somewhat but not significantly superior to the Me 109 – not a single new major acft type was added to the *Luftwaffe* until the final year of the war. Then came the first jet acft and the “V-weapons,” but it was too little too late. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, introduction by T. Taylor*)

a. Force Structure/Strength:

Luftwaffe in 1941 was a *formidable force*. Possessed acft types generally superior to those of VVS; *Luftwaffe* crews far better trained and possessed more combat experience. Command organization of the GAF allowed for *tremendous flexibility*. Units could be transferred rapidly across vast sections of the front. An *efficient signals network* eased tasks of command and control (C2) of the scattered formations, thereby allowing the *concentration of air power at any decisive point*. In matters of supply, particularly of essential items such as fuel, spares, and ammunition, the *Luftwaffe* possessed *severe if as yet concealed weaknesses*. Yet given that campaign was not to last more than four months, none of these weaknesses appeared particularly troublesome. (*Muller, German Air War, 33-5*)³⁵³

Impact of air war on the German *force structure* was such that rising *attrition* cancelled out increasing production so that there was remarkably little change in the *Luftwaffe's* total frontline strength from 1940 thru 1944, particularly in the combat categories of fighter and bomber acft. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat, 303*)

Despite enlargement of the *Luftwaffe as a whole* [?], the force sent against the USSR was scarcely larger than the one that operated against France in 1940. On eve of *Barbarossa*, the eastern air fleets, including *Luftflotte 5*, engaged in anti-shipping ops in the far north, deployed **3 904** acft of all types (of which **3 032** were operational). The force included: **952** bombers, **965** single-engine fighters, **102** twin-engine fighters, **456** Ju 87 dive bombers, the heart of the close army support force. (*Muller, German Air War, 23-4*; also, Boog, et al., *Angriff auf die Sowjetunion, 313*)

The *Luftwaffe* had never possessed the resources to build a sizeable *independent transport force*; rather, a significant percentage of transport acft served to *transition* future bomber pilots from single to multi-engine acft. Thus, the only way to build up airlift capability for emergency situations (i.e., *Cholm, Demyansk*) was to strip training establishments of instructors, pupils, and acft; in other words, to shut the schools down. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat, 120*)

Luftwaffe strength:³⁵⁴

11.5.40:

³⁵³ **Note:** GAF *intelligence* was also poor. Underestimated the number of Soviet acft available; “fecklessly” disregarded the significance of Soviet technical improvements in acft design, as well as the productive capacity of Soviet industry. The *failure of Luftwaffe intelligence to produce a complete assessment of Soviet capabilities* was to have dire consequences on both the strategic level in the coming years and on the tactical conduct of the first campaigning season. (*Muller, 40-1*)

³⁵⁴ See, *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat, Table XII „German Aircraft Strength”* (p 80) for complete listing of acft. Of note is that the Germans began *Barbarossa* with **200 fewer bombers** than they had possessed at beginning of *Westfeldzug* in May 40. Also conspicuous is fact that the available quantity of dive-bombers had remained stagnant.

1 356 single-engine fighters
354 twin-engine fighters
1 711 bombers
414 dive bombers

4 782 a/c in all

21.6.41:

1 440 single-engine fighters
188 twin-engine fighters
1 511 bombers
424 dive bombers

4 882 a/c in all

Jun 41: According to *Air Ministry*, the *Luftwaffe* force (four *Luftflotten*) engaged during opening phase of *Barbarossa* comprised no less than some 2770 acft, out of a total front-line strength of 4300 acft. These included: 775 long-range bombers; 310 dive bombers; 830 single-engine fighters; and 90 twin-engine fighters. Also, some 710 long- and short-range *reconnaissance* acft. Of this force, *Luftflotte 2* mustered not less than 1500 acft (i.e., more than half the total force). (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 165)³⁵⁵

Jun 41: When Germany invaded Russia in Jun 41, it had less than 3 000 acft available, *fewer than it had to support the invasion of France in May 1940*. In Russia, „*it was a case of too much front and too few aircraft*.“ Although it performed „brilliantly“ in early stages of campaign, it simply lacked sufficient numbers of acft to carry out its mission.“ (*J.S. Corum*, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 217.)

Jun 41: The *Luftwaffe* had a total of 1945 acft available for Operation „*Barbarossa*.“ Some 1400 combat acft took part in the initial attack on 22.6.41. Germany's allies provided nearly 1000 additional machines. (see, *C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia, 22-23*)³⁵⁶

Jun 41: According to chart in article by *Rudolf Hofmann*, the *Luftwaffe* committed 2000 acft to Operation *Barbarossa*: 1160 bombers, 720 fighters, and 120 reconnaissance acft. Of these, *Luftflotte 2* had: 490/390/30 (bomber/fighter/reconnaissance acft). (*Hofmann*, „*Schlacht von Moskau*,“ 142)

Jun 41: *Gen.Lt. Hermann Plocher* gives a smaller figure for number of German acft available for *Barbarossa*: 2,000 combat planes + 230 non-combat acft. Former included 29.3 bomber groups (880 acft); 9.3 dive bomber groups (280); 20 fighter groups (600); 2 twin-engine fighter groups (60); 2 ground attack groups (60), and 12 long-range reconnaissance squadrons (120). Non-combat planes arranged in 5 air transport groups (150) and 8 liaison squadrons (80). In addition, he places strength of *Second Air Fleet* on eve of Russian campaign at 910 combat acft: 8 bomber groups (240 acft); 8.3 dive bomber groups (250); 9 fighter groups (270); 2 twin-

³⁵⁵ **Note:** All these *strength figures* differ somewhat. *Boog's* figures (*Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*) probably most reliable.

³⁵⁶ **Note:** With the figure of 1945 acft, *Winchester* offers the lowest number I've seen. What are his sources?

engine fighter groups (60); 2 ground attack groups (60); and 3 long distance reconnaissance squadrons (30). Also attached to them were 2 air transport groups (60) and 3 liaison squadrons (30). Army air units in this combat area [i.e., Army Group Center] consisted of 4 long distance reconnaissance squadrons (40), 11 close reconnaissance squadrons (110), and 3 liaison squadrons (30). The *Second Air Fleet* had 1 antiaircraft artillery corps staff, 3 AAA regimental staffs, 16 mixed (light and heavy) battalions, and 7 light AAA battalions. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 33-34*)

Jun 41: The *Luftwaffe* had an overall (i.e., all theaters of war) in-commission rate of **65 percent**—57 percent for bombers, and 75 percent for fighters. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat, 95*)

21.6.41: According to *J. Prien, et al., Luftwaffe* in the east possessed **2.995** acft of all types on this day. Of these, **2.225** were *einsatzbereit*. *Luftflotte II* was the largest of the eastern air fleets: **1.367** acft, of which **994** were operational. In addition, there were a further **669 Aufklarungs- und Kuriermaschinen** — davon **560** *einsatzbereit* — die den Heeresgruppen- bzw. Armeoberkommandos unmittelbar unterstellt waren. Thus total = **3.664** acft. *Prien*: „Auch wenn damit anhaehernd zwei Drittel der Kraefte der dt. Luftwaffe im Osten versammelt waren, stellten diese 3.664 Flugzeuge angesichts des bereits zu Beginn **1.600 km langen Frontverlaufes** eine vollkommenen unzureichende Zahl dar. (For a breakdown of acft types, see, *Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 5-6*)

21.6.41: Jagdfliegerkraefte im Osten = insgesamt sechs *Geschwaderstaebe* u. **20 Jagdgruppen** (+ other minor elements); diese verfuegte am Vorabend des Angriffsbeginns ueber **858** Maschinen, davon allerdings nur **657** *einsatzklar*. Der ueberwiegende Teil der *Jagdgruppen* hatten mittlerweile auf die **Bf 109 F** umgeruestet, so dass nur mehr vier Gruppen ganz mit der **Bf 109 E** ausgeruestet waren. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 21*)

22.6.-31.12.41: *Prien, et al.,* address the „*unzureichende Zuweisung neuer Maschinen.*“ (Note: See table in *Prien*, according to which *Luftflotte 2* received a total of **342** new fighters from Jun-Sep 41, but only **9** in Oct and *none* in Nov or Dec! (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 26-27*)

30.8.41: Ende Aug 41, also knapp zehn Wochen nach Beginn des Feldzuges, belief sich die Zahl der im Osten vorhandenen *Bf 109 E* u. *F* auf noch **626** Maschinen, von denen ganz **329** als *einsatzklar* gemeldet wurden. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 15*)

6.9.41: Einsatzbereite dt. Flugezeuge am 6.9.41: **Luftflotte 2:** Kampf (**141**); Stuka (**55**); Jagd (**44**); Zerstoerer (---); Aufklaerer (**11**). („*Unterstuetzung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe,*“ **KDC**, Microfilm „E;“ also, *Halder KTB*)

Sep-Dec 41: According to *Halder's Tagebuch*, the *Luftwaffe* on the eastern front possessed **1916** acft [*ohne Transporter*] on **6.9.41** [operational?]. Of these, Army Group North had **886**; Center had **457**; and South **573**. By **12.12.41**, the total number of acft in the east had sunk to just **1050**; of which **490** were in central sector (**160** Jagdflieger; **330** Kampfflieger). (See, *Halder KTB, 6.9.41, 12.12.41*)

Oct 41: *Luftwaffe* had overall in-commission rate of **54 percent**—38 percent for bombers, 62 for fighters. (*Murray, 95*)

2.10.41: German general offensive (“*Taifun*”) begins against Moscow, supported by **1 387** acft. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 86)³⁵⁷

2.10.41: In der Luft sollte der Angriff [Unternehmen „*Taifun*“] durch die zusammengefassten Kraefte des **II. und VIII Fliegerkorps** unterstuetzt werden, deren Verbaende jedoch durch die vorangegangenen Einsaetze bereits *ganz erheblich angeschlagen waren*, so dass beim Angriffsbeginn entlang der **750 km langen Frontlinie des Angriffsraumes** insgesamt nur rund **500 Maschinen** verfuegbar waren, davon **300 Kampf- u. Stukaflugzeuge**, **25 Aufklaerer**, sowie etwas **150 Jaeger**. Die vorhandenen Luftwaffenkraefte waren damit fuer die ihnen gestellte Aufgabe schon zahlenmaessig bie weitem nicht ausreichend. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien*, 17)³⁵⁸

Early Oct 41: In-commission [i.e., “mission capable”] rates for *Luftwaffe’s* bomber force had sunk below 40 percent, while only 58 percent of single-engine fighters were in commission. The rate for all acft hovered near **53** percent. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 88)

Mid-Nov 41: Much of *Luftflotte 2* withdrawn for service in Mediterranean. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 87)

Dec 41: *Luftwaffe* overall in-commission rate = **45 percent**—32 percent for bombers, 52 for fighters. By this time, the bomber in particular had *reached a point where the Luftwaffe hardly had any capability left*. On **6.12.41**, with an authorized strength of **1 950** bombers, the *Luftwaffe* only had **468** in commission [in all theaters of war], or **24** percent of authorized acft. (*Murray*, 95, 101)

12.12.41: Staerke der dt. Luftwaffe an der Ostfront. Mitte = **7** Kampfgruppen, **3** Stuka-Gruppen, **1** Zerstoerer-Gruppe, **5 1/3** Jagd-Gruppen. Wenn man eine Gruppe zu **30** Flugzeugen rechnet, ergibt sich folgender Vergleich mit den Staerken des Feindes: Mitte: Jagdfl. **160**, Kampffl. **330** vs. **88** russ. Jagdfl., **67** russ. Kampffl. u. **55** sonst. Flugzeuge. („*Unterstuetzung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe*,” **KDC**, Microfilm „E;“ also, *Halder KTB*)

27.12.41: Of a total of ca. **1900** front-line machines (including transport acft) in the east, about **960** were ready for action. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 817)

Late 41: Output of close-support acft in troublesome situation late in 1941. The **Bf-110** fighter-bomber suffered a complete production breakdown. Monthly output of these acft fell from **123** in Feb 41, to just **1** in Dec 41, and *not even 1* in Jan 42—at a time when the *Bf 110* units were being rushed back to eastern front to help stem tide of Soviet counteroffensive.³⁵⁹ Only slowly was the *Bf 110* production crisis resolved, and 42 of the planes were delivered in Mar 42. While *Stukageschwader* had experienced a revival of sorts during first months of *Barbarossa*, appearance of new and faster Soviet fighter acft made it obvious that a successor was needed. Production of the *Ju 87* also was planned to be phased out; output of *Ju 87s* decreased and *almost*

³⁵⁷ Not sure if this figure includes *Luftwaffe* units supporting *Guderian’s* drive on the southern wing of Army Group Center, which began on **30.9.41**.

³⁵⁸ **Note:** *Prien’s* figures for *Luftwaffe* strength at outset of “*Taifun*” differ dramatically from those of *W. Murray*—500 vs. latter’s figure of 1387!

³⁵⁹ Heavy losses, combined w/ need to convert the *Bf 110* to another role—that of night fighter against increasing RAF night raids on German cities—had compelled the OKL to withdraw most of the remaining *Bf 110 Zerstoerer* from eastern front in fall of 1941. Several months later, during Soviet winter offensive, they were rushed back to the Moscow front. (26)

terminated toward end of 1941. But as no adequate replacement was available, needs of eastern front compelled Germans to *reinstate the Ju 87 into production from Jan 42*. A **new version**, the **Ju 87D**, better armored, better equipped and w/ stronger defensive armament, entered service in early 1942, replacing the old **Ju 87B**. The output of *Ju 87s* increased from **476** in 1941 to **960** in 1942. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 26-27)

Winter 1941/42: Coincident w/ withdrawal of operational commands (i.e., bulk of *Luftflotte 2*, etc.), large-scale withdrawals of flying units, badly in need of rest and re-equipment and for reinforcement of the Mediterranean, also took place, w/ the result that during the winter of 1941/42, German air strength on eastern front was reduced to some **1 700** acft. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 172)

Early 42: With creation of the first **Schlachtgeschwader**—ground attack wing—in 1942, the *Luftwaffe* considerably improved the structure of its ground-attack force. But the technical equipment did not follow the improvements in organizational structure. At beginning of 1942, *the only operational acft type expressly designed as a ground-attack plane remained the old Hs 123 biplane*. In Jan 42, one *Staffel -10.(S)/LG 2* (later to be reformed as **8./SchG 1**)—was the *only unit operating this type of plane on eastern front*. The bulk of the acft composition of **SchG 1** was **Bf 109Es** with *liquid-cooled engines and thus extremely vulnerable to ground fire*. A new acft type entirely designed for the ground-attack mission was being completed in early 1942—the heavily armored twin-engine **Hs 129**. But the *Hs 129* proved to be a disappointment as it entered service in May 42. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 27)

1942: The great success of the German acft industry in 1941 had been the new *Focke-Wulf Fw 190* fighter. Equipped w/ a powerful air-cooled radial engine, it was faster than the *Bf 109F*, and better armed. Still, the *Bf 109* would remain the *only German fighter active on the eastern front during most of 1942*.³⁶⁰ Among bomber units, the old **Do 17** horizontal medium bomber disappeared from service w/ the *Kampfgruppen* on the eastern front at end of 1941. From then on, *Do 17s* only served as long-range reconnaissance acft. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 27)

Mar 42: Despite a clear qualitative superiority in the first nine (9) months of the Russian campaign, in **Mar 42** the *Luftwaffe* had nearly **600 fewer** acft [in its *entire* inventory?] than in **Jun 41** and – amazingly – **40 fewer** than it had possessed in **Sep 39**. (*Megargee, Inside Hitler's High Command*, 174)

b. Losses:

Note: For compilations of *Luftwaffe* losses in the east for various time periods from **22.6.41 – 8.4.42** see, “*Verluste der dt. Luftwaffe in Russland*.” Data compiled by Gen.Qu. **6.Abt.** des OKL, **KDC**, Microfilm “E.” Many of the losses in opening weeks of campaign attributed to Soviet *Bodenabwehr* against German *Tieffliegerangriffe*.

Note: By the beginning of **1942**, the Germans had **lost the equivalent of two entire air forces**. Loss of acft only one indicator among many of what was happening to the *Luftwaffe*. The *attrition of pilots and skilled aircrews* was perhaps the *most important factor* in the destruction of the *Luftwaffe* as an effective fighting force. The rise in the attrition rate of pilots resulted in a *steady reduction in the skills and experience* of those flying German acft. Skills of German pilots

³⁶⁰ For technical details of *Bf 109* designs at this time, see p 27.

beginning to decline after the 1940 air battles—as reflected in rising level of non-combatant losses after this time. Conversely, those *Luftwaffe* pilots who survived the attrition of the first air battles of the war had *little difficulty defeating new allied pilots* no matter how many training hours the latter had flown. In fact, the ratio of kills-to-sorties climbed as those *Luftwaffe* pilots who survived built up experience. However, few German pilots survived the attrition of the first war years, and thus the *Luftwaffe* became, in fact, **two distinct forces**: the few great aces—the *Hartmans*, *Galands*, and *Waldmans*—and the great mass of pilots who faced great difficulty in landing their acft, much less surviving combat. Only **8** of Germany's **107** aces to score more than **100** victories joined their squadrons after mid-1942. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 312)

Note: As a general observation, important to note that the *Luftwaffe* sustained terrible attrition rates in eastern campaign. Unlike Battle of France or Battle of Britain, however, *attrition in Russia* involved low loss rates combined w/ sustained ops over long periods of time. The cumulative effect of these small “acceptable” losses was no less decisive, however. In fact, when one considers all *Luftwaffe* ops in 1941—i.e., in the east, the “Blitz” against British Isles in winter of 1941, Balkan campaign, commitments in Mediterranean—the *Luftwaffe went thru its entire inventory of acft in just 12 months*. By end of 1941, German acft production and crew training could *no longer keep pace w/ losses*. By **Jan 42**, conditions forced front-line units to rob transition [i.e., training] schools of crews a month before their scheduled course completion.³⁶¹ (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 89, 94)³⁶²

Note: According to *W. Murray*, for fighters the attrition of German pilots over the war was probably well into the **90th percentile**. The statistic (mentioned in the last preceding chapter) on the *average length of service of line pilots* (between **8** and **30** days!) is an indication of the fate awaiting those who flew for the *Luftwaffe*. The statistics for bomber, night fighter, or “*Stuka*” pilots could not have been much better. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 303)

May 40 – June 41 [Attrition of the Luftwaffe]: In contrast to the Army, from the opening of the campaign against France in **May 40** through the invasion of the Soviet Union the following year, the *Luftwaffe* was *required to perform in almost constant combat*, fighting a long and costly campaign over Great Britain. Figures for the period between **May-Sep 40**, covering both the defeat of France and the Battle of Britain, illustrate the toll these operations took on the *Luftwaffe*. Taken as a percentage of the early **May 40** total, losses for single-engine fighters amounted to **57%**, twin-engine fighters **94%**, bombers **64%**, and dive bombers **50%**. Such an erosion of strength was clearly unsustainable in the long term and boded ill for the further commitment of the *Luftwaffe* in the campaign over England as well as the expansion of aerial ops in new theaters. . .

Between autumn **1940** and the spring of **1941**, the bombing of Britain and attacks on British shipping resulted in a reduced, but steady attrition of German acft. As **1941** wore on, each month recorded a new increase in the *Luftwaffe*'s losses. The spring **1941** Balkan campaign and the subsequent aerial invasion of Crete placed significant demands on the *Luftwaffe*'s resources,

³⁶¹ What now happened is that operational units completed whatever training the schools could no longer finish. The process in many units involved working new pilots into squadron ops on a gradual basis while hopefully minimizing exposure to hazardous missions. Then as experienced increased, squadrons assigned pilots to more dangerous tasks until they were fully combat-ready. As Murray notes, however, this policy had “pernicious side effects.” (*W. Murray*, 94-96)

³⁶² **Note:** See tables in *Strategy for Defeat*, pp 89-93, for details of losses. For example, German *bomber losses* for year peaked in Jul 41 at 18.4 percent—perhaps due to beginning of aerial attacks on Moscow on **22.7.41**.

while in the final months preceding Barbarossa, the Luftwaffe was ordered to intensify the air war against Britain to camouflage German intentions in the east and feign that a German invasion of Britain was finally at hand. . . In practical terms, from the beginning of **Aug 40** to **Jun 41** the Luftwaffe had lost **3700** acft (all types) as well as almost **3700** members of flying crews killed, **3000** missing and **1500** wounded.

As Williamson Murray aptly points out, the demand on the Luftwaffe's resources even before Barbarossa began, and the great strain that would be subsequently added by the war in the east, left many fundamental questions concerning the Luftwaffe's capabilities unanswered. . . By the summer of **1941** it was clear that the Luftwaffe was *only going to be able to meet all its obligations if the war in the east could be won quickly and w/o substantial losses*. The Luftwaffe was already engaged in a multi-front war which was tying down some **1566** acft in western Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa and Germany. . . (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 86-88; also, *W. Murray, The Luftwaffe 1933-45*, 77; for overview of problems in German acft industry see, *A. Tooze, The Wages of Destruction*, 446-52)

22.6.-1.11.41: Average monthly strength of *Luftwaffe* in east was **2 462** acft. Average monthly loss (damaged/destroyed): **741** acft = **30.1** percent. Average crew strength was **2 963**. Average monthly crew loss: **318** = **10.7** percent. (For detailed breakdown by acft type see, *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 89)

5.7.41: [*Luftwaffe attrition*]: After a scant two weeks of combat, the strength (*Ist-Staerke*) of the *Luftwaffe*'s main combat acft types, which had totaled **2 475** on **21 Jun 41**, had sunk to **1 888**. (See, *Muller, German Air War*, 38-9; 261, f.n. 23, for details)

Early Aug 41: By this date, the GAF had lost **1 023** of its initial **2 800** acft, w/ another **657** undergoing repairs. (*D.R. Jones*, in: *Why Air Force's Fail*, 279)

10.-21.8.41: Over this 12-day period, *Fliegerkorps VIII* (temporarily transferred to Army Group North), while supporting I AK in its efforts to cut the main Moscow-Leningrad railroad, **lost 10.3 percent of its acft** (destroyed or written off as result of the operations), while 54.5 percent of its planes were damaged but repairable. The air corps also incurred a **12.5 percent total casualty rate** among its flying personnel. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 84)

Further complicating *Luftwaffe*'s problem of flying missions was fact that its acft were operating from *primitive dirt strips*, while Red Air Force was using more permanent facilities near Moscow. Combination of a *weak flying safety program* along w/ untrained and unskilled pilots³⁶³ flying off of the dirt strips was deadly—in fact, in **1941**, the *Luftwaffe* was destroying three of its own acft for every four destroyed by the enemy! (See, Table XVII, p 93, in: *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 93)

26.9.41: Seit Beginn des Ostfeldzuges verlor die dt. Luftwaffe im Osten **170** Nahaufklaerer (**124** beschaedigt), **110** Fernaufklaerer (**72**), **536** Bomber (**337**), **146** Stuka (**49**), **466** Jaeger (**333**), **62** Zerstoerer (**29**) u. **113** andere Typen (**84**). Insgesamt: **1603** abgeschossenen oder zerstoert, **1028** beschaedigt. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1230)

27.9.41: Die *Verluste der Luftwaffe* im Osten beliefen sich in den gut drei Monaten bis zum 27.9.41 auf:

³⁶³ Attrition over summer and fall of 1941 led to a *steady deterioration in the experience level of aircrews*. (*W. Murray*, 96)

170 Nahaufklaerer	(124 beschaedigt)
110 Fernaufklaerer	(72)
536 Kampfflugzeuge	(337)
146 Stukas	(49)
466 Jaeger	(333)
62 Zerstoerer	(29)
113 Misc.	(84)

Insgesamt bedeutete dies einen Verlust von **1.603** abgeschossenen oder zerstorten Flugzeugen u. weiteren **1.028** mit erheblichen Schaden, was wiederum bezogen auf den Anfangsbestand am 22.6.41 eine *Verlustrate von fast 88% bedeutete*. (For more details see, *Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 17*; see also, "*Verluste der dt. Luftwaffe in Russland*," *Gen.Qu. 6.Abt. des OKL*, in: **KDC**, Microfilm „E.“

28.9.-6.12.41: *Luftwaffe* losses during this period amount to: **489** zerstort / **333** beschaedigt = **822**. (For details see, "*Verluste der dt. Luftwaffe in Russland*," *Gen.Qu. 6.Abt. des OKL*, in: **KDC**, Microfilm „E.“

6.12.41: Die dt. *Luftwaffe* verlor seit dem **22. Jun 41** an der Ostfront:

758 Bomber
 568 Jaeger
 767 sonstige Fluegzuege
 (darunter ueber 170 Stuka
 rund 130 Fernaufklaerer u.
 200 Nahaufklaerer)

Beschaedigt wurden:

473 Bomber
 412 Jaeger
 475 sonstige Flugzuege

(*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1240)

7.12.41-8.4.42: *Luftwaffe* losses for this period amount to: **859** zerstort / **636** beschaedigt = **1.495**. (For details see, "*Verluste der dt. Luftwaffe in Russland*," *Gen.Qu. 6.Abt. des OKL*, in: **KDC**, Microfilm „E.“

27.12.41: Of a total of ca. **1900** front-line machines (including transport acft) in the east, about **960** were ready for action. . . As of this date, German acft losses in the east were **2505** destroyed (**327** not due to enemy action), and **1895** damaged. This meant that w/in **6** months of the opening of the eastern front, **4400** acft were permanently or temporarily out of action. Total losses on all fronts since the beginning of the war in the east were **5730**, about **3/4** of them in the east. In comparison, new production (excluding seaplanes, gliders, and courier acft) from **Jun 41** until the end of **Dec 41** was only **5147** – far too low to make up for the losses of the previous six **[6]** months. . . Although the *Luftwaffe* was still a strong, efficient and combat-ready instrument of

war at the end of **1941**, the figures still show that in terms of material and armaments it was declining. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 817-19)³⁶⁴

31.12.41: Direct support of the army was also costly to air transport units (**Ju-52s**) and in terms of the number of close-reconnaissance acft lost. Of **56** close-reconnaissance Staffeln at the start of the campaign, only **19** were still ready for action at the end of the year. The limited readiness for action of the long-range reconnaissance units since the beginning of the campaign made their losses especially serious. Such losses also demonstrated the wastefulness of the tactical fragmentation of these units between the army and Luftwaffe and the resulting frequent duplication of effort and omissions in reconnaissance. Oversights resulting from such a lack of reconnaissance acft – long-range reconnaissance acft were also used as bombers on the battlefield – was an important factor in the German failure to realize in time the scale of the westward transports of fresh Soviet troops from Siberia in later autumn **1941**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 823)³⁶⁵

Dec 41-Feb 42: Among all *Luftwaffe* units on eastern front, the **heaviest losses** during *Barbarossa* were suffered by the **Heeresfliegerverbände**—the *Nah-, Panzer- and Fernaufklaerungsstaffeln* [?] subordinate to the German Army. Chiefly outfitted w/ the old **Hs 126**, these tactical reconnaissance units registered **259** acft totally destroyed and **231** damaged by *end of 1941*—compared to **366** that had been on hand at onset of Operation *Barbarossa*. Hence, it is hardly surprising that the tactical recon units underwent the **largest reorganization among all German aviation units during 1942**. Due to frequent coordination difficulties between the *Luftwaffe* and the army's tactical recon aviation, the army aviation units were *disbanded* and the *Heeresaufklaerungs* units placed under GAF control in Feb 42. Moreover, the gradual replacement of the *Hs 126* w/ the new twin-engine **Fw 189** resulted in a **radical improvement** of the technical standing of the *Heeresaufklaerungs* units in 1942. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 28)

Jan-Apr 42: The attrition in 1941 forced the *Luftwaffe* to operate w/ considerably less effectiveness in 1942 because of *less well-trained crews* than it had in 1941. Overall, the *Luftwaffe's* attrition rates for the year showed an **alarming rise over those in 1941**. From Jan-Apr 1942, *Luftwaffe* losses (all types) amounted to nearly **30 percent** (see, Table XXVI, etc., in: *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 115)

1.9.6: Aircraft/Equipment/Munitions:

Note: Even w/ just half their normal bomb-load, the medium bombers could only fly **900-1000 km**. Ground-attack, dive bombers and fighter acft could penetrate only **375, 200 and 180 km**, respectively, unless fitted w/ extra fuel tanks. The *Luftwaffe* had long demanded a long-range bomber – the „*Uralbomber*“ – but in **Nov 40** production of the **Heinkel 177** long-range bomber was postponed three months and limited to just a few a month. Not until **Jan 42** did a few more

³⁶⁴ **Note:** Personnel losses of *Luftwaffe* between **22.6.-27.12.41** on p. 818. Crew losses of the flying units in the east were **3010** (including **664** officers) KIA, mission, captured.

³⁶⁵ **Note:** By the end of **Mar 42**, all close- and long-range reconnaissance, anti-acft, and air-signal units assigned to the army were progressively returned to Luftwaffe commands, and the *Luftwaffe* staffs in the armies disbanded and replaced by *Luftwaffe liaison officers* w/ the army staffs. . . The final result of these measures, however, was that the *Luftwaffe* was bound even more closely to the army, as the air fleets and air corps now had to concern themselves even more w/ the wishes of the army and found even less time for the operational-strategic tasks of the flying units. (823-24)

acft start to roll of the production line. The German medium bombers – the Dornier 17 „flying pencil,” the **Ju 88** and the **He 111** – had all been state-of-the-art in the late **1930s**, but were now approaching *obsolescence*, while the **Ju 87** „Stuka“ could only survive when there was no serious air opposition. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 173)

The *Luftwaffe* had no four-engined heavy bombers of the sort entering the service in the USA and the UK. Promising designs like the Dornier **Do-19** and the Junkers **Ju-19** had been cancelled in **1937**. The Heinkel **He-177**, the only heavy bomber under development, was hamstrung by a demand for dive-bombing capability and would never be successful. Long-range attacks on Soviet industrial centers – or on the rail network – would not be possible. The *Luftwaffe*, like the Army, was *not ready for a prolonged conflict*. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 23)

a. Aircraft:

Heinkel He 111: Photo shows two **He 111H-11s** of **KG 53**, “Legion Condor,” returning from bombing mission in Russia. The acft are painted in a standard camouflage scheme – upper surfaces painted in shades of dark-green, and undersurfaces painted light blue-grey. Bombers taking part in the Russian campaign also had yellow bands painted around rear portion of fuselage. Another photo shows an **He 111H-3** w/ the standard camouflage scheme. (M. Griehl, *German Bombers over Russia*, 10-11, 22-23)

Heinkel He 111: The twin-engine **He 111** was the *backbone of the GAF's horizontal bomber fleet*. In late 1941 the modified **He 111 H-6**—supplied w/ improved armor protection—was introduced. *He 111* production increased from **950** in 1941 to **1 337** in 1942. In 1942, the acft was used in versatile roles as a horizontal bomber, torpedo plane, minelayer and transport. **Hansgeorg Baetcher**, an *Oberleutnant* and *Staffelkapitän* in **I./KG 100** in early 1942, describes the *He 111* as an outstanding acft in 1942—„excellent handling characteristics, a bit slow, but w/ a great ability to withstand damage.“ It was very popular among the flight crews. (Bergstroem, *Black Cross RedStar*, 28)

Henschel Hs 123 biplanes: These were the only *specialized* army support acft possessed by the *Luftwaffe* at beginning of Russian campaign. These were allocated to a single *Gruppe* (**II./Lehrgeschwader 2**). The fact that this type *remained in service until 1944* is more a reflection of the absence of a suitable successor than of the type's usefulness. (Muller, *German Air War*, 32-3)

Henschel 126: The short-range tactical reconnaissance units, which were sometimes allocated even to individual Panzer divisions, flew this acft—an *obsolescent parasol-wing monoplane*. (Muller, *German Air War*, 33)

Henschel 126: In **4000 m** Hoehe ratterten wir ueber die Stadt. Die Reisegeschwindigkeit [*crusing speed*] der **Hs 126** war **250-260 km/h**. Zur Erhoehung der Geschwindigkeit drueckte ich das Flugzeug, vom Osten kommend, auf **3000 m** herab, um die Luftaufnahmen schneller zu erstellen. Sie wurden damals noch mit einer Handkamera ueber Bord haengend durchgefuehrt. (E. Krombholz, **3.(H)21**, „Zurueckbesinnung auf die Zeit“)

Junkers Ju 52: The three-engine *Ju 52* had made its first flight on **13 Oct 30**, and for next 15 years *its chassis was never changed*—a measure of the farsightedness of its designer, **Ernst Zindel**. This old and slow transport plane served by the hundreds in all combat zones, providing

surrounded German troop contingents w/ vital supplies, bringing up ammunition and fuel to advancing *Panzer* spearheads or forward airstrips, evacuating wounded, etc. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 28)

Junkers Ju 52: CBS Berlin correspondent *Harry Flannery* flies in Ju52 from Athens to Crete in early Jun 41. German “parachute troops” accompany him on the flight. They sit on munitions chests during flight. His informant, a young, bespectacled NCO said to Flannery during the flight: “You may have noticed this is an old plane and that we are not flying very high. *Junker-52’s are like freight trains*. They don’t have the speed and can’t gain the height of some other planes, but they get there.” Flannery: “As we later swung through the air and banked for a landing on some of the small fields on Crete, I noticed also that the machine was unusually manoeuvrable.” (*Flannery*, 316)

Junkers Ju 52/3M: First flew in **Apr 31**. Was a *three-engine version* of the single-engine Ju52, which first flew on **13 Oct 30**. The Ju52/3 continued in production until mid-1944. Total production from 1939-44 was **3225**. (*For Germany, Skorzeny*, 113, f.n. 3)

Junkers Ju 52 = Tante Ju. The word *Tante* “not always having a nice meaning.” Aircraft was slow and clumsy. No heating, no toilets. (*Verton*, 81-2)

Junkers Ju 88: The *Do 17’s* replacement, the *Ju 88*, was *the best German combat airplane on the eastern front in 1942*. It was a fortunate combination—a fast medium bomber that could dive-bomb w/ sufficient accuracy. The acft was supposed to dive at an angle of about 50 degrees, but *Ju 88* crews state they frequently dived at 60 to 70 degrees. The *Ju 88* could be used w/ considerable effect against pinpoint targets such as bridges, ships, and even moving tanks, and its high speed often allowed it to escape fighter interception. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 27)

Messerschmitt Bf 110: A twin-engined long-range fighter and light bomber that equipped the so-called *Zerstoerer* formations of the *Luftwaffe*. A failure over Great Britain in 1940, the 110’s range, varied wpn load, and speed gave it a *new lease on life in Russia*. (*Muller, German Air War*, 33)

Stukas:³⁶⁶ Usually dived against intended target at an *angle of about 70 degrees*, which enabled pilot to place the bombs w/ high precision. Thanks to *dive brakes*, the descent could be carried out at a fixed speed. When the pilot levelled out from the steep dive, he experienced 3 to 5 Gs of pressure, and during this phase of the attack the Stuka crew was most vulnerable to enemy fighter attacks. (*Bergstroem, Black Cross Red Star*, 22)

Stukas: Against the RAF in the Battle of Britain, the Stuka had suffered heavily, lacking speed and armament but, given adequate protection, or in absence of serious opposition, the Stuka could provide remarkable accuracy, while its screeching air brakes had an often terrifying psychological effect on ground forces. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 85-86)

Stukas [Frankreichfeldzug]: Uebereinstimmend wird in den Quellen u. Geschichtsdarstellungen festgehalten, dass die Stuka-Einsaetze „von *vernichtender moralischer Wirkung*“ gewesen sind: „An diese Art Angriff ist der franzoesische Soldat nicht gewoehnt. Die Stukas schiessen mit einem infernalischen *Geheil* herab u. setzen ihre Bomben buchstaeblich ins Ziel. Der Soldat

³⁶⁶ **Note:** Stuka pilots flew many missions a day, day in and day out, at beginning of Russian campaign. Some suffered mental breakdowns from the terrible strain. See, Section **2.18.2**.

hat den Eindruck, *als stuerzte sich die Maschine selbst auf ihn*, u. das halten seine Nerven um so winiger aus, als diese Angriffe von 12.00 bis 16.00 Uhr pausenlos fortdauern.“ (Benoist-Mechin, *Der Himmel stuerzt ein*, 72; quoted in: H.J. Schroeder, *Die gestohlenen Jahre*, 507)

Stukas [*Frankreichfeldzug*]: Zur Wirkung der Stuka-Angriffe erklart der franz. General Ruby: „Die Kanoniere schossen nicht mehr, sie warfen sich zu Boden, die Infanteriesten kauerten sich in die Graeben, betaeubt vom Krachen der Bomben u. dem Kreischen der Stukas; sie hatten noch nicht die instinktive Reaktion entwickelt, zu ihren Flakwaffen zu laufen u. zurueckzuschossen. Sie hatten nur eine Sorge, die Koepfe drunten zu behalten. Fuenf Stunden dieses Alptraumes genuegten, um ihre Nerven zu zerfetzen, sie konnten gegen die feindl. Infanterie nicht mehr reagieren.“ (Horne, *Uber die Maas, ueber Schelde u. Rhein*, 228; quoted in: H.J. Schroeder, *Die gestohlenen Jahre*, 507)

Stukas: The *Stukageschwader* operated the **Ju 87B** single-engine dive bomber. The *greater accuracy* imparted by this method of attack made the Stukas a logical choice for direct army support duties. In fact, this was only one of the *many tasks facing the dive bomber formations in Jun 41*. The Ju 87's *lack of adequate armored protection and corresponding vulnerability to small-arms fire* made it a **less than ideal close support wpn**. Still, they were the „*heart of the close army support force*.” (Muller, *German Air War*, 32, 38)

Stukas: “The Stukas’ success resulted in large part from the absence of effective fighter or antiaircraft opposition. The vulnerability of the dive bomber, first demonstrated in the Battle of Britain...did not prevent the *Luftwaffe* from using Stukas effectively against the Russians throughout the war, after 1943 more as a tankbuster than a strike aircraft.” (Showalter commentary, *K. Fuchs*, 7. PD, 116)]

Stukas: The *mode of attack* [”the machine tilts to one side, begins to dive and plunges down thru a milky wall of cloud towards its objective, hurtles down steeper and steeper; stands on its head, dives almost perpendicularly. . .“] while not precision bombing, was *the most accurate that technology could achieve at the time*. Pilots labored under uncomfortable *G-force pressures* varying from **4g** to **12g** for **1** to **6** seconds depending how the pilot levelled from his dive. Hauptmann Robert *Oleinic*, a Stuka training instructor, explained:

A dive speed of **480** kph placed enormous strain on the system. The dive brake set at this speed prevented the machine from breaking up in the air, enabling the pilot to get it under control again. The pressure while levelling out was so intense that pilots occasionally experienced a *temporary misting sensation* that could last a few seconds. That meant for a moment he *blacked out*. (Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 53)

Stukas: “Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive bombers were particularly terrifying because of the suddenness with which they could appear from a clear sky and swoop down with their sirens screaming. ‘Nobody who has ever heard the whistling scream made by dive bombers before releasing their load is ever likely to forget the experience,’ wrote *Marc Bloch*, a prominent medieval historian and French army reservist who would be executed by the Gestapo in 1944 for his work in the French Resistance. He recalled getting up after one attack in which no one was killed: ‘[I]t left me profoundly shaken, and when I crept out the ditch where I had been crouching I was trembling pretty badly.’ This caused him to reflect on how ‘this dropping of bombs from the sky has a unique power of spreading terror...It seems to crush the

very air with unparalleled violence, and conjures up pictures of torn flesh which are only too horribly borne out in fact by the sights one sees.” (*M. Boot, War Made New*, 213-14)

Stukas: “Every time I was shot down behind Russian lines—[all told, he was shot down 13 times during the war, and bailed out twice!]
—I was always prepared to shoot myself, because I never would have let them take me alive. I had seen the remains of Stuka fliers who had been massacred by Russian soldiers, their stomachs slit open, and so on. The Russians really hated Stuka crews.” (Note: He flew missions at Smolensk in summer of 1941.) (*Siegfried Fischer*, in: *Voices of the Third Reich*, 137-39)

Stukas: For chilling description of a Stuka attack from perspective of one who endured it see, *Boris Gorbachevsky's Through the Maelstrom. A Red Army Soldier's War on the Eastern Front, 1942-45.*, p 112.

Stukas: Notizen (Bullets) aus den Aufzeichnungen Major a.D. Friedrich Langs ueber die „Sturzkampffliegerei:“

- Die Sturzkampffliegerei wurde fuer den Angriff auf kleine, wichtige, meist im fdl. Hinterland gelegene Ziele, wie es Bruecken, Schiffe, Zuege, Gebaeude u. aehnliches sind, geschaffen. Die Bomben wurden in einem Sturzwinkel von etwa 70 [Grad] geworfen, wobei ihre grobe Fallrichtung auf das Ziel durch die Lage der Flugzeuglaengsachse bestimmt wurde; (5)
- Die Angriffseinheit war im Normalfall die Gruppe, die in ihrer Staerke die Zerstoerung des Zieles mit einiger Sicherheit gewaehrleistete. Sie bestand im Fluge aus drei [3] Flugzeugen der Stabskette u. je 9 Flugzeugen der drei [3] Staffeln, insgesamt also aus 30 Flugzeugen; (5)
- Eine genaue Trennungslinie im Aufgabenbereich der Sturzkampf- u. Schlachtfliegerei bestand nicht. Je mehr sich die Sturzkampfangriffe der Kampflinie naeherten, um so aehnlicher wurden sie, durch die anders gearteten Ziele bedingt, der Angriffstaktik der Schlachtflieger, wobei mehrfache Bomben- u. Schiessanfluege auf Inf.- u. Art.-Stellungen, Kolonnen, Panzer u. Aehnliches, meist im Schraegangriff von 30-50 [Grad], durchgefuehrt wurden; (5)
- Im Verlauf des Krieges traten die Sturzangriffe auf entsprechende Ziele, der unmittelbaren Anforderung, aber auch der Not der kaempfenden Truppe gehorchend, immer mehr in den Hintergrund, so dass die Sturzkampffliegerei, die sich allerdings schon seit Beginn des Krieges in der Mehrzahl der Einsaetze im Schlachtfliegerangriff voll bewaehrt hatte, zur reinen Schlachtfliegerei wurde. Die Umbenennung der Verbaende im Herbst 1943 war die aeussere Folgeerscheinung; (5)
- Im Sommer 1938 wurden die Sturzkampfverbaende mit der zweisitzigen „JU 87A“ ausgeruestet, welche die urspruenglich als Jaeger gebaute „HS 123“ abloeste. Die „JU 87“ war das erste fuer den Sturzkampfangriff konstruierte Flugzeug. Ihre fliegerischen Eigenschaften waren sehr gut. Ihre Bewaffnung u. Tragfaehigkeit wurde im Verlauf der Jahre von einer 500 kg Bombe (ohne Fliegerschuetzen!), einem starr u. einem beweglich eingebauten MG der „JU 87A“ auf eine 1800 kg Bombe (die allerdings niemals eingesetzt wurde), zwei starr eingebauten 2 cm Kanonen u. einem beweglichen Zwillingen – MG der

„JU 87D5“ gesteigert. Die Motorenleistung wurde dabei von rund **600** PS auf das Dreifache verstaerkt. Durch die fast gleichbleibende Zellenform bedingt, nahm die Geschwindigkeit in Bodennaehе aber nur von etwa **250** Km/h auf **280** km/h zu; (6)

- Den Vorkriegsanschauungen entsprechend, betrug den Anflughoehe des Verbandes auf ein Ziel zur Wahrung des Ueberraschungsmomentes u. zur Ausschaltung der Erdabwehr etwa **6.000** m. Vor dem Ziel wurde die Anflughoehe verringert u. der Sturzangriff moeglichst gegen den Wind in Ziellaengsrichtung u. aus der Sonne heraus angesetzt. . . Nach den ersten Kriegseinsatzen wurde aufgrund der Erfahrungen festgestellt, dass ein Ersteigen von **6.000** m Hoehe nicht erforderlich war. Mitentscheidend fuer die Hoehenherabsetzung war wohl auch die nicht angenehme Benuetzung des Sauerstoffsgeraetes; (6)

- In den „JU 87“-Verbaenden wurde frueh oder spaeter auch die Betaetigung der Sturzflugbremsen weggelassen. Diese hatten die Sturzzgeschwindigkeit von etwa **650** Km/h im **70** Grad-Sturz auf **450** Km/h herabgesetzt u. ein ruhigeres Zielen ermoeeglicht. Ohne Bremsen konnte der Angriff zuegiger durchgefuehrt werden, da die durch das ungleichmaessige Aus- u. Einfahren der Bremsen verursachten Geschwindigkeitsunterschiede Unruhe in den Verband brachten. . . Ein weiterer Grund fuer das Weglassen der Bremsen war die zunehmende Staerke der Erdabwehr, die ein Durchfliegen des gefaehrdeten Raumes mit nicht herabgesetzter Geschwindigkeit ratsam erschienen liess. Der Zielvorgang, die Treffgenauigkeit u. die Ausloesehoehe wurden dadurch kaum unguenstig beeinflusst; (6-7)

- Die Bomben wurden je nach der Beschaffenheit des Zieles mit u. ohne Verzoegerung geworfen. Die Ausloesehoehe im Sturzangriff schwankte zwischen **600** u. **1.000** Metern. Im Schraegangriff war der tiefste von rund **200** Metern fuer das Ausloesen durch die Zeit, welche die Bomben fuer das Scharfmarchen benoetigten, bestimmt. Erfolgreiche Schiessanfluege verlangten ein moeglichst dichtes Herangehen an das Ziel. Flugzeugfuehrer, welche ihre Bomben zu frueh ausloesten, brachten die vor ihnen noch tiefer stuerzenden in unnoetige Gefahr. Im Schlachtfliegerangriff wurden die Flaechenbomben meistens zuerst abgeworfen, vor allem, wenn es sich um **250** km bomben handelte; (10)

- Die Hoehe, aus welcher die Angriffe angesetzt wurden, schwankte zwischen **400** bis **800** Metern fuer Schraeg- u. **4.000** Metern u. mehr fuer Sturzangriffe. Ausschlaggegend war das Ueberraschungsmoment, die Mindesthoehe von etwa **2.000** Metern fuer einen gut geflogenen Sturzangriff, die Luft- u. vor allem die Erdabwehr des Gegners; (10-11)

- Angriffe auf Bruecken: Bruecken waren Punktziele, die vor allem bei seitlichem Winde schwer zu treffen waren. Sie wurden bei starker Flakabwehr, wie es fast immer der Fall war, im Sturzangriff, bei fehlender oder geringer Abwehr auch im Schraegangriff, moeglichst in Brueckenlaengsrichtung u. gegen den Wind, angegriffen. Die zerstoerende Wirkung auf Stahlgitterkonstruktionen war nicht sehr gross, denn diese hielten viel aus, bevor sie zusammenstuerzten, es sei denn, dass die Bomben ein Auflager trafen. Holz- u. Pontonbruecken wurden

mit wesentlich besserem Erfolg angegriffen, doch wurden sie, vor allem im Osten, sehr schnell wieder instandgesetzt; (13)

- Angriffe auf Eisenbahnzuege u. Bahnanlagen: Geleiseunterbrechungen auf offener Strecke wurden meistens im Schraegangriff durchgefuehrt u. die grosskalibrigen Bomben so tief als moeglich mit Verzoegerung u. in Streckenlaengsrichtung ausgeloeost. Die Windrichtung, ausser dem Seitenwind, spielte fuer den Angriff auf derartige Ziele keine besondere Rolle, es sei denn, dass man einen bestimmten Punkt, z.B. Weichen oder eine kleine Bruecke, treffen wollte. In einem solchen Fall flog man wie ueblich moeglichst gegen den Wind an. Im **Sep 41** wurde die **I./St.G. 2** von einem Feldflugplatz suedlich von Welish zur Unterbrechung der Strecke Welikije Luki – Rshew eingesetzt. (See p. 14-15 for details of this successful mission.);

- Derartige Angriffe zur Streckenunterbrechung allein wurden aber nur selten durchgefuehrt. Die Zerstoerung eines Zuges hatte einen weit groesseren Wert u. in den meisten Faellen eine laenger anhaltende zerstoerende Wirkung. Eisenbahnzuege wurden im Normalfall mit einer Beladung von einer **250** kg u. vier **[4]** **50** kg Bomben angegriffen. Der Anteil der Splitterbomben war gering, die Zuendereinstellung entsprechend gemischt. Der Anflug erfolgt in einer sich nach der Erdabwehr richtenden Hoehe u. der Angriff im nicht zu steilen Sturzflug. . . Es war selbstverstaendlich, dass der ganze Zug, unter besonderer Beachtung der Lokomotive, mit Bomben eingedeckt wurde. Mehr als ein Anflug konnte wegen der meistens vorhandenen Jagdabwehr kaum durchgefuehrt werden. Die Sturzkampf- u. Schlachtfliegerverbaende wurden oft zur Niederkaempfung von Panzerzuegen an Brennpunkten der Front in meist stark flak- u. jagdgeschuetzten Raeumen eingesetzt. . . Die **I./St.G. 2** griff im **Feb 42** in Dno startend einen Panzerzug auf der Strecke Staraja-Russa-Bologoje ostwaerts des Kessels von Demjansk an, dessen Artillerie durch gut liegendes Feuer der eigenen Truppe stark zu schaffen machte. (See p. 15 for the details of this Stuka attack on armored train.)

- Angriffe auf Panzer: Panzer waren die kleinsten u. daher auch am schwierigsten zu treffenden Ziel der Sturzkampf- u. Schlachtfliegerverbaende. In den meisten Faellen konnten sie nur durch einen Volltreffer zerstoert werden. Sogenannte Nahtreffer waren fast immer wirkungslos. Sie hatten hoechstens einen voruebergehenden Ausfall des Panzers durch Beschaedigung der Ketten zur Folge. Die Bomben wurden im Schraegangriff in moeglichst geringer Hoehe in mehreren Anfluegen einzeln u. ohne Verzoegerung ausgeloeost. Man muss dabei immer den gleichen Angriffswinkel, etwa **45** [Grad], u. die gleiche Ausloesehoehe beibehalten u. nur den Haltepunkt [*point of aim*], aufgrund der vorherigen Bombe, wenn noetig entsprechend veraendern. . . Wesentlich erfolgreicher waren die Angriffe auf massierte Panzeransammlungen in der Bereitstellung. Hierbei wurden die Bomben auch im Reihenwurf ausgeloeost. . . Der Angriff auf einzeln fahrende Panzer war von Anfang an ein Notbehelf. Erst mit dem Erscheinen der mit zwei **3,7** cm Pak ausgeruesteten „**JU 87**“ konnte von einer wirklich erfolgreichen Bekaempfung die Rede sein; (19)

- Angriffe auf Art.- u. Inf.-Stellungen u. Kolonnen: Art.-Stellungen wurden meistens im Sturzflug durch Ausloesen der Bomben im Reihenwurf angegriffen. Die beste Tarnung wurde durch das aufblitzende Geschuetzfeuer zunichte

gemacht. Es war vorteilhaft, wenn man es schon aus groesserer Entfernung feststellen u. sich dadurch die Lage der Batterien einpraegen konnte. Kurz vor dem Angriff stellten die Geschuetze meistens das Feuer ein. Die Anflueghoehere richtete sich nach der Abwehr, die in den in Betracht kommenden Abschnitten oft sehr stark war; (21)

- Inf.-Stellungen wurden am zweckmaessigsten mit kleinen Splitterbomben, die in Behaeltern ausgeloeset wurden, in Laengsrichtung der Stellung angegriffen. Es kam auch hier darauf an, dass bei seitlichem Winde die Bombenlage des Vordermannes oder bei mehreren Angriffen die Lage der eigenen Bombe zur notwendigen Verbesserung des Haltepunktes beachtet wurde. Der Angriff erfolgte meistens im Schraeganflug. Die Anzahl der Anfluege richtete sich nach der Erd- u. Luftabwehr. Die Wirkung der normalen Splitterbomben wurde auch hierbei durch das Einsetzen der Zuenderabstandstaebe (Dinortstaebe) verbessert. Diese etwa **70** cm langen, an ihrem Ende mit einer kleinen Platte versehenen Rundeisenstaebe wurden in das Gewinde, das an der Bombenspitze fuer die Aufhaengeose [*suspension lug* (for a bomb)] vorgesehen war, eingeschraubt. Sie verursachten die Detonation der Bomben knapp ueber dem Erdboden u. hatten dabei eine erheblich groessere Splitterwirkung. Erstmalig hergestellt u. erprobt wurden diese Staebe im **Mai 41** von der **I./St.G 2**. . . Bordwaffenbeschuss in Grabenlaengsrichtung war bei allen Einsaetzen angebracht; (21)

- Fahrzeugansammlungen wurden durch die groessere Verletzbarkeit fast immer das restlose Opfer der Bomben- u. Schliessanfluege. Gute Tarnung und weites Auseinander ziehen boten fuer sie den bestmoeglichsten Schutz. (21)

- Angriffe auf Befestigungen u. Gebaeude: Betonierte Befestigungsanlagen wurden mit grosskalibrigen Sprengbomben u. mit Verzoeigerung Zuenderstellung angegriffen. Die durchschlagende Wirkung, die sich nach der Betondicke richtete, war, ausser bei **1.000** km Bomben, gering. . . Gebaeude verschiedenster Art wurden als Widerstandsnester oft angegriffen u. durch Sprengbomben mittleren u. schweren Kalibers zerstoert. Brandbomben wurden nur selten geworfen. (24)

(Major a.D. F. Lang, „Aufzeichnungen aus der Sturzkampffliegerei,“ 5-24)³⁶⁷

b. Equipment:³⁶⁸

Note: Some of the most refined technical developments of early 1940s never used, or used only on limited scale, on eastern front. One example is *radar*, use of which was scarce throughout the

³⁶⁷ **Note:** Major Lang served w/ Stuka-Geschwader 2 “Immelmann.” He earned the Ritterkreuz (**Nov 41**); Eichenlaub (**Nov 42**) and Schwerter (**Jul 44**). From **Oct 41-Nov 42**, Lang was Staffelkapitaen **1. Staffel St.G. 2** “Immelmann.” The Knight’s Cross was awarded to Oblt. Lang following more than **300** missions. He was promoted to captain in **Jun 42**. In **Feb 42**, in northern sector of Ostfront (Demjansk Kessel), he became the first Stuka pilot to log **500** missions. All told, he accumulated **1008** Feindfluegen during the war. (46-49)

³⁶⁸ **Note:** For a discussion of equipment (radar, navigation aids, etc.) used on eastern front see, C. Bergstroem & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol. II, pp 34-37.

war. On eastern front, the Germans only made use of radar in northern Norway, and for brief periods at *Leningrad*. The German *Freya* early warning radar had a range of 80 to 100 miles. In field of navigation, bombsights and gun sights, the situation was better, and both sides had quite similar equipment. While fighters and ground-attack planes navigated visually, the German bomber crews used a radio navigation beacon of a more simplified nature than in western Europe. Says, *Hansgeorg Baetcher (I/KG 100)*: “We were provided w/ only one radio beacon for navigation, not the three-axis beacon common in the Western Theater of Operations.” (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 34*)

With introduction of the German gyrosopic reflector bombsight *Lotfernrohr Lotfe 7 H*, which automatically calculated drift during high-altitude horizontal bombing, the German medium bombers achieved a considerable increase in bombing accuracy in 1942. Soviet bombers were outfitted w/ similar bombsights for both daylight and nocturnal bombing. (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 34*)

For air combat, the Germans had the *Reflexvisier Revi 12* reflector gun sight (which had a roughly equal Soviet counterpart in their standard PBP-1a gun sight). (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 34*)

Communication by radio transmitter (R/T) was the main difference between the GAF and the VVS regarding technical equipment. All German acft had modern and reliable radio transmitters and receivers, which naturally was an enormous advantage in aerial combat. The Soviets were slowly taking steps in that direction. Most fighters and ground-attack planes produced by Russia in 1942 were outfitted w/ radio receivers, but only a small portion was also equipped w/ transmitters. (*C. Bergstroem, Black Cross, 34-35*)

Fuer die Luftnachrichtentruppe ergaben sich besonders grosse Schwierigkeiten bei der nachrichtentechnischen Ueberwindung der grossen Entfernungen des Ostraumes. Die Funkverbindungen spielten auf diesem Kriegsschauplatz naturgemaess eine ausschlaggebende Rolle. Fuer die Fuehrung genuegten aber wegen der Abhoermoeglichkeit u. der Stoeranfaelligkeit die Funkverbindungen allein nicht, sondern alle hoeheren Staebe mussten mit Fernschreibern u. Fernsprecher erreichbar sein. Welche Entfernungen dabei z.T. ueberbrueckt werden mussten, veranschaulicht z.B. die Tatsache, dass im Jul 41 die Drahtverbindung zwischen dem Befehlszug der Luftflotte 2 u. dem VIII. Fliegerkorps ueber eine 1300 km lange Leitung lief.[!] („Unterstuetzung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe,“ KDC, Microfilm „E“)

c. Munitions:

Brandbomben: Incendiary bombs.

Brandbomben-Schuettkasten (BSK): Fuer 36 Elektronbrandbomben zu 1 oder 1,3 kg.³⁶⁹

Brandbomben-Schuettbehaelter (BSB): Fuer 700 Ektronbrandbomben zu 1 oder 1,3 kg.

Flammoelbombe 250 kg (Flambo 250)

SBe 50 = Schuettbehaelter 50 kg, mit ca. 30 Brandbomben.

³⁶⁹ **Note:** For “BSK,” “BSB,” and “Flambo 250” see, „Unterstuetzung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe,“ KDC, Microfilm „E.“

SC 50

SC 250 = 250 kg *Sprengbombe*

SC 500 = 500 kg *Sprengbombe*

SC 1000

SD 50 = 50 kg

SC and SD 1400, 1700, 1800 and 2000 bombs were among the heaviest used by the Luftwaffe. Because only a limited number of these were available, only very skilled crews had the opportunity to drop them. The SC 2000 “Max” was 3.5 m in length and had a diameter of 0.66 m. It was filled w/ 1200 kg of explosive and destroyed everything within 100 m of impact. (M. Griehl, *German Bombers over Russia*, 47)

SC 250 GP (General Purpose) bombs: Photo showing the “black men” arming a bomber w/ SC 250 bombs fitted w/ “screechers,” or “*Pipes of Jericho*” – attachments that made loud, whistling noises as the bombs fell. The purpose of the “screecher” was to demoralize the enemy. (M. Griehl, *German Bombers over Russia*, 19)

SD-2 Splitterbombe: Im Bereich der *Abwurfbewaffnung* ergab sich eine Neuerung [i.e., at start of Russian campaign] durch die *Einfuehrung der SD-2 Splitterbombe*; dabei handelte es sich um *kleine, nur 2 kg schwere Splitterbomben*, von denen jeweils **96** Stueck an einem Bombenrost unter dem Rumpf der Maschinen aufgehaengt werden konnten, u. die gegen abgestellte Flugzeuge u. Flugplatzeinrichtungen sowie gegen Infanterie u. ungepanzerte Fahrzeuge verwendet werden sollten. Die **SD-2 Bomben kamen nur bei der Bf 109 E zum Einsatz**; die ausladende u. in ihrer Formgebung sehr *klobige* [*crude; clumsy*] *Bombenaufhaengung* beeintraechtigte die Flugeigenschaften der „*Emil*” dabei sehr stark zu deren Nachteil...Der Einsatz der *SD-2* bereitete *erhebliche Schwierigkeiten*...Bei Angriffsbeginn am 22.6.41 verfuegte die *Luftwaffe* ueber insgesamt **2.298.500** Stueck der *SD-2 Bomben*. (see, *Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien*, 34-35)

SD 1 & SD 2: Day fighters and other acft were fitted to drop small **SD 1** and **SD 2** bombs from bomblet dispensers and engaged in low-level attacks on enemy installations everywhere. So called “butterfly bombs,” the SDs were carried in **1 kg** or **2 kg** dispensers which, when dropped, opened in mid air and scattered the bombs over a wide area. SD bombs were at their most effective when used against troop concentrations. . . (M. Griehl, *German Bombers over Russia*, 5-6)³⁷⁰

SD-2 (22.6.41): Hundreds of **SD2 2 kg fragmentation bombs** began to trickle from open bomb bays. They fell among serried ranks of acft, neatly parked wingtip to wingtip w/ personnel tents situated close by. The Russian acft were neither camouflaged nor dispersed. The small bombs were adjusted to explode either on impact or above ground. Each bomblet had a blast radius of up to **12** meters. Airframes were lacerated and slashed by the release of **50-250** particles of shrapnel. A direct hit had the impact of a medium anti-acft shell. (Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 33)

³⁷⁰ **Note:** Yellow bands painted around rear part of fuselage of German bombers showed that the acft were involved in operations in Russia. (17)

SD-4-HI: The standard German aerial AT wpn. A 9-lb bomblet, **78** of which were carried inside a **1100-lb** bomb case. The Germans had learned that **550-lb** or heavier bombs needed to score a *direct hit* to knock out a tank. This was difficult to achieve, but a „shotgun“ blast of *hollow-charge bomblets*, each powerful enough to blow through the thin top armor, produced much better results. They were delivered primarily by **Ju-87 Stukas**. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 126)

Sprengbomben: High-explosive bombs.

1.9.7: Units (Geschwader, Gruppen, etc.):

Fliegerkorps VIII: Dr. D. Showalter: “At this stage [Jul 41], *Panzergruppe 3* was being supported by arguably the first real tactical air command in history. Wolfram v. Richthofen's 8th *Fliegerkorps* was specially organized and trained for direct intervention in the land battle. Time and again its dive bombers and fighters made up for the growing numerical weaknesses of the German ground spearheads.” (*K. Fuchs*, 115)

Fliegerkorps VIII: Focus of ops following initial advance, was to be *Leningrad* in August and September and the *Moscow* front from October to January. In course of *Barbarossa* campaign, this *Fliegerkorps* shifted its HQ *no fewer than 18 times*; its component flying units, dispersed on a number of air bases, had to exhibit an even greater *degree of mobility*. (*Muller, German Air War*, 55)

Rowehl-Geschwader: For some months prior to start of *Barbarossa*, this *secret long-range reconnaissance formation* conducted photo-reconnaissance surveys of most of European Russia. Flying to a penetration depth of 300 km, *Rowehl's* specially pressurized high-altitude planes ascertained the location of Red Air Force bases, one reason the *Luftwaffe* target selection on 22 Jun 41 was so “*prescient*.” (*Muller, German Air War*, 43; see also, *David Kahn, Hitler's Spies: German Military Intelligence in WWII*, 115-26, for in-depth account of *Rowehl Squadron's* activities; also, *Halder War Diary, Burdick, et al.*, 412)

Stuka Geschwader “Immelmann” (StG 2): Winter came. Started snowing. „The units of the Eighth Air Crps had to camp, unprotected, on the ice-coated open fields in front of *Moscow*. The advance of our troops came to a halt. It soon changed into a Napoleonic retreat, as we could recognize from the air during our last sorties in the *Moscow* area...Our *Geschwader* could get only a small number of planes into the air per day. The *preheating units* for the engines got stuck in the frozen mud far behind our lines. We gathered wood, preheating the engines over open fires to get them started. The fighting capacity of the *Geschwader* rapidly declined. The most urgently needed spare parts for motors and airframes were flown in by *Ju-52s*. The other units of the [Air] Corps were handicapped too.” Notes that Soviets had their planes stationed in *heated hangars* around *Moscow*! Fighting power of Air Corps soon reduced to “practically zero,” due to lack of fuel, munitions, spare parts. (*Hozzel, “Conversations with a Stuka Pilot,”* 71-2)

1.9.8: Raids on Moscow:

Note: For excellent overview of German aerial attacks on *Moscow* see, *H. Boog, GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 805, 809-11. According to *Boog*, the “attacks on *Moscow* repre-

sented the only operational-strategic use of the *Luftwaffe* in **1941** on orders from Hitler or the [OKW].” He also notes that German bomber losses during this offensive were especially low in the first **3** attacks (only **1** acft in each attack) and remained “within acceptable limits” later. Boog emphasized the “frivolousness” and the “lack of planning” w/ which these attacks were initiated. Finally, he avers that “severing the supply-routes from the ice-free ports in the far north of the Soviet Union by means of regular strategic bombing would have been a more worthy objective for the German bombers, especially after the ground forces had failed to reach their objectives Murmansk, Kandalaksha, and the Murmansk railway line.” . . . According to Soviet figures, **1088** persons were killed in the air raids on the city. (B’s source for latter figure: *Cassidy, Moscow Dateline*, 77)

Note: For precise details of first **59** *Lufwaffe* attacks on Moscow – i.e., through **25.10.41** – based on *Luftwaffe* records (*Lageberichte des Ob.d.L./Ic*) see, *H. Plocher, Einsatz gegen Moskau, KDC*,³⁷¹ Microfilm “E.” These reports include: number of acft involved in each raid; times of raid; *Flughöhe* of attacking planes; bombs used and tonnage dropped. They illustrate, for ex., that most of the raids carried out at altitudes between ca. **2 – 4000 meters**. Only the first three of these **59** attacks involved more than **100** acft; most attacks involved only a small number of planes (and many just a handful, less than **10**). Bomb mix included high explosive and incendiary bombs. In raids in late **Oct 41**, *Flammoelbombe* (**250 kg**) also employed (was this similar to *Napalm*?)

Note: According to study completed in **1943/44** by Abteilung 8 (historical section, I believe) of OKL, in **1941** a total of **87** air raids were made on Moscow – **76** at night and **11** during the daytime. These included: **3** raids w/ more than **100** planes; **6** raids w/ more than **50** acft; **19** raids with **15-40**; and **59** raids w/ only **3-10** acft. “Bei einer grossen Anzahl der Angriffe, namentlich der *Tagesangriffe*, wurden die Bomben ohne Erdsicht nach *Funk- oder Koppelnavigatin* abgeworfen.“ („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,” *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

Note: From as early as **Jul 41**, in *technical disobedience* to the spirit and letter of *Fuehrer Directive 21*, the *Luftwaffe* attempted to wage a *strategic air offensive* against the Soviet Union. This involved a considerable drain on its resources—and its ability to intervene in the ground battle—however, it was also in line w/ GAF practice in earlier campaigns. Yet w/ the *Luftwaffe* stretched thin along an **1880-mile front**, this evident adherence to *prewar doctrine* was unrealistic. (*Muller, German Air War*, 51)

14.7.41: Fuehrer spricht von der Notwendigkeit, Moskau zu bombardieren, um das Zentrum des bolschewistischen Widerstandes zu treffen u. den geordneten Abzug [?] des russ. Regierungsapparat zu verhindern. („*Hitler waehrend der ersten drei Monate des Ostfeldzuges 1941*,” *KDC*, Microfilm „E;“ also, *KTB OKW*)

ab 21./22.7.41: [Aerial bombing of *Moscow* begins] Die Angriffe gegen Moskau, an denen vor allem die *Kampfgeschwader 28, 54, 3 u. 2*, darunter Geschwader der *Lufflotte 3 im Westen*, beteiligt waren, *machten mir viel Sorge*. Abgeschossene Besatzungen musste man als „erledigt“ ansehen; die *Flakwirkung* u. die *Blendwirkung* durch *Scheinwerfer* machten sogar auf unsere Englandflieger Eindruck. Auch die russ. *Abwehrjaeger* traten im Laufe der Zeit in groesserer Zahl – gluecklicherweise *nur bei Tage* – auf. Die Wirkung entsprach nicht ganz meinen Erwartungen; im Verhaeltnis zur Groesse des Objekts waren die *Kraefte doch recht schwach*, die *Blendwirkung* stoerend u. die *Munitionsbeipackung* durch die erhoelte *Betriebsstoffzuladung*

³⁷¹ Karlsruhe Document Collection (USHRA).

sehr beschränkt...Auf jeden Fall haben die laufenden Angriffe neben der materiellen Wirkung den *späteren Zusammenbruch in der Stadt vorbereitet*.³⁷² Schade, dass er nicht ausgenutzt werden konnte! (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 128)

22.7.41; In the first weeks of the war, the Germans flew a large number of *reconnaissance flights* over Moscow; one of them, a **He 111**, was brought down when *Lt Goshko* rammed it w/ his own aeroplane on **2.7.41**. But first blow against the city fell on 22 July. It was beginning of air campaign that lasted until **Apr 42** – as long as the Blitz on London, which had been conducted by *many of the same acft and many of the same crews* less than a year earlier. Nearly **200** acft attacked in *four waves*: **127** reached the target and dropped **104** tons of high explosive and **46,000** incendiary bombs. The Germans attacked by *night* because their fighters did not have the range to escort them all the way to the target. The *anti-aircraft defenses* were *much stronger than anything the German crews had faced over London* in **1940**. Ten (**10**) bombers were shot down by gunfire and **12** by night fighters working w/ searchlights. For the Germans, it was a disappointing result.

Captain *Timoshkov* and his searchlight battery were stationed in *Mozhaisk*, **60** miles west of Moscow. For a whole month they saw no action. Other soldiers moving to and from the front would *jeer at them*. On the evening of that first raid, Timoshkov and his people were already manning their four searchlights and their two batteries of AA guns when, at about **9:45**, they saw the first German acft silhouetted against the setting sun. They were flying in tight formation, straight down the *Mozhaisk* highway on their way to Moscow. Timoshkov and his men blazed away for most of the night, w/ no noticeable impact on the waves of bombers...

This first raid went on for *five hours*.³⁷³ **130** people were killed, **241** severely injured, **421** lightly injured, **37** buildings were destroyed and **1,166** fires started. „By the standards of the London Blitz it was a *flea bite*.“ (for actual sites *damaged* by this first raid see, *Braithwaite, Moscow 1941*, 192-95)

First *Luftwaffe* mission against *Moscow* occurred on **21.7.41**. Raid involves **195** bombers, primarily from *Kesselring's Luftflotte 2 (KGr 100 [pathfinder], KG2, KG 3, KG 53, all from Fliegerkorps II)*. At least one bomber *Gruppe, III KG 4* (newly arrived in east after taking part in Blitz on London), from *Luftflotte I* also took part. This raid inaugurated a series of missions that, until it ended on **5.4.42**, consisted of **76** night and **11** day attacks on Soviet capital. None matched the strength of the first attack; most involved fewer than **50** acft. *Muller*: „What is significant about these attacks is that they occurred at all. Strategic bombing activity was fairly heavy during the month of October, also the period of the greatest commitment of *Luftwaffe* units to direct and indirect support of Operation „*Taifun*.“ In that month alone, *Moscow* was raided **35** times, while *Leningrad* received **30** *Luftwaffe* visitations. The armaments centers of *Kharkov, Rostov, Gorki, and Rybinsk* also appeared on *Luftwaffe* target lists. An examination of the motivation for this air campaign reveals much about German operational doctrine in the east during 1941. The raids were in *violation of the principle of Schwerpunktbildung* to which most *Luftwaffe* commands adhered during the first campaigning year against the Soviet Union. The raids appear to have been part of a larger pattern of channeling *Luftwaffe* effort away from direct army support tasks and into a more broadly-based air strategy. Certainly the city of *Moscow* in particular, esp. after launching of *Taifun*, was an objective w/in the Army's

³⁷² Here *Kesselring* most like exaggerates impact of bombing attacks on Moscow.

³⁷³ See eye-witness account in *Alexander Werth's* book. In *deutsche Fassung* he notes: „Was mich dabei am meisten beeindruckte, war das gewaltige *Flaksperrfeuer*; die Splitter der Granaten prasselten wie Hagelkörner auf die Strassen, u. Dutzende von *Scheinwerfern* erhellten den Himmel. Ich hatte dergleichen in London nie gesehen oder gehoert...“

projected zone of operations...Thus, the strategic attacks on Moscow and similar targets fell w/in the gray area between „indirect army support“ and independent air ops... (Muller, *German Air War*, 51-3)

22.7.41: In der Nacht vom 21./22.Juli wurde mit **127** Flugzeuge der erste Angriff auf Moskau geflogen. Bei diesem Angriff, der, wie der **OKW**-Bericht bekannt gab, als *Vergeltungsangriff* fuer die sowjet. Bombenangriffe auf *Bukarest* u. *Helsinki* gefuehrt wurde, wurden aus Hoehen von **2000 – 4000** m bei guter Erdsicht **104** to Spreng- u. **46 000** Brandbomben abgeworfen u. im Stadtgebiet grosse Braende erzielt. Trotz erheblicher Abwehr durch starkes u. gut liegendes Flakfeuer u. mehrerer Nachtjaeger geriet bei diesem Angriff *nur ein Flugzeug* in Verlust. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*“, *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

23.-24.7.41: In den beiden naechsten Naechten wurden die Grossangriffe mit **115** Flugzeugen am 22./23 u. **100** Flugzeugen am 23./24 fortgesetzt. Auch bei diesen Angriffen ging nur *je ein eigenes Flugzeug* verloren. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*“, *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

22.7.-17.8.41: Germans conduct **17** more bombing raids on Moscow. „The toll may not have matched the destruction in London. But it was continuous and it told on the nerves of the people.“ MosGES, one of the main power stations in Moscow, was a *prime target* for the bombers, and the area around it was heavily damaged. The nearby *Zatsepski Market* was destroyed by incendiary bombs. On **27.7.41**, a high-explosive bomb scored a direct hit on a newly built school in *Zemskoi Lane*, which was almost completely destroyed. More than **300** people were buried in the shelter beneath it. Despite the flames, the rescuers managed to get them out...(Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 195)

Okt 41: Im Oktober versuchten die dt. Flugzeuge **31 Mal** einen *Luftangriff* gegen Moskau. **278** Flugzeuge sind abgeschossen worden. Von **2,000** Flugzeugen sind nur **72** in den Luftraum eingedrungen. (A. Samsanow, *Schlacht vor Moskau*, 190)³⁷⁴

25.10.41: By this date, **59** attacks had been carried out on Moscow and just over **1,000** t. of high-explosive bombs dropped, ca. **1/2** of what the Royal Air Force dropped on average in a single night in its strategic attacks on Germany in 1944 [!]. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 810)

Oct 41/Nov 41: The bombing raids *increased in frequency* as the Germans got closer to Moscow. People concluded – as they had done in London – that it was just as dangerous to go to the shelter as to remain in bed. As time passed, they no longer bothered to leave their homes at night...Some of the worst damage was done on **28.10.41**. Among the sites hit that day was the *Bolshoi Theater*...The Germans were now so close that they could send fighters to escort their bombers, and raid *by day as well as by night*. On **14.11.41**, **180** acft raided the city by day: the Russians claimed **48** shot down. The warning time for getting people into the shelters was sometimes reduced to as little as *five minutes*. Casualties started to go up, and the city's morgues had to work overtime. The cemeteries began to run out of space. People were buried three deep, and graves were dug close together...By November, the sirens were sounding several times a day. Lessons in the schools, which had in practice already ceased, were now officially stopped. „Things are getting more unsettled every day,“ wrote Dr *Sakharova* in her diary. „It is impossible to get used to the sirens...“ (for rest of quotation see, *Braithwaite, Moscow 1941*, 201; also, 197-99)

³⁷⁴ Figures an exaggeration?!?

22.12.41: By this date, the casualties sustained in Moscow in German air raids amounted to **1235** dead, **5406** wounded, and **2** totally destroyed and **112** partially destroyed factories. (Figures from *Moskva-frontu*, Doc. 44, p 107; quoted in: *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 75, f.n. 12.

Jan 42: In January, bombs fell once again on the *Moscow Zoo*, killing the director and wounding the night watchman. The animals were terrified, especially an ape called *Paris* and a donkey called *Emir*. Surprisingly, apart from a couple of parrots, none of them was killed...By now, the German air assault on Moscow was *beginning to peter out*. There were substantial attacks both before and after the official end of the Battle of Moscow on **20.4.42**. (*Braithwaite, Moscow 1941*, 203)

16.6.42: Final mass raid on Moscow takes place. Another attempt made by a small group of aircraft in **Aug 42** and again in **Oct 42**. (*Braithwaite, Moscow 1941*, 203)³⁷⁵

Assessment of bombing campaign:

Muller: In early July, the OKW and, subsequently in *Fuehrer Directive No. 33*, Adolf Hitler, had in effect *lifted the prohibition against strategic bombing*, at least against Moscow and Leningrad. The High Command left details of the execution of the raids to the *Luftflotte* and *Fliegerkorps* staffs; they carried out the missions w/ varying degrees of enthusiasm. After the war, *Field Marshal Kesselring* recalled:

The raids on Moscow caused me great anxiety. Crews shot down had to be written off, the effectiveness of the Russian AA guns and searchlights impressing even our airmen who had flown over England. Also as time went on Russian defense fighters appeared in increasing numbers, luckily only in daytime. Results did not quite come up to my expectations, but in relation to the size of the target our forces were not any too strong, the dazzling effect of the searchlights was disturbing and the weight of the bombs that could be carried was greatly reduced by the increased fuel load...(Kesselring, *Memoirs*, 94-5; quoted in *Muller, German Air War*, 53)

Kesselring's assessment was correct. The Moscow strikes amount to *little more than harassing attacks*.³⁷⁶ Most German sources dismiss them as *prestige attacks*. However, it seems clear that something more substantial was motivating the attacks than a mere desire to mount prestige ops. The parallel waging of a strategic bombing offensive and a protracted army support campaign was *simply the result of the Luftwaffe's attempt to carry out its semi-independent air power concept* w/ entirely inadequate forces. (*Muller, German Air War*, 53-4)

Braithwaite: Russian and German historians differ considerably in their view of the campaign. The standard German history [i.e., *Boog, Das Dt. Reich u der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 698] says that, in all, Moscow was attacked **76** times by night and **11** times by day. Only the first three attacks

³⁷⁵ **Note:** See p. 203 for how Soviet propaganda dealt w/ German bombing offensive over Moscow after the war – ie., not a single enemy bomber got through!

³⁷⁶ **Note:** British *Air Ministry* study of *Luftwaffe* also notes that the Moscow aerial offensive amounted to “little more than harassing attacks.” *Rise and Fall*, 167.

deployed more than **100** bombers; on **59** occasions less than **10** bombers were involved. The German losses, the German historian claims, were *negligible*. The Russians say that between the first raid on 21 Jul 41 and 20 Apr 42 the Germans launched **141** major raids on the city. They claim that the Germans lost nearly **1400** acft – **10%** to Soviet fighters, the rest to AA guns. This figure is impossible to reconcile w/ the German figures, and would represent an improbable and surely unsustainable rate of losses for the attackers.

According to Russian figures published after the war, more than **2,000** people were killed during the raids on Moscow, and nearly three times that many injured; **5,584** domestic buildings were damaged or destroyed. So were **90** hospitals, **253** schools and **19** theaters or palaces of culture...

There were a number of reasons why Moscow suffered less than London [*author provides comparative figures*]. During Battle of Britain and the Blitz, the *Luftwaffe* was engaged in an *undistracted strategic campaign* against the British heartland. But in Russia, the men and machines which *Kesselring* had used against Britain were primarily involved in giving *tactical support to the German army* on the ground. At the height of the Battle of Moscow, the *Luftwaffe* was using most of its bombers to attack the *railway lines* bringing reinforcements, rather than against the city itself. The *Luftwaffe* was never able to deploy the forces against Moscow which it had directed at London.

Second, the Germans suffered from a number of *practical disadvantages*. In campaign against Britain, they had operated from good airfields in France relatively close to their targets and could easily be supplied w/ ammunition and replacement acft from Germany. In *Russia*, the German acft were *operating up to 600 miles away for their targets*, from bases less sophisticated and far less securely attached to the German industry on which they relied. They brought their bases forward as the front moved closer to Moscow, but this only compounded their difficulties, esp. as autumn and winter set in. Aircraft had to be dug out of the overnight snow before they could fly, and often it was too cold for them to operate at all for the *battered and ill-equipped airstrips* which the Germans had captured.

Third, Stalin chose to deploy a *very much larger force* to defend his capital. During the Battle of Britain, the British had less than **800** fighters available to defend the whole country. By contrast, *General Gromadin* had nearly **600** fighters for the defense of Moscow alone. In addition, he could call on **29** fighter regiments from the neighboring fronts. Between **Jul 41 – Jan 42**, nearly **2000** fighters had flown in the defense of Moscow. By the end of the campaign, most of the fighters were of modern types. In addition, there were American *Airacobras*, which the Soviet pilots liked; and two squadrons of *Hawker Hurricanes*, which they did not. Moreover, far more guns were deployed around Moscow than around London. (*Braithwaite, Moscow 1941, 204-07*)³⁷⁷

1.9.9: Chronology of Events:

a. Weather and air power:

³⁷⁷ **Note:** Soviet success in the air battle over Moscow was achieved at a cost. The defense of the capital drew strength away from the rest of the front. *Sevastopol* in the Crimea was almost wiped out from the air in the first week of **Jun 42**. The first devastating daylight raid on *Stalingrad*, on **23.8.42**, was practically unopposed. Tens of thousands of people were killed in both cities in a matter of hours or days. (207)

German tactical air elements – fighter, medium bomber, attack, dive bomber, reconnaissance, observation, and transport acft – operated under *ideal conditions* in summer of 1941, which comprised long hours of daylight and clear weather. In the months of **Jul-Aug 41** around *Smolensk* and Moscow, daylight weather conditions involving *ceilings of less than 1500 ft* are infrequent, but *weather conditions deteriorated dramatically* in months of Oct-Dec, as illustrated by following:

Moscow:

Number of Days w/ Ceilings Less than 1500 Feet, Visibility Less than 3 Miles
During Daylight Hours, 0900-1500

<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>
4 days	6 days	15 days	18 days	21 days

The listing is based on a recent ten-year sample of weather at the *Moscow international airport*. It shows how flying weather deteriorates radically later in the year, w/ *low ceilings and visibility*. Thus, the medium bomber, attack, and dive bomber formations of *Luftflotte 2* were forced at end of year to attack ground targets predominantly under ceilings less than 1500 feet and visibility less than three miles with attendant (1) *difficulty in aerial navigation*, (2) *reduced chances of target location and identification*, (3) *restriction of attack to low level wpns and delivery techniques*, and (4) *increased effectiveness of opposing air defense gun systems and small arms fire*. (*Stolfi, Chance in History, 224-25*)

Oberst Hans-Ulrich Rudel fought on eastern front from **23.6.41 – 8.5.45**, and emerged from war as probably the most successful combat aviator in history of aviation. In an interview in 1977, he stated that he and his men later in the war in **1943-45**, w/ the anti-tank „cannon birds“ fought under ceilings as low as **150** feet. Rudel makes it clear that such feats were exceptional and that he preferred to conduct searches for tank targets from elevations of about **1500** feet although the actual elevation would depend on strength of opposing air defenses. (*Stolfi, Chance in History, 225, f.n. 35*)

b. Summaries of “Luftkrieg” 1941/42:

Note: For terrific overview of German aerial operations over Russia from **Jun-Dec 41** see the **Diagram II.i.8** (“*Luftwaffe Operations in the East in 1941*”) in, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Russia*, 806-8. The diagram offers overview of all major operations in direct/indirect support of ground troops, strikes on railway lines, factories and production plants (listed by town/name), etc. For example, for **Air Fleet 2**:

- **Oct 41:** Support for the army in battle of encirclement near Vyamza and Bryansk; advance on Moscow. Attacks on aircraft factory in Voronezh, industrial targets in Aleksin, Kashira, Balabanova, Narafominsk, and chemical plant in Tula;
- **Nov 41:** Support for army at Moscow. Attacks on tank factory in Gorkiy;
- **Dec 41:** Support for withdrawal movements west of Moscow. Attacks on aircraft factory at Rybinsk and on open oil storage facilities near Rybinsk.

GAF on eve of Barbarossa: „By almost any measure, the *Luftwaffe* was superior to its enemies in 1939-41.“ The **Me 109** fighter was superior to most opponents, and only Britain's *Spitfire* could match it in combat. The **Ju 88**, **He 111**, and **Do 17** medium bombers were some of the best machines of their day. In Poland, Norway, France, N. Africa and Russia, the **Ju 87** „*Stukas*“ proved to be fearsomely effective as close support acft. In addition to combat machines, the *Luftwaffe* could field **500 transport acft**, the largest air transport force in the world. The *Luftwaffe* of 1939-40 was a well-rounded force, able to defend the homeland, win air superiority, support advancing forces and conduct strategic bombing. Contrary to popular myth, the *Luftwaffe* put considerable effort into creating a strategic bomber arm and doctrine. It was the first air force to employ „*pathfinder*“ bombers and was the only one able to attack enemy targets accurately at night in 1940. Generally, GAF pilots were also better trained than their opponents. Germany also had the advantage of a *first-class acft industry* w/ excellent designers and engineers and a huge, modern industrial base. (the **second largest economy in the world in 1939**). Remarkably, none of these advantages would last for long. By 1941, the *Luftwaffe* was heavily outnumbered on every front. By 1942, few of the GAF's acft had an edge on their opponents. The Allies soon outstripped the *Luftwaffe* in both numbers and quality. The well-trained personnel of 1939-41 were lost to attrition and replaced w/ inferior crews. By mid-point of war, *Luftwaffe* locked into a „*steady and irreversible decline*.“ (J.S. Corum, in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, 203-04)³⁷⁸

Note: The plethora of targets and the army's *escalating demand for close air support* ruled out any serious strategic effort by the *Luftwaffe* in **1941**. The Soviets were allowed to dismantle whole factories and dispatch trainload after trainload of industrial plant to safety w/o intervention by the GAF. Factories old and new were able to keep working w/ little threat from the air. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 42-43)

Note: The German army was forced to *rely increasingly on air power* to compensate for its own problems. The vigorous presence of the *Luftwaffe* above the Russian battlefields was not the manifestation of German technical superiority it looked to be at the time. It should be recognized as a *symptom of the army's weaknesses*: its **lack of artillery** and **anti-tank wpns**, and the fact that only a small proportion of the army was mechanized. The Panzer formations depended upon air power both to break thru the Soviet defenses and to defend the „outer ring“ of the lines of encirclement they found themselves holding. The Panzers needed bombers to compensate for their *relative lack of organic artillery*, as well as transports to deliver emergency supplies of petrol, oil, lubricants and ammunition. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 43)

Note: Bei einer zusammenfassenden Betrachtung des Luftkrieges im Osten im Jahre **1941** faellt als *hervorstechendes Merkmal* in die Augen das starke Ueberwiegen des Einsatzes der *Luftwaffe* zur mittelbaren oder unmittelbaren Unterstueztung des Heeres auf Kosten des strategischen Luftkrieges. Es stellte sich bald heraus, dass die *Heeresverbaende* nur dann gut vorwaerts kamen, wenn ihre Angriffe gegen den immer zahlenmaessig weit ueberlegenen u. meist sehr zaeh kempfenden Gegner wirksam durch die *Luftwaffe* unterstuetzt wurden. . . . In Erkenntnis dieser Sachlage erliess der *Fuehrer* darum einen Befehl, dass groessere Angriffsunternehmen des Heeres erst dann begonnen werden durften, wenn eine weitgehende Unterstuetzungsmoeglichkeit der *Luftwaffe* sichergestellt waere. [?] Das im Jahre **1941** bis in den November hinein auf der gesamten Ostfront ein Bewegungskrieg gefuehrt wurde, zu dessen Unterstuetzung die Masse der im Osten eingesetzten fliegenden Verbaende benoetigt wurden, blieben fuer Einsaetzte *rein strategischer Art* nur schwache Verbaende uebrig u. nur in wenigen Faellen erlaubte die Erdlage, dass staerkere Kraefte fuer derartige Einsaetzte zusammengefasst werden konnten. Wenn man

³⁷⁸ James S. Corum, „*Defeat of the Luftwaffe, 1935-1945*,“ in: *Why Air Forces Fail. The Anatomy of Defeat*. Ed. by Robin Higham & Stephen J. Harris. 2006.

sich die Zahl der eingesetzten Flugzeuge u. der jeweiligen Einsatze bei den Angriffen auf Moskau u. auf die verschiedenen Industrieziele vergewogen, so muss man, *gemessen an den heutigen, durch die anglo/amerikanischen Angriffe* auf eigene Staedte u. Industriewerke gewonnenen Erfahrungen zugeben, dass diesen strategischen Angriffen kein durchschlagender Erfolg beschieden sein konnte. („*Unterstützung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe*“, KDC, Microfilm „E“)

Note: Aehnlich lagen die Verhaeltnisse bei der Eisenbahnbekaempfung, von der sich die dt. Fuehrung im Hinblick auf das weitmaschige sowjet. Bahnnetz, mit seinen verhaeltnismaessig wenig leitungsfahigen Strecken eine *Wirkung operativen Ausmasses* versprochen hatte. Aber auch hier erwiesen sich die zur Verfuegung stehenden Kraefte fuer die Groesse der Aufgaben im weiten russ. Raum als *viel zu schwach*. In den ersten Kriegswochen wirkten sich wohl die Angriffe gegen das Bahnnetz fuer den Gegner *ausserordentlich stoerend* u. in einzelnen Faellen, insbesondere bei den grossen *Kesselschlachten*, auch verhaengnisvoll aus. Aber der erhoffte *Dauererfolg blieb aus*. Die Wirkung der Eisenbahnbekaempfung blieb oertlich u. vor allem auch zeitlich begrenzt, denn die Sowjets entwickelten eine ganz unerwartete u. geradezu *erstaunliche Leistungsfahigkeit bei der Wiederherstellung zerstoeorter Bahnlinien* in unglaublich kurzer Zeit. Ausserdem gingen sie in der Erkenntnis der ungeheuren Bedeutung, die ein intaktes Bahnnetz fuer ihre Kampffuehrung hatte, bald dazu ueber, alle Bahnhoeefe, auch die kleineren, mit **Flak** zu schuetzen, alle Zuege mit *leichten Flakwaffen* auszuruesten u. *Jaeger* entlang der Bahnlinien einzusetzen, sodass die eigenen Verbaende bei der Bahnbekaempfung bald auf eine *starke Abwehr* stiessen. („*Unterstützung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe*“, KDC, Microfilm „E“)

Note: Auch beim Einsatz der dt. Jagdwaffe zeigte es sich, dass die zur Verfuegung stehenden Verbaende *bei weitem nicht ausreichten*, um in den riesigen Raemen der Ostfront ueberall die *Luftueberlegenheit*, geschweige denn die *Luft Herrschaft* zu erkaempfen, obwohl sie hinsichtlich Ausbildungsstand, kaempferischem Geist u. Guete des Materials den sowjet. Verbaenden weit ueberlegen waren. Nur bei scharfer Zusammenfassung ueber den Schwerpunkten der Erdoperationen war es moeglich, oertlich u. zeitlich begrenzt die voellige Luft Herrschaft an sich zu reissen. („*Unterstützung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe*“, KDC, Microfilm „E“)

Note: Unter demselben Uebel der zu geringen Kraefte fuer die einzelnen Raueme litt auch die Luftaufklaerung, vor allem die *Fernaufklaerung*, deren Schwerpunkt auf die *Bahnaufklaerung* lag. Aus Mangel an Kraeften war es nicht moeglich, die Hauptbahnlinien zweimal taeglich ueber mehrere hundert Kilometer Laenge durchlaufend zu ueberwachen u. die Abstellung der groesseren Bahnhoeefe mindestens einmal taeglich im Luftbild zu erfassen . . . Infolge der unzureichenden Kraefte konnte aber immer nur ein relativ geringer Teilausschnitt des umfangreichen Verkehrsgeschehen beim Gegner erfasst werden... („*Unterstützung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe*“, KDC, Microfilm „E“)

Note: Ueber diesem Kapitel [i.e., „*Barbarossa*“] steht aber trotzdem: *Vorbildliche, erfolgsversprechende Zusammenarbeit von Herr u. Luftwaffe*. Aus dieser Einstellung heraus habe ich meine Flieger- u. Flakgenerale angewiesen, unbeschadet der alleinigen Unterstellung unter mich, *die Wuensche des Heeres als meine Befehle anzusehen*, wenn nicht schwerwiegende Luftinteressen eine Erfuellung unzweckmaessig oder sogar schaedlich erscheinen liessen. Alle meine Fuehrer u. ich sahen unseren Stolz darin...den Wuenschen des Heeres voraus zu handeln u.

in der Lageentwicklung begründete Forderungen des Heeres *so rasch u. umfassend wie möglich zu erfüllen.* (Kesselring, Soldat, 118-19)³⁷⁹

Note: Es ist weiterhin festzustellen, dass es der dt. *Luftwaffe* zu keinem Zeitpunkt gelang, die russ. Luftwaffenverbände nicht nur fuer kurze Zeit u. oertlich begrenzt, sondern vollstaendig u. nachhaltig auszuschalten; im Gegenteil *erholte sich die sowjet. Luftwaffe erstaunlich schnell* von den verheerenden Verlusten der ersten Wochen u. blieb waehrend des gesamten Feldzuges 1941 ein ernstzunehmender Gegner. (*Jagdfliegerverbände 6/1, Prien, 25*)

Note: It must be said at this point that the invasion's initial success was in *no small measure due to German air superiority*, where low-level air attacks had a dramatic effect upon Russian soldiers and civilians alike. (*H.J. Schroeder, German Soldiers' Experiences, 312*)

Note: According to Dr Stolfi, in Russia the *Luftwaffe* "operated off sod strips. As a matter of fact, they never operated off hard surfaces. The Germans used enlisted pilots. (*Hozzel, "Conversations," 91*)

The onslaught against Russia put to test a *mature air force*, supremely confident in the basic soundness of its equipment, leadership, personnel and intellectual foundations. And there is little doubt that the *Luftwaffe*, like the other armed services the instrument of Hitler's will, prepared during the whole of its existence for a conflict such as the one that greeted it on morning of **22 Jun 41.** (*Muller, German Air War, 1-2*)

In Jun 41, the *Luftwaffe* was "*at its zenith*, fresh from the easy and spectacular victories in the Balkans and Crete, well-organized and experienced for battle as the result of operations in the West in 1940, and still w/ a strong bomber force after the winter's bombing offensive against Britain." There can be *no doubt that the Germans entered upon the Russian campaign in a spirit of the highest confidence*; emboldened further by the *very poor showing of the Soviet Air Force in Finnish Campaign of 1939-40*, where **900** acft had been lost to a handful of obsolete fighters and guns. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall, 166*)

GAF intelligence well aware of older Soviet acft, such as the **I-15, I-153** and the legendary **I-16 „Rata“** of the Spanish Civil War; however, they knew little at all about new types of Soviet acft—i.e., **MiG-1, LaGG-3, Jak-1** or **Pe-2**. But these acft were available in numbers to VVS since 1940. Also knew nothing about the *gepanzerte Tiefangriffsflugzeug: II-2*. Also: Bei der *Bezeichnung der sowjet. Flugzeugtypen* herrschte auf dt. Seite ein *erhebliches, zum Teil noch bis weit in den Krieg hinein andauerndes Durcheinander!* (for details see, *Jagdfliegerverbände 6/1, Prien, 11*)

Synopsis of Luftwaffe in Barbarossa: German bomber and fighter units exceeded the most optimistic hopes of their cdrs, when they *virtually annihilated the Soviet air force during the first two days of the campaign*. It is likely that this campaign against the **VVS** at the war's onset was the *Luftwaffe's major contribution to the course of the war*. The momentous German advances of summer and early fall 1941 took place under *conditions of general air supremacy*; it is doubtful that they could have occurred otherwise. However, the eventual *collapse of the German offensive in winter 1941* would result in the GAF assuming an *emergency army support role* from which it would never really escape. As long as the *Luftwaffe* possessed anything approaching an adequate force structure, use of flying units to buttress the ground forces signified but a *small percentage of the overall air effort*. Only w/ the Soviet counteroffensive of Dec 41 did the *Fliegerkorps* cdrs

³⁷⁹ Appears Kesselring and GFM v. Bock had a solid working relationship.

place their forces at the disposal of the army. Only when the eastern front was in danger of total collapse did the *Luftwaffe* reluctantly commit not only dive bomber and ground attack units, but even the long-range bomber formations towards stabilizing the desperate ground situation [i.e., to direct support of the army]. (Muller, *German Air War*, 28; 62)

The very arguments [*between Hitler and his General Staff*] about priorities – Moscow or Leningrad, Leningrad or the Ukraine, Sebastopol or Leningrad – prove that from the very beginning the *German forces were stretched*. Once Russian resistance was not wholly broken w/in weeks, the German command faced choices because the tasks were too many. The same applied to the *Luftwaffe*. In the first four (4) weeks of the campaign a force of **3000** acft averaged **2500** sorties a day, and thereafter **1500-2000** a day for the rest of the year. Their performance was excellent (the **Me 109F**, faster but less heavily armed than the **Me 109E**, was making its first operational appearance) but in spite of this *remarkable effort* the force was *too thinly spread* for its commitments and again switches told the tale – to Leningrad one moment and then back again to the central front for the main assault on Moscow. Air raids on Moscow were hardly more than a *token gesture*. (Calvocoressi & Wint, *Total War*, 182)

Synopsis of Luftwaffe in Barbarossa: In a vain effort to reach a decisive military conclusion before end of year, the *GAF had been committed ruthlessly to an unbroken period of air ops* which continued even after weather broke in mid-October and until the severe cold finally brought about an *enforced suspension of activity*. Little or no time allowed for resting of air crews, and the *insistent demands for air support*, arising first on one sector of the front then on another, gave little opportunity for respite. Air ops were carried out *almost unbrokenly by all units engaged between June and end of October*. Intensity of effort may be gauged by fact that during this period dive-bomber units maintained an average number of sorties per day equivalent to **75 %** of establishment acft, whilst fighters maintained about **60%**, and long-range bombers **40-45%**. An average scale of effort for the entire period by the total force, averaging some 2500 acft, worked out in excess of **1200 sorties per day for acft of all types at the front**; in periods of great intensity, up to **2000 sorties a day** or more were put up. Despite all this effort, *GAF fails ultimately in effort to eliminate Soviet air forces*, despite fact that some **20,000** Russian acft were claimed destroyed by the end of Oct 41. On the contrary, *GAF losses were extremely heavy*, due to the enforced use of *inadequately prepared and ill-equipped airfields*, and esp. owing to the *great accuracy of Russian A.A. fire*, from which both reconnaissance and long-range bomber units suffered particularly. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 174)

Hermann Plocher: “It is true that the complete destruction or the *continuing neutralization* of remaining Soviet air forces [i.e., following the *GAF* victories in opening days of campaign] had not succeeded. The reason was that the bulk of the *Luftwaffe* now had to begin to carry out its *second mission* – its *future main task* – the direct and indirect support of the army. It would have been correct for the *Luftwaffe* to have continued the fight against Soviet air forces w/ all available power, for they *should not have been allowed to recover* after the initial knockout blow. But this would have meant not only commitments against the enemy air forces in the air and on their bases but also against Russian production, the factories of the air armaments industry. The latter was impossible, however, because of the inferior range of German twin-engine bombers and the *lack of a long-range four-engine bomber* capable of making regular assaults upon acft plants, esp. against industrial installations in the *Moscow* and *Voronezh* areas, which, at the time, had not yet been evacuated to the East. Only during **Sep-Oct 41**, after capture of the territory around *Kiev* and *Smolensk* provided a jump-off area, were a few attacks made upon the acft industry at *Voronezh* by the *Second* and *Fourth Air Fleets*. But these were simply independent ops, initiated by the air fleets concerned. A large, planned operation, such as those envisioned under the

German principles for “*The Conduct of Aerial Warfare*,” ordered and controlled by the C-in-C of the *Luftwaffe*, never took place.”

Why? Because: a) sufficient forces were not available for such ops; b) long-range escort fighters, essential for daylight attacks, were unavailable; and, c) the Soviet acft industry had by then been shifted to the east, esp. those plants producing specialized items such as optical instruments. The failure to strike Soviet acft production centers permitted the undisturbed Russian plants to steadily replace the enormous losses of the first weeks of the war. In addition, hostile air activity gradually increased in certain areas, and *by late summer became troublesome* to German ground ops and helped to cause appreciable *Wehrmacht* losses. It was ***impossible for the Luftwaffe to perform simultaneously its two assigned missions*** – the achievement of air superiority and support of the ground forces – since the German air units in the east were *numerically weak* and the operational territory so vast. (*GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 43-44*)

Plocher: At the beginning of the campaign, the GAF swept the Soviet air force from the skies and destroyed nearly all of its obsolete acft. This could have been a *decisive victory* if the *Luftwaffe* had been able to stifle the reconstruction of the Russian air forces through a destruction of the Soviet acft industry and the closing of the ports of *Murmansk, Arkhangelsk*, and the *Black Sea* area. This it was not able to do. Strategic objectives in the Soviet Union might have been attained if the *Luftwaffe* had carried out a systematic strategic operations. By the end of October it should have been clear that the “*Blitzkrieg*” warfare was not going to work. A joint request at that time by the General Staffs of the Army and the *Luftwaffe* asking for an interruption in operations to prepare for all-out strategic air warfare might have succeeded, but this was not done. Since all significant operations over Britain ceased about the time of the invasion of Russia, at least two *bomber wings* should have gone at once to the East for strategic assignments. These units (**4th / 28th Bomber Wings**) were eventually sent to the East anyway, but by the time they arrived they were desperately needed for tactical purposes and to fill the gaps caused by the increasing *attrition rates* among other *Luftwaffe* combat units. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 232*)

Plocher: The principle of *concentration of forces* was not uniformly observed among *Luftwaffe* units in the Soviet Union. Real concentrations of air power were observed on only *two occasions* in **1941** – once in the general advance upon *Leningrad* and again during the offensive against *Moscow*. At all other places the GAF was employed in a *piecemeal fashion*, usually IAW the demands of front line ground units. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 253*)

c. Chronology:

Apr-May 41: Though construction of airfields, provision of accommodations, etc., had begun in fall of 1940 (under the *Ostbauprogramm*), it was not until Apr-May ‘41 that actual preparations for the reception of flying units started to be made in the newly-occupied Polish territories. During these two months, administrative and supply units and installations were set up, transport and supply columns allotted, and acft maintenance and equipment issuing stations established. All of this was *done unobtrusively w/ every security precaution.*” (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall, 162*)

10-11.5.41: Nach einem letzten grossen Angriff auf *London* (mit **500** Bombern) stellte die *Luftwaffe* ihre Angriffe gegen England fast voellig ein. (*Dollinger, Kain, wo ist dein Bruder, 69*)

Late May/June 41: Move to the East of *Luftwaffe* flying units *delayed until the latest possible moment to obviate risk of detection*. The entire transfer of flying elements to the East was, in fact, *accomplished w/in a space of some three weeks*, during which period a force of over **2500** acft was established in secret along Russian front. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 162)

June 41: "...so schwer lag die Verantwortung auf den einzelnen Fuehrungsstellen. Ein Beweis dafuer war, dass sich mein ausgezeichnete *Luftflotten-Nachrichtenfuehrer* [signals officer], Dr. Dr. **Seidel**, kurz vor Beginn des Kampfes das Leben nahm, da er die *Last der Verantwortung* nicht mehr tragen zu koennen vermeinte." (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 116)

June 41: Schon in diesen Tagen flog ich mit meiner **FW 189** *allein im russ. Raum* – ein Beweis, wie vollkommen die ersten beiden Angriffstage gegen die russ. Flieger gewirkt hatten. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 121)

ab June 41: Fuer die **Flakkorps**, die bei den *Panzergruppen* eingesetzt waren, waren an die Stelle der *ureigensten Aufgaben*, des „Luftschutzes,“ in vermehrter Masse die *Panzerabwehr u. die taktische Unterstuetzung* gegen russ. Widerstandsnester getreten. Die Flakkorps waren *so in die Heeresverbaende eingegliedert*, dass man sie als Teile von diesen ansprechen konnte; ihre *Wirkung war oft ausschlaggebend*. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 120)

June-July 41: According to British *Air Ministry* study (1948), the *Luftwaffe's* long-range bomber force operated in *direct support of the army*, necessitating **low-level attacks on a large scale** and operating almost exclusively by day [confirm]. The rapid advance of German ground forces thru Poland and into White Russia called for highest degree of mobility on part of close-support forces, and ground organization of the GAF in the field proved itself fully capable of maintaining the serviceability and operational efficiency of units under these conditions. The GAF was in fact *being employed on the now classic lines evolved by pre-war theory and confirmed w/ such striking success in practice in previous campaigns*. In particular, the tactical and long-range *reconnaissance elements* comprised over **700 acft**, and the extent to which air recon was carried out was *one of the outstanding features*. Reconnaissance extended deep into the Russian back areas as well as covering the fighting zones, and the *German HQs were constantly able to form a clear picture*, not only of Russian movements and of troop and tank concentrations, but also of the general situation on an extensive front. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 166-7)³⁸⁰

7.-21.6.41: The elite **VIII Fliegerkorps** had to move from Greece and Yugoslavia to *Suwalki* between these dates, so **600** of its vehicles and **40%** of its acft were unavailable on *Barbarossa-tag*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 23)

15.-21.6.41: Motorized elements of the entire *Luftwaffe* ground organization in the East, including anti-aircraft artillery and signal services, were deployed by rail and motor convoys, a movement which was in great part completed by **15.6.41**. Flying units were brought up to their prepared airfields before **20.6.41** in *individual flights* or in small, three-plane formations (*Ketten*), avoiding for security's sake all the larger urban areas. On **21.6.41**, the *Luftwaffe* was in place for its most difficult operation. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia*, 1941, 32-33)

³⁸⁰ This is an interesting and intriguing point. If reconnaissance was so effective early, why did it apparently fail in fall of 1941, when it didn't detect shifting of Soviet reinforcements from the Far East to the Moscow front? One reason may be devastating losses suffered by the German reconnaissance elements during *Barbarossa*.

21.6.41 [Air Corps VIII]: This was the largest of the two air corps assigned to **Air Fleet 2** and had been heavily engaged in the capture of Crete which, due to the battle concluding in early **Jun 41**, meant that there was little time to accomplish its transfer and make adequate preparations for Barbarossa. Hence, on **21 Jun 41**, **Air Corps VIII** was still short some **600** motor vehicles, **40%** of its acft and vital communications equipment – a crucial deficiency on the eve of war. The cdr of **Air Corps VIII**, Col.-Gen. Wolfram v. Richthofen, noted on this day: “[w]e are greatly concerned that our units are as yet unready.” As aviation historian Richard Muller noted: “While not every Luftwaffe unit had undergone such extensive recent use, the fact remains that the [GAF] commenced its largest operation of the war w/ a force structure and serviceability at dangerously low levels.” (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 88; see also, *R. Muller, German Air War in Russia*, 40)

22.6.41: By midnight on 22 June, Soviet losses had risen to a total of **1811** acft, w/ **1489** destroyed on the ground and **322** destroyed mostly in the air. German losses rose to **35** acft. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 764)

22.6.41: Der Vernichtungsschlag gegen die sowjet. Luftwaffe fuehrte bei der **Luftflotte 2** am 22.6. zu besonders grossen Erfolgen. Von den **1811** an diesem Tage vernichteten Flugzeugen wurden ueber **900** allein durch die *Luftflotte 2* vernichtet. Hierdurch wurde im Kampfraum der Luftflotte die *Luftherrschaft* im frontnaehem Raum bereits *am ersten Kriegstage* errungen. Infolgedessen war es moeglich, den Schwerpunkt des Einsatzes schon am naechsten Tage auf die Unterstuetzung des Heeres zu legen. („*Der Lufikrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,” *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

22.6.41: The pilot of the Heinkel **He-111** bomber kept the *control column* pulled backwards as the acft continued climbing. He glanced at the *altimeter*: it wavered, held, then continued to move clockwise past **4500 - 5000m**. The crew were signalled to *don oxygen masks*. At **0300** hours the acft droned across the Soviet frontier at maximum height. Below was a sparsely inhabited region of marsh and forest. **KG 53** had taken-off in darkness south of Warsaw, steadily climbing to maximum height before setting course to airfields between *Bialystok* and *Minsk*. Dornier **Do17-Zs** from **KG 2** were penetrating Soviet airspace to the north toward *Grodno* and *Vilnius*. **KG 3**, having taken-off from *Demblin*, was still climbing between *Brest-Litovsk* and *Kobrin*. The aircrew scanning the darkened landscape below for navigational clues were *hand-picked men*, w/ many hours’ night-flying experience. *These 20-30 acft formed the vanguard of the air strike*. The mission was to fly undetected into Russia and strike fighter bases behind the central front. Three [3] bombers were allocated to each assigned airfield. They droned on toward their targets. Below, the earth was shrouded in a mist-streaked darkness. Pin-pricks of light indicated inhabited areas. Ahead, and barely discernible, was a pale strip of light emerging above the eastern horizon. There was little cloud. Only **15** minutes remained before H-hour. Behind them, in occupied Poland, scores of airstrips were bustling w/ purposeful activity. Bombs were still being loaded and pilots briefed. Acft engines burst into life, startling birds who flew off screeching into the top branches of trees surrounding *isolated and heavily camouflaged landing strips*.

Over the primary Russian fighter bases immediately behind the newly forming *Ostfront*, trios of acft from **KG 2**, **KG 3** and **KG 53** arrived undetected. It was still dark, but a shimmering strip of light was now floating on the eastern horizon. The independently operating wings began their descent. By **0315** hours, they were roaring in at low level. Hundreds of **SD2 2 kg fragmentation bombs** began to trickle from open bomb bays. They fell among serried ranks of acft, neatly parked wingtip to wingtip w/ personnel tents situated close by. It was peacetime. The Russian acft were neither camouflaged nor dispersed. Last-minute alerts had been of no avail. The small

bombs were adjusted to explode either on impact or above ground. Within seconds, crackling multiple explosions began to envelop the line of acft. Each bomblet had a blast radius of up to **12** meters. Airframes were lacerated and slashed by the release of **50-250** particles of shrapnel. A direct hit had the impact of a medium anti-acft shell. Punctured fuel tanks, ignited by subsequent detonations, produced multiple swirling fireballs, jetting dense clouds of boiling black smoke into the night sky. The result was total chaos. Attempts to combat fires by dazed ground crews were inhibited by vicious delayed-action explosions. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 31, 33)

ca. 22.6.41: “But at that moment a murderous shrieking noise swooped down, tearing open the sky and lashing the earth. . . A **Ju-88** dived almost to street level w/ a terrifying howl – so that was it, a Wagnerian performance.” (*Plievier, Moscow*, 80-81)

ab 22.6.41: Depending on the distance to their bases from the front, the German bombers each flew **4-6** sorties a day, the dive-bombers **7-8**, and the fighters **5-8**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 764)

ab 22.6.41 [*Hans Rudel*]: Flights of *gull-winged Stuka* dive bombers peeled off, sirens wailing into the attack. Junkers **Ju-87B Stukas** were the main providers of close-air support for the Army. Lt *Hans Rudel* had by evening of the first day „been out over the enemy lines four [4] times in the area between *Grodno* and *Volkovysk*.“ His targets were large numbers of tanks together w/ supply columns the Russians were bringing up to the front. „We bomb tanks, Flak artillery and ammunition dumps supplying the tanks and infantry,“ he wrote. . . Lt *Rudel* commented on the *cumulative physical strain* dive-bombing had upon *Stuka* pilots during the opening weeks of the campaign. Take-off was at **0300** hours in the first few days w/ the final landing often after **2200** hours. „Every spare minute,“ he stated, „we stretch out underneath an aeroplane and instantly fall asleep.“ When scrambled, „we hop to it w/o even knowing where it is from.“ Prolonged stress caused them to go about their business „as though in our dreams.“ (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 53; see also, *H. Rudel, Stuka Pilot*, 16-17)

22.-23.6.41: ...brachte den groessten zahlenmaessigen Erfolg, der jemals im Kampf zwischen zwei Luftwaffen innerhalb von 24 Stunden erzielt worden ist: Insgesamt wurden nach damaligen dt. Angaben am ersten Tage des Krieges im Osten **1.811** russ. Flugzeuge vernichtet – 322 sowjet. Maschinen sollen danach von Jaegern oder von der Flak abgeschossen worden sein, waehrend weitere 1.489 am Boden zerstoert wurden. Ueber die dt. Verluste am ersten Tage...hiess es seither, dass sie *sehr gering gewesen seien*—meist wird dabei die Zahl von lediglich **36** Totalverlusten genannt. Tatsaechlich aber waren die dt. Verluste im Verhaeltnis zur Zahl der eingesetzten Flugzeuge sehr schwer—insgesamt waren **113 Mann** des fliegenden Personnels gefallen oder vermisst, vier Mann waren in russ. Gefangenschaft geraten, **66** wurden verwundet u. weitere **33** wurden jenseits der Linien abgeschossen, konnten aber—z.T. schwer verwundet— an folgenden Tagen zu den eigenen Verbaenden zurueckkehren. Die *Flugzeugverluste* betruen **78** Maschinen, die als Totalverluste mit Schadensgraden von 60 bis 100 % abgeschrieben werden mussten; waehrend weitere **89** Flugzeuge Beschaedigungen von 10 bis 60 % erlitten. Damit lagen die Verluste deutlich ueber denen, die die Luftwaeffe an den beiden blutigsten Tagen waehrend der Kaempfe ueber England im vorangegangenen Sommer, naemlich am 18. August u. am 15. September 1940, hatte hinnehmen muessen. Bis zum Abend des **23.6.41** wuchs die Zahl

der vernichteten russ. Flugzeuge nach Angaben der Luftwaffe auf **2.759**. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 12-13*)³⁸¹

22.-23.6.41: Dank der taktischen Luftplanung u. dank dem unermuedlichen Einsatzwillen der Verbaende gelang es, auf Grund *ausgezeichneter Luftbildaufklaerung innerhalb von zweier Tage die „Luftherrschaft“ zu erkaempfen*. Die Meldungen ueber Abschuesse in der Luft u. ueber Zerstoeerung von Flugzeugen am Boden erreichten die Hoehe von rund **2500** Flugzeuge, eine Zahl, die *anfangs vom Reichsmarschall nicht geglaubt wurde*. Als er die Zahlen nach Eroberung des Gelaendes nachprufen liess, musste er mir mitteilen lassen, dass die wirklichen Zahlen um **2-300** hoeher laegen. Ohne Gefahr zu laufen, eines falschen Schlusses geziehen zu werden, glaube ich feststellen zu koennen, dass *sich ohne diesen Auftakt die Heeresoperationen nicht so rasch u. erfolgreich abgewickelt haetten*. (*Kesselring, Soldat, 119-20*)

22.-24.6.41: The first attack caught complete [Soviet] air units upon the ground, unprotected. Within a few days the greater part of the Soviet air forces were destroyed. In the *weeks that followed*, the Russian air force appeared to be paralyzed; only small units, appearing at very infrequent intervals, participated in combat actions, and most of these were uncoordinated and unsystematic. The possibility of Soviet flying units halting or even delaying the swift advance of the German Army groups, or of threatening the German homeland, was eliminated. By accomplishing its primary mission, the *Luftwaffe* contributed materially to the great victories of the German Army in the east during opening weeks of campaign. (**Note:** Plocher also notes that in opening days of campaign, the *Luftwaffe* “succeeded in destroying the *basis for the Russian bomber fleet buildup* so that during the later campaigns Russian bombers scarcely put in an appearance, an achievement of the [GAF] in the East which was *never really appreciated*.” (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 39, 42*)

22.-26.6.41: By noon (of 22nd), the Russians had lost **528** acft on the ground and **210** in the air in the western district. For the entire front, Russian losses totaled no less than **1200** planes in the first 8 1/2 hours. Slaughter of Soviet aircraft resembled the destruction of the *Japanese fleet air arm* in the “*Mariana’s turkey shoot*” of 1943. *Milch* recorded in his diary the destruction of **1800** Soviet acft on the first day; followed by **800** on 23 June, **557** on the 24th, **351** on the 25th and **300** on the 26th. Whether, in fact, the *Luftwaffe* had managed to destroy that many planes is beside the point: a *defeat of immense proportion* had overtaken the Red Air Force. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat, 81-82.*)

22-30.6.41: *Luftwaffe struck at 31 airfields on first morning*; by noon claimed destruction of **800** Soviet acft for a loss of only **10** German planes. During the first two days, the VVS lost **1811** acft, **1489** of them on the ground. By **26 Jun 41**, the *Luftwaffe* had attacked some **123** airfields, destroying **4614** Soviet acft by end of the month for a loss of only **330** German planes. Crux: The result was a “virtually unqualified victory” for the *Luftwaffe* in its *air superiority mission*. The Red Air Force proved as vulnerable in the air as on the ground. The poorly training and equipped VVS pilots were shot down in appalling numbers, *entire formations at a time*. *Kesselring*, then commanding *Luftflotte 2*, referred to destruction of VVS bomber force as “*sheer infanticide*.”³⁸² The *Luftwaffe effectively attained air superiority on the first day of the invasion*,

³⁸¹ **Note:** The German loss numbers for 22.6.41 are *official Luftwaffe numbers: Verluste lt. Meldungen des GQM, 6. Abt., RL 2/1185.*) Prien, et al., appears to be *very reliable source!*

³⁸² See *Kesselring’s Soldat bis zum letzten Tag*, p 120, where he discusses his disgust at how the Russians simply sacrificed their bomber formations--a tragedy he observed personally beginning on the second day of *Barbarossa*. He continues: “Darueber hinaus gelang es, die *Basis fuer den Aufbau einer russ.*

a goal that had eluded them for all of the months of the Battle of Britain. On **25 Jun 41**, the *Luftwaffe* was able to turn to its *second task*: Direct and indirect support of the German army. Most army corps after-action reports for this period [frontier battles] refer to the “minimal enemy air activity.” (Muller, *German Air War*, 44-5)

22.6.-30.6.41: For detailed account of a *Stuka* pilot’s first week in combat on central sector of eastern front see, reports of *Haupt. Herbert Pabst (Staffelkapitaen)*. From his reports, one gets a feel for nature of combat for a *Stuka* pilot at this time – multiple missions per day, exhaustion, breaks for coffee and cigarettes, battle w/ the mosquitoes on the ground, etc. Pabst and his unit are spectators as a group of six Soviet 2-engine bombers are systematically destroyed by German *Jaeger*. (H. Pabst, “*Berichte aus Russland Sommer 1941*,” **KDC**, Microfilm “E”)

22.6-21.7.41 [1. Phase: vom 22.6.-21.7.41]: In den ersten **3-5** Tagen wird die *strategische Luftherrschaft* gegenueber der russ. *Luftwaffe* errungen u. bis auf weiteres gehalten . . . Eines ist jedenfalls klar, dass die *Luftherrschaft* dort erreicht ist, wo das Herr im Schwerpunkt kaempft – in der Mitte u. im Norden. – Die dt. Verluste sind jedoch nicht so gering, wie man angenommen hatte. Sie sind in den letzten **14** Tagen sogar *weitaus groesser, als in jedem anderen noch kommenden u. gleichen Abschnitt* . . . Der *Jagdschutz* ueber den vorderen Infanterielinien u. ueber den Panzerspitzen, das *Zerschlagen der russ. Artillerie*, der Reserven u. frontnahen Zufuehren, die *Strassenjagd* u. die *Abriegelung des taktischen Kampffeldes* gegen die Bildung einer neuen geordneten Abwehr kennzeichnen den *Nahkampfeinsatz* auf der ganzen Front. Dieser nimmt von Woche zu Woche einen immer groesseren Raum in der Kampffuehrung der *Luftwaffe* ein... („*Ueberblick ueber den dt. Luftkrieg gegen Russland*,” **KDC**)

23.6.41: In opening days/weeks of Russlandfeldzug, Russian bomber acft conducted suicidal missions and were annihilated. One German soldier writes of witnessing the systematic destruction of nine (**9**) Russian bombers on this day by a single **Me-109**. Later, a lone German fighter takes out several more Soviet bombers. (For this account see, *Dr. E. Bunke*, **31. ID**, *Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 231-32)

23.-30.6.41: Between **23-26 Jun**, the number of Soviet airfields attacked by the *Luftwaffe* reaches **123**. By end of the month, **4614** Soviet aircraft are destroyed at a cost of **330** German acft. Total *Luftwaffe* air supremacy has been achieved. (Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 54)

ab 24.6.41: Vom dritten Tage an wurde die *Stukaangriffe* gegen die feindlichen Frontheereskraefte...verstaerkt. Folgende Aufgaben waren nun gestellt u. wurden erfuellt: a) *Niederhalten der feindl. Luftwaffe* (eine Aufgabe, die keine besonderen Kraefte mehr beanspruchte; b) *Unterstuetzung der Panzer- u. Inf.-Kraefte*...eine Aufgabe, die in erster Linie den *Stukas-* u. *Schlachtfliegern* vorbehalten war; c) *Vernichtung oder Aufhalten der russ. Kraefte*, die noch zur Front marschierten [i.e., *interdiction mission*] oder nach rueckwaerts auszuweichen versuchten, durch *Stuka-, Schlacht- u. Jagdflieger, Zerstoerer, u. sonstige Kampfkraefte*; d) *Stoerung operativer Bewegungen auf den Bahnen*; e) *laufende Aufklaerung*. (Kesselring, *Soldat*, 120)

25.6.41: The *Luftwaffe* was able to fulfill its first task – achieving air supremacy or at least superiority by destroying the Soviet air force in surprise strikes – „within two days.“ . . . Its second major task of direct and indirect support for the army began w/ some delay around

Bomberflotte so zu zerschlagen, dass russ. Bomber waehrend der ganzen Feldzuege nicht mehr in Erscheinung trat...“

25 Jun 41. The war against the Soviet air force was continued „as a sideline“ w/o any system and only whenever the reviving activity of enemy air units became a problem for the German ground forces. In such cases support for the army had to be reduced. The *Luftwaffe* had to divide itself, dealing w/ one task after the other, as its resources were no longer sufficient to fulfill all at once. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 766-67; see also, *Kesselring*, Memoirs)

ab 25.6.41: In addition to providing direct support for the army, after **25 Jun 41 Air Fleet 2** attempted to seal off the battle area by attacking railway lines leading into it at Minsk, Orsha, Molodechno, Zhlobin & Osipovichi. It also struck at airfields in the area of Smolensk, Bryansk, Polotsk, and, on **2.7.41**, Gomel. All attacks on bridges were discussed in advance w/ the army to determine which of them were important for its own advance and supplies and should not therefore be destroyed.

The close-support units of **Air Fleet 2** accompanied the further advance of **2. and 3. Pz.Gr.**, while its bombers attacked roads, railway lines, and junctions in the hinterland in the area of Mozyr, Gomel, Roslavl, Smolensk, Vitebsk, Polotsk & Daugavpils. These attacks on railway lines, however, were rather of a tactical-operational nature and their strategic effect was over-estimated. Not until Guderian's panzer group was crossing the Berezina at Bobruysk and the Dnieper at Mogilev on **11 Jul 41** did strong Soviet air formations attack the advancing German forces, but they suffered heavy losses at the hands of **Jg. Geschw. 51** under Colonel Werner Moelders. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 769-70)

28.-29.6.41: In der Nacht vom 28. zum 29.6. wurde der *erste groessere Angriff* gegen eine sowjet. Grosstadt geflogen. **32** Flugzeuge des **II. Fliegerkorps** bombardierten **Smolensk** mit guter Wirkung, wobei grosse Flaechenbraende entstanden. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,“ *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

29.6.41: The German Armed Forces High Command (**OKW**) reports the destruction of **4,017** Soviet acft, against a loss of only **150** German planes. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941*, 41)

29.6.-11.7.41: Note: Although many historians' accounts posit that the Russian air force was virtually swept from skies in opening days of campaign—and then hardly seen in action for weeks—diary entries in *Tagebuch* of *Gefr. G. (Stab III/AR 119/11. PD, BfZ)* show that at least opposite his division the VVS was reasonably active. See his diary entries in Section **2.2** for, 29.6.41, 2.7.41, 6.7.41, 8.-9.7.41. Finally, on 11.7.41, he notes: “*Die feindl. Luftwaffe is sehr geschwacht.*”

30.6.41: By the end of June, some **330** German acft had been lost, against a total of **4614** Soviet acft reported destroyed – **1438** in the air and **3176** on the ground. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 764)

30.6.41: Bei Einsatz der Jaeger bildete sich gleich in den ersten Tagen (genauso wie bei der *Luftflotte 4*) der Schwerpunkt ueber den von den sowjet. Kampfverbaenden besonders stark angegriffenen Panzerrollbahnen u. Panzerspitzen heraus. Bei dem raschen Vorstossen der Panzerspitzen der Hr.Gr.Mitte war es dabei oft sehr schwierig, die Bodenorganisation der Jaeger schnell genug nach vorne zu bringen, u. es langte manchmal die Reichweiten nicht aus, um den Jagdschutz ueber den vordersten Panzerspitzen zu gewahrleisten. Einen besonderen Erfolg konnte bei diesen Einsaetzen am **30.6.** das rechtzeitig vorverlegte **J.G. 51** erringen, das an diesem

Tage **110** sowjet. Kampfflugzeuge abschoss. [!] („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*“, *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

Jun-Jul 41: By mounting continuous air attacks, both air corps of **Air Fleet 2** played an effective part in preventing the break-out of Soviet ground forces from the pocket of Bialystok and in the defeat of the four [4] Soviet armies in the pocket near Minsk further east. They thus contributed „decisively“ to the victory in the double battle of Bialystok & Minsk, which ended on **9 Jul 41**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 768-69)

Jun-Jul 41 [VIII. Fl.K.]: Fast **2000** Einsaetze am ersten Angriffstag (**22.6**), die die Verbaende des Korps flogen, erfolgten in der Masse zur Unterbindung aller Truppenbewegungen beim Gegner . . . Als dann eindeutig ruecklaeufige Bewegungen auf der Strasse *Bialystok-Slonim* erkannt wurden wurde der Schwerpunkt des Angriffs des [VIII. Fl.] Korps mit vernichtendem Erfolg auf diese Bewegungen verlegt. Der Rueckzug dieser Feindkraefte wurde nachhaltig unterbunden, sie wurden zerschlagen. Es handelte sich hierbei um starke Teile mechanisierter Einheiten . . . Das tiefgestaffelte Vorgehen der Pz.Gr.3 verlief zuegig . . . Mit dem Vorziehen der ersten eigenen *Nahkampfverbaende* in den Raum *Lida* u. noerdlich, verlegte das Korps den Gefechtsstand in den Raum *Voronovo* (1:250 000 ca. **26.6** bis **30.6**). Die Vorverlegung weiterer Nahkampfkraefte in den Raum *Molodesno* wurde vorbereitet . . . **KG 2** u. **ZG 26** sollten baldmoeglichst auf die Plaetze *Wilna* vorgezogen werden, fuer eine weitere Verlegung waren *Molodesno* u. *Minsk* vorgesehen . . . Es kam jetzt darauf an, bei einer *Einsatztiefe* der Nahkampfverbaende von rund **120 – 150 km** mit der schnellen Vorwaertsbewegung der Panzerverbaende Schritt zu halten. („*VIII. Fliegerkorps: Erste Kaempfe vom 22.6. bis ca. 3.7.41*“, *Heinemann, KDC*, 4-6)

Jun-Aug 41: In den ersten beiden Wochen des Russlandkrieges beliefen sich die Verluste der dt. *Luftwaffe* auf **787** zerstoerte u. erheblich beschaedigte Maschinen (vgl., *KTB OKW 1941 Teil II*, 427). Das entsprach bereits ueber **20 %** der am 22.6.41 im Osten vorhandenen u. sogar **35%** der zu Angriffsbeginn dort einsatzbereiten Flugzeuge. Dabei handelte es sich in erster Linie nicht einmal um Kampfverluste, sondern in erheblichem Masse um *technischen Verschleiss*, der sich deswegen so nachteilig auf die Einsatzstaerke der Verbaende auswirken musste, weil zugleich der *Nachschub* an Neubaumaschinen nicht ausreichend war u. bei den *Ersatzteilen* zeitweilig fast voellig zum Erliegen kam. Da man auf Seiten der dt. Luftwaffenfuehrung getreu der Feldzugplanung davon ausgegangen war, das das Unternehmen *Barbarossa* innerhalb weniger Wochen erfolgreich erledigt sein wuerde, hatte man es schlicht unterlassen, Vorkehrungen fuer einen laengeren Kampf zu treffen u. entsprechend umfangreiche Reserven an Maschinen u. Ersatzteilen zu schaffen. *Der Ostkrieg musste statt dessen mit dem gefuehrt u. gewonnen werden*, was zu Beginn der Kampfhandlungen verfuegbar war. Bei den *Jagdfliegerverbaende* fuehrte diese dazu, dass *bereits in der zweiten Augusthaelfte die ersten Gruppen aus dem Einsatz gezogen werden mussten*, um kurzfristig nach- bzw. umgeruestet u. aufgefrischt zu werden. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien*, 14-15)

Summer 1941: In *Tagebuch* of G. Kreuter (**SR 101 / 18. PD**) at start of *Barbarossa* are many references to support provided by the *Luftwaffe*. References to *Moelder's* wing. Support provided by *Stukas* was especially appreciated. Contrast *this* with virtual disappearance of the *Luftwaffe* from front of Hr.Gr.Mitte in late fall 1941.

Summer 1941: Success of GAF ops during first three months of *Barbarossa* depended almost entirely on the *adequate functioning of the supply organization*. (*War Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 168)

Summer 1941: (Einsatz der Jagdfliegerverbände): (Stichwort: „Jagdzeit“): Der Feldzug im Osten ergab fuer die dt. *Luftwaffe* eine bis dahin nicht gekannte Vielzahl von Gelegenheiten, in der Auseinandersetzung mit den zahlreich auftretenden russ. Kampf- u. Jagdfliegerverbänden *schnell zu zahlreichen Abschuessen zu kommen*; die technische u. taktische Ueberlegenheit der dt. Jagdflieger einerseits sowie die gerade anfangs noch in grosser Anzahl auftretenden Vielzahl veralteten Kampf- u. Jagdflugzeugmuster der russ. Luftwaffe auf der anderen Seite *bescherten die Jagdflieger mit einer bis dahin nicht erlebten „Jagdzeit“*, in der zahlreiche Flugzeugfuehrer—die aelteren erfahrenen ebenso wie die jungen Nachwuchsjagdflieger—rasch zu ansehnlichen Abschusszahlen u. in der Folge zu hohen Auszeichnungen kamen. (*Jagdfliegerverbände 6/1, Prien, 24*)

Jul 41: Neben der unmittelbaren Unterstuetzung des Heeres beim weiteren Vorstoss auf *Smolensk* richteten sich die Angriffe der **Luftflotte 2** auf die Bekaempfung der feindl. Luftwaffe u. ihren Flugplaetzen u. vor allem gegen das *Bahnnetz*, das bis in eine Tiefe von **300 km** empfindlich gestoert wurde. Die Feststellung im OKW-Bericht vom **13.7.[41]**, dass die *Luftwaffe* schon jetzt dem Gegner durch die Zerstoerung des Bahnnetzes die Moeglichkeit fuer eine Gegenoperation groesseren Stils genommen habe, traf auch fuer den Kampfraum der Luftflotte 2 zu. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,“ *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC, Microfilm „E.“*)

1./13.7.41: In the first days of the campaign both the army and the *Luftwaffe* were very optimistic. On **1 Jul 41** the commanding general of **VIII Air Corps**, General Freiherr v. Richthofen, believed that the bulk of the Red Army’s attack forces had been annihilated; on **13 Jul 41** he believed that there were no more military obstacles on the road to Moscow. German forces could reach the Soviet capital in eight [**8**] days. (*GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 766*; also, *Richthofen, Tagebuch*)

12.7.41: By the end of the fighting in the frontier area on **12 Jul 41**, the figures had risen to **6857** Soviet acft destroyed, against **550** total losses and **336** damaged acft on the German side. (*GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 764*)

13.7.41: *Richthofen (Fliegerkorps VIII)* notes hopefully that the first massed attack (*erster grosser Angriff*) on Moscow “could cause a catastrophe. All the experts calculate that a famine exists in the 4 million population of the capital.” (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat, 81-82*; see also, *BA-MA RL 8/49 Russland Feldzug 1941: VIII Fliegerkorps*)

14.7.41: On this day, the rail link between Smolensk & Moscow was attacked for the first time; at the end of the month the railway station at Orel was bombed. (*GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 770*)

Jul/Aug 41: [Smolensk] Diese Kaempfe fuehrten zur *Kesselschlacht im Raume von Smolensk*, die einen grossen Erfolg (ueber **300 000** Gefangene), aber wiederum *keine Entscheidung*, also nur einen „ordinaeren Sieg“ brachte. *Er haette entscheidend werden koennen*,³⁸³ *wenn es gelungen waere, eine ostwaerts Smolensk befindliche Luecke zu schliessen*. Meine u. des Oberbefehlshabers der Luftwaffe *Dringlichkeitsantraege* scheiterten im Vollzug [*execution*]. Eine schmale, wenige Kilometer breite Luecke, in deren Mitte ein kleines Flusstal mit tarnender Bodenbedeckung verlief, liess im Laufe weniger Tage, vor allem waehrend der Naechte, *betraechtliche Kraefte durchsickern*. Glueckte es den *Nahkampffliegern* bei Tage, durch *pausenlose Angriffe* das Durchsickern wesentlich einzuschraenken, so konnten Daemmerung u.

³⁸³ What does he mean by „decisive?“

Nacht von den Russen um so erfolgreicher ausgenutzt werden. Die auf diese Weise nach rueckwaerts entkommenen russ. Soldaten – von mir auf ueber **100 000** Mann geschaetzt – wurden zum *Skelett neuer russ. Verbaende*. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 123)

Jul-Sep 41: During these months, *Luftwaffe* often wrought havoc on Soviet troop movements, supply columns, etc. Aerial photos from this period taken by *Luftwaffe* aircrew often depict vast scenes of destruction (twisted, charred vehicles, dead men and horses, shattered equipment, etc.); one, of a supply column destroyed during air interdiction near *Kiev*, reminds one of the photos of the „*highway of death*“ from the First Gulf War in **1991** – shattered, overturned vehicles, debris everywhere, etc. It is a picture of utter devastation. (*Uebe, Russian Reactions to German Airpower*, 16c)

Aug 41: During this month, **II Air Corps** support of Army Group Ctr is focused in the areas of Gomel, Bryansk and Roslavl. In first days of August, it helped Guderian encircled Soviet forces around Roslavl. Between **9-24.8.41**, close-support forces of the air corps attacked Soviet **21** and parts of Soviet **5 Army**, which were encircled by **2. PzGr.** and **2 Army** near Gomel. Simultaneously, bomber formations attacked Soviet troop movements in the area of Chernigov, Konotop, and Gomel, as well as railway lines, to prevent the withdrawal of forces and the transport of new units to the front facing the southern wing of Army Group Ctr. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 773)

Aug 41: *Luftflotte 2* supports Hr.Gr.Mitte in following actions: a) vom 1.Aug 41 an, mit *Fliegern u. Flak*, Guderian im Raum **Roslaw**; b) dann die fast gleichzeitig beginnenden Kaempfe der 2. Armee unter *Weichs* um **Gomel**; c) Ende August die Ausraeumung der in den Niederungen zwischen *Smolensk* u. *Ilmen-See* ostwaerts **Welikije-Luki** zurueckgebliebenen russ. Kraefte; und, d) der noerdlich **Kiev** im Sumpfbgebiet operierenden *Kavallerie-Division* durch Vernichtung gut getarnter u. recht unangenehmer *Monitore* freie Bahn zu schaffen...In kurzer Zeit wurden **126 Panzerzuege**, tausende von **Kraftfahrzeuge**, **15 Bruecken** zerstoert, ohne die grossen blutigen Verluste anzufuehren, die die russ. Verbaende im Frontraum erlitten. Bei Beginn der geschilderten Kaempfe wurde der **Gefechtsstab** der *Luftflotte* nach **Smolensk** vorverlegt. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 125)

3.8.41: On personal order of Hilter, *Fliegerkorps VIII* left command area of Army Group Center and was shifted to Leningrad sector to support I AK. This was the *first major redistribution of Luftwaffe* forces in the east since start of campaign. Size of *Richthofen's* force was very modest. Yet the reinforcement of *Luftflotte 1* w/ some 400 close-support acft contributed much to the rapid advance towards Leningrad. Conversely, the Leningrad diversion meant that the *level of air support for the final offensive of the 1941 campaign*, Operation „*Taifun*“, would hardly be commensurate w/ the importance of the task. (For ops on Leningrad front see, *Muller, German Air War*, 55-7; also, *Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 167)

21.8.41: Kesselring notes that he was not happy w/ Hitler's decision – made official on this day – to move south to *Kiev*. He also notes: „Mit dem Befehl vom **21.8.41** (Angriff Richtung *Kiev*) war auch das entscheidende Wort fuer den **Jelniabogen** gefallen; er konnte aufgegeben werden; die Verteidigung sollte nunmehr in Abschnitten aufgebaut werden, die auch *ohne Luftwaffenhilfe* u. unter Schonung der Heereskraefte zu halten waren. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 126-27)

22.-26.8.41: Between these dates, **II Air Corps**, in cooperation w/ **VIII Air Corps**, wiped out a large part of the Soviet **22 Army** near Velikie Luki. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 773-74)

30.8.-6.9.41 [Yelnya salient]: Apparently, the German forces in this exposed position received virtually no air support until end of August, despite their calls for support. German air units in the central sector of the front were no longer sufficient to perform several tasks at the same time, considering that air attacks on Moscow had begun on **21-22 Jul 41** [also, transfer of **VIII Air Corps** to Army Group North]. Thus **Air Fleet 2** decided to use all of **II Air Corps** to support the southern wing of AGC and held **2 Army**. . . The German army, which in the second half of August was undecided about whether or not to hold the [Yelnya salient], openly criticized the „high-handed“ action of the *Luftwaffe*. Only when Kesselring heard that the salient might have to be abandoned did he agree to provide air support for a few days; this was made available from **30 Aug 41** until the evacuation of the position on **6 Sep 41**, though only w/ parts of **II Air Corps**, whose bulk remained deployed w/ **2 Army** and **2. PzGr**. The decision of the *Luftwaffe* proved to be correct, as no more than a tactical defensive success could be expected at Yelnya, while the main effort near and east of Gomel and SW of Bryansk helped eliminate the deep Soviet wedge between Army Groups South and Centre and establish the northern starting-position for the encirclement of Budenny's armies east of Kiev, and thus resulted in an operational success. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 774)

Aug-Sep 41 [Kesselschlacht Kiev]: *Luftwaffe* provides major support to forces of AGS and AGC converging on Lokhvitsa (to consummate encirclement). They provide tactical air-ground support to advancing Panzers and interdict the area of ops to block all Russian approaches to the pocket. For four [4] weeks, the *Luftflotten* systematically attack all Soviet rail communications converging on the area of ops from the east and NE. The northern part of the pocket is covered by **Luftflotte 2's II. Fliegerkorps**, while **V. Fliegerkorps** from **Luftflotte 4** attacks in the south. Staffing and bombing attacks are mounted against stations, bridges, defiles and locomotives and trains. Soviet reinforcements for Marshal Budenny's armies are blocked and lines of retreat are disrupted. Fearful punishment is meted out to Russian vehicle traffic jams unable to manoeuvre within the pocket. Bad weather hampers close formation attacks, which are substituted by isolated and group sorties. These keep railway lines in the battle area permanently cut. Repeated **Bf110** strafing runs cut **20 to 30** trains marooned along one section of railway track to ribbons. Large formation-size Russian units do not appear on the roads until forced to concentrate in order to break out. As soon as they commit themselves, they are – in the words of a *Luftflotte* cdr – “relentlessly attacked w/ devastating results.” Gabriel Temkin, serving in a Russian labor btn, remembered:

The *Luftwaffe*'s favorite places for dropping bombs, especially incendiary ones, were forested areas close to main roads. Not seeing, but expecting, and rightly so, that the woods were providing resting places for army units and their horses, German planes were bombing them, particularly at nightfall.

Pure *birch forests*, which, Temkin confessed, “I never before or after saw,” were consumed in flames. “The burning *grayish-white trees* were turning reddish, as if blushing and ashamed of what was going on.” As he observed the inferno he became aware of a peculiarly pungent smell. “For the first time,” Temkin said, “I smelled burnt flesh.” He was unable to distinguish whether it was men or horses.

Stuka dive bombers were employed to shatter resistance in the pocket. Between **12-21 Sep 41**, **V. Fliegerkorps** flew **1422** sorties, dropping **567,650** kg of bombs and **96** incendiary **Type 36** devices. Results were impressive: **23** tanks, **2171** vehicles, **6** Flak batteries, **52** railway trains and **28** locomotives were destroyed. Railway lines were cut in **18** places and a bridge destroyed. *Luftwaffe* losses were slight. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 159; also, *Kesselring, Soldat, DRZW*, 752-53)

Sep 41: Mit GFM v. Bock war ich darueber einig, dass die Stellungen der 4. u. 9. Armee fuer den *Winterfeldzug* wenig geeignet waren...Der Gedanke, noch einmal an dieser Front das Glueck zu versuchen, lag deshalb nah. Schon eine erfolgreiche *Kesselschlacht* konnte die russ. Kraefte dezimieren u. die *Kampffuehrung waehrend des Winters* bestimmend beeinflussen. Ob man nach einem derartigen Sieg die Operation Richtung Moskau weiterfuehren konnte, musste von Staerke u. Zustand der eigenen Kraefte, sowie vor allem von der *Wetterlage* abhaengen. *Das Wetter war die gross Unbekannte*, die schon den Anfangserfolg stark beschneiden konnte. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 128)

Sep 41: Prior to start of Operation “*Taifun*,” *far-reaching changes in the disposition of the Luftwaffe took place*, the effect of which was to place under *Kesselring (Luftflotte 2)* the strongest single concentration of airpower since early stages of the campaign. This concentration involved the re-subordination of *Fliegerkorps VIII* to his air fleet, along w/ the entire long-range bomber and fighter forces of *Fliegerkorps I* and fighter units from *Luftflotte 4*. As a result, the total force at disposal of *Luftflotte 2* amounted to ca. 50 % of the total GAF strength on the eastern front and included: Long-range bombers (**600**); long-range reconnaissance (**100**); *Stuka* dive bombers (**120**); S.E. fighters (**400**); T.E. fighters (**100**). Total = **1 320** acft. The close-support forces of *Luftflotte 2* were assembled in two main sectors: a) one extending from *Smolensk* southeast to *Roslavl*; and, b) the other further south in the *Konotop* area. These sectors were supported by some 400 and 200 L.R. bombers, respectively. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 168-71)

Sep 41: *Luftwaffe Luftflotte 2* HQ, located in woods near *Smolensk*, was considerably reinforced for the coming offensive. **VIII Fliegerkorps** is moved from the Leningrad front at end of **Sep 41** and attached to the left wing of the gathering panzer spearheads to support **3** and **4 PzGr**. The latter are also reinforced by **2 Flak Corps** configured in a ground role. The **1 Flak Corps** is placed on the right wing to support **4 Army** and **2 Pz Army**. In addition to relocation of **VIII Fliegerkorps**, **1 StG**, **77 StG** and **26 JG**, formerly committed to the Kiev area, arrived at airfields in AGC’s area of ops. Once again, *Luftflotte 2* is positioned to support the army w/ *massive sortie rates*. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 169)

Sep 41: In connection w/ preparations for the attack on Moscow, **Air Fleet 2**, whose staff was located in a forest camp near Smolensk, was significantly reinforced. At end of September, **VIII Air Corps** was transferred from the front at Leningrad to left wing of the army group in the area of Smolensk, where it was assigned the tasks of supporting **9 Army**, more particularly the spearheads of **3** and **4 PzGr**. The corps had not been rehabilitated after the fighting in the north and was thus considerably weaker than had been envisaged for the attack. Individual army units considered this to be so serious that they advised against the attack. [See, *Richthofen, Tagebuch*, 26.9.41, 1.-2.10.41] **4 PzGr** was also reinforced by **II Flak Corps**, which for this purpose had been transferred from **Air Fleet 4** to **Air Fleet 2** and moved to Roslavl. **II Air Corps**, at Shatalovka-East, was also reinforced by formations from **Air Fleet 4** and, together w/ **I Flak Corps**, which was used as “reinforcement and assault artillery,” deployed on the right wing of AGC for co-operation w/ **2 Army** and, especially, **4 Army** and **2 PzGr**. Its close-support forces were combined under a single close-support leader. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 790-93; see also the Luftwaffe Order of Battle for Taifun, 791-92)

Sep 41: An *strategischen* Angriffen wurden im September ausser den laufenden Angriffen auf Moskau zwei Angriffe gegen ein *Flugzeugwerk* in *Woronesh* u. je ein Angriff gegen eine *Pulverfabrik* in *Briansk*, ein *Sprengstoffwerk* in *Tula*, eine *Munitionsfabrik* u. zwei *Munitionslager*

gefuehrt. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,“ Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC, Microfilm „E.“)

5.9.41: Denn auch an der *Luftwaffe* hat der Ostfeldzug bereits so gezehrt, dass *wir augenblicklich* im Osten nirgends mehr die *Luftueberlegenheit haben*, diese dagegen zum Teil auch an entscheidenden Stellen durchaus in den Haenden der Russen liegt. (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 127)³⁸⁴

15.9.41: [*Luftwaffe* mission in „*Taifun*“] Seit [diesem Tage] wurden die Vorbereitungen fuer den neuen Angriff getroffen; ich selbst besprach die Einzelheiten der kombinierten Kampffuehrung mit den Oberbefehlshabern der **2., 4., 9., Armee** u. der **2., 4., u. 3. Panzerarmee**. Mein alter Metzger Freund, **Generaloberst Hoepner** [4. Pz.Gr.] hatte – anscheinend durch die wenig erfolgreichen Kaempfe der Hr.Gr.Nord beeindruckt – **wenig Zutrauen**. Zweimal habe ich ihm die ganz anders liegenden Verhaeltnisse vor der Hr.Gr.Mitte auseinandergesetzt, ihm seine geradezu einmaligen Chancen fuer ein Durchbruchs – u. Umfassungsoperation klargemacht u. **ihm verstaerkte Fliegerunterstuetzung zugesagt**. Er gewann Vertrauen – u. als ich ihn waehrend der Schlacht aufsuchte, war er des Glueckes u. Stolzes voll. Was meine eigenen Verbaende betrifft, so war der taktische Rahmen eindeutig gegeben. Die **Flakkorps**³⁸⁵ hatten schwerpunktmaessig *Erdaufgaben*, waren *Verstaerkungs- u. Stossartillerie* – mit dem *Schwerpunkt auf dem rechten Flugel*. Die *Nahkampfflieger* kaempften...den Weg fuer die Heeresverbaende, vor allem von den *Panzertruppen*, frei u. hatten die *Feindverschiebungen* auf dem Kampffeld bis zur Vernichtung anzugreifen. Die *schweren Kampfkraefte* schlossen das Kampffeld nach rueckwaerts ab. Das **VIII. Fliegerkorps** hatte noch den *Sonderauftrag*, die linke Flanke der Pz.Gr. 3 (Hoth) zu ueberwachen u. etwaige Feindangriffe im Raum **Bieloy** unter Zurueckstellung aller anderen Aufgaben zu zerschlagen. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 129)

(ca.) 22.9.41-1.10.41: German forces by autumn of 1941 had advanced so far into Russia and the Ukraine that both army and air force strength was **seriously dispersed**.³⁸⁶ When one considers the harsh climatic conditions and *primitive airfield facilities*, the picture for the GAF becomes even bleaker. *Richthofen* and his chief of staff, *Oberst Rudolf Meister*, spent *late September* conferring w/ Bock's HQ about coordination of air support for the operation. ***Richthofen grimly noted that his force was 50 percent weaker than preliminary planning for Taifun had foreseen.*** In fact, on *1 October*, the *Luftwaffe's finest army support cdr* refused „for the first time in [his] life“ to accept responsibility for the outcome of an operation in which he participated. He cited as reasons the overall weakness of his forces and the *unwillingness of the army command to appreciate their condition*. (*Muller, German Air War*, 57-8)

30.9.-1.10.41: *Second Panzer Group* launches its attack toward **Orel** w/ strong **II Air Corps** (Second Air Fleet) support. For this operation, the air corps had regrouped and now had its CP at *Shatalovo*. The **3d & 53d Bomber Wings** were based at the airfields *Shatalovo East* and *Shatalovo West*. To protect these fields, which were repeatedly attacked by Soviet bombers and ground-attack acft, a fighter unit was located at an advanced airfield east of these fields. The

³⁸⁴ Here, *Stieff* also notes: „*unbedingt* aber muessen wir noch Arbeitskraefte fuer die Lufttruestungsindustrie freimachen...Also wird *alles* im Reich diesem Ziel untergeordnet werden...Sonst *muessen* wir unterliegen.“ (127)

³⁸⁵ *Kesselring*: Das **I. Flakkorps** hatte vom Feldzugsbeginn bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt **314** russ. Flugzeuge u. ueber **3000** Panzer abgeschossen. (129)

³⁸⁶ British *Air Ministry* study of *Luftwaffe*, addressing air ops in Sep 41, noted how they demonstrated that the “resources of the [GAF] on the Russian front still remained *insufficient* to allow strong forces to be maintained at all points; a difficulty increasingly contended w/ by *concentrating the main air effort in support of local operations at the expense of other sectors*, thus establishing air superiority where considered most necessary.” (*Rise and Fall*, 168)

28th Bomber Wing was based at *Bobruysk*, while the **2d Squadron** of the **122d Long-Range Reconnaissance Group** operated from the airfield *Smolensk South*. The **II Close Air Support Cdr** was assigned two groups of the **1st Dive Bomber Wing**, three groups of the **77th Dive Bomber Wing**, and two groups of the **210th Ground-Attack Wing**, respectively. The fighter forces of **II Air Corps** consisted of four groups of the **51st Fighter Wing** and three groups of the **3rd Fighter Wing**.

On **1.10.41** the *Luftwaffe* reported that German armored units had advanced from the *Glukhov – Yampol* line and that the bulk of the bombers, supporting the ground forces, had successfully attacked Russian troop concentrations and columns of tanks and trucks in the *Glukhov – Bryansk – Kursk* area. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 227-28*)

Fall 1941: By this time, *less than 30 % of the Luftwaffe's forward air units were operational*. Airfields were desperately short of fuel, and each of the air fleets had *hundreds of acft awaiting repairs*. (*J.S. Corum, in: Why Air Forces Fail, 210*)

Early Oct 41: *Fliegerkorps II* destroyed artillery positions on the right flank of the *Second Army*, carried out sustained counter-air ops against Soviet airbases in the *Moscow* area, and gave direct support to the **2. SS „Das Reich“** around *Vyazma*. (*Muller, German Air War, 59*)

Early Oct 41: Some of *Fliegerkorps II's Heinkel units*, and even on occasion scarce dive bomber formations, feverishly dropped *millions of propaganda leaflets (244 000 on 5.10.41 alone)* along the *Smolensk-Moscow highway*. Other bomber *Geschwadern* continued to attack the Soviet armaments industry at such diverse locations as *Voronezh, Aleksin, Kashira, Balabanova, and Tula*. More in keeping w/ the operational goals of *Taifun, Fliegerkorps II*, as the encirclement battle [at *Bryansk?*] drew to a close, embarked upon ambitious *interdiction ops* designed to cut off the escape route of Soviet forces. (*Muller, German Air War, 58-9*)

Early Oct 41 [Support of Operation “*Taifun*”]: Very strong action by Second Air Fleet – with the II Air Corps reinforced by units of the Fourth Air Fleet and the VIII Air Corps transferred swiftly from the *Leningrad* area to just north of *Smolensk* – contributed “*decisively*” to all the penetrations and breakthroughs by the ground forces. The II Air Corps supported the advance of the Second and Fourth Armies, and particularly the Second Panzer Group on the right wing of the army group, while VIII Air Corps deployed its units before the Ninth Army, esp. ahead of the Third and Fourth Panzer Groups on left wing. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 230*)

Oct 41: Ausser den weiterlaufenden Angriffen auf *Moskau* wurden im Oktober nur ein *strategischer* Angriff gegen ein *Flugzeugwerk* in *Woronesh* durch ein Flugzeug der **Fernaufklaerungsgruppe 122** geflogen, das durch **2** Treffer schwersten Kalibers in der grossen Montagehalle einen Ausfall dieses Werkes, dessen Tagesproduktion **16** Flugzeuge betrug, fuer lange Zeit verursachte. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,” *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC, Microfilm „E.“*)

Oct/Dec 41: Im Norden ist der Angriff auf *Murmansk* nicht vorwaerts gekommen. Die *Murmanbahn* u. *Murmansk* werden angegriffen, aber es kommt zu keiner grosseren Wirkung, da die *Kraefte zu schwach sind* . . . In der Mitte wird das Heer durch Luftangriffe gegen die feindl. Erdtruppen u. die rueckwaertigen Verbindungen weiter unterstuetzt . . . Der russische *Neuaufmarsch* wird nicht wesentlich gestoert. Die *Kraefte der Luftwaffe* werden auf die vielen Ziele zu sehr *zersplittert*. („*Ueberblick ueber den dt. Luftkrieg gegen Russland*,” **KDC, 13**)

1.10.41 [K.Gr. 100]: He 111 bomber pilot Hansgeorg Baetcher takes part in bombing mission over Moscow: Feindflug: Nr. 69. Uhrzeit [i.e., Start- u. Landezeit]: 20.52 – 01.56. Abwehr: starke Flak. Ziel: Moskau; Bomben ueber Ziel abgeworfen; Wirkung wegen tiefer Wolken nicht erkannt. (*Flugbuch Eintragungen H. Baetcher*; quoted in: *Ltr, H. Gaenshirt, K.Gr. 100, to C. Luther, 11 Jan 03*)

2.10.41: At 5:30 a.m., units of **9th Army** and **Panzergruppe 3** jumped off on the northern flank between *Smolensk* and *Byelov*, w/ *Fliegerkorps VIII* in full support. Acft from all units of the air corps averaged four sorties on the first day, with **Stukageschwader 2's** *JU-87s* flying no fewer than six. The attacks involved the usual mixture of „direct“ and „indirect“ objectives: „enemy tanks, horses, retreating columns, enemy airfields.“ (*Muller, German Air War, 58*)

3.10.41: Elements of *Guderian's* panzer group – continuously supported by **II Air Corps** – reach **Orel**. Enemy air activity was “very lively,” w/ Soviet bombers and ground-attack acft, flying mostly in small formations of 3-6 planes, continuously attacking the German assault columns and airfields. **II Air Corps** laid particular importance on quickly advancing the close support and fighter units as closely as possible behind the attacking ground forces. Thus, immediately after fall of *Orel*, fighter units were brought forward to the airfield at that point. In days that followed, this field [at *Orel*] also became a *base for the air transport of supplies*, since poor road conditions severely limited the forwarding of supplies and made all ops on the ground most difficult. For ex., **132,100** gallons (**500** cubic meters) of fuel and other materiel had to be flown in for *Second Panzer Group* [not clear over what time period]. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 229-30*)

4.10.41: *Luftwaffe* High Command (in its report for **4 Oct.**) states that **48** dive bombers and **32** bombers, supporting ground forces, made successful daylight attacks on rail lines and troop movements in the *Sumy – Lgov – Kursk* area. Then, **202** dive bombers and **188** bombers, some of them in actions integrated w/ ops of Panzer units, struck Soviet positions, supply movements, troop concentrations, and rail targets in the *Bryansk – Spas – Demensk – Sukhinichi* area. Further, some **152** dive bombers and **259** bombers were sent over the *Belyy – Sychevka – Vyazma* area in support of the army. These attacks destroyed some **22** tanks (including **4** of 52 tons), **450** motor vehicles, **11** horse-drawn limbers, **7** tractors, and **3** fuel depots. In addition, these attacks hit a motor park, destroyed **6** guns and put **7** more out of action, and wrecked a bunker and **3** AA artillery emplacements. Fires and demolitions were inflicted everywhere. Suffering various degrees of damage were **10** railroad depots, while rail lines were frequently interdicted and **37** trains damaged or destroyed. It was even believed that greater losses than those shown above had been inflicted upon the enemy, although these additional losses could not be verified. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 230-31*)

4.10.41: Ein sehr grosser Erfolg wurde am **4.[10.]** gegen Transportbewegungen erzielt, wo **10** mit Panzern beladenen Zuege durch das **II. Fliegerkorps** vernichtet wurden. An einem anderen Tage wurden auf eine Bahnstrecke **55** Zuege durch Volltreffer zerstoert u. **22** beschaedigt, dass sie nicht mehr weiterfahren konnten. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,” *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC, Microfilm „E.”*)

4-10.10.41: Despite imposing list of potential targets, *Richthofen* seems to have made a particular effort to *keep his forces concentrated over the Schwerpunkt of the attacking Panzer forces*. **Bruno Loerzer's** *Fliegerkorps II*, supporting the attack of the **Second Army** and *Guderian's* **Panzergruppe 2** on the right flank of Army Group Center, carried out a *somewhat wider variety of missions*. In the main, these were intended to seal off the „cauldron“ area of the *Bryansk pocket* and prevent escape of shattered Soviet formations. Between *4-10 October*,

Fliegerkorps II performed an *intensive vertical envelopment*, achieving great success despite the depleted forces at its disposal. The reports of the **31 Flivos** *ccordinating the air support* reveal the scope of the air corps' operations. One account ran:

The units of *Fliegerkorps II* were today in the main responsible for halting the enemy's withdrawal, as well as for providing direct support and protection to our advancing units...Numerous attacks were directed at rearward railway lines and roads, trains, villages, airfields...The visibly destructive effect on the enemy was entirely the result of our units' activities. The enemy has again sustained grievous material and personnel losses. (*Muller, German Air War*, 58-9)

4.10.-6.12.41: Auf die *strategischen Angriffe* hatte die *Luftwaffe* aber auch in dieser Periode nicht verzichtet. Vom 4.10.41 bis 6.12.41 wurde das *Zentrum Moskau* weitere **35** mal, *Leningrad* erneut **30** mal angegriffen. Diese Angriffe werden fast die ganze Periode ueber – der Moskau-Angriff ist im vollen Gange – gefuehrt. Daneben werden noch *Industrie-Angriffe* gegen **Charkow (6. u. 9.10)**, **Rostow**, **Gorki (5.6.? u. 12.11)** u. **Rybinsk (2.12.)** geflogen. („*Ueberblick ueber den dt. Luftkrieg gegen Russland*“, **KDC**, 15)

ab 5.10.41: Das *Handikap*, das auch diese Schlacht [*Wjasma-Briansk*] bei **650 000** Gefangene nur zu einem „*ordinaeren*“ Sieg werden liess, lag am *auesserten rechten Fluegel*. Die Hoffnung auf eine *gross angelegte Umfassung* ueber **Tula** auf Moskau war *durch das bereits in den ersten Oktobertagen im Suedraum vor der 2. Pz.Armee auftretende Schlechtwetter* zunichte gemacht. Unguenstiges Flugwetter *erschwerte die fliegerische Unterstuetzung*; Schnee u. Regen zusammen mit einer uebermaessig starken Benutzung der Strassen durch schwerste *Raupenfahrzeuge* u. ihre Zerpflegung durch Bombentrichter verlangsamten die Bewegungen, um sie **ab 5.10.41** allmaehlich nahezu zum Erliegen zu bringen. Selbst die *Panzer* hatten darunter zu leiden. Der Versuch, mit *Zugmaschinen der Flak* einzelne Fahrzeuge zu bewegen, endete mit dem *Auseinanderreiessen von Wagen oder Ketten*. Als die *Verpflegungsnachschub* versagte, musste die *Luftflotte* fuer Teile der 2. Pz.Armee sogar Verpflegung abwerfen. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 129-30)

7.10.41: Some **800** bombers, comprising most of the bomber strength, supported ground forces and successfully attacked infantry and tank assembly areas, columns of trucks, and communities occupied by Soviet forces. These attacks took place in the areas of *Sukhinichi – Kaluga – Chern* and *Kholm – Vyazma – Spas – Demensk*. In addition to silencing **4** artillery positions, the bombs destroyed several bunkers, **8** MG nests, **40** horse-drawn limbers, **34** artillery pieces, **650** vehicles of various kinds, and **20** tanks. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941*, 230-31)

9.10.41: *Luftwaffe* intelligence assesses Soviet air force losses to date at **12,700** acft of all kinds, leaving **2600** front-line and training acft in service. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 805)

10.10.41: *Fliegerkorps II* claims destruction of **264** Soviet acft (up to this date) in the air and on the ground, as well as **78 locomotives**, innumerable motor vehicles, and other vital targets. (*Muller, German Air War*, 59-60)

10-17.10.41: By 10 October, one pocket of Soviet forces had been formed south and one pocket northeast of *Bryansk* and one west of *Vyazma*. Although by **13.10.41** the northern pocket was almost *completely annihilated by extremely heavy Luftwaffe attacks*, elements of the forces of the two southern pockets (south of *Bryansk* and the pocket west of *Vyazma*) succeeded in breaking out to the east and making continuous assaults upon the weak positions in the ring. The escaping

forces were *constantly pursued and attacked by units of II Air Corps*. These breakout and breakthrough efforts cost the enemy very high casualties and materiel losses, because at the normally very narrow gaps in the circle – frequently bridge crossings over rapid streams, swollen from rain and snow – 1000s of men and vehicles were pressed tightly together. Some combat units reported that a bombing miss on such a *compact mass of troops and equipment* would be simply impossible! The two southern pockets surrendered on **17** and **20 Oct**. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 231*)

ab Mid-Oct 41: There were good rail and road links to [Soviet positions along the Mozhaisk defense line]; they enabled the rapid deployment of troops to the focal points and the rapid transport of replacements, esp. since after mid-October they were hardly attacked at all by the Luftwaffe. . . **Luftflotte 2** was mainly employed against the enemy directly facing German positions to support the assault by the German troops. The Moscow railway distribution network, the destruction of which would have been significant for the interruption of the Russian supply system, did not suffer much damage. This was because the Luftwaffe only made **17** night-time harassing attacks and **6** daytime attacks on the Russian capital [over what period?], the heaviest of which took place on **28 Oct 41** using **59** acft. They did no great damage. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 100-01; 122, f.n. 169*)

17.10.41 [K.Gr. 100]: He 111 bomber pilot Hansgeorg Baetcher takes part in bombing mission over Moscow: Feindflug: Nr. **78**. Uhrzeit: **07.49 – 10.40**. Abwehr: schwere Flak. Ziel: Stoerangriff auf Moskau. **1** SC 500, **2** SC 250, u. **8** SD 50; im Ziel. (*Flugbuch Eintragungen H. Baetcher; quoted in: Ltr, H. Gaenshirt, K.Gr. 100, to C. Luther, 11 Jan 03*)

17.10.-10.11.41: On **3 Nov 41**, the *Lagebericht Ost* spoke of “aerial reconnaissance that had produced nothing for days. The **KTB KdrLw HGr Mitte** reported “bad weather (rain and low cloud),” sometimes snow, from **17 Oct – 5 Nov 41**. The usual formula was: “No night-time reconnaissance and no daytime reconnaissance owing to bad weather.” Not until **31 Oct 41** did they again report “very limited daytime reconnaissance yielding no information on the enemy.” No transport of troops was reported before **10 Nov 41**. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 125-26, f.n. 198*)

20.-21.10.41: As an example of the impact of the weather on flying, the *Luftwaffe* reported that weather conditions during the night of **20.-21.10.41** had been unfavorable for ops *along the entire front*, w/ the exception of the southeastern part of the Ukraine. During daylight hours on **21.10.41**, bombing and reconnaissance ops on the front were curtailed because of “low, multi-strata clouds, continuing rainfall, and frequent bad visibility.” But the desire of the *Luftwaffe* command to fight and the high combat morale of the Second Air Fleet were clearly demonstrated that day, when the air fleet, despite the bad weather, committed **168** bombers, **49** fighters, and **2** reconnaissance planes in support of ground ops. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 233*)

21.10.41 [K.Gr. 100]: He 111 bomber pilot Hansgeorg Baetcher takes part in bombing mission over Moscow: Feindflug: Nr. **80**. Uhrzeit: **12.49 – 15.46**. Abwehr: keine Abwehr. Ziel: Moskau; **1** SC 500, **2** SC 250, **8** SBe 50; Abwurf nach Koppelnavigation [i.e., nach Kompasskurs], Wirkung nicht erkannt. (*Flugbuch Eintragungen H. Baetcher; quoted in: Ltr, H. Gaenshirt, K.Gr. 100, to C. Luther, 11 Jan 03*)

22.10.41: On this day, the *Luftwaffe* commits **481** bombers, **123** fighters, and **20** reconnaissance acft, mostly in support of the army, against troop concentrations, tank assembly areas, and communities occupied w/ Soviet troops, while a smaller number of planes bombed rail lines and some airfields. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 233*)

22.10.41: High Command of the *Luftwaffe* reported on this day that in the fighting around *Vyazma*, the **II AA Artillery [Flak] Corps** – which had been transferred from the area of the Fourth Air Fleet to Army Group Ctr and assigned to Second Air Fleet for ops against Moscow – had, between **2.-13.10.41**, shot down **29** Soviet planes; destroyed **17** bunkers, **18** fortified field positions, **14** armored cars, **5** defensive posts, **104** artillery pieces, and **94** MGs; captured or destroyed **579** vehicles of various types and a *freight train*; routed **7** columns and a cavalry squadron; and repulsed **23** infantry attacks. The AAA corps also thwarted all enemy attempts to break through the sides of the pocket, mopped up a village housing enemy units, and took **3,842** prisoners. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 232*)

23.10.41: On this day, sorties carried out by **458** bombers, **140** fighters and **17** reconnaissance acft, mostly against armored and infantry concentrations, particularly around *Kalinin* and the area bounded by *Mtsensk – Tula* – and the terrain north of *Rshew*. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 234*)³⁸⁷

23.10.41: Bei der Unterstuetzung dieser Kaempfe ist der Einsatz der **Lfl.2** beim Eintreten [Antreten?] der Pz.Gr.2 am **23.[10.]** in Richtung *Tula* erwaehnwenswert. Trotz schlechten Wetters griffen an diesem Tage **304** Kampf- u. *Stuka*flugzeuge bei *Wolkenhoehen* von nur **50 m** in die Erdkaempfe ein. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,“ *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

24.10.41: German acft hit field positions, artillery emplacements, columns, and communities billeting Russian forces, esp. in the sector around *Mtsensk – Tula*. These attacks conducted by **441** bombers, **208** fighters and **13** recon planes. Railroad lines were interdicted by smaller forces. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 234*)

25.-27.10.41: **455** bombers, **173** fighters and **23** recon planes support ground forces by attacks in the areas around *Mtsensk, Mozhaysk, Kalinin* and *Volokolamsk* on **25 Oct**. Two days later, however, *weather conditions* permit only **one acft** to be committed east of the battle area. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 234*)³⁸⁸

28.10.41 [K.Gr. 100]: **He 111** bomber pilot Hansgeorg Baetcher takes part in bombing mission over Moscow: Feindflug: Nr. **86**. Uhrzeit: **09.40 – 12.16**. Abwehr: schwere Flak. Ziel: Moskau; **1** SC 500, **2** SC 250, **4** Sbe 50, **4** SD 50; nach Koppelnavigation [i.e., nach Kompasskurs]. (*Flugbuch Eintragungen H. Baetcher*; quoted in: *Ltr, H. Gaenshirt, K.Gr. 100, to C. Luther, 11 Jan 03*)³⁸⁹

Late Oct 41: Toward the end of October, as a result of the completely bogged-down condition of advanced airfields, ops of Second Air Fleet units were heavily restricted and, at times, impossible. The heavy snowfall mixed w/ rain, which began about mid-October, considerably curtailed

³⁸⁷ **Note:** What does this *mean*? Does each sortie = one acft? Or might some of these acft have conducted *multiple* sorties?

³⁸⁸ **Note:** Besides its principal mission of supporting ground forces, the *Luftwaffe* continually and successfully attacked *airfields and railroads*. In one of these ops, bombers of II Air Corps destroyed **10** trains loaded w/ armored vehicles. On another day, direct hits on a rail line destroyed **55** trains and damaged **22** so badly that they could no longer proceed. (235)

³⁸⁹ **SC 500 = 500 kg Sprengbombe / SC 250 = 250 kg Sprengbombe / SD 50 = 50 kg / SBe 50 = Schuettbehaelter 50 kg, mit ca. 30 Brandbomben.**

Second Air Fleet activities and brought every movement of the ground forces to a halt by end of the month...Rations had to be *air-dropped* to some units of *Second Panzer Army*. (H. Plocher, *GAF vs. Russia, 1941*, 233)

Late Oct 41: In last half of month, *Luftwaffe* support of Moscow offensive *almost ceased*. Flying off of *primitive dirt strips* located at end of long supply lines, air units found it as difficult to provide the army w/ close air support as the army found it to advance. From a level of over **1000 sorties per day** before onset of the bad weather, the sortie rate fell to **559** on **8 Oct** and to **269** on the **9th**. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 87; also, Reinhardt, *Wende vor Moskau*, 73)

Late Oct 41: *Luftwaffe* played a *decreasingly important role* as the *Battle of Moscow* approached. Conversely, the Red Air Force, once thought destroyed, mounted increasingly effective attacks in support of Moscow's defenders. Fighting on eastern front had brought the *Luftwaffe* to desperate straits. Operational ready rates for combat acft sank towards dangerous levels; and in conditions of mud, bad weather, and increasing cold (not to mention difficulties w/ supply), maintenance personnel found it almost impossible to maintain acft. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 88)

Late Oct 41: More and more of *Luftflotte 2's* bomber force tied down resupplying the *bogged-down German spearheads* around **Kalinin**. **Waldau**, *Jeschonnek's* chief of operations, noted on **16.10.41**, „The boldest hopes fade under rain and snow.“ The *Luftwaffe*, under conditions of near-total stagnation, could accomplish little. (Muller, *German Air War*, 60)

ca. Oct-Nov 41: In an endeavor to provide air support for a move to encircle Moscow from the north, a determined attempt was made to establish strong close-support forces at **Kalinin** at the apex of a salient formed by a drive northeast of *Viasma*. Although exposed to heavy attack by Russian ground and air forces and having to *rely largely on air transport for supplies*, the GAF succeeded in maintaining a foothold in this area for some considerable time. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 171)

Oct-Nov 41: Winter in Northern Europe includes *low visibility conditions* associated w/ snowfall, sleet, rain, overcast and cloudy skies, and dense ground fogs. Such conditions detract from the strength of the attacker and strongly *favor the defender*. *Luftflotte 2*, maintained air superiority over the battlefield during Oct and Nov 41 (for AGC) but during both months was *unable on numerous occasions to generate ground attack sorties* because of low visibility conditions, often in combination w/ low temperatures, mud, snow, and ice on the advanced German *dirt runways*. U.S. National Archives, No. T-311, Roll 289, supports a view that visibility conditions alone severely inhibited the attacking Germans. Roll 289 presents the daily reports of the **Ia** of Army Group Ctr in the Group War Diary, i.e., *Hr.Gr.Mitte, Ia, Tagesmeldungen*. A representative sampling of days – **30 Oct., 2, 7, 25 Nov., 1 Dec 41** – shows a dreary repetition of the words rain, precipitation, overcast, fog, frost and snowfall, across the entire front of the Army Group. (Stolfi, *Chance in History*, 221)

Oct-Nov 41: Waehrend der *Schlammperiode* konnten aber trotzdem in gewissen Frontabschnitten oft tage- oder gar wochenlang nicht geflogen werden. („*Ueberblick ueber den dt. Luftkrieg gegen Russland*,” KDC, 18)

ca. Late Oct/Nov [anecdote!] During *Second Panzer Army's* drive to the NE against *Tula*, a serious crisis arose in area around **Teploye**, some **37** miles south of that city. In an attempt to outflank heavily fortified and bitterly defended *Tula*, the forward units (right wing) of the **53 AK** unexpectedly encountered a strong Soviet combat group consisting of two cavalry and five inf.

divisions and one armored bde. (**Note:** The *exposed eastern flank* of Guderian's army almost invited attack by Soviet forces.) While the German tanks could move only w/ difficulty, the Soviet **T-34s** attacked, unhampered by the mud and mire. When air recon determined that the enemy was approaching the only firm road in the line of advance of the Second Panzer Army, the *Orel – Tula* road, along which the army's units were standing in columns, the **II Air Corps** decided upon an *unusual action*. Although the weather was so bad that the acft ran the risk of colliding w/ trees on the many small hills in the region, a large number of *bombers* were employed in *very-low-level attacks* and actually succeeded in discovering the Soviet tanks which had already arrived close to the *Orel-Tula* road. Part of them were destroyed and the remainder forced to retreat. This action, however, was costly to the *Luftwaffe*, and some of the participating bombers even returned home w/ *fragments and splinters from their own bombs in their wings*. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, 235-36*)

ca. Oct-Dec 41: The *Luftwaffe* had meanwhile been drawn into an *increasingly narrow role* on all fronts in direct support of army ops, and it appeared that the [GAF] had lost sight, at least for the moment, of the *cardinal objective of airpower*: the establishment and maintenance of *air superiority*. (*Uebe, Russian Reactions, 17-18*)

ca. Nov 41: Um alle Moeglichkeiten auszuschöpfen, waren die fliegenden Verbände **ganz nahe hinter der Heeresfront** in der allgemeinen Linie **Orel – Juchnow – Rshew** auf *Feldflugplaetze* untergebracht. (*Kesselring, Soldat, 132*)³⁹⁰

Nov 41: Die von schweren Verlusten u. Ausfällen betroffene *Luftwaffe* konnte kaum noch Hilfe leisten, zumal sie teilweise zur Unterstützung der Kämpfe im Mittelmeerraum abgezogen werden musste. Sie hatte von **Jun** bis **Nov 41** insgesamt **4466 Maschinen verloren**.³⁹¹ (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg, 113*)

Nov 41 [*Kesselring*]: „Ungefähr 8 Tage vor der Stabschefbesprechung bei der Hr.G.B, also vor dem 16.11. [I believe he means the conference in *Orsha* on 13-14 Nov 41] begründete *Halder* die Fortsetzung der Offensive mit der Notwendigkeit, die russ. Front vor dem Eintreffen der russ. Divisionen zu zerschlagen. So um den **10.11[41]** muss die dt. Führung etwas von dem Antransport der sib. Divisionen gewusst haben. Sehr leicht möglich, dass unsere Fernaufklärung die Anfaenge der Bewegung festgestellt hat, da man ja schon seit langem wusste, dass der Fesselungsangriff der Japaner aufiel. *Objektiv betrachtet muessen wir zugestehen, dass wir von den Sibiriern vor der 2.Pz.Armee ueberrascht worden sind*. Das Wetter war nicht guenstig, eine laufende Fernaufklärung war erschwert, wenn nicht zeitweise unmoeglich. Moskau, der Verkehrszentralpunkt wurde wegen der ueberstarken Flak u. der beachtlichen Jaeger gemieden...“ („*Bemerkungen des GFM Kesselring zum Antransport der sibirischen Truppen*“, **KDC**, Microfilm „E.“)

Nov 41: *Hossbach* (**31. ID**) notes that, even during the months of the offensive, the *Luftwaffe* had only occasionally supported the infantry (mostly employed in support of the armored units). “Seit dem Abklingen der dt. Offensive im Nov 41 hatte die *Luftwaffe* noch seltener an Kampfhandlungen der **31. ID** teilgenommen. Sie war auch nicht mehr in der Lage, der russischen *Luftwaffe* Herr zu werden, die seit Beginn des Winters an Zahl u. Aktivitaet erheblich

³⁹⁰ **Note:** *Kesselring* points out that after the *Kesselschlachten* of Brjansk-Wjasma the air war became more challenging and frustrating—there were simply fewer Russian targets to hit. Red Army forces now conducted fewer large troop movements; many of the targets (individual bunkers, strong points, etc.) were well-camouflaged and isolated, making them hard to find, particularly in bad weather. (132)

³⁹¹ **Note:** These losses for Ostfront only, or overall?

zugenommen hatte. Die russischen Flieger, die Tag u. Nacht eingesetzt wurden, waren weniger abhaengig vom Wetter als die deutschen. Unser Jagdschutz war voellig unzureichend. Die Panzerdivisionen verfuegten wenigstens ueber eigene Flakartillerie, die Inf.-Div. hingegen ueber keine Spezialwaffe zur Luftabwehr.” (Hossbach, 206-7)

Nov 41: Im November schraenkte die *Schlechtwetterlage* den Einsatz der Verbaende der Luftflotte 2 weiterhin erheblich ein. Ausser der Unterstuetzung der in schweren Kaempfen sich an Moskau heranarbeitenden Heeresverbaende wurde an **3** aufeinanderfolgenden Tagen Angriffe gegen *Industriewerke* in **Gorki** mit Schwerpunkt gegen das *Automobilwerk „Maxim Gorki“* durchgefuehrt. Bei diesen Angriffen gelangten am **4.11.[41] 51** Kampfflugzeuge, am **25.[?]** u. am **6. 18** zum Einsatz. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941,*“ *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC, Microfilm „E.“*)³⁹²

Mid-Nov 41: Hitler’s overconfidence [?] showed itself not only in impossible demands [on his troops] but with the mid-Nov *withdrawal of much of Luftflotte 2* for service in the Mediterranean. This left support of drive on Moscow almost entirely on shoulders of Richthofen’s *Fliegerkorps VIII*. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 87)

Mid-Nov. 41: Other theaters begin to *impinge on ops in the east*. At this time, bulk of *Luftflotte 2*, including the powerful *Fliegerkorps II* (minus *Nahkampffuehrer II*, a rump CAS force which remained behind on Moscow front) was *transferred to the Mediterranean to support General Rommel’s Afrika Corps*. As one German historian pointed out, the *transfer of Kesselring’s Luftflotte came at precisely the wrong moment*. The air fleet left the Moscow front before a decision had been reached there, and completed deployment in the Mediterranean too late to prevent Rommel’s retreat following Operation *Crusader*, British General *Sir Claude Auchinleck’s* counteroffensive in early Dec 41. In any case, the air support for the *last gasp* of the German 1941 offensive devolved almost entirely onto *Fliegerkorps VIII*, for all intents and purposes a temporary (and *extremely understrength*) air fleet. (Muller, *German Air War*, 60-1)³⁹³

Nov-Dec 41: Aiding the *Luftwaffe’s* support of the army’s advance was its *flexible supply and maintenance system*. Units moved forward rapidly behind advancing spearheads; and as the campaign’s emphasis shifted from one front to another, bomber and fighter units moved swiftly to new bases and areas of ops. Such *flexibility* allowed the *Luftwaffe* to give maximum support to the armored drives...Conversely, the continual movement of units across the Russian landscape was *not w/o cost*. These shifts *strained the maintenance and supply system to the breaking point* so that by **late fall 1941**, *operational acft readiness rates were way down*. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 84)³⁹⁴

Nov-Dec 41: By Nov 41, *airfield conditions* had become exceedingly difficult, alternating between mud in which the acft became bogged, and hard frozen surfaces which caused *damage to undercarriages and tail-wheels*. In contrast, Russian air forces, concentrated in the defense of Moscow and based on its home airfields which remained in good condition, were able to operate

³⁹² From this report, unclear whether authors mean 4.-6. or 24.-26. Nov 41. However, it is probably the 4-6th.

³⁹³ **Note:** Transfer of bulk of *Luftflotte 2* meant that *Fliegerkorps VIII* alone would have to cover the front of Hr.Gr.Mitte, which extend some **400 miles**. In view of fact that this sector previously under charge of an entire *Luftflotte*, *Fliegerkorps VIII* was given the temporary status of a *Luftflotte*, in the sense that it operated under direct orders of the Air Ministry. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 173)

³⁹⁴ **Note:** For movement of *Luftwaffe* units on eastern front see, Air Ministry, *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe*, 167-70.

w/ success against the GAF. The adverse weather conditions which continued into December appear to have had less effect generally on the Russian air forces than on the GAF, which by now was *handicapped by lack of fighter support and completely failed to give adequate air support to the army over the greater part of the Moscow front*. Thus, with approach of winter, *initiative and air superiority passed to Russians*. (*Air Ministry, Rise and Fall*, 171)

13.11.41: *General der Flieger Bruno Loerzer*, commanding **II Air Corps**, issues an *order of the day* which proudly enumerated the outstanding performance of his corps since **22.6.41**. Between **22.6.** – **12.11.41**, flying units of the air corps conducted over **40,000** day and night sorties, destroyed **3,826** Soviet planes (**2,169** in aerial combat and remainder on the ground), **789** tanks, **614** artillery pieces, **14,339** vehicles of every type, etc. Besides these targets, *rail lines* were attacked **3,579** times, resulting in severing of tracks **1,736** times, in the destruction of **159** trains and **304** locomotives, and damage to another **1,584** trains and **103** locomotives. More than **23,150** tons of bombs had been used in fighting since 22 Jun 41. (See, *H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941*, 237-38; see also, **KDC**, Microfilm “E”; also, *GSSW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 795, f.n. 885)

22.11.41: German fighter ace, *Werner Moelders*, killed in plane crash. CBS Berlin correspondent *Harry Flannery* states that, shortly after the Russian campaign began, the High Command and the papers ceased talking about Moelders and gave the score [of planes destroyed] of other men. The Germans said *Moelders was being punished* by not being assigned to fronts where he could maintain his record. Later there were whispers that the situation was due to fact that *Moelders*, who was a *Catholic* and had been *prominent in the Catholic Youth Organization* before it was banned, *had protested against the closing of a convent at Breslau, where his sister had been a nun*. In November, after I left Germany, I heard reports from within the Reich that Moelders had conferred w/ his Bishop and was advised to appeal directly to Hitler. Germans said that he wired the Fuehrer: “I cannot continue to fight for the Fatherland if the Gestapo continues to attack and weaken the home front.” That same month he was killed when a transport plane on which he was a passenger mysteriously crashed. [Note: Anything to this story?] (*Assignment to Berlin, H. Flannery*, 408)

27.11.41: Ltn Richter (**AR 74 / 2. PD**) notes absence of *Luftwaffe* on his sector of front (opposite Moscow) in late Nov 41. Soviets dominate airspace. See, *Tagebuch Richter* (27.11.41...)

30.11.41: Die Erfolge der *Luftflotte 2* vom **22.6.-30.11.41** sprechen fuer sich: **6670** Flugzeuge, **1900** Panzer, **1950** Geschuetze, **26 000** Fahrzeuge u. **2800** Zuege. Der ununterbrochene Einsatz der Fliegerkraefte waehrend des ganzen bisherigen Krieges vom **1.9.39** – **ca. 15.11.41** hatte aber die Luftstreitkraefte *materiell u. personell in hoechstem Masse mitgenommen*. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 131-32)

Late Nov/Early Dec 41: H. Haape and ObLt Kageneck (**6. ID**) visit *Luftwaffe* unit in *Staritsa*. Haape notes that the *world of the Luftwaffe might have been on another planet*. Was a *world of luxury* compared to infantry. *Luftwaffe* officers slept in real beds; possessed French cognac and liquers; had full kit of winter clothing, etc. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 199-200)

Late Nov/Early Dec 41: *Richthofen's* air corps continued its operations, although they were increasingly hampered by bad weather. On **3.12.41**, for ex., *Fliegerkorps VIII* could put only **16** acft into the air; five days later (**8.12.41**), only **3** acft. On this latter date, Hitler *ordered cessation of offensive ops on the eastern front*. By now, the Soviet counteroffensive had begun. So critical was the situation, that *Richthofen* ordered even his *ground specialists and flying personnel* to take part in the containment of local enemy breakthroughs. For a brief period, *Richthofen* himself

commanded **VI AK** after its cdr was sacked. (Muller, *German Air War*, 61; Halder *War Diary*, Burdick, 595)

Dec 41 [Attitudes of Luftwaffe leadership]: We know from the diary of General v. Richthofen, who spent some time at this point w/ Goering, Jeschonnek, and Hitler, that the Luftwaffe leaders at first obviously did **not** regard the defeat at Moscow as the beginning of the turning-point of the war in the east, any more than did Hitler or the army leaders. Goering, who was hardly interested in that war and, ever since the beginning of the campaign in the east, had largely withdrawn into his private world, was inclined to underestimate the Soviet Union and, unlike the head of the Luftwaffe operations department, Maj-Gen Hoffmann v. Waldau, to take a rosy view of the situation. This tendency to ignore unpleasant facts was made easier by Japan's entry into the war on 7 Dec 41. Not only Jeschonnek and Richthofen but also the sceptical Hoffmann v. Waldau expected this development to lead to a great improvement on the eastern front. The transfer of Soviet troops from Siberia to Moscow would enable the Japanese to „attack the centres of Soviet strength in the rear of our enemy,“ which, as Richthofen stated in his order of the day on 10 Dec 41, would have a favorable effect on the German conduct of the war. He was inclined to see the defeat at Moscow as a „local setback,“ and still hoped to be able to return to Germany w/ his units in **3 weeks**, if everything went well. But his optimism was not entirely unclouded by forebodings. (See, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 816-17; also, *Richthofen Tagebuch*, 7./10.12.41)

Dez 41: *Luftflotte 2* wurde aus dem Einsatz im Osten herausgezogen, um fortan die Fuehrung des Luftwaffeneinsatzes im Mittelmeerraum zu uebernehmen. Damit uebernahmen der im Osten verbleibende *Nahkampffuehrer der Luftflotte 2 – NaKaFue 2* – sowie das *VIII. Fliegerkorps* bis auf weiteres die Fuehrung des Luftwaffeneinsatzes im Bereich der Hr.Gr.Mitte. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 9/1, Prien*, 18)

Dez 41: In diesen Tagen wurden auch zum ersten Mal an der Ostfront *Bodenpersonal* der Fliegertruppe zusammen mit Flakseinheiten zu „*Luftwaffen-Gefechtsverbaenden*“ zusammengestellt, um im *Erdkampf* eingesetzt [zu werden]...Als weitere Hilfe wurden der Hr.Gr.Mitte der *Lufttransportfuehrer (Oberst Morzik)* mit **5** aus der Heimat neu zugefuehrten **Ju-52-Gruppen** fuer dringende Transporte zugeteilt u. dem **VIII. Fliegerkorps** unterstellt...An *strategischen* Einsaetzen wurden im Dezember nur Angriffe auf ein *Flugzeugwerk* in **Rybinsk** durchgefuehrt. („*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941*,“ *Studie der 8.Abt. OKL, KDC*, Microfilm „E.“)

ab 6.12.41: The withdrawal battles of the German armies were supported by attack waves of the **VIII Air Corps** and the **II Close Support Air Cdr**, insofar as weather conditions would permit. In these crucial days – for the first time in the central sector of the eastern front – ground personnel of the *Luftwaffe* and AA artillery and *Luftwaffe* signal service units were organized into “*Luftwaffe combat units*” and committed in ground combat in support of Army units which were fighting under particularly difficult conditions. These Luftwaffe combat units (*Luftwaffen-Gefechtsverbaenden*) were the forerunners of the *Luftwaffe field divisions* which were established in the autumn of **1942**. Additional help was given by the arrival of an *air transport commander (Col Fritz Morzik)* and five (**5**) **Ju-52** groups from Germany for assignment to the **VIII Air Corps** to carry out urgent air transport duties.

Also Hitler directed [**16.12.41?**] that the air corps be reinforced w/o delay by a *full bomber group* from the Western Front, three (**3**) newly activated bomber groups, a twin-engine fighter group withdrawn from the night fighter forces to replenish two similar groups of VIII Air Corps, four (**4**) newly activated air transport groups, and one transport group transferred from *Fourth Air*

Fleet. The four new air transport groups were to be equipped with the Chief of Training's "last **Ju-52s**" and all but the most essential courier planes of the various staffs and agencies of the *Luftwaffe*. These groups were to bring w/ them elements of the 4th SS Standarte from *Krakow*. (H. Plocher, *GAF vs. Russia, 1941*, 243-45)

ab 6.12.41 [*Flakeinheiten*]: Neben der unmittelbaren Unterstuetzung des Heeres durch Luftangriffe auf die russ. Erdtruppen, verstaerkte das **VIII. Fl.K.** im Abschnitt *Wjasma, Sytschewka, Rshew* u. *Smolensk* die Verteidigung der eigenen Stuetzpunkte durch den Einsatz aller greifbaren Verbaende der *Flakartillerie*, der *Bodendienste* u. der *Luftwaffenbau-Truppen*. Voruebergehend fuehrte **Richthofen** auch aus der Lage der Umstaende ein Armeekorps. („*Ueberblick ueber den dt. Luftkrieg gegen Russland*“, **KDC**, 17)

6.12.41: Der Beginn der russ. Gegenoffensive vor Moskau erfolgte zu einem Zeitpunkt, *als die dt. Luftwaffe auf dem Tiefstpunkt ihrer Kampfstaerke u. Einsatzbereitschaft* seit dem Beginn des Krieges im Osten angelangt war. Die Folge war eine mittlerweile *dt. zahlenmaessige Unterlegenheit der Luftwaffe gegenueber den sowjet. Luftstreitkraeften*. Allein im Bereich der Hr.Gr.Mitte verfuegte die sowjet. Luftwaffe ueber **1.376** Maschinen gegenueber unter **600** auf dt. Seite. Auch die *Jagdfliegerverbaende* waren von dieser Entwicklung in starkem Masse betroffen: gegenueber den zu Beginn des Russlandkrieges im Jun 41 im Osten aufmarschierten **22. Jagdgruppen** befanden sich Anfang Dezember nur mehr **13 Gruppen** im Einsatz auf der Ostfront. Diese 13 Jagdgruppen verfuegten zusammen noch ueber **487** Maschinen, von denen wiederum ganze **200 als einsatzklar** gemeldet wurde (!!!). Im Bereich der Hr.Gr.Mitte zaehlte die *Luftwaffe* zu Beginn der russ. Gegenoffensive am 6. Dezember noch ganze **164** Jagdflugzeuge, von denen **86** – mithin knapp ueber die Haelfte – *einsatzklar* gemeldet waren. Die dt. Jagdflieger waren ihren sowjet. Gegnern, die in diesem Abschnitt ueber **674** Jagdflugzeuge – davon **480 einsatzklar** – verfuegten, demnach zahlenmaessig im *Verhaeltnis von mehr als 1:5 unterlegen*. Auch die mit Beginn der russ. Gegenoffensive allerorten entstehenden Krisen vermochten es nicht, eine wesentliche Verstaerkung der schwachen Jagdfliegerverbaende durch Zufuehrungen aus dem Reich oder von anderen Fronten zu bewirken. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 9/1, Prien, 13*)³⁹⁵

7.12.41 [*Luftlage*]: Kampfraum Mitte: Bekaempfung von Bereitstellungen, Fahrzeugen u. belegten Ortschaften im Raum suedostw. *Kalinin* mit starken Verbaenden. **9** Panzer, **60** Lkw. u. **3** Geschuetze vernichtet. Weitere Angriffe richteten sich gegen Kolonnen u. Stellungen noerdl. Tula u. *Kaschira*, sowie gegen Eisenbahnziele auf den Strecken um Moskau. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 800)

8.12.41: Hitler's order to suspend offensive ops (given this day) also called for the *Luftwaffe* to „[disrupt] the recovery of Russian armed forces through *attacks on armaments and training centers*, esp. *Leningrad, Moscow, Rybinsk, Gorki, Voronezh, Rostov, Stalingrad, Krasnodar...*“ *Luftwaffe* was also to continue „to support the army w/ its defensive battles.“ This order **reversed Fuehrer Directive 21's ban on strategic bombing** until the cessation of mobile ground operations because the war no longer promised to be a four-month affair. Hence, ironically, the German High Command's orders in light of the grave military situation actually proposed to *increase the spectrum of Luftwaffe ops*. (Muller, *German Air War*, 62; see also, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 797)

³⁹⁵ **Note:** By end of Jan 42, w/ more *Gruppen* withdrawn to the *Reich* to be refurbished, number of *Jagdgruppen* on the *Ostfront* would drop to 11. (14)

8.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Schwache Kraefte griffen Moskau ohne beobachtete Wirkung an. Bei Bekaempfung von Eisenbahnzielen wurden **7** Zuege beschaedigt, **1** Lokomotive zerstoert u. mehrere Strecken unterbrochen. Angriff mit einigen Flugzeugen auf *Michailow* u. Kolonnen noerdl. davon. Im Stadtgebiet **6** grosse Braende. **1** Flakbatterie vernichtet. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 804)

9.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff auf Truppenansammlungen u. Kolonnen im Raum von *Michailow* u. *Jeletz*. Starke Truppenverluste des Gegners. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 808)

10.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Infolge unguenstiger Wetterlage nur Einsatz schwaecherer Kraefte zur Unterstuetzung eigener Pz.Truppen im Raum suedl. *Michailow* sowie um *Klin*. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 811)

11.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff mit staerkeren Kraeften gegen Feindansammlungen im Raum *Libny* [sp?] – *Jeletz* mit guter Wirkung. Zahlreiche Panzer u. Kfz. sowie mehrere Geschuetze vernichtet. Starke Menschenverluste. Einzelne Flugzeuge wurden ferner gegen Truppenansammlungen u. Kolonnen suedl. *Michailow* eingesetzt. Etwa **30** Lkw. zerstoert, **50** weitere beschaedigt. Kampf- u. Sturzkampfflugzeuge fuehrten Angriffe gegen Truppenansammlungen, Batteriestellungen u. Kolonnen noerdl. *Klin* durch. Ueber **100** Kfz. u. mehrere Geschuetze vernichtet. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 815)

12.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff mit staerkeren Kraeften gegen Truppenansammlungen u. Kolonnen sowie **1** Fabrikanlage suedl. *Jeletz* u. Eisenbahnziele an der Strecke *Jeletz – Grjasi* mit gutem Erfolg. **10** Lkw. vernichtet, **1** Zug zerstoert, **1** beschaedigt, mehrere Gleisunterbrechungen. Noerdl. *Narofominsk* wurden ferner Ortschaften u. Ziele auf der Rollbahn mit Bomben belegt. Angriff mehrerer Verbaende gegen Feindkraefte im Raum noerdl. u. nordostw. *Klin*. **20** Fahrzeuge vernichtet, die *Moskwa – Bruecke* bei *Swenigorod* durch Bombentreffer zerstoert. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 818)

13.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff mit staerkeren Kraeften bei *Jeletz* u. Truppenansammlungen nordwestl. davon. Weitere Angriffe auf Bereitstellungen zwischen *Klin* u. *Kalinin*. **35** Lkw., **1** Batt. u. **5** Geschuetze vernichtet, zahlreiche weitere Lkw. beschaedigt. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 821)

14.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Einsatz von starken Kraeften. Angriff gegen Feindansammlungen, Kolonnen u. belegte Ortschaften, Flakstellungen u. Eisenbahnziele im Raum *Jiwny* [Liwny?] – *Jeletz – Jefremow – Isralkowo*. Etwa **50** Lkw, **1** Flakstellung, **3** Lokomotiven u. **1** Gueterzug vernichtet, weitere Zuege u. Lkw beschaedigt. **1** weiterer Einsatz richtete sich gegen Bereitstellungen, Kolonnen u. belegte Ortschaften im Raum westl. u. nordwestl. von Moskau mit guter Trefferlage. **11** Panzer, ueber **150** Fahrzeuge, **2** Batterien vernichtet, weitere Panzer u. Lkw. beschaedigt. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 824-25)

15.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Einsatz staerkerer Verbaende zur Unterstuetzung des Heeres u. Bekaempfung von Inf.- u. Kav.-Abteilungen ostw. *Liwny* sowie Truppenansammlungen, Kfz.-Kolonnen u. Unterkuenften noerdl. *Tula*. Im Raum suedwestl. Moskau wurden Truppenansammlungen u. belegte Ortschaften mit starken Kraeften mit gutem Erfolg angegriffen. **1** Panzer u. etwa **70** Fahrzeuge vernichtet. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 828)

16.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff mit staerkeren Kraeften gegen Truppenansammlungen u. Kolonnen suedostw. *Liwny* u. ostw. *Berchowje* sowie im Raum suedostw. Gaganowitsch. Etwa **20** Lkw. u. **1** Batteriestellung vernichtet. Starke Verluste an Truppen u.

Material. Weitere Flugzeuge bekaempften Truppen, Kolonnen, Panzer u. belegte Ortschaften um *Tula*. **20** Lkw. u. **1** Batteriestellung vernichtet. Angriff weiterer Flugzeuge gegen eine Kavallerieabteilung, Lkw-Kolonnen u. Panzer bei *Kubinka*. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 831)

16.12.41: In his new directive of 16 Dec 41, which now took into account the real situation on eastern front, Hitler finally ordered reinforcements for **VIII Air Corps**: **3** newly created bomber Gruppen, **1** bomber Gruppe from the western front, **1** twin-engine heavy fighter Gruppe from the night-fighter strength, and **5** transport Gruppen (**1** of them from **Air Fleet 4** and the other **4** obtained by “taking the last **Ju-52** from the chief of training and by the relentless plundering of commands and staffs, except for machines absolutely necessary for courier duty”). As w/ the army, the directive interfered radically in important basic details of tactical combat ops, organization, and training of the *Luftwaffe*. Particularly in the last-mentioned area, this led to serious restrictions and problems in the training of bomber crews, for which the **Ju-52** was especially important. The transport groups were combined under command of the air transport leader in Smolensk, Colonel Fritz Morzík, who was responsible to **VII Air Corps**. (*GSSW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 798)

17.12.41 [*Luftlage*]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff mit starken Kraeften, vor allem Sturzkampfflugzeugen, gegen belegte Ortschaften, Lkw-Kolonnen, Artillerie- u. Flakstellungen in Gegend noerdl. *Liwny*, westl. *Tula* u. ostw. *Russa*. **13** Panzer, etwa **200** Lkw. u. andere Fahrzeuge, **2** Batterien u. **1** Flakstellung vernichtet. Starke blutige Verluste. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 835)

18.12.41 [*Luftlage*]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff gegen Truppenansammlungen u. belegte Ortschaften westl. *Tula* u. suedwestl. *Klin*. Staerkere Verbaende von Sturzkampfflugzeugen griffen im Raum um *Rusa* u. bei *Swenigerod* Panzer, Truppenansammlungen, Munitionskolonnen, Artilleriestellungen u. belegten Ortschaften an. **4** Panzer u. etwa **14** Fahrzeuge vernichtet, weitere beschaedigt. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 838)

18.12.41: *Fliegerkorps VIII* receives *five transport groups* from w/in the *Reich*, and one additional group detached from *Luftflotte 4*. These units, operating the trustworthy **Ju 52/3m trimotor**, assembled near *Smolensk* under the command of *Transportfuehrer Oberst Fritz Morzík*. They were to resupply German forces cut off at *Cholm* and *Demyansk*. These missions would prove to be very costly: For *Demyansk pocket* alone, *Fliegerkorps VIII* would register **14 435** operational flights by transport acft and their fighter escorts, losing **265** acft in the press. Since the number of *Ju 52s* available proved insufficient, **He 111 long range bombers** were pressed into service as well. (*Muller, German Air War*, 62-3)

19.12.41 [*Luftlage*]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff gegen Truppenansammlungen u. fdl. Kolonnen bei *Liwny* u. gegen einen Flugplatz. Hierbei wurden **2** Flugzeuge am Boden zerstoert, **3** Flugzeuge im Kampf abgeschossen, etwa **10** Lkw. vernichtet. Im Raum *Nikolskoje – Wolowo – Plawskoje* u. im Raum *Tula – Kaschira* Angriff von Kampf- u. Sturzkampfverbaenden auf marschierenden Truppen, Nachschubkolonnen u. Batteriestellungen mit guter Wirkung. **2** Geschuetze, **55** Lkw. vernichtet, mehrere Kolonnen u. Kav.-Abteilungen zersprengt. Schwaechere Kraefte griffen im Raum ostw. *Rusa* u. nordwestl. *Moskau* Kolonnen u. belegte Ortschaften an. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 842)

20.12.41 [**VIII Air Corps**]: For the Order of Battle of this air corps on **20 Dec 41** see, *GSSW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 796)

20.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff gegen Truppen u. Kolonnen im Raum *Werchowje – Ismalkowo* u. suedwestl. *Tula*. Etwa **40** Fahrzeuge vernichtet. Weitere Angriffe richteten sich gegen belegte Ortschaften, marschierende Kolonnen u. Ansammlungen in den Raeumen suedl. *Serpuchow*, um *Podolsk*, ostw. *Rusa* u. um *Istra*. Eine Batterie, **2** Geschuetze, **30** Lkw. vernichtet. Angriff mit einigen Flugzeugen auf Moskau. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 845)

21.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Starke Angriffe gegen Feindkolonnen aller Art, Bereitstellungen u. belegte Ortschaften im Raum suedl. *Kaluga*, nordwestl. *Dubna*, suedl. *Tula*, bei *Aleksin* u. bei *Serpuchow*. Weitere Angriffe gegen belegte Ortschaften u. Feindstellungen in den Raeumen um *Borochowo – Novopetrowskoje – Welokolamsk* [sic]. Starke blutige Verluste des Gegners. **2** Panzer, **75** Lkw. U. **21** bespannte Fahrzeuge vernichtet. Einzelne Ortschaften wurden voellig zerstoert. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 848)

22.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Einsatz zahlreicher Kampfflugzeuge gegen Truppenansammlungen u. Kolonnen im Raum noerdl. *Liwny – ostw. Werschowje*. Mehrere staerkere Verbaende bekaempften ausserdem Panzer, Lkw.-Kolonnen, Batterie- u. Flakstellungen sowie marschierende Truppen in den Rauemen *Lichwin – Odojewo – Tula – Aleksin – Kaluga* u. *Malojaroslawez – Jermolino – Borowsk*. Insgesamt wurden **4** Panzer, etwa **60** Lkw., **1** Batterie, **1** Flakstellung sowie zahlreiche Fahrzeuge aller Art vernichtet. Starke blutige Verluste. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 852)

23.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff starker Verbaende auf belegte Ortschaften u. Truppenansammlungen sowie Bereitstellungen in den Rauemen westl. u. suedwestl. Moskau. **4** Geschuetze u. ueber **75** Fahrzeuge vernichtet. Ferner wurde **1** Flugplatz westl. *Jelez* u. **1** Flugplatz suedwestl. *Aleksin* angegriffen. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 855)

24.12.41: Winter weather made flying that much more dangerous. On this day, Richtofen ordered transfer of “Immelmann” *Geschwader* back to Dugino (ca. 30 km north of Wyasma). Weather bad (poor visability; light snowfall). Seven (7) Stukas don’t make it to Dugino—commander of a *Schwarm* went into the ground, with all his planes following him. (*Hozzel*, “Conversations,” 72-3)

24.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff mit schwachen Kraeften gegen Truppenansammlungen u. Kolonnen sowie einen Flugplatz nordwestl. *Aleksin*. **2** Flugzeuge am Boden zerstoert. Staerkerer Einsatz gegen Kolonnen aller Waffen, belegte Ortschaften u. Panzer im Raum nordostw. *Naro Fominsk – Moshaisk – Rusa – suedl. Wolokolamsk*. **2** Panzer, ueber **50** Fahrzeuge vernichtet, **8** Panzer beschaedigt. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 858)

25.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff mit staerkeren Kraeften gegen Truppen, Kolonnen u. Fahrzeugansammlungen suedl. *Kaluga*, nordwestl. *Aleksin* u. im Raum *Lichwi – Bjelew – Gorbatschewo*. **1** Pz., **11** Lkw. vernichtet. Hohe blutige Verluste des Gegners. Weitere Angriffe gegen Stadt u. Bahnhofe *Torshok*, mehrere Lkw. vernichtet. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 861)

26.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriffe mit einigen Flugzeugen gegen Eisenbahnziele bei *Wischny – Woloschek* u. suedl. *Bologoje*. (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 863)

28.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff auf Kolonnen u. Truppenansammlungen im Raum um *Trudki*. Staerkere Kraefte griffen Truppenansammlungen, belegte Ortschaften u. Kolonnen an. Zahlreiche Fahrzeuge vernichtet. Braende u. Zerstoerungen in Ortschaften. Bei *Kamenka* wurden **3** Panzer u. mehrere Lkw. vernichtet. Im Raum *Wolokolamsk – Turginowo*

wurden Kolonnen aller Waffen u. belegte Ortschaften angegriffen. Ueber **60** Lkw. u. **1** Panzerzug vernichtet. Starke Truppenverluste des Gegners. Weitere Angriffe richteten sich gegn *Torshok*. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 867)

29.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriff gegen Feindkolonnen, belegte Ortschaften u. Stellungen in den Rauemen *Kalinin – Torshok – Startiza – Kaluga – Koselsk – Lichwin*, im Raum *Trudki* u. im Raum *Tim*. Zahlreiche Kolonnen aller Waffen aufgegeben u. z.T. vernichtet. In Luftkaempfen **3** Feindflugzeuge abgeschossen, am Boden **4** Flugzeuge zerstoeert. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 870)

30.12.41 [Luftlage]: Kampfraum Mitte: Angriffe gegen Truppenbereitstellungen, Kolonnen aller Art u. belegte Ortschaften im Raum *Torshok – Stariza – Kalinin*, auf Strasse *Stariza – Kalinin*, noerdl. *Rshew* (Treffer in Zielen sowie Braende beobachtet, vorrueckende Infanteriekolonnen aufgegeben), im Raum *Koselsk*, im Raum *Juchnow*, im *Trudi-Bogen*, auf Strassen *Kalinin – Klin* u. *Tula – Krapiwna, Gorbatschewo – Mzensk*. Insgesamt **25** fdl. Fahrzeuge vernichtet. Mit weiteren Zerstoeerungen u. Beschaedigungen ist zu rechnen. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 873)

31.12.41: According to Luftwaffe intelligence, by end of year the Soviet air forces have lost a total of **20 392** acft. (GSWW, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 805)

31.12.41 [Recap of year]: For the second year in a row, the *Luftwaffe* had **lost nearly its entire complement of acft**. Yet the GAF could not look forward—as it had in 1940 after Battle of Britain—to a period of recuperation. Everywhere, the Germans faced *increased commitments w/ [air?] forces* that barely reached pre-war levels. The reasons for this dangerous situation not hard to find: A failure to draw objective conclusions from the *attrition rates of 1940*; overweening pride and arrogance after the early victories; refusal to recognize the fact that modern war ever since the American Civil War has been a *struggle of industrial production* as well as a conflict on the battlefield—all converged to *weaken the Luftwaffe fatally*. Combined w/ these failings went a regime, the criminal inclinations of which have rarely been equalled in history. German now faced a *worldwide coalition* w/ an army near defeat in Russia and an air force already in serious trouble. That the *Reich* recovered from this situation and managed to hold on for the next 3 ½ years is a remarkable comment on the staying power of the German people and their military institutions, if not their good sense. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 107)

Dec 41-Jan 42: Apparently, GAF bombers, *Stukas*, *Zerstoerer* and fighter-bombers in „relentless action“ over central front in Dec 41, dealing „heavy blows“ to advancing Red Army troops. But after the new year, this *activity stopped abruptly*. „Suddenly there were only small groups in the air,“ recalled one Soviet fighter pilot. Reason for paucity of *Luftwaffe* acft was **dramatic change in the weather**. Temperatures in the central combat zone *fell sharply after Christmas ,41* and, on **4.1.42**, plummeted to minus -42 degrees Celsius. Unlike their adversary, the Germans *had virtually no means to cope w/ the Arctic cold on the primitive front-line airfields*. „Eighty percent of the acft park of the *Luftwaffe* was paralyzed at temperatures below minus -20 degrees Celsius,“ states historian *Heinz Kiehl*. During flights over German-held territory in early Jan 42, Soviet airmen were „stunned“ to see large numbers of GAF planes on the airfields—and very few airborne. One Soviet fighter pilot recalled how they attempted in vain to *thaw out the engines of German acft seized at Klin Airdrome w/ heating lamps*. Despite all efforts, the *fuel remained too thick*. According to report issued by the *Air Defense of the Soviet Western Front*, GAF activity over Western Front sector in Jan 42 dropped to 1/3 of activity of the previous month. „Only when we seized the airfield at *Klin* die we understand the reason for this German passivity in the air,“ said a Soviet pilot. „Several German acft were captured there, all of them intact, *but w/ their*

engines frozen. The desperate Germans had even attempted to thaw out the engine of a *Messerschmitt 109* by wheeling the nose of the plane into a house!“ (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross Red Star*, 39-40, 45)

Dec 41-Jan 42: For the first time Luftwaffe ground personnel and persons from anti-aircraft and air-signal units were assembled to form Luftwaffe fighting formations and field rgts and sent into ground actions to support the army. Even pilots for whom acft were no longer available or whose acft were not ready for action and “most valuable specialists” were used in ground fighting IAW Richthofen’s wishes. In view of the long and expensive training these individuals had received, this policy (like his diary entry: “The men really enjoyed facing the enemy for once, at **150** metres w/ a carbine”) seems rather irresponsible, even though understandable in view of the crisis confronting the ground troops. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*; also, *Richthofen, Tagebuch*, 15./17./19.-20.12.41; *Halder Tagebuch*, 11.1.42)

Jan 42: According to *Percy E. Schramm*, Germans had **1 500** first-line acft in service on eastern front at this time; along w/ some **200** acft from Germany’s allies—including **110 Finnish**. (*KTB OKW*, III, 166)

Jan 42 [Summary]: Unter dem Oberbefehl des **VIII. Fliegerkorps** mussten die Verbaende des VIII. Fliegerkorps u. des **Nahkampffuehrers 2** im **Jan 41** mit Schwerpunkt zur unmittelbaren Unter-stuetzung des Heeres eingesetzt werden. Es war dem Gegner gelungen, auf dem aeussersten Nordfluegel der Hr.Gr.Mitte einen tiefen Einbruch noerdlich **Rshew** bis in den Raum von **Weliki Luki** zu erzielen u. dadurch eine breite Luecke zwischen der Hr.Gr.Mitte u. der Hr.Gr.Nord aufzureissen. Ein weiterer nicht unbedenklicher Einbruch erfolgte im Raum **Suchinitschi**. Soweit es die Schlechtwetterlage, die den Einsatz der fliegenden Verbaende oft unmoeglich machte, nur irgend zuliess, unterstuetzte die *Luftwaffe* das Heer an diesen kritischen Stellen durch unmittelbaren Eingreifen in die Erdkaempfe u. durch *Luftversorgung* abgeschnittener eigener Verbaende. Die Bekaempfung des feindl. Nachschubverkehrs trat dagegen in den Hintergrund u. an strategischen Einsaetzen wurden nur drei Angriffe mit schwaecheren Kraeften gegen kriegswichtige Ziele in *Moskau* gefuehrt. („*Der Luftkrieg in Russland 1942*,” **KDC**, Microfilm „E.“)

Jan 42: *Fliegerkorps VIII* focuses its efforts in support of **216. ID** encircled at *Sukhinichi*. Hitler had ordered the surrounded division to hold the village “under all circumstances“ to *act as a breakwater* against the Soviet offensive tide in this area. An *airlift operation*—by the *Ju 52* transports of **KGrzbV 172**—was organized, and Fuehrer personally instructed the twin-engine bombers of *Fliegerkorps VIII* to concentrate on low-level attacks in support of the *Sukhinichi* garrison. Although on repeated occasions navigation problems over snow-covered landscape and constantly shifting front lines resulted in *Luftwaffe* bombing of German troops, *these raids enabled the troops at S. To hold out*. Conversely, concentration of *Richthofen’s* corps in the *Sukhinichi* area in the south left the *northern flank of Army Group Center* with *virtually no air support*. And there, *Ivan Konev’s Kalinin Front* opened a major offensive on **8 Jan 42** against the German **9th Army** east of **Rshew**. Farther north, the Soviet *Northwestern Front* launched a massive attack on **9.1.42** in the *Ostashkov* area striking the seam between Army Groups Center and North. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 45)

Jan 42: By latter half of month, the GAF *slowly starting to resurge*. More and more „alert boxes“ came into use; various other *improvised methods*—such as lighting fires beneath the acft engines on the ground—also helped. With this, the *method of continuously pulling out worn-down aviation units and replacing them w/ fully equipped units that had been rested in Germany*,

Fliegerkorps VIII managed to increase its presence in the air. (For details see, *C. Bergstroem, Black Cross*, 46)

10.1.42: Of a total of ca. **1713** front-line machines (including close- and long-range reconnaissance acft under army command), only **775** were ready for action. Only **1/3** of all Luftwaffe units were still in the east. (**Note:** In his account, Horst Boog adumbrates the reasons for the Luftwaffe's low state of readiness: wear and tear on acft higher than expected; need to often transport heavily-damaged acft back to Germany for repairs; primitive nature of airstrips in east; inadequate preparations for maintaining acft at temperatures far below freezing, etc.) (For more details see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 817)

11.-14.1.42: Due to serious weather problems during this period (heavy snow, snow drifts up to **1.5** meters, etc.) German Luftaufklaerung in H.Gr.Mitte sector essentially grounded. (For details see, *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 131-37)

Feb 42 [*Summary*]: Auch im **Feb 42** zwang die Entwicklung der Erdlage, die *Luftwaffe* unter gaenzlicher Zurueckstellung strategischer Einsaetze nur zur Unterstuetzung der schwer ringenden Erdtruppe einzusetzen. Wertvolle Hilfe wurde dem Heere geleistet bei der Vernichtung von suedl. *Rshew* eingekesselten Kraeften, bei dem Entsatz des voruebergehend eingeschlossenen Stuetzpunktes *Wjelish* u. durch *Luftversorgung* eingeschlossener eigener Kraeftegruppen, besonders des Stuetz-punktes *Weliki Luki*. Eine besondere Gefaehrdung des Nachschubes fuer die kaempfende Truppe in der Mitte der Hr.Gr. entstand durch staerkere *Partisanengruppen* hinter der Front im Raume suedl. u. suedwestl. *Wjasma*, die durch naechtliche Lufttransporte sowie Truppen laufend verstaerkt wurden u. ihre Angriffstaetigkeit vor allem gegen die Rollbahn *Smolensk – Wjasma* eine der Hauptverkehrsadern der Hr.Gr., richteten. Die Aktionen gegen diese Partisanen-verbaende u. das Freikaempfen der Rollbahn wurde von den Luftwaffenverbaenden wirksam unterstuetzt u. darueber hinaus durch *Nachtjaeger* in naechtlichen [.....?] sowjet. Lufttransporte bekamepft. In geringem Umfange wurden im **Feb 42** auch Angriffe gegen den feindl. Bahnverkehr u. belegte Flugplaetze durchgefuehrt. („*Der Luftkrieg in Russland 1942*“, **KDC**, Microfilm „E.“)

Feb 42: Russians opened a **100-mile gap** between *Army Groups North and Center*, but were unable to exploit their advantage. Still, this time the Red Army managed to *isolate two pockets of German troops*—the first of ca. *brigade strength* around **Cholm**; the second containing better part of *two army corps* (**6 divisions/100 000 men**) near **Demyansk**. Hitler ordered the forces so trapped to hold in what was optimistically termed the Demyansk „fortress.“ Responsibility for resupply fell to the already overburdened *Luftwaffe*. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 118)

Feb 42: Retreating from the Moscow sector, the German **2. AK** (roughly **100,000** men) was encircled at **Demyansk**. Hitler forbade a breakout to the rear, and decided to supply the Corps by air. This was accomplished, but at a cost of **160** railway trains of gasoline, **265 Ju-52s**, and consequent loss of trained crews and disruption of the pilot-training program. (*H. Plocher, GAF vs. Russia, 1941, introduction by T. Taylor*)

ca. early Feb 42: Germans (*Gen Model*) have finally removed immediate threat to *Rollbahn* coming from the south. This enabled *Fliegerkorps VIII* to shift its focus to the Soviet *Kalinin Front's* broad advance to the south on the northern flank. It's acft fell upon large concentrations of Soviet soldiers on wide snow-covered fields that offered little protection against air attack. Heavily-armed *Bf 110s* of the newborn *Zerstoeerergeschwader* dealt the Red ground troops particularly bloody losses. *Oblt Johannes Kiel (I./ZG 26)* wrote: “There were Soviet troops on

all roads, and they were unable to take cover, because these roads were nothing but narrow tracks that had been created by snowplows, huge mountain walls of snow rose on both sides of them. Congested like sheep herds, tightly squeezed between vehicles and other equipment, entire battalions often were caught w/o any chance of survival from our air attacks. There was no escape from these *ravines of death*; flying at low level, we mowed them down on road after road, and saw the snow becoming *stained red by all the blood*.” (Quoted in: C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 48-49)

Mid-Feb 42: Beginning at this time, both *Luftwaffe* and VVS dramatically increase their roles in the campaign. Russians try to sever the *Warsaw-Moscow highway*—which runs parallel to and south of the *Rollbahn*—and joining forces w/ **Soviet 50th Army**, operating in area south and SE of *Yukhnov*. Intention was to encircle and annihilate German troops in *Yukhnov* area and to break German defensive positions south of *Vyazma*. This, in turn, could have created favorable conditions for encircling the entire German *9th Army*. For this purpose, *Gen Levashov's 4th Airborne Corps* staged the *third large-scale airborne operation behind German lines at Vyazma on 17.2.42*. Soviet bombers from several units were concentrated for the task of isolating the German battlefield by staging *intense raids* against lines of communications in the area. Meanwhile, *Fliegerkorps VIII* successfully brought into action against attacking Soviet forces on the ground. Despite taking a tough beating, the German *Zerstörer Staffeln* dealt crippling losses to the *4th Airborne Corps* on ground and in the air. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 50)

End Feb 42: Soviet winter offensive has by now been *strategically halted all across its lines of advance*. Without question, the *Luftwaffe* had played an immense role in this ultimate defensive victory of Army Group Center. According to VVS documents, in the sector of the Soviet *Kalinin Front* alone during Feb 42, the *Luftwaffe* conducted **2866** combat sorties (**2781** in *daytime*), while the VVS-*Kalinin Front* carried out **6667** combat sorties (**3939** in *daytime*). It is also clear that the *Fliegerkorps VIII*, once it had overcome difficulties deriving from the cold spell in early January, was *regaining the German initiative in the air*. This was above all due to the fighters of **JG 51**—particularity **II.** and **IV. Gruppen**, which abandoned its fighter-bomber missions and began to challenge the VVS formations in air combat again. Claiming **90 victories against only four Bf 109s shot down, II./JG 51** was the most successful *Jagdgruppe* of *Fliegerkorps VIII* during the defensive battle of Jan-Feb 42. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 54)

Mar 42 [Summary]: Im **Mar 42** lag der Schwerpunkt des Luftwaffeneinsatzes auf der Bekämpfung des feindl. *Bahnverkehrs*, vor allem auf der in die Lücke zwischen den beiden Heeresgruppen nach *Weliki Luki* führenden Linie *Toropez – Ostaschkow – Bolgoje*. Größere Erdkampfhandlungen fanden nicht statt, doch erforderte der Kampf gegen die *Partisanen* u. die Abwehr feindlicher Angriffe bei *Rshew* u. im Raum *Suchinitschi* wieder das Eingreifen der *Luftwaffe* in die Erdkämpfe. Erwähnenswert aus diesen Kämpfen ist der Einsatz des *Luftwaffengefechtsverbandes Schlemm*, der im Lufttransport aus dem Raum *Rshew* in die Nähe eines durch den Einbruch ostwärts *Suchinitschi* gefährdeten Flugplatzes befoerdert wurde u. den Auftrag hatte, durch Angriffe das Vorfeld dieses unter sowjet. Erdbeschuss liegenden Platzes zu erweitern, damit der fuer die Versorgung der Erdtruppe notwendige Flugbetrieb unbehindert abgewickelt werden konnte. Unterstützt durch *Nahkampfverbände* gelang es dem *Gefechtsverband Schlemm* diesen Auftrag zu erfüllen. An *strategischen Einsätzen* wurde im **Mar 42** ein Angriff mit **2** Flugzeugen [!!!] gegen ein *Flugmotorenwerk* in **Rybinsk** u. zwei Angriffe gegen eine *Oelraffinerie* mit *Einzelflugzeugen* [!!!] bei **Kalinin** u. ein Nachtangriff auf den *Kremel* in Moskau durchgeführt. („*Der Luftkrieg in Russland 1942*,” **KDC**, Microfilm „E.“)

Synopsis of air war in winter 1941/42: Main reasons given in most accounts for German defeat at Moscow are the unusually low temperatures—for which the *Wehrmacht* was unprepared—

combined w/ overextended German supply lines, and, not least, the Soviet determination to fight back. *A further key factor to the German setback was the lack of support from the Luftwaffe in January 1942*, another effect of the extreme cold. During the *Blitzkrieg* in the early years, the German ground troops grew *increasingly spoiled* by continuous air support. By the summer of 1941, the Germans on several occasions had *shown a tendency to keep their heads down as soon as there was no air support immediately available*. Without doubt, *the weak opposition from the air was an important factor to the Soviet successes on central combat zone in Jan 42*. In Feb 42, the *radically increased presence of the Luftwaffe* above Soviet lines and rear areas was a factor of equal importance w/ the over-extended Soviet supply lines and German reinforcements in halting Soviet offensive efforts. *Fliegerkorps VIII*, in fact, increased its air activity in February *by more than seven times* compared to the previous month. The growing emphasis Soviet air cdrs placed on air-base raids from mid-Feb on serves as a confirmation of the *deadly threat from the air against the Red Army*. According to authors, it was only due to *inadequate training of a large part of its airmen* that the VVS failed to play the same decisive role as the GAF. (C. Bergstroem, *Black Cross*, 54)

Apr 42 [Summary]: Zu Beginn des Monats wurden diese Einsaetze auf das *Motorenwerk in Rybinsk* einmal u. auf die *Oelraffinerie bei Konstantinowka* zweimal mit *Einzelflugzeugen* wiederholt. Am **10.4.42** uebernahm den Oberbefehl ueber die im Bereich der Hr.Gr.Mitte eingesetzten Verbaende des **VIII. Fliegerkorps**, des **NakaFue. Sued** u. des **NakaFueh. Nord** der aus Bruessel nach Smolensk verlegte **Stab V.Fl.Korps**, der mit dem Tage der Befehlsuebernahme die Bezeichnung Luftwaffenkommando Ost erhielt. („*Der Luftkrieg in Russland 1942*“, KDC, Microfilm „E.“)

10.4.42: After winter 41/42, the sector of *Heeresgruppe Mitte* *virtually denuded of air resources*. The command authority there was now not even an air fleet; instead a smaller command, **Luftwaffenkommando Ost**, under *General Robert Ritter v. Greim* and deploying two understrength *Fliegerdivisionen*, provided the air support for the entire army group. This command came into being on **10 Apr 42**, and represented the fusing of two even smaller air support commands: *Nahkampffuehrer Nord* and *Nahkampffuehrer Sued*, as well as the command staff of *Fliegerkorps V*. Throughout much of the spring of 1942, in absence of major ground ops, *Air Force Command East* carried out armed reconnaissance and interdiction of rail and road traffic opposite Hr.Gr.Mitte. (Note: *Schwerpunkt* of GAF efforts in spring of 1942 focused on the *Crimean campaign*. (Muller, *German Air War*, 82)

10.4.42: An diesem Tag wurde aus dem Stab des *V. Fliegerkorps* das **Luftwaffen-Kommando Ost** gebildet, welches fortan nach Abzug des *VIII. Fliegerkorps* und der Umwandlung des *NaKaFue 2* zur *2. Fliegerdivision* die Fuehrung der Luftwaffenverbaende im vormaligen Abschnitt der *Luftflotte 2* im Bereich der Hr.Gr.Mitte uebernahm. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 9/1*, Prien, 18)

May 42: Pocket at *Demyansk* relieved by German troops, who finally broke through. The airlift in support of the pocket flew **14 455** missions, moved **24 303** tons of wpns and supplies and **15 445** soldiers into the pocket, and moved **22 093** wounded out: a performance that averaged between **100-150** missions and **265** tons per day. But the cost was inordinately high. By time the army relieved the pocket, the *Luftwaffe* had lost **265** transport acft, or **30** percent of its transport force at end of **Feb 42**. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 120)

1943: The *Luftwaffe* did make a few raids on Soviet industrial targets in **1943**, but this was a local initiative by **Luftflotte 6**. A series of night attacks were made in **Jun 43** against the tank and engine plants at *Gorky*, the synthetic rubber factory at *Yaroslavl*, and several petrol

refineries. To put these ops in context, a total of **168** Heinkel **He-111s** took off to attack *Gorky* on **3.6.43**: **149** acft attacked and dropped **234** tons of bombs. Eight (8) days later, RAF Bomber Command attacked *Duesseldorf* w/ **693** bombers, delivering **1968** tons of bombs in **45** minutes...In any case, the *Luftwaffe* was being overwhelmed by the *army's incessant demands for intervention* on the front line. The German army had come to *depend on tactical air power as a substitute for heavy artillery*; and as a primary element in its AT defenses. The escalating requirement for close air support missions that had been such a marked feature of the **1941 blitzkrieg** had never stabilized...And ground attack rapidly became the *Luftwaffe's* primary mission. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 125)

1.9.10: Gen. von Waldau (Tagebuch):³⁹⁶

3.7.41: ...Die wesentlichsten *Momente* sind folgendermassen gekennzeichnet:

1) Die militaerischen Machtmittel der SU sind *ganz erheblich staerker* als es die Untersuchungen vor Kriegsbeginn am 22.6 erkennen liessen. Wir hatten viele Zahlenangaben als propagandistische Uebertreibung eingeschaezt. Die materielle Qualitaet ist besser als erwartet. Im einzelnen [ueberrascht ?] die Zahl der Staerken der Luftwaffe. Es schaeelt sich heraus, dass etwa 8000 einsatzbereite Flugzeuge zur Verfuegung standen. Die voellige Ueberraschung am 1.Tag zerschlug ueber 1800...Die Motorisierung u. Zahl der Panzer uebertrifft alle realen bisherigen Vorstellungen. Sie sind mit einem 52-to-Panzer allen Abwehrwaffen von uns gewachsen, haben anfangs erhebliche Schwierigkeiten bereitet, z.T. *oertliche Tankpanik erzeugt* u. an einigen Stellen den planmaessigen Ablauf oder Anlauf unserer Panzerfuehrung erheblich beeintraehtigt.

2) Der Widerstandswille u. die Zaehigkeit der Massen uebertraf alle Vorstellungen. Es ist festzustellen, dass die Idee des Kommunismus der Roten Armee eine fuer uns unerwartet starke Kraft gibt, die durch die *primitive Eigenart des [Massenwollens?]* die rote Truppe voellig krisenfest gemacht hat. In den verzweifeltsten operativen Lagen geht der Kampf bis zur voelligen Vernichtung grosser Verbaende in gleicher Weise wie der Kampf des Einzelnen bis aufs Messer...In hoffnungslosen Lagen griffen eingeschlossene rote Truppen in dichten Kolonnen *wie Grenadiere des 17. Jahrhunderts* an, deckten sich hinter den Leichenbergen der Gefallenen, u. haben es z.T. erreicht, dass unsere Maschinenwaffen einfach nicht mehr gegen ankamen [?]. Hieraus erklart sich auch die bisherige Gefangenenzahl von nur 140 000 Mann, nachdem etwa 45 Rote Div. als vernichtet zu rechnen sind.

3) Die Fuehrung zu beurteilen ist insofern schwer, als die totale Ueberraschung in einen gigantischen russ. Aufmarsch [h]ineinstiess...Ein Land, das *vollig andere Begriffe vom Wert u. Unwert des Lebens besitzt* als das sogenannte kultivierte Abendland bringt Fuehrer mit einer *primitiven Einstellung* hervor, die von hohen Opfern nicht zurueckschrecken...

³⁹⁶ **Note:** Von Waldau was *Chef des Luftwaffenfuehrungsstabes* from Mar 39 to **10.4.42**. All entries gleaned from: **BA-MA RL 200/17**.

4) Die mittlere u. untere Fuehrung kennzeichnet der *Mangel an eigener Verantwortung*, die Gewohnheit, nur nach Befehl zu handeln. Kein Wunder in einem Staat zentralster Vollzugsgewalt u. *unterdurchschnittlicher Intelligenz*...

4.7.41: Die Lage hat sich weiterhin guenstig entwickelt. Nur der Suedfluegel haengt nach. Der Masseneinsatz von Panzern...u. das durch Wetter u. liegengebliebenes Material erschwerte Nachfolgen macht viel zu schaffen...

15.7.41: War inzwisheen bei [Dubno?] beim [V.Fl.K.?], sah von dort aus bei Autofahrt mit Plocher (Chef Gen.) die suedl. Dubno liegenden **100-to russ.Pz.** [?!?], dabei viele Ueberschwere. *Die Ruestung der roten Armee verbluefft [amazes] immer wieder.* Groesste Hitze mit vielen Gewittern erschwerte die Kaempfe u. den Vormarsch...Die operative Lage hat sich guenstig entwickelt. In der Mitte u. im Norden allerdings besser als im Sueden...Noerdl. der *Pripjet-Suempfe* wurde durch Zusammenfassung der Pz.-Gr.2 u. 3 zur 4.Armees die Zertruemmerung der russ. Mitte ausgenutzt. *Dnjepr u. Duna* in 300 km Breite ueberschritten u. damit in die im Aufbau befindliche russ. Rueckhaltstellung eingebrochen. In der Mitte bei *Orscha* u. *Witebsk* gelang am **14.7** der Durchbruch auf *Smolensk*...Das *Eigentumliche der [Pz.Taktik?]* ergab hier das Bild, dass 200-300 km vor den zu Fuss nachfolgenden Armeen die schwersten Kaempfe zusammen mit der Lw. entschieden werden. Techn. u. Versorgungsgruende werden nach Bereinigung der Lage in *Smolensk einen Stop erforderlich machen*, der ein Aufschliessen der Armeen gestattet...

In diesem Abschnitt war von entscheidender Wirkung der von uns laufend u. planmaessig durchgefuehrte Einsatz gegen das *Bahnnetz*. [Dessen?] Zerstoerung rasch einen Umfang annahm, welcher jede planmaessige Leitung von Transporten ausschloss. Erfreulich bleibt die Feststellung, dass der [Russe?] sich hier entscheidend schlagen will, jede Gelegenheit ausnutzt, sich festzulaufen u. damit den Gang der Vernichtung beschreitet. *Die Sorge, er wuerde planmaessig nach der Tiefe ausweichen, besteht nicht mehr*...

18.7.41: ...Heeresgruppe Mitte. Der Durchbruch der Pz.Armees (4.Armees) zwischen [Motulow?] u. *Polosk* gelang vollkommen. Es bildeten sich [----?], durch starres frontales Halten der Russen zustande gekommene Einkreisungsraeume...Verblieben ist nur eine aus Richtung *Gomel* in nordwestl. Richtung bei dem **15.** auf **16.7.** angreifende russ. Gruppe von 5 bis 6 Div. die unsere Flanke im [Sueden?] in Druck brachte, ohne sie ernsthaft zu gefaehrden. [Wesentliche?] *Reserven westl. Moskau sind damit kaum mehr vorhanden*...

24.7.41: Die Gesamtlage entwickelt sich langsam insgesamt in guenstiger Richtung. Sie ist gekennzeichnet:

a) durch ungeheuer hartnaeckige russ. Gegenangriffe unter Bevorzugung offener Flanken. – Diese Angriffe ermangeln nicht einer einheitlichen straffen Fuehrung von oben, sind jedoch ohne wesentlichen Einfluss auf die operative Lage. Sie verhindern aber zweifellos durch ihre takt.Erfolge, dass wir ganze Armeen vereinnahmen.

b) Dies wird auch dadurch erschwert, dass bei den Pz.Verbaenden die seit nunmehr 5 Wochen im schaarfsten Kampf stehen, techn. u. personelle Ausfaelle eingetreten sind, die Einschliessungen groesster Einheiten der Russen erschweren...

An allen Fronten ist das Gesamtbild das gleiche. *Zaehestes Abringen mit Kraeften, die ruecksichtslos gefuehrt werden.* Es waere falsch, an allen drei Fronten gleichzeitig operative Entscheidungen zu erhoffen. M.E. kommt es darauf an,

- 1) Die Umfassungsschlacht bei Uman durchzukaempfen u. bei Smolensk die eingeschlossenen Teile zu vernichten.
- 2) *Leningrad* abzuschneiden u. gleichzeitig auf *Moskau* vorzugehen.
- 3) *Moskau* zu nehmen, danach erst
- 4) die grosse Umfassung nach *Sueden* einzuleiten.

Die Absichten gehen einstweilen dahin, *zwei bis vier gleichzeitig anzustreben.* Ich befuerchte, wir werden es mit der *Luftwaffe* nicht schaffen. Den derzeitigen Erwaegungen liegen allzu sehr *heeresmaessige* Erwaegungen zugrunde.

Die seit **22.-23.7** auf *Moskau* mit herangefuehrten [---verbaende] gefuehrten Angriffe stehen m.E. in keinem Verhaeltnis zum Einsatz. Ich hoffe, sie werden bald beendet, da ich ihnen keine Entscheidung zusprechen kann.³⁹⁷

8.8.41: ...*Smolensk* wurde durchgekaempft...Die aus der Umschliessung von *Smolensk* freigeordneten Kraefte loesten die Panzer u. mot. Div. ab, *deren technische Ueberholung dringend wurde.* – Wir loesten das **VIII. FLK.** heraus, verlegten es zur *Luftflotte 1* suedostwaerts [-----], von wo aus heute der Angriff des I.AK auf [*Nowgorod?*] beginnen sollte...

14.8.41: ...Heeresgruppe Mitte. Die “Einkreisungsschlacht” von *Smolensk* hat *nicht zur Vernichtung von Kraeften im erwarteten Ausmass gefuehrt.* Ortliche Unterlassungen, [---spannung] der Kraefte u. Zurueckgehen der [techn.?] Einsatzbereitschaft von Lw. u. Pz. allein [----] eine ausreichende [Begruendung?]. Es bleibt die *ausserordentliche Haerte des russ. Gegners*, seine *taktisch geschickte Fuehrung* u. Kenntnis des Gelaendes als Hauptgrund dafuer uebrig, dass er mit staerkeren Kraeften entkam...Wir gehen starken Belastungen entgegen. – ...Das Heer bleibt *im Winter in staerkerem Masse durch den Osten gebunden.* Die notwendigen Entlastungen zugunsten der Erhoehung der Kriegsproduktion werden nicht in erwartetem Umfang eintreten.

27.8.41: Besuchte **25.8** *Richthofen* in seinem neubezogenen Gefechtsstand *Spasskaja Polist* [?] noerdl. *Ilmensee*. Von hier sind fast 900 km...Unendliche Flaechen duennster Besiedelung, Suempfe, Waelder, [Bruchland?], Seen, aermlichsten Dasein auf primitiver Lebensstufe kennzeichnet den Raum unseres Kampfes...Die Lage hat sich bis heute wie folgt entwickelt: ...Mitte: Erfreulich laesst sich der Angriff der 2.Armee u. der – nun endlich angretretenen – Gruppe *Guderian* an; die *Desnauebergaenge* wurden genommen...Die Front noerdl. *Jelna* steht in Abwehrkaempfen (weitergeschrieben am **3.9.**)...

9.9.41: Keine wesentliche Aenderung der Lage...Die Vorbereitung der neuen Operation gegen die der Heeresgr. *Mitte* gegenueberstehenden Kraefte wird von oben her mit grosser Beschleunigung erwartet. Die *zeitliche Einschraenkung der eigenen Handlungsfreiheit* durch den Herbst besteht zwar, aber es laesst sich ein *Riesenraum nicht sezieren* [dissect] mit Verbaenden,

³⁹⁷ **Note:** Von *Waldau* must be referring to the bomber offensive on *Moscow*, which got underway on **22.7.41**.

die materiell u. personell aufs hoechste angestrengt sind. *Ich kann die unerfreulich nervoese Stimmung*, die z.Zt. besteht, innerlich nicht mitmachen

Die Arbeitsweise mit *Rominten* [?] (taegl. 120 km Autofahrt) ist belastend. – Heute dauert es nachts bis 1 Uhr an (gestern 2,00 Uhr). Das eigene Dasein darf nicht mit der Lage der eigenen Truppe verglichen werden. Es bedrueckt mich. Weniger die eigene Verantwortung – die durch das Verfahren weitgehend ausgeschaltet u. auf versoehnlichen Ausgleich beschraenkt bleibt – als die *persoenliche Inanspruchnahme u. zwar Zwang*, der mit dienstlichen Aufgaben nichts mehr zu tun hat.³⁹⁸ *Wir gehen einem Winterfeldzug entgegen. Die schwere Last des Krieges hat begonnen.* Der Glaube an den Endsieg bleibt.

11.9.41: Heeresgr. Sued. Die *schwersten Regenfaelle seit 1874* verschlammen die Wege der Ukraine. Der Nachschub ist aeusserst erschwert. Sie verzoegern die Angriffsabsichten in einer operativ denkbar guenstigen Lage...Nach nunmehrigen Durchbruch der Gruppe *Guderian* mit der **3.Pz.Div.** auf *Romny* sind alle Voraussetzungen fuer eine *Vernichtungsschlacht* zwischen *Desna* u. *Dnjepr* gegeben, wenn nur das Wetter den Einsatz der *Luftwaffe* zulaesst u. die Gangbarkeit der Strassen ermoeoglicht...

10.10.41: 14-taegiger Urlaub, anschl. wachsende Arbeit haben diese Zeilen unterbrochen, die wenige Freizeit durch die Brunft [*hunt.*, *rut*] u. Pirschen in dem herrlichen *Rominter Forst* ausgefuellt. Im Osten gelang es die grosse Schlacht zwischen *Dnjepr* – *Desna* mit dem Gesamtergebnis von 660 000 Gefangenen zu Ende zu schlagen...Am **2.10.** trat die Heeresgr.Mitte auf breiter Front unter Aussparung der Mitte an...[Es gelang] am **6.-7.10.** beide Pz.Gr. (3 u. 4) bei *Wjasma* zu vereinen. Am **10.10.** waren folgende Kessel gebildet: a) suedl. *Bruansk* – *Trubtschewsk*; b) westl. *Wjasma*.

Die russ.Fuehrung war *voll ueberrascht*, gewann anscheinend erst sehr spaet den Ueberblick ueber die Lage u. fasst wohl den Entschluss, mangels ausreichender, die Abschnuerung Moskaus gewaehrleistende Kraefte auch aus der Nordfront entbehrliche Teile abzuziehen u. auf die engere Sicherung Moskaus zu konzentrieren. Sehr starker Einsatz der *Lft.2* (**VIII Fl.K.** mit groesster Beschleunigung aus dem Einsatz vor Leningrad in den Raum noerdl. *Smolensk* verlegt, **II.Fl.K.** am **1.10.** durch *Stuka* u. *Jgdkraefte der Lfl. 4 verstaerkt*) trug entscheidend der Ein- u. Durchbrueche bei.

Das anfangs gute Wetter verschlechterte sich ab **7.10.**, erschwert den Einsatz der [*Luftwaffe*] u. behindert Strassen u. Wege.

Die Gesamtlage ergibt folgendes Bild am **10.10.**: ...Die Heeresgr.*Budjenny* ist mir ihrer Suedarmee geschlagen. Wenn es gelingt die Versorgung fuer unsere schnellen Verbaende nachzubringen, kann ein *rasches Durchstossen bis Rostov u. auf die Oelfelder von Maikop erreicht werden*...Die Mitte vernichtet die Masse von der Heeresgruppe *Timotschenko*, neue Kraefte, die aus Norden herangefuehrt werden, sollten die Stellung um Moskau halten. Sofern die *Wetterlage* sich nicht zunehmend verschlechtert, z.Zt. ist gutes Wetter, 2 bis 5 [Grad] Kaelte – wird die Einschliessung Moskaus nicht durch den Feind verhindert werden koennen.

16.10.41: *Die kuehnsten Hoffnungen schwinden unter Regen u. Schnee.* In der Mitte hat die totale Vernichtung der Hr.Gr. *Timotschenko* den Weg nach Moskau freigemacht. Die letzte feste

³⁹⁸ **Note:** These remarks are intriguing, but I'm not sure what he's driving at. Perhaps something to do w/ his leadership or staff?

Stellung vor der Hauptstadt wurde durch die **Pz.Gr.3** u. Teile der **4. Armee** im Abschnitt zwischen *Maloja Roslawisz* [sp?] u. *Moshaisk* durchbrochen, nur vier Div. u. neue wohl direkt aus der Fabrik herausgefahrene Panzer hat der Russe entgegensustellen. Aber in grundlosen Wegen bleibt alles stecken. Dazwischen gibt es Kaelte bis zu 8 [Grad], 20 cm Schnee u. darauf wieder Regen.

21.10.41: Odessa fiel...Erfolgreiche Angriffe auf die anlaufenden Transporte (ca. 30 000 to vernichtet) konnte nicht hindern, dass die Masse an Truppen in *Sewastopol* einlief u. gegen unsere Krimfront aufgebaut wird. Dementsprechend kam der Angriff der 11. Armee auf der Enge Iuschun [sp?] erst nach sehr schweren verlustreichen Kaempfen im Gang. *Wir haben zudem dort zu wenig Luftwaffe*, insbesondere Jaeger. Ich hatte mich [s.?]Zt. *gegen die Ueberspitzung der Schwerpunktbildung fuer die Hr.Gr.Mitte ausgesprochen*, da zu erwarten war, dass die Verbaende nicht rechtzeitig herankamen bzw. zurueckgeholt werden koennen. Es war am **2.10.** bereits zu erkennen, dass etwa gleichzeitig das Antreten in der Krim auf Rostov u. oben im Wolchow-Abschnitt erfolgen wuerde. Jahreszeitlich waren die Zweifel an der Wetterlage begruetet. – Jetzt *schreit alles* u. man versucht, die Dinge nachtraeglich zu aendern. Es geht auf Kosten der Beanspruchung der Truppen...

15.11.41: Rueckkehr Reichsmarschall. An der Front hat sich – leider – sehr wenig getan. *Kursk* u. *Sewastopol* sind eingeschlossen, bei *Rostov* geht es mal aus Nachschub mal aus Wettergruenden nicht voran. Das Antreten zum Stoss ueber den *Don* hat Erfolge [?] zur Verbesserung der Ausgangsstellung erbracht, blieb aber liegen, nun soll es nachTerminverschiebungen am 16.11. fortgehen....Schwierigkeiten kommen durch den seit 4 Tagen herrschenden Frost (10 bis 20 Grad Kaelte) hinzu. *Eispickel* [sp?] der Panzer fehlen, *Glysanthin* muss im Lufttransport herangeholt werde, das Anspringen der Motoren ist schwierig. Bei uns gelingt das Herausziehen der fuer neue Verwendung der *Luftflotte 2* vorgesehenen Verbaende – langsam aber so, dass errechnete, u. gemeldete Termine Abtransporte, Auffrischung, Umruestung u. Verlegung im Grossen gehalten werden koennen...

Bei *Tichwin* sehr gespannte Lage. Das Gesamtoperation ist mit *zu schwachen Kraeften angesetzt*, die Raeume dehnen sich aus. Die groessere Wintererfahr-ung liegt in Ausbildung u. Ausruestung bei den Russen. Umso hoeher ist die Leistung unserer Truppe zu veranschlagen. Dies umso mehr, als sich weder eine Schwaechung des Widerstands-willens noch [...] Zahl der Ruestung der Russen bisher abzeichnet. Trotzdem werden wir es schaffen.

Gegenueber *Moskau* kommen den Russen unveraendert alle Vorteile einer mit kuerzeren Nachschubweiten, beguenstigten Stellungen [sic] in der Naeh eines Industriegebietes zugute. So kommt durch Tapferkeit der Truppe, zahlensmaessige u. ernaehrungsmaessige Ueberlegenheit allein an Uebergewicht zustande.

23.11.41: Abschluss einer *schwarzen Woche fuer die Luftwaffe*. Udet am **17.11.** *Wilberg* [sp?] mit [K-erbs?] am **21.11** u. gestern *Moedlers* mit He 111 im Einmotorenflug im Abflug auf ZZ nach *Gandau* [sp?] mit besonders guter Besatzung infolge Ausfall auch des 2.Motors unmittelbar vor dem Platz abgetrudelt [i.e., went into *tailspin*] u. tot...Fuer uns als Folge von Udet's Tod hoechst unerfreuliche Spannungen, die *Jesch.* 3 Tage im Bette hielten. Nunmehr duerfen wir bis auf weitere nicht mehr fliegen...

Gute Fortschritte auch ohne Mitwirkung der durch Wetterlage behinderten *Luftwaffe* noerdl. der *Autobahn* u. nordwestl. Moskaus, wo heute *Klin* u. *Solnetschnogorosk* genommen wurde. Leider liegt die 4.Armee suedl. der Autobahn nach Abwehr der schweren russ. Angriffe fest...

27.11.41: An der Ostfront *keine wesentliche Veraenderungen*. 2.Pz.Armees erreichte den *Oka-Abschnitt* bei *Kaschira* – Sicherungskraefte rechts heraus im Raum noerdl. *Michailow* [sp?] u. *Skopin*, das wieder aufgegeben werden musste. Sollte es gelingen, durch konzentrischen Angriff auf *Tula* u. *Kaschira* den Gegner dort noch zu vernichten, waere es schoen. ***Ich glaube aber an keinen Erfolg mehr, die Truppe ist ziemlich fertig.*** Kaelte, schlechter Zustand der Ausruestung u. Bekleidung haben ihre Stosskraft verringert. – Noerdl. Moskau wurde zwar *Istra* u. *Solnogorsk* genommen. Aber es zeichnet sich weder die Moeglichkeit einer vollstaendigen Einschliessung Moskaus noch ein derart nahes Herankommen an die Hauptstadt ab, dass die Ruestungswerke im artilleristischen Beschuss ausgeschaltet werden...

28.11.41: Osten. Zunehmend starker Feinddruck auf *Rostow*, von Sueden u. Norden macht die Ruecknahme der Ostfront (**60.mot.**), gestern auch der Stadt *Rostow* selbst erforderlich. Es hat an sich nichts zu bedeuten, da die Absicht, nach Sueden vorzustossen sich vorerst [*for the time being*] nicht verwirklichen laesst. *Um Moskau gute Entwicklung der Lage im Nordwesten*. Im Sueden bezweifle ich einen Erfolg. Wenn es gelingt, durch konzentrischen Angriff von der **17. PD** (*Guderian*) aus *Kaschira* [nach] Suedwesten im Verein mit den [**XXXIII. Ak.**]³⁹⁹ *Aleksin* die Ecke um *Tula* zu bereinigen, kann man meines Erachtens zufrieden sein.

3.12.41:...Am **2.12.** abends wurde die vorsorglich behelfmaessig ausgebaute *Mius-Stellung* eingenommen, die wohl gehalten werden wird. *Stunden erheblicher Erregung mit dramatischen Szenen*. – Wir muessen – leider – ein muehselig fertiggemachtes *Fallschirmbataillon* zusammenstellen u. am **5.12.** zum Abmarsch bereithalten. – *Reserven sind freilich kaum da*. Die Abwehr durch Versaeumnisse in der Bevorratung der **Lfl.4** kann nicht zum naechsten Einsatz der Lw. gebracht werden. Bodenpersonal u. *Waermegerate* fehlen mehr als Flugzeuge, deren Wartung [durch] Kaelte erschwert u. nicht in erwuenschem Ausmasse einsatzbereit gemacht werden koennen. – Nachts **1./2.12** entschliesst sich der *Fuehrer* zum Flug nach *Mariupol*, um in persoenlicher Aussprache mit der **1.Pz.Armees**...

In der Mitte begann der Angriff der **4.Armees**, nachdem die **Pz.Gr.3 u. 4** bereits seit Tagen in fortschreitendem Angriff auf Moskau noerdl. der Autobahn lagen. Anfangs erfolgte beiderseits [----] ... bis *Trotzkoje* [sp?] wurden in der Nacht **2./3.12.** durch Nachtangriff der Russen zunichte gemacht. **3.u. 4. Pz.Gr.** geringer Bodengewinn. Praktisch kommt der Angriff zum Erliegen. *Das gesteckte Ziel, Einschliessung Moskaus, wird damit nicht mehr erreicht...*

So findet der Ostfeldzug nicht das erstrebte Endziel: *Leningrad* kann noch erreicht werden. *Moskaus* Einschliessung entfaellt. *Rostow* mit Brueckenkoepfen ostwaerts des *Don* als Ausgangspunkt fuer die *Maikop*[truppe?] ging verloren. Es darf andererseits *kein Pessimismus aufkommen*. Wir haben ein Riesen-Territorium erobert, sehr wichtige Erzeugnisstaetten u. Rohstoffvorkommen fortgenommen, schliesslich die Russen ca. **5.Mill.** Mann Verluste (**3,6** Gefangene, **1,4** Mann Tote) beigebracht. Der Krieg streckt sich, wird haerter u. laenger.

6.12.41: ...Um *Moskau* leidet die Truppe durch Mangel an Winterbekleidung u. Frosteinwirkung. *Man wird hier zu eis kalten Entschlüssen kommen muessen*, sonst zerbricht viel. Es erscheint unmoeglich, angesichts einer Millionenstadt zum Stellungskrieg ueberzugehen, da kurzfristig staerkste Kraefte unbemerkt ausbrechen u. durchstossen koennen. *Die Truppe hat es sehr, sehr schwer*. – Die Unterstuetzung durch die *Luftwaffe* ist *durch Frost stark behindert*.

14.12.41: Osten: Um es kurz zu machen: *Es ist die angespannteste Krise des Krieges...*Folgende Fragen liegen an:

³⁹⁹ **Note:** Does he mean **43. AK**?

1.) Absetzen auf (von **OKH** vorgeschlagene Linie) Kursk – Orel – Moshaisk – Stariza.

2.) Frontalhalten

Zu 1.) *Nachteile*: Verzicht auf Versuch Masse schweren Materials zu retten. Den Russen die operativ wichtigen Verbindungen Moskau-Kalinin u. [...] Tula – Voronesch in die Hand zu geben. Moegliche *Vorteile Frontverkuerzung um 170 km*, Versuch Truppe von naechsten Verbindungen Moskaus russ.Front (?) abzusetzen, zugunsten der Abwehr.

Zu 2.) *Nachteile*: Moeglicher Zusammenbruch der Mitte durch laufendes frontales Abringen. Moeglicher Vorteil ist mir nicht klar. *Ich sehe in der Loesung I die einzige*. Soeben geht *Fuehrerweisung* ein, dass Zurueckgehen nicht erfolgen darf. Nur die Aufgabe des vorspringenden Zipfels zwischen *Istra* u. *Kalinin* wird zugestanden.

15.12.41: ...Die Lage von Hr.Gr. Mitte gibt immer noch zu Besorgnissen Anlass...Schwerwiegend der *Einbruch westl. Tula*, weil 1.) Dort kaum Kraefte greifbar sind u. 2) der Russe mit kurzen Entfernungen auf Moskau dorthin nachschieben kann...

19.12.41: Es waren erhebliche *Krisentage*! Heute ist wenigstens keine Verschlechterung der Lage eingetreten...Die Mitte: Zu den grossen Luecken kam ein Einbruch bei *Sarpushnow* [sp?]. Wir haben – wie an der ganzen Front – *keine Reserven*. **200 Transporter haben wir zusammengezogen**, die letzten Reserven – u. **fliegen ab heute Infanterie nach vorne**. Es ist ein einfaches operatives Problem.

Wegeverhaeltnisse erschweren die Mitnahme schweren Materials. Koennen wir nicht halten, bleibt es liegen u. die ganze Mitte kan ueberrant werden, solange der Russe selbst sitzen kann. So sind daher *schaerfste Befehle* erlassen, ohne Ruecksicht auf Durchbruch mit der Masse *frontal zu halten*. – **Ermuedungserscheinungen** bei Truppe u. Fuehrung, Wettereinwirkung u. Nachschub-schwierigkeiten kommen hinzu u. vermehren die *Schockwirkung*.

Trotzdem *bin ich ueberzeugt*, dass *keine operative Krise eintritt*, dass *sich die Lage in etwa 14 Tagen bereinigt*.

20.12.41: Die Lage der Hr.Gr.Mitte ist unveraendert *gespannt*. – In der Einbruchsstelle bei *Liwny* wurden frische russ. Kraefte nachgefuehrt...Unsere **Lufttransporte**, die mit einem Aufwand an Betriebsstoff **10 000** Mann an die Front fliegen, sind durch schlechtes Wetter beeintraehtigt. – Die Abgaenge an der Front vermindern die Kampfkraft des Heeres mehr als der Nachschub an Zuwachs bringen kann. Nun, man darf die Lage des Gegners auch nicht ueberschaetzen...

(**Note**: In this diary entry, von Waldau also refers to the “*Schwaeeche [der russ.] Luftwaffe*, die sehr wenig aktiv ist.”)

24.12.41: Klarer Schnee – u. Frosttag. Die Lage hat sich insofern nicht besonders unguenstig entwickelt, als *Kaluga* noch haelt, aber der *Russe fuehrt sehr starke Kraefte in den Raum westl. Tula*, die ab heute ein Zuruecknahme der rechten Flanke der **4.Armee** erfordern. Damit wird unter der Voraussetzung, dass das Absetzen gelingt – die tiefe Flanke der 4.Armee u. ihre rueckwaertige Verbindung entlastet, aber das **Loch zwischen Guderian u. 4. Armee (ca. 100 km duenn besetzt)** noch nicht geschlossen. – Auf der *Krim* gewann der Angriff der **11.Armee (22.ID)** gut an Boden.

An der ganzen Front werden alle – z.T. mit sehr starkem Personaleinsatz – vorgetragenen russ. Angriffe abgewehrt. – Es ist *Heiliger Abend*. Ich sprach kurz zu meinen Leuten. Ein kleiner *Tannenbaum* brannte. Aber es *wuergte mich im Halse*. Man empfand nur *Wehmut, kaum Freude*. Es lastet ja viel Bedrueckendes auf mir. Es ist nicht die aeusserst gespannte Lage in der Mitte, sondern verschiedene Umstaende, die ich als Spannung wertere. – Brauchitsch, Rundstedt, Bock. – Wo bleibt verpflichtende Dankbarkeit fuer dieses Leben der Arbeit u. Pflicht? Der *Reichsmarshall ist nun seit Tagen fort*. Er feiert Weihnachten zu Hause. Ich bin zufrieden, dass ich hier blieb. Man muss auch im Kleinen ein Beispiel geben. Wir werden uns an ganz andere, harte Zeiten gewoehnen muessen.

Ich denke an die Kinder, u. das Mitwissen um ihre Freude ist mir als Weihnacht genug.

25.12.41: Ich beginne Gesamtlage [?] wieder Vertrauen zu fassen. Wenn die Ereignisse der naechsten 8 Tage keine grundsaeztliche Aenderung ergeben, *sind wir ueber den ersten Berg des Winterfeldzuges*. Die bedrohliche Feindlage kann dann im Wesentlichen als gebannt gelten. Als zweite Schwierigkeit bleibt dann Schnee u. Nachschub. *Panzerreserven* (?) sollten aber zurueckgestellt bleiben [?]. Was mich wieder im Glauben bestaerkt, einen groesseren Zusammenbruch verhindern zu koennen, sind 2 Dinge:

1.) Der Russe setzt seine Massenangriffe an sehr zahlreichen Stellen der gesamten Front fort. Operativ schiene [?] er richtiger die nunmehr erkannte schwaechste Stelle suedl. *Kaluga – Odejewo* [?] zum operativen Durchbruch durch Zusammenfassung staerkster Kraefte in Richtung *Wjasma* auszunutzen. Er hat dort jet zwei Gruppen zu je 5. Inf., 1 Pz., 1 KD [?] u. 7. Inf.Div [?], 1 Pz. Zusammengebracht. Die z.Zt. aufgebracht Kraefte sind meines Erachtens kaum Volldivisionen, immerhin eine *oertliche Ueberlegenheit, die beachtlich ist*. Es wird dort noch Krisen geben. Es kommt jedoch ab morgen 1. Inf.Div. [German?] heran u. zum tiefen Durchbruch braucht er noch mehr.

2.) Der *Abwehrwille* der Front ist – wieder – da. Man hat den *Schock ueberwunden*. Dieser wirkte umso staerker, als mot. – u. Pz.Verbaende aus der Vorwaertsbewegung stark angegriffen u. geschlagen furchtbar heilloes Durcheinander u. damit der Panik sind...

Wir haben bis gestern **7 500 Mann** im *Lufttransport* zur **4.Armee** gebracht...⁴⁰⁰ Wir bilden eine *Ob.d.L.-Reserve (I.KG.77, II.KG 54, 1.JG 2* unter Ausscheiden aus Befehlsbereich Ob.Sued) u. eine *Jagdgruppe 54* u. **I.KG 55**. Sie soll in Ostpreussen zur Verstaerkung von Mitte order Nord bereitgehalten werden.

29.12.41: ...Der rechte Fluegel **2.Armee** wehrte – z.T. unter erfolgreicher Abwehr von Panzern mit der *Rotkopfmunition* (?) – im allgemeinen Feindangriffe bei *Tim* u. am *Truchy* (?) – Bogen [?] ab...*Kaluga* musste heute Nacht aufgegeben werden. Leider unter *Verlust von 4 bis 5 Flakbatterien*...Gestern sehr schwere Angriffe auf **9.Armee (II. AK)**. Dramatische Differenz ueber Beurteilung der Lage durch *Richtofen* u. II. AK fuehren zur Abberufung des Kommandierenden Generals II. AK. (General **Forster**). Stattdessen soll *Richtofen* bis zum Eintreffen des neuen Herrn II. AK. fuehren...

2.1.42: Mann kann nicht sagen, dass der *Jahreswechsel* unter gluecklichen mil. Anzeichen sich vollzieht. Die Lage is gespannt. – Gespannter als vor 8 Tagen. Meldungen aus japanischer Quelle, die Russen haetten nunmehr ihre operativen Reserven aufgebraucht, finden gerne

⁴⁰⁰ **Note:** Included in this number must be the **SS-IR 4** (see, *W. Tieke*, “*Die dt. 4.Armee vor Moskau.*”)

Glauben. Fuer den nuechternbleibenden Beurteiler der Lage [!] bleiben sie Annahme ohne Begrueundung im Einzelnen. Die Lage: Hr.Gr.Mitte...2. u. 2.Pz.Armee im allgemeinen in erfolgreicher Abwehr...Die ersten Teile der herangeholten **26. ID** wehren vor *Suchinitschi* starke russ. Angriffe verlustreich fen den Gegner [?] ab. *Wir hatten durch Einsatz der Luftwaffe dabei erheblichen Anteil...Westl. Kaluga* u. noerdl. planmaessiges Absetzen der **4.Armee**. Dagegen ist der tiefe Einbruch ueber *Nawo Forminsk* bis *Malojaroslawsk* durchgedrungen u. hat nach Norden [?] Raum gewonnen. Ich stelle in diesem Zusammenhang erneut fest, dass die Hr.Gr. die Dinge doch besser sieht bzw. gesehen hatte, als die Armee [?]. Es ist haeufig, dass untere Dienststellen aus Sorge sich dem *Odium einer Schwarzscheri* auszusetzen, *die Dinge weniger besorgt darstellen*. Wir sind in einer Lage, in der die kleinsten taktischen Vorgaenge in der Lage sind, rasch in operativen Folgen hineinzuwachsen. [Diese]? Sehen z.T. auch nicht die ganzen Armeen [?]. Die gleiche Gefahr besteht durch oertliche Besuche einzelner Abgesandter u. hoechster Stellen. [...er] Kommandeur will ohne zwingendsten Grund die Lage als aeusserst ernst u. gespannt sehen u. darstellen, wenn er weiss, dass er hierbei in das Rampenlicht rueckt. Es soll hier nicht behauptet werden, dass bewusste Schoenfaerberei betrieben wird. Aber die *seelischen Umstaende* unter denen Aeusserungen fallen, muessen irgendwie in positiver oder negativer Hinsicht in Rechnung gestellt werden. Es liegt mitunter auch nur an der Frische der am Telephon hoerbaren Stimme, um beim Empfaenger den Eindruck gehobener oder gefestigter Zuversicht zu erwecken, welche zu leicht als dann allgemeine Haltung eines grosseren Frontbereichs ausgewertet u. vorgetragen wird...

4.1.42: Gestern lange Bespechung in *Rominten*. Sie hinterliess bei mir denkbar – bedenklichste Eindruecke. Man kann nicht ohne Kenntnis in gewissen Dingen im einzelnen Leute in den Grund u. Boden verurteilen, deren Handlungen im Effekt Rueckschlaege bedeuten. Man soll nicht in Dinge im einzelnen von oben her hineinbefehlen, u. fuer Ausgang andere Leute verantwortlich machen. – Mann kann u. darf selbst einen weniger gluecklichen Kom.Gen. oeffentlich[41/2 Zeilen nicht lesbar].....*Es bestaerkt mich in dem Entschluss, meine Stellung zu verzichten*. Ich habe sie seit 3 Jahren fast im ausschliesslich [?] Entsagen u. Arbeit [?] nach besten Wissen u. Gewissen ausgefuellt. Kleinlichste Hingabe u. der *Dauerzustand einer seelischen Knechtschaft* haben eine Belastung auf mich gehaeuft, die ich ertragen habe, deren daurende Buerde [?] ich in Verbindung mit der Erkenntnis grundlegender Verantwortlichkeit auf die Dauer doch nicht ausueben zu koennen, nach 3 Jahren abzugeben mich berechtigt [?] fuehle.

Ich habe meine Offiziere zu einer Einheit u. Arbeit erzogen, die nichts darstellt als schweigende Pflichterfuellung u. selbstloses Opfer. Sie treten nicht hervor, dafuer arbeiten sie sehr. Das hohe Glueck eines verantwortlichen Kommandeurs blieb ihnen zum grossen Teil versagt, aber es bleibt sein Ehrgeiz, sie in einer ganz bestimmten Richtung zu formen u. zu foerdern. So blieb die Ueberzeugung, hier im kleinen Rahmen einen Teil hervorragend veranlagter Offiziere in Ausbildung u. Haltung weitergebracht zu haben, das Einzige an Freude u. Befriedigung als *Chef der I.Abteilung...*

16.1.42: Eine Woche netten *Urlaubs* in *Blankenburg* [?] liegt hinter mir. Die Lage hat sich inzwischen wenig guenstig fortentwickelt...**2.Armee** zu Hr.Gr.Sued uebergetreten. Hierfuer war Entwicklung in der Mitte bestimmend.

Hr.Gr.Mitte: Ein sehr haesslich tiefer Einbruch ueber *Suchinitschi* heraus gewann nach Westen [?] weit am Boden. Z.Zt. halten sich die beiderseitigen Kraefte die Waage. Der Russe hat vorerst Nachschub[----?]. Div. *Gilsa* in *Suchinitschi* eingeschlossen. Wird vorerst *aus der Luft versorgt*. Ob man sie heraushauen kann, erscheint fraglich...

24.1.42: Die Lage hat sich in der Mitte etwas *gefestigt*. Der Angriff auf *Suchinitschi* fuehrt heute zur Verbindung mit der Div. *Gilsa*, die seit 10 Tagen eingeschlossen war...Der *Gesamteindruck*: *Zunehmend gespannte Versorgungslage*, zunehmende Festigung der Mitte...

Die Zusammenarbeit mit dem Heer wird durch einseitige Ansprueche gekennzeichnet. Ton u. Haltung bewegt sich in Formen, die den von uns gebrachten Opfern nicht gerecht werden. Wir beanspruchen keine Sonderstellung aber die *Gleichberechtigung* in Wertung [?] all dessen, was wir ausschliesslich zugunsten des Heeres in diesen Wochen tun. Es ist unerfreulich, nur dringende Forderungen zu empfangen, die einseitig sind, genau so wie der Versuch, sich mit meinen Kollegen ueber gegenseitige Lagebeurteilung, Auffassung u. Massnahmen auszusprechen...Heute Abreise mit *Asienzug* via *Berlin* nach dem Sueden. Erhebliche Vorbereitungen, deren Schwergewicht auf dem Bekleidungsfach liegt. *Man geht in solchen Zeiten ungerne fort.*

End of Waldau Tagebuch

1) Attachment to Tagebuch:

Besprechung 14.6.41 Reichkanzlei

Oberbefehlshaber, Flottenchefs

Tischrede bei Hitler

Hauptgegner bleibt *England*. England kaempft solange der Kampf Sinn hat, dies ueberhaupt typisch engl. Eigenart. Sowohl erwiesen durch Verhalten des engl. Einzelkaempfers (Flandern) wie durch Duenkirchen, Greichenland, Kreta. Englands Kampf hat nur Sinn, solange Hoffnung besteht, dass amerikanische Hilfe wirksam u. Moeglichkeit kontinentaler Unterstuetzung gegeben ist. Daher Hoffnung auf russ. Eingreifen, starker dt. Bindung, Verringerung der Wehrwirtschaft u. Kraefteausgleich durch amerikanische Hilfe. Diese z.Zt. sehr gering. Vor Sommer 1942 nicht wirksam, sofern Tonnage-herueberbringen gewaehrleistet. Tonnageverluste nehmen zu...

Russlands Haltung daurend ungewiss. Jeder Moment politischer oder militaerischer Bindung wurde sofort zu politischen Forderungen ausgenutzt. Dies ist festzustellen,

- a) Im Eingreifen Russlands im Polenfeldzug
- b) dasselbe gegen Ostseestaaten, Finnland
- c) im Balkan (Besarabien, Freundschaftspakt mit Jugoslavien...)

Also laufende Versuche, vorzustossen. Diese Versuche, in zeitlichem Zusammenhang mit gewissen Schwaechemomenten der dt. Lage lassen erwarten, dass in Zukunft jede Moeglichkeit ausgenutzt wird, gegen dt. Interessen zu handeln. Die *Staerke der russ. Wehrmacht* laesst die Entlassung von [dt.] Soldaten u. ihre Zufuehrung an Ruestungs- u. Verbrauchsindustrie solange nicht zu, als die *latente russ. Bedrohung* besteht. Dies gilt auch im Falle eines Friedensschlusses mit England. Auseinandersetzung daher *fruehzeitig* [?] *erwuenscht*, ja *zwingend notwendig*, bevor guenstige Voraussetzungen hierfuer verpasst sind. Dies gilt auch hinsichtlich des militaerischen Aufmarsches. Die *Masse der russ. Kraefte steht an der Grenze*. Es besteht die Aussicht, sie vorne zu schlagen. ..

2) Attachment to Tagebuch:

Betrachtungen zum Jahresabschluss 1941

„Die Jahreswende hat uns erstmalig mil. Krisen u. Rueckschläge gebracht. Sie werden im grossen Rahmen ueberwunden werden. Ihre Folgen sind jedoch nicht zu unterschätzen. Sie haben gewisse *Vertrauenskrisen* im Gefolge, die nicht unbedenklich sind...

Das Ziel des Feldzuges gegen Russland ist nicht erreicht. Der letzte *Griff nach der Siegespalme* durch Wegnahme von *Rostov, Moskau u. Leningrad* misslang. Nicht nur das, sondern der misslungene Versuch brachte uns militärisch in die denkbar unglücklichste Lage. Dieser waren wir weder nach Ausrüstung, Nachschub, Verbindungen u. Kräften ausreichen gewachsen. Wenn sie bei Inkaufnahme starker Ausfälle u. personellem Materials gemeistert werden kann, dann *nur durch die Truppe*. Denn man kann nicht sagen, dass Führungsmassnahmen ausreichen können...

Die Betrachtungen militärischer Art waren unvollständig ohne einen Blick auf die *innere Haltung des Volkes*. ***Der Krieg wird jetzt sehr ernst***, Ernährung u. Transportlage ist nur bedingt gesichert. Der *Ruecktritt von Brauchitsch hat – wie ich feststellen musste – sehr viel tiefere Erschütterungen verursacht, als schlechthin anzunehmen war*. Gerade der „kleine Mann“ wird unsicher, insbesondere durch Ausbleiben einiger Worte danksagender Anerkennung an den ObdH, der das Heer in drei siegreichen, sogar glorreichen Feldzügen führte. – Der anschliessende Wechsel in höchsten Kommandostellen des Heeres – in ihren Gruenden der Allgemeinheit [*public at large*] unbekannt – verstärkt diesen Eindruck...

Noch bleibt Hoffnung, dass das Fruehjahr wieder durch mil. Erfolge all jene Niedergeschlagenheit u. Unebenheiten beseitigen hilft. Der bewusste *Opferwille der Nation* ist wohl kaum in Preussens – Deutschlands – Geschichte allgemein so gross gewesen, wie in diesem Kriege. Es kommt darauf an, ihn zu erhalten u. nicht durch kleine *Machthaber* zu ersticken.

Januar 42.

1.10: Logistics:⁴⁰¹

Note: As Robert Citino has observed, the “subject of logistics in the campaign deserves more attention than it has received. (*Death of the Wehrmacht*, 328, f.n. 73)

Note: „The simple fact that we were being supplied *restored some of our confidence*. We felt that we hadn’t lost all contact w/ the outside world.“ (*Sajer*, 205)

Note: There has been a profusion of accounts, studies, and analyses examining – from strategic, operational, and tactical angles – why Germany did not succeed in bringing the campaign against the Soviet Union to a victorious conclusion in **1941**, and why Operation “Barbarossa” failed. In contrast, *logistic aspects, questions of transportation and supply, have hardly received any attention*. (*K. Schueler, “The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem,”* 205)

⁴⁰¹ **Note:** According to *Martin van Creveld*, as of late 1970s no detailed logistic study of Russian campaign, the largest ever conducted on land, had ever been undertaken. (*Supplying War*, 148)

Note: Although my discussion of the major armed components making up Germany's invasion force reveals many of the institutional flaws within each service, the *Achilles heel* upon which all rested was logistics. . . When one takes into account the great distances and poor infrastructure of the Soviet Union, the issue of logistics, w/ all its foreboding implications, *stands at the forefront of problems to be encountered*. . . The German Army's supply system was simply incapable of adequately sustaining anything further than a penetration of about **500** kilometers into the Soviet Union. . . The task of organizing the logistics for "Barbarossa" belonged to the Quartermeister-General, Maj-Gen. Wagner. He had been instructed on **1 Aug 40** to begin his planning – the same day that Maj-Gen. Marcks was reporting to Halder his planned conduct of the operation. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 88-91)

Note: There can be "no doubt that the German operations in the east were underpinned by *irresponsible staff work and shameless over-confidence*." In **1940-41** Germany stood at the height of its overwhelming military success and, flushed w/ the accolades of past victories, Hitler's generals eagerly accepted each new task. The challenges presented by Operation *Barbarossa* seemed less threatening than those faced by the ultimately victorious campaign in the west. The collective shame of those generals, who had dared doubt the invasion of France and the Low Countries, soon extinguished future skepticism and confused the line between reasoned objection and pessimistic cynicism. . . Beginning such a major campaign w/ such a deplorable base in logistics and supply was an obvious symptom of the larger problem. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 95)

Note: The German invasion of the Soviet Union was the largest single military operation of all time, and the *logistic problems involved of an order of magnitude that staggers the imagination*. For the Russian campaign, the *Wehrmacht* never had sufficient means available, and this was even more true of raw materials, reserve stocks and means of transportation than it was of combat forces...The *Wehrmacht* that set out to conquer Russia in 1941 was *a poor army* w/ strictly limited resources; and success—from the logistic point of view—depended above all on a *correct balance between railways, wheels and tracks*. (*Supplying War, van Creveld*, 175, 177)

Note: The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) viewed the speed and decisiveness w/ which major combat ops were conducted in Iraq as a validation of its belief in the *power of transformation*. However, Operation Iraqi Freedom also demonstrated another truth: Without adequate and modern logistics, even the most advanced combat force faces the very real possibility of defeat.

In making the case for defense transformation, Paul Wolfowitz, deputy secretary of defense, is fond of citing the example of the German *Wehrmacht* that conquered much of Europe w/ a force that was only 10% transformed. What he fails to note is that the *Wehrmacht* failed in North Africa and Russia primarily because of the *failures of the German supply chain*. In Iraq, fast moving U.S. forces *outran their supply lines*. In one instance, the offensive almost came to a complete halt due to a dearth of radio batteries. („*Logistics Backbone. Transformation Sputters without Industrial Base*," Daniel Goure, in: *Defense News*, 21 Jun 04.)

One of the *most glaring defects* in mapping out the preinvasion strategy was the *scant attention paid to the logistical difficulties of supporting troops deep inside Russia*. The general assumption seems to have been that the *first great rush of mechanized forces would carry to Smolensk and destroy the Red Army in the border areas*. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 79)

Germany's greatest weaknesses lay in the logistical realm. Only **40,000** miles of hard-surfaced, all-weather roads and **51,000** miles of railroads spanned the vast Soviet Union, and the railroads were of a wider gauge than those found in Germany. Even though they frantically converted captured rail-lines to western gauge as they advanced, German logistical organs had to transfer most of their supplies forward employing whatever Soviet-gauge rolling stock they could capture. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 22)

At Army Group Center, the construction of a forward base (after capture of *Smolensk*) took the *best part of two months* and even then some crucially important items, including above all spare parts, tyres and engine oil, remained in short supply. There is ***no doubt that the logistic situation would not have allowed an advance on Moscow at the end of Aug 41***. At the very best, a force of between 14 and 17 armored, motorized and infantry divisions might have been so employed, and whether this would have been enough, even in Sep 41, to break through the city's defenses is very much open to question. By preventing *Guderian* from being sent to *Kiev*, OKH would have spared his tanks much wear and tear and perhaps made it possible to speed up the replenishment of **2nd Army**. The main force of Army Group Center *would not have been affected*, however, for their supplies came thorough another railway-line. The performance of the line was such that, even as late as **26 Sep 41**, fuel stocks of Army Group Center *were actually falling*. The delay imposed by Hitler's decision to give the Ukraine priority over Moscow was therefore ***far shorter than the usual estimate of six weeks***. ***The postponement***, if there was one, can ***hardly have amounted to more than a week or two, at the very most***. (*Supplying War*, 176)

The difficulties experience in building up a base for the attack on Moscow also rule out another suggestion that is sometimes made—that Hitler, instead of *dissipating his forces in simultaneous offensives along three divergent axes*, ought to have concentrated them for a single attack on Moscow. The logistic situation ruled out such a solution, for the few roads and railroads available would not have allowed such a force to be supplied. It would have been *utterly impossible* to construct an adequate forward base for a force of such a size—after all, the concentration of some **70** divisions for „*Taifun*“ gave rise to very great difficulties. (*Supplying War*, 176-77)

Psychological effect of ammunition shortages: News of the desperate fighting in *Stalingrad* caused another *Landser*, ***Harry Mielert*** to write: „They are defending themselves w/ entrenching spades and rifle butts. When a soldier has no more ammunition he is lonely. Ammunition...*gives him confidence and security*; it also has a *metaphysical impact* on his heart. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 30)

The German army was ***not modern enough*** to overcome [its many] difficulties easily; our *supply and transportation systems* in Russia were especially dependent on *improvisations* because of the peculiarities of terrain and climate. From the outset of the campaign, supply columns had to be *improvised* from motor vehicles of every type that had been requisitioned from private owners. Many of these vehicles were in poor condition and therefore of little service, and the *problem of replacing spare parts* for so many different types of trucks caused *incessant difficulties*. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 8)

R. Kershaw: Re: The logistic ***trip wire***' impedient: „This invisible motor transport shuttle line stretching **500km** beyond the Reich frontier meant a rail network had to be quickly established beyond to bring fighting divisions up to their full logistic combat supplements. With half the lorry fleet out of action and no capability quickly to reconfigure Russian railway gauges, an intangible logistic hurdle was created stymieing any further strategic advances on Moscow. Adverse weather – first mud and then sub-arctic temperatures – ensued, preventing practical

and sustainable logistic support. An irretrievable breakdown of the Ostheer's logistic ability to support an offensive was the result. Wheeled and rail transport was unable to cope.” (*War Without Garlands*, 240)

Note: While the parallels between World War II and today [i.e., **Dec 01**] are obvious, in fact the most fitting Churchillian episode to recall for our present time may not be **1940**, but rather his earlier experience in the British reconquest of the Sudan in **1898**, which he wrote about in his classic, The River War. . . Space does not allow even the most cursory recounting of the features of the Sudan campaign. . . [which] Churchill describes masterfully in *some of the best war writing ever done*. One of Churchill's most memorable passages describes how logistics determined the outcome:

In a tale of war the reader's mind is filled w/ the fighting. The battle – w/ its vivid scenes, its moving incidents, its plain and tremendous results – excites the imagination and commands attention. . . The long trailing line of communications is unnoticed. . . *Victory is the beautiful, bright-colored flower. **Transport is the stem w/o which it could never have blossomed.*** Yet even the military student, in his zeal to master the fascinating combinations of the actual conflict, often forgets the *far more intricate complications of supply*. . . Fighting the Dervish⁴⁰² was primarily a *matter of transport*. The Khalifa was conquered on the railway.

This explains Churchill's pre-eminent interest in logistics in his later career, both in World War I and World War II. (“*A Churchillian Perspective on September 11*,” Steven Hayward, at: <http://www.ashbrook.org>, Dec 01.)

Crux [Why supply services failed]: It may be that the principal reason for the failure of supply leadership lay in the *fundamental errors of operational thinking*, which was based on a belief that the bulk of the Red Army could be destroyed west of the Dnieper, and that relatively few forces would be required to occupy the remainder of European Russia.⁴⁰³ As far as the Dnieper – Dvina line, supplies *proved to be secure and generally functioned satisfactorily*. By contrast, the conditions for an adequate reconstruction of the supply-base on the far side of the Dnieper were wholly lacking. Even in **Jul 41** it was obvious that the operations plan had failed [*obvious to whom?*]. Despite this, no new war plan was developed to take account of economic and logistical possibilities. Hitler and the military leadership held to the strategic goal of the elimination of the Soviet Union as a military factor in **1941**. . . Their *improvised operational thinking* was based on the assumption that the enemy was on the verge of collapse, and that guaranteed and secure supply services could be dispensed with. . .

The Quartermaster-General was not prepared to fetter [?] the operational leadership by pointing out the realities of the supply situation. He accepted the risk of supplying the troops along diminishing supply-routes. . . Wagner subordinated himself completely to the operational leadership [i.e., to Halder], even when he knew that the Army in the east had reached the limits of its strength in men and material. His conduct was partly a response to his position in the military hierarchy, and to the traditional failure to value the role of quartermaster-general in comparison

⁴⁰² **Note:** The Mahdi's warriors were known as the Dervishes.

⁴⁰³ **Note:** In other words, Ou.Gen. Wagner based his logistics planning – allocation of resources, etc. – on the basic assumption that “Barbarossa” would be over in a matter of weeks, and that only a small occupying force (**56** divisions) would need to be supplied.

w/ the art of operational leadership.⁴⁰⁴ (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV, 1141*)

*H. Boog, et al., "Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: The Attack on the Soviet Union."*⁴⁰⁵

- The supply task which had to be mastered by Quartermaster-General Wagner for "Barbarossa" "*outstripped all historical precedents.*" Over **3,000.000** men, with ca. **600,000** motor vehicles and around the same number of horses, had to be supplied w/ rations, fuel, ammunition, replacement parts, and other requirements of war. All this had to be achieved along a front stretching over **2500** kilometers from the North Cape to the Black Sea; within a few weeks, moreover, this front was due to reach operational objectives lying **1500** kilometers from the starting positions. The territorial, climatic, and geographical conditions were all very different from those previously encountered by German armies during World War II. (1107)
- The role of the Army High Command [**OKH**] was to calculate and obtain in advance the outlay that would be necessary to achieve the envisaged goals of conquest. Some of the factors involved were almost impossible to predict. These included the speed of the advance (on which depended the consumption of fuel), the intensity of enemy resistance (which determined ammunition expenditures), and – most of all – the duration of the campaign. The **OKH** was *too ready to rely on optimistic assumptions* – that the expenditure of ammunition would be no greater than during the campaign against France; that much of the army's food could be obtained from the land; and that the Red Army could be completely destroyed in front of the Dnieper-Dvina line. (1108)
- Even if these assumptions correct, difficulties remained which overstretched the capabilities of the Wehrmacht. For example, the problem of supplying tyres was almost impossible to solve because of the bottleneck in rubber supplies in Germany. From the outset, a high level of wastage had to be expected in the motorized columns, which had to negotiate the few and poor roads and trackless terrain. *Virtually no replacements were available.* Armored vehicles were also affected by the shortage, because the development of a pure metal track was still not complete, and the rubber-padded tracks in use were not sufficiently durable. (1108)
- Most serious was the fuel shortage. While civilian and military consumption had been drastically reduced before the start of the campaign, and the motorization of the Army was kept within extremely narrow limits, a reserve of three [3] monthly consumption quotas was all that had been provided. Direct imports from Romania to the eastern front promised to provide some relief. On the other hand, captured stocks would be of little assistance, since Soviet fuels had a lower octane rating and could not be used in German engines w/o

⁴⁰⁴ **Note:** Failure of Wagner's leadership in logistics arena due in part to deeply engrained cultural biases within the German Army General Staff – biases which clearly diminished the status and significance of the field of Supply (Versorgungswesen). Megargee addresses this issue at some length in his book on the German High Command.

⁴⁰⁵ **Note:** Following "bullets" gleaned from this semi-official Germany history of the war.

adaptation. . . Overall, it had to be assumed that there would be a fuel shortage by **Jul 41** at the latest. (1108)

- Another problem was the enormous need for replacement parts by the Army in the east. This was caused not only by expected wear and tear on motor-vehicles, but also by the use of over **2000** different types of vehicle as a result of the use of captured material. More than **1,000,000** different [types of] spare parts were required in the area covered by AGC alone. (1108-09)
- In the ammunition sector, the Chief of Army Armament Programmes had initially demanded a reserve of **12** monthly consumption quotas, based on the highest levels of consumption during the French campaign. This could not be achieved because ammunition manufacture had to take second place to wpns production. Beyond the two to three basic issues [*erste Ausstattungen?*], the army in the east had minimal reserves at its disposal. . . (1109)
- The problem of providing adequate supplies was overshadowed by the difficulty of transferring to the front such material as was available. Logistically, the sheer extent of the planned operations could be mastered only w/ help of the rail system. The railway network in the Soviet Union, however, was inadequate. . . Their intention to wage a lightning campaign forced the Germans to *rely more than before on the use of motor-vehicle convoys*, requiring increased costs (fuel, wear and tear, men) for smaller payloads. Some **1600** lorries were needed to replace the capacity of a double-track stretch of railway. Moreover, there were not even enough motor-vehicles available to equip all the divisions of the Army in the east w/ the planned motorized supply columns. Despite use of large numbers of captured vehicles, 77 infantry divisions were equipped only w/ horse-drawn transport columns; each, in addition, received **200** wooden peasant carts. (1109)
- By means of a systematic integration of motorized transport capacity, it proved possible to deploy **20,000** t. of haulage capacity w/ each army group.⁴⁰⁶ This consisted of heavy trailer lorries belonging to the Reich railway and civilian transport hauliers, which were called up w/ their drivers and amalgamated into three [**3**] motor-vehicle regiments. No further reserves were available. The plan was for this system to cover the first 500 kilometers in one fell swoop, and then to establish a new supply-base for the second phase w/ the help of the railway. The Wehrmacht had no choice but to adopt this combination of road and rail. At most, the lorries could bring in about **10,000** t. of supplies per day to the front on their even longer journeys, i.e., roughly **70** t. for each division [i.e., *for the entire Ostfront*]. The estimated requirement of the mobile divisions, however, was **300** t. per day. In order to supply the armies over a distance of over **1000** kilometers by motor convoys alone, transport capacity would have had to be increased ten-fold. Germany lacked for fuel and vehicles to achieve this. (1109-10)
- The Army High Command attempted to find a new solution to cope w/ the *two heterogeneous masses* of the Army in the east, one of which was advancing in

⁴⁰⁶ **Note:** This is a rough estimate. See, Toppe, FMS **P-190**, for precise figures for each army group's Kolonnentransportraum.

front of the other. Its plan was to make the mobile assault troops independent of a supply base in the first stages of the campaign, and to prevent the lorry convoys on their journey from the supply-depots to the most advanced units from becoming entangled w/ the marching infantry columns. This was to be achieved by equipping the motorized divisions w/ an extra “suitcase” of supplies, consisting of **400-500** t. of transport capacity, integrated w/ the fighting troops. After supplies were consumed or unloaded, the lorries were to be taken back behind the front. There they would join the large-volume haulage vehicles in creating a “necklace” of supply-bases. Starting from each army group’s supply district, which was sited close to the border and was already partly stocked, *bases were to be established at intervals of 100-200 kilometers to supply the various armies*. As soon as motorized convoy capacity became available and the railways were made usable, the Army Group Supply District [*Versorgungsbezirk*] was to be moved further into captured territory, and then supplied from the rear by rail alone. (1110)

- To direct and supervise this new system, the Quartermaster-General established a field agency [*Aussenstelle*] directly subordinate to him w/ each army group. Its task was to direct the staffs of the assistant chiefs of staff in the separate armies. . . To this end, the haulage facilities and a range of supply-depots, field hospitals, equipment stores, and workshops were integrated into the supply district, and placed under the control of the field agencies. The separation of the army groups from the management of supplies enabled the Quartermaster-General to set his own priorities. . . Yet the danger remained that the control of operations and the management of supplies were not always synchronized. At the beginning of **1942**, the field agencies were thus reorganized into Army Group Assistant Chief of Staff offices (*Oberquartiermeisterstaebe der H.Gr.*). (1110-11)

- Other errors in organization occurred elsewhere. For example, the Quartermaster-General had control over supplies from **OKH** stockpiles, and over the depots and haulage vehicles, but he had no authority over the railways operating between them. These were under the control of the Chief of Wehrmacht Transport, Lt.-Gen. Rudolf Gercke. This **OKW** department gathered individual requests for supplies, and decided on the final allocation of trains. The Army’s Quartermaster-General could therefore bring supplies to the railway, and fetch them from the unloading-point, *but he had little control over what quantities arrived at the destination or when*. The interests of the **OKH** and the **OKW** did not always coincide.

Furthermore, Gercke used his own troops, badly equipped and ill-prepared for their tasks in Russia, on this railway service. **OKW**’s Authorized Transport Officer w/ each army group had authority over the Cdr of Railway Engineers, w/ appropriate construction teams and a Field Railway Command of **22,000** men for the operation and development of the tracks prepared by the engineers. Though each army normally required its own stretch of line to supply it, the railway troops were seldom able to re-lay and operate more than one main line per army group. In the most favorable circumstances, four [4] coys of railway engineers managed to re-lay **20** kilometers in **24** hours. (1111)

- In these conditions, it is surely very doubtful whether the ambitious operational objectives could be achieved even if enemy resistance had collapsed rapidly, as the German leadership had expected. In theory, the balance achieved between rail, wheel, and caterpillar track was the best that could be obtained. . . . At the same time, however, there was no way of keeping the flow of supplies constant or distributing them evenly. . . [Moreover] victory was to be achieved in central Russia which offered less favorable opportunities for movement [as opposed to the Ukraine, where conditions were favorable to tanks] and obtained w/ a supply apparatus which *became increasingly dependent on the **railway and horse-drawn vehicles** as the advance moved to the east.* (1111-12)

“*Failure of Logistics in ‘Operation Barbarossa’ and its Relevance Today,*” Maj Loganathan, in: “*Pointer*” (Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces) Vol 24, #2, Apr-Jun 98, at: <http://www.mindef.gov.sg>.⁴⁰⁷

- The art of logistics during combat is a highly complex, often misunderstood, operation. It can mean the difference between success or failure on the battlefield. Campaigns at the operational level have *repeatedly demonstrated that commanders often fail to allocate sufficient resources to logistics*. Along the same lines, there is often a lack of appreciation for the tremendous demand borne of combat operations carried out over significant distances. Leaders have over-extended their lines of communication and moved beyond sustainment to the detriment of combat effectiveness. The result: defeat. The German invasion of Russia in **1941** . . . serves as a prime example.

- Logistics planning was overly optimistic and totally unrealistic and planning factors were often determined *by capability rather than actual requirements*. . . For example, by **Aug 41**, the motorized supply system was exhausted. Ammunition and fuel, both of which were previously underestimated were in limited supply. The reason was because the planning requirements were inaccurately based on the transportation capability rather than operational consumption. Cdrs were unable to exploit tactical advantage because of severe shortages of fuel and ammunition and as such resupply could not keep pace w/ advances. Tactical ops were curtailed for weeks waiting for resupply from the rear. . .

- Full wartime production was not in effect before the invasion. For a campaign of such magnitude, German factories were operating on a single shift basis and the under-utilization of German industrial capacity resulted in shortfalls of essential combat material. Production consistently lagged behind consumption. . . . Many of the deficiencies [i.e., for ex., major equipment shortfalls] had been foreseen and, as often as not, side-stepped or ignored on grounds of economy or because Hitler and many of his cdrs had deluded themselves into believing the war would be won long before winter took its toll.

- Transport assets within a theater are major factors in campaign planning, both tactical and logistical. Being a key element in logistics, it can severely restrict operations. In Sinews of War, *James Huston* has highlighted that in a theater of

⁴⁰⁷ **Note:** The seven [7] “bullets” that follow are from this article in “Pointer.”

ops, a single authority, identical w/ the command authority should be responsible for logistics. This is again precisely what the German logistics system lacked – unity of command. The transportation responsibilities were split between the Chief of Transport (rail and inland waterways) and the Quartermaster-General (motor transport). This made an already bad situation worse. The German motor vehicle production could replace neither normal wear and tear nor keep up w/ combat losses. As a result, the Wehrmacht conducted a major **demotorization** programme, procuring horses and wagons to offset the critical truck shortage.

- The Wehrmacht's greatest resupply failures can be summarized as follows: a) its inability to sustain the force; b) excessive long lines of communication; c) over dependence on the railroads; d) severe shortfall in motor transport capability, and e) untrafficable roads causing a total collapse of the supply system. . .

- Among "lessons learned:" a) Logistics considerations belong not only in the highest echelons of military planning during the process of preparation for war and for specific wartime operations, but may well become the *controlling element* w/ relation to timing a successful operation. Conflicts will not succeed w/o the *pragmatic considerations* of subsistence, ammunition, repair parts, fuel and transport. What appears to be an apparent capability on a Cdr's map board is brought face to face w/ an often harsh reality when logistical considerations are factored in. . . b) Logistics can be a ***force multiplier***; however, if not controlled, it can be the Achilles' heel of an operation.

- Conclusion: Analyzing Operation "Barbarossa" in retrospect, it can be concluded that the German invasion was doomed to failure from the beginning. The failure to integrate logistics planning w/ strategic and tactical planning [*operational planning?*] resulted in the invasion force reaching its culmination point short of the campaign's objective.

1.10.1: Background:

Poland: During the ops against Poland, destruction of the railways by both sides so heavy that the logistic system was *saved from collapse only by the speedy Polish surrender*, while the appalling conditions on the roads led to losses of up to 50 % of the motor companies' vehicles. Even then, it was not possible to make up these losses, given insufficiencies of German truck production. In **Jan 40**, OKH driven to *reduce the number of motorized supply columns* in each infantry division by a half, replacing the rest w/ horse-drawn wagons. (*Supplying War, van Creveld, 146*)

France: Though campaign only lasted six weeks, and ended in one of the greatest victories of all history, the *army's fundamental logistic weakness did not escape Hitler's attention*. While consumption of many items—esp. ammunition—was moderate, the *difficulty of supplying the armored spearheads* during their rapid advance was considerable, and, but for the use of aircraft and the opportune capture of large quantities of fuel, might have brought their attack to a halt. Also, the great mass of foot-slogging infantry turned out to be *scarcely more mobile than 25 or even 75 years previously*. *Eisenbahntruppe* proved too few in number, and the quality of personnel supplied by the civilian *Reichsbahn* left something to be desired. In any

case, even as the campaign was ongoing, Hitler ordered the army's supply system to be *completely reorganized*. Yet this would also prove „inadequate.“ (*Supplying War, van Creveld, 146-47*)

Men, munitions, fuel, equipment and transport were all in *short supply* when the Germans invaded Russia, esp. considering the scope of the task. *Barbarossa would fail in large part because the Germans simply did not have the resources to defeat the Soviets in one campaign.* (Megargee, 117)

DiNardo states that “the completion of the preparations for Barbarossa represented a *tremendous logistical achievement* for the German Army, although the invasion was **launched on a logistical shoestring** when compared to later American standards...For example, despite use of so many captured foreign vehicles, German Army was short **2 700** trucks at start of campaign. As campaign wore on, many of the captured French vehicles—unsuited for conditions in Russia—broke down. German wheeled vehicles also had tremendous difficulties, since *many were actually civilian vehicles not suited for military operations*. To add to these problems, **German economy was still operating at a peacetime pace**. As a result, truck losses began to outrun production in **Aug 41**. Thus, as *Wehrmacht* drove deeper and deeper into Russia, it became *steadily less motorized*. (DiNardo, 40-41)

According to *Ulrich de Maiziere (Ib / 18. ID (mot.))*, “Der zweite Generalstabsoffizier (Ib) war fuer die Versorgung (heute als Logistik bezeichnet) der Div. zustaendig. Zu seinem Verantwortungsbereich gehoerten *Waffen u. Kraftfahrzeuge, Munition u. Betriebsstoff, der Sanitaetsdienst, die Verpflegung u. Bekleidung*. Dem entsprach die Zusammensetzung seines Stabes (*Quartiermeisterabt.*) aus Fachleuten fuer die verschiedenen Sparten, wie dem *Divisionsarzt, dem Divisionsingenieur, dem Divisionsintendanten, dem Waffenoffizier*. Die nachgeordneten Versorgungstruppen, unter dem *Divisionsnachschiebfuehrer* zusammengefasst, setzten sich aus Transportkolonnen fuer Betriebsstoff u. Munition, Instandsetzungseinheiten fuer Kraftfahrzeuge u. Waffen, Sanitaetstruppen einschliesslich einem Feldlazarett, je einer Baeckerei- und Schlaechtereikompanie, einem Verpflegungsamt und einem Feldpostamt zusammen. (Ulrich de Maiziere, *In der Pflicht*, 64.)

Problems of a Semi-Motorized Army:⁴⁰⁸

Van Creveld discusses the problems of the Wehrmacht's *semi-motorized army*. Notes that Hitler loved cars and „had a surprisingly good understanding of their technology and construction, and showed a lively interest in their engines...“ From point of view of Germany army, Hitler's love of and interest in the motor-car—est. of *Autobahnen*, etc.—was a mixed blessing. The problem was mainly that Hitler, in this field as in all others, *took no interest in administrative details*, nor did he have the patience to carry thru on long-term projects which alone might eventually have provided him w/ a well-balanced motorized army. (142-43)

Role of roads vs. railroads: During WWI, the latter had enabled Germany to *make full use of her internal lines* and thus resist the combined resources of almost the *entire world*. Yet the railways were *too clumsy to sustain mobile ops in the field*, as was proved in 1914 and thereafter in virtually every offensive launched on the Western front by both sides throughout the war. In staking their future success on the tactics of armored, self-propelled fighting vehicles, therefore,

⁴⁰⁸ This section gleaned from *van Creveld, Supplying War*.

Hitler and his generals obliged to cast around for a *more flexible logistic instrument*, which could only be found in the *motor truck*. (143)

If motorization of army's supply service was rightly regarded as important, indeed indispensable, in securing its future success in the field, the *strategic benefits appeared far more dubious*. Given technological conditions in 1939, no less than **1 600** lorries were needed to equal the capacity of just one double-tracked RR line. What is more their greater consumption of just about everything (fuel, personnel, spare parts, maintenance) in relation to payload meant that the *railway retained its superiority at distances of over 200 miles*. It followed that, while motorization was essential for operational and tactical purposes, *its effect on strategy would be limited*. Also, however great the effort, *little chance that motor vehicles would relieve, much less replace, trains as Germany's main form of transportation*. As it was, Hitler's decision to *motorize his army* [at least part of it] led him to „fall between two stools.“ The outlay involved meant that the *railways suffered comparative neglect*, leading to a *decline in the total quality of locomotives and rolling-stock available between 1914-1939*. At same time, Germany's *automobile industry was insufficiently developed to meet the needs of the new army* in addition to civilian requirements. On 1.9.39, there were just under a million four-wheeled motor vehicles of all descriptions on Germany's roads—a proportion of **1:70** per head of population, compared w/ **1:10** in the United States. Finally, motorization required *rubber and oil*, which Germany did not have, instead of coal and steel, which she did. Despite synthetic manufacture and heroic improvisation, difficulties in obtaining both rubber and oil *created problems throughout the war*. (144)

Between 1933 and 1939, the capacity of Germany's motor industry proved *wholly inadequate* to equip the army on the requisite scale. Of **103** divisions available on the eve of war (Sep 39), just **16** armored, motorized and „light“ formations were fully motorized, and thus to some extent independent of the railways for both tactical and strategic movement. The rest all marched on foot, and, though a *complement of 942 motor vehicles* (excluding motor cycles) was the *authorized establishment of each infantry division*, the bulk of their supplies was carried on **1 200** horse-drawn wagons. To bridge the distance from the depots to the railheads, only *three motor transport regiments* (known as *Grosstransportraum*, in contrast to the *Kleinkolonnenraum* of the troops) were available for the whole army, having between them some 9 000 men, 6 600 vehicles and a capacity of **19 500** tons. Since vehicles were very hard to obtain, a large number of them had to be taken straight out of the civilian economy. This resulted in an *impossibly large number of types*, all of which had to be supplied w/ spare parts at a rate that was greatly accelerated by the demands of war. So heavy were these demands that, during early years of war, it *proved impossible to maintain even the modest degree of motorization already achieved*. In winter of 1939/40, and again in that of 1940/41, it was *necessary to partly demotorize units and services*. And this despite fact that, by the latter date, no less than **88** German divisions—some 40 percent of the total—were equipped w/ *captured French material*. (144-45)

Another problem resulting from fact that *Wehrmacht* was only partly motorized was a *lack of homogeneity*: Germany's motor vehicles were *concentrated in a small number of units*. In effect, this meant that there were „*two separate forces, one fast and mobile and the other slow and plodding*. Coordinating these two heterogeneous parts was difficult. If equipment of the *Wehrmacht's* logistic apparatus left something to be desired, so did its organization. Crux: Logistic support for the army was *split between two authorities (Generals Gercke & Wagner)* (145).

Culmination and reversal:⁴⁰⁹

In the dynamic setting of a continuing war, the coming together of victory and defeat may extend beyond a new equilibrium, to reach the extreme of a full reversal. If a victorious army can achieve total conquest or impose surrender, its subtle weakening will not matter, any more than the tendencies that tend to strengthen the defeated. But if the depth of territory or just their tenacity prolong the fighting, *the defeated will be able to benefit from the dynamic paradox*,⁴¹⁰ perhaps to the extent of becoming victorious in turn. If the army till then successful simply persists in its advance and is not reinforced sufficiently, ***it will ruin itself by overshooting the culminating point of victory***, beyond which it is increasingly weakened. That was the fate of the German forces that invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. [Despite great initial successes]...as they continued to advance over distances of hundreds of miles, the *German invasion columns were not reinforced sufficiently to overcome the extension of supply lines, the psychological „relaxation of effort,“* and the accumulating tactical errors of victory—while the Soviet forces were strengthened by drastically shortened supply lines, the moral pressure of shameful failure, and the many practical lessons taught by defeat. ***By December 1941, the Germans had overshot the culminating point of victory***, while the Soviets were strong enough to launch their first counteroffensives, aided by the winter freeze. Although their *victories were only tactical* (because the German front did not collapse), the Russians had *proved to be better students of Clausewitz than the Germans*. Yet more remarkably, the sequence of a victorious summer offensive overextended beyond the culminating point, followed by the winter counteroffensive of the recently defeated was *repeated in 1942*—except that the German front at *Stalingrad* did collapse, w/ huge losses...None of this means that victory must inevitably lead to defeat if war continues. But unless it benefits from *overpowering reinforcements derived from its ultimate sources of military strength* (that is, from factors exogenous to the logic), the victorious army will have to pause and recuperate from its own successful advance to overcome the unfavorable tendencies at work. By restoring its energies of morale and leadership thru rest and troop replacements; by bringing forward its entire supply organization; by providing for security of rear areas if threatened; and by revising those procedures, tactics, and methods that the enemy is learning to anticipate and defeat, the *victorious army can restore its capacity for further success*—in effect pushing outward and the future its ***culminating point of victory***. (Luttwak, 20-22)

France 1940:

The German invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium and France, which began on **10.5.40** and end on **17.6.40** w/ the French request for an armistice, *was achieved (but only just) within the span of a single all-out effort*. By **17 June**, the 10 Panzer divisions that spearheaded the German attack had suffered so many breakdowns among tanks, half-tracked carriers and trucks that *their strength was more show and noise than substance*; they had to resort to expedients such as the mounting of MG crews on captured French tanks. In the *infantry divisions* that formed the great bulk of the German army, the troops had marched on foot from the start and *most were utterly exhausted*. As for the ***German supply organization***, which had to rely on the circulation of horse-drawn carts from the nearest functioning railhead to the combat units, it was ***so overextended*** that only the abundance of food and fodder in the prosperous lands just conquered prevented crippling shortages. *Ammunition resupply* was not as serious a problem in a campaign of rapid maneuver and brief offensive thrusts. Mostly marching on foot, *mostly equipped supplied by horse-drawn carts*, the German army did not need much fuel—*yet it too was*

⁴⁰⁹ Luttwak, Edward N., **STRATEGY**. The Logic of War and Peace. 2001.

⁴¹⁰ That is, the *paradoxical logic* that weakens the advancing strong and strengthens the retreating weak. (Luttwak, 23)

insufficient: the dashing Panzer units kept going only because they could **confiscate civilian gasoline as they advanced**. But before the Germans decisively overshot their culminating point of victory, all their *accumulating weaknesses* were nullified by the armistice—their one-bound range of penetration had proved greater than the *geographic and moral depth* of France. (Luttwak, 22)

When Hitler's armies attacked the Soviet Union one year later, their *one-bound reach had only marginally increased* w/ the addition of *captured French trucks as well as a slight expansion in the mechanized forces*. Of the **142** German divisions arrayed in 3 army groups for *Barbarossa*, only **23** were tank, part-armored light, or motorized divisions. In the entire German army everywhere, a total of **88** divisions were by then equipped w/ *French vehicles*. Even so, **75** of the infantry divisions deployed on the eastern front *had to be stripped of their trucks altogether* to equip army-group supply column, receiving instead **200 peasant carts**. Such was the reality **behind the facade of mechanized modernity** that played such a large part in the *psychological impact* of Hitler's blitzkrieg. (Luttwak, 22-23)

But USSR is a country far deeper than France; its rail lines were much less readily usable because of a different track width and also a great deal of sabotage; its few roads were unpaved so that motor vehicles were rapidly worn out; and the tendency of its resistance did not seem to diminish w/ successive, catastrophic defeats. *Thus, in mid-October 1941, when the German forces reached what in retrospect can be recognized as their culminating point of victory*, Moscow was still some **60** miles beyond their most forward columns of advance. But w/ Hitler in command, there could be no pause for recuperation. The German forces on the central sector of the front...continued to advance thru the month of November in *twin thrusts from both north and south*, to achieve one more great encirclement that would finish off the Soviet army, and the war. With this advance, **the German army decisively overshot its culminating point of success and was forced onto the downslope of the curve**. Growing shortages of ammunition at the front were silencing the artillery and leaving even the infantry short, because *distances from the railheads to the front were too great* for the circulating horsecart columns and the few trucks available. The railways were in any case unable to keep up w/ the supply needs because of an *acute shortage of Russian-gauge rolling stock*. In the process, winter clothing and *cold-weather lubricants* were left behind in *remote marshaling yards*, as immediate essentials of food, fuel and ammunition received highest priority. In the *mechanized forces*, the number of functioning tanks, half-tracks and artillery tractors continued to decline, as wear and tear accumulated and field repairs fell behind. By then, *commandeered Russian peasant carts had become essential transport even for the Panzer* [„Panje!“] divisions. Also, the *flow of replacment manpower* was steadily falling behind the rising number of casualties. Above all, German frontline soldiers were increasingly afflicted by the cold, physically exhausted, and *demoralized by their very success*. (Luttwak, 23)

1.10.2: Organization & Responsibilities:⁴¹¹

Logistics *planning* was largely an *army affair*. OKW played only a limited role. Within the army, *both major divisions of the OKH*—the General Staff and elements under the “chief of army equipment and cdr of the *Replacement Army*,” **General Friedrich Fromm**—played important roles. More specifically, *four agencies involved*:

a. *General Army Office* (under Replacement Army Cdr)

⁴¹¹ For details on how logistics system functioned see, *Megargee*, 118-19.

- b. *Transport Branch* (General Staff)
- c. *Organization Branch* (General Staff)
- d. *General Quartiermeister* (General Staff)

In broad terms, the latter three organizations (under the General Staff) set the requirements, and the *General Army Office* filled them. Once the latter made the materials available, the next step was to get them to the proper location:

Chief of *Transport Branch* was **Brig.Gen. Ruldolf Gercke** (who was simultaneously chief of Armed Forces Transport [*Wehrmachttransportchef*]). He *controlled all shipment by rail and inland waterway*, IAW directions received from OKW. Regardless of any task that OKW might give him, however, he was *officially subordinate to Halder*, so army requirements did receive some priority.

Once beyond the railhead, the supplies were the responsibility of the *General Quartiermeister* (Lt.Gen. **Eduard Wagner**). He controlled all *motor transport* in the so-called *zone of communications* behind the lines. Wagner's agency, moreover, *played the primary role in logistics planning*. Wagner's nickname in his domain was "**Nero**." He controlled the largest organization w/in the General Staff. (Megargee, 121-22)

Two major problems existed within the Germans logistical system. The first was *structural*—lines of responsibility and authority were sometimes unclear or illogical. For example, the individual services retained far too much independence; Navy, Luftwaffe, SS all set up their own supply organizations over time. Resulting *redundancy* was waste of materiel and manpower, and also *overburdened the transport system*. As w/ military intelligence, *the far more serious problem was attitudinal*: all planning revolved around the maneuver concept; the operations officers would set that up first and then call in the logisticians. "According to our opinion," Halder told an interviewer after the war, *"the material has to serve the spiritual*. Accordingly, our quartermaster service may never hamper the operational concept." The *hierarchy within the German staffs* mirrored the *dominant attitude*: *Supply officers*, like their counterparts in intelligence, *were junior in rank and experience to the ops officers*. Their job was to support the operations however they could. Even the military's vocabulary gave away its assumptions. The term **Logistik** did not come into general use until after 1945; before then, everything in that sphere came under the rubrics of *Nachschub* or *Versorgung*—both meaning "supply," in a *much narrower term*. (Megargee, 123)

Auf allen hoeheren *Fuehrungsebene des Ostheeres* gab es *logistische Leitinstanzen*: a) den **I b** bei den Divisionen; b) die **Quartiermeisterabteilungen** bei den Korps; und schliesslich, c) die **Oberquartiermeisterabteilungen** bei den Armeen u. spaeter auch den Heeresgruppen. Da man den Versorgungsapparat des Ostheeres *aufs Notwendigste reduziert hatte*, blieb die Zahl derer, die ihn dirigierten, begrenzt. Auf der Fuehrungsebene der Division war beispielweise ein einziger Generalstabsoffizier fuer die Versorgung von anfangs knapp 17.000, spaeter 13.500 Mann verantwortlich. In seinem Stab unterstuetzten ihn **58** Soldaten direkt (11 Offizier, 8 Beamte, sowie 39 Uffz. U. Mannschaften). Groesser waren dagegen die Versorgungstruppe u. die *frontnahe eingesetzte Trosse*: bei einer Division waren dies **2.000 bzw. 2.800**, spaeter dann **1.800 bzw. 2.600** Mann. (C. Hartmann, „*Verbrecherischer Krieg*," 38)

1.10.3: **Logistics Planning:**

Roads in Russia *few and poor*. Planners figured on a *maximum of two arteries for each army group*. The standard up till then was *one supply route per corps*; and there are at least four corps in an army group, but most army groups in Russia would contain more). Those arteries would grow to hundreds of kilometers in length if the armies advanced at the planned rate, but the armies could not pace their advance to let the supply services keep up, or the Soviets would escape to the interior, thus *invalidating the whole concept of operations*. And to top off all other problems, *some materiel was in critical short supply—rubber tires and fuel were the most worrisome items*; the latter might run short as early as July, according to some estimates. (Megargee, 123)

Wagner set up *supply HQs* that would be under his orders but would operate w/ the army groups for maximum efficiency. Each of these HQs would control a “*supply district*” w/ a number of depots. Wagner also scraped together every truck he could find in Germany and the occupied territories to add to the *Grosstransportraum*; this allowed for the army’s *conservative minimum of 20,000 tons of trucking capacity behind each army group*. To deal w/ different march rates of the infantry and armored units, Wagner decided to try to make the latter *independent of any supply base for the initial thrust*. To that end, he directed them to carry extra fuel that they would dump behind their advance but in front of the infantry divisions, so that it would be accessible to the *panzers’* own truck columns. The plan also called for *the armies to live off the land to the fullest extent possible*. (Megargee, 123-24)

The planners knew, however, that *such measures would not be enough to support an uninterrupted drive to Moscow and beyond*. According to results of a war game *Paulus* held in Dec 40, a *three-week pause* would be required after the initial thrust to allow the army to rebuilt RR lines, replenish combat units’ stocks of supplies, repair vehicles and equipment, etc. The pause was to take place roughly 3/4 of the way to *Leningrad*, in the center at *Smolensk*, and at *Kiev* in the south...At no time, die *Paulus*, Halder, Wagner or any of the other planners give any indication they thought the Soviet Union might *simply be too big a target*, that Germany did not have the supplies or transportation assets to carry out the campaign as they envisioned it. In fact, the *more the Germans found out about the difficulties of the campaign, the less time they estimated they would need to complete it!* What at first guess seemed to require five months—this at Hitler’s **31 Jul 40** briefing—Marcks predicted would take as little as eight weeks, plus replenishment time. By early **Dec 40**, planners believed they could do it in **8 to 10 weeks including the replenishment phase!** By **Apr 41**, *Brauchitsch* was speaking of a tough battle at the frontiers that would last “*up to four weeks*,” after which resistance would be negligible. The army’s leaders’ attitude toward logistics was merging w/ their faith in a quick Russian collapse. *Only w/ difficulty can one escape the conclusion that they were engaged in a gigantic effort at self-delusion*. (Megargee, 124)

Note: To propel the Panzer Groups forward as far as possible even the tanks were heavily loaded w/ supplies. The **Mark II, III and IV** tanks were fitted w/ two-wheeled trailers each carrying two [2] **200** litre petrol tanks, while some were further loaded w/ **20** litre petrol cans strapped to their turrets. Moreover, twice the standard ammunition was squeezed inside each tank, making them as self-sufficient as possible during the earliest phase of the campaign.

Despite such improvisations, supplying operations to ranges hundreds of kilometers beyond the German border clearly required a more sustained approach. A reorganization of the army’s rear services, which including *stripping the infantry divisions of all but the most essential motorization* and replacing the loss w/ **15,000** Polish “Panje” horse-drawn wagons, eventually raised the capacity of the *Grosstransportraum* behind the three army groups to **15,880** tons in the south, **25,020** tons in the centre, and **12,750** tons in the north. This was then chiefly concentrated

in support of the panzer groups which gave AGC the only chance of securing the Dvina-Dnepr line before a major halt became necessary. In practice, however, estimates indicate that the trucks could only provide the mot. divisions w/ about **70** tons of supplies per day when they required on average **300** tons.

Specifically, the supply operation employed a new method of distribution known to the troops as the “hand baggage” (*Handkoffer*). This determined that supply columns advanced w/ the Panzer units replenishing them as they went and dumping the remainder of their loads at a forward point about **100** kilometers from the border. While these columns then returned for new loads, others would continue w/ the advance to establish a second supply dump **300** kilometers from the border. The Panzer divisions would use their own *Kleinkolonnenraum* to supply themselves from the dump sites. Obviously, the efficiency of the system deteriorated w/ distance, while complications owing to poor roads, vehicle breakdowns and enemy action [i.e., *Clausewitz's friction of war*] only weakened the already *tenuous* basis upon which it all rested. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 92; see also, *Halder Tagebuch*, 26./28.4.41; *Creveld, Supplying War*, 151)

Verpflegung: Einsichtig ist auch, dass einem Heer, das diesen Krieg mit nur **20 Tagessaetzen** Verpflegung eroeffnet hatte, nicht mehr als *das Prinzip der Selbsthilfe* blieb, wenn es nicht verhungern u. verkommen wollte...Gleichwohl waere es hoechst einseitig, bei der Schilderung der materiellen Situation des Ostheers sich allein auf die Phases des Ueberflusses zu konzentrieren. Nicht weniger haeufig waren jene Zeiten, in denen *die dt. Regimenter mehr schlecht als recht ,von der Hand in den Mund' lebten.* (*C. Hartmann, „Verbrecherischer Krieg,“* 39)

Klaus Schueler:⁴¹²

It was the “common belief” of Hitler and his leading generals that it would be possible to bring a campaign against the Soviet Union to a victorious conclusion within a matter of weeks, in accord w/ the Blitzkrieg concept. During the planning activities, the questions as to the feasibility of the campaign were thus *essentially reduced to the dominating problem of the ‘right’ operational approach*. . . The core operational concept which ultimately formed the basis for the campaign was based on firm conviction that it would be possible to encircle and destroy the bulk of the Red Army west of the line Dnieper – Dvina by conducting rapid and bold operations while pushing far ahead with armored wedges. . . (208)

This concept had by no means failed to recognize the difficulties that would be caused by the problem of bringing up, over hundreds of kilometers, the supplies required for such rapid and large-scale operations. . . In anticipation of rapid victory, however, the extend of [the difficulties in doing so – i.e., geography, climate, infrastructure, etc.] and their impact on the supply situation were regarded as extremely minor. . . (208)

Given the overriding operational premises of a rapid, “Blitzkrieg style” operation, the Army High Command *placed its trust wholly in a motorized, roadbound movement of supplies*, at least in the first, decisive phase of the campaign. . . However, the materiel basis for the roadbound movement of supplies was alarmingly slender, even for the first phase, and necessitated unusual and complicated solutions when designing the supply system developed by the Quartermaster-General, Eduard Wagner, w/ the help of which it was believed possible to ensure the provision of supplies up to the Dnieper – Dvina line. (208-09)

⁴¹² **Note:** This section gleaned from his article, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem,*” in: From Peace to War, Bernd Wegner (ed.).

Calculations, studies, and map exercises, however, had shown that when this line was reached, at the latest, the German forces would be *dependent on efficient rail operations*, since, in order to provide supplies to farther-reaching military operations, the supply areas initially established in the respective concentration areas for each of the three army groups would have to be *moved forward by leaps and bounds*; but, considering the great distances involved, it would only be possible to replenish the advanced supply areas w/ the help of the railways. For this reason, the plan was to execute the necessary supply movements w/ a *combination of trucks and railway trains* after the Dnieper – Dvina line had been crossed. . . (209)

However, some of the area objectives set for the army groups and armies for the first phase of the operations were already way beyond the limit to which it had been calculated the mot. supply movements could reach. All deliberations and studies thus came to the same conclusion, namely that efficient railway operations must commence in the conquered Soviet territories *as soon as possible* in order decisively to relieve the burden on the motorized transportation capacity, to stock the supply bases for further advances, and to enable operations to develop unhindered. It was believed there was no reason to fear serious problems resulting from the different gauges or Soviet acts of destruction. On the contrary, in the course of the planning, the Germans' disdain for their adversary had given rise to the firm expectation that they would, after a relatively short time, be able to *capture much of the Russian broad-gauge railway system* w/ only insignificant damage to the network of lines and merely minor losses of rolling stock. . . (209-10)

The Germans' expectation that they would be able to take over much of the Russian railway network and its rolling stock in a serviceable condition was thwarted at an early stage by the extensive Soviet evacuation and subsequent destruction measures. . . The amount of stock captured was accordingly low, and the Germans were forced to use to a considerable extent [their own] standard-gauge stock from the interior of the Reich – stock that was numerically extremely limited and in any case greatly overstrained⁴¹³ – and, thus, had to convert the Russian broad-gauge lines to the German standard-gauge on a much greater scale than had originally been envisaged. (210)

Robert Kershaw:

Note: *Kershaw* writes of a **logistics trip wire** [500 km from start line] which represented the limit of the *Ostheer's* strategic logistic sustainability, beyond which an offensive aimed at Moscow could not be achieved unless supported w/ a *rail-based* transport network. The lorried tactical carrying capability (i.e., the *Grosstransportraum*) was the only element able to keep up w/ the fighting spearheads. The lorry fleet, as also combat vehicles w/in the fighting formations, had been *decimated* by the eve of Operation "Taifun" at beginning of **Oct 41**. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 165)

The original '*Barbarossa*' concept surmised that the Russian field armies would have to be defeated in western Russia, w/in **500km** of the border, to realize the plan. **OKH** calculated that the distance from the frontier to *Smolensk* should be covered in one mighty leap, followed by a

⁴¹³ **Note:** By the beginning of **Oct 41**, out of a total of about **22,900** operational locomotives, more than **2000** were already in operation in the East. By the end of **1941**, this figure had risen to almost **4000**, and by the spring of **1942** to around **6000**. (210, f.n. 4)

pause, during which time the rail network would be extended to catch up. Covering the *resupply gap*, meanwhile, would necessitate a balance of tracks, wheels and rail transport. The reality was that tracks – the Panzers – rapidly outstripped the marching armies which were reliant upon horse-drawn transport. (*War Without Garlands*, 165)

Logistics was based upon the army's *Grosstransportraum* (lorry carrying capacity), which was truck columns supplying the **33** “fast” divisions and their supporting troops and HQs. [Is this accurate?] There were **144** divisions to be supplied in total. The sanguine expectation was that the **300km**⁴¹⁴ drive to *Smolensk* could be covered by a six-day **600km** round-trip by lorries, including loading and unloading. Each division would receive **70** tons per day through this method, of which well over **1/3** would consist of rations. . . Potential for problems existed even before the **300km** intermediate *Smolensk* objective was reached. The **500km** line (from the frontier) beyond it represented a form of intangible “trip wire” that would snag any offensive and cause it to falter. At worst case it might collapse. . . (165)

A fundamental tenet creating a **500km** logistic check was the technological inferiority of lorried transport compared to rail in **1941**. The earlier campaigns [**1939-41**] had irretrievably damaged the motorized lorry fleet, now reliant upon captured stocks. Even if these fleets had existed, they would have been inferior to rail. (165)

No fewer than **1600** lorries were needed to equal the capacity of one double-track railway line over the **500km** distance. Motorized transport further devoured material in its own right – requiring fuel, drivers and personnel, spare parts and maintenance. Consumption relative to the payload carried placed railways in the ascendancy as the most efficient primary carrier at distances in excess of **320km**. Lorry columns were a tactical rather than strategic asset. Some **40%** of *Wehrmacht* divisions [i.e., **88** divisions] were equipped w/ captured French motorized vehicles at the outset of “*Barbarossa*.” The creation of additional “fast” divisions before onset of Russian campaign resulted in a corresponding demotorization of units and services in the infantry divisions, which had expanded from **120** to **180**. (*War Without Garlands*, 166)

*Van Creveld “Supplying War:”*⁴¹⁵

In German planning, it was *generally recognized that the Russians would have to be defeated within the first 500 km* (300 miles) *if they were to be defeated at all*. And the plans made at OKH did in fact start from the *premise that the distance from the frontier to Smolensk could be covered in one might leap*—to be followed by a pause that would allow the railways to catch up. (152)

Discusses early German attempts at planning (*Gen Marcks* in OKH & *Col v. Lossberg* in OKW). Notes that terrain north of *Pripet Marshes* better suited for strategic movement (than districts south of them) on account of the *larger number of roads*. Also, the *railway lines were best and most numerous* along the Warsaw-Moscow axis (i.e., on both sides of the great highway from Warsaw to Moscow). However, a major thrust toward Moscow would lead the *Wehrmacht* thru the *forests of Belorussia*, and thus confine the advance to a few widely-separated axes between which little or no contact was possible. Advantage of area south of the marshes was that an advance there would lead the Germans into the Ukraine which was considered *perfect tank*

⁴¹⁴ **Note:** This cannot be correct. The distance to Smolensk alone must have been about **500** km. Certainly, it was more than **300**. Confirm!

⁴¹⁵ This section taken from *van Creveld, Supplying War*

country; for Hitler, moreover, a drive into the Ukraine was *indispensible* if Germany was to secure grain and later, the oil from the Caucasus. However, the Ukraine had only one good west-east road via *Kiev*. In any case, the ultimate outcome of these deliberations was a **double offensive along diverging lines thousands [hundreds?] of miles apart**. Van Creveld calls *Directive No. 21* a „*rambling and confused document*“ that provided for an advance by three Army Groups along separate axes towards *Kiev*, *Moscow* and *Leningrad* up to the general line *Dvina-Smolensk-Dnieper*. (148-49)

In any case, the logistic problems *were of a magnitude far greater than anything experience before and, in some ways, since*. The number of troops involved, almost **3 500 000**, was *more than five times that which Napoleon took across the Niemen in 1812*. And this enormous mass, w/ its hundreds of thousands of horses and vehicles, had to be marched and supported while marching toward objectives which, from north to south, lay **600, 700 and 900 miles** away from the base of departure. All this in a country where the roads were known to be few and bad and where every single yard of railroad had to be *converted to standard gauge* before it could be used.

Despite this, the responsible staffs *made a number of highly optimistic assumptions*: For example, that the *expenditure of ammunition* would be similar to that of the western campaign; and that the *Russians would be defeated west of the line Dvina-Smolensk-Dnieper*. Even so, some key resources were in short supply: (150-51)

- a. **Tyres**: *Were in very short supply*. Thus for some types of vehicles their replacement by *steel-shod wheels* was considered.
- b. **Fuel**: Although current *consumption of fuel* was cut back to a level below that which the army regarded as the indispensable minimum, *a reserve of no more than three months' consumption* (in the case of *diesel oil*, only one month) *could be built up*. A certain shortage of fuel was expected as early as **Jul 41**, though the situation would hopefully be *improved thereafter by deliveries from the Rumanian oilfields*. Nor was there much hope in using *captured fuel*, for Russian petrol had a *low octane content*, and could only be used by German vehicles after the addition of *benzol* in specially-constructed installations.
- c. **Spare parts**: Since preparations for *Barbarossa* involved *great expansion in size of the army* (from 9 to 19 tank divisions, and from a total of **120** divisions of all kinds to **180**, later revised to **207**) spare parts for existing formations *were almost impossible to obtain*. This problem was aggravated by fact that Germans in Russia *used no less than 2 000 different types of vehicles*, the spare parts required by those vehicles in area of Army Group Center alone numbering *well over one million*.
- d. **Ammunition**: The Germans crossed into Russia w/ only 2-3 *Ausstattungen* (basic loads of ammunition, plus an unspecified reserve for 20 divisions—far less than the reserve for 12 months fighting demanded by the cdr of the Replacement Army).
- e. **Trucks**: We also in short supply before start of *Barbarossa*. (see below)

It might be expected that these shortages would have induced the German leadership to reconsider the *rationale* for the whole campaign. Instead of doing so, however, they managed to convince themselves that what they had *originally estimated* to take five months to achieve could, in fact, be achieved in four, or even in one. *The German general staff seemed to have abandoned rational thought at this point*. (151)

Overshadowing above problems was the *difficulty of obtaining sufficient transport to support the operation*. Because Germans could not wait for Russian railroads to be converted to western European gauge—would have allowed Russians to withdraw safely into interior of the country—it followed that, as in the West in 1940, *everything depended on an adequate supply of motor trucks*, but these in as short a supply as ever. To expand their motor pool the Germans: a) „reorganized“ the army’s rear services so as to take away their vehicles; b) purchased lorries in *Switzerland* and replaced those of the civilian economy w/ *captured French vehicle*. In this manner, the OKH succeeded in more or less meeting its own very modest requirement for an average of **20 000 tons Grosstransportraum** behind each of the three army groups. In fact, until the rail lines could be used, *the whole burden of supplying the gigantic operation rested almost exclusively on the Grosstransportraum*. However, there were *no reserves whatsoever*, and such was the shortage [of mot. transport] that **75 infantry divisions had to be given 200 panje wagons each**. (151, 155)⁴¹⁶

Supplying motorized columns: OKH did not intend to supply its armored and motorized spearheads by means of lorry columns shuttling between them and the frontier. Rather, it decided to make the armored spearheads *independent of base-supply during the first stages of the operation*. For this purpose, the normal fuel-carrying capacity of each armored and mot. division, amounting to some **430 tons**, was *supplemented further by 400-500 tons of so-called Handkoffer—containerized fuel* that would enable them to cover some 500-600 miles in all. Since it was calculated that the vehicles of an advancing army *drove two miles for every one conquered*, this would have given a *radius of 250-300 miles*. It was intended to dump the additional supplies at points between the armored units and the infantry masses following in their wake, and to have the former use their *Kleinkolonnenraum* in order to replenish themselves. By thus concentrating a great part of the available motor transport in support of the advanced spearheads, OKH hope to reach the line *Dvina-Smolensk-Dnieper without a major halt*. In order to go beyond the **300 mile limit** the Wehrmacht would have to rely on the railways. (152-53)

Problems w/ railroads: If one railway behind each army was the *normal requirement*, conditions in the East were such that it was *possible to construct only one line behind each army group*. The *Eisenbahntruppe* entered the Russian campaign *without adequate training*. They were low on list of priorities and were finally allowed only **1 000** motor vehicles, most of which were inferior French/English material. Thus, barely a sixth of their formations was fully motorized and 2/3 had no motorization at all. Also, they were *short of signal and communications gear*. Finally, their *numerical strength proved hopelessly inadequate*; as early as **Jul 41**, they had to be supplemented with men taken from the *Reichsbahn*. (153-4)

To lead and supervise entire gigantic operation, a *new organization was created*—the „*Aussenstellen*,“ or advanced detachments of the quartermaster-general at OKH. Each army group was allocated one of these. They remained independent of the field commanders and were subordinated to *Wagner* himself. Each *Aussenstelle* was responsible for a number of depots, which were grouped together in supply districts—one per army group. Initially located on the frontier, these supply districts were to be moved forward as soon as the railways became available. While quartermaster-general and his subordinates did control the *magazines* as well as

⁴¹⁶ *Van Creveld* also notes that German calculations as to the loss of vehicles to be expected were “*hopelessly optimistic*.” It was intended to conduct the operation without bringing up any replacements at all. Organization of repair service—for tanks, etc.—was also faulty, since a *large part of it remained in the Reich*, on the assumption that the campaign would be over before a major overhaul became necessary. (179-80)

the *Grosstransportraum*, they did *not exercise authority over the railways*. This rested in hands of the *Wehrmachttransportwesen*, and the number of trains to be despatched each day, as well as their destinations, had to be *fixed by a process of negotiation* between the two authorities. Thus, the *supply-apparatus w/ which the Germans entered Russia was far from impressive*. At the cost of *demotorizing a large part of the army* and depriving it of its strategic mobility the problem of supplying the „fast“ units during the first 300 miles or so was more or less solved. But at that point, logistic difficulties *would certainly force a halt*. (154)

End Creveld

Nov 40: The OKH logistics chief, Maj.Gen. Eduard *Wagner* calculated that the *Wehrmacht's* logistics system could support the forces at a depth of **500 kilometers** east of the frontier – a distance short of Leningrad, Moscow and the Donets basin. His warning made little impression. Moreover, German logisticians warned that advances of **300-400 km** would demand a *pause for resupply and restocking* of forward units. But then the supply authorities themselves made a number of *overly optimistic assumptions*; for ex., they calculated that *ammunition expenditures* would not exceed those of the Battle of France. Thus, the invading troops crossed into enemy territory w only **two to three basic units of fire** (a day's estimated ammunition) in the hope that the supply system would cough up enough shells until the collapse of Soviet resistance. Since the supply system could barely transport sufficient fuel and ammunition to frontline units, foodstuffs for the troops and fodder for horses had to come from *foraging* – and this encouraged further *mistreatment of civilians*. Finally, the *railroad troops*, whose support was essential to success of campaign, were inexplicably assigned the *lowest priority* in the move forward. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 119-20)

Dec 40: The army's head quartermaster, Maj.-Gen. F. Paulus, conducted a wargame in Dec 40, which demonstrated that the logistic arrangements would *collapse before the Germans reached the upper Dnepr*. However, as the date for the offensive drew nearer, German planners persuaded themselves that, if the army could not sustain a campaign on this scale for 6 months, then the war would have to be won in 3. Martin van *Creveld's* study of the 1941 campaign observes, „the German General Staff seemed to have abandoned rational thought at this point.“ (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 63)

1.10.4: Railroads:

Note: If the initial vehicle-based advance appeared tenuous at best the conceptual foundation for the railway-based supply system should be characterized as sheer wishful thinking. Overwrought by buoyant optimism, the calculations made during the spring **1941** planning stage *assumed the absolute minimum requirement* for the repair and operation of the railways in the occupied areas. To make matters worse, planning assumed the widespread capture of broad-gauge Soviet trains and only insignificant damage to the Soviet rail network. The general disappointment of this absurd expectation forced heavy reliance on the immediate eastward extension of the standard gauge rail lines, while the deficit in locomotives and rolling stock had to be borne by the already over-strained Reichsbahn. . . The railway troops (*Eisenbahntruppen*), however, were faced w/ critical shortages of both manpower and materials, making rapid progress impossible. Dependent on the army groups for their allocation of fuel, they suffered from a low priority ranking, made worse by the fact that only **1/6** of the formations were fully motorized and **2/3** had to make do

w/o any vehicles at all [!]. In total, only **1000** vehicles were allocated to the Eisenbahntruppen (mostly inferior French and British models) across the whole eastern front. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 93; also, *Crevelde, Supplying War*, 153)

Note: Administrative difficulties also encroached on the operation of the logistical system. Wagner's position as the Army Quartermaster-General gave him authority over the stockpiles of supplies, the depots at which these were stored and the haulage vehicles, but not over the railways, which were under the control of Lt.-Gen. Rudolf Gercke, the Chief of Wehrmacht Transport. Gercke was thus working under the timetables and constraints of the **OKW**, while Wagner served **OKH**, and the interests of the two command organizations did not always coincide. Thus, while Wager was responsible for the organization and distribution of supplies at each end of the railways, he held little power over what quantities could be shipped or when these would arrive. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 93)

Note: “Der Krieg im Osten hat...mit aller Deutlichkeit gezeigt, dass im Gegensatz zum westlichen Kriegsschauplatz die *Eisenbahnen fuer den Aufmarsch u. die Versorgung der kaempfenden Truppe von **entscheidender Bedeutung** waren.*“ (*Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 24)

Note: Under the prevailing technical conditions of **1941** even the *Wehrmacht*, a moderately modern and certainly innovative force, remained dependent upon rail transport for strategic reach – just as their predecessors in **1917** had. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 166)

Note: On eastern front, Germans could *never solve the logistical problems created by the paucity of rail lines* and the problem of converting the Russian rail lines to the standard European gauge. (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm*, 28)

Note: German *standard gauge* rolling stock (**1.435** metre); Russian wider gauge (**1.520** meter). (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 165)

Note: The *Reichsbahn* engines could not operate on Russian coal and were quite unsuited to the very cold temperatures [in fall/winter]; the result was widespread mechanical breakdown, so that at one time during the winter [**1941/42**] **80%** of the German engines were out of action. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 172)

Note: The successful evacuation of the Soviet railroads forced the Germans to commit **2500** locomotives and **200,000** railcars to support the troops in the east. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 72-74; also, *Reinhardt, The Turning Point*, 32, 146-47)

C. Winchester: „The entire invasion had been conducted on a *logistic con trick* ... The *Wehrmacht* consisted of a relatively small mech. army and a largely unmodernized force of infantry divisions. Although only part of the army's total strength was motorized, its demand for supplies, esp. **POL** (petrol, oil, lubricants) created a heavier logistic burden than the armies of **1914-18**. Unfortunately for the *Wehrmacht*, the German railway network had *deteriorated since the First World War*: there were fewer locomotives and less rolling stock than in **1914**. As the army moved deeper into Russia it would depend on the Russian rail network, which was built on a wide gauge incompatible w/ German rolling stock. *The tracks could not carry as heavy a load as equivalent German ones*. Even when the rails were converted to German gauge, all the facilities, like *water towers*, were built for Russian engines and were *too far apart* for German engines. The latter were unsuited for the east anyway: their *water tubes* froze in the much colder temper-

atures, and most of those sent to the USSR during the winter of **1941** became immobilized. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 62-63)

A. Seaton: Little reliance could be placed on the Soviet railway system. In the early part of the campaign, all loads had to be transferred from one railway to the other at the Soviet border because of the different width of the track gauge. This, together w/ the lack of captured Soviet rolling stock, reduced capacity and made it imperative to re-lay the tracks to the standard European gauge. Except in some areas of the Ukraine, where the Red Army had systematically ploughed up the track and railway bed, good progress was made w/ the conversion, but even so the capacity of the re-laid track was usually poor. Many of the main lines had only one track converted and the efficiency of a double track was limited until sidings, turntables and repair sheds had been similarly retracked. . . All locomotives and rolling stock had to be provided by the Reichsbahn from German or West European sources, and German locomotives proved unsuitable for use in Russia since they could only operate on German fuel or a mixture of German and Donets coal, and were not designed to withstand the low winter temperatures. At one time during that hard winter **80%** of the German locomotives were out of action. Because of the destruction of the rail bridges over the Dnieper all loads had to be off-loaded, and ferried over the river by road bridges or by boat, and reloaded on the other bank. The winter brought only one advantage in that the frozen Dnieper served as a bed for a temporary railway track across the ice. . . Only the motor transport organization prevented the whole supply system from collapse. The railway performance was so near disastrous that a committee to investigate, w/ the Fuehrer himself as the chair, removed the responsibility for the railway from the Military Transport Officer-in-Chief to the Reichsbahn (the Reich Transport Minister Dorpmueller) as far forward as the army railhead, the responsibility being defined in a letter signed by Hitler (*OKW/WFStb/Qu (Verw) Nr. 8/42*) dated **4.1.42**. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 218; also, *Pottgiesser, Die Reichsbahn im Ostfeldzug*, 33-40; also, *Keitel, Memoirs*, 176-77)

a. Deutsche Reichsbahn:

The *Deutsche Reichsbahn Gesellschaft* (DRG, also “DR” for short) was *first and foremost a civilian or commercial organization*, supporting the needs of the *Wehrmacht* were ordered to do so. In times of war, the DR adhered to military regulations and as such was placed under the guidance of the German Army General Staff's *Transportation Division*. The DR was a *separate entity from the German military's rail arm*. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)⁴¹⁷

Throughout *Polish campaign*, the DR was able to satisfy all of the supply and movement needs of the German Army despite fact that the Polish military forces successfully disrupted, if not outrightly destroyed, large sections of the Polish railway network as they retreated inward. On the negative side, the DR and OKW quickly realized that the *Wehrmacht* did not possess sufficient numbers of *Eisenbahnpieler* (RR engineers). Thus, quickly a *crash training program* was initiated for the creation of additional railway engineer troops. On **26.10.39**, the “*Gedob*” (***Generaldirektion der Ostbahn***) was established with HQ in Warsaw. This was a separate entity from the DR and was responsible for the administration of the railways in the *Generalgouvernement* (GG) (Poland). (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Starting in **Oct 40**, the DR and Gedob were given orders to prepare and expand the existing German rail network in the east for a military campaign against the Soviet Union. The goal was

⁴¹⁷ **Note:** Much (most?) the material in www.feldgrau.com gleaned from *H. Pottgiesser's Die Deutsche Reichsbahn im Ostfeldzug 1939-1944*.

to double the existing rail transportation capacities. This entire undertaking fell under auspices of the “*Otto*” Program. Approximately 30,000 German and Polish railway employees worked for the program. Despite losing 10,000 “*Otto*” program participants to the mandatory “*Winterhilfe*” duties in Poland during the winter of 1940/41, and despite *sheer enormity of project itself*, the “*Otto*” effort met its goals on 15.6.41. In 1939, 84 trains moved eastward every day – by Jun 41, eight months after the start of the *Otto* Program, 220 trains moved eastward every day. Many of the DR trains serving the needs of the German Army during this period were *cleverly disguised as normal civilian trains*. After all, the goal was to move some 141 German divisions to the Soviet border w/o detection. During the first 5 months of 1941, nearly 34,000 trainloads of supplies and troops were unloaded in the east. Remarkably, the German and Polish rail lines were not used at their maximum capacities during the build-up period. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com; see also, Pottgiesser, *Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 21-26)

With regard to DR support of the eastern front, Germany would realize that one of its shortcomings was that it did not possess a “*German*” locomotive suitable to cover the long distances between coaling stations in the USSR. As a result, new types of locomotives would be built in 1942/43. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Trains in Germany: “It was my first trip in a German train. I was told that Germany had a number of streamlined trains before the war, but I never saw one. *The trains I saw were old, and some were not in good condition*, so that it was the exception for one to arrive on time. They were smaller than our trains; the freight and passenger cars looked like miniatures. The engines, of a different design from those in the U.S., looked like squat little pistoned pygmies.” (*Flannery*, 82)⁴¹⁸

Sep 39: An essential element of the Third Reich as an *archetypal expression* of modernization was the embracing of the motor vehicle and its promotion under the Nazis to supercede the railways. Thus, by the autumn of 1939 neglect had let to a critical deterioration of the railways, w/ fewer locomotives and rolling stock than had existed in 1914. Yet motorization had by no means filled the void in Germany’s transportation sector. . . At its root were unalterable economic considerations that persistently failed to impress upon the Nazi leadership the futility of their goal. As many as 1600 trucks were required to equal the capacity of a double-tracked railway line, while the consumption rates of fuel, personnel, spare parts and maintenance decisively favored the railways for distances over 200 miles. Furthermore, Germany could not domestically produce the rubber and oil needed for motorization, whereas coal and steel for the railways were readily available. . . It is evident that, by pursuing motorization and neglecting the railways, Germany created a situation where neither infrastructure was able to meet the demands of war. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 88-89)

Sep 39: The German traffic and transportation system was in a strained situation a long time before the start of Operation “*Barbarossa*.” When Hitler unleashed the Second World War by attacking Poland in **Sep 39**, the system was *in no way prepared for what would be demanded of it*. This was particularly true of the condition and efficiency of the railways, following a process of material deterioration since end of the First World War. . . The retrograde trend after WWI is illustrated by the fact that, in the autumn of 1939, the Reichsbahn had *fewer locomotives and less rolling stock than in 1914*. The construction of new locomotives and rolling stock was also way below that of WWI.

⁴¹⁸ These are interesting comments on condition of German *Reichsbahn* trains in late 1940. Insight into condition of German rail infrastructure.

The civil authorities responsible for questions of traffic and transportation had time and again clearly pointed out to the German command the substantial weaknesses and deficiencies of the rail transportation system. . . However, their indications, demands, and warnings did not have a lasting effect. The reasons for this primarily due to fact that the German command believed that there was *not the slightest urgent necessity* to make greater efforts in order to strengthen the railways effectively. The resultant neglect of their interests during German rearmament was, in turn, an *expression and consequence of Hitler's strategic concept* . . . his "Blitzkrieg" concept. . . In Hitler's opinion, the railway had been *removed from its previous dominant position and replaced by the motor vehicle*, which to all appearances better satisfied [Blitzkrieg] criteria. . .

Hitler's motorization plans by no means met w/ unanimous approval in the Reichswehr and Wehrmacht. Whereas Hitler strongly advocated the primacy of the motor vehicle over the railway, the armed forces continued to think predominately in traditional terms, and adhered to the supremacy of the railways. In particular, the Army General Staff sections responsible for questions of transportation and supply warned against a one-sided overestimation of the possibilities of motorization and against a failure to recognize the importance of the railways. If, both before the start of the war and for a long time thereafter, little heed was paid to such warnings, one of the major reasons for this was that within the Wehrmacht, and in particular in the Army General Staff, *questions of transportation and logistic support management were traditionally underrated compared w/ the primacy of operational command*. . . The decisive factor, however was that the *latent crisis of the rail transportation system*. . . did not break out fully in the campaigns preceding "Barbarossa" because of the favorable military, geographic, and infrastructure conditions, w/ the result that the weaknesses could mostly be covered up and offset w/o lasting negative consequences. (K. Schueler, "The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem, 206-07)

b. Russian RR infrastructure:

Die Eisenbahnen der Sowjetunion waren Ende **1937 86.500 km** lang. Der russ. Fuenf-Jahres-Plan sah vor, die Laenge bis Ende **1942 auf 97.000 km** zu erweitern. (Pottgiesser, *Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 26)

In **1938**, the Soviet five-year plan called for the Soviet rail line system to be expanded to approximately **62.000 miles (100.000 km)**. For the most part, the Soviets were able to meet their construction goals. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

One of first actions taken by German *Transportation Division (OKH)* to prepare for attack on Soviet Union was to conduct a preliminary analysis of Soviet rail network. This effort highlighted following—only **four major east-west running trunk lines** connected the western border regions of the Soviet Union (including the recently annexed regions of Poland and the Baltic States) with Soviet interior: (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

- Nieman River to Leningrad (double track)
- Bug River to Orsha to Moscow (double track)
- Bug River to Kremenchug to Donets Basin (double track)
- San River to Odessa (double track)⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ These four major east-west trunk lines were intersected by only six major north-south running trunk lines, see: www.feldgrau.com.

The Soviets “rather sparse network” was also fed by numerous smaller, single-track, feeder lines, whose transport capabilities were far from optimal. In fact, *the majority of the Soviet rail network was the same as it had been for the Czarist armies 20 years earlier*. Only three important industrial or urban centers contained a *dense network of rail lines*: the Donets industrial region, Leningrad and Moscow. **Moscow was in fact a key hub**—cut off Moscow and the entire Soviet rail network would be *seriously crippled*. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Railroad gauge: While Germany and Poland used *standard gauge* rail lines (**1435mm**), the Soviets continued to use the *Czarist era’s wide gauge* lines (**1528mm**). Thus, in order to receive the large quantities of goods (mainly foodstuffs and raw materials) the Soviet Union was obliged to deliver to Germany under the 1939 pact, Germany was obliged to construct *two special gauge conversion yards* on the German-Soviet border. One of these yards was built in *Malaszevica (Brest-Litovsk)*; the other in *Przemsyl*. These two rail yards also became key rail centers once Germany began *Barbarossa*. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Since taking the advice of an *American railway engineer* in the mid-1800s, the rail gauge of Czarist Russia and its successor state, the Soviet Union, has been in the wide gauge. The theory being that an attacker would encounter more operational and supply problems if he were forced to convert the wider gauge rail line to “his” gauge. In 1939, only in Lithuania (and, to a lesser degree, in Latvia and Estonia), did one find larger concentrations of standard gauge rail lines, which the Soviets had not yet converted to wide gauge after their occupation and annexation of the Baltic States in 1940. If the Germans wanted to make use of Soviet rail lines, they had to convert them to standard gauge. However, *this was not as easy as it might sound!* (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Railroad gauge was different in Russia than Western Europe, so there would be no way to bring supply trains forward initially. Special railroad units would follow behind the advancing armies to *reset the rails to the German gauge and repair damage*, but until they could catch up, the combat units would have to depend upon the **Grosstransportraum** and their own carrying capacity for their supplies. (source?)

Soviet construction standards: The Soviet standards were “poor,” which “played a key role in the German decision making process.” Whereas German and most western *rail bed construction methods* contained a multi-tiered *rock and gravel foundation* – the Soviet rails were *almost always sitting only on a bed of sand* covered occasionally w/ rocks to minimize the inevitable dust clouds. To exacerbate matters, the vast majority of Soviet *rail ties were made of untreated pine*. This meant that their weight capacity fell way below German railway norms (**38kg/m** for Soviet vs. **49kg/m** for German lines). Soviet rail ties were *also placed farther apart* than American and German norms (ca. **1.440** ties per km in the USSR vs. **1.600** in Germany and **2.000** in the USA). This, too, added to the *lower overall transportation capacity* of the Soviet rail infrastructure. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com; see also, Pottgiesser, *Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 26-27)

Another technical limitation was the *use of Soviet coal*. Because of its lower quality (at least that which was available to the Germans via the *Donets region*), Soviet coal, in worst operating conditions, had to be mixed w/ German coal at a ratio of **1:1**. Soviet *water* for locomotives was also not of optimal value. In addition, Soviet *yard and line switches* had to be rebuilt, German signals and German traffic signals had to be installed, etc. One of the biggest problems encountered by the Germans was that *larger Soviet trains could cover greater distances before they needed to re-water and re-coal*. German trains, required more frequent servicing in this

respect. This problem was *most acute in the more remote regions of the middle and southern fronts*. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Many of the existing *railway bridges* in European Russia were *temporary structures*. Most of the bridges were built during the First World War to meet needs of Czars' Army in 1914-17. Some of these temporary structures were in fact manufactured of sheet steel and simply riveted together. By German and western European standards, these temporary bridges were of *no value for the heavier trains* (carrying heavier tanks, etc.) of the late 1930s and early 1940s. There were also *no double-track bridges*. All Soviet double track lines which had to cross a river did so in *split fashion*—that is, each line had its own bridge. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

All along the 1939-41 Soviet-German border, the Soviets had re-built all of their border rail centers to only allow for through traffic. All *marshaling yards* and other *major railroad transportation* and *workshop facilities* near the western Soviet border areas had been removed to prevent the Germans from making use of the same in case they attacked. This precaution *slowed the Germans down during their advance* and later created difficulties for them during the retreats of 1943-45. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Soviet rolling stock: Germans would try to make use of Soviet rail cars. [But] “re-wheeling Soviet stock to German norms was not always an optimal solution. Although the wagon width itself remained unchanged, re-wheeling to German norms *altered-lowered payload allowances and balance requirements*. Soviet wagons were not always the sturdiest of wagons. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

c. Railroad Planning & Ops:

For attack on USSR, three *Feldeisenbahndirektionen* (FBD) (Military Railway Administrations) were established during spring of 1941. These three FBD's would serve as the *main supply life-lines* of the German invasion forces. Each contained a full complement of administrative personnel, repair facilities and construction works. **FBD 2**, created in spring of 1941, was eventually relocated to *Warsaw*. **FBD 3** was initially headquartered in Warsaw, then relocated to *Cracow*. **FBD 1** was quickly withdrawn and used for the Balkan campaign before *Barbarossa* began; it was replaced by **FBD 4**. During spring of **1942**, the FBD were redesignated as “*Feldeisenbahnkommando*” (FEKdo) (Field Railway Command). This designation was retained until end of war. Later [?], four *Haupt-eisenbahndirektion(en)* were set up in *Dniepropetrovsk*, *Kiev*, *Minsk*, and *Riga*. (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

Jun 41 (Aufmarsch im Osten): Die Verlegung von Truppen erfolgte in fuenf [5] seitlich festgelegten Staffeln⁴²⁰ auf sechs [6] Transportlinien. Taeglich fuhren **144** Zuege mit einem Durchschnittstempo von **24** km/h. Dabei muss man davon ausgehen, dass fuer den Transport einer Inf.-Div. etwa **70** u. fuer eine Pz.-Div. etwa **90** bis **100** Zuege erforderlich waren. Hier wurde von der Reichsbahn in Zusammenarbeit mit den Transportstaeben der Wehrmacht, trotz vieler Schwierigkeiten durch den Mangel an Lokomotiven u. wegen unvorhergesehenen Witterungseinflussen ein enormes Arbeitspensum bewaeltigt. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 97)

⁴²⁰ **Note:** These deployments, of course, started well before June 1941.

*Synopsis [Pottgiesser]: “Die Organisation des Eisenbahnwesens in den besetzten Ostgebieten u. das Nebeneinander von Ostbahn, Wehrmachtsgefolge, blauem Eisenbahnpersonal, der GVD Osten [Generalverkehrsdirektion, in Warsaw], Feldeisenbahneinheiten u. Pionieren sind vielfach kritisiert worden. Manche Berichte haben einer volligen Militarisierung der gesamten Eisenbahn an der Ostfront das Wort geredet. Andere haben betont, dass es leichter u. besser gewesen waere, aus einem Eisenbahner einen General als einen General zum Eisenbahner zu machen. Soviel ist zweifellos richtig, dass sich aus der Organisation heraus viele Maengel ergeben haben...[Trotzdem]...Gerade massgebende Heerfuehrer haben in verschiedenen Phasen des Krieges an der Ostfront fuer die hervorragende Leistungen aller Sparten [fields; lines] des Eisenbahnwesens Worte hoechster Anerkennung gefunden...Nach der **Doppelschlacht bei Wjasma u.Brjansk** schrieb der Oberbefehlshaber der Hr.Gr.Mitte [v. Bock] an die in seinem Bereich eingesetzten Eisenbahnpioniertruppe, Transport- u. Eisenbahndienststellen:“ (Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn, 35):*

Ohne die in dem weiten russischen Raum wiederhergestellten und in Betrieb genommenen Eisenbahnen waere eine Versorgung der Truppe und damit auch die Durchfuehrung dieses Abschnittes des Ostfeldzuges nicht moeglich gewesen.

Die Eisenbahnpioniertruppe hat in *stiller u. immer vorwaertstreibender Arbeit* die zerstoerten Strecken u. Objekte oft unter gleichzeitiger Abwehr eines angreifendes Feindes in einer Zeit u. in einem Ausmass wieder hergestellt, wie es kaum zu hoffen war.

Dem reibungslosen Zusammenwirken und dem restlosen Einsatz der *Feldeisenbahndirktion 2, der Feldtransportkommandantur 2, der Eisenbahnhauptdirektion Mitte, der Transportkommandantur Minsk, Warschau u. Koenigsberg*, spaeter auch der von *Wilna*, ist es zu verdanken, dass so schnell u. in einem den Forderungen entsprechenden Umfange trotz immer wieder auftretender Schwierigkeiten, der Betrieb ostwaerts der Reichsgrenze ueber insgesamt **8 050 km Gleislaenge** aufgenommen u. durchgehalten werden konnte. (see, Pottgiesser for rest of quote)

According to *W. Murry*, the units scheduled to repair railroads leading to *Smolensk lay at the bottom of army priorities*—a reflection of an unduly optimistic approach to logistics. Compounding the *casual attitude* towards logistics was the failure to appreciate the distances involved in traversing Russia. The push to Smolensk and from there to Moscow, represented a logistical problem on a vastly different scale than the campaign in the west against France. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 79)

Logistics problems *began to crop up early on*, largely due to failure of Germans to solve problem of converting *broad-gauge Soviet rail track* to the narrower European gauge. Railway construction companies were *far too few* for task at hand...Construction companies also limited as they lacked motor transport, relying instead on construction trains. Thus, despite best efforts of construction companies, *Umnagelung* of the railroads proceeded slowly. By **10.7.41**, although some **300 miles of track had been converted** [on entire front?], capacity of the lines was still too low. (*DiNardo*, 44)

In view of different gauge of Russian RRs, the hopes of OKH for their operation depended heavily on use of *captured rolling stock*. Partly because combat troops did not pay sufficient attention to the problem, however, *these hopes were disappointed*. It also proved impossible to

retain as large a part of the original network as had been planned, while the *task of conversion was heavier than expected*. Though aided by fact that Russian ***sleepers were made of wood, not iron***, the changing of gauge was time consuming and did not solve all problems. Russian rails were *lighter than German ones*, per unit of length, and the number of sleepers were smaller by one third—thus, it was *impossible to run heavy locomotives over converted track*, which meant that use had to be made chiefly of older material. As *Soviet engines were larger than German ones*, ***water-stations were further apart***, and many of these had been destroyed. *Russian coal could not be used* by German engines, except by adding to it either German coal or petrol. Signal and comm equipment was in *very short supply*, having been dismantled by retreating Russians or, as frequently, by *advancing German troops*. Nor did the RR construction battalions always conduct repairs in an acceptable fashion: Concerned above all w/ restoring the greatest possible length of tracks and bridges, the ***Eisenbahntruppe*** frequently paid no attention to such vital matters as *access to quays, workshops and engine sheds*, the need to supply locomotives w/ coal, or even the elementary fact that one double line can carry more than two single ones. Finally, the *conversion of Russian track* created problems w/ the rolling stock which was captured. While a simple procedure could *adapt wagons to standard gauge*, equipment thus treated could *not be used outside Russia* [?]. *Locomotives were impossible to convert at all*. (*Supplying War*, van Creveld, 157-58)

Eisenbahntruppen: A decisive victory was anticipated w/in the **500km** belt immediately to the east of the border. *Eisenbahntruppen* (railway troops) therefore neglected to spend the winter of **1940** exercising the conversion of Russian railways to standard European gauge and were not adequately prepared. Priority was given to the more pressing task of extending the *Polish network* in anticipation of the German concentration. This resulted in an *over-capacity*, which was ironically applied to assist in the “*Final Solution*” extermination of European Jewry. Even when the invasion began, railway troops had *low transport priorities*. Equipped w/ inferior and captured French and English vehicles, they were not able to keep up w/ the advance. Only **1/6** was motorized and **2/3** had *no vehicles at all*. They were poorly supplied w/ fuel by the army groups, and their signals and communications assets could only stretch to **100** km. Their numbers were not appropriate to the immense demands they faced. In recognition of this they were supplemented in early **Jul 41** w/ men from the German *Reichsbahn* (national railways). (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 167; *Creveld, Supplying War*, 153)

ab Jun 41 [Brueckenbau]: Als der grosse Ostfeldzug im Jahre **1941** in Russland begann, stand eine moderne, gut ausgeruestete, voll motorisierte Eisenbahn-Pionier-Truppe mit zahlreichen Sondereinheiten aller Art, darunter auf Strasse u. Schiene fahrbare Eisenbahn-Nachrichten-Abteilungen (Feldfernkabel- u. Funker-Kompanien) u. Eisenbahn-Pionier-Erkundungs-Kompanien bereit. . . Am meisten Sorgen machten in Russland die ueber die breiten, tief eingeschnittenen unregulierten russ. Riesenstroemen neuzubauenden Behelfs- u. Kriegsbruecken. Hier waren Mammut-Bauwerke zu erstellen ueber den Dnjester, den Dnjepr, die Duena, den Donez, den Don u. die Wolga. . . Bei der H.Gr.Mitte im Osten erfolgten noch **3** weitere bemerkenswerte grosse Brueckenbauten ueber den Njemen bei Grodno, ueber die Duena bei Polozk u. bei Witebsk, alle ca. **250** m lang u. **32** m hoch, in je etwa **20** Tagen Bauzeit. (*Gen.-Lt. a.D. Hans v. Donat, “Eisenbahn-Pioniere,”* II., abschliessender Teil, in: *Deutsches Soldaten-jahrbuch 1966*, pp 106-08)

ab Jun 41 [Umspur-Arbeit]: Eine besondere Aufgabengebiet im Osten war, wie schon **1914-16**, die Umsetzung der russ. Breitspur auf deutsche Normalspur. Im **1. Weltkrieg** hatte man sich damit begnuegt, die Bahnen in Russisch-Polen, in den Ostsee-Provinzen u. in West-Weissrussland auf deutsche Spur umzunageln. In der Ukraine u. in Suedrussland war damals eine Umnagelung nicht noetig gewesen, weil noch genuegend russ. rollendes Material vorgefunden

worden war. Dieses Mal gab es aber im gesamten besetzten russ. Gebiet kein brauchbares Breitspur-Material mehr.

Deshalb musste das ganze Bahnnetz, auch in Suedrussland, in der Ukraine, bis zum Kaukasus u. bis zur Krim auf deutsche Spur umgesetzt werden. Ein Blick auf die Karte genuegt, um zu erkennen, dass dieses Gebiet mehr als dreimal groesser als das Umspurgebiet des 1. Weltkrieges u. dass die Streckendichte mindestens viermal groesser als die oestliche des 1. Weltkrieges waren. Man duerfte deshalb nicht zu weit gehen, die waehrend des 2. Weltkrieges geleistete Umspur-laenge einschl. Bahnhoefen auf ca. 35.000 km . . . feststellen. Und auch diese Riesenleistung ist wiederum in der kurzen Zeit von 1 ½ Jahren, von Mitte **1941** bis Ende **1942** geschafft worden. Im Nordabschnitt wurde z.B. unter Leitung des Stabes des Eisenbahn-Pi.-Rgt. 3, Gen.-Maj. v. Donat, die Bahn Pleskau – Petersburg mit einer Laenge von **220 km** in 22 Stunden umgespurt. Der auf russ. Breitspur laufende Mittagszug des Vortages wurde bereits am folgenden Tag vom Mittagszug auf Normalspur abgeloeset. Der vorher erwaehte Schlagteller-Geifuss hatte die taegliche Umspurleistung einer Kompanie auf **10 bis 12 Kilometer** gesteigert. . . (*Gen.-Lt. a.D. Hans v. Donat, "Eisenbahn-Pioniere,"* II., abschliessender Teil, in: *Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch 1966*, p 108)

Jul-Aug 41: The railways became a factor of paramount importance for the course of the campaign at a very early stage when, during the first phase of operations, it was possible, by around the middle/end of **Jul 41**, to achieve the area objectives set (w/ a few exceptions in the southern front sector), but not the actual main military objective, namely to destroy the bulk of the Red Army west of the Dnieper – Dvina line.

The way in which the transportation and supply situation developed confirmed by and large the original assumption that it would be possible to ensure the provision of adequate supplies to the Eastern Army w/ the help of motorized transportation capacity up to the Dnieper and Dvina rivers at the furthest, but that it would then, at the latest, be necessary temporarily to cease operations to build up a supply base close to the front, the replenishment of which would require efficient rail operations. This, however, was the *start of an increasing shift in emphasis* – basically going beyond a superficial combination of rail and road – to a system of moving supplies which was ultimately dependent on the efficiency of the railways. . . The railways were thus confronted at a very early stage by constantly mounting transportation demands, and increasingly assumed the role of main supply carrier – a role they lacked the necessary resources to accomplish satisfactorily. . .

Even in this early phase of the campaign, the unsatisfactory transportation situation had led to initial supply difficulties in all sectors of the eastern front. These especially handicapped operational development in areas, such as the northern and central front sectors, where the offensive – its logistic support apparently ensured according to the initial area objectives and following *exceedingly optimistic forecasts* by the Quartermaster-General, Wagner – had already been pushed forward way beyond the supply boundary marked by the Dvina and Dnieper rivers. . . . (*K. Schueler, "The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem,"* 211-12)

Aug 41: The growing transportation and supply difficulties were overshadowed by the protracted and intense struggle to reach further command decisions. This struggle ended in late **Aug 41** when Hitler took the decision. . . to defer the offensive in the central sector towards Moscow in favor of operations on the two wings, w/ the main effort in the south. While this decision was diametrically opposed to the intentions of the army cdrs, the *prerequisites for an offensive were in any case lacking in the central front sector at this time* (not that this played any role in

the deliberations within the German command). The transportation capacity was not even sufficient to cover day-to-day consumption, not to mention the indispensable stockpiling of supplies. . .

At this time [*when exactly?*], AGC required at least 24 supply trains a day to meet current requirements. If the number of trains provided had up to then sometimes been considerably lower than this figure, in the first half of **Aug 41** it even fell at times to scarcely ½ of it. While the Army Group was then promised an increase to 35 supply trains a day, only **18** trains came through. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 213, f.n. 7)

30.8.41: Of around **1000** Soviet locomotives that the Germans had captured by the end of **Aug 41**, only about ½ were operational. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 210, f.n. 3)

Sep 41: During this month, too, the transportation capacity of the railways was unable to meet requirements.⁴²¹ The replenishment of the forward supply base was thus still in its initial stages when Hitler, under the effect of the successes on the wings that appeared to be in the offing, resolved to launch a large-scale offensive on Moscow after all. . . Still, Quartermaster-General Wagner was *exceedingly optimistic*⁴²² as far as the range of adequate supply operations was concerned. . . (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 213)

Sep-Oct 41: The transportation capacity of the railways continued to lag far behind the constantly mounting demands. If, in **Sep 41**, 2093 supply trains had been run for the entire Eastern Front (which was inadequate in any case), this figure fell to a total of 1860 in **Oct 41**. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 214, f.n. 9)

Oct 41: In the autumn of **1941**, the German railway infrastructure could not cope at all w/ the demands being made on it. As against the *Reichsbahn's* daily requirement for **Oct 41** of **240,000** wagons the actual number of wagons provided was only **142,000**, and this hardly met the most urgent transport requirements. . . The main reason for the serious transport situation was that Germany went to war w/ not enough locomotives and rolling stock; this situation had not really improved by start of Russian campaign. On **10 Aug 41**, there were only **23,400** locomotives – including **1850** French locomotives – in working order; not enough to cope w/ the services required. There was an **11.2%** increase in performance per locomotive [meaning use of, I assume] as soon as the eastern campaign began, leading in the ensuing period to increased wear and tear and more frequent breakdowns. The result was an overall reduction in efficiency of the *Reichsbahn*.

Contrary to all expectation, only about **1000** wide-gauge locomotives – of which only **500** were in working order – and about **21,000** goods wagons were seized in the USSR by end of **Oct 41**. The Germans were thus forced to convert far more Russian routes to the German track [*Umnagelung*] than they had originally intended. [Note: By **1.10.41**, about **15,000** km had been converted (to European gauge).] . . . In **Oct 41**, **2500** locomotives and **200,000** were required in the occupied eastern territories to meet demands at the front. . . but also to transport the harvest and other booty

⁴²¹ **Note:** This did not only apply to the sector of AGC. Instead of the required minimum of **18** supply trains a day, AGN received on average only **15**, and AGS, w/ a required minimum of **24**, received on average only **14**. (213, f.n. 8)

⁴²² **Note:** Such unwarranted optimism appears to have been a problem of his?

from the east. . . Thus there was a serious shortage of rolling stock and simply no way to overcome it in the short term. . . (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 146-47; 157, f.n. 64)

ab Oct 41: By the beginning of **Oct 41**, out of a total of about **22,900** operational locomotives [i.e., of the German Reichsbahn], more than **2000** were already in operation in the East. By the end of **1941**, this figure had risen to almost **4000**, and by the spring of **1942** to around **6000**. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 210, f.n. 4)

ab Mid-Oct 41: The consequences of the lack of coordination between operational intentions and the fundamentals of transportation and supply became apparent when, from mid-**Oct 41** onwards, the advance of the Eastern Army became increasingly bogged down, and finally, early in **Nov 41**, came to a total standstill. In the course of the offensive [i.e., “*Taifun*”] operational developments had *increasingly become directly and totally dependent on the transportation situation*, which had deteriorated drastically. . . The increasing gravity of the re-supply crisis was in no way – as the German side believed – primarily the expression of a strained situation that was due solely to the weather and would only last a short time. Rather, it was a latent permanent crisis which, accelerating and heightening considerably, was now becoming increasingly apparent. . . (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 214)

d. Railroad Operations in Winter:

During first winter of war, wounded men sometimes *froze to death* because hospital trains were immobilized for hours by the cold. (CMH 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 23)

Winter of 1941/42 placed the German military transportation system into a most difficult predicament. By **1 Jan 42**, the German rail system was *nearly paralyzed*—nearly! However, although the German rail network suffered severely due to extreme winter temperatures, it was also the *one supply system which was able to continue operating day and night* (albeit w/ great difficulty). (Source?)

In the winter of 1941/42, sometimes only a third, and frequently less, of the *daily quota of 28 trains* got through to Army Group Center. The German 2nd Army and 2nd Panzer Army together required **18 supply trains** a day and received only **two**. In **Nov 41**, these armies were unable to take **Tula** because their supply system had broken down. (CMH 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 21)

Nov 41: Um die Kampfkraft der Hr.Gr.Mitte zu erhalten u. sie mit Winterkleidung zu versorgen, ist ein *taeglicher Zulauf* von **32** Versorgungszuegen notwendig. Am **24.11.41** treffen als *hoechste Tagesleistung* **24** Zuege ein. Der Durchschnitt liegt bei **20** Zuege taeglich. Damit wird schon allein die laufende Versorgung nicht gewaehrleistet. (W. Tieke, *4.Armee vor Moskau*, 280-81)

Nov 41: At the beginning of **Nov 41**, AGC required at least **32**, AGS **22**, and AGN **20** supply trains a day to meet current requirements. The actual figures – an average of **16** trains for AGC, **15** for AGS, and **19** for AGN – came nowhere near reaching the required minimum. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 216, f.n. 10)

Nov 41: [Concerning resumption of offensive before Moscow] the rail transportation situation virtually ruled out the extensive stockpiling – necessary as a basic prerequisite for resuming large-scale offensive ops – for the increased requirements of a new offensive; moreover, it practically ruled out the possibility of adequately covering the expected rate of consumption of supplies. . . [Yet] despite recent experiences, any misgivings regarding the precarious transportation and supply situation were disregarded, although these difficulties and the handicaps they entailed were known to the Army High Command. . . However, despite actual developments, and probably not least because the transportation difficulties in **Oct 41** were *analyzed as supposedly being solely the consequence of the autumn mud period*, the Army High Command placed its confidence in a rapid improvement in the transportation and supply situation. . .

However, this optimism very soon proved to be an illusion, as a rapid and fundamental improvement in the transportation and supply situation was, under the prevailing circumstances, completely beyond the scope of the railways, which were still struggling w/ enormous operating difficulties and whose transportation capacity lagged far behind the minimum requirements. Thus, in mid-**Nov 41**, both the Army High Command and the High Command of AGC, which had made an *immediate and substantial increase in the rail transportation capability a **decisive precondition** for a resumption of the offensive*, were confronted by the clear realization that the basic transportation and supply prerequisites for the offensive operations they advocated did not exist. . . Under these circumstances the [new offensive] was in all probability doomed to failure right from the start. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 215-16)

Nov 41 – Jan 42: After the number of supply trains for the entire Eastern Front had already noticeably decreased once again in **Dec 41** (1643 compared w/ 1701 in the previous month [*i.e.*, **Nov 41**]), it plummeted to 1420 in **Jan 42**. This would theoretically produce an average number of 53 trains/day in **Dec 41**, and around 45 in **Jan 42**. Apart from the fact that AGC alone would have required the provision of at least 32 supply trains every day to meet its current requirements, the abovementioned figures refer only to the trains dispatched to the three army groups, not the number of trains that actually arrived at the unloading stations, which was much lower. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 220, f.n. 12)

Dec 41: In early **Dec 41**, the German Eastern Army finally had to cease its offensive operations. Initiative passed to the Red Army. . . Hitler blamed the adverse weather conditions for the fact that the offensive finally came to a standstill, thereby laying the foundation for the abiding legend that the Ostheer was forced to cease its attack only because of the effects of the autumn mud period and the Russian winter. . . However, the German offensive had come to a standstill first and foremost because of: a) unbroken Soviet resistance; b) the total exhaustion of its own attacking power; and, not least, c) the drastic coming to a head of the rail transportation crisis (which had been looming for some time) and the resultant totally inadequate supply situation. . . Despite initial breakdowns (still relatively few in number) due to the cold from the end of **Nov 41**, it was not until early **Dec 41** that the permanent crisis of the railways began to develop into the transportation disaster of the winter of **1941/42**. . . (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 216-17)

Dec 41: While the Army High Command was still assuming in early **Dec 41** that, during the winter, the rail transportation situation would allow supply operations on at least the same scale as previously – in other words, not expecting the transportation crisis to deteriorate any further –

the transportation capacity of the railways fell to an all-time low. In most cases, it was not even possible to provide ½ the number of trains promised by the Commander of Transportation, Rudolf Gercke – a number that was, in any case, far below the minimum necessary to meet requirements. On good days, around **50%** of the promised trains arrived at the unloading stations, whereas on some days not one single train arrived. As a result of the cold, locomotive failures had risen to **70%** by early **Dec 41**. (*K. Schueler, “The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem,”* 218, f.n. 11)

31.12.41: By the end of **1941**, over **23,000** km of track had been converted from Russian broad-gauge to German standard-gauge. (*K. Schueler, “The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem,”* 210, f.n. 5)

Dec 41/Jan 42: When, contrary to the positive development promised by Gercke, the situation deteriorated even further at the end of **1941**/beginning of **1942**, Hitler now resolved for the first time to take more concrete measures to increase the efficiency of the railways. These measures covered not just the personnel and material fields, but also the organizational sector. Going against the view of the Headquarters at the front, he transferred the responsibility for almost all rail operations in the occupied Soviet territories to the Reich Minister of Transport, thereby placing management of the railways in civilian hands to a very great extent. At the bottom of this was his intention to mobilize every last resource of the Reichsbahn for the Eastern Front. . . (*K. Schueler, “The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem,”* 219)

Jan 42: The number of supply trains reaching their destinations on the eastern front amounted to **1420** in this month (compared to **2093** in Sep 41). (*Hart, Guderian*, 129, f.n. 43; see also, *Wray, Standing Fast*, 74)

Jan 42: By this time, the Germans had regauged the railroad as far as Bryansk: „At Bryansk everything going to the front had to be unloaded and reloaded from German to Soviet-gauge trains.“ (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 123)

Jan 42: It was not until mid-**Jan 42**, when the rail transportation crisis had reached its peak, that Hitler realized that his hopes and expectations had been deceptive. He felt that the railways had let him down in the execution of his plan, w/ which he intended to master the crisis on the Eastern Front, and in the implementation of his orders and instructions to hold the front at all costs and to eliminate the risk factors by means of a rapid and extensive increase of transportation capacity so as to expedite the bringing-up of reserves and thoroughly eliminate the re-supply crisis. His measures had not been feasible, which is why he ultimately, under the pressure of operational developments, had reluctantly agreed to withdraw a sizeable sector of the central front. *Hitler now blamed the operational crisis on the failure of the railways*, and started openly to threaten and take repressive measures against those whose fault he thought it was. Hitler threatened the Undersecretary of State at the Reich Ministry of Transport w/ the Gestapo; he had two [2] senior Reichsbahn officials arrested and taken to a concentration camp. (*K. Schueler, “The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem,”* 220)

Mar 42: The first signs of a gradual slackening of the acute transportation crisis in **Mar 42** seemed to confirm the view held by the German command that the disaster of the winter had been a serious crisis, but ultimately one that had been due purely to the weather, and thus of a temporary nature, and, moreover, that it was quite possible to remedy the shortcomings in the rail transportation system by exerting increasing pressure and making appropriate threats. Very soon, however, they were forced to realize that the problems had by no means been surmounted. On

the contrary, the ominous deterioration of the operating situation in the territory of the Reich, where the Reichsbahn was no longer able – primarily because of the chronic lack of rolling stock – to meet the transportation requirements of the arms industry, made it increasingly clear that the German rail transportation system was in a permanent fundamental crisis. The Reichsbahn, which even at the outbreak of the war had not been prepared for additional requirements, was permanently overstrained by the enormous burdens that the campaign against the Soviet Union entailed to a constantly increasing degree. . .

The Reichsbahn was eventually so overstrained that, in the spring of **1942**, it had to *declare itself unable to perform its tasks any longer*. A total collapse of the rail transportation system, w/ disastrous consequences for the German war effort, was imminent. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 221)

1942: Hitler now felt compelled to tackle the rail transportation problem more thoroughly than in the past. As a result of the concurrence of the numerous measures ordered by him and initiated in the summer of **1942**, which were primarily aimed at remedying the glaring shortage of available rolling stock, it was possible to avert the impending early collapse of the rail transportation system. . . [However] a considerable deterioration in the transport situation set in once again in the autumn of **1942**. . . Thus as a result of the *permanent discrepancy between requirements and capacity*. . . the German rail transportation system continued to remain permanently overstrained, a condition which had caused it to become the *Achilles’ heel* of the German war effort from a very early stage, and w/ increasingly serious repercussions. (K. Schueler, “*The Eastern Campaign as a Transportation and Supply Problem*,” 221-22)

1.10.5: Chronology of Events:

1940/41 [Truck shortages]: In **Feb 40**, Halder noted that the Army possessed **120,000 trucks**, which did not allow any to be held in reserve. There was already a shortfall of **2668** trucks (more than **2%** of the overall total) which, added together w/ those trucks out of service due to maintenance or repair, created a deficit of more than **4%** of the total. Thus, the Army was already some **5000** trucks under strength. . .

Continued tank production and Hitler’s decision to arbitrarily double the number of panzer divisions, resulted in many more trucks being required to provide for their movement and supply. The inf.-divs. were thus forced to shed an even greater share of mot. vehicles, finding themselves even more dependent upon horses and wagons. In the spring of **1941** the drain was somewhat offset by the expropriation of French war materiel, furnishing the Wehrmacht w/ **13,000** trucks and **341** trains. In addition, the Army gained between **3-4000** trucks from French North Africa and was able to purchase more from Switzerland.

The trade-off for alleviating the immediate strain on resources was a further exacerbation of the standardization problem, which had grown so out of proportion that by the launch of “Barbarossa” some **2000** different types of vehicle were in service and Army Group Centre alone had to stock and distribute over **1,000,000** types of spare parts. [!] The administrative complexity inevitably led to time-consuming delays in returning vehicles to service. It also complicated the smooth function of the panzer divisions. The **18. PD**, for example, fielded no less than **96** different types of personnel carriers, **111** types of trucks and **37** types of motorcycles. The evidence suggests that Hitler’s eastern army resembled a pieced-together, mismatched construction – not the imposing, purpose-built, uniformly equipped war machine often portrayed in the immediate post-war literature. (For more details on German Army’s mot. vehicle shortages

see, *D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 89-90; also, *Halder KTB*, 2.5.40, 18.3.41; also, *Creveld, Supplying War*, 151)

Oct 40-Jun 41: Im Oktober 1940 ergingen von der *Wehrmacht* an die Stellen der Eisenbahn klare Weisungen fuer einen *Ausbau der Bahnhoeefe u. Strecken der Ostbahn* u. der RBD [*Reichsbahndirektion*] *Koenigsberg* mit dem Ziele, die Streckenleistungen, hauptsaechlich in der West-Ostrichtung, u. die Ausladeleistungen entlang der Ostgrenze bis zum **10.5.41** insgesamt ueber **100 % zu steigern**. Die hierfuer aufgestellte „*Otto*“-Programm machte eine grosszuegige Erweiterung der betroffenen *Umspannbahnhoeefe*,⁴²³ den Neubau von **20** Lokomotivbahnhoeefe sowie zahlreicher Militaerrampen, Kreuzungsbahnhoeefe u. Blockstellen u. ferner eine Ergaenzung der *Signalanlagen* u. des *Fernsprechnetzes* notwendig...Nachdem durch das *Otto*-Programm die moegliche *Einlaufleistung* ueber die Reichsgrenze nach Osten von **84** auf **220** Zuege taeglich gesteigert worden war, vollzog sich der durch die mil. *Eisenbahntransportabteilung Ost* in Warschau mit den TK *Krakau, Warschau, Koenigsberg*, u. *Danzig* vorbereitete, weitgehende *getarnte* personnel u. materielle *Eisenbahnaufmarsch* des dt. Heeres (**141** Divisionen) gegen Russland *planmaessig*. Trotz des einmaligen Ausmasses dieser Transportleistung von **11.784** (bzw. bei Einrechnung der Einmarschvorbereitungen von **33.800**) Zuegen innerhalb von 5 Monaten mit einer mittlern Laufweite von 800 km wurde im Bereich der *Ostbahn* die auf Grund des *Otto*-Programms erreichte Kapazitaet des Netzes nicht voll ausgenutzt. (*Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 21-24)

12.11.40: Eintragung in Halders KTB ueber einen Vortrag des Generalquartiermeisters des Heeres (General *Wagner*) ueber die Grundlage der Versorgung “im Falle einer Ostoperation.” Interessant ist dabei, dass damals eine *Munitionsbevorratung* [stockpile] von **2 ersten Munitionsausstattungen** [*initial issues of ammunition*] fuer eine Infanterie-Division u. **3 erste Munitionsausstattungen** fuer ein Panzer-Division vorgesehen wurden. Als Reichweite wurde ein Zeitraum von **10** Tagen⁴²⁴ bei der Annahme eines *Tagesverbrauchs* von durchschnittlich einem *Fuenftel*, bezw. einem *Drittel* einer ersten Munitionsausstattung angenommen. Das **OKH** selbst hat einen Vorrat fuer **20** Divisionen zu seiner Verfuegung gehalten. Nach der Notiz im KTB Halder waeren fuer eine Munitionsausstattung aller fuer den Ostfeldzug vorgesehenen Verbaende **76.500 t** Munition, also rund **170** Munitionszuege mit je **450 t**, erforderlich gewesen. Es muss daher mehr als **160.000 t** Munition als erste “*Barbarossa-Ausstattung*” vorgesehen werden. (*Donat, Der Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 28-29)

For logistical challenges facing **18. ID (mot.)** at beginning of campaign—over 100 different types of vehicles (not suited for conditions in Russia), poor roads, lack of replacement parts, lack of good maps, etc.—see, *de Maiziere, In der Pflicht* (67-8)

Heavy German horse-drawn transport soon proved inappropriate for conditions in Russia. Within weeks of beginning of *Barbarossa*, infantry of **6. ID** using Russian *panje horses* and their small wagons (in lieu of heavier German vehicles), considerably lightening march of the infantry. (see, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 60-1, 83)

Use of “**Hiwis**” (Hilfswillige): *Skorzeny* notes that ca. **Aug 41**, his unit had *selected six auto mechanics from among the Russian prisoners* to help repair vehicles: “They were good

⁴²³ *Umspannbahnhoeefe* sind Bahnhoeefe, auf denen Zuege lediglich die Lokomotive wechseln, ohne sonst in ihrer Zusammensetzung veraendert zu werden. (23)

⁴²⁴ Ten (**10**) days of *combat*? Many of the inf.-divs. went days – sometimes weeks – at start of campaign w/o seeing much combat. Also, German ammunition expenditures in the east thru **31.7.41** only came to **113,458 t** –i.e., to about **1.5** initial issues (see entry below).

mechanics and quite knowledgeable. For example, they discovered that certain *springs from the T-34 tank would fit on our Horch*; these springs were strong and never need replacing.” Later, he goes on to describe how hard the *Hiwis* worked to please him—on one occasion bringing him a bathtub and a cooked chicken dinner! (*For Germany, Otto Skorzeny*, 105, 115-16)

Die artilleristische Taetigkeit an den Geschuetzen war *staendig auf sparsamsten Munitionsverbrauch ausgerichtet*. Kein Vergleich zum Gegner u. seinen Reserven. **Munition war fuer uns fast von Beginn des Feldzuges an Mangelware**. (*Loewer Memoiren, AR 129/129. ID*, 32)

Note: Virtually all indicators support a view that the Germans were *not restricted by logistics factors* in scope or direction of their ops from **Jun-Sep 41**...Elements of Pz.Gps. 2 & 3 arrived on **15.7.41** in and around *Smolensk*, **700 km** inside the Soviet Union from its **1939** borders; yet the cdrs did not note significant logistical problems until two weeks later. At that time, they mentioned *shortages w/ the resupply of artillery ammunition*, but correlated them w/ the special conditions of positional warfare which had developed around Smolensk and *Yelna*. (*Stolfi, Barbarossa Revisited*, 32-33)

Note [Fuel consumption]: Because Russian roads were even worse than OKH planners had assumed in pre-1941 war games, fuel consumption turned out to be **330,000** tons per month, rather than the **250,000** budgeted for. Germany had only **2-3** months' supply of oil in reserve and it was discovered that captured Soviet petrol was too low-grade to power German engines. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 63)

Feb 41: Der Generalquartiermeister hielt nun monatlich Vortrag ueber die Versorgungslage, insbesondere auf dem Sektor Waffen u. Munition, sowie ueber den Stand der Vorbereitung fuer den Ostfeldzug. Anfangs **Feb 41** gab er ein besonders anschauliches Bild ueber die Lage der Munitionsbevorratung. Sie sei woertlich wiedergegeben:

Der Bestand nach Kampfmonaten in “Ueberblick ueber den Ruestungsstand” ist aufgebaut auf dem Verbrauch im Westen. Dieser Verbrauch ist *aeusserst niedrig* gewesen. Legt man den Verbrauch in Polen zugrunde, der *erheblich hoeher* als jener im Westen war, jedoch insgesamt immer noch als niedrig zu bezeichnen ist, so bleibt am **1.4.41** ein Munitionsvorrat von etwa **6 ½** Kampfmonaten. Die Eigenart der Bereitstellungen erfordert jedoch einmal eine weit-raeumige *Zerlegung* dieses Vorrats, zum anderen eine hohe Bevorratung verhaeltnismaessig kleiner Verbaende u. verringert damit den Gesamtwert des Nachschubvorrats.

Aus diesen Worten spricht die *ernste Sorgen des Generalquartiermeisters*, ob die aus der derzeit geringen Munitionsfertigung moegliche Bevorratung [*stockpiling*] ausreichen wuerde, die fuer die Angriffsverbaende eines Ostfeldzuges noetigen Munitionsmengen zeitgerecht verfuegbar zu haben. (*Donat, Der Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 29)

Jun 41: Germany's main weakness lay in the field of logistics. The vast expanse of the Soviet Union included only **40,000** miles of hard-surfaced, all-weather roads and **51,000** miles of railroads. These railroads were of a wider gauge than those found in Germany. As they advanced eastward, the Germans converted captured railbeds to their own gauge, but for much of **1941** all supplies moving by rail to the forward area had to be transferred onto whatever Soviet-gauge rolling stock the Germans could capture. Moreover, the mechanized forces lacked the maintenance capacity for a long campaign. . . Spare parts and trained maintenance personnel were

always in scarce supply, w/ many major repairs requiring that the vehicle be returned to the factory in Germany. Even the relatively limited distances involved in the Polish campaign of **1939** had posed such a strain on German armor that an entire corps was immobilized for maintenance overhaul by the end of the campaign. . .

Perhaps the fundamental logistical weakness was the German economy, which had *not yet been mobilized for war*. Throughout the war, Germany's lack of petroleum and other raw materials limited production and transportation. By **Jun 41**, the German industrial economy was already dependent on **3,000,000** foreign workers, and the labor shortages became more acute w/ each new draft of conscripts for the army. As in the previous campaigns, Hitler was banking on a quick victory rather than preparing for a prolonged struggle. In fact, he was already looking beyond the 1941 campaign, planning to create new mech. and air formations for follow-on ops in North Africa and Asia Minor. Hitler *dedicated virtually all new wpns production to such future plans*, leaving the forces in the east *chronically short of material*. The Wehrmacht had to win a quick victory or none at all. (*Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed, 29-30*)

21.6.41 [*Munitionslage: Stand 21.6.41*]: Detailed compilation of all types of munitions (and quantities) available to Army, *Luftwaffe* on eve of *Barbarossa*. Document compiled by „Der Generalquartiermeister.“ (See, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1101-03)

22.6.41: There would be no supply line to the Panzer groups; shuttling supplies forward would be impossible w/ so many unsubdued enemy formations in between. Each Panzer division, therefore, carried about *twice its normal allocation of fuel*. The standard load was **430** tons for a Panzer division at full establishment. An additional **400 – 500** tons were carried by the Panzer and mechanized divisions in **1941**, enabling them to make a fighting advance of **250 – 300** miles. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia, 45, 206*)

ab 22.6.41: Whereas shortages of fuel proved substantial in France, its affect was mitigated first by the much shorter distances, secondly by the seizure of Allied fuel dumps, and thirdly by the fact that the German tanks were fitted w/ petrol engines, which allowed them to refuel at roadside petrol stations. By contrast, not only was the Soviet Union a much larger theater of ops, but Soviet fuel contained a *lower octane content* rendering captured stocks useless until they could be treated in specially-constructed installations. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath, 94*; also, *Creveld, Supplying War, 150*)

22.6.41-31.1.42 [*Table*]: For losses and allocations of tanks, assault guns, trucks, artillery [only figures for losses] on a monthly basis see, Table **II.vi.i**: “*Armored Fighting Vehicles and Assault-guns on the Eastern Front between 22 Jun 41 and 31 Jan 42.*” For example, table illustrates the large losses of “trucks” incurred, and the small number of replacement vehicles allocated to the Ostheer. Figures of losses / allocations (captured) for **Jul 41 – Jan 42** as shown in table were as follows:

Truck Losses / Allocations (captured)

<u>Month</u>	<u>Losses</u>	<u>Allocations (captured)</u>
Jul 41	6281	1251 (525)
Aug 41	7655	3733 (1538)
Sep 41	4943	2018 (917)
Oct 41	3184	2703 (1417)
Nov 41	5996	1348 (378)

Dec 41	5189	855 (128)
Jan 42	5976	625 (57)
Totals:	39,870	12,685 (4960)

(See, For figures for tanks, assault guns, etc., see, *H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union*, 1120-22)

23.6.41: ...Unsere Panzer haben bereits 100 fdl. Kampfwagen abgeschossen ohne einen eigenen Verlust! Sie liegen augenblicklich fest, da sie keinen Betriebsstoff mehr haben. Betriebsstoffkolonnen gehen vor, auch **Ju 52** fuehren ihn heran. Wir warten den ganzen Tag auf unseren Gef.-Tross. (*Tagebuch Kreuter, SR 101 / 18. PD*)

24.6.41: Though OKH fully aware that the roads in Russia were few and bad it was surprised by the fact that *the surface of such metalled ones as existed had already begun to deteriorate on the third day of the campaign.* (*Supplying War, van Creveld, 155; see also, Tagesmeldung der Genst.d.H./Op.Abt., 24.6.41, in: KTB OKW, p 493*)

24.6.41: *Gercke:* Bau der Eisenbahnen [i.e., *change of gauge of railroad track east of frontier*] von der Grenze an nach dem vorgesehenen Plan ist eingeleitet. (*Halder KTB, 9; Halder War Diary, 418*)

25.6.41: Roads were few and *marching discipline poor* in sector of **Heeresgruppe Mitte**. Huge masses of infantry blocked the bridges over the Bug, and by evening of this day, the *Grosstransportraum* earmarked for *Guderian's* support had still not managed to cross the river. Thus, as early as **23 Jun 41**, *Guderian obliged to request the supply of fuel by air.* (Similar problems arose in the area of **9th Army**) (*Supplying War*)

25.6.41: Using Russian equipment, today the *railroads are already running again as far as 80 km east of Brest [-Litovsk]* – a very important relief for the overcrowded supply roads to Panzer Group *Guderian.* (*Bock War Diary, Grebet, 228*)

29.6.41: Eine Woche Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion...**Grossen Munitionsmangel...** 15 *Feindjaeger* greifen uns auf der Panzerstrasse an. MG-Kugeln zwischen um die Ohren. Und wieder Flieger. Erkennungssignal vier rote Sternchen. Es sind **He III**, die uns Munition mit Fallschirmen abwerfen. (*Tagebuch, Gefr. G., Stab III/AR 119/11. PD, BfZ*)

29.6.41: As early as 29 June, the *Luftwaffe* had to fly fuel to **4. Pz.Gr.** Supply trains to Army Group North, which were scheduled to unload in **3** hours at the transfer point from German to Soviet gauge, were taking **80** hours. Observers describe the resulting traffic jam as *catastrophic.* (*W. Murray, War to be Won, 126*)

30.6.41: Fuel consumption by both 2. and 3. *Panzergruppen* was very high (in opening days of campaign), but could be met because that of ammunition was correspondingly low, and because *Panzergruppe 2* made a timely discovery of a large Russian reservoir near **Baranovichi**. Scarcely any subsistence [rations] at all was making its way forward, but the troops found it *possible to live off the land.* (*Supplying War*)

Jun-Jul 41: AGC did not advance as quickly as AGN. This was partly due to the fact that there were fewer roads in the sector covered by GFM v. Bock's army group and the marching discipline of the formations was not sufficiently strict. Enormous masses of infantry blocked the

Bug bridges in the first days, preventing the haulage vehicles intended for Guderian from crossing the river until the evening of **25 Jun 41**. Thus, **2 PzGr** had to be supplied w/ fuel by air. Conditions in **9. Army**, where infantry and horse-drawn supply convoys struggled w/ Hoth's armored group for priority on the roads, were equally confused. Frequent detours into the countryside *dramatically increased the fuel consumption of the tank formations*. However, this did not initially lead to difficulties, owing to the capture of a big Soviet fuel depot at Baranovichi; after appropriate technical processing, almost **1/3** of the group's fuel consumption was for a time covered from captured stocks.

The spearheads of Guderian's armored group reached the Dnieper, and thus the limits of assured supply, on **2 Jul 41**. Until that time, no serious bottlenecks had occurred, although the dusty conditions and the shortage of spare parts led to breakdowns in the tank formations. . . Following the deployment directive from AGC, Guderian attempted to reach the area Roslavl – Yelnya – Smolensk as quickly as possible. Yelnya was situated **750** km from the supply-base, scarcely within reach of motorized supply. *The transport problem became the dominant factor*. Moreover, the important Warsaw – Minsk – Smolensk railway route was not brought into operation quickly enough. Large parts of the remaining railway network remained under Soviet control for longer than expected, and could not be used to ease the situation. At the beginning of **Jul 41**, railway capacity was just sufficient to supply **3 PzGr**. **9. Army** was completely dependent on haulage transport, although the distance from the supply-base was now almost **400** km., and the roads in poor condition. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union, 1124-25*)

Jun-Jul 41 [Supply Districts Centre/Dnieper]: Supply District Centre had been established in the area around Warsaw and Suwalki. In the first days of the invasion, it had begun to set up supply-bases on the line Alitus – Voronovo – Lesna in order to shorten supply routes. Each supply-base included: ammunition, fuel and foodstuffs depots, field hospitals, maintenance and repair workshops, bakers' and butchers' coys, a spare-parts detachment, and a supply battalion or else a detachment of the Reich Labor Service [RAD], as well as a Vehicle Transport Detachment, and public-order services [?].

At end of **Jun 41**, preparations were made to create a new backbone of support for the supply-system, beginning on the line Molodechno – Minsk – Slutsk. . . The new base, the Dnieper Supply District, was extended eastwards to the line Polotsk – Lepel – Borisov – Bobruysk by the middle of **Jul 41**. Restocking proceeded slowly once the track had been re-laid, and the railway was operating efficiently enough to bring increased supplies to the new bases. Halder and Wagner had intended that the Dnieper base would be ready by the end of **Jul 41**, when it would be able to guarantee the tank formations an operational range as far as Moscow. Daily deliveries of **37,000** t. of supplies would have been necessary to achieve this objective. These conditions were not fulfilled: When Guderian crossed the Dnieper, the new base contained munitions sufficient for only five [**5**] days' fighting, fuel for **40** km., and half a days' rations. Yet the organizational structure of the base did keep pace w/ the advance. At the end of **Jul 41**, the bases Orsha and Smolensk were established along the army group's main line of advance. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union, 1125-26; see also, Toppe, P-190, 85*)

Jun-Aug 41: Germany enters Soviet Union already short some **2,700 trucks**. By Aug 41, *truck losses are outrunning production*. (Situation would become *catastrophic* by late autumn). (*Dinardo, Panzer Arm, 15-16*)

Jun-Sep 41: German army logistics elements lagged far behind combat units, and were often relegated to the worst “roads“ – w/ dire consequences, given the *Wehrmacht’s* heavy reliance on horse transport. It was not only the mud of the autumn and spring rainy seasons that imprisoned wagon wheels and wore down horses; the choking dust and *deep, concrete-hard ruts* of summer were also destructive. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 14)

Jul 41: By early July, Bock’s *panzer* divisions are losing tanks because the supply system cannot provide parts. (see, *W. Murray, War to be Won*, 127)

Jul 41: For **2 Pz Gr** the Stalin Line does not appear to be a hollow shell. The operational rate for tanks of **3 PD** and **18 PD** stood at only **35%** and **58%**. With the German rail and logistics system severely disrupted at Brest-Litovsk, **4 PD** sends a staff major all the way back to Germany to scrounge for spare parts. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 53)

Jul 41 [Railroad conversion]: The relaying of a major part of the Soviet rail network – from wide to standard gauge – and its operation w/ German material proved more difficult than expected. The bed of the Russian tracks was generally so weak, and the rails so lacking in load-carrying capacity, that the only German engines they could carry were light models dating from before the First World War. The rail system had also suffered serious damage: some rails had been torn up by the Russians w/ sleeper ploughs; many stations had been destroyed by the Luftwaffe; the German troops themselves had often inflicted excessive damage, such as the destruction of telephone lines, the burning of snow-fences and sleepers, the removal of serviceable railway material as scrap, etc. (For more details see, *H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union*, 1114)

Jul 41 [Vehicle breakdowns]: While **OKH** had been aware that the few roads were in poor condition, the sheer extent of the difficulties was greater than had been expected. The surfaced roads were not capable of bearing the heavy lorry traffic, and were often ruined after a few days. Unsurfaced roads were badly rutted by the horse-drawn vehicles; after heavy rainfall at the beginning of **Jul 41**, these roads became little more than quagmires. The resulting breakdowns, including the losses caused by enemy action, amounted to **25%** of the haulage-vehicle capacity. [**Note:** See, *Halder Diary, 11.7.41*] In AGC, this figure rose to over **30%** by **20 Jul 41**. A major problem was that repair facilities, still sited far to the rear in the Government-General or the Reich itself, could not be brought to the front.

The rapid decline in available motorized transport capacity was accompanied by an unexpected increase in fuel consumption. Owing to poor road conditions and tactical detours, the daily requirement of the Ostheer rose from the original estimate of **9000 t.** to **12,000 t.** In practice, fuel sufficient for **100 km** [i.e., a “*Verbrauchsatz*”) under normal conditions was enough for only **70 km** of the Russian countryside. As a result of periods of high temperatures during the day, the fuel was often unserviceable, and its use led to breakdowns. In **2 PzGr**, **30 Pz III** and **4 Pz IV** tanks broke down at the beginning of **Jul 41** because captured oil had been used.⁴²⁵

Much of the damage sustained by the motor-vehicles could have been avoided if there had been enough time and fuel to prepare the drivers for the extraordinary conditions they would meet in Russia, and the special driving skills they would require. A shortage of maps also necessitated travel in convoy, causing considerable loss of time in the event of a major breakdown. Many of

⁴²⁵ **Note:** Does author mean “oil” as in “lubricants,” or does he mean fuel for the tank engines? Check original German text in DRZW.

the civilian vehicles used by the troops, especially the motor-cars, proved to be unserviceable because of their *low ground clearance*. . . As a result, these vehicles frequently suffered irreparable damage to their oil-sumps and transmission. During the advance, many breakdowns were also caused by broken suspensions. Stocks of spring steel in the replacement-part depots, provided on the *basis of demand during the French campaign*, were exhausted after a short period, compelling the armies to use their own lorries to fetch small amounts of spring steel from Koenigsberg and Elbing, or from Stuttgart and Ulm. Tyres proved unable to withstand the abrasion of the sandy tracks, but could be replaced only infrequently. On **10 Jul 41**, **OKH** informed the armies that no more tyres at all would be supplied.[!]

Difficulties and breakdowns plagued the numerous horse-drawn vehicles as well as the motor-vehicles. Their usual rubber tyres were rapidly worn to shreds, and had to be replaced w/ wooden wheels clad w/ iron hoops. Moreover, the German horses were not up to the demands made on them. The heavy columns and field howitzer detachments, in particular, were held fast by the deep, loose sandy soil. The number of horses lost through exhaustion rose inexorably, leaving some inf.-divs. faced w/ the prospect of having to *leave the heavy artillery behind*. . . In the first phase of the campaign, when supplies had to be transported mainly by road, the numerous vehicle breakdowns inevitably reduced the movement of supplies. Very few replacement vehicles were available. Until the end of **Jul 41**, only about one in ten [**1:10**] broken-down vehicles was replaced by a new one. Thereafter, **OKH** *refused to provide more vehicles*⁴²⁶ *because of the shortage of lorries and because it planned to establish new formations*. (H. Boog, et al., *Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union*, 1112-14)

1.7.41: Bad roads resulted in *increased demand for fuel*—rising to **330 000** tons a month (**9 000** daily)⁴²⁷ instead of **250 000** as had been expected. In Russia, a normal *Verbrauchssatz* for **100 km** (60 miles) lasted for **70** only. (*Supplying War*, 155; see also, *Halder KTB*, 1.7.41)

1.7.41 [*Halder Tagebuch*]: *Gen Wagner* (Gen.Qu.): a) . . . Bei der H.Gr.Mitte wird bis **5.7.41**, abgesehen von den „*Handkoffern*“ der Pz.Gr., eine Auslagerung von **17 000** t Nachschubguetern moeglich sein. Mit den Pz.-Handkoffern zusammen sind das **24 000** t. Vorkommando des Stabes Krumpelt [Oberstlt. i.G., war OQu. des **AOK 4**] geht nach Minsk, um alles vorzubereiten. Auslagerung soll auf **73 000** t gesteigert werden (eine Munitionsaustattung, **5** VS [Verbrauchssatze]-Betriebsstoff, **5** Tage Verpflegung).. . b) *Betriebsstofflage*: Geschaetzter Bedarf: taeglich **9000** cbm, monatlich **250 000**, d.h. taeglich **22** Zuege. Tatsaechlicher Bedarf: taeglich **11 500** cbm, monatlich **330 000**, also *erheblich hoeher als erwartet*. Davon ist etwa **1/3** durch Beute gedeckt. Der Zugbedarf bis **6.7.41** betrug taeglich **7** Zuege, ab **6.7.41** werden wieder **14** Zuege noetig sein. (*Halder KTB*, 32)

3.7.41: ...The *railroad is keeping up surprisingly well*. We are already running as far as *Baranovich* on *German gauge tracks*. The day after tomorrow the trains are to be running to *Minsk* – on Russian gauge. Talked the chief of field transport [Gercke] into converting the tracks from *Branovich* to *Minsk* to the German gauge, as *we haven't captured any Russian tank cars and fuel can only be transported to the front in large quantities in German tank cars*. (*Bock War Diary*, Gerbet, 237)

⁴²⁶ **Note:** Table **II.vi.i.** appears to contradict this statement. Table shows that, while vehicle losses were much higher than replacements (“allocations”), the Ostheer did indeed receive some replacement vehicles, many of which had been captured. See pp. 1120-22.

⁴²⁷ **Note:** See entry below from *Halder Tagebuch*. It appears actual daily fuel consumption was **11 500** tons (cbm) per month, not **9000** (that was the pre-war estimate).

7.7.41: Performance of railways fell so far below expectations that **9th Army** complained it was *only receiving a third of the daily contingent of trains to which it was entitled*. Instead of improving, the *situation grew worse*. After **8 Jul 41**, the railway only carried supplies for **3 PzGr**, and **9th Army** had to use its *Grosstransportraum* even though the distance from base now exceeded **250** miles and roads in between were atrocious. (*Supplying War*, 168)

10.7.41: By this day, in sector of *Heeresgruppe Nord*, some **300** miles of rail line had been restored and converted to standard gauge. But line capacity was still so low that, instead of the **10** required, only one [1] train per day was reaching *Dunaburg*, which was already hundreds of miles behind the front. For the railheads to keep up w/ the advance was *clearly impossible*. Russian tracks and captured rolling stock had to be used, and it soon became clear that the *transfer-points [Umschlagstellen] from German to Russian trains formed the bottleneck of the entire logistic system*. (*Supplying War*, 160)

10.7.41: Railway troops work feverishly to restore damage and convert railway lines to German gauge. By **10 Jul 41**, some **480 km**⁴²⁸ has been completed but only about **1/10** of the load capacity required is reaching the army groups. Russian rail-track is lighter than German variants and supported by **1/3** fewer sleepers, which prevent running heavy locomotives over converted track. Soviet locomotives are larger, their *water stations* farther apart, and many had been destroyed. Russian coal, it is discovered, can not be burned efficiently in German engines w/o German coal or petrol additives. Damage to signal equipment and rolling stock, bridges and engine sheds, and the elementary point that one double track can carry more capacity than two single ones, reduce German logistic planning figures to theoretical aspirations. Resupply *bottlenecks* occur at the exchange-transfer points between German and Russian railway gauges. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 167; also, *Creveld, Supplying War*, 157-60)

10.7.41: The further the Germans advanced, the greater became the *supply difficulties*. Civilian trucks, stolen from western Europe, disintegrated on the primitive Soviet roads. Within **19** days of the start of the campaign, the *Wehrmacht* had lost **25%** of these vehicles, w/ little change for replacements. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 126)

11.7.41: Due to appalling roads, and also enemy action by isolated parties not smashed by the advancing Panzers, losses among the lorries of the *Grosstransportraum* had already reached **25 percent**. A week later, the figure for Army Group Center reached **one-third**. (*Supplying War*, 155; also, *Halder KTB*, 11.7.41)

13.7.41: *Wagner* optimistically reports that he could supply the armored groups for an advance on Moscow. Next day, however, he *modified his estimate*, in that he now admitted that they could go no farther than *Smolensk*, and that the infantry would have to halt even further to the west, on the Dnieper. (*Supplying War*, 168; also, *Halder KTB*, 13.-14.7.41)

Mid-Jul 41: By this time, *Luftwaffe* units were seriously short of fuel and ammunition. On **5.7.41**, **VIII. Fl.K.** reported that fuel had run short, even though it had already scaled back operations. Its commander, *Generaloberst v. Richthofen*, noted that „supply is for us the greatest difficulty in this [campaign].“ (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 127; *BA-MA, RL 8/49, Russland-Feldzug 1941: VIII. Fliegerkorps*)

⁴²⁸ **Note:** Compare this figure w/ Creveld's above, which states that, by this date, in sector of H.Gr.Nord alone, some **300** miles of rail line have been converted.

15.7.41: From middle of July, supply-situation of Army Group Center „was *developing signs of schizophrenia*.“ On the one hand, Wagner and Halder were aware of some „strain,“ but still confident of their ability to build up a new supply basis on the *Dnieper*, from which further ops were to be launched around end of month. *They appeared not to hear the loud cries for help from the armies. The consumption of ammunition throughout the period was very high*, and could be met only—if at all—by means of a *drastic curtailment in the supply of fuel and subsistence*.⁴²⁹ (*Supplying War*)

15.7.41: The deeper the flying units moved into Russia, the more precarious became their supply situation. By mid-July, the *Luftwaffe* air units were *crying for fuel and ammunition*; and within the jumble moving forward to support the spearheads, the *Luftwaffe's* logistical system functioned no more efficiently than that of the army. *Fliegerkorps VIII* had reported as early as **5 Jul 41** that fuel was lacking even though the corps had already limited its missions. Laconically, *Richthofen* noted: “*Supply is for us the greatest difficulty in this war.*” (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 83-4)

ca. 15.-20.7.41: The *Ostheer* was already „howling about supply shortages.“ *Abwehr* maps had proven totally inadequate; they showed dirt tracks as main roads. Bad road and enemy action had reduced the strength of the *Grosstransportraum* by 25 to 30 percent in less than a month. Railroad conversion crews were not keeping up. Captured food supplies and transport never reached expected quantities, and Russian *gasoline and coal proved useless due to its poor quality*. Aerial resupply to some forward units had become necessary to make up for *critical shortages of fuel and ammunition*. By mid-July, the German thrusts had stalled almost exactly where the precampaign planning had forecast, but their preparations for the next phase progressed much more slowly than expected. (*Megargee*, 133)⁴³⁰

16.7.41: Guderian's and Hoth's armored spearheads meet again, this time at *Smolensk* (earlier at *Minsk*). *No very great difficulties in supply appear to have been encountered during these operations*. Although the distances covered were such that, already on the *10th day of the campaign*, some tanks were lost due to a *shortage of spare parts*. (*Supplying War*, 167)

19.7.41: Mechanized forces of Panzer Groups 2 & 3 meet at *Smolensk* to complete another envelopment of Soviet forces. Yet, the advance to *Smolensk* had *stretched supply lines to the breaking point*. The Germans found it almost impossible to supply their forward spearheads. The distance to the *railheads*, the movement of infantry to support the mechanized forces, and the exhaustion of the motorized supply system created a *logistical nightmare*. Intensive fighting within and outside of *Smolensk* pocket exacerbated the situation—it made heavy demands on ammunition stocks so that the transportation system had to bring up ammunition, and thus there was no opportunity to stockpile fuel for the next advance. By **23 Jul 41**, *Halder* admitted that the existing situation, where the frontline units were living a “*hand to mouth*” existence (in terms of supplies), was making it impossible to build up stockpiles for the next push. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 83; also, *Halder KTB*, 23.7.41)

⁴²⁹ **Note:** Appears Germans often had to „rob Peter to pay Paul,“ when it came to meeting logistic requirements of the *Ostheer*. That is, to meet a surge of requirements in one area—in this case, munitions—they had to curtail the supply of other key requirements.

⁴³⁰ See also, van Creveld's *Supplying War*, 155-59. Van Creveld maintains that, given the supply difficulties Army Group Center was having in July, August, and September, the diversion south *did not delay the advance on Moscow by more than one or two weeks at most*. (176)

19.7.-1.8.41: Army Group South faces terrible weather conditions – periods of blazing heat and dust followed by torrential downpours. By 19 July, **50%** of the army group's trucks are out of commission. Bitter arguments broke out between units over the hijacking of trains and supplies. On **1.8.41**, *Rundstedt's* forward units had between **1/6** and **1/7** of their basic ammunition load. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 126)

24.7.41: On front of *Heeresgruppe Nord*: Whereas *Maj Toppe* (head of Wagner's *Aussenstelle* w/ this army group) thought he needed **34** trains per day (at **450** tons each) to meet all requirements, he actually did not get more than **18** from the *Chef des Transportwesens*, and even this number was reached only on exceptional occasions. (*Supplying War*, 160-63)

30.7.41: Enormous success of their initial advance has caused the Germans to outrun their fragile logistical structure; this prompted OKH **30 July 41** decision to declare a virtual standstill so that AGC could rest and refit. **2 PzGr's** embattled bridgehead over the Desna at El'nia was **720** km (**432** miles) from the nearest German railhead. The infantry were running short of boots, and staff officers began to plan for large quantities of winter clothing. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 84)

31.7.41: Wenn der *Generalquartiermeister* des Heeres am **31 Jul 41** zum ersten Mal einen Gesamtverbrauch von **113.458 t** Munition feststellt, fuer deren Transport insgesamt **252** Munitionszuege zu je **450 t** erforderlich waren, so ergibt sich rechnerisch ein *Tagesdurchschnitt* von **2.840 t** fuer den Zeitraum vom **22.6.-31.7.41**. Diese Zahl liegt also rund bei der **1 ½** fachen Menge, die als eine erste Munitionsausstattung fuer die "*Barbarossa-Verbaende*" vom dt. Generalstab *geplant* war. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt, also bei Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges, betrug die *erste Munitionsausstattung* einer Inf.-Div. **600 t**; einer Pz.-Div. **730 t**; u. einer mot. Div. **560 t**. Das ergibt also eine tatsaechliche Gesamtmunitionsmenge von rund **91.000 t** als erste Munitionsausstattung aller dt. Angriffsverbaende am **22.6.41**. (*Donat, Der Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 32)

Jul/Aug 41: A serious ammunition crisis developed in the Yelnya salient. When Soviet counter-attacks forced the German formations to mount a five-week defensive battle, the high level of ammunition expenditure could not be made good because of the long, overstretched communications w/ the rear. . . Troops remained dependent on the efficiency of the motorized transport capacity [due to the existing shortcomings of the railroad]. Stocks at the advanced supply-bases were so low that the motorized convoys were compelled to *travel back to the nearest working railhead – a distance of 750 km*. Fundamentally, the crisis at Yelnya was no accident; the *investigation ordered by Hitler* found no evidence of a dereliction of duty. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union*, 1126)

Jul/Aug 41: Noch staerker als beim Heer machten sich bei der *Vorverlegung der Bodenorganisation* die Wegeschwierigkeiten bemerkbar, da die Verbaende der Bodenorganisation an sich *ungenuegend motorisiert* waren u. ueber keine *Raupenfahrzeuge* verfuegten. Dazu kam, das ausser den wenigen staendigen Flugplaetzen *Feldflugplaetze* erkundet u. hergerichtet werden mussten, die nicht mehr unmittelbar durch Heerestruppen geschuetzt waren...Russische gut gelaendegaengige Kraftwagen aus *Beutebestaenden* u. die russ. Landesueblichen *Karren* wurden in den Nachschubdienst eingestellt. Auch erbeutete russ. Kampfswagen eigneten sich die Kraefte der Bodenorganisation an, mit denen sie, wie z.B. *Oberst Mueller bei Bobruisk*, feindl. Kampfswagen-Angriffe gegen die Flugplaetze abschulgen. Noch heute bleibt es ein *Ruhmesblatt* meines *Oberquartiermeisters (Oberst i.G. Heigl)* und des *Eisenbahntransportchef* (Heer), dass *die gesamten Verbaende der Luftflotte stets ueber genuegend Nachschub verfuegten* u. damit allen Anforderung der *Heeresgruppe* u. des

selbststaendigen Luftkrieges gerecht werden konnten. Bei der **entscheidenden Bedeutung des Nachschubs** hatte die Luftflotte den Quartiermeisterdienst dem Ia-Dienst gleichgestellt,⁴³¹ hier trug die Organisation ihre Fruechte, ohne dass leider bei der *Ordenverteilung* die Folgerungen gezogen wurden. (*Kesselring, Soldat*, 122, 125-26)

Jul/Aug 41: Supplies for Army Group Ctr require **25** goods trains a day. Yet despite working around the clock to convert the railway lines to a German gauge, only **8-15** trains a day are reaching the front line in late July and early August. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 409-10; also, *Leach*, 205-07, 210)

Aug 41: When priority was given to ammunition supply at the beginning of **Aug 41** [due in part at least to crisis at Yelnya, I assume], a drastic cut in the supply of fuel and rations was necessary.⁴³² The armies which had been sent into action to liquidate the pocket at Smolensk were thus placed in a difficult situation. Despite the moving forward of some supply bases, no decisive overall relief was possible as long as supplies from the Reich continued to be sluggish. Vital *ammunition trains* “**got lost**” in the Warsaw supply catchment area, w/ days elapsing before they were located and sent further. The ammunition stocks of AGC declined even further, instead of increasing to the extent which would have been necessary to prepare a new offensive. The resistance of the Soviet troops in the Smolensk pocket also delayed the rest period which had to be planned for the mobile formations. The Soviet forces held out for a month, although Guderian had originally calculated that only **3-4** days would be lost. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union*, 1126)

Aug 41: Infamous August pause during which German army *remained virtually stationary at Smolensk* and in the north resulted not only from disagreements within the high command as to next objective(s) and the need to refresh exhausted mech units, but also from a *logistical system that could barely supply frontline forces*, much less build up reserves. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 83)

Early Aug 41: Ob wir es schaffen ihn [den Russe] vor Moskau zu schlagen? Für uns wird *das Nachschubproblem immer schwieriger*, die Ausfälle bei der Pz.Gruppe durch Abnutzungserscheinungen des Materials werden auch nach der Auffrischung in steigendem Maße zunehmen und die Truppe wird auch immer abgekämpfter. (*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*)

Aug 41: Army Group Center suffering from shortages of munitions and fuel, which effect operations. For example, on **21.8.41**, Guderian’s *Panzergruppe* could advance no farther toward *Gomel* “for reasons of materiel and fuel.” (See, *Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 281-82; 288).

11.8.41: The *ruthless utilization of engines* less to their *rapid deterioration* and increased the consumption of oil—as against that of petrol—from two to five or seven percent. Spare parts, esp. tires, were hard to obtain, because of the *Reich’s rapidly sinking stocks of rubber*. Under

⁴³¹ **Kesselring:** „Meine Gedanken waren in dieser Frage sehr einfach. *Alle Feldzuege hatten erwiesen, dass der Ausgang vom Nachschub abhing*...Die Gleichstellung des Oberquartiermeisters mit dem Ia-Fuehrungsgehilfen war fuer mich eine *Selbstverstaendlichkeit* geworden. Ich war immer veraergert, wenn man meine Auszeichnungsvorschlaege fuer die Nachschubbearbeiter unberuecksichtigt liess.“

⁴³² **Note:** Supports my thesis that supply of the Ostheer was always a zero-sum game – uping the “supply ante” in any one area – in this case, ammunition – seemed to always signify a reduction in the remaining areas.

such conditions, the *actual capacity of the Grosstransportraum fell far below what had been expected*. (Supplying War, 157; see also, Halder KTB, 11.8.41)

12.-15.8.41: Mitte unverändert. Ernüchterung der HGr. wegen der großen Verluste; im Angriff um den Jelna-Bogen zu räumen. *Bei uns dort ständig Mangel an Artillerie-Munition*, die der Russe verschwenderisch hat. (Tagebuch Muenchhausen)

15.-31.8.41: By this time, both **2nd** and **9th armies** were „living from hand to mouth,“ w/ *stocks of ammunition still falling instead of rising in preparation for a new offensive*. Also, the supply of **POL** (petrol, oil and lubricants) was quite insufficient and did not take into account the *worn state of the engines*. The continued resistance of the Russian troops trapped inside the *Smolensk pocket* delayed the *refreshment of the armored formations* and this **finally required almost a month**, instead of the 3-4 days Guderian thought would be needed. Even then it remained incomplete, for Hitler refused to make available *new tank engines* at the expense of the program of vehicle production. Meanwhile, even after *Smolensk pocket* was liquidated, Army Group Center was *still engaged in heavy fighting*. Throughout August it had to **face enemy counter-attacks from the east**, causing heavy expenditure of ammunition that could only be met by *cutting back on subsistence*. [i.e., again by „robbing Peter to pay Paul.“] **Stockpiling for a new offensive was impossible**. (Supplying War, 168-69)

16.8.41: Conversion of railway gauge [from Soviet to European standard] extended to Orscha and Smolensk by this date. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 168)

16.8.41: OKH announces a deficit of **38,000** vehicles on **16 Aug 41**. Panzer units are on average **50%** short, w/ corps troops and HQs already down **25%**. Infantry divisions, w/ comparably fewer vehicles, and mainly horse-drawn at that, have lost **25%** of their motorized fleets. The mobile columns required to spearhead the final *blitzkrieg* [i.e., attack on Moscow] were between **25** and **33%** below their previous capacity. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 168)

30.8.41: At a meeting on **30 Aug 41**, the Quartermaster General of the Army, General der Artillerie Eduard Wagner, explained that the operations had left Army Groups Centre and South w/ a critical fuel shortage and that replenishment would be impossible, if for no other reason than the serious problems on the railways. However, at the same time he declared that the quantities required in **1941** to conclude operations could be provided if further extensive cutbacks were made in industry, the home army, and the occupied territories. However, Wagner came to the overall conclusion that by **Jan 42** supplies would have run out and that “new oilfields would have to be captured.” (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 151)

Late Aug 41: By this date front line German formations in east running short of a laundry list of items crucial to modern, mechanized war: tanks, tank engines, trucks, prime movers. Moreover, it wasn't a good idea for any modern army to be *operating 450 miles from its railhead*, but w/ conversion of the Russian railways to western European gauge moving so slowly, that was the *exact situation for large parts of Army Group Center*. (Citino, *Death of the Wehrmacht*, 42)

Aug-Sep 41: During his operation in the [Ukraine], Guderian did not face further serious supply problems, because the German railway transport had now reached Gomel, and **2 PzGr** could thus be supported effectively from the Roslavl - Gomel line. However, the switching of the main supply-line to the SE delayed the restocking of supplies for **2. Army**, whose supplies were dependent on a less efficient Soviet railway line from Gomel to Gorodnya. Not until **15 Sep 41**

did the army describe its supply situation as secure; and even then, *the slow build-up of stocks made any resumption of the advance impossible before the beginning of Oct 41*. Moreover, in the northern sector, **9. Army** and **4. Army** reported that the transport capacity was insufficient to provide running supplies as well as stocking the depots to the extent at which the troops could totally rely on them during the coming fighting. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union*, 1130)

Aug-Sep 41: To meet current consumption and *build up stocks for the attack on Moscow*, **Bock** estimated that he needed **30 trains daily**. **Gercke** only promised **24**, however, and the average number for the *first half of August* did not exceed **18**. After the *conversion to German gauge of the Orsha-Smolensk railroad on 16 August*, the situation showed signs of improvement, but the *target number of 30 trains per day was never met*. Though this was to be the final and decisive act of the Russian campaign, *the OKH did not concentrate all its resources behind it*. On 15 August, a „nervous“ Hitler ordered Hoth’s *Panzergruppe 3* to send out a corps to help Army Group North; he also ordered **5 000 tons of the Grosstransportraum** to be diverted from Center to Army Group South, where stockpiling was meeting w/ great difficulties. In view of this *almost unbelievable dispersion of resources*, **9th Army** declared flatly on **14 Sep 41** that its transport was „insufficient to support the coming operations.“ (*Supplying War*, 170)

Aug-Sep 41: Army High Command hoped that the advance on Moscow would bring about the last and decisive act of Operation “Barbarossa.” However, it neglected to concentrate the available supply capacity behind this sector of the front. At the end of **Aug 41**, **5000 t.** of haulage capacity was actually withdrawn and placed at the disposal of Army Group South in order to build up its supply depots. To cover running requirements, and at the same time lay in sufficient stocks for the advance on Moscow, GFM v. Bock demanded **30** trains daily; **Gercke** could promise him only **24**. In fact, in **Aug 41**, AGC seldom received more than **18 trains** per day. Sufficient numbers were not dispatched even after the strategically important Orsha – Smolensk line had been re-laid. Despite these problems, the troops’ supplies had been partially restocked by the end of **Sep 41**. The exception was **2 PzGr**, which had returned to AGC after the battle of Kiev and now had only small reserves of fuel available. On the other hand, the restocking of the Dnieper Supply District was still in its early stages. . .

The establishment of supply-bases near to the front – in Gomel – Roslavl – Smolensk – Vitebsk – could bring relief only until the stocks in store there were exhausted. Because of the inadequacies of the railway network and the damage inflicted upon it by partisan groups, the troops *inevitably encountered increasing supply problems as they moved further away from the railheads*. Given the scarcity of motorized transport capability, these problems might easily develop into full-scale crises if weather conditions were to deteriorate. . . (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1130-31)

Aug-Sep 41: During **Aug-Sep 41** the Dnieper Supply District was moved forward to the area round Smolensk and expanded into a productive base. *The rear bases had to be closed down step by step*, and the supply troops moved forward in order to receive and distribute the supplies which were being moved up by train. . . The rear services of divisions and armies endeavored to live off the land as far as possible, to relieve the strain on supply. Under their supervision and w/ their co-operation, the *harvests were brought in*, and mills, dairies, bakeries and craftsmen’s businesses were set up. In the case of **167. ID**, for example, these measures resulted in an improvement in rations, while captured tractors were repaired in the tractor station and used to motorize a heavy artillery battery and to establish a breakdown platoon [?] w/ the workshop company.

AGC's capacity to resume the offensive depended partly on the arrival of reinforcements, and partly on the restoration of its fighting strength by making good its losses and providing sufficient supplies. In **Sep 41**, *there was not enough time to achieve this*. Though the advancing of the equipment store from the Warsaw area to Smolensk did shorten the supply-route, the losses of wpons and equipment could not be made good. Running losses alone exceeded the new production of the Reich in almost every sphere. Moreover, only part of this new material was available for the eastern front, because much of it was being held back for new formations. At first, Hitler had actually ordered a complete ban on supplies for the armored forces. [!] If major losses were sustained, individual tank formations were to be amalgamated, and surplus support troops and occupation troops withdrawn.

With only minor exceptions, Hitler kept to this decision until the end of the year. By the end of **Aug 41**, the Ostheer had lost **1488** armored fighting vehicles, i.e., more than **1/3** of the original supply; it was allocated **96** vehicles in replacement, from a new production of **815** during the period **Jun-Aug 41**. [!] The loss of tanks due to a shortage of spares was often greater than that caused by enemy fire. Frequently, the troops responded by *obtaining spare parts from Germany independently*, thus avoiding central direction by the Quartermaster-General. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV: Attack on the Soviet Union, 1126-27*)

Sep 41: To judge from records of *Panzergruppe 2*, Guderian's forces did not—thanks mainly to the *German railway reaching Gomel in late August*—suffer from any very great supply difficulties during the *southward thrust to Kiev*. (*Supplying War, 170*)

Sep 41: **2093** supply trains reach their destinations on the eastern front during this month. (*Hart, Guderian, 129, f.n. 43; also, Wray, Standing Fast, 74*)

Sep 41 [Gen.Qu. Wagner]: Shortly before the launching of “Taifun,” the arrival of fuel trains was considerably in arrears. . . Fuel stocks would not support an advance of more than **300** km – at most to the gates of Moscow. On the eve of the attack, Wagner reported that supply for “Taifun” was “satisfactory,” and everything was “ready for the jump-off.” Though the last part of the report was accurate as far as it went, it was very doubtful whether the “jump-off” would reach as far as Moscow and beyond. Wagner was still *unshakeably optimistic* in his conviction that he could get AGC to Moscow. Further than that he dared not think. . . Wagner was playing a dangerous game w/ his readiness to take any risk in the conduct of operations, and his tendency always to give an optimistic answer to any question about the range of supply despite “some nerves.” (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV, 1132; also, Halder Diary, 26.9.41; Wagner, Generalquartiermeister, 203-06*)

Sep 41: Some progress was achieved in **Sep 41** but only limited stocks of *Verbrauchssaetzen* (logistic „units“) could be amassed to support the impending offensive. It was not possible to amass the „buffer“ stocks desired: **27** trains were needed daily in September to shunt units into place and locate material forward. Only **16** [per day] could be mustered before **22.9.41**, although **27** [per day?] delivered up to **30 Sep 41**, producing a limited build-up of stocks. **OKW** estimated **29** trains would be needed daily during **Oct 41**, but could only confirm **20**. It was anticipated that **Nov 41** and a cessation of activity [!] due to winter conditions would lessen the requirement to a much reduced three [**3**] trains daily in order to move winter clothing and equipment. In any event, it was not enough. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 168; also, DRZW, Bd. IV, 658*)

Sep 41 [Logistics problems]: The **POL** shortage is serious except for Army Gr North. Stock piles are exhausted and newly arriving shipments are immediately distributed to front-line units. In calculating the requirements for the offensive in the direction of Moscow, the planners find that the daily rate of POL trains arriving in theater would have to be stepped up from **22** to **27** for the period **17 Sep** to **2 Oct 41** and to **29** as of **3 Oct 41**. As of **4 Sep 41** breakdown of tank strength showed following: Available for employment (**47%**); deadlined for repair (**23%**); disabled [destroyed?] (**30%**). Compared w/ the tank status report of **4.8.41**, the percentage of disabled tanks had increased from **20** to **30%**. On the other hand, the percentage of deadlined vehicles had been reduced from **30** to **23%** because of the arrival of spare parts and the possibility of allocating time for maintenance and repair. However, the repair facilities were inadequate and the shortage of tank engines continued. Moreover, the repaired tanks had been so overtaxed by previous employment that their future usefulness was bound to be short. (For more details see, *G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia, 72-73*)

Sep 41: The **4 PzGr** has to relocate **600** km from Leningrad via *Luga, Pskov* and *Nevel* to join AGC SE of Velizh. Large numbers of tanks and SP guns break down during the rapid **3-4** day administrative march. Service support vehicles are obliged to move northward from the Panzergruppe assembly area to recover many of these vehicles, denying vital last-minute support to the remainder prior to the offensive. Artillery gun numbers are reduced as a result of half-track prime movers breaking down and a shortage of spare parts. „**3 PzGr**’s main supply point in the Ribshevo area in no respect carried sufficient supplies to feed a far-reaching attack later on,“ admitted Oberst Hans Roettiger, the Chief of Staff of **XXXXI PzK**. Fuel and ammunition are particularly short, as also spare parts for tanks and artillery towing vehicles. On the eve of the battle, the corps possesses between **50** and **75%** of its strength, about one to one and a half divisions. Its **1 PD** is down to **90** tanks, having begun the campaign w/ **154**. Army Group Center is about to embark on the last thrust on Moscow w/ **340** km to go, w/ under half (**48%**) of its serviceable tank strength. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 169*; see also, *H. Roettiger, XXXXI Pz Corps during Battle of Moscow*, in: *S.H. Newton, German Battle Tactics, 16-17*)

Oct 41: If the Ostheer had a weakness, it was its logistics tail. Captured rail lines were handling only around $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of their former capacity, while competing demands by garrison commanders in Poland squeezed supplies passing thru to the front. To make matters worse, Typhoon’s six [**6**] armies had only four [**4**] major railheads from which to draw ammunition, fuel and food, and the armies could not operate far from these railheads, given poor road networks and Germany’s chronic shortage of motor transport. Two-thirds of Germany’s artillery was still horse-drawn as Operation Typhoon began. Of the 13,000 tons of supplies per day needed to sustain Army Group Center’s **70** divisions, its motor pool was able to supply just **6500** tons over decrepit Russian roads. (*J. Jordan, “Panzers at the Gates of Moscow,” 56*)

10.9.41: *Ausgesprochener Munitionsmangel an kleiner Munition, vor allem schwer u. scharf hervorgetreten durch die im Fruehjahr erfolgte Anhaltung der Mun.Fertigung (durch Fuehrer). Dieses ist wiederum eine Folge der allzu optimistischen Einschaeztung des Russen. Fertigung wieder angelaufen, wirkt sich erst November aus. (Tagebuch Thilo)*

13.9.41: C-in-C of **4th Army**, *von Kluge* wrote: „The supply situation of the Army may, on the whole, be regarded as secure...w/ the growing distances, the Army is almost completely dependent on the railways.” At the moment, the latter meet current consumption only. The transport situation did not so far allow the establishment of depots sufficiently large to enable the troops to receive what they need IAW the tactical situation. The *Army lives from hand to mouth, especially w/ regard to the fuel situation.* (*Supplying War, 170-71*)

13.9.41 [2. AOK/vehicle shortages]: The situation w/ regard to motor vehicles was similarly unsatisfactory [i.e., along w/ tanks] and it was esp. critical in the **2 Army**. This army reported on **13 Sep 41**: “the shortage of army vehicles is jeopardizing the freedom of movement of the divisions and provisioning of the troops. Increasing numbers of vehicles are being lost every day, and it is impossible to replace them all by captured vehicles. The army’s normal transport capacity has fallen from **2900** tonnes to an operational capacity of **1500** tonnes. . . a high rate of material fatigue will lead to even more falls in tonnage.” (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 68, f.n. 38)

13-14.9.41: GFM v. Kluge, cdr **4 Army**, declares on 13 September that „w/ growing distances, the army is almost completely dependent on the railways.” Although current consumption is met, the build-up of offensive stocks is less certain. “The army lives had to mouth,” he admitted, especially as regards the fuel situation.” The **9 Army** C-in-C was less compromising, commenting the following day [14 Sep 41] that its transport “was insufficient to support the coming operations.” (*Crevelde, Supplying War*, 170-71)

Mid-Sep 41: In the middle of **Sep 41**, Army High Command instructed the Army formations in the east to endeavor to *lay in their own winter stocks*, despite the fact that the final accommodation areas and the composition of the occupying troops had not yet been defined. The overriding principle was “to obtain and utilize the stocks and products of the country to the fullest extent possible, in order to relieve the homeland.” The Quartermaster-General therefore launched an extensive production programme in the area of operations. Alongside bathtubs, pokers, and other equipment, this included the manufacture of **252,000 handkerchiefs**, **445,789** articles of knitted underclothing, and **30,000 snow-shirts**.⁴³³ (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1135)

21.9.41: After being *interrupted for 8 days because of floods*, stock-building for Army Group Center resumed on this day. By the end of the month, it was more or less complete. However, this could only be achieved by *cutting back on subsistence*, so that the troops were *forced to live off the country*. Other shortages included **motor oil (the bottleneck of the entire transportation system)**, vehicles, engines, spare parts for tanks (which, on Hitler’s orders, **were not being manufactured at all**), and *tyres*, which only arrived at a rate of one a month for every 16 vehicles. **Fuel was so short** that the shortage threatened to bring the operation to a halt in November. This was due in part to its non-availability at home, and partly to the impossibility of supplying six armies (including three tank armies) w/ some **70** divisions at a **distance of 400 miles from their bases**. (*Supplying War*, 171; also, *Halder KTB*, 12./22./26.9.41)

21.9.41: Das KTB Halder weist unter dem **21 Sep 41** Notizen ueber die vom *Generalquartiermeister* des Heeres fuer den *durchschnittlichen Monatsverbrauch* in Ausstattungen angegebene Munitionsmenge auf:

a) *im Angriff*:

2.20 erste Ausstattungen 1FH

2.00 erste Ausstattungen sFH

2.26 erste Ausstattungen 10 cm Kanonen

1.90 erste Ausstattungen 21 cm Moerser

⁴³³ **Note:** Over what time period was this production accomplished? I assume the figures are for actual production, not production targets.

b) *in der Abwehr:*

2.00-2.50 erste Ausstattungen LFH

2.25-2.75 erste Ausstattungen sFH

1.75-2.75 erste Ausstattungen 10 cm Kanonen

2.00-5.00 erste Ausstattungen 21 cm Moerser

(Donat, *Der Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 33-34)

ab 21.9.41: Schon ab Herbst 1941 „litt die Fronttruppe zeitweilig Not.“ Spätestens im Winter 1941/42 zeigte es sich dann endgültig, *dass es sich auch beim Konzept des ‚Leben aus dem Lande‘ um eine Illusion handelte.* Je schwieriger die mil. Lage wurde, desto häufiger wurde der Hunger zum Begleiter der dt. Einheiten. (C. Hartmann, „*Verbrecherische Krieg*,“ 39)

30.9.41: For a month now, Army Group Ctr has fought a relatively static battle, so it has accurate intelligence on Soviet strength and dispositions; it has identified **80** of the **83** Soviet rifle divisions to its front (typically, FHO identified only **54** of them). Yet even in this static situation, German logistics are still unsatisfactory: despite large depots at Gomel, Roslavl, Smolensk and Toropets, they can only sustain a short burst toward Moscow. Tank serviceability rates are a problem: they stand at **50%** for Guderian, **70-80%** for Hoth, and **100%** for Hoepner [?]. Prior to „*Taifun*,“ for ex., **4 PD** receives as replacements only **30 Pz IIIs** and **5 Pz IVs** (for a total of **110** operational tanks), and only enough fuel to travel **60** miles. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 68)

ca 30.9.41: Except for **2 PzGr**, the German tank availability had improved and risen to **70%** of establishment. The delay in mounting the offensive against Moscow brought other administrative advantages, slight though these were, since the conversion of gauge of the railway line had proceeded from Gomel to Roslavl, from Minsk to Smolensk, and through Vitebsk to Toropets and had brought some improvements in the supply situation. These advantages had to be weighed against the drain of German military strength thru casualties caused by holding ground, and the great expenditure of artillery and mortar ammunition which defensive battles always entail. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 175)

Sep-Oct 41: Even during the buildup for Operation „*Taifun*,“ the concentration of all Germany’s offensive strength on one army group had created *huge transport bottlenecks*. In **Sep-Oct 1941** the supply dumps in *Gomel, Roslavl, Smolensk* and *Witebsk* were lucky on any given day to receive 2/3 of the stores needed to maintain „*Taifun*“ at full strength. (Tooze, *Wages of Destruction*, 492)

Sep-Oct 41 [Tanks for AGC]: The [pressing requirement] for a considerable increase in supplies was partially fulfilled, at least as regards tanks, w/ the allocation of **316** armored fighting vehicles – more than the total production for the month of **Sep 41** – and the dispatch of **2. PD** and **5. PD** from the **OKH** reserve w/ around **450** tanks. In addition, large numbers of captured French tanks were to be dispatched for deployment on security tasks in the rear area. In **Oct 41**, **62** of these vehicles were already at the disposal of AGC. . . Even then, the reinforcement of heavy equipment was not sufficient to restore the armored formations in the central sector of the front to full combat strength.

In fact, **OKH** was not certain how the position should be assessed. The game of playing w/ percentages for combat-ready tanks, and the submission of widely differing situation reports, had

become a serious problem. On the basis of the position taken by the army administration, Wagner reported to Halder that there was a deficiency of **40%** [Note: See *Halder Diary* for **11.9.41**]; three days later, **OKH** Organization Department reported a deficiency of **53%** to **OKW**; the two departments of **OKH** thus showed a difference of **543** tanks in the number of losses reported. Such hair-raising errors in this order of magnitude were the result of different chains of reporting. Moreover, they were disregarded in the Army General Staff, which also used divergent figures on available new production. Only Hitler was irritated by the confusion. “How was he to conduct a war, if he was counting on **1000** additional tanks and then someone told him there were actually only **500**? He had assumed that the people in the Ordnance Office could at least count. [!] (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV, 1131-32*; see also, *Engel, Heeresadjutant bei Hitler, 112, 4.10.41*)

Sep-Nov 41: Although the conversion of the Russian railway tracks to the German system had been completed as far as Smolensk and Toropets, enabling relatively fast delivery of supplies, and although in all probability sufficient supplies had been delivered to areas near the front at Gomel, Roslavl, Smolensk and Vitebsk, the progress of the operations revealed that these provisions left much to be desired. The calculation of supplies was based on assumption that the offensive would be decided quickly, a situation, therefore, not borne out by the facts. The limited efficiency of the railways, which were vital for deliveries, became apparent early on. The significance of the tracks was recognized too late by the German Command. To obtain sufficient supplies of fuel for Operation “Taifun,” the eastern army needed 27 trainloads daily throughout the whole of September and 29 trainloads in October. However, **OKH** could only agree to providing the 27 trainloads of fuel required for **13** days, for the remaining days and for the whole of October only 22 trainloads, and for the month of November only 3 trainloads daily. However, in November the daily requirements amounted to 20 trainloads. In practice, however, the approved figures were not reached. So, although the Quartermaster General of the Army said on **29 Sep 41** that the “supplies for ‘Typhoon’ were satisfactory,” the troops had to order restrictions on fuel and ammunition even *before* the offensive started. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 62-63*)

Sep-Nov 41 [Fuel Situation]: At a meeting w/ the Quartermaster General of the Army on **22 Oct 41** it was obvious that previously calculated fuel quotas for the army were no longer applicable, as difficult terrain and bad weather had led to greater fuel consumption. The quantity of fuel calculated for **100 km** was only enough for about “**35 to 40 km.**,” so that more had to be supplied than was originally intended. The situation on the railways made it impossible to make these extra deliveries. As a result, troops in the east, who usually had only enough fuel to cover about **40 km.** daily, required **20** trainloads of fuel per day. The impossibility of providing so many trains led to reduced troop mobility. In addition, transport problems on the eastern railway meant that in **Sep 41** alone **120** and in **Oct 41** **70** of the approved fuel trains could not reach the front. Still, when in **mid-Nov 41** fuel supplies for the Reich were exhausted, fuel could still be supplied to the front from a backlog of fuel trains, which at this time numbered about **140**. However, the Quartermaster General had realized that the operational capability of the troops would have to be restricted considerably after these reserves, which they had been reluctant to draw on, had been exhausted. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 152; 161, f.n. 102*)

Oct 41: Railroads in sector of *Heeresgruppe Sued* in a „disatrous state.“ During the whole of October, only **195** trains out of **724** scheduled actually arrived, and even this number included 112 left over from the previous month. (*Supplying War*, 165)⁴³⁴

Oct 41: Aus der Beurteilung der *Munitionslage fuer Okt 41* geht hervor, dass fuer die Wintermonate *ein erhebliches Absinken des Munitionsverbrauchs erwartet wurde*, was aber in Wirklichkeit infolge der harten Winterkaempfe besonders westl. Moskau nicht eintrat. (*Donat, Der Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 34)

Oct 41: The few *railroads* of European Russia are the *only means of long-distance transportation during the muddy season*, and the overburdening of their facilities was inevitable. Operating schedules were disrupted because muddy highways prevented access to the railheads. Repairs to damaged track consumes endless time, because labor and materials had to be transported by rail to the damaged places. The right of way had to be restored step by step, as simultaneous work on several sections of track was out of the question. Supply shipments suffered *serious delays*: In some areas of Army Group Center the *supply flow* became so *constricted* that operations *came to a complete halt*. Many units found themselves w/o bread for days and to live off the land and such local food supplies as the Red Army had not already destroyed. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 89)

Oct 41 [Operation “Bow”]: In order to meet at least the most urgent needs of the troops [i.e., for winter equipment], the Quartermaster-General planned a transport movement – named “**Bow**” – from **22-30 Oct 41**. The “Bow” trains were loaded in the Reich w/ clothing, accommodation material and equipment, motor-vehicle winter equipment, sledges and skis. This plan, however, fell victim to the failures of railway transport. The trains were kept waiting in the Warsaw supply catchment area, and could only be brought to the front in isolated cases, slipped in between the ammunition and fuel trains which had priority.

As a result, it was left largely to the initiative of the individual armies to demand trains w/ winter equipment, if necessary at the expense of ammunition supplies. For example, **2. Army**, advancing thru Bryansk to Tula, had decided on **16 Oct 41** that the dispatch of winter clothing was urgently necessary to prevent frostbite; after the arrival of clothing at the Gomel supply-base, it applied for this to be brought to the front by air transport. A week later two army corps received a drop comprising **47,000** pairs of gloves and **68,000** Balaclava helmets. The situation had not greatly improved by the time the frost set in **14** days later. . . (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1136)

Oct 41 [Motor vehicles]: Technical transport reports from the **SS Pz.Gren.Div. Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler (LSSAH)** [although belonging to H.Gr.Sued] offer an instructive snap-shot of the problems experienced by a relatively well-equipped mot. unit. The **LSSAH** began the eastern campaign w/ an inventory of **3403** vehicles, of which **240** were captured. Many of the same vehicles had already been used for campaigns in Austria, the Sudetenland and Bohemia-Moravia, and most of them had been employed in Poland, France and the Balkan campaigns before “*Barbarossa*.” No regular or complete refurbishment of vehicles occurred between the French and Balkan campaigns before “*Barbarossa*.” **OKH** simply ruled that fairly worn parts – those w/

⁴³⁴ *Van Creveld*: „In the case of Army Group South, the warning that it would not be possible to support the operation beyond the 300 mile limit proved correct. Attack over the Dnieper started w/o adequate logistic preparation, long before there was any prospect of pushing the railways across the river and at a time when the lines leading from Poland were the scene of great confusion, which, incidentally, had nothing to do w/ the Russian winter. (166)

an assessed **5000** km of life – were to be reinstalled. By autumn, most vehicles have averaged **8000** km and supply and special-duty variants have surpassed **12,000** km. Fine dust on all roads caused numerous breakdowns. There were no new filters to remedy the situation, so cylinders and pistons wore out early. Reliance on low-grade oils caused piston-rod failures requiring a complete overhaul to repair damage. Shortage of *spare parts* resulting in “junking” otherwise repairable vehicles, which were *cannibalized* to keep the remainder of the fleet moving. By **10.10.41**, the *Motor Transport Officer* was predicting catastrophic fall-out rates: **493** vehicles had broken down, **160** were immobilized awaiting parts and, he assessed, **250** more vehicles would likely break down within the next **500**km. This was the situation on the eve of the final German offensive at end of the year. The *Ostheer’s* motor vehicle fleet was experiencing serious difficulties. Only **1000** trucks were allocated to *Wehrmacht* land forces each quarter to make up losses. This was insufficient to replace those lost thru normal wear and tear, never mind enemy action. Fuel was in short supply and could not be procured as in France by filling up at civilian petrol stations – Russian petrol had a *high octane content* and could only be used in German vehicles after the addition of *benzol*, mixed at specially constructed installations. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 166)

Oct 41: The first problems of supply emerged at the beginning of **Oct 41**, shortly after launching the new offensive. For example, after its operations w/ Army Group North, **4 PzGr** had *returned w/ only about 50% of its combat-ready motorized transport capacity*. It was thus unable to make the supply trips to the depots which were necessary to cover its needs. After great initial successes in the battles of encirclement at Vyazma and Bryansk, the army group encountered increasing difficulties in the pursuit, when heavy losses caused by enemy action were intensified by supply problems.

The change in weather between **9-11 Oct 41** turned the few usable roads into deep mud. . . The armies were “*marooned in mud*” for almost **3 weeks**, the divisions and their baggage-trains often hundreds of kilometers apart. An attempt was made to get essential material to the troops using tractors and peasant carts. Apart from local expedients of this kind, the *movement of supplies came to a standstill almost everywhere*. In the Smolensk – Vyazma sector, the Minsk – Moscow highway was paved w/ cobblestones; this surface was quickly ruined by the heavy loads. An entire infantry division eventually had to be employed to make this important route serviceable again. At a time when the fighting in the Mozhaysk defensive line would have demanded extensive supplies, there was a real collapse of supply management. . .

Supply management was unable to provide adequate supplies and rehabilitation for AGC during its enforced standstill. . . The supply-base was moved forward as far as the Rzhev – Vyazma – Bryansk line, w/ an advance base in Orel, but there was *insufficient transport capacity to stock it*. Across almost **1000** km from the Reich border, through land that was almost empty from a logistical point of view, most supplies had to be moved along two [2] railway lines (Warsaw – Minsk – Smolensk and Brest – Gomel – Bryansk); these had only a limited capacity and were under attack by partisans. The ability of the Dnieper Supply District to transport and distribute the supply goods brought in by train was dependent on the available lorry capacity. . . Even when the supplies eventually arrived w/ the divisions, they still had to be taken to the front by peasant carts and a small number of motor-vehicles, often off the roads. . . (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1133-34)

Oct 41 [6. ID]: For fascinating and insightful account of attempts to feed the men and horses of **6. ID** during month of October see, *Bericht des Ib der 6. ID*. For example, this report discusses total amount of rations furnished (or stockpiled) for men/horses at start of Operation “*Taifun*.” This included “**134** t Hafer.” However, due to speed of advance, and poor weather, problems

quickly arose: “Die an sich schlechten Strassen u. das einsetzende Regenwetter erschwerten das Heranschaffen von Verpflegung, so das Brot am **9.10.41** ueberhaupt nicht ausgegeben werden konnte u. auch sonst der Lebensmittelzuweisungsplan stark gekuerzt war. Das Abholen weiterer Verpflegung wurde bei dem neu einsetzenden Frostwetter durch das Fehlen von Betriebsstoff verzoeigert. . . Die Verpflegungs-Lkw der Truppe sassen zum Teil in den Moraesten fest oder hatten wegen der haeufigen Aenderung der Marschrichtung der Truppe die Verbindung zu dieser verloren. . . Ab dem **13.10.41** beschraenkte die Division sich nur noch auf Verpflegungsaushilfen. Die vorn eingesetzten Truppen waren schon durch Ia-Befehl vom **11.10.41** allgemein auf das Leben aus dem Lande angewiesen. Es wurde jedoch alles getan, um die Truppe mit den notwendigsten Verpflegungsmitteln: Brot, Fett, Getraenke u. Abendkost zu versehen. Insbesondere empfing nach wie vor die Masse der Division Frischfleisch fuer die Mittagkost u. die Abendkost. . .

“Die Schlaechtereikompanie wurde am **17.10.41** nach Pogoreloje Gorodischtsche verlegt, wo sie bis Anfang **Nov 41** lag. Der Weg von Pogoreloje Gorodischtsche nach Staritza war im letzten Oktoberdrittel fuer mot. Fahrzeuge voellig unpassierbar. Die dort zur Ausgabe gelangten Sachen konnten der Truppe daher durch die Versorgungstrosse nicht zugefuehrt werden, soweit nicht die Verpflegungsoffiziere bzw. Truppenzahlmeister aus eigenem Antrieb Panje-Gespanne hierfuer in Anspruch nahmen. An Vorraeten konnte dem Lande entnommen werde: Fleisch, Kartoffeln, Huelsenfruechte, Mehl. Mangel herrschte an Fett (Schweine gab es kaum), Zucker, Suesswaren, Tabakwaren u. Getraenken, die in der ersten Zeit noch aus fruerehen Ersparnissen vorhanden waren. . . Sehr bald machte sich das Fehlen von Fett, Abendkost, Zucker u. Getraenke sehr bemerkbar u. es wurde immer mehr der Nachschub dieser Waren gefordert. Lediglich bei Brot konnte die Truppe sich selbst helfen. Die Kompanien stellten besondere Kommandos zum Brotbacken ab, die schon nach ein bis zwei Tagen ein durchaus genussfaehiges, spaeter sogar ein recht gutes Brot herstellten. . .

“Futter konnte laufen dem Lande entnommen werden. Mangels Laderaum wurde bereits ab **7.10.41** der Nachschub von Hafer eingestellt. In Scheunen u. Speichern fand die Truppe auch genuegend Hartfutter. . . Abschliessend ist zu bemerken: Die Versorgung der Truppe auf dem Nachschubwege war unzuellaenglich. Die schwierigen Wegeverhaeltnisse wirkten sich insbesondere bei den Verwaltungsdiensten annaeherd katastrophal wegen der schlechten Kfz.-Lage derselben aus. Der Gepaecktross, der mit etwa **50 t Gesamtladeraum** zu Verfuegung stehen sollte, stellte tatsaechlich nur etwa bis zu **25 t Nutzladeraum**, z.T. wegen des schlechten Zustandes seiner Kfz – es waren die schlechtesten der Division - . . .

“Bekleidung, Unterkunftsbeduerfnisse u. Kassenwesen. Mitte u. Ende des Monats machte sich das Fehlen der Winterbekleidung schon unangenehm bemerkbar u. liess einen baldigen Nachschub dringend notwendig erscheinen. Geringe nachempfangene sonstige Bekleidungsmengen konnten der Truppe nicht mehr zugefuehrt werden u. wurden in Gridina eingelagert. An Unterkunftsbeduerfnisse konnten der Truppe Anfang des Monats die Seife fuer **Sep u. Oct 41**, sowie je **2 Mann 1 Hindenburglicht** u. je **12 Mann [!] 1 Kerze** ausgegeben werden.” (For more details see, *Bericht des Ib der 6. ID*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 52, 25-27*)

ab Oct 41: It is possible that Hitler had forbidden his cdrs to refer to the problem of winter equipment. However, this had not prevented Halder from ordering appropriate measures from the beginning of **Jul 41**. *Hundreds of regulations, orders and circulars from the Quartermaster-General had been issued during the autumn to deal w/ winter preparations.* These concerned three [3] main problem areas. The first need was to define requirements for winter equipment and supplies. . . In anticipation of a rapid victory, it was initially assumed than an occupying army

of 56 divisions would be required, to be provided w/ appropriate accommodation. 2/3 of the Army in the east would therefore be brought back home, leaving some of their material behind to provide stocks for the occupying troops.

As early as the beginning of **Sep 41**, the base figures for the winter programme had to be revised upwards by **50%** -- to **750,000** men and **150,000** horses. . . Only in mid-**Dec 41**, did **OKH** recognize that it was no longer possible to bring divisions back to Germany, and that, on the contrary, considerable reinforcements would have to be brought into Russian territory. . . The Quartermaster-General was simply not prepared for the resulting demand for winter equipment and supplies. (For more details see, *H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1134; see also, *Halder Diary*, 8.7.41; and, *Wagner, General-quartiermeister*, 313 ff.)

4.10.-7.11.41: *Panzergruppe 4* complains on 4 Oct 41 that it had begun the operation w/ only 50 percent of its motor transport still serviceable. For days later (**8.10.41**), **4th Army** protested against the *small number of fuel trains arriving from the rear*. Between **9.-11.10.41**, *the weather broke*, turning the countryside into a morass, and the few roads that were available *quickly broke up under the weight of the traffic*. From this time for about three weeks *all armies were stuck in the mire*, unable to move either forward or backward, and the troops reduced to living on whatever could still be taken away from the country. In the autumn mud, for the success of its offensive, the **world's most modern army** now depended on *small parties of infantrymen, unsupported by heavy wpns and accompanied only by panje carts*. While Army Group Center remained stuck in place until *frost set in around 7.11.41*, this does not mean that the situation was everywhere uniformly bad, or that no local improvements were made, enabling at least some supplies to get through. Moreover, *close scrutiny of the quartermasters' diaries reveals what divisional histories tend to conceal*—namely that the **difficulties were due as much to the poor performance of the railroads as to the ubiquitous mud**. Since the **crisis in railway transportation** (esp. for fuel) *began well before the onset of frost*, this goes some way to *correct the impression that the German failure to take Moscow stemmed solely from the lateness of the season*. (*Supplying War*, 171-72)

11.10.41: Though antifreeze had been sent to AGC from **11 Oct 41**, many of the vehicles were not winterproof and broke down. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1134)

11.10.41: At Guderian's *Panzergruppe 2*, the state of the roads led to *grave supply problems* from this day onward. At the same time, the number of *fuel-trains* reaching **Orel** *fell very sharply*, thus making it impossible to resume the offensive even after the frost had hardened the roads and the tactical situation had once more become „favorable.“ [Is this accurate?] (*Supplying War*, 172)

Mid-Oct 41 [2 Pz Army]: Guderian had hoped to capture Bryansk quickly and establish a supply-base there. In fact, from the middle of **Oct 41** his panzer army faced a serious crisis in fuel supply. There were a number of reasons for this: Bryansk could not be stocked up by the haulage vehicles as effectively as anticipated owing to the poor road conditions; the most important supply-route was barred by constant enemy incursions north of Glukhov; shortly afterwards, the number of fuel trains arriving in Orel fell sharply. The army was forced to a standstill, even when the frost later made the roads passable again. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1133)

Mid-Oct 41: Because of the greatly increased difficulties caused by the weather and the loss of bulk transport facilities it was now necessary to demand an improvement and defense of railway

connections. **2 Army** HQ needed the line between Orel and Bryansk as a basis; supplies for the **2 Pz Army** would have to be brought at least as far as Tula by rail. For the other armies railways had to be built to Kaluga, between Smolensk and Mozhaysk, in the north between Velikie Luki and Rzhev, and between Vyazma and Rzhev. Even if these lines, which were considered minimal requirements, were completed, serious difficulties were still expected between the railheads and individual units. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 679)

15.10.-6.11.41: Detailed description of *supply problems* affecting **6. ID** during this period.⁴³⁵ Crux: *Es fiel wegen des Schlammes aus*. Troops lived off the land. Rounded up and slaughtered Russian horses in rear areas (*Wir haben 4-6 Wochen fast nur Pferdefleisch gegessen*.) Threshed and ground their own bread from *Roggen* found in the fields. Managed to harvest some potatoes. Found some *Kohl* and *Gurken*. *Roggensuppe mit Pferdefleisch war ein Standartgericht beim Div-Stab*. Fodder for the horses in short supply. *Hafenkommandos* of the artillery units continuously underway to find fodder. Supply system slowly came back on line with advent of the Frost in early/mid Nov. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 85-86)

17.-19.10.41: In area of **9 Army** and **3 PzGr** supply problems were becoming so acute that their advance was delayed considerably. The north wing of the army group was entirely dependent on the Vyaz'ma-Moscow motorway, and the effects of various wpns, bomb damage, overcrowding, Russian time-fuses, and blown-up bridges, as well as the impassability of the terrain on both sides of the motorway, made its main supply line unusable. The critical supply situation developed into a supply crisis. . . OKH was now trying to minimize the supply problems in area of **9 Army** by extending the railway from Vyaz'ma to Sychevka, but this took time and precisely when speed was of the essence, was of very little help. A shortage of locomotives and wagons in area of Army Group Ctr meant that this extension brought very little improvement. On **19 Oct 41**, the entire **5 ID**, which was standing ready to march off to the west, was ordered to begin construction work, and their div. cdr was appointed „Motorway Dictator,” in an effort to make the motorway usable again. On the same day the supply situation in the entire area of AGC became so critical that the assault was practically at a standstill and amounted to no more than localized skirmishes. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 93-94)⁴³⁶

21.10.41: At **2nd Army**, the supply situation first became „serious“ on this day. Its artery of supply, the road from *Roslavl' to Briansk*, had deteriorated and out of the **3 daily trains** that the Army was demanding at either *Orel* or *Bryansk* only one arrived. *Weichs* then warned that his supply situation would become „desperate“ unless trains arrived, an admonishment that was *repeated day after day until the end of the month*. (*Supplying War*, 172)

23.10.-13.11.41: Over this **20-day** period, only four *fuel-trains* arrived at *Strauss' 9th Army*, despite fact that mild frost (**5 degrees centigrade below zero**) did not set in till **11 Nov 41**, and remained at this level for several days more. Alone among the army cdrs, *von Kluge* repeatedly asserted that his stocks were large enough, but the difficulty lay in bringing them to the troops, for which purpose the railway to *Vyaz'ma* was coming into operation from **23 Oct 41** onward. There followed a few critical days, but on **28 Oct 41** the supply situation was once again said to be „secure.“ However, by **13.11.41**, *Kluge* had lost some of his optimism, claiming that

⁴³⁵ Grossmann notes that his infantry division's requirement for food (*volle Tagesportion u. -ration*) amounted to **30 tons a day**. (85)

⁴³⁶ **Note:** Reinhardt includes here a long, graphic quote from war diary of **9 Army**, which among other things states (**17.10.41**): “The time-fuses, particularly, have proved to be very dangerous and effective sources of disturbance and destruction. . . charges are . . . made to explode using time-fuses and tear a hole **10 m.** deep and **30 m.** wide in the road, making it completely unpassable.” (94)

Eckstein's Aussenstelle Mitte was favoring other armies at his expense. It seems certain, therefore, that the **mud was only one factor that brought the Wehrmacht to a halt. No less important were the railways**, which had experienced such tremendous difficulties in building up a base at *Smolensk* and which were simply unable to cope w/ the increased demands for a fresh offensive. (*Supplying War*, 172)

31.10.41: Seit dem 20. Oktober quaelen sich die Deutschen in einem Meer von Schlamm vorwaerts. Das Gelaende ist abseits der Strassen voellig ungangbar, aber die Mehrzahl der Strassen sind geradezu Sumpfloecher, in denen ganze Fahrzeuge verschwinden. Dazu haben die Russen selbst die kleinsten Bruecken gesprengt. Die taegliche Marschleistung der Lkw sank unter **30 km**, u. da die Deutschen sich immer weiter von ihren Versorgungsbasen entfernen, werden die Fehlbestaende in den Einheiten immer grosser. Ende Oktober besitzt die **36 ID (mot)** nur noch **25%** ihres Munitionsbestandes, u. die **6 PD** hat die meisten ihrer Zugmaschinen verloren. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 133)

Late Oct 41 [4. *Panzergruppe*]: Es konnte nicht ausbleiben, dass die Kampfhandlungen in zunehmende Abhaengigkeit der Versorgung gerieten u. *die eignen Bewegungen schliesslich Ende Oktober ganz zum Erliegen kamen* . . . Die trotz widriger Verhaeltnisse immer wieder gestartete *Luftversorgung* konnte leider nur im kleinsten Rahmen aushelfen . . . Es war bedrueckend, voraussehen zu muessen, dass der *Munitionsnachschub* dem dringendsten Verbrauch vorn im Abwehrkampf nicht mehr gerecht werden konnte . . . *Fehlender Betriebsstoff* konnte nicht nur den Kampfeinsatz der Panzerwaffe behindern oder ausschliessen, wie es Ende Oktober in Erscheinung trat, sondern auch die Versorgung . . . Die Gegend war duenn besiedelt u. arm. Selbst *Kartoffeln* wurden knapp oder gingen aus. Die *Brotration* musste in den kritischen Tagen herabgesetzt werden, da die Baeckereikompanie nicht genuegend Mehl heranbekam. Hafer fuer die Pferde gab es nur auf dem Nachschubwege. Die Pferde fielen aufgrund der stark gekuerzten Rationen rapide ab, ihre Leistungen entsprechend. Bei der Truppe befanden sich keinerlei Reserven mehr. *Eiserne Portion, eiserne Ration*, alles war verbraucht, alles musste erst wieder aufgefuellt werden, bevor ein weiterer Angriff moeglich war. (*de Beaulieu, Sturm bis vor Moskaus Tore*, 363)

Oct-Nov 41 [Supply shortage in AGC]: Supplies earmarked for Operation „*Taifun*“ were already exhausted towards end of **Oct 41**. From about the end of **Oct 41** onwards troops were living on supplies brought in daily by the supply trains, which were unable to meet current demand. . . It was impossible to provide supplies quickly [to meet requirements to resume large-scale attack] on account of conditions obtaining on the railways and a shortage of large lorries. The army group required at least **32** trainloads of supplies daily, which the **OKW** could not allocate owing to a shortage of rolling stock. Thus, the Quartermaster General of the Army informed Halder that „enough supplies [were to be provided] by the end of the month [i.e., end of **Nov 41**] so that the operation could be resumed. Hence, every attack before this date had to be launched w/ reduced forces and insufficient supplies. [Note: GFM v. Bock believed he could manage w/ **30** trains; and he informed Brauchitsch that, if **30** supply trains could be sent daily to the army group, it would be possible to resume fighting on **18.11.41**. (See, *Bock, Tagebuch*, 14.11.41) However, from **11.11.41** the flow of trains to AGC was reduced to **23** trains/day. After vociferous protests from Bock, this was increased slightly on **12.11.41**, only to fall again on **13.**, **14.** and **15.11.41**. On **16.11.41**, only **12** trains reached AGC.] (*Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 172; 180, f.n. 32; *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 11.11.41)

Oct-Nov 41 [sector **Pz.Gr.4**]: Die immer noch einzige *Bahnverbindung*, die in dieser Zeit zur Verfuegung stand, war die Teilstrecke *Tschipljajewo – Wjasma*, deren Zuege von *Roslawl* aus mit Transportkolonnen beschickt werden mussten. [?] Denn *weder die Strecke Smolensk – Wjasma*,

noch Roslawl – Kirov - Tschipljajewo waren bisher instandzusetzen gewesen. Die *Tagesleistung* dieser Strecke betrug maximal **2 Zuege zu je 400 to**, von denen ein Zug fuer die **9. Armee** abgezweigt werden musste. Es blieb ein Zug = etwa **400 to** = *Gewicht eines Tagessatzes Verpflegung* fuer die ganze Pz.Gr. – also ein *Bruchteil* des Gesamtbedarfs von Versorgungs-guetern – der nun auch noch zwischen Betriebsstoff, Munition u. Verpflegung geteilt werden musste. Diese geringen Mengen waren dann noch nicht einmal auf der zusammengebrochenen „Autobahn“ nach *Gshatsk, Moshajsk* zur Truppe zu bringen. Die Verhaeltnisse auf der Autobahnstrecke *Smolensk, Wjasma* waren auch nicht viel besser, so dass auf diesem Wege ebenfalls nur minimale Mengen herankamen, die der **9. Armee** u. der **Pz.Gr.3** zuflossen. (*de Beaulieu, Sturm bis vor Moskaus Tore*, 363)

Oct-Nov 41: Resupply by rail, vital to sustain any operational advance of consequence, began to disintegrate in freezing conditions. **9 Army** received only four [4] fuel trains between **23 Oct** and **13 Nov 41**; while **2 Army** gained only one [1] of three [3] required from late **Oct 41**. As temperatures plummeted to minus double figures, **70-80%** of German steam locomotives, whose water pipes – unlike Russian types – were outside their boilers, froze and burst. This provided the prelude to a transportation crisis that dwarfed all those that had preceded it. Virtually no trains reached **2 Army**⁴³⁷ between **12 Nov** and **2 Dec 41**; and only one [1] fuel train reached **9 Army** between **9 – 23 Nov 41**. When the latter arrived, its contents could not be distributed because waiting lorries were also out of petrol. Also, GFM v. Bock complained as early as **11 Nov 41** that the number of trains reaching his army group was down to **23** per day. If the **30** promised could not be maintained, he assessed that stockpiling “even for an attack w/ limited objectives, cannot be contemplated before **11 Dec 41**; that means in my opinion the attack will not take place!” At the end of **Nov 41**, only an average of **16** trains per day were reaching the army group. The irony of v. Bock’s protest over several logistics trains is that they had been held to the rear of the army group to give priority to an equal number transporting Jews from Germany to the same area. [!] (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 198; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, 1163-4)

Early Nov 41: The problem of supply dominates the situation...viewed as a whole, the situation is determined by railroad capacity and flow of supplies. There is no point in pushing operations outward before we have, step by step, established a solid foundation for them. Failing to do that inevitably would bring fatal reverses down upon us. (*Halder War Diary, Burdick*, et al., 552-53)

Nov 41 [Ammunition Production]: In an assessment of the ammunition situation on **1 Nov 41**, the Army Ordnance Office came to conclusion that the “supplies of various types of ammunition available for distribution on **1.11.41** just about covered current requirements.” This was because from the month of **Oct 41** onwards the little ammunition that was being produced had to be sent directly to the front, making it impossible to build up stocks. Most of the stocks of ammunition had themselves already been used up. From **Nov 41** onwards, it became difficult to supply some types of ammunition,⁴³⁸ and it was realized that only by “recommencing and increasing production of most types of ammunition. . . will access to supplies be guaranteed.” However, resumption of ammunition production on a large scale, which had been stopped by Hitler in mid-Jul 41, required more manpower, raw materials, explosives and gunpowder. They could hardly be provided any longer owing to acute shortages of all of them. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 147-48)

⁴³⁷ Confirm that Kershaw indeed means **2 Army**, and not **2 Pz Army**.

⁴³⁸ **Note:** By **Nov 41**, there was a shortage of ammunition, esp. for light field howitzers; heavy **10 cm** cannons **18**; **17 cm** cannons on a mortar carriage; **21 cm** cannons **39**, and **24 cm** cannons. (158, f.n. 70; check German text for artillery designations)

Nov 41: In this month, the Germans lost **5,996 trucks** on the eastern front. This was *double the production of 2,752* for the same month. (*Dinando, Panzer Arm*, 16; see also, *KTB Halder*, date?)

2.-16.11.41: [**Note:** See *Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, for GFM v. Bock's struggle w/ his railroads, impact on planned resumption of offensive, etc. As the general said, "everything depends" on the railroads.]⁴³⁹

7.11.41: The *transport system was still in crisis*. Around this date, the *frost set in* on the sector of Army Group Center, thus freezing the mud and making the roads passable again, but the *damage the cold caused to vehicles and locomotives* cancelled out the improvement in road conditions. (*Megargee*, 136-37)

9.11.41: *Kfz Lage* erfordern gruendliche Ueberholung waehrend des Winters...Da *der Krieg gegen Russland anscheinend ohne Fruehjarsfeldzug nicht entschieden werden kann*, erscheint Auffrischung u. Wiederherstellung Operationsfaehigkeit der Armeen wichtigste Voraussetzung fuer weiter Kriegfuehrung...Die Operationsbereitschaft des Heeres auf dem *Kfz Gebiet* kann fuer das kommende Fruehjahr nur dann sichergestellt werden, wenn es gelingt, *Kfz-Ersatzteilfrage zu loesen*. Es fehlt am noetigen Ersatzkontingent. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

10.11.41 [German vehicle losses]: Vehicle losses [on eastern front] "had taken on catastrophic dimensions," which severely restricted the mobility and speed of the army units. By 10 November, following had been put "out of action:"

25 777 lorries

19 242 cars

30 423 motorcycles

1729 prime movers

4410 other vehicles (buses, motor-ambulances, tractors, etc.)

By mid-November, only **15% (75 000)** of the **500 000** vehicles which the eastern army had at its disposal at start of campaign were still in working order, because added to the ca. **80 000** vehicles that were out of action and could no longer be replaced were another **40%** requiring complete overhaul and therefore, having to be transported back home. A further **15%** could likewise not be employed immediately as minor repairs had to be carried out on them. . . Losses showed that previous levels of army motorization, which had not been high enough anyway, could "no longer be maintained." (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 148-49)

11.11.41: While the armies and panzer groups had originally planned to resume the attack even before **11 Nov 41** in the event of early frost, there were such delays in the preparation of supplies for the limited objectives that **4 PzGr** was not ready to attack before **15 Nov 41**. The **9 Army**, w/ **3 PzGr** under its command, was not able to start its operations before **15 Nov 41** either, as they had to attack together w/ sections of **4 PzGr**. The **2 Pz Army** reported that it could not attack until **18 Nov 41** at the earliest, and the **2 Army** w/ a few sections on **19** or **20** and **21 Nov 41**. (*Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 189, f.n. 15; also, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 5.11.41 ff.)

⁴³⁹ For example, Bock notes that his army group was now receiving only **23** trains per day, just enough to meet daily requirements of his army group. He needed this number raised back up to **30** (which he had been receiving) in order to stockpile for resumption of offensive; and if this requirement were not met, he would have to cancel the attack!

13.11.41 [Orsha Conference]: Halder meets w/ chiefs of staff of army groups and armies in Orsha, to convince [them] that the offensive must be continued at all costs. Major i.G. Otto Eckstein, who was responsible for the supply of AGC, strongly opposed this view. . . However, GFM v. Bock did not support his supply officer. He believed it would be better to make one last major effort to take Moscow, rather than be forced to continue the fighting in winter.⁴⁴⁰ Though Halder too was aware that the operation could not be properly prepared, he agreed w/ Bock. In this situation, even Wagner's optimism disappeared; he was now convinced that the Army had reached the end of its strength. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV, 1137*)

13.11.41 [Orsha]: Halder arrives for meeting unable to imagine that Red Army has any means left to stop v. Bock before Moscow; he hopes for six (6) more weeks of cold weather w/o much snow. His hopes are dashed by the men who have just come from the fighting front. Von Bock's chief of staff, v. *Greiffenberg*, echoes his cdr when he says that Moscow could only be taken frontally, and that Halder's grandiose encirclements were out of the question. Halder concedes, and allows the less ambitious army group plan to go forward. The OKH *quartermaster* representative says that he could not supply the army group; for ex., fuel deliveries are **1/4** of requirements. Halder's response to this real problem is simply to announce that OKH was "not going to stand in v. Bock's way if he thinks he can succeed; you also need a little bit of luck in war." Even though rail lines had operated to *Gzhatsk* by **27 Oct 41** and to *Borodino* a few days later, v. Bock's logistics remain under stress, causing the staggered start of the final push. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 80-81*)

14.11.41: ...The armies are ***all complaining about serious supply difficulties in all areas – rations, munitions, fuel and winter clothing.*** With the *limited no. of trains in use it is impossible to do anything about it.* Naturally this has *significantly complicated the attack preparations...*(*Bock War Diary, Gerbet, 357*)

Mid-Nov 41: *Frost* had now set in everywhere, making the roads passable once more, though hewing the vehicles out of the mud in which they were stuck up to their axles was a difficult process in which *many of them were irreparably damaged.* ***Ignition systems, oil and radiators*** also gave trouble, though in theory at least all army groups had been supplied exclusively w/ *freeze-proof POL from 11.10.41 onward.* (*Supplying War, 173*)

Mid-Nov 41: The **1000** km distance to the Reich frontier was served by only two main rail links (*Warsaw – Minsk – Smolensk* and from *Brest* thru *Gomel* and *Bryansk*). Both were frequently cut and harassed by partisan groups. Distribution from the railheads was thru the available *Gross-transportraum* of lorried transport. Many of these had been stuck fast three [**3**] weeks w/ mud up to their axles. When the mud froze they were hauled out but hundreds were severely damaged in the process. By **mid-Nov 41**, **50%** of AGC's lorry fleet was out of action. **4 Army** had been reduced to **1/8** of its original complement of trucks. **4 PzGr**, which had relocated from the *Lenin-grad* front to the centre, had only **1/2** its motorized transport running, even before Operation "*Taifun*" had begun at start of October. Many vehicles had failed to receive timely deliveries of *anti-freeze* and broke down. Meanwhile, the *Minsk – Moscow "Autobahn"* had its concrete covering stripped away between *Smolensk* and *Vyazma* during the difficult weather. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 197; Creveld, Supplying War, 173*)

⁴⁴⁰ **Note:** Yet how would the capture of Moscow have brought the fighting to a conclusion? That is simply a false assumption.

15./17.11.41 [Supply situation 2 Pz AOK]: The **2 Pz Army** had already reported in Orsha that on account of a shortage of fuel it could not reach Kolomna, only Venev. In a “*Beurteilung der Lage fuer die Fortsetzung der Operationen der 2. PzArmee*” of **17 Nov 41**, it was noted that “. . . despite continuous warnings, those in the army command in charge of supplies and rail transport could not supply the divisions w/ fuel for the past **16** days. Since **1 Nov 41** a daily average of **317** cubic meters of fuel has been supplied, while the regular delivery of four [4] times that amount would have been necessary. . . The fuel situation today is such that the panzer divisions designated for the attack were provided w/ about **2-3 quota units** because the three **[3]** motorized divisions have received no allocation for days and consequently have to remain at a standstill in their areas.” (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 203, f.n. 13; see also, *KTZ PzAOK 2*, 15./17.11.41)

19.11.41 [**43. AK**]: Unsere Nachschubverbindungen sind noch immer hoechst kuemmerlich. In normalen Zeiten bekommt ein Korps alle **2** Tage einen Zug. Wir haben in **4** Wochen **2** erhalten. Das bedeutet, dass wir fast ganz aus dem Lande leben muessen. Im Bezug auf Fleisch u. Mehl ist das bisher gut gegangen. Allerdings mussten die Truppen das Brot selbst backen. Gemuese, Obst gibt es ueberhaupt nicht, abgesehen von Weisskohl, der aber jetzt natuerlich erfroren ist. Allmaehlich beginnen aber die Kartoffeln knapp zu werden. Grossen Teils stecken sie auch verfroren in der Erde. . . (*Gen. G. Heinrici, Kriegesbericht an seine Familie*, in: *J. Huerter, Ein Deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 112)

19.11.41: Die [Eisenbahnlage] ist aber, besonders hinten im Reich und im Generalgouvernement [Polen], infolge Organisationsfehler u. der restlosen Herunterwirtschaft unserer Lokomotiven so katastrophal, dass seit Tagen nur 50% der Zuege ueber die Grenze hierherkommen, die mit Nachschubgut, besonders Verpflegung, Munition u. Winterbekleidung, fuer uns bestimmt sind. Besonders fuehlbar ist der Mangel an Mehl, so dass die Brotration oft tagelang fehlt oder ganz knapp ist. Getreide gibt es zwar hier, aber alle Muehlen sind zerstoert...Ausserdem ist aber das Land in unserm Bereich bald kahl gefressen. So gibt es z.B. keinen Hafer mehr. Die armen Tiere bekommen jetzt 2-4 Pfund Hafer je Tag...Sie brechen vor Entkraeftung zusammen. (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 134-35.)

24.11.41: A higher than usual number of logistics trains arrived in the AGC area on **24 Nov 41**. This shipment of **24** trains permitted the first winter clothing issue to be distributed. On average, one man in five **[5]** received an overcoat. They were not issued to the men in the rear services. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 203)

30.11.41: At end of **Nov 41**, the attack [on Moscow] was finally called off altogether. Halder nevertheless remained full of confidence. [?] During a discussion w/ the assistant chiefs of staff of the armies in the east, he painted a positive overall picture. In particular, the management of supplies had been a success up to that time. [**Note**: See, *Halder Diary*, 23.11.41.] Halder did concede that the weakness of the troops and the supply situation – in these weeks only 16 trains / day were arriving at AGC, instead of the **31** demanded – no longer permitted major coordinated operations in **1941**. Nevertheless, Halder announced [when?] that the attack would be resumed before the end of the year, and urged the armies to accept “the greatest risk in supply matters. . . for the sake of the operational concept.”⁴⁴¹ (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1138)

⁴⁴¹ The “operational concept” – Halder’s *idée fixe* – all that really mattered to him in his thinking about the war in the east.

Nov-Dec 41 [616. L.T. Rgt.]: In this period the management of supplies depended almost exclusively on the effectiveness of the haulage vehicles. In fact, *it was due to them that AGC survived at all at this time*. From the beginning of the campaign until the end of the year, **616. Lorry Transport Rgt.** employed w/ AGC carried **291,000** t. of supplies, or the freight of **650** railway trains. By mid-**Nov 41** half of the vehicles had already broken down. In response, **OKH** decided to amalgamate the serviceable units of the haulage fleet and to leave them in the area of operations, while vehicles in need of repair were sent back to Germany. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV, 1137*)

Nov-Dec 41: When the need for winter equipment soared w/ the onset of winter, it would have been necessary for *several hundred trains* to be dispatched to meet the new demand. Given the fact that the transport crisis was intensifying at this time, there was no possibility of an appropriate response. The situation was even worse because the *winter clothing provided was inadequate to meet the demands of the Russian winter*. Furthermore, even when the equipment had arrived w/ the armies, it could not easily be transferred to the front-line troops. With road and transport conditions so poor, it often took several days to get the clothing to the troops, while in the meantime the fighting units were decimated by frostbite. . .

The onset of winter had its worst effect on the railway. German locomotives, unlike Russian ones, had their cooling pipes on the outside; in icy conditions, between **70-80%** of them froze and burst. The ensuing transport crisis exceeded all others. Between **12 Nov – 2 Dec 41**, *no supply trains arrived at 2. Army for days on end*, necessitating serious reductions in consumption in all areas. In the period from **9-23 Nov 41** only one [1] fuel train came through to **9. Army**, and its contents could not be taken by the troops because there was only just enough fuel to fill the empty tanks of the lorry convoys. At the same time, the railway tracks were *continuing to carry “Jew trains” from Germany*. This led to an understandable protest from GFM v. Bock, who feared that it “would mean that a corresponding number of vital trains to supply the attack would have to be dropped.” (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV, 1136-37; also, Wagner, Generalquartiermeister, 317; Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn, 35*)

Dec 41: In the severe command crisis produced by the threat of defeat for the Army in the east, Hitler urged the Army leadership to adopt a ruthless approach to the civilian population. Villages were to be burnt down during retreats; all prisoners and civilians were to have their winter clothing confiscated to meet the needs of the German soldiers. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV, 1138; also, Halder Diary, 20.12.41*)

Dec 41: When the cold set in, it proved impossible to prepare the railway for winter service. . . The failure of those in the Wehrmacht offices to understand the concerns and requirements of the railway, the inability of the Ostbahn to control railway traffic in its area,⁴⁴² but mainly the chronic shortages of wagons and locomotives suitable for winter made a regular flow of supplies now impossible, and from time to time deliveries broke down completely. In early **Dec 41** as many as **70%** of the German trains had been put out of action by the cold. Frequent bombing of the railways and bridges by partisans and the misdirection of supply trains⁴⁴³ led to a further deterioration of the situation. The chief quartermasters of Army Group Ctr and the armies were constantly pressing the officer in charge of supplies for the army group, Major Eckstein, to do something once and for all to improve delivery of supplies. Resignedly, he wrote that he could

⁴⁴² **Note:** The railway in the “General Gouvernement” was known as the Ostbahn. (251, f.n. 24)

⁴⁴³ **Note:** On **27 Nov 41**, instead of the urgently awaited fuel delivery, a train loaded w/ spirits that had been frozen by the cold arrived from France. Only ice and the remains of the exploded bottles were left to be unloaded. (251, f.n. 26; also, *KTB PzGr3, OQu, 27.11.41*)

not do anything either “as locomotives were being frozen up or otherwise damaged on the way. Sometimes I could have howled w/ rage.” (K. Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 245-46; also, Eckstein, in: E. Wagner, *Generalquartiermeister*, 291)

Dec 41: Whilst the German war economy reached a *total impasse*, the tattered remnants of the Panzer divisions fought their way to w/in sight of Moscow. But, as logistical calculations in early Nov. had predicted, they were far too weak to force a decision. The *Ostheer* had reached the limit of its transport capacity. It was *impossible to sustain an offensive against fierce Soviet opposition, at a distance of almost 500 km from the forward supply dumps around Smolensk*. The *Ostheer* was now „in grave danger.“ No preparations had been made for active ops in the winter. Cold-weather stores had been *provided only for the scaled-down occupation force* and even these had not been brought forward because of the need to prioritize transport of fuel and ammunition. Army Group Center, where the bulk of German forces were concentrated, *was completely exposed*. (Tooze, *Wages of Destruction*, 499)

Dec 41 [4. AOK]: Supplies were usually short. Only a few *railways* ran into the area behind the front. These were frequently cut by the *partisans*. The water froze inside the *boilers* of the engines, which were not built to withstand the Russian climate. Each engine could *draw only half the normal number of wagons*. Many of them became stuck for days on end in the snow and ice. Our urgent requests for artillery shells could scarcely be met. Yet to encourage the soldiers on the eastern front, *trainloads of red wine were shipped to us* from France and Germany. The anger of a unit which received a trainload of wine instead of the shells it urgently needed can be readily imagined. Even as wine such a cargo was frequently useless. At **40 C.** below zero, not an unusual temperature, it had often *frozen in transit*, burst its bottles, and all that remained were chunks of red ice. (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 63)

Dec 41: Goebbels is well aware from the *bitter criticism in countless soldiers' letters* to their loved ones of how bad the impact of the supply crisis was on morale, both at the front and at home. (Kershaw, *Hitler*, 447; also, *Goebbels Tagebuch*, 12.12.41)

1.12.41: “Wir haben in den unscheinbarsten Dingen (Flickzeuge, Oel, Naegel usw.) eine *Armeleutewirtschaft*, die in keinem Verhaeltnis steht zu der Groesse unseres mil. Programms,“ befand man im Dez 41 im Stab der **251. ID.** (C. Hartmann, „*Verbrecherischer Krieg*,“ 40; f.n. 221)

6.12.41: Das dt. Eisenbahnpersonal war infolge der Kaelte ausserordentlich beansprucht. Am 6.12.41 wurde daher *eine allgemeine Urlaubssperre angeordnet*. (Pottgiesser, *Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 37)

14.12.41: 4 Armee: An der Suedfront von Moskau keine bes. Ereignisse. Bei **4 PzGr** griff der Feind wiederholt mit staerk. Kraefte an. Die Div. des **V AK**, die ostw. der Strasse Moskau – Kalinin standen, wurden zurueckgenommen. Bei eigenen Div. *starker Betriebsstoff- u. Munitionsmangel*. (Mehner, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 84)

31.12.41 [Munitionsverbrauch im Osten]: For detailed rendering of munitions expenditure in the East, through **31.21.41**, by weapon type or type of munition (w/ comparisons to *Westfeldzug*), see, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1110-14.

Winter 41/42: Hossbach (**31.ID**) re: *Breakdown of German supply system*; impact on **31.ID**. Attempts at improvisation by division. Notes that also in WWI the Kaiser's Army had also

experienced a shortage of bread (the primary staple) on the Russian front; but never had it gone for weeks w/o receiving bread. (*Hossbach*, 124-27)

Winter 41/42 [Dnieper Supply District]: During this period, Dnieper Supply District near Smolensk, w/ its advanced bases of Roslavl – Vyazma – Bryansk – Gomel, became the *backbone of the winter fighting* waged by AGC. The bases proved to be the *cornerstones of the defense*. The troops withdrew to them at times of crisis, and used them as bases from which to launch counter-attacks to close gaps in the front and gain secure defensive positions in this sector of the eastern front.

Supply troops frequently had to be sent into battle as a last resort. . . Apart from the questionable military value of these men, who were generally poorly armed and often unsuitable for front-line service, such interventions had highly regrettable consequences. They weakened rearward connections at a time when they were more valuable than ever. . . Though the combat strength of the infantry was declining, it was not feasible to enforce an equal reduction in the supply troops. The decline in fighting strength affected only the rations transports, which comprised only a small part of the supply load. Consumption of ammunition and fuel was unchanged. . . **47. PzK protested against** the deployment of corps supply troops which had been ordered for the defense of Orel. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1140; see also, *KTB Pz. AOK 2/O.Qu.*, 23 Jan 42)

Dec 41-Jan 42: On the icy and congested roads the battered motor-vehicles were unable to withstand the renewed strains upon them. The constant shortage of fuel and replacement parts caused further problems, so that by the beginning of **Jan 42** more than 10,000 vehicles⁴⁴⁴ had had to be abandoned. Equally disastrous for the mobility and fighting power of the troops was the extraordinarily high loss of horses, particularly w/ the horse-drawn artillery. Guns either had to be blown up or allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy. Overall, the losses of wpns and equipment in **Dec 41** increased sharply. (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1138)

Dec 41 – Jan 42 [Elephants movement]: [To furnish additional haulage capacity] the so-called “elephants movement” was ordered as a replacement for the withdrawn haulage vehicles. Transport companies were hurriedly equipped w/ French lorries, totally untrained officers and drivers were selected from newly conscripted men, and the vehicles – some straight from the production line – were sent off in temperatures of -20 C. and w/o being run in. Not surprisingly, an exceptionally high percentage of the vehicles had broke down by the time they were assembled in Warsaw. After a journey of almost **2000** km an insignificant number of serviceable vehicles reached AGC in **Jan 42**. **2 Pz Army**, which had originally had six [**6**] big lorry convoys of **60** t. at its disposal [for each convoy, I assume] but at this stage was able to operate only one, received precisely **54** t. of additional transport capacity from the “elephant movement.” (*H. Boog, et al., Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1139)

Jan 42: 1420 supply trains reach their destinations on the eastern front during this month. (*Hart, Guderian*, 129, f.n. 43; see also, *Wray, Standing Fast*, 74)⁴⁴⁵

Jan 42 (anecdote re: Munitionslage): III./AR 6, now fighting west of *Rshew* (in Raum *Murawjowo*) as the *Artilleriegruppe „Carl“* and subordinated to the *Gruppe „Lindig“* (Harko der

⁴⁴⁴ **Note:** From context of narrative, I assume these figures are for AGC only.

⁴⁴⁵ **Note:** Apparently, these figures are *much higher* than those given by *Pottgiesser*. See, *Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 37.

9. Armee): „Bei der starken eigenen Feuertaetigkeit wurde die Munitionslage *haeufig kritisch*...Ich erinnere mich noch an solch einen kritischen Fall. Wir hatten in der Gruppe Carl fuer 2 Batterien noch einige 20 Schuss, die mein Kommandeur *einzeln freigab*...Als wir bei 5 Schuss Bestand angekommen waren, kam die erloesende Meldung der Batterien ueber das Eintreffen neuer Munition. (H.J. Dismer, 94-6)

Jan 42: By late 41, or at latest, beginning of 1942, the *Luftwaffe's* supply system no longer functioned effectively. *Milch* in a visit to the eastern front discovered *hundreds of inoperable acft lying about on forward airfields*. They had either broken down or been damaged in combat, and spare parts were not flowing forward to repair them. (W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 84; see also, Irving, *The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe*, 131)

ab Jan 42 [Supply relay established]: To implement the movement [of reinforcements, supplies, etc.] from west to east, the Quartermaster-General established the “Control Staff Centre.” (Leitstab Mitte) The idea was to continue using the railways as much as possible, but to become independent of them for a time and to supply the troops by road transport. Since the territory between the Reich border and the army fighting **1000** km to the east lacked any logistical installations, a **supply relay** would be created along the proposed supply-roads as far as the Smolensk area.

By **10 Jan 42, 44** bases had been established to service the draft-conducting battalions,⁴⁴⁶ horse-moving detachments, and lorry convoys. The draft-conducting battalions were the first to be dispatched. A rest-day had to be included after every three [**3**] marching days because of the exceptionally heavy falls of snow and snowdrifts, a persistent east wind reaching gale force, icy roads, and temperatures as low as **-45** C. The lorry convoy set out at the end of **Jan 42**. Many of the vehicles had been brought straight from the factory to be loaded w/ winter equipment, replacement parts, lubricants, sledges, stoves, medicines, etc. These were followed by the divisions, and finally by the horse detachments. By the end of **Apr 42**, within **100** days, **5** inf-divs. w/ **60,000** men altogether, **26** draft-conducting battalions w/ **17,000** men, **6500** horses, and **650** lorries w/ **3000** t. of transport capacity had been brought to AGC. (H. Boog, *et al.*, *Germany and the Second World War, Vol. IV*, 1139-40)

1.1.42: Aother factor affecting military rail operations is of course the number of available locomotives and wagons. On this date, the *Ostheer* had available for use **84.000** German and captured wagons (i.e., rolling stock). (This figure would rise to **142.000** in Jun 42.) (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com)

4.1.42: By this time, clear to Germans that their railroad service, due to many weaknesses and false projections, was in need of fundamental change: Durch Befehl [Hitlers] vom 4.1.42 wurden der Ausbau, die Unterhaltung [here, *upkeep*] u. Betriebsfuehrung auf den im besetzten Russland betriebenen Eisenbahnen weitgehend dem *Reichsverkehrsminister* uebertragen u. das **blaue Eisenbahnpersonnal** ihm wieder voellig unterstellt. Diese neue Regelung trat am **14.1.42** in Kraft. (See, *Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 38-39)

21.1.-27.2.42: In dieser Zeit sind **348** Zuege mit zusammen **8 565** Wagen *mehr* in die Ostgebiete hineingefahren worden als heraus, d. s. *taeglich im Durchschnitt* rund **19** Zuege mit **475** Wagen zusammen. (*Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 36-37)⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ **Note:** “Draft-conducting battalions” = “Marschbataillonen? Check original German text!”

⁴⁴⁷ **Note:** *Pottgiesser* points out that in late Jan 42, “Die Zuege zur Front *stauten sich* bis in den Bezirk der Gedob zurueck, besetzten dort die *Umspanngleise* der Bahnhoeefe u. vermehrten noch die

24.1.42: Das KTB Halder verzeichnet am **24 Jan 42** einen Vortrag des Chefs der Org. Abtl. **OKH** mit grossem Bedenken in Bezug auf *Ersatzlage* u. Materialreserven. Die harten Winterkaempfe im Osten haben zu bedeutenden Verlusten an Geschuetzen u. Munition gefuehrt. Die vom **OKH** geforderte Munitionsbevorratung fuer **6** Monate war nicht vorhanden, sie lag bei einzelnen Munitionsarten sogar unter der **2-Monatsgrenze**. Nun traten anfangs **1942** die jedem Frontsoldaten bekannten *Munitionsschwierigkeiten* ein. (*Donat, Der Munitionsverbrauch im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 34)

Jan-Feb 42: Between Jan/Feb 42, only **19** military supply trains per day could be dispatched from Germany/Poland to serve needs of the entire German Army on eastern front. During Jan 42, Army Group North alone needed **30** trainloads of supplies a day just to maintain minimum capabilities. The German rail system nearly broke down fully – nearly! (*Deutsche Reichsbahn*, in: www.feldgrau.com; see also, *Pottgiesser*, 37)

Feb 42: Auf der Strecke *Brest-Litovsk – Minsk – Smolensk* wurden im Feb 42 nur **8** Zuege taeglich zur Front durchgebracht. (*Pottgiesser, Deutsche Reichsbahn*, 35)

20.3.42: Liebe Eltern!...Wenn Ihr Zigaretten bekommen könnt, dann schickt mir doch bitte welche, hier ist alles knapp. (*FPB, H. Stuehlmeier, 6. ID*)⁴⁴⁸

22.6.41-1.6.42: *Baeckerei-Kp. 6* backte **2 380 000** Brote. *Schlaechtere-Kp 6* schlachtete mit 20 Soldatenschlachtern **4488 Stueck** Grossvieh, **928** Schafe u. **27** Schweine. *Verpfl. Amt 6* legte mit seinen 12 Fahrzeugen **178 419 km** zurueck. (**Note:** These figures all from *Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 113. Give some idea of logistical requirements of a *single infantry division* on the eastern front.)

1.11: *Horses (Eastern Front):*

Note: The love and respect for his horses runs thru the memoirs of August Freitag like „einen roten Faden.“ He served in a horse drawn artillery unit (I. I.G.) and cared deeply for his animals. His feelings typical of many. (*A. Freitag [6. ID], Aufzeichnungen*)

H. Franze (263. ID):⁴⁴⁹

a) *Pferdematerial: Trakelmer (?) – Oldenburger (?)* – Bauernpferde – viele Beutepferde – Polen – Franzosen (Berberpferde). Strapazen – Hitze, spaeter Kaelte – (bis **40 [Grad]**). Durst, Fuetter, sie passten sich an, erduldeten alles. Ausfaelle ergaenzten wir mit russ. Beutepferden, welche meist frei herum liefen, sie waren zaeher. (Siehe Buch – Seite 14, usw.)

Betriebsschwierigkeiten. Der *Rueckstau* betrug z.B. im Bezirk *Minsk* 185 Zuege Richtung Front u. 80 Zuege Richtung Heimat, u. insgesamt 850 Zuege.“ (35-36)

⁴⁴⁸ **Note:** I've inserted most of *Stuehlmeier's Feldpostbriefe* into Sections **2.3** and **2.4**. He writes consistently of food shortages—esp. bread—and his corresponding hunger; of the breakdown in mail service, etc. Even cigarettes and matches were hard to come by!

⁴⁴⁹ **Note:** These answers received from Herrn Franze in response to my questions. The book references are to his brief memoir: Kriegskamerad Pferd. 2001.

b) *Panjepferde*, Besitzer zivile Russen nicht von Militaer genutzt. Es waren kleine, dickbaeuchige Ponyarten, liefen frei herum. Wurden vor kleine Panjewagen gespannt, fuer uns weniger wichtig, kaum zum Reiten. (Siehe Buch Seite 10)

c) *Futter* wurde beim Vormarsch (Sommer) oertlich gewonnen, Gras, Getreide, Mais. Im Winter Heu, Getreide, Mais, der Nachschub kam vom Tross, (Rueckwaertige Versorgung) zustaendig war ein Futtermeister. In der Freizeit suchten wir immer Futter, meist in den „Kolchosen“ – (staatliche Landwirtschaft). *In Notzeiten fuetterten wir das Stroh von den Hausdaechern!* **1943/44** war die Futtermittellieferung besser, es gab Pressballen, Getreide, Heu, Stroh, Kleie [*bran*] gepresst, der Nachschub war besser.

d) Die *Ausfaelle* waren sehr gross – Verwundungen, verhungert, von **Okt 41** bis **Mar 42** verloren wir – offizielle Angaben – **179.609** Pferde. Ich verlor im Russlandeneinsatz (genutzt) – **85** Pferde! . . . **85** Pferde verlor ich bei **2** Russlandeneinsatzen **1941/42** u. **Apr 43** bis **Apr 44**, beim Rueckzug Charkow – Kursker Bogen bis Tiraspol. [sp?]"

(Ltrs, H. Franze to C. Luther, 16 Feb 05, 8 Mar 05)

1.11.1: Background:

Note: Jede bespannte – also nicht mot. – Inf.-Div. verfuegte ueber eine Veterinaerkompanie, die nach der Kriegsgliederung von **1939** eine Staekke von **234** Mann aufwies. (*A. Freitag* [**6. ID**], *Aufzeichnungen*, 57, f.n. 8)

Note: By subjecting horses to a *quarantine period* before shipping them to the Russian front, communicable diseases remained *practically unknown*. The only exception was sporadic outbreaks of *mange*, which always required replacement of the entire horse strength of the unit effected. (*CMH Pub. 104-6, Effects of Climate*, 59)

Of the **145** divisions committed to *Barbarossa*, **113** were infantry divisions. This required immense increase in number of horses needed. One of the main sources for horses was **Poland**. Another major source was **France**. Number of horses employed by *Wehrmacht* for *Barbarossa* somewhere between **600 000** and **750 000**, depending on the source. Poland also provided some **15,000 peasant carts** to give the German infantry divisions additional transportation. These carts were to be allocated by the *General Gouvernement*, w/ about **200 carts going to each division**. These carts were to prove "invaluable." (*DiNardo*, 38-40, 46)

Horses require an *enormous amount of food*. Even the hardest horses need about *12 pounds of food per day*. Larger horses require proportionately more food and water. A large cold blood can consume up to **20** pounds daily...Horses can eat a wide range of foods. *In the German Army*, horse fodder⁴⁵⁰ consisted of a combination of **oats, hay, and straw**, w/ oats considered to be the best...Horses are *surprisingly delicate creatures*, subject to a wide variety of diseases, some of which are highly contagious. For our purposes, most common maladies are *mange, pneumonia, frostbite, and glanders*. [*DiNardo* discusses these diseases in some detail.⁴⁵¹ Notes that **mange**

⁴⁵⁰ **Note:** Standard German Army fodder consisted of a *cake composed mostly of oats and mixed w/ varying amounts of yeast, potato flakes, hay, and straw*. (49)

⁴⁵¹ **Note:** The German Army in WWI in Russia had difficult time coping w/ the *dreaded disease of glanders*. Yet in WWII, preventive measures in Russia proved quite successful against this and other diseases. (38, 43)

became a serious problem in winter 41/42. Also discusses how the German Army procured horses in peace- and wartime.] (*DiNardo*, 11-14, 48)

Parlous state of Soviet Union's horse population: Forced collectivization and ensuing terror-famine had *inflicted grievous losses*. From **1928-33**, the Soviet Union's horse population declined from **32 million** to **17 million**, a 47 percent decrease. These losses had not nearly been made good by 1941...German Army *did not capture large numbers of Soviet Army horses in 1941*. For example, **260. ID** (w/ Hr.Gr.Mitte) captured only **327 horses** from **19.7-11.9.41**, not nearly enough to keep pace with the losses...Conversely, the Germans obtained horses locally in the Soviet Union, as they occupied a total area which had a *horse population of 11 million*...(DiNardo, 39, 46)

Summer campaign of 1941: Was not exactly kind to the German Army's horses. First obvious problem was the *climate*. Climatically, the USSR is a *land of extremes*. Severity of Russian winter well known. Less renowned is the *severity of the Russian summer*, which, though short, can be extremely hot. This had a *terrible effect on the horses*, who were forced to march long distances...Horse losses began to mount early in the campaign. Most severely affected were the *heavy and extra-heavy draft horses*, used mainly to *haul artillery*. And there were not enough replacements available to cover the losses. (German infantry divisions generally went into the campaign w/ a *reserve of only 150 horses*, at best.) *Feed also a problem*. As noted, *oats* was considered the best feed for the German Army's horses. But oats not widely sown in the Soviet Union. Divisions of Hr.Gr.Mitte were able to *make use of green fodder* while its front was relatively stationary in Aug-Sep 41. (*DiNardo*, 41-45)

Ohne unsere Pferde waren wir bewegungslos. Immer wieder bestaetigte sich, wie wertvoll diese duldsamen u. leidensfaehigen Tiere fuer uns waren. Wohl auch deswegen haben die meisten Kameraden *eine enge emotionale Bindung zum „Kamerad“ Pferd gefuehlt*, die schwer in Worte zu fassen ist. (*Loewer Memoiren, AR 129/129. ID*, 31-2)

Oct 41: "Ohne unsere Pferde waeren wir in der *zweiten Haelfte des Oktober 1941* unbeweglich u. damit rettungslos verloren gewesen." Hossbach makes more than one reference to fact that his unit could not have survived w/o the support from its horses. (*Hossbach, Infanterie im Ostfeldzug*, 113)

Oct 41: *Willy Reese (95. ID)* describes his march from *Kiev* to the front in Oct 41 – thru rain over bottomless roads. Artillery pieces and munitions carts bog down; horses broke down, were barely capable of pulling light loads. „One after another, the horses collapsed and died or had to be put out of their misery. We replaced them w/ *tougher Russian ponies*, which we managed to capture wild or took away from collective farms.“ (*W.P. Reese, Stranger, 95. ID*, 34)

Oct 41: Am anderen Morgen war alles weiss [i.e., snow] u. furchtbar glatt. Das Schlimmste aber war, dass die meisten Pferde noch Sommerbeschlag hatten u. fast gar keine Stollen da waren. So musste bereits waehrend der ersten **100 Meter** ein Pferd wegen Knochenbruch erschossen werden. (*A. Freitag [6. ID], Aufzeichnungen*, 66)

Oct 41: Als die Strassen ab **9.10.41** durch Regenfaelle grundlos wurden u. gleichzeitig Brennstoffmangel eintrat, "erwies sich das Pferd as Retter in der Not," da der mot. Nachschub nicht order nur mangelhalf folgen konnte. Das Gleiche gilt fuer die Antriebsfahrzeuge der Waffen. (*Bericht Divisionsveterinaer vom 24.11.1941 [6. ID]*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 52*, S. 28)

1.11.2: Winter 1941/42:

German horses—especially the heavy Western European breeds—suffered severely during the winter. ***Hr.Gr.Mitte's horse losses reached about 1000 per day during the winter.*** Many more horses were rendered weak or unfit by exposure. Suffered from *mange*; also suffered from *pneumonia* and *frostbite*. *These problems severely affected the artillery of the inf. divisions.* Fodder also a problem during winter...As substitute for standard fodder, Germans improvised as best they could...More often than not, the most common materials used as fodder [under such conditions] included straw, hay, linseed, and, at times, tree bark. Horses had to be put on short rations, which affected their ability to haul artillery...Despite such problems, and although German reliance on horses was in part responsible for failure of *Barbarossa*, ***horses were also the means of deliverance for the German Army during the winter crisis***...Without horse-drawn supply columns to keep troops supplied during the winter, an even worse disaster would have befallen the German Army. (*DiNardo*, 48-50)

Most German horses became *accustomed to the Russian winter*, although they needed at least *emergency shelter*. In the open, *horses freeze to death at temperatures under -4 F.* Russian horses, with their thick shaggy winter coat, can *withstand temperatures as low as -58 F.* if they are sheltered against the wind. Some German horses, notably the *heavy cold-blooded breeds*, were unable to withstand the Russian winter, particularly those moved suddenly from the *mild climate of France*. The Germans expected their draft horses to *pull excessive loads* in winter, and the animals became *prematurely spent* particularly when they were given insufficient care, forage, and water. Lighter breeds were better able to withstand the cold, but were not strong enough to move the heavy German equipment; they became exhausted, and collapsed and died in the snow. During the first winter, German horses frequently ***lacked winter shoeing***, a factor which lessened their draft power on ice roads and caused them to fall. Sometimes ice was so bad that horses which had not been *winter-shod* could not be led from the railroad station to the stables. ***A great many horses perished for lack of forage.*** There were *no horse diseases* directly traceable to or aggravated by the Russian winter. Most of the **1,500,000** horses which the Germans lost in Russia were victims of battle wounds, overexertion, forage shortages, and the cold. (*CMH Pub. 104-6, Effects of Climate*, 21-22)

Hier hatten wir endlich Gelegenheit, unsere Pferde zu traenken, die den ganzen Tag noch nichts gehabt hatten u. infolge der starken Kaelte Durst hatten. Das Traenken war immer eine schwierige Sache, weil die meisten Brunnen zugefrozen waren. Auf diesem Rueckmarsch sind viele Pferde durch Nachlaessigkeit der Landser verdurstet. Je kaelter die Witterung, desto durstiger ist es auch. Auch wir mussten oft dursten, weil wir ja nur im Quartier trinken konnten. (*A. Freitag* [6. ID], *Aufzeichnungen*, 83)

Care of horses in winter: A. Freitag explains how difficult it was to get horses moving again, if they had laid down to rest. Their limbs and joints became so stiff the horses could not get back on their feet w/o help. Their limbs had to be rubbed w/ straw; then they had to be walked for half an hour to free their joints. (*A. Freitag* [6. ID], *Aufzeichnungen*, 87)

Dec 41: Art.Rgt of **129. ID** during withdrawal from *Kalinin*: Besonders unseren Zugpferden, ***alles schwere Belgier***, tat eine Ruhepause mit ausreichend Futter gut. Das mitgefuehrte ***Raufutter*** reichte ja vorlaeufig noch, aber bei 200 Pferden war es bald aufgebraucht, gleiches galt fuer die Vorraeete an Hafer...so dass wir schliesslich unsere Pferde mit Stroh von Daechern versorgen mussten. (*Loewer Memoiren*, **AR 129/129. ID**, 35)

13.2.42: ...Es ist jetzt schon warm draussen, seit Tagen machen wir schon kein Feuer mehr im Raum, nur noch, wenn wir zum Abend unser *Pferdehackfleisch* braten. **Wir leben im „Zeitalter des Pferdes.“** Solange die noch da sind, verhungern wir nicht...(Wm. Josef L., **5.Bttr./AR 129/129. ID, BfZ**)

1.11.3: Losses Suffered:

Sep 41: Care of horses. Led by *Gen Auleb*, division takes special care of its **6000 horses**. Of the 13 divisions of AOK 9, the 6. Inf-Div. had lost the fewest horses (*etwas ueber 50*) as of Sep 41. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID, 47*)

Nov 41: Horse losses in *Ostheer* totaled **102 910** killed and **33 314** sick by this time. (*DiNardo, 47*)

10.11.41: In addition [to losses of motor vehicles], the mobility of units engaged in battle, esp. the infantry and artillery, was further reduced by huge losses of horses in the east, amounting on **10 Nov 41** to **102,910** dead and **33,314** sick horses. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 149*)

Winter 41/42: **AR 6 (6. ID)** lost over **800 horses to starvation** during this time. (*H.J. Dismer, 100*)

Mar 42: Bis Maerz 1942 verlor die *Wehrmacht* an der Ostfront **264.954** Pferde. (*Anmerkung Dr Tauber* in: *Loewer Memoiren, f.n., 35*)

20.3.42: Since 22.6.41, German Army in Soviet Union had lost some **264 954 horses** killed, sick or otherwise unfit for service. (*DiNardo, 50*; see also, *KTB OKW, vol. 1, 489*)

20.3.42: Since 22.6.41, German Army in Soviet Union had lost some **264 954 horses** killed, sick or otherwise unfit for service. (*Greiner Aufzeichnung, „Notizen fuer das Tagebuch,“ „Verluste u. Verbrauch 22.6..41-20.3.42,“* in: *KTB OKW, Band I, 489*)

1.11.4: Russian Panje Horses:

Panje horses [the small native breed of Eastern Europe] proved extremely enduring, as well as easy to feed, handle, and stable. They have *very hard hoofs* and need not be shod for soft ground. In all seasons and in all situations this horse *proved outstanding for pack and draft use*. It is the horse for European Russia. (*CMH, Pub. 104-6, Effects of Climate, 59*)

They were much better suited to conditions in East than heavier European horses. H. Haape “sings their praises.” (*Moscow Tram Stop, 60-1, 83.*)

These horses ate anything—old dry grass off the roofs, bark, dry twigs and garbage, and when no water, they ate snow. (*Moscow Tram Stop, 243*)

Die Temperatur hatte wieder angezogen, und es war glatt. Entgegenkommenden *Panjekolonnen* der Truppen auszuweichen, war mit großen Schwierigkeiten verbunden, denn jedes geringste

Abweichen vom bezeichneten Wege bedeutete Versinken im tiefsten Schnee. *Diese Panjepferde sind ja solch zähe Tiere. Es ist ungeheuerlich, was ihnen alles zugemutet werden kann bei nur etwas Heu als Futter und gar keiner Pflege. (Tagebuch Lemelsen, 14.2.42)*

The most common horses found in the USSR proper were the *panje horses*, small animals of great toughness. These were quickly pressed into service. The Germans quickly found, however, that this created a new problem—this time w/ equipment: The standard German artillery piece, a **105mm howitzer**, when loaded w/ fodder, ammunition, and equipment (the gun and limber were driven as a single unit), weighed as much as **4 tons**—a difficult task even for six well-fed heavy draft horses. The heavy artillery gun (a **150mm** piece), w/ gun and limber driven separately, required eight horses just to haul the reserve cart, which carried the ammunition. Panje horses were far too small and light for hauling artillery. They were also unsuited to hauling horse-drawn vehicles. The *standard German Army horse-drawn vehicle was made of steel*, which also proved too heavy for the panje horses. (*DiNardo, 46*)

Panje horses: „As our panzer and motorized units plunged across the dusty Russian plains during that first summer, nobody paid much attention to the insignificant little peasant horses of the steppes. The tankers and truck drivers could not fail to notice the *industrious little animals* pulling heavily loaded peasant wagons cross-country whenever they were pushed off the road by the modern mechanical giants. Our troops viewed them sympathetically, but what was their performance compared to that of the steel colossi and multi-ton carriers?..Many a man dismissed them w/ a disdainful gesture and the words: „*A hundred years behind the times.*“ Even next to the heavy, cold-blooded draft horses and the tall mounts of the infantry divisions their *dwarfish cousins* seemed slightly ridiculous. A few months later the *panje* horse would be judged quite differently. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus, 3*)

Panje wagons: The *Panje* wagon's high wheels and light weight enabled it to plow through mud several feet deep while riding on the frozen stratum beneath [during the spring Rasputitsa]; and its wooden construction allowed it to be used almost as a boat. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 177*)

Winter 41/42: “Rueckmarsch von Moskau: *Panje-Pferde* zogen die Kraftfahrzeuge durch die Schnee-Verwehungen; daher nannten wir uns damals: ’11. *Panje-Division.*” (*C. Hamann, (2./Pz.Art.Rgt. 119/11.PD), “Im Osten – Anfang 1942,” in: Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch, 1998*)

3.-5.2.42: Am 3. Februar erfolgte nach einer letzten Untersuchung meiner erfrorenen Fuesse meine Abstellung zur Front, die sich...durch harte Kaempfe wieder stabilisiert hatte. Waehrend der letzten 14 Tage verschonten mich die Erfrierungen vor diesen unerhoerten Strapazen...Am 5. Februar [war ich] mit dem *Panjeschlitten* weitertransportiert [und] in *Stolopow* beim Gefechts-tross der Kompanie anlangte. Als ich im Dorf von dem Schlitten stieg, erschrak ich ein wenig, denn ich sah an der Seite der vom Schnee freigefegten Strasse einige der niedrigen *Pferdeschlitten mit angehaengten Kanonen* stehen. Wenn der Anblick auch fuer den ersten Moment das Bild eines gemuetlichen Krieges erscheinen liess, so zeigte es doch beim schaeferen Hinsehen, was sich eigentlich hinter ihm verbarg. Der Rueckzug mit dem strengen Winterwetter war auch an meiner [Pz.Jg.] Kompanie nicht spurlos voruebergegangen. *Panjepferdchen und -schlitten ersetzen die verlorengegangenen Zugmaschinen u. dienten als Protzen fuer die 3,7-cm-Paks*, so dass sich die Kompanie fuer die Zukunft aus einer Mot.-Kolonne u. einer *Hot-Kolonne* zusammensetzte. (*H. Martin, Weit war der Weg, 14. ID (mot.)*, 113)

1.12: Disease & Sickness/Vermin/Typhus:

1.12.1: Disease & Sickness:

a) Historical Examples:

- a) *Plague of Athens (430-425 BC)*: Described by *Thucydides*. The nature of the sickness described by him *cannot be positively determined*. It began during the second year of the *Peloponnesian War*. (*Prinzing, Epidemics*, 11-12)
- b) *Crusades*, as well as the *expeditions of the German emperors to Italy*, offer many examples of how large armies have been destroyed by disease. By far the most devastating example is the *pestilence* which broke out in *Rome* in August **1167**, shortly after the capture of the city by **Frederick Barbarossa**, and paved the way to a catastrophe which *culminated in the complete annihilation of the German army*. It was the true **bubonic plague**, and usually resulted fatally on first day. The armies of the Crusades fared even worse. The mortality in the **First Crusade**, before and after the conquest of *Antioch (1097-8)*, was terrible. The pestilence is said to have broken first among the *children and women who accompanied the armies*. From September to 24 November it carried away 100,000. The nature of the disease is not known, although it is known to have been very infectious. In **1100** another pestilence raged among the crusaders. Again, during the **Second Crusade**, a severe epidemic broke out in the army of the Emperor **Louis VII** at *Attalia* in Asia Minor; the pestilence spread rapidly among the inhabitants of the city. During the **Third Crusade**, shortly after the death of *Frederick Barbarossa (June, 1190)*, a severe pestilence broke out in the army that was besieging *Antioch*; according to *Michaux*, only 5,000 infantrymen and 700 cavalrymen survived out of the entire German army. (see, *Prinzing, Epidemics*, 12-15)
- c) A serious epidemic of *syphilis* broke out in the army of **Charles VIII** of France during his expedition to *Naples (1495)*. There the French army gave itself over to the most *unbridled licentiousness*, and the result was that the disease spread rapidly in both the French and Italian armies. The disbanding of Charles' army caused the disease to spread far and wide in Europe. Among others, the German and Swiss **Landsknechte** returning from Italy spread the disease over a large part of Europe. (*Prinzing, Epidemics*, 17)
- d) At the end of the 15th Century, typhus fever was *prevalent in many parts of Europe*. From the 16th Century on notices are more abundant; we now hear of epidemics of typhus fever throughout all Europe, although we do not know positively where the disease first appeared. The first **scientific account** of it comes from the pen of **Fracastorius**, who had an opportunity to observe the disease during the epidemics in Italy in **1505-8**. The names given to the disease were numerous: „**Hauptweh**“ (headache) or „**Hauptkrankheit**“ (head-disease) was current in Germany, while the additional words „*ohne Sterbedruesen*“ (without death glands) expressly distinguish the disease from bubonic plague. (*Prinzing, Epidemics*, 19-20)
- e) The battles w/ the **Turks** in the east did a great deal toward spreading typhus fever throughout Europe; for that reason, the name „*Hungarian disease*“ came into existence. Toward the end of the 15th Century, hitherto prosperous Hungary, by *endless wars w/ Turkey* and by international strife, was brought to the very verge of ruin. Several contemporaries bear witness to fact that a large part of the *German troops* never once

faced the enemy, for the reason that they succumbed beforehand to „Hungarian disease,“ which killed more of them than the swords of the Turks. Hence, Hungary was called at the time the „*Cemetery of the Germans*.“ (Prinzing, *Epidemics*, 22-23)

- f) **Thirty Years War (1618-48):** At the beginning of the 17th Century, epidemics of bubonic plague and typhus fever were *frequent occurrences in various parts of central Europe*, but they were usually kept localized by the strict measures that were adopted, IAW the best scientific knowledge of the time, to prevent them from spreading. Certainly, one of the most common „war diseases“ during the war was typhus fever. At the same time real plague, bubonic plague, now and then occurred. „In the history of this calamitous war,“ says Seitz,⁴⁵² „we see typhus fever like a *malignant spectre* hovering over the armies wherever they go, in their camps, on their marches, and in their permanent quarters, and preparing an inglorious end for thousands of valiant warriors. Its ravages among the non-belligerent population in town and country caused the inhabitants of many provinces to remember w/ hatred and loathing the departed soldiers who were usually accused of having planted the seed of death.“ (for details see, *Prinzing, Epidemics*, 26-41)
- g) **Napoleon’s Russian Campaign (1812):** Witnessed an epidemic of typhus *after* campaign was over.
- h) **Franco-Prussian War (1870-71):** Resulted in a pandemic of *small-pox* after war was over.

b) *Health of German Troops:*

Dysentery has always played an important role in military campaigns. To be sure, it is not very dangerous, so far as the patient’s life is concerned, but in war times, owing to irregular nursing and scanty nourishment, it may spread over a large territory and be very destructive to large numbers of soldiers and other people. (*Prinzing, Epidemics*, 7)

Waehrend dieser Zeit [Aug 41] brach gewissernmassen eine Ruhrepidemie aus, die wohl von den vielen Fliegen uebertragen wurde. . . Auch ich wurde eines Tages krank. Wohl 25 Mal musste ich am Tage austreten. Es kam aber nichts als Blut. (*Ed. Freitag* wurde von der bakteriellen Ruhr befallen, die die bei weitem haeufigste Kriegsseuche beim dt. Ostheer darstellte. Das geschilderte Symptom der hauefigen Darmentleerung, typischerweise vermischt mit Blut, laesst daran kaum Zweifel. Da der westl. Teil der Sowjetunion fuer das haeufige Auftreten der Ruhr bekannt war, erklaert der Uebertragungsweg – Fliegen setzen sich auf menschliche Ausscheidungen [*secretions*], dann auf Lebensmittel –, warum es den Soldaten verboten war, Speisen u. Getraenke von der Bevoelkerung anzunehmen, wie es Freitag oben S. 52 schildert.). (*A. Freitag* [6. ID], *Aufzeichnungen*, 60, f.n. 12)

The health of German troops during the summer remained generally good. *Diarrhea* was frequent during the *midsummer fly plague*—flies tormented men and animals in hot weather—but seldom required hospitalization. In swamp regions there were isolated cases of *malaria*, and occasionally cases of *cadaveric poisoning* were noted. *Volhynia feveri* appeared in 1942, some cases requiring long convalescence. Many soldiers contracted *jaundice diseases* which lasted 2-3

⁴⁵² F. Seitz, *Der Typhus, vorzueglich nach seinem Vorkommen in Bayern geschildert*. Erlangen, 1847, p 55.

weeks, and sometimes required hospitalization. *Gas gangrene* was not infrequent. *Vaccinations* may be credited w/ preventing epidemics. (CMH Pub. 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 60)

Tens of thousands of German soldiers contacted *infectious diseases* due to lack of hygiene, resulting in *typhoid fever*. *Stomach and bowel ailments* common, as well as *severe influenza*. But *frostbite* topped the list. (Verton, 92)

Note: During winter, many men become casualties due to *strain, exposure* and *dysentery*. And, of course, *frostbite, hypothermia, sickness*.

H. Haape (6. ID) notes that the *three usual types of malaria* were *virtually non-existence in these regions*. Diagnoses himself w/ *Volhynian fever*—an unpleasant, painful illness, which usually ran its course in five days. Seldom fatal. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 179)

H. Haape (6. ID) notes that *hepatitis* fairly common in Russia, although he'd never encountered it in Germany. Also *spotted fever and Volhynian fever*—both *lice-born diseases not known in Germany*. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 195-6)

Diseases which normally would have given the Germans little trouble, took on “extraordinary intensity” during the winter of 41/42. Example of how III. / IR 18 dealt w/ problem of *dysentery*. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 233)

Darmbeschwerden – Durchfall – Ruhr: Manche mussten bis zu 30 Mal innerhalb von 24 Stunden bei eisiger Kälte die Hose runterlassen. [Dr] Haape erfand ein durchgreifendes Verfahren: die kranken Soldaten sollten ihre Hosen der mittleren Naht nach aufschneiden, so dass eine Spalte entstand und sie sich nicht mehr komplett ausziehen brauchten. „Die Kameraden helfen dann die Spalte mit Eisendraht wieder zu zumachen.“, (*La Guerre a L'Est, August v. Kageneck*, 77)

c) Chronology:

24.8.41: Weitermarsch nach Roslawl. Haelfte der Batterie hat **Durchfall** (Brunnenwasser u. Gurken). (*Tagebuch Kummer*, 18 PD)

29.8.41:...Augenblicklich blueht hier bei unseren Soldaten in starkem Masse die **Ruhr**, uebertragen vorwiegend durch die Millionen von Fliegen, die uns keinen Moment in Ruhe lassen. Wir koennen uns kaum vor Fliegen retten. Eine liechte Ruhrerkrankung habe ich auch hinter mir, habe aber in jeder Weise meinen Dienst fortsetzen koennen. – Heiss sind die Tage u. kalt die Naechte, blutiger Kampf in einem Land ohne Grenzen u. Kultur! (*Tagebuch Haape*, 6. ID)

30.8.41: Der Gesundheitszustand der Soldaten war zu diesem Zeitpunkt noch relative gut, ungeachtet der gehaeuft auftretenden Darmerkrankungen. Die noch ausstehende 3. Ruhrschutzimpfung wurde nachgeholt. . . In Welisch wurde in der wiederhergestellten Kirche eine hl. Masse gehalten. (*W. Buddenbohm* [6. ID], *Das Leben des Soldaten*, 60)

16.-20.10.41 [6 ID]: Die Vorbereitungen fuer den Wolgauebergang erfolgten am 20. Oktober. . . Kamerad Heinrich Stockhoff bestaetigt, dass vom 16. bis zur Wolgauebersetzung am **20.10.41** schwerste Fussmaersche unter entkraefeteten Bedingungen abverlangt wurden u. dass aufgrund der mangelhaften Verpflegung eine Darminfektion durch infizierten Honig aufgetreten war. (*W. Buddenbohm, Das Leben des Soldaten*, 72)

Nov 41: Kdr. **III./AR 6 (6. ID)** falls out due to *dysentery* (Ruhr). „Unregelmaessige u. schlechte Verpflegung, Regen Naesse, Kaelte, Schnee u. **insgesamt unhygienische Verhaeltnisse** werden die Ausloeser fuer die Krankheit gewesen sein.“ (H.J. Dismer, 56)

Dec 41: „Durch die *angefrorenen Nahrungsmittel*, die wir auf dem Rueckmarsch verzehrt hatten, litten wir alle an einem mehr oder weniger starken, ruhrartigen *Durchfall*, der uns bei den Ausmaerschen oft in heikle Situationen versetzte...“ (H. Martin, *Weit war der Weg*, 104)

Ende 41: Es gab sehr viele **Lungenentzündungen**. Hermann Matthias, Soldat der 3. Kompanie erzählt: „Einmal hatten wir am Abend einen Fluss überqueren müssen. Das Wasser stieg uns bis zur Brust. Danach haben wir die ganze Nacht draußen bleiben müssen bei – 25 °, um für den Rest der Kompanie Wache zu halten.“ (Hermann Matthias, quoted in: *La Guerre a L'Est, August v. Kageneck*, 73)

30.12.41 [Bergosenki]: “**15x** in der Nacht wegen meinem *Durchfall* heraus. Blieb den ganzen Tag auf der Trage liegen u. ass fast nichts...Es ist immer noch wahnsinnig kalt...(Oberstabsarzt Dr. Willi Lindenbach, *Echolot*, 677)

Jan 42: The health of the [German] soldiers deteriorated to an alarming degree during the winter. An assessment by the senior medical officer w/ **167 ID** highlighted concerns at the beginning of **Jan 42:**

Something like **80%** of the fighting troops are undergoing medical treatment especially for stomach and bowel, catarrh, frostbite, skin diseases and fever. The level of health and overall condition is extremely bad, lowering the body's resistance in coping w/ illness and wounds. Death is often resulting from slight wounds w/ blood loss. Total physical and psychological collapse threatens not only the NCOs and men but the majority of officers as well. (KTB Ia, **167 ID**, *Anlagen*, 4 Jan 42; quoted in: R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 235)

Jan 42: “Lice multiplied, and the dirt and disease increased. No one avoided *pyoderma* and *lymph inflammations*. But only those who were already suffering from *bone caries* were sent to the hospital. There was no lint. The same bandage, pus-encrusted and stiff w/ scabs and rotted flesh, was used again and again. We had to go easy on salves and ointments. Some had long rags of blackened flesh hanging off their feet. It was snipped off. The bones were exposed, but w/ their feet wrapped in cloths and sacking, the men had to go on standing sentry and fighting...Our chilled guts couldn't deal w/ food. Everyone had *diarrhea*, and some had *diphtheria*... Older men developed *rheumatism* and often screamed w/ pain. But we couldn't let anyone go. I got *lumbago* and was moved back to the second village street, referred to as the support line. There I lay three days and nights on a stove, unable to sleep for pain...We fled to *Dubrovka*.⁴⁵³ We left our cannons behind, and threw away our MGs. We left our blankets, bread sacks, mess tins, water

⁴⁵³ **Note:** “Gefecht u. Flucht aus dem kleinen Ort *Urynok* am Tim gut **40 km** suedlich von *Livny* (Liwny) fanden am **18.-19.1.42** statt. „Wir flohen ohne alle Sachen, 150 Zigaretten rettete ich. Jetzt bin ich ganz arm,“ notiert er in seinem Tagebuch. In seinen Briefen schildert Reese noch viele Monate nach dem Ereignis die „*Tragoedie von Orinok*“ als eines seiner zentralen Kriegserlebnisse.“ (Mir selber seltsam fremd, 274, f.n. 23)

bottles, and the recently arrived Christmas mail to the victors.”⁴⁵⁴ (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, 95. ID, 53-54)

Winter 41/42: In Drillichhose, Sommermantel u. zerrissenem Schuzeug waren die Soldaten der eisigen Kaelte mehr oder weniger schutzlos ausgeliefert, waehrend die *Winterausruetzung* entweder im *Nachschub-Sammelgebiet Warschau* haengenblieb oder, erreichte doch einmal etwas die Front, sich als voellig unzureichend erwies. *Erkaeltungskrankheiten* u. *Erkrankungen* des *Magen-Darm-Trakts* machten den groessten Teil der Krankheiten aus, dazu kamen *Infektionskrankheiten* wie *Fleckfieber* sowie die zunehmende *Verlausung*. (*Latzel, Deutsche Soldaten*, 65; also, *Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 173-74; also, *Das Deutsche Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Bd. 4, 984)

1.12.2: Vermin:

Note: „Nicht wir hatten die Laeuse, sondern die Laeuse hatten uns.“ (*W. Bremer, IR 278/95 ID, Die verlorene Jugend*, 35)⁴⁵⁵

Historical Note: Ausfuehrlich schildert *George Orwell* in seinem Bericht ueber den *Spanischen Buergerkrieg* das Elend, dem der Soldat durch die *Laeuseplage* ausgesetzt war: „Ich habe ziemliche Erfahrungen mit koerperlichem Ungeziefer jeder Art gemacht, aber an absoluter Gemeinheit schlaegt die Laus alles, was mir je begegnet ist...“ (for remainder of quote see, *H.J. Schroeder, Die gestohlenen Jahren*, 433)

Note: Overcrowding in cold, wet and unsanitary conditions produced colds, influenza, disease and lice. Lice were the “*scourge of the Eastern Front*,” an irritant contributing to ill health and cumulative psychological depression. Painstakingly picked off the body, they could only be killed w/ certainty by cracking them between fingernail and thumb after they were gorged w/ blood. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 189)

Plague of *lice!* Verton describes impact of this “plague” on the German soldier. Noted that the lice not active during day (in the cold)—“we hardly felt it”—but in warmth of the bunkers at night, they became very active. Itching literally unbearable. Puz oozed from bit wounds that they had scratched and froze skin to parts of their uniforms. Sleep became impossible. So, they went on “lice-hunt.” Now, German soldiers knew why the hair of Russian soldiers was not merely cut short, but shorn. (*Verton*, 104-5)

Germans faced a plague that they were *unable to rid themselves of during the whole campaign*: lice spread uncontrollably, infesting the men’s entire bodies and dirty clothing, and all efforts to free themselves from this vermin were of no avail. “It is *hard for someone who has not undergone the experience to grasp the nuisance, handicap, and danger to health posed by such constant torture by lice.*” The writer *Heinrich Boell*, born in 1917, who took part in the Russian campaign as a private soldier, came to the somewhat exaggerated but not completely far-

⁴⁵⁴ **Note:** During the retreat, Reese mentions encountering elements of a fighting unit that had “been on the run for a long time.” Some of the unit’s men were missing – they were found in the ruins of a village, where they had fallen to sleep and frozen to death. Others had *crept into stoves*, and /w their frozen limbs, were unable to get out. The stoves had to be smashed up, and the “lamenting casualties loaded on sleighs. In the field hospitals their arms and legs were amputated, and they died in the course of the operations.” (54-55)

⁴⁵⁵ **Note:** This appears to have been common parlance among the Landser.

fetched conclusion that “*this demoralizing vermin played a major role in our losing the war.*” (H.J. Schroeder, “*German Soldiers’ Experiences*, 314)

In der Tat ist kaum abzuschätzen, welche *verheerenden Auswirkungen* die allgemeine Verlausung unter den Soldaten letzten Endes gehabt hat. Die *Moral* der Truppe musste angesichts der *Vergeblichkeit* des Kampfs gegen die Laeuse unweigerlich leiden, u. hinzu kam insbesondere, „dass durch die starke Verlausung *Hautkrankheiten* in steigendem Masse auftraten.“ Die Frage, welche Bedeutung die Laeuse moeglicherweise fuer den Verlauf u. Ausgang des Russlandkrieges gehabt haben, braucht hier nicht weiter verfolgt zu werden – immerhin kratzten sich auch die *Rotarmisten* „bis aufs Blut,“ es war auch auf der russ. Seite „unmoeglich, das Ungeziefer auszurotten.“ (H.J. Schroeder, *Die gestohlenen Jahre*, 436; see also, *Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 431)

Germans got lice from houses in the villages (fall/winter 41): The lice were a torment that was to stay with us for months...We scratched armes, legs, stomach, small of the back, and it was a *constant burning in the armpits*. It was worst at night, and the men would thrash restlessly in their blankets. (S. Knappe, **87. ID**, *Reflections*, 218)

Droegemueller: „Everybody had lice. In the evening we would take off our pants and jackets and use the *heat of a lit cigarette* to get them out of the fabric.” (Steinway article, “*German Horse Soldier*, 38)

Note: „Bei -30 C. erfroren innerhalb von 30 Minuten die *Laeuse* u. ihre Eier, wenn man seine Bekleidung an die Luft bringen konnte.“ (Ltr, *Arnulf v. Garn*, **252. ID**, to C. Luther, 17 Oct 02)

C.G. Sweeting: Having experienced the misery of lice first hand in World War I, Hitler announced one evening during dinner at the “*Wolfsschanze*” that he would award the Knight’s Cross of the War Merit Cross to anyone who could invent a way of alleviating this plague. Himmler was dining w/ the Fuehrer that evening and mentioned that cavalrymen and other soldiers using horses, and sleeping under saddle blankets, are seldom bothered by lice. Dr Morell, who was also a chemist and owned several chemical plants, offered to try to find a solution to the problem. He eventually declared that he had succeeded in developing a powder containing artificial horse sweat that was effective against lice. The powder was manufactured and distributed to the troops but was disliked because of the offensive smell. Morell attempted to improve the smell by the use of French perfumes, but the effectiveness remained controversial. Still, Dr Morell did later receive the high decoration from Hitler, which he wore proudly on his semi-official party uniform. (*Hitler’s Personal Pilot*, 174)

23.7.41: ...Es wimmelt mal wieder von Muecken, so viele habe ich noch nie zusammen gesehen! Der Kdr. Ist von Wanzen am ganzen Koerper toll zugerichtet (**26.7.41**) (*Tagebuch Kreuter*, SR 101 / 18. PD)

Early Sep 41: Da inzwischen *das Wetter einen herbstlichen Charackter angenommen hatte*, war es ohne Ofen in unseren Unterstaenden kaum auszuhalten. Dieser Aufenthalt in Bunkern u. Unterstaenden u. der staendige Einsatz, verbunden mit *mangelhafter Hygiene*, servierte uns einen neuen, unangenehmen Feind, der von nun an unser staendiger Begleiter war: „*Die Laeuse*“! (J.H. Dismer, **6. ID**, 49)

Sep 41 [6. ID]: Aus dem Monatsbericht [i.e., for **Sep 41**] des Div. Arztes ist festzuhalten: Der Gesundheitszustand der Truppe war gut. Die Darmerkrankungen gingen wesentlich zurueck u.

waren weiterhin leichter Art. Wesentlich vermehrt wurden bei der Truppe Laeuse festgestellt, was auf die der kuehler werdenden Jahreszeit entsprechende engere Beruehrung der Truppen mit den bislang gemiedenen russ. Behausungen u. auf die Uebernahme der bereits verlausten Stellungen zurueckzufuehren war. . . (*Traditionsverband IR 37, Rundbrief Nr. 50, S. 21-22*)

Oct 41: H. Haape (6. ID) found his *battalion's first louse* in early Oct 41. Made surprise inspections. Found that nearly every man carrying a few lice, several carrying hundreds! Used terrible smelling concoction called **Russla Pulver** as a vermicide. Not very effective. (*Moscow Tram Stop, 137*)

26.10.41: "Meine liebe Eltern! Endlich, endlich komme ich mal wieder dazu Euch etwas zu schreiben...Die Wacholderbeeren helfen prima. Nur fehlt mir jetzt ein Radikalmittel gegen *Laeuse*. Heute habe ich wieder 5 getoetet. Es ist ja furchtbar mit diesem Vieh, sie machen einen fertig. Einmal juckts da, u. dann da. Schickt mal ein Radikalmittel..." („*Hans Olte*," **Nachr. Abt. 52/XII. AK**, quoted in: *Latzel, Deutsche Soldaten, 58*)

Nov 41 (Kalinin): Ende November fielen die Temperaturen. Doch nicht nur die unmenschliche Kaelte machte uns schwer zu schaffen, wir wurden mit einer weiteren Plage konfrontiert: *Wir bekamen Laeuse*. Diese „*Quaelgeister*“ stellten sich ganz ueberraschend ein. Hatten wir bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt die Russenbehausungen als Nachtquartiere gemieden u. uns mit Erdloechern begnuegt, uns unter Bueschen u. Baeumen schlafen gelegt, so suchten wir bei der nassen u. kalten Witterung *Schutz in den Russenkaten*. Und dort hatten wir uns die kleinen „Mitbewohner“ wohl eingefangen...Es war eine ganz scheussliche Plage, die bei vielen, durch staendigen Juckreiz, *schlimme Entzuendungen* hervorgerufen hat. (*Loewer Memoiren, AR 129/129. ID, 33*)

Dec 41: *S. Knappe*, after being wounded at front (5 Dec 41) is finally put on a hospital train bound for Warsaw. But he already had *lice under his bandages*—a “terrible experience because I could not get to them.” (*S. Knappe, Reflections, 238*)

Dec 41: *Landser* during retreat enters house in a village to spend the night. He warms his frozen bread and butter by the oven; quiets his hunger a bit. Then stretches out on the floor to sleep, placing his *Brotbeutel* under his head: „Aber nun meldeten sich die *Laeuse*, denen diese *mollige Waerme genauso gefiel wie mir*, die sich nun befleissigten, ueber Ruecken, Bauch oder Brust zu laufen, um ab u. zu auch mal fest zuzubeissen..." (*H. Martin, Weit war der Weg, 14. ID (mot.), 99*)⁴⁵⁶

11.12.41 [Nowinskaja]: „...An den ersten Tagen herrschte allerdings eine barbarische Kaelte. 28 Grad sollen es gewesen sein. Wenn die Leute vom Postenstehen hereinkamen, wimmerten [*whimpered*] sie vor Kaelteschmerzen. In diesen Tagen haben mich die *Laeuse* wieder ganz unheimlich stark geplagt. Ich war mit den Nerven voellig am Ende. Wenn ein russ. Angriff gekommen waere, ich glaube, ich haette mich als Zielscheibe hingestellt, um endlich von der Qual befreit zu werden. *An einem Tage fing ich allein im Hemd 130 Stueck*, bis ich das Zaehlen aufgab. Die Haut war so gereizt, dass sie auch schmerzte, wenn die *Laeuse* sich ruhig verhielten. Mehrmals bekam ich wieder richtige *Tobsuchtanfaelle* [*threw a tantrum*], wie vor Tagen im „Igel.“ Alle Mittel, die ich von Zuhause geschickt bekam, waren wirkungslos. Etwas besser

⁴⁵⁶ **Note:** For another account of the lice plague, see pp 103-04: “Viele Landser hatten sich bis zum Bluten aufgescharrt, so dass sich durch *Infektion Eiter* untersetzte, mit Blut unterlaufene *Schorfbahnen* [scabs] ueber den Koerper zogen, die aertzliche Hilfe in Anspruch zu nehmen notwendig machten oder bei schlimmen Faellen einen Abtransport ins Lazarett.“

wurde es erst, als der neu erbaute Ofen in Betrieb war u. ich taeglich alle Waesche durchgluehen liess. (*Alexander Cohrs, Echolot*, 408-10)

Winter 41/42: The bad weather forced men of **7. PD** to make increasing use of Russian buildings. *Diesel fuel*, temporarily useless for its primary purpose, was “*borrowed*” to kill the omnipresent lice. (*K. Fuchs*) (See also, *von Manteuffel*, 271-72)

Winter 41/42: *Rhein* noted how horrible the *Laeuse* were. They collected in the genital area. But *Rhein* also says: „*Wir waren auf Haerte erzogen. Dass man die Zaehne zusammenbeisst u. grosse Schwierigkeiten ueberwindet.*“ (*Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID*)

Winter 41/42: Das **1. Btn. IR 17 [31. ID]** bei *Markarowka* hatte sicherlich die schlechteste, die beschissenste Stellung, wie der Lander sagte. Sie war ohne grosse Deckungsmoeglichkeiten u. lag hautnah dem Iwan gegenueber. Sicherlich war es insbesondere die zu geringe Moeglichkeit der Soldaten, sich nach dem Postendienst waschen u. auffrischen zu koennen u. der *Vermehrungswut der Laeuse* Einhalt zu gebieten. Grundsatzlich sassen wir fast jeden Abend vor einem **Hindenburglicht** u. durchsuchten unsere Kleidung nach „**52-Tonnern**.“ Diese 52-Tonner, wie wir Lander sie bezeichneten, waren *dicke schwangere Laeuse*. Sie wurden geknackt u. auch geroestet im *Hindenburglicht*. Haeufiges Wechseln der Unterwaesche, die immer noch *doppelt u. z.T. dreifach getragen wurde* wegen der grossen Kaelte, u. das Absuchen der *Laeuse* konnte zwar diese **verdammte Plage des Arbeiter- u. Bauernparadieses** nicht aufheben, aber immerhin doch *erheblich reduzieren*. Dazu kam, dass bei uns der Befehl bestand, das ein kameradschaftlicher Dienst auch darin bestand, die Soldaten daran zu hindern, die **laeusezerbissene Haut**, die natuerlich *qualvoll jucken konnte*, laufend zu bekratzen. Ein *boesartiges, langwieriges Ekzem* war sonst seine Folge u. ein **Lazarettaufenthalt** liess den Soldaten fuer den Sicherungsdienst fuer laengere Zeit ausfallen. (*Dr E. Bunke, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal, 31. ID*, 608-09)

Winter 41/42: „Da wir bei zunehmender Kaelte nicht mehr gern in Zelten schliefen, sondern zu Uebernachtung auch in die geheizten ‘Panjebuden‘ gingen (*was anfangs strikt verboten war*), hatten wir sehr bald mit ‘**Ungeziefer**‘ zu kaempfen. Fast ueberall gab es **Wanzen**, die einen nachts ueberfielen, zuweilen gab es auch **Floeh**, u. da wir nun mit der Bevoelkerung (*die immer sehr gastfreundlich war*) in engeren Kontakt kamen, *waren wir alsbald auch verlaust*. Die *Laeuse* wieder loszuwerden, war aeusserst schwierig. Nur im rueckwaertigen Armeegebiet gab es ‘Entlausungsanstalten.’

Erst als die Temperaturen unter **25-30 Grad (C)** Frost sanken, fanden wir heraus, dass man die *Laeuse* durch Kaelte loswerden kann, wenn man nachts alle seine Anzihsachen u. tagsueber den Schlafsack, Decken usw. in die kalte Aussenluft haengt. Dann *erfrieren die Laeuse* (aber nicht die Eier, **Nissen** genannt). Man muss die Prozedur daher so lange fortsetzen, bis die neue Generation ausgeschluepft ist. Das dauert mehrere Tage. Sobald die Temperaturen wieder stiegen, funktioniert das System natuerlich nicht mehr.“ (*W. Schaefer-Kehnert, Ltr to C. Luther, 10 Dec 03*)

Winter 41/42 [Anecdote]: Humorous anecdote about the “*Bursche*” [orderly] of an artillery btn. cdr, who had to remove the lice from his cdr’s hair, clothing, etc. The orderly sometimes mimicked the sound of crushing a lause between his finger nails – fooling his cdr into thinking many more lice were being found and destroyed than was actually the case. Author also notes following: “Es war schon *eine fiese* [nasty, mean] *Sache mit diesem Viehzeug*. Besonders unangenehm wurde es auch beim Marschieren: *Wenn der Koerper waermer wurde, dann wurden*

auch diese niedlichen Tierchen lebendig, u. sie krabbelten uns munter aus dem Halskragen heraus.“ (Wagner, *Tage wie Jahre*, 263. ID, 54)

Winter 1942: “Das Aufspueren u. Vernichten eines fdl. Heeres von besonders blutgieriger Art, der Laeuse, wird zur Dauerbeschaeftigung. In den Kleidernaechten [*seams of the clothing*] haben sie eine uneinnehmbare Stellung bezogen. In den abgelegten Nissen wartet eine Reservearmee. Sie ersetzt die blutigen Verluste auf dem Schlachtfeld zwischen den Daumennaegeln, sofort. Entlausungen, durch Auskochen der Kleidung, sind unter diesen Verhaeltnissen nicht moeglich u. auch zwecklos, - einige ueberleben immer. Auch das gelieferte Entlausungsmittel „Russla-Puder“ tut ihnen keinen Schaden.“ (F. Belke, “*Infanterist*,” 53)

9.1.42: Gefreiter Rehfeldt recalled:

The lice drove us practically insane. Our underwear was black w/ them, crawling not only inside our clothes but even onto our coats outside. This revolting feeling accompanied by itching could drive the most composed people to distraction. We have already scratched ourselves bloody – and the whole body, esp. legs, looks scabby and lacerated. Frost injuries have developed into deep septic and bloody holes on both legs. . . . When we have to go out to relieve a sentry post, I have to stagger along **40** minutes before the others. . . . In the evenings, following the relief, I get in half an hour after them, wheezing from the pain. . . . Taking off boots is only achievable at the second attempt accompanied by unbelievable effort and pain. Life is a total misery.

Two weeks later [**20.1.42**] Rehfeldt complained he had been three [**3**] days w/o rations and „practically everyone has the shits on an empty stomach. They felt as „weak and miserable as dogs. . . . His frostbitten feet were becoming more swollen and septic w/ the passing of each day. „Nothing heals in this cold,“ he despairingly wrote. (Quoted in: R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 236)

Feb-Mar 42: (Bei *Rshew*): Wir hatten nun Gelegenheit, in der Naehue unserer Stellungen bessere Unterkuenfte anzulegen. In Schneehohlen [snow caves] mussten wir uns nicht mehr verkriechen, sondern konnten in Scheunen u. verlassenen Russenkatzen warme Unterkuenfte einrichten. Gruendliches Waschen u. *die Jagd auf die laestigen Laeuse* hatte nun Vorrang vor allem anderen...Abwechselnd wurde nun ausgiebig *Koerperhygiene* betrieben, u. langsam begann man sich wieder wie ein Mensch zu fuehlen. *Nur die Laeuse, diese anhaenglichen Tierchen, waren einfach nicht auszurotten*. Es wurde auch in Zukunft jede freie Minute genutzt, um Jagd auf die unliebsamen Untermieter zu machen. (*Loewer Memoiren*, AR 129, 39)

For description of *delousing station* in *Brest-Litovsk* (for treatment of German soldiers coming home on leave) see, H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop* (370).

1.6.42: Nun schreiben wir schon den 1. Juni u. der Fruehling oder besser gesagt, der Fruehsommer hat seinen Einzug gehalten u. die Sonne scheint warm u. freundlich. Da in der naeheren Umgebung sehr viel *Sumpfgelaende* ist, ist die *Mueckenplage* unertraeglich. Wo man ist umschwirren durstig Muecken unsere armen Soldaten u. somit auch mich. Man weiss sich kaum zu retten. Taeglich kommen Kameraden zu mir mit *stark verschwollenen Gesichtern u. Haenden*, mit **200-300** Stichen auf kleinster Umgebung. Es reagieren die einzelnen auf Mueckenstiche so ganz verschieden. Teilweise sind sie ueberempfindlich, dass sie mit starken Schwellungen, umschriebenen Entzuendungen u. leichten Fieberanfaellen reagieren. Gluecklicherweise vertrage ich Mueckenstiche sehr gut, wenn ich z.B. auf meinen rechten

Handruecken schau, so zaehle ich 17 Stiche als kleine, runde Staebchen, ohne weitere Reizerscheinungen . . . Gestern sind eine gewisse Anzahl von *Moskitonetzen* verteilt worden, damit sich die Wachen u. die Soldaten an den M.G.'s schuetzen koennen. Wenn dann demnaechst die Suempfe trockener werden u. somit die Muecken weniger, kommen dann in Massen die *Fliegen* u. mit den Fliegen, die *Ruhr*. So loest hier in dem verfluchten Russland eine Plage, die andere ab...(Tagebuch Haape, 6. ID)

1942/43: Dann kam Stalingrad. . . Es gibt Erlebnisse die kann man einfach nicht wieder-erzaehlen. . . Wir glaubten bei Gott nicht mehr an einen Sieg. Wir hofften nur noch an ein Ueberleben. Vollkommen verlaust u. verdreckt lebten wir wie die Ratten in unseren Loechern. Unsere Hauptbeschaeftigung war die laestigen Laeuse knacken. Nachdem ich in einem Aermel meiner Feldjacke 100 dieser Fiecher geknackt hatte, hoerte ich auf zu zaehlen. (A. Krueger, 60. ID (mot.), "Meine Gedankengaenge")

1942/43: An Plaetzen wo die staendige Hygiene fehlte, beispielweise an der Front, kein Wasser u. nur selten reine Waesche zum wechseln vorhanden war, hatte man in Russland sofort Laeuse u. diese vermehrten sich derart schnell, dass man kaum eine Chance hatte, diese Biester zu vernichten. Das ‚Knacken‘ der Laeuse geschieht mit den beiden Daumennaegeln. Man legt die Laus zwischen die beiden Daumennaegel u. zerquetscht sie, dabei macht es ‚knack.‘ So einfach wie sich das anhoert ist es natuerlich nicht. Die Laeuse legten ihre Eier ins Gewebe der Kleidung u. an den Koerper, hier hauptsaechlich in die Achselhoehlen, zwischen den Beine u. an den Beinen herunter. Eigenartigerweise hatten wir nur selten Kopflaeuse. Anfaenglich war die Belaestigung noch harmlos. Hatte man sich jedoch vor lauter Juckreiz mal die Haut aufgekratzt, sassen sie, wie beim Festessen, zu mehreren um die Wunde herum. Die Wunden eiterten u. wurden groesser u. groesser. Das einzige womit man sich troesten konnte war die Gewissheit, dass alle die gleiche Krankheit hatten. Vom Grenadier bis zum Major.

Ich erinnere mich, dass eines Tages⁴⁵⁷ bei der Feldkueche Unterziehhemden mit ¼ Armen ausgegeben waren. Im Dunkeln fuehlte man, dass es besondere Hemden waren. Sie fuehlten sich weich u. glatt an. In der Helligkeit sah man, dass es sich um reine Seide handelte u. diese ein wenig beige aussahen. Diese Hemden waren gegen Laeuse das Richtige. Aufgrund des engen Gewebes konnten sich die Laeuse nicht halten u. auch ihre Nissen konnten sich nicht festsetzen. Wenn man jetzt eine Laus spuerte, konnte man sie durch die Feinheit des Gewebes sofort ertasten u. ‚knacken.‘ So hatte man es leichter, als immer erst das Hemd auszuziehen um nach den Plagegeistern zu suchen. Diese tollen Hemden kamen angeblich aus Frankreich. Wer schon laenger im Dreck war, der schaeztzte auch die Fallschirmseide der Leuchtgranaten, die auch die gleiche Hilfe gegen Laeuse bot. Die passten gerade um den Hals. Die alten Hasen besassen davon mehrere. . .

Meine Mutter schickte mir mal eine Dose mit Laeusepulver nach Russland. Damit spritzte ich meine Sachen am ganzen Koerper ein. Es half mir jedoch nicht, die Brut los zu werden. Aus Jux fingen wir einige Laeuse u. packten diese zu dem Pulver. Nach Tagen in der Dosen lebten sie noch. Meine Kumpel meinten sogar sie seien dicker geworden. . .“ [!] (W. Bremer, IR 278/ 95 ID, *Die verlorene Jugend*, 52-53)

1.12.3: Typhus (Fleckfieber):

Background:

⁴⁵⁷ Note: The earliest would have been winter 42/43.

Epidemic typhus has been one of the *great disease scourges in human history*. It is classically associated w/ people crowded together in filth, cold, poverty, and hunger; wars and famine, refugees; prisons and jails; concentration camps; and ships. Recognizable descriptions of the disease occur in European literature from the *Middle Ages* on, and *devastating epidemics* of typhus continued to occur intermittently throughout Europe in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Prominent outbreaks occurred during the *Napoleonic wars* and during the *Irish potato famine of 1846-49*. Epidemic typhus was *clearly differentiated as a disease entity* from typhoid fever in the 19th Century. Major progress in combating the disease began only after **1909**, when the *French physician Charles Nicolle* demonstrated that typhus is transmitted from person to person by the body louse. In the early 20th Century, typhus decreased and then *practically disappeared from western Europe* as improvements in living conditions and hygiene occurred. The disease remained intermittently epidemic in *eastern Europe*, the Middle East, and parts of Africa, however. At the close of World War I, the *disease caused several million deaths in Russia, Poland, and Romania*, and during WWII it again caused epidemics, this time among refugees and displaced persons, particularly in German concentration camps. ("Typhus," *Britannica Nobel Prizes*, at: <http://www.britannica.com>)

We must remember that the word „*typhus*,“ w/o further qualification, in Germany means *typhoid fever*, whereas in France and England it means typhus fever. „At all times, says *Hirsch*, „as far back as historical investigation is able to follow the course of typhus fever at all, the disease has *always been bound up w/ the most dismal calamities of the nations*.“ (*Prinzling, Epidemics*, 4, 19)

Typhus (description): Acute, infectious series of diseases that are characterized by a sudden onset w/ *headache, chills, fever, and general pains, a rash appearing on the 3rd to 5th day, and toxemia* (toxic substances in the blood), and terminating after about 2-3 weeks. Originally considered a single clinical entity, it is now regarded as a *group of closely related diseases* caused by different species of *rickettsiae* (bacteria belonging to the family *Rickettsiales*) and transmitted to humans by *insect carriers* under the following general classifications: **epidemic (louse-borne) typhus**; murine, or endemic (flea-borne) typhus; scrub (mite-borne) typhus; and tick-borne typhus. *Epidemic typhus* [i.e., the type in Russia] is caused by *Rickettsia prowazekii* and is conveyed from person to person by the *body louse, Pediculus humanus*. The louse is infected by feeding upon a human who has the disease. The *rickettsial bacteria* grow in the *epithelial cells* lining the louse's gut wall and are *excreted in the insect's feces*. The infection kills the louse after 12 to 18 days. Man is commonly infected by scratching the louse bite, thus rubbing the louse's infected feces into the wound by abrasion. After an *incubation period of one to two weeks*, an infected person experiences **headache, loss of appetite, malaise, and a rapid rise in temperature w/ fever, chills, marked prostration, and nausea**. Four to six days after onset a *characteristic rash appears* over most of the body. The temperature reaches a maximum range by end of the first week and is sustained until about the 12th day, when it generally falls rather rapidly, becoming normal in an uncomplicated course about the 14th to 16th day. *Depression and weakness* may be protracted during the recovery, and the patient's *convalescence is slow*. In *fatal cases* of the disease, prostration is progressive, and **delirium and coma follow**; cardiac failure may be the immediate cause of death. ("Typhus," *Britannica Nobel Prizes*, at: <http://www.britannica.com>)

The evidence [U.S. Military Tribunal, *Nuremberg*] showed that in some cases there were **epidemics of typhus in the German army**, but nothing to parallel the various epidemics which broke out in Russian [POW] camps. (*German High Command Trial, Leeb and 13 Others* at: <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/WCC/ghctrail4.htm>)

Russians more resistant to disease than Germans, for it was prevalent in central sector of Russian front. (H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 356)

Haape notes that healthy, yet undernourished, people were *particularly susceptible* to infection with *spotted fever*. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 324)

According to Haape, spotted fever disappeared with the coming of spring. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 377)

Dr. J. **Haapes (6. ID)** Vorschriften, um **Fleckfieber** [*Typhus*] zu vermeiden: „Überall wo es möglich war, sollte sich der Soldat am Abend ausziehen und sorgfältig seine Unterwäsche nachprüfen, um jede Laus zwischen den Nägeln zu vernichten; vor allem die fetten weißen mit einem *Malteserkreuz* am Rücken, denn sie sind diejenigen die die Krankheit übertragen“. Aber unter den schrecklichen Umständen, waren diese Vorschriften schlecht anwendbar. Haape teilte ein Medikament aus, das aus Deutschland kam: es hieß „*Roussla*“ *Pulver* und entfernte eine Zeitlang die Viecher. Doch das Problem war, dass es *fürchterlich stank*. (*La Guerre a L'Est, August v. Kageneck*, 76)

Dr Killian: “In Russland machen die Menschen den *Flecktyphus* im *Kindesalter* durch. Er ist dort eine **Kinderkrankheit**, wie bei uns die *Masern*. Sie verlaeuft leicht. Es kommt nicht einmal zu schweren Krankheitserscheinungen, man merkt kaum etwas davon. Tritt aber bei einem Russen erst im spaeten Alter Flecktyphus auf, ist er genauso gefaehrlich wie bei uns. Wer einmal Flecktyphus gehabt hat, ist *immun*. Eine zweimalige Infektion kommt kaum vor. Eine *Hiobsbotschaft* erreicht uns. Natuerlich muss die *Verschleppung des Flecktyphus in die Heimat mit allen Mitteln verhindert werden*. An der Grenze sind grosse **Entlausungsanstalten** eingerichtet worden. Jedermann, gleichgueltig ob gesund oder krank, ob verwundet oder nicht, ob General oder Landser, ob weiblich oder maennlich, wird entlaust. Und gerade das fuehrt zu einer *Katastrophe*.

Die Lauese sitzen naemlich mit Vorliebe in den *Gipsverbaenden* [plaster casts]. Sie fuehlen sich in der Waerme eines gepolsterten Gipsverbandes ungemein wohl, vermehren sich praechtig u. quaelen die Patienten unsagbar. Alles denkbar Moegliche wird dagegen versucht: Injektionen von Aether u. Chloroform unter den Verband. Es nuetzt nichts. Beim Anlegen eines Gipsverbandes streuen wir zwischen die Polsterschichten *Laeusepulver*. Das ergibt mit dem Schweiss zusammen eine ueble Schmiere u. erzeugt *Ekzeme*. Nichts hilft, die Laeuse halten sich im Gipsverband: so entsteht unvermeidbar ein *Riesenjammer*.

An der Grenze reisst man naemlich den Verwundeten mit Schussbruechen ruecksichtslos der Entlausung wegen alle Gipsverbaende herunter. Mit welcher Muehe haben wir die Brueche eingestellt u. fixiert, die Maenner schmerz- u. fieberfrei bekommen. Jetzt werden die Bruchstellen wieder bewegt u. lockern sich. Verheerende Fehlstellungen sind die Folge. Die Bruchheilung wird gestoert u. verzoeigert, es bilden sich falsche Gelenke. Es ist nicht auszudenken. Und das alles wegen der verfluchten *Flecktyphuslaeuse*. (*Killian, Im Schatten der Siege*, 165-66)

Chronology:

Ca. **22.10.41:** Haape finds *first case of spotted fever* (typhus) in his battalion. Takes measures to keep soldiers away from civilians and to isolate suspicious cases at once. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 149-51)

Autumn/Winter 41/42: During this time, the *infestation of troops w/ lice reached serious proportions* in front-line positions. Typhus was *less common among combat troops than among service personnel* in rear areas, because front-line troops had much less contact w/ the civilian population. Major outbreaks of typhus among combat troops occurred when the men occupied captured enemy positions and immediately bunked on straw they found in dugouts and other shelters. In some cases, the Germans had to *withdraw and quarantine whole companies*.⁴⁵⁸ During the first year of the Russian campaign, the Germans did *not have effective antivermin powders*, and only at the end of **1942** did frontline units get *mobile delousing stations*. (CMH Pub. 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 42)

Winter 41/42: Jetzt kam beim **1. Btn. [IR] 17** in *Markarowka* hinzu, dass das **Fleckfieber** auftrat, eine schwere fieberhafte *Infektionskrankheit* mit erheblicher *Kreislaufschwache* u. *fleckigem Hautausschlag*. Der Erreger, die **Rickettsia Prowazetki**, wurde durch die Kleiderlaus uebertragen. In diesen Faellen musste der Soldat *isoliert werden*. So **fiel das ganze 1. Btn. [IR] 17 in wenigen Tagen aus**, weil es von der *Fleckfieberansteckungswelle* heimgesucht wurde. Ein ganzes Btn. wurde so durch eine Laeuseinvasion ausser Gefecht gesetzt. (Dr E. Bunke, *Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, **31. ID**, 609)

Jan 42: H. Haape now in Rshew. Visits the *spotted-fever isolation hospital*. “The place was a **madhouse**. (See, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 339-40)

17.3.42:⁴⁵⁹ [*Anecdote*] Der *Flecktyphus* nimmt im [16.] Armeebereich zu, er breitet sich im Hinterland *beaengstigend* aus. Jetzt haben wir zu der entsetzlichen Wintersnot auch noch den Kampf gegen diese *Seuche* aufzunehmen. **Die Gespensterkrankheit: 17.Maerz**. Heute habe ich etwas Besonderes vor, eine Fahrt nach *Chilowo*, um mir dort **Flecktyphusfaelle** anzusehen, die in ein *Sonderlazarett* zusammengelegt worden sind. Ich muss das Krankheitsbild unbedingt naeher kennen lernen, denn bei dem *Flecktyphus* kommen *eine Reihe schwerer chirurgischer Komplikationen* vor. [Dr Killian drives to to military hospital in Chilowo, where the *Chefarzt*, ein *Internist*, takes Killian over to his *Flecktyphusstation*. The internist whispers to him: “Erschrecken Sie nicht, Professor, die Maenner sind sehr unruhig, **einige geistern herum!**“ What Killian experiences is shocking...] Der erste Eindruck is geradezu *gespenstisch*. In dem daemmrigen Raum *geistern tatsaechlich drei Maenner herum*. (for details of this shocking story see, *Killian, Im Schatten der Siege*, 158-62)

1.13: Cold Injuries:

1.13.1: Background:

Note: Of the **3,250,000** Germans who died in the Russian campaign over **100,000** literally froze to death in the snow; as one soldier put it, one night without shelter meant amputation or death. (*Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 502)

Note: In the extreme cold, even a relatively minor wound and bleeding could lead to *severe shock*, and death. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 284)

⁴⁵⁸ May be true, but in all the reading I've done, I've yet to come across such a radical measure being implemented.

⁴⁵⁹ **Note:** Although *Killian* served in sector of Army Group North, his narrative of visit to *Lazarett* in Chilowo imparts shocking account of behavioral effects of typhus on several soldiers suffering from the disease.

Cold Injury Research in WWII: The magnitude of the morbidity and mortality rates among troops, aircrews and submarine crews due to cold was a *compelling stimulus* to the major powers to *embark on research programs to solve the problems of the etiology and treatment of frostbite, trench foot, and hypothermia*. Germans not only had catastrophic casualties in Russia, but their **U-boat crews** had the *highest mortality and casualty rate of any branch of any service in WWII*. Of **40,000** men in the U-boat service, **28,000 (70%)** lost their lives. Many of those deaths were due to exposure or a combination of *hypothermia and drowning*. German experiments at **Dachau** were related more to treatment of hypothermia than frostbite. („*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,“ Kent B. Pandolf, ed., 335-36)

Schukov explained in the *Moscow Officer's Club* toward the end of the war that *his respect for the German general staff* had been shaken when he saw the first German prisoners from the winter battle. Officers and men had all *perfectly fitting footwear*, and, of course, their feet were freezing. In Russia it had been the *rule since the 18th Century* to supply the men w/ *larger size shoes* for the winter for the purpose of padding them w/ straw and paper. (Killian, *Cold and Frost Injuries*, 17)

„Earth's environments have always influenced the planning and conduct of military operations. Past campaigns have been impacted by heat, cold, and altitude, as well as the changes in barometric pressure that divers face in special operations...Military medical personnel must never forget that *harsh environments are great, silent, debilitating agents for military operations*.“ („*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,“ Kent B. Pandolf, ed., xi)

Cold, even above the definitive level for *hypothermia*, has a **peculiarly depressing and inhibiting effect on resolve and activity** – an effect that can only be reversed by reaching warmth. If he is to maintain fighting efficiency and survive, a *freezing soldier must draw on deeper wells of courage, determination, and discipline than one who is warm*. (Pandolf, 344)

Hippocrates, Aristotle and Galen mention various cold injury treatments. Cold has had *impacts on military history*. **Hannibal** lost nearly half his army of 46,000 crossing the Alps in **218 BC**. Baron *Larrey, Napoleon's* chief surgeon, reported only 350 of the 12,000 men in the 12th Division survived the cold. He observed that those soldiers placed closest to the campfire during the retreat from Russia died. The winter of **1777** took its toll on **Washington's** troops. There were large losses to cold injuries in the *Crimean* and both *world wars*. About 10% of the U.S. casualties in **Korea** were cold-related. (***Hypothermia–Physiology, Signs, Symptoms and Treatment Consideration***, at: <http://www.sarbc.org>)

Military history is *full of examples where weather conditions influenced the outcome of military campaigns*. In fact, the **earliest recorded instance** of weather's having a direct influence on the outcome of a battle dates back to the **Old Testament**:

*And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died w/ hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew w/ the sword. (Joshua 10:11, The Holy Bible, King James version; quoted in: „*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,“ K. Pandolf (ed.), xiii)*

The *greatest epidemics of cold injury* have occurred during wars:⁴⁶⁰

- a) **Xenophon (434-355 BCE):** Was a young *Athenian officer* in an army of mixed Greek mercenaries led by *Cyrus* on a campaign into Asia Minor. After *Cyrus* killed, *Xenophon* led 10,000 men on a 1000-mile retreat through the mountains of what is now *Armenia*, in the depths of winter of **401/400 BCE**. Only 4000 soldiers survived; most of the others died from exposure and frostbite. (315)
- b) **Hannibal:** Famous *Carthaginian* general. Planned to invade northern Italy in **218 BCE** by leading an army of 38,000 infantry, 9000 cavalry, and 80 *elephants* up the valley of the Rhone, across the Alps, and into the valley of the Po. When he made the passage of the Alps in **Oct. 218 BCE**, heavy snow had already fallen in the mountain valleys. The altitude, bitter cold, and fierce mountain tribes extracted a heavy toll. Only 19,000 men survived, half-starved and frozen. (315)
- c) **Charles XII of Sweden:** Won string of victories in the *Great Northern War (1700-21)*, which only came to an end when he was defeated by the Russians at the battle of **Poltava (July 1709)**. The campaign leading up to that defeat was *conducted in one of the coldest winters ever experienced in Europe*, and by spring only 20,000 men were fit for action to face 50,000 Russian troops led by *Peter the Great*. Only 1500 Swedish troops survived the battle. (315)
- d) **George Washington and Valley Forge:** Winter of **1777-78**. Washington's army of 11,000 *raggle-taggle*, retreating men marched into the valley in **December 1777**. 2000 were w/o shoes or boots. During those winter months the hardships endured were severe, although the *winter was relatively mild*. Accurate records were not kept of the number of cold injuries, but **Lafayette** wrote: „*Feet and legs froze until they became black and it was often necessary to amputate them.*“ (315-16)
- e) **Napoleon in Russia:**⁴⁶¹ In **1812**, Napoleon invaded Russia to suppress *Tsar Alexander* and consolidate his hold over Europe. Napoleon *studied the problems he might encounter in minute detail and repeatedly read the accounts of the campaign of Charles XII of Sweden*, vowing that he would not make the same mistakes. His invading army made up of **612,000** troops, fewer than half of whom were French. Despite massive preparations, one factor – apart from the extremes of weather – had not been considered and could not be controlled: Napoleon, while only **42 years old**, was *no longer at the height of his military powers*. His *health was not good and it deteriorated during the campaign*. **Carl v. Clausewitz** – who was himself serving in the Russian army in **1812** – had forecast that if Napoleon invaded Russia, he would be *destroyed*. The River *Niemen* in Poland was the *starting line for invasion of Russia*, but no arrangements were made to feed the troops before they reached this point...As a result, many arrived at the *Niemen* already *malnourished* and *suffering from diseases that included diarrhea, diphtheria, and typhus*. In addition, **insufficient warm clothing had been ordered**. Napoleon believed that he would defeat the Russians quickly in *one decisive battle* and, unrealistically, hoped the **campaign would be over in 20 days**. But Russians avoid battle; he is drawn

⁴⁶⁰ **Note:** This entire section gleaned from, “*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,” Vol. 1, K. Pandolf (ed.), pp 314-44. For additional historical and statistical data on *frostbite* see, *H. Killian, Cold and Frost Injuries*, 35-42)

⁴⁶¹ Thousands of Napoleon's soldiers perished from starvation, dehydration, hypothermia, and freezing; and from *unrelenting Cossack attacks on their flanks* (432).

deeper and deeper into Russia. Russians finally make stand at **Borodino**. By time Napoleon entered the *Kremlin* in **September 1812**, he had lost two-thirds of his army due to death from wounds and illness, desertion and capture. Retreat became a *frozen nightmare*. By time Moscow reached, *Grande Armee* had been reduced to **110,000** men. This force started back to France on **19 Oct 1812**. A month later, by the time the army reached *Vyazma*, only 160 miles from Moscow, the force was down to **50,000** men. First snow storm hit on **6 Nov 1812** and was followed by intermitted snow, rain and thaw until early December, when the *weather became bitterly cold*. During the next six weeks the temperature fell to nearly **-40 C.**, and the size of the Grand Armee was further depleted to **12,000** men. When the army finally crossed the Nieman into Poland, fewer than **10,000** effective soldiers remained. Exact number who died from cold can never be known, but in addition to those who died from cold alone, *thousands of wounded who might have lived must have died from the combined effects of their wounds and the cold*. Count **Phillipe-Paul de Segur**, a brigadier and aide to Napoleon, who wrote a definitive history of the campaign that was both a *literary and military masterpiece*, described the first snow as it fell on the retreating army:

Russian winter in this new guise attacked them on all sides; it cut through their thin uniforms and worn shoes, their wet clothing froze on them, and this icy shroud molded their bodies and stiffened their limbs. The sharp wind made them gasp for breath, and froze the moisture from their mouths and nostrils into icicles on their beards. (318)

The depth of the final defeat and degradation of the *Grand Armee* can hardly be described. According to *de Segur*, one division that started from Moscow w/ 12,000 men arrived in France w/ fewer than **400** in good health. (for excellent and graphic quote see, p 318)⁴⁶²

- f) **Crimean War (1853-56)**; the **American Civil War**, where there were more than **15,000** cold injuries, of which **1075** were serious. Amputations were common, w/ a mortality rate of about **30%**. Many were for frostbite. **Franco-Prussian War (1870-71)**, **Russo-Turkish War (1877-78)**, **Sino-Japanese War (1904-5)**, **Boer War (1899-1902)** – all extracted their tolls of thousands of cold injuries. (321)
- g) **World War I**: Hundreds of thousands of soldiers spent days, even weeks, in trenches filled w/ near-freezing, injured soldiers. *Page* reported many cases of *symmetrical gangrene of legs*. All of these men had spent at least 24 hours in wet trenches w/ a ground temperature below **5 C**; the cases were considered to be *almost identical to frostbite*. Conditions on the eastern front were equally harsh (as in the west). Col Knox, British *military attache* w/ the Russian armies in 1914 noted: „*If we have to advance in the winter our losses will be three times as great.*“ Sentries *froze to death* at their posts. Sometimes *weapons did not work*. On the eastern front, the Russians reported **12,000** cases of frostbite. Eight percent of all casualties in east were due to cold. The Germans reported **10,000 cases of frostbite in a single night**. Treatment for frostbite was to put the casualty in a cool room and *rub the frozen parts w/ snow or cold water*. The official advise to the US Army and Navy in **1917**, still reflecting the **teachings of Larrey**, was to rub the frozen part „*vigorously*“ w/ wet snow or ice water, „*never w/ dry snow as the*

⁴⁶² See also the long quote from Napoleon's *Surgeon-General*, the **Baron Dominique Jean Larrey**, who wrote graphically of the retreat and cold injuries to soldiers. Larrey also advocated treatment for frostbite that would become *the standard for the next 100 years*. (318-19; see also, pp 431-32)

temperature of dry snow may be much below freezing.“ (322-25; see also, Killian, H., *Cold and Frost Injuries*, 41)⁴⁶³

- h) **World War II:** Cold injuries alone *numbered in the millions*. The Germans fighting in Russia had more than **250,000** frostbite injuries, most in one winter [1941/42]. The Americans lost the *equivalent of several divisions temporarily or permanently because of cold injuries*.⁴⁶⁴ All told, more than **91,000** cold injuries to US Army personnel serving in all theaters were officially reported by end of WWII. The French, sitting in the relative comfort and security of the *Maginot Line*, sustained **12,000** cold injuries during the first winter of the war...(327, 554)
- i) **Korean War:** Between **5,000 – 6,000** cases of frostbite. On **27 Nov 50**, **X Corps** was hit by the advancing Chinese, who made a pincer thrust around the **Chosin Reservoir**. The **1st Marine Division** was surrounded and isolated, but managed to fight its way out and join **3rd Division**. The Marines suffered *thousands of frostbite injuries*. (Pandolf, 340; see, pp 455-58 for dramatic eye-witness accounts of the withdrawal from the *Chosin Reservoir*.)

German invasion of Russia (Barbarossa):⁴⁶⁵ Not until **Aug 41** did Halder issue an order stating that a report should be made on the *winter clothing needed*.⁴⁶⁶ With typical thoroughness, the German supply corps had *accumulated enough winter equipment for the 50 divisions expected to occupy defensive winter positions*, but they had neither prepared for nor obtained sufficient winter clothing for all the ca. 150 divisions of the *Ostheer*. Before the winter of 1941/42 was finished, **200,000 German soldiers had been frostbitten**. The early part of the winter was not unduly severe, but as December progressed into January and February the *weather became bitterly cold*. General Guderian, reported the temperature to be **-63 C**. In a moment of depression he wrote to his wife:

*The icy cold, the lack of shelter, the shortage of clothing, the heavy losses of men and equipment, the wretched state of our fuel supplies, all this makes the duties of a commander a misery.*⁴⁶⁷

Learning from the *Finnish experience*, the Russians had thousands of ski troops who outmaneuvered the Germans. The snow was so deep that horses pulling the German guns floundered up to their bellies, and retreating soldiers had to spend their nights digging roads along which they could retreat the next day. Again Guderian:

*Only he who saw the endless expanse of Russian snow during this **winter of our misery**...who drove for hour after hour through no-man's land only at last to find too thin shelter, w/ insufficiently clothed half-starved men; and who also saw, by contrast, the well fed and warmly clad and fresh Siberians, fully equipped for winter, only a man who knew all that can truly judge the events that now occurred.*⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶³ For **cold injury research** between the wars (1919-39) see, K. Pandolf, ed., “*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,” 325-27)

⁴⁶⁴ For U.S. Army cold injuries in Europe (1944/45), and treatment methods for cold injuries see, Pandolf, 336-39).

⁴⁶⁵ This also from Pandolf, 328-32.

⁴⁶⁶ This according to A. Clark, *Barbarossa*.

⁴⁶⁷ See, A. Clark, *Barbarossa*, 174.

⁴⁶⁸ A. Clark, *Barbarossa*, 175.

Winter clothing never reached the front...**Deighton**⁴⁶⁹ recounts a telephone conversation between *Fedor v. Bock* and *Brauchitsch*, in which Bock *complained bitterly that all the cold weather supplies were stored in areas hundreds of miles from the front*. Brauchitsch's reponse was: „The Fuehrer wants to know when Moscow will be captured. One battalion of 800 men received only 16 winter greatcoats and 16 pairs of fur-lined boots [*H. Haape's btn. of 6. ID, I believe*]. The temperatures fell to **-40 to -60 C**. Men *urinated on their freezing hands to warm them*. The cracked skin bled w/ every movement. Soup that came boiling from the pot was *frozen before it could be eaten*. The *tank engines* could not be started. The *recoil mechanisms* of the guns froze, and fingers froze to exposed metal. The wounded or the exhausted who fell *froze to death* if they could not be roused into action. When the temperatures were bitterly cold and snow was dry, the Russians fought in **felt-lined boots**, while the Germans wore **leather, calf-high boots filled w/ rags and paper**. The Russians had *quilted clothes* [*Steppkleidung*]; the Germans, standard *wollen field uniforms*; and the Germans had to increase the insulation of their uniforms by *stuffing newspapers between the layers*.

The Russians, esp. the *Siberian troops* brought from the east, knew how to live in the cold and treat cold injuries. They knew how to improvise stoves to keep themselves warm. The Germans burned precious gasoline. Shelter was impossible to find because the ground was too hard to dig. Everything *confirmed the well-known experience that in winter, the losers have more casualties and a greater number of frostbite victims than the victors*. As **professor Hans Killian**, a surgeon w/ the German 16th Army, later wrote: The cold injury is „**the badge of depression, demoralization and defeat**.“ The Germans learned the *same bitter lessons* as had previous armies invading Russia: training, personal discipline, supervision by NCOs of the troops, strong morale, good food, and equipment reduced the number of casualties. Given equal circumstances, a *well-disciplined unit had fewer cold injuries than one w/ lax control and lazy supervision*.

Despite the terrible conditions and heavy losses from the cold, the *official* German army training manual, entitled **Winter Warfare**, published in 1942, **failed to sound the warnings that might have been expected** and gave a *falsely optimistic impression of how the German soldier had coped w/ the winter conditions of previous year*. However, it did note following:

*The danger of freezing is especially great when one is exhausted after great exertion or after a long period on guard. Then the soldier must summon all his will power in order to keep awake and alert...It is impossible to warn too forcefully against the **use of alcohol** as protection against cold. It dilates the pores and simply stimulates a feeling of warmth. It abets exhaustion and death by freezing and, therefore, must **never be taken prior to physical exertion**...The feet are especially susceptible to frostbite. **Socks should be changed frequently**...An especially effective measure for protecting the feet is to **wear paper between two pairs of socks** and another layer of paper or food cloths over the top pair of socks...[To protect the genitals]...the soldier should wear short trunks, if they are available. In addition to his underwear [he?] should place paper between his drawers and his trousers. (German Winter Warfare, War Dept., Dec 43, p. 131)*

1.13.2: Key Terms:

⁴⁶⁹ L. Deighton, *Blood, Tears and Folly*, 1994, p 213.

Cold immersion damage: In WWI, the terms *trench foot*, *Flander's foot*, and *pied te trenche* were invented, which we today [1981] classify under the name *cold immersion damage*, which owns its development to the physical fact that the **conductivity of water is 20 times greater than that of dry air**, so that the loss of heat of a limb is abnormally great. (Killian, *Cold and Frost Injuries*, 35)

Cold Stress: Applies to any degree of environmental cold that causes the *physiological thermoregulatory mechanisms* to be activated. The severity of cold stress is not related to the absolute temperature alone but is affected by air movement (winds or drafts) and moisture (humidity, rain, or dampness); a body will lose less heat at **-10 C** in still air than at **+10 C** w/ a 20 mph wind. (Pandolf, 492)

Frostbite: (also called *Freezing Cold Injury [FCI]*): „A cold injury involving *freezing of tissues*. Damage may be temporary or permanent. *Gangrene and loss of digits or limbs* may result. Long-term *sequelae* [?], including pain on exposure to cold, are common.“ Frostbite is characterized by an *uncomfortable sense of cold*, followed by *numbness*. Individuals may complain of *tingling, burning, aching cold, sharp pain, decreased sensation, or no sensation*. Visually, the *skin will turn from red to waxy white*. The areas most likely to be effected are: **nose, toes, fingers, ears, cheeks, forehead, and exposed wrists**. Prevention involves dressing properly, keeping clothes clean and dry, avoiding fatigue, not touching bare metal, being aware of signs of frostbite, and using a *buddy system* to watch for signs of injury. („*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,“ Kent B. Pandolf, ed., 314, 421-22; for explanation of the *degrees of frostbite* see, Killian, *Cold and Frost Injuries*, 68-75)

Frostbite: “describes the freezing of *superficial tissues* of the face, ears, fingers and toes. Symptoms of frostbite include: Pain, burning, numbness, tingling, skin turns hard and white, skin starts to peel or get blisters, skin starts to itch and skin gets firm, shiny, and *grayish-yellow*.” (AFFTC Form 5265, “*Monthly Safety Activities Report, Feb 08*)

Frostbite: “Frostbite happens when the fluids and tissues of the skin freeze. When it is very cold, and especially when the *wind blows hard*, it is difficult to keep the ends of your body warm. Frostbite is a great danger to your nose, cheeks, ears, toes, and fingers. The first sign of frostbite is reddening of the skin. It then turns blotchy white, gray, or yellow. Finally, the skin becomes completely white and sometimes blisters. The body part may feel very cold and numb. In advanced stages of frostbite, there is *no feeling at all* in the exposed skin. Frostbite victims also suffer from *hypothermia*...” (AFFTC Form 5265, “*Monthly Safety Activities Report, Feb 08*)

Hypothermia: Or loss of body heat. Symptoms are shivering (even intense or violent shivering), lack of coordination (for example, loss of hand control), drowsiness, goose bumps, mental confusion, numbness, sluggishness, difficulty speaking (or slurred speech), stumbling, depression, trouble seeing, unconsciousness, and not caring about staying warm. Hypothermia victims need to get out of the cold immediately. (AFFTC Form 5265, “*Monthly Safety Activities Report, Feb 08*)

Nonfreezing Cold Injury (NFCI): „Includes trench foot, immersion foot, sea-boot foot (an injury that results from multiday exposure of limbs [usually the lower limbs] to a cold—but nonfreezing wet environment. The primary injury is to nerves, but damage to blood vessels and other tissues also occurs. *Gangrene* may result. Long-term, *painful sequelae* are common. („*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,“ Kent B. Pandolf, ed., 314)

Trench foot: At first the distinction between „true“ (or „ground“) frostbite and trench foot (or immersion foot) was not clear, but as WWI progressed it became clear that „trench foot“ was distinct from „true frostbite.“ In trench foot, the limbs were not frozen, and the water in which the men stood was not freezing, whereas in frostbite, tissues are frozen and ice crystals develop between cells. One of the salient symptoms of trench foot was a feeling of intense warmth in the feet and lower legs. („Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments,“ K. B. Pandolf, ed., 324-25)

1.13.3: Frostbite & Immersion Injuries:⁴⁷⁰

Note: Two main types of injuries were apparently addressing: actual *frostbite* and *cold immersion damage* (i.e., *trench foot*). According to *Krjukow (1914)*, there was an average of **500-700 deaths from freezing each year in Russia**. In **1880**, *Fremmert* compiled a list of **494 cases** of partial freezing (92.3% men and only 7.7% women), 40% of which were in a drunken state. In **1940**, *Davis* reported on frostbite among the members of the **Tibet expedition of 1903/04** among Europeans and some local carriers. Dry cold was seldom the cause of the trouble. The **combination of dampness and cold was the main cause of the damage**. In all large-scale catastrophes it has been found that the *lower extremities* are much more frequently affected than the upper ones. (*Killian, Cold and Frost Injuries*, 39, 43)

Note [Autumn 1941]: The infantry endured wretched conditions. “My boots were still so wet this morning, Uffz H. Pabst complained [outside *Kalinin* ca. **mid-Oct**], “I could only get into them in my *bare feet*.” Their feet, constantly soaked, in temperatures just above freezing, were susceptible to “*immersion*” or “*trench foot*.” Such chilling interrupted the blood flow to these extremities and could cause tissue damage akin to superficial frostbite. Close-fitting wet clothing and saturated *shrunken boots* exacerbated the symptom, as also did protracted standing in wet and cold conditions. Damage was often *not recognized*, and dismissed as aching feet, occurring as it did in conditions above freezing. Not seen since World War I, “trench foot” and *hypothermia* (body chill) took a steady toll of the sick, further increasing the vulnerability of *under-nourished soldiers* to face even harsher conditions to come. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 189: *H. Pabst, The Outermost Frontier*, 34-35)

Note: „Die klinischen Erscheinungen bestehen in zunehmender Mattigkeit, starkem Kaeltegefuehl u. Schlafsucht, Atmung u. Herzschlag verlangsamen sich, der Blutdruck sinkt, u. im Sopor tritt unter allmaehlichen Erloeschen der vitalen Funktionen der Tod ein. Als kritische Grenze gilt eine Temperaturherabsetzung auf etwa **20 Grad**. Lokale Erfrierung kommt gewoehlich bei starker Herabsetzung der Aussentemperatur auf frei getragenen Koerperteilen, Nase, Ohren u. allen schlecht durchbluteten peripheren Berzirken zustande. . . Die Einteilung der Erfrierung in drei Grade, wie bei der Verbrennung, ist nicht zweckmaessig, Art u. Ausdehnung der Beschaedigung sind erst spaeter aus dem Verlauf zu erkennen, waehrend sie bei der Verbrennung unmittelbar zu sehen sind. . .“ (For rest of this report see, *Der Deutsche Militaerarzt, Heft 8/1942*; quoted in: *J. Piekalkiewicz, Schlacht um Moskau*, 256)

Paton, in an excellent summary of the *pathophysiology of frostbite*, noted that „**frostbite is as old as history itself**.“ Cold injury has played a *paramount role in the outcome of military ops throughout history*.

⁴⁷⁰ **Note:** Some soldiers who survived the war had frostbite injuries that plagued them for years, even decades. See below (2.21.5: “Chronology”), example of *Hans-Georg Alvermann*, whose frostbite injury around **1.1.42** led to an operation in **2007**.

Note: Without winter clothing, troops *cannot remain out of doors in temperatures under -10 F.* (CMH 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 18)

Note: According to *Generalmajor Alfred Toppe*, temperatures of approximately **32 F** are particularly dangerous for frostbite to feet and toes. (See, **P-062:** *Erfrierungsprobleme im deutschen. Heer waehrend des II. Weltkrieges, Anlage 2*, p.5; quoted in: *Solfi, Chance in History*, 220, f.n. 16)

Note: „Immer wieder musste die *Wehrmacht* es waehrend des Russlandkrieges hinnehmen, dass die Ausfaelle durch Erfrierungen u. Krankheiten *groesser* waren als die Verluste durch Feindeinwirkung. (H.J. *Schroeder, Die gestohlenen Jahre*, 426; also, *Seaton, Russo-German War*; and *Guderian, Erinnerungen*, 242)

Note: *Alfred Toppe* provides *death rates* for wounded and frostbitten. He shows **10%** fatalities for wounded soldiers and the more modest figure of a **1-6%** death rate for frostbitten troops. Toppe also presents data which shows that **40%** of German frostbite casualties were returned to duty within a three-month period but that a substantial **30%** were out of action for three to six months. (*Toppe, P-062, Erfrierungsprobleme, Anlage 8*, p 8; quoted in *Stolfi, Chance in History*, 223, f.n. 27)

Between the two world wars, the *treatment advised for frostbite* was, **almost universally**, *rubbing w/ snow or the application of cold*. The reasoning behind this advice was that *rapid warming caused more pain, swelling, and tissue destruction than did very slow rewarming*. During the mid to late 1930s, a group of scientists at the *Kirov Military Medical Academy of the USSR Army*, proved that *rapid warming was preferable to older methods using cold*. One of these scientists, *T.V. Ariev*, found that frozen *rabbit ears*, rewarmed rapidly, sustained less damage than ears allowed to warm spontaneously in air... Until the end of WWII, the **management of cold injuries had remained remarkably unchanged for more than 100 years**. But during the war, research in many countries had *demonstrated the usefulness and importance of rapid rewarming of frozen limbs*. Within the space of a few years, *rapid rewarming* became the treatment of choice. Later, basic laboratory research – growing out of an increasing understanding of inflammation, wound healing, and reperfusion injuries – **transformed our ideas about the pathology of frostbite**. Until *Fuhrman and Crismon's work in late 1940s*, rapid warming was generally thought by authorities in U.S. and western Europe to be *harmful*. The **1950s and 1960s were the golden era of frostbite research**. (see, *Pandolf*, 326, 342)

In **1942**, a German medical officer who had served in Russia outlined the treatment used for cold injuries: *Warming was gradual*.⁴⁷¹ Frozen parts were elevated to *reduce edema*. Blisters were incised and covered w/ antiseptic powders. *Hasty amputations were avoided and surgery used sparingly* [i.e., a *conservative approach*]. The same account described how the frozen parts were „bathed“ in water at **25 C to 30 C**, which was gradually heated until it reached **40 C**. Rewarming in water was, therefore, already being used, although more conservatively than later. *Alcohol and coffee* were given as stimulants. („*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,” *Kent B. Pandolf, ed.*, 330; also, *A. Toppe (ed.), MS P-062:* „*Frostbite Problems in the German Army*.”)

⁴⁷¹ **Note:** *Pandolf* late states that the Germans *did utilize rapid rewarming* for initial thawing of frozen extremities. (434) *Killian* related the cold problems of the axis forces in WWII w/ a discussion, still of concern today, of **slow as compared to rapid rewarming**, the latter *being preferred by many German military physicians* despite slow-thawing methods being the *European dictum*. (434)

To avoid *frostbite*, had to conscientiously keep hands and fingers moving, beating our hands against our chest to keep circulation going. Continuously stamped feet on floor of lorry during transport. (Verton, 86). On the move, rendered “first aid” to one another by rubbing the left side of each other’s face with snow. “Only so could we avoid threatening frostbite when *yellow patches* appeared as *first symptoms* on the skin.” (Verton, 95)

H. Haape (6. ID) made *newspaper* his primary weapon against frostbite. Newspaper stuffed into boots; two sheets on a man’s back, between vest and shirt; around stomach; in trousers; around legs. Newspaper everywhere body required extra warmth. He scrounged newspaper from rear areas. (Moscow Tram Stop, 181-2)

Hans Killian:⁴⁷²

a) „Even today [his book appeared in 1981] it must be admitted that the *ultimate cause of damage to tissues and cells due to cold is not properly known.*“ Actual heat is lost not from the body surface but from the *millimeter fine air boundary layer*, which constantly surrounds the skin like a fine, protective coat. It is wellknown that, when exposed to the cold, man and animals *adopt a stooping position* to reduce the surface area and prevent loss of heat. If one takes the above conditions into account, it becomes clear that the *peripheral areas of the body*, esp. the limbs, are *most acutely exposed to loss of temperature*. Apart from *anatomical causes*, unsuitable clothing must be considered: tight bandages, tight shoes, which hinder blood supply to the extremities and encourage development of cold injury. In Russia in **1941/42**, Killian gave *warm infusions (5 – 7% glucose etc.)* of hot sweet drinks (**40–41 C**) to warm the body after temperature loss. During WWII and in Korea, *nearly all surgeons used exclusively a very guarded technique of rewarming* [i.e., *slow active rewarming*]. In general, the technical practice involved the frozen limb being put as a whole into a *luke-warm bath*, the temperature of the limb was slowly brought up to **4 C** by the addition of hot water. (Killian, *Cold and Frost Injuries*, ix, 11, 16-17, 183-84, 187-89)

b) Frostbite under normal air pressure conditions used to be *divided into three groups* [degrees] *according to degree of severity*. Then, during WWII, we experienced the state of *total freezing of tissue and have termed this the 4th, the worst degree of localised frostbite*, which mostly *ends in total loss of tissue or limb*. Mild frostbite normally remains fairly superficial; it can occur in damp, cold conditions at relatively low temperatures *over or just under 0 C*, or in dry cold w/ heavy frost. The *time of exposure* also plays an important part...Uncovered, exposed areas are *most likely to be affected*...Smaller limbs cool quickly as the quantity of heat is not so great; large limbs more slowly as their heat input via the *arterial blood supply* is considerably greater...With *common frostbite*, the *etiological emphasis is on exogenous factors*...Anybody can be affected by a cold injury. The natural resistance to cold of the tissue and the *general state of health* play a decisive part. (Killian, 32)

c) For a long time it was *believed that frostbite could only occur at outside temperatures under 0 C* and frostbite was understood to be result of a *freezing of the cells and tissue at different depths*. This view had to be abandoned as wrong, because it was *discovered in time that even at temperatures over 0 C w/ high air humidity, wind and wetness but w/o the possibility of freezing more severe cold injuries w/ gangrene could occur*...Hecht observed frostbite at **+ 6 C** and even at **+8 C**. (Killian, 34-35)

⁴⁷² Killian was surgeon w/ **16th Army** in 1941/42.

d) Areas affected by frostbite:

1) In the *head region* the *scalp* is at risk, though really only when it comes into contact w/ metal. At the front, we saw *cases of 3rd degree frost damage* to the scalp due to the skin being in contact w/ a *steel-helmet*. In general, these only occurred at **temperatures of less than -15 C**. (Killian, 44)

2) Cold damage to the *face* often arose through *pressure points*. The fact that the *ear-lobes* and esp. the rim of the ear are susceptible to damage through cold is understandable if we take the wet and air-flow into account. That is why this type of cold injury occurs esp. in **lorry drivers, airmen**, etc. Also saw some cases of cold damage to *lips*, and rarely, to the *tongue*. (Killian, 44)

3) Numerous reports of cold damage to *male genitalia*, and also to the *perineum*. Such cases occur particularly in *lorry drivers*, etc., esp. when trousers and underclothing are not sufficiently well-fitting and are easily penetrated by icy wind. Often people exposed to cold have been *unable to fasten their clothing again properly due to numbness in their fingers*, resulting in *severe frost injuries to the penis*, and also the **testicles, perineum and anus**. In some of these cases frostbite was the *result of wetting*. We have seen cases of men, who sat in *armored tanks* for longish periods in icy weather conditions (escort infantry) w/ isolated frostbite *necroses* in the area of both *sciatic bones* and at the *perineum*. (Killian, 44)

4) In the *upper extremities*, **hands, fingers, elbows** are at risk. Of the fingers, particularly the *first and fifth* are particularly sensitive to cold. (Killian, 44)

5) In the *lower extremities*, two areas are particularly susceptible to cold damage: The *frontal region of the knee joint* and the *area of the foot*. In the area of the *toes*, the *first, second and fifth toes* are particularly at risk...In cases of the most severe cold injury, w/ damage to the *arteries of the lower leg*, the whole foot up to above the ankle is lost, sometimes even to about the middle of the lower leg. (Killian, 46-47)

6) Local cold damage often *causes considerable pain*, which makes the general condition worse and the patient suffer sleepless nights. One is therefore often obliged to give **anagelsics**. During the disastrous winter of **1941/42** in Russia we used **morphine** and **oxycodone (Eucodal)** reservedly, since they can lead to *vasoconstrictive side-effects*. The *rubbing of freshly frozen extremities* is a common habit of laymen. *Many a limb has been saved this way*, since there is no doubt it encourages *peripheral circulation*. (Killian, 204)

7) **Complications:** There is an *acute danger of infection* w/ every *2nd – 4th degree cold injury*. Experience has shown that it is *far greater in the area of the lower extremities* than in other parts of the body. Cases of **wound diphtheria** after cold injuries have occurred more often. During the years **1941/43** our *bacteriologists* discovered that in almost 40% of the cases of 3rd degree frostbite *diphtheroid rod-shaped bacilli* were to be found are the *demarkation area*. In the past wound diphtheria was *one of the most dreaded complications*, today it has

become extremely rare thanks to effects of *antibiotics*. (Killian also addresses *tetanus*, *gas gangrene*, etc., see, 169-71)

e) During WWII, esp. during the *inter-seasonal period*, surgeons at the front diagnosed cases of *wet-type gangrene*. Unfortunately, *German surgeons did not concern themselves more closely w/ this special form* nor did they make a note of them in their reports. This is the only explanation available for fact that no detailed reports on *immersion damage* or trench foot exist. This is also why in *Toppe's (1949) report* on his experiences the *false claim was made* that in WWII on the German side *trench foot did not occur*. (Killian, 35)

f) Every group leader bears full responsibility for the avoidance of cold damage during exposure to cold. It is also the *duty of every single member to observe his comrades* and report any sudden paling w/ a danger of freezing, esp. in the area of the face, the nose, the cheeks, the ears and hands, since the *person affected very often notices none of this*. After an *initial burning pain*, the area too quickly becomes insensitive, all sensitive qualities are lost. (Killian, 176)

g) From the practical side, it is important to prevent snow getting into the *upper edges of the shoes*. They must be made leakproof. 3rd and 4th degree frostbite *often resulted when snow penetrated army boots*, melted, and then froze hard, so that the *whole foot became totally frozen*. Often the frozen foot had to be knocked out of a solid block of ice, once the army boots had been sawn open. (Killian, 177)

h) *Prevention of skin freezing to metals*: It is particularly dangerous if the skin freezes onto metal. This happens suddenly, if the skin of the hand, the fingers, the toes or the soles of the feet, which are always slightly moist, come into contact w/ the *smooth surface of cold metals at -15 C*. The skin becomes frozen to the metals so quickly that it is, in most cases, no longer possible to free it and in most attempts to do so the *epithelium sticks to the metal*, so that unpleasant superficial injuries result. Completely dry and well oiled skin does not freeze onto metal. (Killian, 177)

Professor Killian (surgeon with *16th Army*): According to my own observations there were **18,694** cases of cold damage [frostbite] in the 16th Army between **12.12.1941** and **31.8.1942**. **393 early amputations** were necessary. Seventeen (**17**) patients died, mainly from *septic complications*. The distribution according to degrees of injury: 1st Degree (**4243** or **26%**); 2nd Degree (**12,993**, or **66%**); 3rd Degree (**1458**, or **8%**). The 4th degree cold injury *had not yet been distinguished by us* at that time. In all large-scale catastrophes it has been found that the *lower extremities are much more frequently affected than the upper ones*. (Killian, *Cold and Frost Injuries*, 43)

Among the infantry, the freezing weather resulted in **14,357 frostbite amputations**—an entire divisional complement. Meanwhile, „moderate“ frostbite totally incapacitated a further **62,000** soldiers and slight frostbite kept many more out of the line for a few days' rest. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 125; also, *Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 325-26)

Fatigue and nutrition: Fatigue is related to nutrition and increases the possibility of cold injuries. In contrast to U.S. soldiers, many German units were *very badly fed*. *Cigarettes and alcohol consumption increase the risk of cold-related injury*. Lapses in *personal hygiene* can increase the chances of illness and disease. (Pandolf, 337, 423)

Standard German open-topped boots: The soles of the boots were thin, w/ *metal studs* that conducted heat from the feet to the ground. The open tops of the boots allowed snow to blow in and surround the feet. *Frostbite was inevitable.* („*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments,*“ Kent B. Pandolf, ed., 330)⁴⁷³

In the region of the *hand*, always around the **critical borderline temperature of -14 to -15 C**, perspiration can cause an *immediate freezing onto metals*, which, when an attempt is made to remove the skin, results in the *epidermis being torn off* and the *epithelium* damaged. The latter may *easily become infected.* (Killian, *Cold and Frost Injuries*, 18)

Role of Nicotine: Nicotine has a harmful effect on the whole *vascular system*. Nicotine plays a *relatively insignificant part in the general loss of temperature* but the reactions of the **peripheral circulation and the blood supply itself are seriously affected by even small quantities of nicotine.** The *constriction* and drop in the peripheral skin and limb temperatures caused by nicotine favor the development of *peripheral frostbite*. This *vasoconstriction* and drop in temperature is most noticeable in the area of the *toes and fingers*...As a result of all these investigations and the *experience of the winter of 1941/42 in Russia*, the author gave **urgent warnings to the sentries on duty not to smoke.** (Killian, *Cold and Frost Injuries*, 19-22)

Alcohol: Taken internally in *small quantities*, it is of unquestionable significance in the *prophylaxis and treatment of localized cold injuries*...This is the basis of the fact, learnt from experience, that *small amounts of alcohol, taken before or during exposure, give increased protection against frostbite* and delay noticeably the onset of the cooling of the limbs. (Killian, 200)

“*Frostbite festered and stank* in the heat of the stove [i.e., stove of the Russian peasant cottages]. (W.P. Reese, *Stranger*, 53)

1.13.4: Hypothermia:

Note: “Body’s normal temperature is about **98.6 F**. As body temperature drops, symptoms go thru stages. First, most people exercise or keep moving to stay warm. In this first stage, people may have a hard time doing things like lighting a match, tying a knot, or buttoning clothing. Next, speech becomes slurred. Victims may stumble, seem confused, or deny that they are cold or need medical attention. They may seem weak or tired. At this point shivering may stop. Breathing may be shallow and the pulse hard to find. As the body gets colder, muscles become stiff and the heartbeat becomes uneven. Unconsciousness may set in. Death can result...” (AFFTC Form 5265, “*Monthly Safety Activities Report, Feb 08*)

a) Journal of the American Medical Association: „Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiac Care,“ Emergency Cardia Care Committee and Subcommittees, American Heart Association (28 Oct 92):

Hypothermia: „Severe accidental hypothermia (body temperature below **30 C [86 F.]**) is associated w/ *marked depression of cerebral blood flow and oxygen requirement, reduced*

⁴⁷³ **Note:** In account of U.S. Marines retreat from *Chosin Reservoir*, a corporal noted: “As long as we were moving, our feet stayed warm and even sweated; but as soon as we were still, the sweat would freeze and so would our toes.” (457)

cardiac output, and decreased arterial pressure. Victims can appear to be clinically dead because of marked depression of brain and cardiovascular function, but full resuscitation w/ intact neurological recovery is possible, although unusual...“

34 – 36 C: *mild hypothermia*

30 – 34 C: *moderate hypothermia*

-30 C: *severe hypothermia*

b) **„Hypothermia – Physiology, Signs, Symptoms and Treatment Consideration,“** at: <http://www.sarbc.org>:

Hypothermia is *temperature related disorder*. Man is considered to be a *tropical animal*. Normal functioning of the human animal requires a body temperature of **37 degrees Celcius (98.6 F.)**. Comfortable human survival using only that protection from temperature stress which is provided physiologically at birth therefore require an environment providing a temperature of 37 degrees Celcius, *plus or minus perhaps 1 degree*. The body can *self-compensate* for small upward or downward variations in temperature through the activation of a *built-in thermoregulatory system*, controlled by temperature sensors in the skin. The response to an upward variation in body temperature is the initiation of perspiration which moves moisture from body tissues to the body surface...The response to a downward variation in body temperature is *shivering*, which is the body's attempt to generate heat. Shivering is an *involuntary contraction and expansion of muscle tissue* occurring on a large scale. This muscle action creates heat through friction.

Hypothermia is defined as **core temperature of less than 35 degrees Celcius**. Many variables contribute to the development of hypothermia. Age, health, nutrition, body size, exhaustion, exposure, duration of exposure, wind, temperature, wtness, medication and intoxicants may decrease heat production, increase heat loss, or interfere w/ *thermostability*. The healthy individual's *compensatory responses* to heat loss via conduction, convection, radiation, evaporation and respiration may be *overwhelmed by exposure*.

Recognition of Signs and Symptoms:

- a) **Impending Hypothermia:** Due to physiological, medical, environmental or other factors the person's core temperature has decreased to **36** degrees C. The person will increase in an attempt to warm up. The *skin may become pale, numb and waxy. Muscles become tense, shivering may begin* but can be overcome by activity. **Fatigue and signs of weakness begin to show.**
- b) **Mild Hypothermia:** The person has now become a victim of hypothermia. The core temperature dropped to **35-34** degrees C. Uncontrolled, intense shivering begins. The victim is *still alert and able to help self*, however *movements become less coordinated and the coldness is creating some pain and discomfort.*
- c) **Modernate Hypothermia:** Core temperature has dropped to **33-31** degrees C. Shivering slows or stops, muscles begin to stiffen and *mental confusion and apathy sets in*. Speech becomes *slow, vague and slurred*, breathing becomes *slower and shallow*, and drowsiness and **strange behavior may occur.**

- d) *Severe Hypothermia*: Core temperature now below **31** degrees C. *Skin is cold, may be bluish-gray in color, eyes may be dilated.* Victim is very weak, displays a marked lack of coordination, slurred speech, appears exhausted, may appear to be drunk, denies problem and may resist help. There is a *gradual loss of consciousness*. There may be little or no apparent breathing, victim may be very rigid, unconscious, and may appear dead.

c) „*Medical Aspects of Harsh Environments*,“ Vol 1, Edited by Kent B. Pandolf & Robert E. Burr. *Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Army, et al., 2001.*

Hypothermia is an ever-present nemesis that **attacks the weak and weary**. Regardless of origin, *hypothermia* is defined as a **2 C decrease in core temperature**.⁴⁷⁴ A decrease in core temperature will affect every component of a physiological system. Once the physiological systems cannot maintain adequate core temperatures, various systems begin to shut down. Normal core temperature is usually considered to be **37 C for brain, heart and lungs**. Although the clinically defined value for hypothermia is **35 C**, this must be considered a rough estimate. Regardless of the precise core temperature, hypothermia eventually causes a decrease in metabolic rate. From a military perspective, hypothermia will cause a decrease in overall effectiveness of the casualty, but, paradoxically, the decreased metabolic rate will allow for a much greater time in which the casualty can be rescued. *Hannibal, Napoleon and Hitler* all experienced major losses during campaigns in cold weather; a majority of their cold-induced losses probably had **secondary hypothermia**.⁴⁷⁵ A soldier who has lost blood and is dehydrated will not be able to respond adequately to the temperature challenges of a cold environment. The time for the onset of hypothermia depends on a large number of factors: clothing, body size, metabolic rate, physiological state, hydration, and nutritional status. In military situations, the **onset of hypothermia is insidious**. It occurs gradually and poses a major threat for completion of military operations. (Pandolf, 352-53; 375-76)

The effect cold environments have on the brain are *multiple*...Many different anecdotal and field studies indicate that the *first signs of hypothermia* are *disruption of higher functions such as visual and auditory hallucinations*; as the core temperature drops further, *slurring of speech, decreased consciousness, and impairment of short-term memory* incur. Changes in an individual's behavior, such as *becoming withdrawn* or silent, may indicate the early stages of hypothermia. *Consciousness is usually lost at a body temperature of 28 C to 30 C.* (Pandolf, 357-62)

Signs of hypothermia include: *hallucinations, amnesia, poor judgement, maladaptive behavior, depression-apathy-irritability, decrease in pulse rate, changes in respiratory response, tachycardia, ataxia and apathy, slurring of speech, progressive decrease in level of consciousness, impairment of short-term memory, impairment of vigilance, atrial fibrillation, dilated pupils, loss of reflexes, overall decrease in human performance, etc.* Significant attenuation and frequency alterations in the *brain's electrical activity* can be observed at temperatures below **34 C**. (see, Pandolf, 361-66; see also, p. 494, for „*signs and symptoms at different levels of hypothermia*“)

⁴⁷⁴ **Note** Thermally, the body can be divided into two zones: the core and the shell. The *core* consists of the *deeper tissues of the body*, including all the vital organs, such as *heart and brain*; the *shell*, the remainder, including the skin. (Pandolf, 493)

⁴⁷⁵ **Note:** See, Pandolf, p 352, for classifications of hypothermia.

From a military point of view, the effects of a cold environment have their ***greatest overt effect on the motor system***. Troops are not able to move as fast, and fine coordination is impaired. Cold hands make it difficult to pull a trigger. (In military settings, losing the effective coordinated use of hands can be *devastating*.) *Cold stress* and hypothermia influence motor function by way of the neural and cardiovascular systems and on the muscle cell itself. As a person is initially ***cold-stressed*** and then becomes hypothermic, *muscle tension leads to shivering, which continues until core temperature reaches 29 – 31 C*...In a field situation, *shivering* is an important sign that all physiological systems are functioning, and also that hypothermia may eventually occur. (Pandolf, 364-65, 498)

Medical officers should keep in mind that the *time available to resuscitate hypothermic casualties is prolonged because of their slowed metabolisms*. As the familiar saying implies, „**You are not dead until you are warm and dead.**“ (Pandolf, 372)

1.13.5: Chronology:

7.11.41: Divisions in *Guderian's 2d Pz. Arme*e suffered their *first casualties from frostbite*. (Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, ca. 246)

7.11.41: “Allerdings traten vom 7. November ab bei den ohne Winterbekleidung kaempfenden u. marschierenden Verbaenden die ersten, schweren Frostschaeden auf.“ (Guderian, „*Vorstoss auf Tula*,“ 752)

13.11.41: H. Haape's unit (III./18. IR (**6. ID**)) has ***first case of frostbite*** on this day. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 181-2)

17.11.41: The **112 ID**, protecting the right flank of the advance, had over **50% frostbite casualties** by this date. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 124)

17.11.41 [Guderian]: Die **112 ID** geriet an die frischen Sibirier. Als nun gleichzeitig aus Richtung Dedirowo fdl. Panzer gegen die Division vorgingen, war die geschwaechte Truppe dieser Belastung nicht mehr gewachsen. Man moege bei der Beurteilung ihrer Leistungen beruecksichtigen, dass jedes Rgt bereits **400** Mann durch Erfrierungen verloren hatte, dass die Maschinenwaffen infolge der Kaelte nicht mehr schossen u. dass unsere **3,7-cm-Pak** sich gegen den russ. Panzern **T-34** als unwirksam erwies. *Es kam hier zu einer Panik*, die sich bis Bogorodisk auswirkte. Diese erste Panik im Russlandfeldzug war ein ernstes Warnungszeichen, dass die Kampfkraft, auch die seelische Spannkraft unserer Infanterie am Ende war u. starken Belastungen nicht mehr ausgesetzt werden konnte. (Guderian, „*Vorstoss auf Tula* [Schluss],“ 824-25)

Nov-Dec 41: As the first *deep frosts* gripped the central front early in Nov 41, the German divisions suffered rashes of frostbite casualties due to lack of effective winter clothing and the greater exposure of the attacking Germans to the elements. The front soldiers suffered most commonly frostbite damage to *feet and hands*. To compound the problem, the Germans found themselves faced w/ an „insurmountable shortage“ of *socks* of any kind and *winter mittens* in Nov 41. Evidence exists that a significant number of German troops engaged in combat close to Moscow in Nov and early Dec 41 ***fought in bare feet inside the excellent German summer marching boot***. (Stolfi, *Chance in History*, 222-23; see also, Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 179-80)

Dec 41: Guderian lost **1200** men to frostbite in one division in one day [true?!]. On **9.12.41**, one corps reported **1500** cases; **350** men had to have their limbs amputated. **1100** army horses perished every day. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 351)

Dec 41: According to M. Gilbert: "In one day alone, at the end of December, as a result of frostbite, more than **14,000** German soldiers had been forced to submit to amputation. Not all of them survived the operation" (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 284)⁴⁷⁶

Dec 41: *Willi Reese (95. ID)* describes impact of cold and frostbite on men of his unit – during attack on, and flight from, *Volovo* (east of the *Tim river*; northeast of *Kursk*). Some men froze to death; others ran off in despair. Men's skin *froze onto the metal of their rifles*. Often sat for hours in cold and snow; then their legs failed to function properly when they tried to advance. Some vomited; other collapse in snow, refuse to get up, etc. All the while fending off terrifying attacks from mounted *Cossacks*. (See, *W.P. Reese, Stranger*, 45-50)

Dec 41 [*Adventzeit*]: Elements of **95. ID** trying to retire toward the *Tim River* and to avoid encirclement. Then received orders to come to aid of a beleaguered outpost]: "The outpost was in a railway crossing cottage, on the line from *Livny* to *Kursk*...We had our AT gun, two heavy and three light MGs, and plenty of ammunition. We slept on hay spread over boxes of bullets and grenades. We had a stove for warmth and a rifle oil lamp for light. But that was pretty much all we had. We burned the fencing and finally the flooring. For 12 days we *lived on potatoes*, which we boiled w/ a little salt. We found some green *makhorka* to smoke, or we made do w/ hay. We drank snowmelt. There was no soap, and each of us had just one thin blanket. *Tangled hair and beards, black hands, and most of us either festering and frostbitten or eaten alive by lice, scabies, and the inflammations of our legs*. When we went out to do sentry duty, we wrapped ourselves in our threadbare blankets, but our icy feet drove tears of pain and rage to our eyes..."*Advent for the doomed*. We had to bear it; how we got through, no one bothered to ask...We were all sick and irritable. Outbursts of rage and hate, envy, fistfights, sarcasm and mockery stood in for whatever might have remained of *comradeship*...We didn't attend to our dead and didn't bury them either, just put on their coats and gloves. Things and values changed. Money had become meaningless. We used paper money for *rolling cigarettes* or gambled it away indifferently...A piece of bread, though, was a fantasy that could not possibly be realized. Death brought w/ it a limitless desire for sleep and oblivion. Only a few sought intimacy, most drugged themselves w/ superficialities, w/ gambling, cruelty, hatred, or they masturbated. This between fighting." (see, *W.P. Reese, Stranger*, 50-52)⁴⁷⁷

Dec 41: Even good boots no guarantee against frostbite: Beim letzten Aufenthalt im Ort...stellte ich fest, dass meine Fuesse angefroren waren. Ich hatte beim Marsch auf *Bukontowo* [see entries for **24.12.41**] die Spitze gefuehrt u. war durch tiefen Schnee gegangen. *Dabei war in meine Stiefel Schnee gefallen, hatte sich aufgetaut u. war nass in den Fuss gefallen*. Meine Fuesse waren schwarz, also angefroren...(Erinnerungen, *F. Nebe, IR 37 / 6. ID*)

Dec 41: By this time, *frostbite* beginning to account for many casualties (**87. ID**), sending men home with *amputated toes or fingers*...Men being *tormented by vermin*...Trucks and vehicles would not start, and our horses started to die from the cold in large numbers for the first time. (*S. Knappe, Reflections*, 232-33)

⁴⁷⁶ Gilbert's Source? This simply *cannot* be accurate!

⁴⁷⁷ **Note:** "Reese kaempft in dieser Region etwas **150 km** nordoestlich von *Kursk* vom **12.-25.12.41**." (*Mir selber seltsam fremd*, 274, f.n. 21)

8.12.41: As early as **8 Dec 41**, the **2 Pz Army** reports that one of its corps has suffered **1500** frostbite cases, **350** requiring amputation. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 199-200; see also, *Ziemke & Bauer*, 73)

8.12.41: 2 Armee: 9 PD erreichte im Vorgehen Marmyschi. . . Staerkere fdl. Angriffe suedl. u. noerdl. Welez [sp?] mit Fliegerunterstuetzung, die noch anhalten. Bei **XXXV** Hoeh.Kdo. nur Spaehtrupptaetigkeit. Durch starken Frost bis **-38** Grad Ausfaelle an *Frosterkrankten*. Bei einem Rgt. allein **215**, davon **103 Amputationen**. Einige Verwundete auf Ruecktransport erfroren. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 74)

19.12.41-12.1.42 [6. ID]: Verluste des **II./IR 37** [during said period]: **3** Offz. gefallen, **3** verw., **3** Lazarett; **6** Uffz. gefallen, **36** Uffz. verw., **3** Uffz. vermisst, **24** Frost; **32** Mannsch. gef., **158** verw., **37** verm., **163** Frost. Am **12.1.42** wurde das Btn. mit den Resten zum **III. Btn.** ueberfuehrt, das waren noch rund **40** Mann. (*Aus einem Brief Oblt. Dunker vom 18.1.42*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58*, S. 16-17)

27.12.41: Erschreckend war das schnelle Absinken der Kampfstaerken, z.B. am 27.12 allein bei der **2./Pi.B. 6 15**, bei der Radf.-Schwadron der **A.A. 6 35** Mann Ausfall an *Erfrierungen*. Dazu kam, dass durch die starke *Verlausung* Hautkrankheiten in steigendem Masse auftraten. (*Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID*, 98)

28.12.41: Erfrierungen bei **26. ID:**

IR 77: **34** schwere / **74** leichte Faelle

IR 78: **200** schwere / **400** leichte Faelle

AA 26: **51** schwere / **45** leichte Faelle

(Source: *Meldungen der H.Gr.Mitte an OKH vom 28.12.41*; quoted in: *Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau,"* 175)

Dec 41-Jan 42: „Wir feierten 1941 nach Aufgabe der *Kalinen-Front* Weihnachten in einem Erdbunker vor der Wolga, Sylvester noch naeher dran u. beim Ueberschreiten des Flusses am *Jahreswechsel* ging unsere Feldkueche „*koppheister*.“ Dabei gelangte auf dem von einem Pferd gezogenen I-Wagen auch ein Teil der Ausruestung unseres Zugfuehrers, Lt. *Schmalfeldt*, fuer den ich als sein Bursche verantwortlich war, sowie einiges meiner Ausruestung mit dem Bach ebenfalls in Feindeshand.

An jenem Nachmittag wurde ich verwundet (*Kopfstreifschuss*) u. erreichte einige Tage spaeter auf einem offenen, kleinen Schlitten, der von einem Pferd gezogen wurde, *Rshew*. Bei diesem Transport *erlitt ich zusaetzlich leidvolle Erfrierungen*. In *Rshew* gelante ich wohl eben noch in den letzten Zug, der mich bis *Smolensk* brachte u. dann ins Lazarett in *Brest am Bug*. Spaeter leitete man mich an das in *Nuernberg* weiter, aus dem ich am **23.4.42** entlassen wurde. Nach **65** Jahren, **2007**, genau an diesem Tage, *musste ich wegen der Spaetfolgen der damals erlittenen koerperlichen Schaeden durch Erfrierung erneut operiert werden*.

Fuer mich ist diese Zeit von 66 Jahren [i.e., 1941 – 2007] daher wenig von Lust auf Rueckblicke gepraeagt. Geblieben ist der *Frust* [frustration] u. die Erinnerung an das unnoetige *Rasseln mit dem Saebel*, das auch gegenwaertig noch kein Ende gefunden hat. Das stete Erinnern u. Mahnen der Veteranen des Russlandfeldzuges scheint nur wenig Gehoer zu finden.“ (*Hans-Georg Alvermann, IR 254, Traditions-Verband der 110. ID, Jahresbrief 2007*)

Winter 41/42: „Wir hatten lediglich die *normale Winterausruestung* fuer unsere Klima: ungefuetterten Mantel, duenne Strickhandschuhe, Pullover, Leibbinde u. Kopfschuetzer. Dazu die normalen Lederstiefel. Die Russen, alles sibirische Regimenter, waren hervorragend fuer den Winterkrieg ausgeruestet...Kein Wunder, dass jeder Landser versuchte, den gefallenen Russen die Filzstiefel auszuziehen...*Bei Temperaturwechsel lassen heute noch unterschiedliche Verfaerbungen erkennen, in welchem Umfang die Haende u. Fuesse angefroren waren.*“ (Dicke Memoiren, p 52)

Winter 41/42: *Erfrierungen* took out ½ of Rhein’s company in winter 41/42. (Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID)

Early 1942: “Auf dem Weg zur B-Stelle . . . erfror ich mir bei leichtem Schneesturm mein Gesicht. Es haette schlimmer kommen koennen, wenn nicht ein entgegenkommender russ. Bauer auf meine *kalkweissen Wangen* gezeigt u. mir die Bewegung des Einreibens mit Schnee vorgemacht haette. Mein Gesicht war noch wochenlang durch *blauroten Schorf* [scabbing] entstellt.” C. Hamann, (2./Pz.Art.Rgt. 119/11.PD), “*Im Osten – Anfang 1942*, in: *Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch*, 1998)

Jan 42: A German *panzer* division near *Volokolamsk* suffered up to **800 frostbite casualties per day** during this month. (CMH 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 18)

20.1.42 [6. ID]: Erfrierungen in der Zeit vom **11.-20. Jan 42: 158**. (KTB 6. ID, quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58*, S. 19)

22.1.42: 6. ID, Abteilung Ic **21.1.42** an Gen.Kdo VI AK-Abteilung Ic betr. Gefangenenernehmung: Daraus entnommen: Ueberlaeufer vom Schtz.Rgt. **190** der **24 Div.** am **15.1.42** (Wald **3 km** westl. Wischinki). Etwas **10% Ausfaelle** [i.e., der Russen] durch Erfrierungen. (*Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58*, S. 23)⁴⁷⁸

24.1.42 [Goebbels Tagebuch]: Gestern: [. . .] . . . Aus Oberschlesien bekomme ich Mitteilungen, dass dort immer noch Verwundetentransporte in *ungeheizten Gueterwagen vor sich gehen, die verwundeten Soldaten ohne Decken, z.T. mit erfrorenen Gliedmassen, in den Zuegen liegen, unverpflegt u. seit 70 oder 80 Stunden ohne jede Nahrung*. Ich schlage energisch Laerm bei den zustaendigen Sanitaetsstellen der Wehrmacht u. Sorge nun, dass die Partei sich hier einschaltet, damit wenigstens dieses so ausserordentlich schwierige u. kompromittierende Problem geloest wird. Das Rote Kreuz wird seine Vorkolonnen auch in die besetzten Gebiete bis kurz hinter die Front schicken. . . (R.G. Reuth (ed.), *Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, 1744)

20.2.42: Diese Ausfaelle [i.e., *Erfrierungen*] beliefen sich bis zum 20.2.42 auf **14 357** schwere, d.h. solche Erfrierungen, bei denen groessere *Amputationen* notwendig wurden, etwa **62 000** mittlere u. **36 270** leichte, d.h. an Ort u. Stelle behandelte Faelle. Die schweren u. mittleren Faelle ergeben fuer die Zeit vom **5.12.41** bis zum **20.2.42** einen *Tagesdurchschnitt* von **979**. (*Assmann, Schicksalsjahre*, 285; also, *Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 325-26)

28.2.42: Bis zum diesem Datum wurden **112.600 Faelle von Erfrierungen** erfasst [throughout the *Ostheer*], davon **14.400** als schwer eingestuft; diese wurden saemtlich als **Kranke** (!) gezaehlt. Die gelegentlich anzutreffende Darstellung, wonach *die Zahl der Verluste durch Erfrierungen deutlich hoeher als die der Verluste durch Feindeinwirkung gewesen sei, ist in jedem Falle*

⁴⁷⁸ **Note:** As this entry shows, the Russians *also suffered* from Frostbite during the winter months.

unzutreffend, denn die Zahl der Gefallenen, Vermissten u. Verwundeten im Zeitraum Dez 41 bis Apr 42 belief sich auf insgesamt **416.500** Mann, davon **87.000** Tote, **24.500** Vermisste u. **305.000** Verwundete. (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 9/1, Prien, 6*)⁴⁷⁹

Mar 42: Bis [Mar 42] verlor die *Wehrmacht* an der Ostfront **264.954** Pferde, die *Zahl der erfrorenen Soldaten* laesst sich nur schwer ermitteln, aber allein **133.620 Soldaten** wurden von den Verbandsplaetzen u. Feldlazaretten wegen Erfrierungen 1., 2. bzw. 3. Grades behandelt. (*Anmerkung Dr Tauber in: Loewer Memoiren, f.n., 35*)

10.3.42: [*Anecdote, see, Section 2.4, for details*]: ...Der Arzt befahl ihm, Stiefel u. Strumpf auszuziehen. *Als er den Strumpf aus hatte, stiess der Infanterist einen Schrei des Erschreckens u. Staunens aus u. rief: „Mein Zeh! Wo ist mein Zeh! Mein Zeh ist weg! Tatsaechlich war seine grosse Zehe bis zum zweiten Glied ab*; erfroren u. abgefallen wie ein Eiszapfen im Strumpf zu fuehlen...(Wm. Josef L., **5.Bttr./AR 129/129. ID, BfZ**)

20.3.42: Erfrierungen [an der Ostfront]:

- 1. Gr. = **41 120**
- 2. Gr. = **74 925**
- 3. Gr. = **17 575**

133 620

(Source: *KTB OKW, Bd. I, 489*)

31.3.42: 4th Army suffered **96,535** casualties between **1.1.-31.3.42**, of which **14,236** were frostbite cases. (*CMH Pub. 104-6, Effects of Climate, 6*)

12.4.42: ...Das kann ich mir denken, dass es zuhause so kalt war. Was meinst Du, wie kalt es hier hier war, 45 -46 [Grad] u. dazu noch Schneetreiben. Unsere Panzer kamen kaum durch, so hoch lag der Schnee, u. dazu noch der Moorboden. Auch *ich hatte die Fuesse, Finger u. Ohren u. die Nase erfroren, trotzdem ich gute Wollsachen von der Heimat hatte (Wollspende)*. Jetzt bin ich wieder hergestellt u. kam zur Instandsetzungsstaffel as *Panzerwart* bei der Kompanie...(Sold. *Walter H., 1./Pz.Rgt.36/11. PD, BfZ*)

21.4.42: Halder gave a contemporary and comprehensive picture of German losses in the winter in a presentation to Hitler on **21 Apr 42**. The average daily battle casualty figure for period from **30 Nov 41** to **1 Apr 42** was consistent, varying from about **2800** to **3500** w/ a slightly greater loss (**3700**) in the period from **31 Dec 41 – 10 Jan 42**. These figures indicate that German battle casualties were not particularly high during the winter withdrawal. In addition to the **376,000** battle casualties during the winter period, there were however over **500,000** sickness casualties, of which **228,000** were frostbite cases, making a total of about **900,000**. (*Seaton, Russo-German War, 228; also, Halder KTB*)

1.14: Medical Care & Services:

⁴⁷⁹ **Note:** Some of the German veterans of the *Winterschlacht vor Moskau* still believe that they suffered more losses due to frostbite than fighting—a “fact” which they have sometimes asserted in their letters to me, *Fragebogen*, etc.

Sanitaetswesen:

„Jede Kompanie hat 4 Krankentraeger, fuer deren Ersatz 4 ausgebildete Hilfskrankentraeger zur Veruegung stehen, ferner einen Sanitaetsdienstgrad im Range eines Uffz. Truppenaerzte bei allen Einheiten, die einem Bataillon entsprechen, ausserdem bei allen Batl. der Inf.-Rgter je 1 Hilfsarzt. Die Division hat ferner eine Sanitaetskompanie (mot) u. eine bespannte San.Kp. mit je 1 Krankentraegerzug, einem [HVP]-Zug u. einem Ergaenzungszug, ausserdem das Feldlazarett (mot). . . schliesslich 2 Krankenkraftwagenzuege, die im Gefecht den San.Kompanien zur Errichtung von Wagenhalteplaetzen, im Marsch zur Errichtung von Krankensammelpunkten, ausserdem zum Abtransport Verwundeter u. Kranker nach hinten zur Veruegung stehen.

„Die Krankentraeger verbinden die Verwundeten an Ort u. Stelle, ebenso wie der San. Dienstgrad, der alle Verwundeten zugleich sammelt u. dem Hilfsarzt uebergibt. Dieser errichtet am naechsten geeigneten Platz einen Truppenverbandsplatz, wo er den Verwundeten die erste aertzliche Hilfe angedeihen laesst, Tetanus Spritzt, wonoetig schient, Morphium gibt u. fest Verbaende anlegt. Waehrend der Hilfsarzt dann oder schon frueher mit der Truppe weiterzieht, uebernimmt der Truppenarzt diesen Tr.V.Pl. u. sorgt fuer den Abtransport, entweder mit dem ihm zugeteilten Personenkraftwagen (Pkw), sofern diesen nicht der Batl.-Kdr. braucht, oder mit Fahrzeugen der San. Kompanien, die zum Abtransport der Verwundeten zum [HVP] vorne die Wagenhalteplaetze errichten. Vom [HVP], wo die Verwundeten operiert bzw. fuer laengeren Transport transportfaehig gemacht werden, werden sie zum naechsten Feldlazarett, oder Ortlazarett oder einer Krankensammelstelle transportiert. Letztere sorgt fuer Abtransport nach hinter mit Lazarettzuegen oder mit San. Kraftwagen von den ihr zugehoerigen Krankentransportabteilungen (Armee-Einrichtung).“ (*Dr. E. Willich, 112. ID, „Bericht ueber die Erfahrungen auf dem Gebiet des Sanitaetswesens“*)

1.14.1: Background:

Note: In der Ausbildungsvorschrift fuer die Infanterie unter Nr. 218 war aufgefuehrt: „Das Zurueckfuehren von Verwundeten ist Sache der Krankentraeger. Anderen Soldaten ist das Zurueckbringen von Verwundeten ohne schriftlichen Befehl eines Offiziers verboten.“ (*Dr W. Dicke, Memoiren, 43*)

In his memoir, „*Infanterist*,“ Friedrich Belke describes the workings of a Hauptverbandplatz (HVP) in later summer 1941. Among other things he writes: “Der [HVP] ist die erste frontnahe aertzliche Versorgungsstelle. Er ist ein Pegel des Frontgeschehens. . . Die Aerzte u. Sanitaeter sind pausenlos in Taetigkeit. Ihre weissen Kittel u. Schuerzen sind blutbeschmiert. In Waschwannen tragen sie die amputierten Beine u. Arme hinaus zu den ausgehobenen Gruben. Die beiden Divisionspfarrer haben auf dem HVP ein weites Betaetigungsfeld. (*F. Belke, „Infanterist*,“ 45)

Among the most valuable and respected members of the German army were the „*Sanis*,“ the medical personnel. They were distinguished by their **dark blue arm-of-service shoulder patches** and by the *Red Cross armband* that they wore. According to *international law*, medical personnel were *classified as non-combatants* and they were therefore not supposed to be armed. However, particularly on the eastern front, where neither side upheld established laws of war, German medical personnel frequently carried side arms. Scale of their effort in WWII was enormous: armed forces medical staff treated almost **53,000,000** casualties during the war.

Despite the enormous strain placed on available resources, the *quality of German medical care* – even in the most primitive conditions – *remained high*. A wounded soldier who *reached a field hospital* had a **98.5% chance of surviving**, testimony to the professionalism of German doctors and nurses...Some **86%** of wounded returned to duty within *three months*; and **99%** within six months. Less than **1 %** were so badly maimed that they had to be discharged as unfit for duty. On average, a wounded soldier spent *nine days in hospital*. Once sufficiently recovered to be discharged from hospital, convalescents usually were posted to *convelescent units*, where they undertook light mil. duties while completing their recovery. Once recovered, convalescents often returned to the front mixed in w/ fresh recruits in so-called „*Marschbattalionen*.“ (Hart, *German Soldier*, 87-88)

Psychiatric illness: One area where German medical profession remained *backward* was in its recognition and treatment of mental and non-combat injuries. ”*Battle fatigue*“ was *not officially recognized in the German army*. Men displaying nervous symptoms were classified as either mentally or nervously ill. The first category was much rarer; only about *one in 500* soldiers who served in the war were classified as mentally ill. *Nervous complaints* were much more common, *one man in 20* being so diagnosed during the war. The nervously ill were further subdivided into those with *hysteria* and those suffering from *shock*. Informally, many troop cdrs did their utmost to help and protect troops suffering from battle fatigue by issuing them special leave, reassigning them from the front to other duties in the rear for rest and recuperation. Within a soldier’s own squad – his military family – squad leaders helped those under strain by re-assigning them to the least dangerous tasks, such as bringing up ammunition. Apart from such measures, there was little a cdr could do w/ men clearly on the verge of a breakdown. The Germans, however, *retained a very macho – and rather unscientific – attitude toward battle fatigue*. Many a soldier executed for cowardice had simply reached the end of his tether. The *lesson learned* from WWI was *not* to send battle fatigue sufferers home for treatment, as their presence had a disconcerting and negative effect on civilians. Psychological casualties really **only began to emerge in significant numbers during the eastern campaign**. Some nervously ill patients required psychiatric treatment which included *electric shock therapy* and *hypnosis*. Such treatments were *surprisingly successful*: some **85%** of cases *returned to combat duty* from one hospital for which records survive. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 91-92)

Summer 41: Evacuation of sick and wounded during summer often *handicapped by bad road conditions, heat and dust*. Moreover, when roads were being used for sizable troop or convoy movements, delays made evacuation trips seem like torture. The Germans **took full advantage of air evacuation of casualties**. Medical liaison acft often picked up casualties from *right behind the front lines*. (CMH Pub. 104-6, *Effects of Climate*, 60)

Note: In one account, wounded soldier given a *Morphiumspritze* – *deren Wirkung auf zwei Stunden berechnet war*. (A. Cohrs, *Echolot*, 528)

Inoculations: Emil Bud, *Obergrefreiter (Flak Abt. 303)* notes in his memoirs receipt of numerous injections. For example: **25.4.41:** Ich erhalte die **5.** Impfung. Diesmal gegen *Typhus* – **1 ccm**. . . **14.3.42:** Ich erhalte meine achte [8.] Impfung, diesmal gegen *Typhus* – **1 ccm**. . . Am **16.5.42** erhalte ich als Soldat meine **9.** Impfung. Diesmal gegen *Cholera* – **1 ccm**. . . Am **16.7.42** erhalte ich meine **10.** Impfung. Diesmal gegen die *Ruhr* – **1 ccm**. . . Am **25.7.42** erfolgt die **11.** Impfung. Wieder gegen die *Ruhr* – **1 ccm**. . . **1.8.42:** **12.** Impfung; wieder gegen die *Ruhr* – **1 ccm**. . . Am **3.4.43** erhalte ich meine **13.** Impfung als Soldat; *Typhus* – **1 ccm**. (E. Bud, *Tagebuch*)

Dr E. Fritze: „Als ich im **Mar 42** als Truppenarzt der **Pz.-NA 82** zur **6. PD** kam, hatten alle Soldaten u. Offiziere Laeuse. Als Arzt kannte ich aus meiner Lazarettzeit schon Fleckfieber. Waehrend meines Einsatzes bei der Nachrichten-Abt., bei den Panzerjaegern, bei einer Art.-Abt. u. auch bei einer Sanitaetskompanie *erlebten wir nur selten Fleckfieber*. Verdachtsfaelle wurden aber nach Entlausung in rueckwaertige Sanitaetsabteilungen, also Lazarette verlegt. **Russla-Puder**, das die Laeuse fernhalten sollte, u. von dem Leibarzt Hitlers entwickelt worden war, *war nur wenig wirksam*. Die Russen, also unsere Gegner, hatten grossen Respekt vor Fleckfieber. Wenn ich auf die Tuer eines von uns verlassenen Hauses „**Typh. sipnoi**“ schrieb, konnte ich gewiss sein, dass kein russ. Soldat das Haus mehr betrat.

Die ersten Fleckfieberfaelle habe ich im Winter **1941** bei dt. Soldaten u. russ. Gefangenen im Reserve-Lazarett Koeln-Hohenlind erlebt. Eine Behandlung gab es damals nicht. Im weiteren Verlauf des Krieges gab es aber eine Schutzimpfung. Das grosse Problem des Fleckfiebers war die *Labilitaet des Herzens* bzw. des *Kreislaufs*. Erfrierungen habe ich in jedem Winter an Zehen u. Fingern gesehen. *Nur selten waren die Folgen so schwer, dass Zehen oder Vorderfuss amputiert werden mussten*. Auch Erfrierungen der Ohren u. der Nasenspitze kamen gelegentlich vor, *am haeufigsten waren aber die Zehen betroffen*. *Hypothermie*, also Unterkuehlungen des Gesamtkoerpfers, *habe ich niemals erlebt*, obwohl wir erst gegen Ende des ersten Winters warme Bekleidung bekamen. . . Als Arzt in einem Kampfverband konnte ich *nur erste Hilfe leisten*. Der Ruecktransport der Verwundeten verursachte gelegentlich grosse Probleme wegen der Wegeverhaeltnisse. Schnee, Eis, aber auch Schlamm bereiteten vor allem zivilen Kfz grosse Schwierigkeiten.“ (*Ltr to C. Luther, 27 Jun 05*)

1.14.2: Doctors & Medics (on eastern front):

Note: *Robert Kershaw* discusses the Germans' *medical evacuation chain* in some detail – from company aid post, to field dressing station, to transfer to a field hospital (either in occupied area or the Reich), etc. (See, *War Without Garlands*, 170)

Bernard Haering (medic/priest): Strong bonds of friendship developed with the men I served. The medic, even more than the priest, who lives with and for his comrades finds *appreciation and trust* which encourages him in his service. (*Embattled Witness*, 14)

Heinrich Haape (3 Btn. / IR 18 / 6. ID) was one of most decorated doctors on *Ostfront*. EK 1 & EK 2. German Cross in Cold. Medal for destroying Russian tanks in close combat (*Panzer Nahbekaempfangsabzeichen*), etc. Was 31 years old in 1941. Oldest officer in his battalion. Always in thick of the action. Followed on heels of the assault troops to be able to attend immediately to wounded. (See, *Moscow Tram Stop*).

For details of a doctor's work attending to wounded and sick soldiers see, H. Haape (**6. ID**), *Moscow Tram Stop*, pp 20-21, 23, 52, 54, 63, 67, 72-3, 94, 99, 103, 112, 137, 149-51, 181-2, 195-6, etc.) (Note: *Casualty cards* hung around necks of wounded being sent back to division's *Medical Company*.)

25.6.41: *Der Abtransport der Verwundeten war miserable*. Tagelang lagen sie herum. Eine einschneidende Reform des *Sanitaetswesens* ist dringend erforderlich. (*Tagebuch Stabarzt Lierow, IR 37/6. ID*)

15.7.41: Nach dem Durchbruch durch die *Stalinlinie*. „Der Abtransport der Verwundeten klappte diesmal vorbildlich gut.“ (*Tagebuch Stabarzt Lierow, IR 37/6. ID*)

H. Haape notes that stomach wounds generally much more serious than head wounds. Stomach cases can live or die in an hour. Internal bleeding—and internal dirt—are the killers. Also notes that he has *no sterilized instruments, washing of hands in alcohol, or germ-free bandages.* (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 195-6)

Oct 41: For treatment of wounded during this period see the „*Bericht des Divisionsarztes*“ of the **6. ID**. He notes, for example: „In den ersten **3** Tagen des Angriffes vom **2.10.41** waren die San.-Dienste mit Arbeit ueberhaeuft. So mussten z.B. auf dem **H.V.Pl. Jakowzewo** binnen **36** Stunden fast **300** Verwundete versorgt werden. Mit dem erfolgreichen Fortschreiten der Kampfhandlungen u. Vortragen des Angriffes wuchsen gleichzeitig die Abtransportschwierigkeiten, da das Feldlazarett sehr weit zuruecklag (Pretschistaja). . . Infolge regnerischen Wetters u. grundloser Wege blieben Mitte des Monats fast alle mot. Fahrzeuge liegen, wodurch u.a. auch die aertzliche Versorgung u. der Abtransport Kranker u. Verwundeter sowie die zentrale Steuerung des Einsatzes der San. Dienste ausserordentlich erschwert wurden. Dies traf insbesondere fuer die **2.** Haelfte des Monats **Okt 41** zu, in der infolge Betriebsstoffmangels, Ausfall an Kfz. u. schlechter Wege die ganze Division auf Pferdebespann umgestellt werden musste u. die Division erneut zu Angriffen antrat. Der Ruecktransport der Verwundeten erfolgte dann teils bei schlechtestem Regenwetter teils bei Frost bis zu **20** Grad mittels **20** vorsorglich fuer solche Faelle hergerichteten u. von **San.Kp. 1/6** mitgefuehrten Panjewagen. Ferner wurden bespannte Leerkolonnen der Division beim Ruecktransport der Verwundeten eingesetzt. Anstelle der zu den Rgtern kommandierten **Krkw** [Kraft-Krankenwagen, I assume] wurden behelfsmaessige u. planmaessige Krankenwagen der **San.Kp. 1/6** bei der Truppe eingesetzt. Die mittels dieser Fahrzeuge von den **H.V.Pl.** zu den rueckw. San.-Einrichtungen zurueckgelegten Wege betruen mehrfach ueber **70** km u. konnten in jeweils **2**taegiger Fahrt nur mit Hilfe von Umschlagstellen durchgefuehrt werden. In vorzueglicher Zusammenarbeit mit der Luftwaffe gelang es in verschiedene Faellen, mit Hilfe von Transportflugzeugen teils direkt vom H.V.Pl. im freien Gelaende teils ueber die Flugplaetze eine groessere Anzahl von Verwundeten abzutransportieren.“ (*Bericht des Div.-Arztes*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 52*, S. 28)

Dec 41 [*Krankensammelstelle Smolensk*]: “Am vierten Tag kamen wir endlich nach Smolensk. . . Wir sahen in dem Dunst des kalten Wintertages die schoenen Kuppeln der Smolensker *Kathedrale*. . . Viele Landser mit erfrorenen, dick verbundenen Fuessen humpelten u. stuetzten sich auf die Schultern von Kameraden. Es war ein Bild des Elends, u. man wurde an die Bilder erinnert, die franzoesische Maler vom Untergang der *Grande Armee* gemalt haben. . . Der Strom der Verwundeten, Kranken u. der Soldaten mit erfrorenen Gliedmassen riss nicht ab. Man hoerte auf der Strasse staendig die Motoren der Sanitaetskraftwagen, die neue Verwundete brachten. . . Die Smolensker Krankensammelstelle war eine grosse *Zentralstelle*, wo die Verwundeten u. Kranken sortiert wurden in solche, die mit Lazarettzuegen in die Heimatlazarette kamen, u. solche, die man in die Kriegslazarette nach Polen verlegte. Schliesslich gab es noch die dritte Kategorie, bei der man die Verwundung als unbetraechtlich ansah. Diese Kranken wurden nach der Ausheilung in einem frontnahen Lazarett wieder zur Frontruppe zurueckgeschickt. . . Ich kam mit meiner *Gelbsucht* zur Kategorie II, also Kriegslazarett Polen. Mittags bekamen wir etwas Graupensuppe u. Kaltverpflegung, dann liefen wir Gehfaehigen denselben Weg zurueck zur Bahn. Dort standen schon unser Transportzug wie gehabt, also *deutsche Gueterwaggons* mit einem *Oefchen* in der Mitte des Waggons, u. *Stroh am Boden* fuer die Liegenden, sowie sechs *Bankreihen* fuer diejenigen, die sitzen konnten.“ (*H. Fuchs, Echolot*, 507-08)

16.12.41 [*Sowjetunion*]: “. . . Auch mit verwundeten russ. Gefangenen, die ich pflegte, hatte ich Erlebnisse, die ich nie vergessen werde. Ich versuchte, ihre Wunden zu heilen. Und es gelang

mir, etwas ganz anderes zu heilen, denn – sie hoerten auf, Feinde zu sein.“ (*Sanitaeter W. Hebestreit, Echolot*, 484-85)

Anecdote: Scene at a *dressing station* in winter of 41/42. Crowded with helpless men lying on straw beds, groaning from pain, filthy, smeared w/ blood, etc. (see, H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 297)

Jan 42: Insufficient ambulance trains running to the west. Wounded German soldiers being *packed into cattle trucks* [cars] w/o protection from the deadly cold and w/o adequate numbers of medical personnel to attend to them. A large number of German wounded died a cruel death on these trains, from frostbite, *gangrene*, etc. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 299-300)

Jan 42: *Stabarzt Lierow (6. ID)* administered a drug, *Pervitin*, at beginning of winter, 1941, apparently to combat exhaustion. (see diary entry, **5.1.42**) *Pervitin*, a *stimulant* similar to amphetamine, and commonly known as speed today, was “the German army’s wonder drug...*Pervitin* was generally viewed as a proven drug to be used when soldiers were likely to be subjected to extreme stress...Although *Pervitin* was classified as a restricted substance on **1 Jul 41**, under the Opium Law, ten million tablets were shipped to troops that same year...” (“*Hitler’s Drugged Soldiers*, Andreas Ulrich, *Spiegel Online*, 6 May 05)

Jan 42 [Brandt fact-finding mission]: Dr Karl Brandt’s influence w/ Hitler was at its zenith. Seeing the Fuehrer almost daily at his field HQ, he was well-informed of the overall military situation. . . Upon his return from one of his journeys to the eastern front in the winter of **1941/42**, the Reich Minister for Armaments and Munitions, Fritz Todt, told the assembled generals that the medical organization of the Army was inadequate. Having inspected places such as Viasma, Smolensk and Minsk, Todt had concluded that there was a serious lack of medical supplies and services, which was killing thousands of men in the freezing conditions. Wounded soldiers were not transferred to the rear. Inadequate facilities brought medical care almost to a standstill. Although Todt’s description of the situation was met w/ disbelief at Fuehrer HQ, Brandt suggested that such conditions could and should be improved.

By **Jan 42**, Brandt was dispatched for **8-10** days on another of his fact-finding missions, this time to the eastern front. Brandt recalled that he drove along the road from Smolensk to Moscow. . . After hours of travel, Brandt arrived in the small village of Viasma. There, along the railway station platform, he witnessed the *true horrors of war*, a scene which Goya could have created in his etchings entitled “The Disasters of War” (*Los desastres de la Guerra*), which recorded the unimaginable horrors of the Napoleonic invasion at the beginning of the 19th Century. It was an image Brandt would never forget:

Ten [**10**] big freight trains stood there, closed freight trains, all packed w/ the wounded. The temperature was between **35** and **40** degrees Celsius below zero. Some of the bandages and dressings of the wounded were actually frozen to the floor of the cars. The boilers [of the locomotives] had burst. A small number of medical personnel tried to help the wounded as much as they could, but it was, of course, practically impossible. In the **10** trains, there were approximately **10,000** wounded. At the railway station, there were two medical officers w/ a minimum of medical supplies, and these two officers were hardly able to stand any longer. In the village the small buildings which had been converted to receive the injured were overcrowded, and the situation for the wounded was similar. Agencies of the army, w/ which I came into contact, attempted to blame these conditions on a failure of the medical command. The same attitude was taken by the operational

staff of the army. The truth was that the medical services were to be blamed for the failure of the actual strategic command, especially for the inadequate supplies of winter clothing for our troops.⁴⁸⁰

Realizing there was a serious problem in the organization of medical supplies and in the management of medical care within the German Army, Brandt traveled further east in order to assess the seriousness of the situation:

I continued to travel along the road towards Moscow until I came to the central bandaging station for the troops [*Truppen- u. Hauptverbandplaetze*], and there I learned from those in charge of supplies that there were also complete inefficiencies here. About **30** Kilometers from Moscow, at a small station by the name of Moschaisk, freight trains had arrived w/ Soda water, all frozen and also completely unnecessary. The most urgently needed medical supplies were not on board the trains. Discussions w/ the responsible medical agencies in this area of the central sector showed that the army was *no longer capable of supplying medical aid*. About **10** kilometers away from the railway station in Viasma, which I mentioned before, was an airfield. At this airfield a medical officer had been stationed who had nothing to do, but who had orders not to leave the airfield.⁴⁸¹

Returning to Hitler's HQ, Brandt confirmed Todt's impressions. He told Hitler and his advisors that the "failure in providing for the care and transport of the wounded was grounded in the main fact that the army alone – after this critical situation had arisen – was not capable of controlling the situation, while at the same time, large contingents of materials etc. were handed out." [?] The only feasible way to alleviate the suffering of the soldiers, and salvage the situation, Brandt argued, was to use the personnel, facilities and supplies of the German air force and the navy. . . Hitler was forced to issue an explicit Fuehrer order to ensure that the different military services gave support to the army. Within **24** hours, and w/ the support of Hitler's personal courier squadron, Brandt managed to fly 45 medical officers from the medical HQs of the air force and the navy to the region around Viasma. Medical supplies were flown in from Koenigsberg. It was an attempt to stem the tide of a military medical catastrophe. . .

To stem the acute crisis among the troops, and remedy the shortages of medical personnel, Brandt proposed sending some of the remaining personnel of the "euthanasia" programme to the eastern front. He knew that these men and women were readily available after the "euthanasia" programme had been halted in **Aug 41**. From **Dec 41** to **Apr 42**, a group of **20** to **30** doctors, nurses and administrative personnel from the T-4 organization took part in the "Front Support Centre" (*Fronthilfe Mitte*), which was organized thru the Todt Organization. Their activities were concentrated on the area around Minsk – Smolensk, where they helped to gain control of a catastrophic medical and logistical situation by transferring soldiers in buses supplied by T-4 to rear area hospitals. There is also evidence . . . that they engaged in more sinister activities, and perhaps *killed severely wounded German soldiers* to "deliver" them from their suffering. One of the nurses later admitted that she had given German soldiers lethal injections because she believed they were "mad." (*U. Schmidt, Karl Brandt: The Nazi Doctor, 173-75*)

13.1.42: During the evacuation of positions, many German wounded froze to death because of shortages of blankets. The care for the wounded improved on 13 January, when **133** medical

⁴⁸⁰ **Note:** Appears this was taken from Brandt's testimony at Nuremberg trials (NDT-Records).

⁴⁸¹ **Note:** Also NDT-Records.

officers and 290 enlisted men were airlifted into the Army Gp Ctr area. In the Zone of Interior, the number of hospital beds proved insufficient, and schools had to be used as emergency hospitals. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 103)

Hossbach (31.ID): “Der Abtransport der Verwundeten in die Lazarette bereitete grosse Schwierigkeiten, da es an Transportraum mangelte und in den naechsten Tagen Schnee-verwehungen einsetzten.” This is *another theme of winter fighting*—the difficulty in timely transport of wounded/sick soldiers to rear area dressing stations or hospitals. Scarcity of villages (and *intact* villages) in central front, meant that there was often not enough room in the tiny peasant dwellings and barns for all wounded. Thus, some wounded/sick left out in cold; many died or suffered grievous frostbite. (*Hossbach*, 168)

*Bernard Haering*⁴⁸² (medic w/ unit of Hr.Gr.Sued): Served as medic on battlegrounds and among civilian populations of France, Poland, Russia. Impression of Russian people was of their *deep piety* and how they often shared their meager food and abundant faith. Also writes of the decency of some of his superiors who used to turn a blind eye when Haering would send home his wounded Russian prisoners. (*Embattled Witness*, front flap).

1.15: Relations w/ Civilian Population:

1.15.1: General:

Greeting by population: When we entered the *Ukraine* at the beginning of the war, the population received us in a way that was not only friendly but almost triumphant, as if we were liberators. People were in the streets when we entered their villages, offering milk, bread, honey, strawberries and other fine things to our exhausted men. Their excessive hopes had been kindled especially by the war prisoners of the First World War who had spent years in Germany, mostly as workers on farms. These ex-prisoners spoke well of Germans...[Note: According to *B. Haering*, this all changed after *two SS Regiments* moved into the Ukraine in about the fourth week of fighting (Jul 41): “Immediately, the attitude of the population toward us changed.” Russian troops also offered much stiffer resistance. Losses of Haering’s unit increased accordingly. (*Embattled Witness*, *B. Haering*, 49-50)

Russian people: With little information, and no faith in either the Soviet or German state, *each person had to weigh the options for his own survival*. In July 1941, thousands of local people joined the German side as *politzei*, agents of Nazi power in the occupied zones. (*Ivan’s War*, *C. Merridale*, 143)

Relations w/ civilian population: *E.M. Rhein* (6. ID) notes that German soldiers were *very disciplined*. If they committed offenses against Russian civilians, they were *very harshly dealt with*. Noted that the „*Wehrmachtausstellung hat mich innerlich kaputt gemacht, weil es ein Bild der dt. Soldaten gezeigt hat, was voellig wirklichkeitsfremd ist.*“ Notes that, while the Germans were advancing, Russian civilians mostly afraid when Germans came into their villages. Russian propaganda had told them that the Germans would *decapitate them!* Contact w/ civilians became more significant where the front became stagnant, and the Germans went over to the defensive.

⁴⁸² Paul Collins, in 5 Feb 99 article in *National Catholic Reporter*, calls Haering, “arguably the greatest Catholic moral theologian of the 20th Century and one of those most responsible for the renewal of contemporary Catholicism.” Haering has also been called the “father of modern moral theology” in Roman Catholic Church. He died in Jun 98, at age of 85.

In this phase, most contact w/ civilians was behind the HKL, in the villages there. „Dort gab es ueberwiegend eine gute Zusammenarbeit mit der Bevoelkerung.“ For example, he noted that Russian women were employed by the German *Feldkueche*, to peel potatoes, etc. They also washed the soldiers clothing, repaired their boots, and performed other tasks. Often, very friendly relationships developed, even in some cases love relationships (or relationships w/ women, who felt that they would benefit in some way from them). During withdrawals, Rhein often experienced *Russian civilians crying* because the Germans were leaving and begging to be taken along. Rhein: „Je laenger die dt. Soldaten in einem russ. Quartier (Haus) lagen, desto enger wurden das gegenseitige Verstaendnis. Vor allem, die Frauen sahen, dass die dt. Soldaten Post bekommen hatten, u. den Russen Fotos von ihren Familien zeigten.“ German soldiers would stare at the photos for long periods of time; sometimes they would cry over them. The Russian women thought to themselves: „He could be my son.“ „Es entstand eine mitmenschliche Solidaritaet.“ Finally, Rhein notes that w/ visits of the *Kuratorium Rshew* to Russia since early 1990s (beginning 93 or 94), they met many Russians who said how well they were treated by the Germans.⁴⁸³ Several women said that they owed their lives to German soldiers. Met many Russians in Rshew who told them that, „die dt. Soldaten waren diszipliniertes als die Unsirgen.“ (Intvw, E.M. Rhein, IR 18/6. ID)

23.6.41: ...bei einem Halt kommt die ganze Dorfbevoelkerung zusammen u. bringt Eier u. Milch...Wir stellen Requirierungsscheine aus. (See also diary entry for **27.6.41**) (*Tagebuch Kummer*)

Aug 41: Nach der Kesselschlacht von Smolensk u. dem kommenden Einsatz bei Leningrad hatte das **XXXIX AK (mot.)** noch **9 Tage ruhe**. Hans Hertel berichtete aus jenen Tagen u.a.:

dass die Russen in Mjedwjenje, ostw. Smolensk, wo sich der Korpsgefechtsstand befand, die Kirche in einen Tanzsaal umgewandelt hatten. General Schmidt liess sie sofort saeuern u. von allem kommunistischen Propagandakram entruempeln. Dann bauten unsere Pioniere ein neues Gestuehl, u. die Kirche wurde mit Tannenreisern [*fir twigs*] u. Blumen geschmuet. Am Vormittag des naechsten Sonntags fand hier zunaechst ein dt. Gottesdienst mit Fuerbitten fuer die Gefallenen statt. Anschliessend wurde die Kirche den Russen uebergeben, die nachmittags ihren eigenen Gottesdienst hielten. Wir hatten mit vielen Muehen bei Smolensk einen Popen aufgetrieben, der als einer der wenigen Geistlichen die Revolution ueberlebt hatte. Als der weisshaarige Greis in seinem Ornat die Kirche betrat, war diese ueberfuellt. Draussen standen noch einige Tausende. Viele waren aus **50** Kilometer Entfernung gekommen, um dem ersten Gottesdienst seit mehr als **20** Jahren beizuwohnen. Ich habe nie in meinem Leben eine so ergriffene Gemeinde erlebt.

(H. Hertel, *Generation im Aufbruch*, 289; quoted in: *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 116-17)

10.8.41: Heute hat in *Smolensk* in der Kathedrale der erste orthodoxe Gottesdienst stattgefunden; es soll ganz fantastisch gewesen sein, die Popen hatten ihre versteckten Meßgewänder wieder vorgeholt, die Chöre sollen hervorragend gewesen sein u. das Gotteshaus war uebervoll von der Zivilbevoelkerung. Das ist unsere beste Propaganda“ (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*)

⁴⁸³ **Note:** I observed this myself during my visit to *Rshew* with the *Kuratorium* in **May 2005**.

30.8.41: Der Fuehrer will nicht, dass in Russland die Kirchen wieder geoeffnet werden u. das Christentum wieder auflebt u. so was nennt sich Kreuzzug gegen den Bolschewismus u. Atheismus! (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

Sep 41 [*anecdote*]: For ca. 10 days in late Sep., *Panzerjaeger* coy of **14. ID (mot.)** quartered w/ division in area of *Welisch*. Specifically, coy billeted in village of *Nowonytschi*. There, it quickly developed friendly relations w/ the local population. The Russians wanted to see photos of the German soldiers' families and homeland. They were starved for information and deeply curious. One day, the Germans were even invited by the town's mayor to a *Tanzveranstaltung*. When they finally moved out in late September, all the inhabitants of the villages turned out to send them off – the men, women and children ran along side the *Zugmaschinen* waving and shouting, while some tossed bread into the Germans' vehicles. Others cried. Moreover, during the unit's stay in the village, it had received 90 liters of milk each day from the inhabitants. (*H. Martin, Weit war der Weg, 14. ID (mot.)*, 58-61)

Oct 41: W. Dicke's *Pi-Zugtrupp* quartered in Oct 41 with a Russian schoolteacher (*Lehrerin*) who taught German. They listen repeatedly to records *mit dt. Schlagern*. (See, *Dicke Memoiren*, 50)

12.10.41: *Dearest Father...*(K. Fuchs goes on to describe w/ great pride how his unit beat back Russian breakout attempt in the *Vyazma Kesselschlacht*...In the evening, *civilians helped us reload our machine guns*. You cannot imagine how glad they were to have been freed of Bolshevism...Your loyal son, Karl. (*Fuchs*, 137-8)

Numerous examples in *Grossmann Tagebuch* of efforts of Germans to get along with and even support Russian villagers.

According to F. Strienitz: "Der Verkehr dt. Truppen mit der russ. Zivilbevoelkerung hatte keine groessere Bedeutung. Das ist vor allem darauf zurueckzufuehren, dass sich auf dt. Seite der ganze Verkehr beschaenkt auf den unmittelbaren Frontraum (zwei bis 3 km) vollzog." (*Strienitz, Sonderfragen*)

24.10.41: Spähtrupp. Ich ziehe los mit Gewehr...viele Zivilisten hin und her mit Säcken Kartoffeln und Brot...eine Frau ruft uns zu vorsichtig zu sein; gestern waren noch 20 bewaffnete Russen hier in der *Stadt Nisch*...wollen rechts und links der Bahnstrecke die Häuser durchkämmen...gleich im ersten Dorf *werden wir mit Milch und frischem Brot bewirtet*...beim Rückmarsch durchstreifen wir das ganze Straßendorf; bekommen immer Milch angeboten, der einzige Reichtum dieser Leute! (*Tagebuch Rupp, 17. PD*)

Oct-Nov 41: Russian population in captured German areas experiencing acute food shortages. As German soldiers at the front were trying to help the Russian people, the **OKH** felt compelled to intervene. It issues a secret directive on **1 Nov 41**, concerning "*Die Ernaehrung der Front u. der Heimat. Richtlinien fuer die Behandlung in Frontzeitungen. . .*" It orders absolute ruthlessness in behavior of German troops. For details see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 103-04; 124, f.n. 187)

Okt-Nov 41 [*relations w/ population*]: In unserem aus zwei Raeumen bestehenden Quartier [in village of *Pokrow*] wohnte eine Frau mit zwei kleinen Kindern...Manchmal kam die Mutter zu uns herueber an den Ofen, um eine Krautsuppe zu kochen, die zum groessten Teil aus Wasser bestand, zu der sie ihr selbstgebackenes, saures, klebiges Brot assen. Die *Armut*, die zu ihrem Lebensstil gehoerte, war fuer uns Deutsche *erschreckend*...Deshalb tasteten wir den kleinen

Kartoffelvorrat im Keller unseres Hauses auch nicht an...Anfang Nov. nahm ich an so einer Fahrt teil [i.e., to find food – mainly potatoes – for his unit, which now had to feed itself as supply transports not getting thru due to rain and mud]...Unser Trupp, bestehend aus acht Mann, erhielt zwei *Panjewagen* mit je einem Pferd. Aufgrund der Anwesenheit von *Partisanen* in der Gegend, die *uns von der Bevoelkerung gemeldet worden waren* traten wir stark bewaffnet...den Marsch an. (H. Martin, *Weit war der Weg*, 14. ID (mot.), 66-67)⁴⁸⁴

Nov 41: 6. ID dealings with *local population*. At this time, hundreds of village dwellers had to be removed from several villages in the front line and transported back to the rear. This accomplished by division w/ care and planning. Relocated persons handed over to the village mayors. Grossmann: *Unsere Einstellung der Bevoelkerung gegenueber war, wie ersichtlich, fuersorglich u. kameradschaftlich.* (Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. ID*, 88)

Nov-Dec 41: Brief von *Gefreiter August Freitag* (6. ID) an seine Familie: „Ankunft am 1. November, *Allerheiligen*, wir hatten uns in ein sehr schönes Eck einquartiert mit allem Nötigen, um unsere Pferde zu füttern. Die Zivilisten kochten Bratkartoffeln für uns und danach gingen wir ins Bett. *Durch unseren ewigen Heißhunger war unsere Abneigung, gegen alles Russische verschwunden.*“ (73); „Als das Schicksal des Krieges sich nach und nach von den deutschen Fahnen abwandte, waren uns die Zivilisten der Dörfer und Städte nicht mehr zugetan, denn sie spürten, dass jetzt ein anderer Wind wehte.“ (93); Russische Frauen helfen deutsche Verletzte zu pflegen. (97) (*La Guerre a L'Est, August v. Kageneck*)

Dec 41: August Freitag (6. ID) describes withdrawal of his unit from a Russian village. They have orders to torch the village (“saemtliche Schuppen, Scheunen, Staelle u. Getreidemieten wurden niedergebrannt, um den immer staerker nachdraengenden Feind zu behindern.”) Freitag describes the reaction of civilian population (women, children, etc.); and his own reaction to the terrible scene (“Noch nie in meinem Leben hatte ich soviel Elend gesehen, nein, ich haette es mir nicht einmal denken koennen.”). About the „scorched earth“ policy he writes: „Dies war ein harter Befehl, der nur zu deutlich den Kampf um Sein oder Nichtsein kennzeichnete. Entweder Du stirbst u. Ich lebe oder umgekehrt. Der Kampf glich gewissermassen einem sinkenden Schiff, welches nur fuer **50%** seiner Besatzung Rettungsboote beihat.“ (For this gripping account see, *A. Freitag, Aufzeichnungen*, 74-75)⁴⁸⁵

16.12.41 [*Anecdote / Kursk*]: Very funny – yet instructive story – of German *Oberfeldwebel* disrespecting a Russian woman. Her son recites the event: German soldier pounds on their door; grasps his mother’s chin; pats her on the bottom, demands her help w/ *Schneerauemen*, etc. She is outraged; responds with, “das ist doch *unbestaendig*,” when what she meant to say was “*unanstaendig*”! Day or two later, two German *Quartiergaeste* arrive at the home. The woman breaks into tears and relates to them how she was mistreated by their comrade. They assure her it will not happen again. Several days later, the *Oberfeldwebel* returns, but his behavior has changed 180 degrees! He knocks gently on the door, w/ his field cap in his hand; in a soft voice, he gently requests the woman’s help with *Schneerauemen*, etc. See story for rest of details. (*Wadim Juschenko, Echolot*, 485-86)

⁴⁸⁴ **Note:** Martin also writes: “Die Einwohner der benachbarten, unbesetzten Doerfer meldeten immer wieder der Kompanie, dass die *Partisanen* ihnen nachts das Vieh aus den Staellen hollten. (68)

⁴⁸⁵ Freitag: “Die Naechte waren hell erleuchtet von den unzaehlichen brennenden Doerfern, die deutlich den Verlauf der Front anzeigten. Die Flammen zuengelten gen Himmel, als wollten sie das ganze Elend zu Gott empfortragen, um ihn um Erbarmen anzuflehen.” (75)

25.12.41: On Christmas Eve I was ordered to take my [Pz IV] platoon back to Trotzkowskoje again. . . [Platoon spends night in several houses of the village.] The next day we had mail call and we got all our Christmas packages on Christmas day. . . We sang Christmas songs and ate our cookies, candies, some extra rations, and we also drank some schnapps. We invited the Russian peasants in, gave them some cookies and some good stuff and let them celebrate Christmas w/ us. They lived in the kitchen of the house, we in the livingroom. The next morning we could not find our boots. We opened the door to the kitchen and all five pairs of boots were there, neatly lined up. They were cleaned and shined, and they put fat on them so the snow would not penetrate the leather and we could keep our feet dry. Our hosts obviously wanted to thank us. We got along w/ these Russians very, very well. (*R. Hertenstein* [tank cdr in Pz IV w/ 13. PD], *Experiences of a German Panzer Cdr*, 42-43)

15.1.42: Hier in *Orel* hat die Armee eine „Bunte Bühne“ aufgemacht; da waren wir heute! *Russische Künstler und Künstlerinnen*, die sehr beachtliche Darbietungen zeigen; meist Gesang, was den Russen ja besonders liegt. Diese russischen Chorgesänge sind sehr stimmungsvoll, etwas schwermütig, aber wundervolle Stimmen, besonders die Bässe. Nur sahen die Künstler alle schrecklich heruntergekommen und verhungert aus, teilweise ganz alte Menschen, denen man ansah, dass sie früher mal bessere Zeiten erlebt haben. Sehr beachtlich waren die Tänze und der rasende Beifall unserer Landser, besonders wenn Mädchen auftraten, trotzdem sie alles andere als schön waren. (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*)

Winter 41/42: ...*B. Haering's* regiment was stationed for several weeks in a large village named *Mal Psinka*. During this time, Haering took good care of not only his men but of wounded Russian prisoners. Also attended to the sick and wounded among the civilians...Several weeks later, Haering's unit moved to a small Russian town about 20 miles from front, where he continued his work. He befriended the mayor of the town. One evening Mayor discussing how disillusioned he and others had now become due to crimes committed by Hitler's men and the bad behavior of many German officers and officials. He says: "But if all the German officers would treat our people *like the doctor in Mal Psinka*, I'm sure the war would go differently." Haering responded: "Do you know this doctor personally." Mayor: "Unfortunately, I do not, *but everyone has heard about how generously he cared for our Russian soldiers and civilians there.*" (*B. Haering, Embattled Witness*, 52-3)⁴⁸⁶

In **Mar 42**, H. Haape checked Russian civilians for T.B. and inoculated them against typhus and paratyphus. These included large number of Russian girls, who helped out in the German field kitchens. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 348)

Bernard Haering (medic/priest), was "touched by the living, active [religious] faith of these humble Russian people...Not only in their daily living did these simple people manifest their faith. They evidenced it at times even to the point of martyrdom." Later he writes: "The courtesy and kindness of these persecuted people was almost beyond belief." (*Embattled Witness*, 28-29) (Note: See also his experiences in *Stalingrad Kessel*—how he led 300 men out of the encirclement with the help of Russian civilians, who treated him and his men w/ such compassion and mercy.) (86-88)

1.15.2: *Hilfswilligen* ("Hiwis"):

⁴⁸⁶ Note: This is example of "what might have been," if Germans had adhered to humane occupational policies.

Note: Rund eine Million sowj. Kriegsgefangene u. Ueberlauerer, so schaezte der renommierte Freiburger Militaerhistoriker Dr. Joachim Hoffmann, dienten als Kaempfer oder Helfer bei der dt. Wehrmacht – unter ihnen etwa **400 000** „Hiwis.“ . . . BILD am SONNTAG-Leser Martin Drechsler, einst bei einer Pioniereinheit der Waffen-SS Division „Das Reich:“

Anfangs setzten wir gefangene Russen zu Arbeiten ein. Wer sich dabei bewaehrte, den haben wir uebernommen. Er bekam unsere Uniform, allerdings ohne Kragenspiegel. In der Kompanie hatten wir schliesslich **60** Russen. Sie haetten oft Gelegenheit gehabt, abzuhauen. Doch keiner tat es. [*End Drechsler quote*]

„Hiwis“ lenkten Versorgungs-Lkws, schaelten Kartoffeln, beschulgen Pferde, hoben Deckungsloecher aus, dolmetschten fuer den „Spiess.“ meint heute ein ehem. Grenadier. Wenn im Winter die Motoren nicht ansprangen oder die Waffen einfroren, dann liessen wir unsere Hiwis ran. Sie wussten, wie man improvisiert.

(Source: „*Russland-Feldzug – wie es wirklich war*“, *Bild am Sonntag*, 1 Nov [no year given])

See, **H. Haape**, for numerous examples of how *Hiwis* worked loyally for the German Army; how Russian women and girls helped out in the sick bay w/ the wounded, or massaged the frost-bitten feet of German soldiers, etc. (252)

Due to ever-increasing shortages of soldiers at the front, Germans made increased use of Russian POWs and women to perform various tasks. Thus, Russian prisoners and Russian women did fatigue duty, building roads and trenches. They also worked as drivers, assistant cooks and sometimes as typists and interpreters. This enabled the Russians to infiltrate spies into the Wehrmacht and thus find out about German intentions more easily. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 153, f.n. 10)

Overview: Bis Ende Nov 41 waren **740,000** Mannschaften, Uffz. u. Offiziere ausgefallen, u. nur **400,000** Mann waren als Ersatz eingetroffen. Die dt. Verbaende an der Ostfront waren auf sich selbst angewiesen. Sie mussten den Fehlbestand mit eigenen Kraeften ergaenzen. Man begann, Mannschaftsdienstgrade fuer die Kampfverbaende an der Front freizusetzen, indem man in den Versorgungsverbaenden an ihrer Stelle sowjet. Kriegsgefangene u. Personen aus der Zivilbevoelkerung als *Hilfspersonal* heranzog u. sie als Wagenlenker, Pferdeknechte, Munitionstraeger, Koeche, Baecker, Schmiede u. in aehnlichen Funktionen verwendete. An der Front hatten besonders die *Pioniere* einen grossen Bedarf ans Hilfspersonal. Zum Brueckenbau wurden u.a. Holzfaeller, Zimmerleute u. Materialtraeger benoetigt. In den Instandsetzungswerkstaetten arbeiteten die Hilfskraefte als Schlosser, Schmiede, Schreiner, Wagner, Fahrer u. Hilfsarbeiter. Wenn keine dt. Uniformen, in der Regel anfangs nur Drillichanzuege, fuer sie vorhanden waren, trugen sie als Unterscheidungsmerkmal zu den Kriegsgefangenen eine *weisse Armbinde* mit der Aufschrift „*Im Dienst der dt. Wehrmacht*“ auf ihrer russ. Uniform . . . Man nannte sie *Hiwis*. Mit wenigen Ausnahmen bewaehrten sie sich als fleissige u. treue Helfer. Die Verwendung von Hiwis auf Posten, die nicht im Stellenplan der *Wehrmacht* vorgesehen waren, beispielweise als Offiziersburschen, war untersagt. Die *Verpflegungssatz*, der ihnen zugewiesen wurde, war der gleiche wie fuer dt. Soldaten. Nach einer dreimonatigen *Probezeit* u. der offiziellen Registrierung als „*Freiwilliger des Hilfsdienstes*“ erhielten sie auch *Dienstbezeuge in drei Soldstufen* u. hatten Anspruch auf Zusatzverpflegung u. Marketenderwaren . . .

Zur Sicherung der riesigen besetzten Gebiete, in denen die *Partisanengefahr* von Woche zu Woche wuchs, entschlossen sich die Befehlshaber der ruckwaertigen Heeresgebiete, vertrauenswuerdigen Hilfswilligen Beutewaffe in die Hand zu druecken u. sie zur Bewachung von Depots u. Nach-schubstrecken heranzuziehen. Auch die Orts- u. Kreiskommandanten benoetigten zum Schutz der Siedlungen ihres Bereichs bewaffnetes Personal. So entstanden „*Hilfsmannschaften*“ u. „*Sicherungseinheiten*“ aus Freiwilligen. Zu ihnen gehoerten Rotarmisten, die nach ihrer Gefangennahme nach Hause geschickt worden waren, Deserteure u. Reservisten der Roten Armee u. waffenkundige Ortsansaeessige. Sie meldeten sich aus verschiedenen Gruenden. Die einen dachten an die *Sonderverpflegung* fuer sich u. ihre Familien, die anderen hassten den Bolschewismus, der unter ihren Angehoerigen Opfer gefordert hatte, die dritten glaubten an die Versprechungen der Besatzungsmacht, dass die *Kolchosen* aufgeloeset wuerden u. das Land in *Privateigentum* uebergehen wuerde, u. wieder andere waren beeindruckt, dass die *Kirchen* fuer den orthodoxen Gottendienst wieder geoeffnet wurden. Dass sich auch *Agenten* u. *Spione* einschlichen, wurde erste spaeter deutlich.

Im **OKH** hatte man von dieser Entwicklung nur *unklare Vorstellungen*. Das **OKW** kuemmerte sich ueberhaupt nicht darum. Auch Hitler war ueber den Umfang, in dem Hiwis u. bewaffnete Hilfswachmannschaften eingesetzt wurden, nicht informiert . . . In den dt. Streitkraeften dienten waehrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges mindestens **800,000** Angehoerige der Sowjetunion in den verschiedensten Bereichen. Die *Isvestija* vom **23 Jun 95** bestaetigte die Zahl. (*F. Seidler, Hilfstruppen*, 56-60)

13.12.41: Alle Truppen haben sich aus dem Grunde [i.e., terrible weather; slick, ice covered roads, etc.] *Panje-Kolonnen gebildet* mit dem landesueblichen Panje-Schlitten. Ganz niedrige, fast auf dem Boden rutschende, breite, aus Holz ganz primitiv gezimmerte Schlitten mit einem oder zwei Panje-Pferden davor, mit dem typisch russischen Holzbuegel ueber der Deichselgabel. *So sieht man jetzt ueberall neben der Truppe diese Panje-Kolonnen fahren, und auf dem Schlitten friedlich nebeneinander frierend der Panje und unsere Landser*. Der Panje freut sich ueber diese Verwendung mitsamt seinem Pferd, weil er was zu fressen bekommt, und er faehrt unbekuemmert wochenlang mit der deutschen Truppe, ohne sich Sorgen zu machen, ob er heim darf und seine Familie je wieder sieht. *Der einzelne Mensch und sein Schicksal spielen eben in Russland gar keine Rolle*. Wer umkommt, ist eben weg, und zehn andere treten sofort an seine Stelle. Der Menschenvorrat ist ja unerschoepflich. Das fiel in Kaganowitsch auch wieder besonders auf. Diese Arbeiterfamilien hatten jede mindestens 8 – 10 Kinder. Bei solchem Nachwuchs macht es doch gar nichts aus, wenn Tausende im Kampfe fallen oder Zehntausende gefangen genommen werden. An Menschenersatz fehlt es nicht, und wenn wir auch noch Jahre Krieg gegen die Sowjets fuehren sollten, was Gott verhueten moege. (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*)

Feb 42: To supply his operations south of *Rshew*, on the western face of the salient around the city (above *Sychevka*), General Raus (**6. PD**) used local *panje* sleds driven by some 800 Russian volunteer auxiliaries under German control and supervision. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 111)

1.16: Partisan Warfare:

1.16.1: Background:

Note: In Vietnam war der Partisanenkrieg auf beiden Seiten nicht weniger grausam als im Osten u. von den Amerikanern wurden dort kaum weniger Doerfer niedergebrannt als von den

Deutschen in der Sowjetunion. In Algerien wandte die franzoesische Armee fortlaufend die Folter an u. aehnliche Taten ereigneten sich im Balkan u. im Nahen Osten. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 141-42)

Note: Armed civilians participating in the fighting [on eastern front] came under the heading of irregulars according to the unambiguous terms of the Hague Convention on Land Warfare, as well as the common usage of war; they enjoyed no protection under international law. This applies also to Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, executed by German troops on **29 Nov 41** for arson; this young woman is presented as a shining example to the youth of the Soviet Union. "Deplorable though the fate of the young Komsomol girl may have been, it should not be overlooked that it was inevitable under the merciless laws of war." (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 908)

Guerilla warfare is as "*old as time itself*." Partisan operations do not conform to any hard and fast tactical doctrine or principles that have general applicability. The partisan fighter is *unpredictable and unscrupulous*. His weapons are usually simple in design and limited in number. They achieve deadly effectiveness in the hands of a tough, crafty group of individuals who operate almost entirely independent of normal logistical support. Proficient in camouflaging their activities, these men spread a *reign of terror* over the civilian population of their own country. During their initial encounters w/ partisans, combat troops usually tend to *underestimate the importance and effectiveness of these irregular forces*. What a fallacy! In most instances, partisans are *energetic and relentless men* [and women!] *driven by a fanatic belief in their cause*. (*CHM Pub. 104-22, Small Unit Actions*, 264)

Many Red Army units caught behind German lines in the initial invasion did not surrender. Instead, they melted into the forests and swamps, to re-emerge when the German forces passed eastwards. As early as **Jul 41**, German cdrs were reporting attacks well behind the lines, launched by cut-off units of the Red Army and local volunteers. The Partisan War had begun. Yet despite previous association w/ guerrilla warfare, the Soviet regime discovered a *severe shortage* of experienced guerrilla cdrs in **1941**. Stalin had executed most of the Bolshevik „Old Guard,“ and there had been *no preparation for resistance activity in the late 1930s*. All pre-war Soviet war plans assumed a conventional war in which the Red Army would take the offensive. By early **1942**, the Partisan movement had *yet to make a serious impact on the war*. While a central command system had been established in Moscow to coordinate the campaign behind the lines, there were probably no more than **30,000** guerrillas in the field. However, a nuclear had been created. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 74)

OKH and several senior field cdrs *initially underestimated the threat posed by the partisans*, and thus refused to divert sufficient troops to the rear to combat the partisans *in cooperation w/ the FATs (Frontaufklaerungstrupps)* of the *Abwehr*. The consequences of this *insouciance* for the Germans is well-known. (*D. Thomas*, 273)

„In den ersten Kriegsmonaten stiess die *Wehrmacht* auf ueberwiegend schlecht organisierte Partisanengruppen, die trotz Stalins Aufruf *keinerlei militaerische Bedeutung* erlangten. Dennoch dehnten das **OKW** u. das **OKH** die Definition, wer als Freischaerler zu behandeln sei, weiter aus. Neben bloss Verdachtigen u. versprengten Rotarmisten toeteten Wehrmachtseinheiten auch Zivilisten, insbesondere Juden, die generell unter Verdacht standen, Partisanen zu sein oder diese zu unterstuetzen. Festgenommene sollten im Verhoer routinemaessig geschlagen, gefoltert, im sogenannten „strengsten Verhoer“ anschliessend getoetet werden.“ (<http://www.verbrechen-der-wehrmacht.de>)

Hillgruber notes that partisan warfare corresponded to Soviet military theory and also to Russian traditions. „Doch ist das Ausmass, dass der Partisanenkrieg im Osten gewann, nur als Folge des *Vernichtungskriegs-Konzepts* der dt. Fuehrung erklarbar; denn diese dt. „*Ostpolitik*“ war bereits nach wenigen Wochen „unwiderruflich gekennzeichnet von dem *Massenmord* an Kriegsgefangenen u. dem systematischen Vernichtungsfeldzug des SD.“ (Hillgruber, *Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 454)

Note: The intangible effects of partisan war were even more telling [i.e., than the material effects]. The growth of the partisan struggle and its increasingly measurable successes had an exceptionally important psychological impact on the course of the war overall. First of all, it raised the morale of many millions of Soviet people who lived in the rear area. This, in turn, further fuelled the flames of partisan war. On the other hand, successful partisan activity had a clearly demoralizing effect on German leaders and soldiers alike. The effect was more than just psychological. Beyond the simple calculation of material losses inflicted by partisan operations, *German soldiers and their units simply could not feel completely secure either at the front or in their rest areas during periods of combat inactivity.* . . . German troops developed a **moral fear** of the Soviet partisans. Rumors of torture by partisans combined w/ an almost instinctive dread of the cruel Russian winter led some German soldiers to *commit suicide rather than report to stations or units in the East.* (L. Grenkevich, *Soviet Partisan Movement*, 214)

The partisan activity that the Germans encountered immediately after the invasion of Russia was **entirely unexpected**. [?] German officers who had fought against the Russians in WWI remembered that, when overrun or cut off, the *Russians of that day stoically accepted their fate as prisoners of war.* In WWI, it was not unusual for two or three German soldiers on bicycle or horseback to escort as many as 500 Russian prisoners to a distant collecting point. Small groups of captives were often sent to the rear in the custody of the ranking POW. *Independent operations by isolated or by-passed groups were practically unknown.* In relying on their experiences from WWI, the Germans *overlooked that the Russian Army of 1941 was not a mere continuation of the armies of the Czars, but rather a force born of a long and bitter revolutionary struggle* in which the ends justified the means. It took but a few days to shock the Germans into the realization that the Russian soldier of 1941 *followed concepts different from those of his forebears of World War One.* . . . Isolated Russian soldiers considered it their duty not only to continue the struggle as partisans but also to enlist civilians in their cause. (CHM Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 264)

Note: The Communist Party's disregard of life and its contempt for any form of humanity and decency was one of the decisive factors in the recruiting and control of the partisan movement. In the early part of the war, the indigenous population was not hostile to the Germans, and some White Russians, Ukrainian, Tartar and Cossack elements welcomed them. During the summer, the German treatment of the population of the occupied territories lost them much popularity. During the autumn, small partisan elements in radio touch w/ Moscow became firmly established in the German rear areas, and these increased in size and influence by terrorizing the local population or making the Germans do their work for them. Failure to co-operate w/ the partisans meant death, sometimes of a most terrible kind, or reprisals against relatives who were living in the Soviet Union. The partisans sometimes committed atrocities against the occupying power, apparently for no other reason than to attract German reprisals on to the heads of the innocent local population. In this they were only too successful. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 221-22)⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁷ **Note:** The activity of Red Army stragglers or units cut off in the woods behind the German lines was distinct from that of the partisan movement which, although controlled by Moscow or the subordinate

Note: In der sowj. Militaergeschichtschreibung wird der Partisanenkampf durchgehend als heroischer Widerstand gegen die dt. Okkupanten beschrieben, der von der Bevoelkerung aktiv unterstuetzt wurde. Mit der Wirklichkeit hat dies wenig gemein. Eine kuerzlich von der **BBC** unter Leitung von Professor Kershaw hergestellte Serie, "War in the East" hebt die Grausamkeit hervor, mit der russische Partisanen gegen die eigene Zivilbevoelkerung vorgingen u. zeigt, dass die Landbevoelkerung oft die Partisanen nicht weniger fuerchtete als die Wehrmacht. Russische u. ukrainische Zeitzeugen berichten von Raub, Vergewaltigungen u. Ermordungen ihrer Familienmitglieder durch Partisanen. Hinrichtungen von Einwohnern der eigenen Landbevoelkerung werden in Filmaufnahmen gezeigt, wie auch Bilder von Leichen gefangengenommener dt. Soldaten, die von den Partisanen graesslich verstummt worden waren. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 141-42)

Note: Zu verurteilen sind gewiss die Veraechtlichmachung der Partisanen durch die Bezeichnung "Banditen," die spektakulaeren oeffentlichen Hinrichtungen mit Schimpfplakaten u. die Morde an den Juden durch die Einsatzgruppen, die oft unter dem Deckmantel "Partisanen" durchgefuehrt wurden. Dieser terminologische Kunstgriff [*trick; artifice*] wurde in den ersten Nachkriegswerken⁴⁸⁸ vielfach nicht beachtet u. trug dazu bei, der dt. Partisanenbekaempfung einen besonders verbrecherischen Stempel aufzudruecken. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 141, f.n. 483)

Equipping the partisans (1941/42):

One of the most acute problems partisan formations faced was the procurement of necessary wpons and ammunition. In **1941**, their supply of armaments from the rear was woefully insufficient, and this forced partisan units to *collect arms and ammunition primarily from the battlefield*. Ironically, the large-scale defeat of Soviet forces in the initial period of the war benefited the partisans by *strewing immense quantities of military hardware and supplies across the Soviet countryside*. Owing to their precipitous advance, the Germans could not recover or destroy this material. Thus, simply by scavenging, partisan units equipped themselves w/ small arms and even heavy weaponry (in several instances even tanks) recovered from the battlefield.

The weapons and ammunition stockpiles designated for use in peacetime pre-military training at Soviet secondary or vocational schools and centres were another lucrative source of supply for the partisans. Pre-military training centres were distributed all across the face of the pre-war Soviet Union, and, collectively, they possessed numerous small and well-hidden supply dumps. Finally, during their withdrawal, regular Red Army forces often left behind hidden wpons, ammunition, and equipment catches for guerilla use. . . Of particular value to the partisans were the thousands of land mines that Soviet sappers [combat engineers] had laid before and during the war. The rapidly advancing Germans either missed them or lacked the time necessary to disarm

fronts, received the bulk of its recruits and support from the local indigenous population. Whereas the partisan movement was negligible during **1941**, the uncoordinated hostile activity of military detachments in the German rear was widespread and took the form of attacks on convoys and installations. Eventually, these detachments were destroyed or made their way back to Soviet lines. Sometimes wpons and uniforms were thrown away and the soldiers hid among the civilian population, a few of them to re-emerge as partisans later in the war. (221, f.n. 20)

⁴⁸⁸ **Note:** Stein writes that one can simply "push aside" most of the early works following WWII on German anti-partisan ops. In his view, these works [which attribute a particularly criminal character to German anti-partisan operations] have been overtaken by conflicts since that time, such as Algeria, Vietnam, etc., where the same counterinsurgency methods were employed as used by the Germans on eastern front. (141)

them. Since they often knew from Red Army soldiers where these mines were located, partisans removed them and employed them in their operations. . .

In **1941**, the partisans also procured wpns and ammunitions from the Germans by theft, by killing individual soldiers, or by capturing them in combat. For example, during the period from **Aug-Sep 41**, partisans in the Vitebsk region seized **738** German rifles and **21** I.M.G., primarily in combat. Overall, based on a thorough study of archive materials, the Belorussian historian Iakubovsky concluded that in **1941** Belorussian partisans seized from the enemy **3** artillery pieces, **133** M.G., **124** sub-machine guns, **1125** rifles, **3** radio sets, about **30,000** rifle cartridges, and **750** hand grenades. . .

All of these measures aside, in **1941** the Soviet government organized a formal centralized supply system to equip and supply partisan forces, although, admittedly, it was not as effective as the system that evolved later in the war. . .

Finally the partisans also drew equipment and supplies from Red Army central supply depots. In this manner, according to official Soviet documents, by the end of the winter **1941/42**, Belorussian partisans had received a total of **9560** rifles and carbines, **265** sub-machine guns, **3800** pistols, **30,000** hand grenades, **125,000** cartridges for sub-machine guns, **1,710,000** rifle cartridges, and **15** tons of high explosives. They also received other materials necessary to conduct partisan warfare, such as spare gun barrels, binoculars, flare pistols, etc. As the Nazi advance continued and German forces overran or destroyed these depots, the High Command assigned the Red Air Force the mission of delivering wpns and ammunition to the partisans. . .

In addition to such items as rifles, light MGs, pistols, sub-machine guns, etc., the guerillas often also needed heavier infantry wpns to survive in combat against the better armed and trained Germans.⁴⁸⁹ This meant mortars, light AT guns, light field guns, etc. Despite clear need, the partisans never had more than a very limited quantity of these wpns. There were, of course, exceptions, particularly in the rear of Army Group Centre in winter **1941/42**, when some fortunate partisan detachments possessed heavy wpns, even tanks.⁴⁹⁰ . . . When the partisan force began its wholesale expansion in **1942**, the need for wpns, ammunition, and explosives increased dramatically. (*L. Grenkevich, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 163-68)

Anti-partisan Operations: The partisans were composed of *local people, Soviet soldiers cut off in the great encirclement battles of 1941, and specialists flown in from Moscow*. These partisans became an increasing menace to German troops and lines of communication. The German reaction to the partisan threat was *extremely savage*. All partisans were to be shot, and army and SS cdrs vied w/ each other in approving the toughest responses to the partisan threat. German soldiers were ordered to execute **50-100** civilians for every German death. Captured partisans were publicly shot or hanged w/ placards round their necks. German soldiers, often on the flimsiest pretext, and w/ help of *local militias or Cossacks*, would massacre entire villages. The **707. ID**, in White Russia in one month shot **10,431** alleged „partisans.“ Reprisals on this scale served only to increase recruitment for the partisan units hiding out in the forests and swamps of the region. In great anti-partisan sweeps, the Germans deployed panzer divisions and air fleets to clear areas of partisan activity, *tying down large numbers of troops*. Swaths of the ***Pripet Marches*** in White Russia were controlled by the partisans, forcing the Germans to send in troops to the heavily wooded and marshy wilderness to hunt them down. In the occupied zones of the

⁴⁸⁹ **Note:** Yet the partisans were waging an asymmetrical war – not trying to engage the Wehrmacht in conventional ground combat!

⁴⁹⁰ **Note:** Were these wpns “scavaged” from the battlefields of Vyazma and Bryansk?

USSR, ordinary German soldiers behaved quite differently than during their occupation in the West. Occupation troops would organize „man hunts“ on the slightest pretext, when villages were surrounded and the inhabitants forced out to be shot down. The soldiers would then *loot the homes for souvenirs*. In response to such terror, the partisans exacted what revenge they could. German *hospital trains were derailed* and the *occupants burned alive w/ paraffin*. Railways were a favorite target of the partisans. Defending the lines involved German troops travelling in *armored trains* and manning *blockhouses* along the line. Roads were unsafe and vehicles had to travel in convoys w/ heavy MGs mounted on trucks. Convoys were stopped by the simple expedient of trees felled across the road and then bullets pumped into the halted convoy. In the end, fear of partisans led *dispirited German troops* to carry out many acts of brutality. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 131-33)⁴⁹¹

The influence of *forests and swamps*—which abound in central European Russia—on military ops *plays a crucial role particularly in one respect, namely partisan warfare*. Partisan warfare was a festering, ever-spreading cancer. Anyone flying over occupied Russia in **1943/44** got an excellent picture of how far the disease had spread. Pilots *were issued maps on which partisan-infected areas were circled in red*. There were an amazing number of these red circles. Within each circle was a number, stating the minimum altitude for crossing the particular area. *Rovno, Borisov, Gomel, Bryansk, Vinitza*, and other places were marked **2500 meters (8300 feet)**, which meant that the partisans in those territories had *antiaircraft artillery*. (see, *FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 75-78)

Antipartisan ops required a *substantial number of forces* that otherwise might have fought at the front. Guarding rear lines of communication, particularly railroad lines and operating facilities, airdromes, ammunition and ration dumps, etc., absorbed hundreds of thousands of men. Despite the guard details, however, the rail lines were *blown up w/ clocklike regularity*. At times, the demolitions assumed such proportions that the *supply of the front became seriously endangered*. There were times when night traffic on vital feeder lines had to be completely shut down. The trains, *w/ sand cars ahead of the locomotives*, ran only during daytime, one train following w/in sight of the preceding one...Today, there is no longer any need to prove that the *partisans fought their war w/ unusual cruelty*. And if warfare in the east became more and more bitter, the *partisans contributed no small share toward that end*. (*FMS T-34, Terrain Factors*, 76-78)

1941-44 [Weissrussland]: Versprengte Rotarmisten bilden die Basis fuer *Partisanentrupps*, die Funktionaere der kommunistischen Partei u. der Staatssicherheit schon im Sommer **1941** aufbauen. Nach sowjet. Angaben waechst die Zahl der Partisanen im *dicht bewaldeten Weissrussland* von **12,000** im **Aug 41** ueber **122,600** im **Nov 43** auf **180,000** Kaempfer im **Mar 44** an. Ab Herbst **1942** versetzt der Untergrund den Besatzern vor allem im „*Schiienenkrieg*“ schwere Schlaege: durch das gezielte Sprengen von *Bahngleisen* u. vor allem Lokomotiven. In den *Waeldern Weissrusslands* entsteht eine *Gegenwelt des Widerstands* mit Lazaretten, Schulen, Feldkuechen u. Druckereien. Zur Untergrundarmee gehoeren auch dt. Kommunisten. Im **Mar 43**, raemen die Besatzungsbehoerden intern ein, in Weissrussland seien „*ganze Gebiete voellig ausser unserer Macht*.“ Etwa **35%** der Landwirtschaftsbetriebe in der Umgebung von *Minsk*, so Berichte vom **Feb 43**, befaenden sich unter Kontrolle der Partisanen. Es hilft den Besatzern nichts, dass sie **28** Fuehrer des *Minsker Untergrunds* im **Mai 42** oeffentlich hinrichten u. **251** erschliessen. Es nuetzt nichts, dass der Sicherheitsdienst der SS von *Lockspitzeln* [agents]

⁴⁹¹ See, p 133 for *ghoulish anecdote* involving partisans in *Mogilev* region: Heads of several German soldiers left in a leather box (w/ „Gelb,“ i.e., „Gold“ scrawled on it) and found by German soldiers lured to the spot by rumors of gold hidden on a nearby state farm.

Partisanengruppen aufbauen u. auffliegen laesst. Es rettet die Okkupanten nicht, dass sie Tausende *einheimische Polizisten* anwerben u. Kollaborateure in „*Wehrdoerfern*“ zusammenfassen – ein Modell, dass die Amerikaner zwei Jahrzehnte spaeter im Partisanenkrieg in Suedvietnam ebenso erfolglos kopieren. [?]

Die Kaempfer, die von der Besatzungsmacht nur „*Banditen*“ genannt werden, erhalten *bestaendig Zulauf*, auch durch *Zwangsrekrutierungen*. Nicht einmal jene zu *Raeuberbanden* verrohten Partisanentrupps, die bei Bauern Schnaps erpressen, in Doerfern pluendern u. morden, treiben die Weissrussen in die Arme der Besatzungsmacht. Auch eine von den Deutschen Ende **Dez 43** eingesetzte *Marionettenregierung* unter dem frueheren Gymnasialdirektor *Radoslaw Ostrowski* kann das nicht aendern. Sie bleibt isoliert u. machtlos. Fuer die *Partisanenbekaempfung* ist nach einer Weisung Hitlers vom **Aug 42** Reichsfuehrer-SS *Himmler* „*allein verantwortlich*.“ Die SS, darunter die aus Kriminellen rekrutierte Einheit des SS-Sturmbannfuehrers *Oskar Dirlewanger*, sieht sich im Kampf gegen „Untermenschen“ u. geht ab **Jun 42** wahllos zum Massenmord an weissrussischen Zivilisten ueber. Unter dem Vorwand der Partisanenbekaempfung ermorden SS-Einheiten die Bevoelkerung ganzer Doefer. Die Moerder in Uniform erschossen oder verbrennen Frauen, Kinder u. Greise bei lebendigem Leib in Scheunen u. Haeusern. *Kube*, der mit einem „*lebensbejahenden Geist kultureller Aufbauarbeit*“ die Weissrussen zu Verbundeneten Hitler-Deutschland machen moechte, *kritisiert das wahllose Morden*. In einem internen Bericht vom **Aug 43** klagt er, *Dirlewanger* fuehre mit den „*Methoden des 30-jaehrigen Krieges*“ einen „*ruecksichtslosen Vernichtungsfeldzug gegen die Zivilbevoelkerung*.“ Zur Zivilbevoelkerung rechnet er die weissrussischen Juden aber nicht – gegen *deren* Ermordung hat der kulturbeflissene Altnazi Kube nichts einzuwenden.

Angesichts des Terrors der Besatzer faellt es den Partisanen immer leichter, selbst bisherige Kollaborateure auf ihre Seite zu ziehen. Kube ahnte nicht, dass auch seine *Haushaltshilfe*, *Jelena Masanik*, eine Genossin der Partisanen ist. Am **22.9.43**, legt sie dem Generalkommissar, der kurz zuvor noch vor „*lichtscheuen Stalinbanditen*“ gewarnt hatte, eine *Haftmine* unters Bett, die ihn toetet. (*Klussmann, Gegenwelt im Wald*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 134-36)

C. Merridale discusses Soviet partisans—notes that *their main task was really to maintain the grip of Soviet power in areas occupied by the Germans*. Talks about the OSMBON, the Motorized Infantry Brigade of the NKVD, and its role in building up the resistance. By Nov 42, there were about 94,000 partisans behind German lines from the Baltic to the Crimea. Just under 10 percent of them were in the Smolensk region. (*Ivan's War*, 144)

Description of barbaric nature of (*Verton*, 111). Notes that German prisoners of partisans had eyes poked out, ears cut off, etc. Considers the partisan activity to have been inherently *illegal* (according to Hague Convention of 1907)—fighting w/o uniform of visible sign of rank.

The partisans were helped from the start by the Germans themselves [due to their extreme brutality]. On one occasion, the Germans burned down **158** villages as a single act of reprisal. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 467)

Sajer discusses *atrocities committed by partisans* against German soldiers – faces smashed open w/ axes, so that the gold teeth could be pulled out; the hideous agony of wounded men tied w/ their heads inside the gaping bellings of dead comrades; amputated genitals; Eller's section, found tied up and naked, on a day when temps dropped to **30 below zero**, w/ their feet thrust into a drinking trough which had frozen solid. (*Sajer*, 373)

Note: Stalin konnte sich zunehmend auf die anwachsende Partisanenbewegung stuetzen. Fuer den roten Diktator waren die Widerstandskaempfer vor allem wichtig, um die Bevoelkerung im

dt. Hinterland unter Druck zu halten. *Sie toeteten in einigen Regionen mehr kollaborierende Landsleute als dt. Soldaten.* [!] (Mueller, Duell im Schnee, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 123)

Note: There was no place in the ordered German military mind or *tactical doctrine* to deal w/ civilian irregulars. German soldiers considered it wrong, or somehow “unfair,” for the enemy to continue fighting in the rear after having been overrun or encircled, fighting on in a hopeless situation. In Russian, unlike in the West, the enemy refused to follow the convention of orderly surrender. Irregulars were termed “*bandits*” in German military parlance and treated as such. Thousands of Russian soldiers found themselves cut off from their parent formations during the huge encirclement battles. On **13 Sep 41**, **OKH** ordered that Soviet soldiers who reorganized after being overrun and then fought back were to be treated as partisans or “bandits.” In other words, they were to be executed. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 141)

Bei Rshew hatte die **9. Armee** u. die H.Gr.Mitte mit besonders starken Partisanenverbaenden zu kaempfen. Model hatte strenge Richtlinien zur Partisanenbekaempfung erlassen, aber es duerfte ausser Zweifel stehen, dass auch in seinen Kommandobereichen Exzesse stattfanden. In seinen Verbaenden waren kleinere SD-Einheiten vorhanden, die bei der Partisanenbekaempfung eingesetzt wurden. Die Mitwirkung des **SD** an der Partisanenbekaempfung wird in einer Reihe von **Ic** Berichten erwaeht u. als „zufriedenstellend“ bezeichnet. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 254)

1.16.2: German Rear Area Organization:

„So many military, civilian and SS authorities shared in anti-partisan policy and ops that the nominal Chief of Anti-Partisan Units (*Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski*) later characterized the situation as ‘*a wild state of anarchy.*’ . . . This administrative jungle of competing authorities [i.e., Army, SS, police, civilian authorities, etc.], which handicapped the formulation of a *coherent* anti-partisan policy . . .” (Mulligan, *Cost of People’s War*, 29)

Behind the Army Group Ctr rear area was the German civil administration – the *Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien*. Together w/ the Baltic States, *Weissruthenien* (literally, “White Ruthenia” or “White Russia”) constituted *Reichskommissariat Ostland*, under the nominal authority of Alfred Rosenberg’s *Reichsministerium fuer die besetzten Ostgebiete* (Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories). The military units stationed here were represented by an Armed Forces Cdr (*Wehrmachtbefehlshaber*) responsible to **OKW** [*accurate?*], but the police powers and security responsibilities resided w/ Heinrich Himmler’s SS. (Mulligan, *Cost of People’s War*, 29)

Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien: Documentary evidence in this area – where the real anti-partisan authority lay w/ reps of *Reichsfuehrer-SS* Himmler – is much more fragmentary: neither the civil administration nor the SS developed the systematic reporting of the Army [pertaining to *Bandenbekaempfung*] and many pertinent records were either captured by Soviet forces or destroyed. The available data, however, indicates that the partisan movement in this region *took longer to mature* than in the neighboring military sector. *Sicherheitsdienst* (**SD**) and police reports for the winter of **1941/42** scarcely mention partisan raids or ambushes (by summer they would *speak of little else*), and anti-partisan actions result in arrests rather than battles. . . This data, together w/ a lack of any German losses reported to the civil administration until **Apr 42**, suggests that Soviet guerrillas merited little attention up to the spring of that year. Thereafter, however, they grew steadily as a menace to German authority in “White Russia.” (Mulligan, *Cost of People’s War*, 39)

The German army's **9** security divisions – formed of **6-7** btns of old soldiers and equipped w/ obsolete wpns – were clearly inadequate to police the occupied territories. Although the combined strength of these units, the *Einsatzgruppen*, and the *Ordnungspolizei* (regular police), exceeded **100,000** men by end of **1941**, they had more than **850,000** square miles to control. In **Aug 42**, the term „partisan“ was replaced by „bandit“ in SS documents, signalling an even more brutal phase in an already ghastly campaign of terror and counter-terror. Mass killings of civilians in retaliation for attacks on German forces – **100** hostages shot for the death of one (**1**) German – were supplemented by indiscriminate slaughters. Many „anti-partisan“ ops led to high body counts w/ disproportionately few wpns captured. Scenes of hideous brutality by German soldiers, regular army as well as SS, were documented in nauseating detail on their personal cameras ... Elements w/in the German Army and the SS favored the *recruitment of local troops* to counter the partisan threat ... Perhaps the most notorious Russian unit that fought along side the Germans was the so-called „*Kaminski brigade*,“ or RONA (*Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Narodnaya Armiya*: Russian Peoples' Liberation Army). This began as a locally raised militia in the small town of **Lokot**, south of **Bryansk**, at end of **1941**. Kaminski's men would take part in major anti-partisan sweeps (for ex., in **Jun 42**, in the forests north of **Bryansk**). (See, *C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 143)

An atmosphere of uncertainty reigned behind the front. Soldiers felt beleaguered and isolated. **Korueck 582** – rear-area security unit operating behind **9 Army** – was responsible for **1500** villages over an area of **27,000** sq. km. It had only **1700** soldiers under command to execute this task. No support was forthcoming from **9 Army**, which had been **15,000** men short at the start of the campaign. Partisan activity encompassed **45%** of its operational area. These security units were often commanded by old and incompetent officers aged **40-50** years, compared to a front-line average of **30** years. **Korueck 582** btn cdrs were almost **60** years old and their soldiers poorly trained. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 142; see also, *Heer & Naumann, "Korueck 582,"* 325-27, in: *Vernichtungskrieg*)

1.16.3: Losses in “Bandenkrieg” in Central USSR:⁴⁹²

The estimates of Marxist and Western historians concerning overall losses of both Germans and their satellite troops, and partisans, civilians, civilian collaborators, etc., vary wildly. The Soviet official history [ca. **1964**] claims a total of **1.5** million enemy soldiers, civil officials, and “traitors” put out of action by partisans – **1/3** of whom fell in *Belorussia*. The standard Western study of the Soviet partisans [*John A. Armstrong, The Soviet Partisans in WWII, 1964*], however, estimates that partisans inflicted only **35,000** total casualties, only **1/2** of whom were German. The “most recent” [i.e., **1979**] account places German and satellite losses at **45,000** “killed.” [*Matthew Cooper, The Nazi War Against Soviet Partisans, 1941-44*]. The number of Russians killed in course of German anti-partisan ops likewise varies considerably according to the source: Soviet histories acknowledge a loss of **25,000** partisans KIA in *Belorussia*; and offer the amazingly precise figure of **1,409,225** civilian victims of the German occupation of the same area [*The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1974*]. Western estimates range from *Gerald Reitlinger's* **250,000** to *Alexander Werth's* **1,000,000**. Disparate as all these estimates and calculations are, they share a common problem: none review the data bases which produced them. The Soviet estimates presumably derive from the records of Soviet archives, but these – save for

⁴⁹² Central sector encompasses *Belorussia* and the western Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (**RSFSR**).

some documentary publications – are unavailable to western scholars. The latter have utilized the voluminous German operational records seized by the Allies and largely microfilmed by the National Archives (prior to restitution to the German Federal Republic); yet *no systematic examination* of that data has appeared. (Mulligan, *Cost of People's War*, 27-28)

Mulligan's conclusions: The above review of German source materials demonstrates that German data, while incomplete, is a great deal more than fragmentary. Precise figures *can never be obtained*, but the data provided by the German records covers most of the area occupied for most of the period of occupation. A summation of the available data reveals the following totals(rounded off to nearest 110th):

a) Axis Casualties:

German	33,800
Eastern Troops	13,900
Hungarians/French	4,600
TOTAL:	52,300

b) Russian Civilians

Killed by partisans	3600
Abducted by partisans	1400
TOTAL:	5000

c) Partisans & partisan suspects

Killed	243,800
Captured/Deserted	54,000
TOTAL:	297,900

As these figures are *incomplete*, they may be said to establish the *absolute minimums* for each of the categories. In terms of the listed categories, the *least conclusive* statistics are those for Russian civilians killed or abducted by the partisans for collaboration w/ the Germans. A **1944** Soviet estimate of **11,699** “traitors and policemen” liquidated by Belorussian guerrillas may well be correct. What is clear, however, is that in the struggle for political control of the occupied population, the partisans employed a much more selective form of terror than the indiscriminate reprisals of the Germans.

The soundest basis for conclusions is provided by the data for German and allied casualties. The German records are *most reliable* when they discuss German losses, a subject which German authorities would need to know and could measure. Granted the gaps w/in the records and the scale of fighting at the time of those gaps, total Axis casualties must have numbered at least **54,000**, possibly as many as **57,000**. While those figures include German civil officials, members of Organization *Todt* and railway personnel of the *Reichsbahn*, the majority are German Army and SS men.

It is evident, then, that the Soviet claim of *half a million* casualties inflicted is greatly exaggerated. But the scale of that exaggeration diminishes if one combines the German and civilian collaborators and adds the Soviet claims for the summer offensive of **1944**: the total of **100,000** losses then becomes a reality.

Looking at the final figures given above, the numbers of those “killed” and “missing” are as follows: Germans, **14,000** (over **41%** of their total loss); Eastern troops, **8320** (**60%** of the total); Hungarian and French, **1710** (about **37%**); total = **24,030** (ca. **46%** of all casualties) . . .

The reported losses of the “partisans” are obviously incomplete, and probably incorporate some inflation of “body counts” as an *inherent bias* of the German records . . . A reliable estimate of those who died as a direct result of German anti-partisan ops would amount to over **300,000**.

But the question remains: how many of these were actually partisans? The above estimate also omits the dead and wounded guerrillas carried off by their comrades. According to Soviet accounts, partisans operating in the Belorussian SSR lost **25,000** men killed during the war, while guerrillas of the occupied districts of the *western Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic (RSFSR)* suffered **30,047** losses in dead and missing. Ironically, then, partisans and German forces exchanged losses almost equally [?], while over a quarter-million inhabitants died in the crossfire. Of the estimates of the total number of victims to German anti-partisan ops, *Gerald Reitlinger's* figure of **250,000** tallies most closely w/ the German data, although Reitlinger apparently applied his total for *all* the occupied Soviet Union. The Soviet and Western historians' estimates of more than **1,000,000** killed, however, appear too high.

Note: In **1941**, partisan activities were reported *irregularly* by local German commands; by **1943**, reports on anti-partisan ops (*Bandenbekaempfung*) were channeled monthly to the Ops Section (**Ia**) of each Army and the Army Group Rear Area HQ, then forwarded to Army Group HQ. As the German military reports occasionally concede higher losses than those of the partisans, they may be accepted as *reliable* for German casualties; but as “partisan” losses usually exceed German, it may also be assumed that many Russian civilians killed by German forces were counted as partisans. SS records are less complete and more subject to distortion. In short, German military records are generally more trustworthy than SS and police records, and the figures given for German losses constitute an absolute minimum. (*Mulligan, Cost of People's War*, 30-31)

The “*incredible disparity*” between German and “partisan” losses and the inclusion of Jews among the victims illustrate the true character of these murder expeditions [i.e., of the so-called anti-partisan sweeps in White Russia]. A German veteran of several such ops later described the standard tactics employed:

The village was surrounded by the entire battalion and the people. . . were driven into the stables right up to full capacity, irrespective of whether this involved women or children or old people or men of medium age. Then these stables were closed and four or five SD people were placed in front and told, “Shoot.” The stable door was opened and these SD men shot blindly into the mass of people. . . without taking any aim, w/ no target. . . until they thought that human life was extinct in those stables. Then the stables were closed again and approximately ten or fifteen minutes later set on fire. . . Children and women came running out (and) were then likewise shot down.

(Source: Testimony of Albin Vogel, *United States of America v. Ernst von Weizsaecker et al*, Transcript (Eng.) Vol. XI, pp 4044-45, RG 238, NA; quoted in: *Mulligan, Cost of People's War*, 41)

1.16.4: Chronology:

a) Summary:

Through the end of **1941**, the fragmented and largely *unpopular* partisan movement posed no major threat to the German occupation, yet German forces exacted a tremendous toll in reprisals. Summary reports of the Army Group Ctr Rear Area for period **Jul 41** through **May 42** reflect the scale of the human cost and the *disparity* between German and “partisan” losses during first phase of partisan war:

Partisans killed = **80,000**
Germans killed = **1,094**⁴⁹³

These statistics demonstrate the failure of the German use of *mass reprisals* to break the guerrillas: the number of partisans [*for central sector only?*] grew from an estimated **30,000** at end of **1941** to **150,000** by summer of **1942**. (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 32)

Escalation of counter-terror ops is evident, for ex., in reports of **4 Army Korueck** for partisans killed: **331 (1.9.-10.10.41)**, **510 (1.-30.11.41)**, and **1467 (18.1-15.3.42)**. (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 33)

(**Note:** See also, “Table 3” for losses in **2 Pz Army** sector from **Apr-Dec 42**. They clearly show the escalation in anti-partisan ops over these months, seasonal variations in activity (i.e., less in winter), increased reliance by Germans on so-called “Eastern troops,” etc. *Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 35)

Recognizing the failure of their initial policy and tactics, the **OKH** and many field cdrs initiated changes [in policy/tactics] during the spring and summer of **1942**. The introduction of large-scale sweeps in rear areas by regular troops, the use of native Russian and *Cossack* military and police units (i.e., “Eastern Troops”) in security duties, a *reduction in the application of collective reprisals*, and the *granting of prisoner-of-war status* to deserters from all the partisans all characterized the new policy in the areas under *military* government. (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 33)

Jun 41 – Nov 42 [Historiography]: The partisan movement’s *efficiency* during this [first period of the war] has been and remains a subject of great controversy among historians in both Russia and the West. Often since the war’s end, authors have reached diametrically opposed conclusions. Most Soviet and Russian historians, for example, have emphasized the *efficiency and impact* of partisan combat operations. German authors, too, including many former German generals who commanded combat and security forces at every level of command, praised the high efficiency of the Soviet Partisan Movement. These include G. Herman, Joachim Fest, Walter Goerlitz, and Marshal Erich v. E. Manstein. . . . Another group of German officers collectively prepared an entire series of special reports on the Second World War for the U.S. Army [i.e., the *foreign military studies*]. In this **24-volume** series, they concluded that the *Wehrmacht confronted significant partisan resistance as early as the very first days of the Russian campaign*.⁴⁹⁴ . . .

⁴⁹³ **Note:** German figure is only thru **10.5.41**. (32)

⁴⁹⁴ **Note:** The author is referring here of course to the collection of German FMS studies published in **1979** by D. Detweiler and C. Burdick.

The prominent British military historian, J.F.C. Fuller, also studied the Soviet partisan war and concluded:

The partisans, whose numbers were always increasing, *sowed fear in the hearts of the German soldiers*, who were scattered along the endless railways. In the immense spaces which these crossed, the partisan detachments played the same role as did the submarine packs in the Atlantic – packs which, it should be remembered, nearly brought the economic demise of Great Britain.

Later, however, many Western analysts detected a more sinister aspect of partisan activity that tended to undermine their military efficiency. Disagreeing w/ their earlier counterparts, these analysts concluded that the *principal task the Communist Party assigned to the partisans was **not** to conduct combat operations. Instead, the party required them to perform an essentially **political function**, specifically forcing the population in the occupied territories to **adhere to the Communist regime***. Most of these analysts simply did not believe German and Soviet reports on partisan and anti-partisan military actions and thought that the information in these reports about Soviet partisan operations was exaggerated. Further, they concluded partisan weaponry and C2 was very poor, and, as a result, it would have been impossible to inflict significant losses on the enemy. Obviously, in retrospect, many of these more recent criticisms are correct. It is important, however, to test their validity against newly available source materials . . .

Cautiously evaluating the formative period of the Soviet Partisan Movement, [one author] described initial partisan activities and indicated that, during the period **22 Jun – 16 Sep 41**, the partisans carried out **250 rail demolitions** and destroyed **447** bridges just in the rear area of Army Group Centre. Alan Clark added that, from **Jul-Aug 41**, the Germans had serious problems w/ partisan activities along their communications routes and w/ bypassed groups of Red Army soldiers. Other authors have persuasively argued that the partisan activities were not particularly effective in **1941**. The eminent historian Earl F. Ziemke penned the following negative judgement:

Those partisan units that did appear were small, ineffective, usually isolated, and in constant danger of disintegrating. Communist Party and NKVD [secret police] attempts to leave behind a network of Party and partisan groups had failed because of lack of time and because the local Party authorities, on whom the burden of the work fell, either had no clear concept of what was required or lacked enthusiasm for underground activity. It was clear that, contrary to propaganda claims, neither the masses, nor the Party elite would voluntarily spring to the defense of the Soviet system in a time of crisis.

[Yet L. Grenkevich writes]: In general, the partisans made significant contributions to the war effort in the summer and autumn of **1941**. . . They sabotaged enemy rail traffic and equipment, disrupted German maintenance and repair work, destroyed locomotives and bridges, attacked German lines of communication, raided German HQs, individual soldiers, and small units, poisoned wells, demolished supply dumps, and performed terrorist acts against Nazi collaborators. . . (L. Grenkevich, *Soviet Partisan Movement*, 153-62; also, E. Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin*, 103)

Summer '41: For two main reasons, partisan fighting in summer of **1941** in occupied Soviet territories remained only rudimentary at best and did not involve mass participation of the local populace:

- 1) In most instances, Soviet authorities had not undertaken prudent advanced preparations for this kind of war, such as the organization of nuclei for future partisan detachments, and the storage and stockpiling of weaponry and foodstuffs for partisans had not been accomplished. This was so primarily because pre-war Soviet military doctrine was essentially offensive in nature, and, as a result, refused to acknowledge the possibility that an enemy force would occupy Soviet territory. . .
- 2) Secondly, in most cases, the precipitous German advance physically eliminated the possibilities to prepare for the conduct of partisan war. At the same time, however, in those regions where the German advance was slower, there were some cases where partisan activities were prepared in advance. . . [For example], considerable preparation for partisan warfare took place in many regions of the Russian Republic that the Germans occupied in late summer or early autumn **1941**. For example, based primarily on German reports, Gerhard Weinberg has described the steps taken at that time by Soviet authorities in the El'nia – Dorogobuzh area of the Smolensk district.

(L. Grenkevich, *Soviet Partisan Movement*, 71-72)

Winter 41/42 [Partisans in the Battle of Moscow]: During the Battle for Moscow, partisan forces did not operate w/ uniform efficiency in German rear areas across the broad expanse of the front. For example, in the western portion of the Ukraine, where a separatist population predominated, there were only the merest traces of a partisan movement. Elsewhere, the large distances between front-line and occupied areas inhibited contacts between the local population and the C2 echelon of the partisan movement, and the harsh conditions of an unusually cold Russian winter adversely affected partisan survival and operations. One source accurately described the situation, writing:

Finally, the first winter of **1941/42** hurt the movement everywhere: forays to collect food and fuel meant tracks in the snow, and naked trees often meant naked guerrillas. In order to survive, various bands amalgamated into good-sized camps, and some of these became vulnerable to the German attacks.

Despite these many shortcomings in partisan warfare and the hardships they faced, the winter of **1941/42** was not a complete failure for the partisan fighters. *Considerable evidence indicates that they made a substantial contribution to Soviet victory.* A German source used German reports and captured Russian materials to describe the *role of partisan warfare during the Battle of Moscow*, and concluded:

Although the partisans had already made themselves felt through sabotage and harassment, their real importance as a fighting force developed as the siege of Moscow reached its decisive stage in the winter of **1941/42**. It was then that the irregular forces behind the German lines coordinated their operations w/ those of the Red Army to prevent the quick victory sought by Hitler.

During the Red Army's counter-offensive, partisan units primarily sought to assist advancing Soviet troops in liberating occupied territories west of Moscow, principally by conducting

reconnaissance and providing intelligence information. The partisans also attempted to prevent the Germans from blowing up or evacuating important facilities and materiel. . .

During the winter of **1941/42** in Belorussia, partisan detachments managed to seize control of a large region in the Vitebsk District, and these detachments kept the so-called “Surazh Gates” open until **Sep 42**. . . Month by month after their **Jun 41** invasion, the German command recorded the increasing activity of the Soviet Partisan Movement. . . With good reason, the HQ of German security forces in occupied Belorussia officially reported that, since **Feb 42**, the task of fighting against partisans had become a *routine daily activity* and a concern of the German civil and military administration throughout the region. . .

In mid-**Dec 41**, while German panzer forces were withdrawing from the Volokolamsk region west of Moscow, it was very important for the retreating Germans to retain one of the few existing bridges over the Sestra River. Hence, the Soviet Western Front HQ ordered a local partisan detachment to blow up the bridge. A small demolition group successfully carried out the mission. As a result, Soviet aviation units discovered and attacked a large concentration of German tanks and lorries stuck in a bottleneck at the destroyed river crossing. The Soviet air attack cost the Germans about **100** lorries destroyed, although the main German forces located an alternate crossing and escaped across the river.

Wehrmacht officers attested to instances of such successful co-operation [*between partisan and Red Army forces*]. For example, German officers noted in a post-war study, “During large scale enemy breakthroughs, or German withdrawals, strong partisan groups frequently managed to coordinate their operations w/ those of Soviet cavalry, ski units, infiltrated infantry, or paratroopers.”

To promote closer and more reliable co-operation, partisan leaders often sent personal messengers through the front lines to the HQs of Red Army formations, and *front* HQs dispatched liaison officers to partisan commands to participate directly in specific operational planning. [Note: Author mentions several examples of partisan-Red Army co-operation in winter **41/42** involving Soviet **10, 30** and **50 Armies**.]

One of the most positive and extensive examples of co-operation between partisans and Red Army forces occurred during the period **Feb-Jun 42**, when Smolensk partisan commands closely co-operated w/ General Belov’s group operating SW of Viaz’ma. Belov’s group – consisting of his **1 Gds Cav Corps**, the **4 Airborne Corps**, and several divisions separated from **33 Army** – struggled long and hard in Army Group Centre’s rear area near El’nia – Viaz’ma – Dorogobuzh. . . . The combined cavalry, airborne, and partisan force liberated about **10,000** sq. km of territory. Ultimately, Army Group Centre employed up to **7** regular divisions to counter these bold operations. It took the Germans from **Apr** thru **Jun 42** to clear the region of Belov’s force. In **Jun 42**, Belov’s regular forces regained Soviet lines near Kirov, but the large partisan formations remained in the German rear area.

Partisan achievements in disrupting the enemy communications network were rather impressive. During the winter of **1941/42**, in the central sector of the front, partisans:

- a) derailed **224** trains;
- b) blew up **650** bridges;
- c) destroyed **1850** enemy vehicles

During the Soviet Moscow offensive (**Dec 41 – Apr 42**), partisans employed sabotage to delay German rail traffic for a total of **180** days. . . In general terms, the extensive Soviet offensive operations in the winter of **1941/42** along the entire extent of the Soviet-German front and the frequent Soviet penetration of the German defenses, produced the sort of fluid situations that partisans could exploit. . .

The British author David Irving claimed that, from the spring of **1942**, some German generals persistently suggested that Hitler authorize the use of poison gas against the partisans, asserting that the best way to deal w/ unlawful partisan warfare was to implement their own unlawful but effective measures.⁴⁹⁵ . . .

One of the most interesting phenomena associated w/ partisan warfare in **1941/42** was the *partisans' ability to seize and successfully hold large areas in the German rear area*. These so-called "partisan regions," which the partisans controlled nearly totally, existed in many districts in Belorussia, and the Smolensk, Leningrad, Orel regions. . . The first of these partisan regions appeared in the autumn of **1941**, and they grew dramatically in number and scope thereafter. During the winter of **1941/42** and the subsequent spring, the number of partisan regions reached a total of **11** – four [**4**] in Belorussia and **4** in the Smolensk region, **2** in the Orel region, and **1** in the Leningrad region. . . So threatening were these zones to German occupation authorities that they tried strenuously to recapture these areas in late **1941** and the first half of **1942**, but w/ only partial success. . .

Red Army military successes in the winter of **1941/42** [*and the resulting increase in the prestige of the Soviet regime and the Red Army*] were of paramount importance for the *expansion of the partisan warfare* in the German rear area. . . During the winter, the number of guerrillas in Smolensk District had increased three-fold to a strength of **19,500** men. Partisan strength in the Briansk partisan region increased to **21,000** men, and another **28,000** partisans were operating in eastern Belorussia. Exploiting their increased strength, in **Dec 41** and **Jan 42**, the Briansk partisans routed German garrisons in such regional centres as Trubchevsk, Lokot', Zhukovka, and Suzemka and held on to these towns for various periods. During the Battle for Moscow, the partisans in the Russian Republic alone managed to destroy:

- a) **2000** German vehicles;
- b) **200** tanks & APCs (approx. figure);
- c) **70** guns;
- d) **66** acft;
- e) **170** enemy depots;
- f) **400+** bridges (including **29** railway bridges)

(*L. Grenkevich, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 174-88, 201; see also, *D. Irving, Hitler's War*, 386)

⁴⁹⁵ **Note:** Writes Irving: "Hitler would not hear of it [i.e., the use of gas against partisans]. . . Similarly he flatly forbade the General Staff to study the problems of bacterial attack, except in a purely defensive light. What may have been a hangover from his own gasing experience in World War I kept him adamant to the end. Although the British employed phosphorus in their bombs, Hitler forbade its use in the Luftwaffe's, as it caused skin injuries and its fumes were poisonous. Since German scientists had developed nerve-gases (Sarin and Tabun) and bacterial weapons to a degree of sophistication unknown to the enemy, Hitler's otherwise inexplicable inhibitions were not w/o effect on the war effort." (*D. Irving, Hitler's War*, 386)

Spring '42: Official [Soviet] archival data on the numerical strength of the Soviet Partisan Movement in the spring of '42 indicates that **88** partisan formations totaling **6000** fighters were operating in Army Group North's rear area and in Karelia. In addition, **251** formations numbering **56,000** men were in Army Group Centre's rear area; and another **152** formations numbering about **10,000** men, were in Army Group South's rear area. Thus, according to this data, the total strength of the Soviet Partisan Movement in spring **1942** was about **500** partisan formations containing about **72,000 fighters**. Therefore, from winter through spring of **1942**, it appears as though the total number of partisans decreased by almost 20,000 men. Many Western historians have tended to attribute this reduction, at least in part, to mass desertions from the partisan detachments. . . Other Western authorities, while readily accepting this explanation for the precipitous fall in partisan strength, also added the factor of disease and illness. . . (L. Grenkevich, *Soviet Partisan Movement*, 204-05)

Summer '42: By this time, the overall strength of the partisan movement had reached **125,000** fighters. However, partisan forces were distributed unevenly throughout the German rear, and the network of partisan units in much of the Ukraine and southern Russia was still rather thin. (L. Grenkevich, *Soviet Partisan Movement*, 208)

b) Chronology:

22.6.41: Germans met *strong partisan resistance* on the *very first day of the Russian campaign*. For example, lead division of **V. AK**, invading from area east and northeast of *Suwalki*, soon found itself in bitter struggle w/ partisans who had ambushed a German bridging column near the forest west of *Seirijai*. A short time later, the reserve rgt. reported street fighting against *armed civilians* in *Seirijai*. This report was first doubted, for until 1939 the area had been part of *Lithuania*. As it turned out, the Germans were being fought by Russian civilians who had settled in the area after the USSR had occupied Lithuania; they were supported by several hundred Russian soldiers cut off by the German breakthrough. Most of these soldiers had *discarded their uniforms and obtained civilian clothing*. Together, the Red Army soldiers and civilians had to be cleared in desperate fighting from the forest from which they were operating. (see, *CHM Pub. 104-22, Small Unit Actions*, 266-67)

22.-23.6.41: Before nightfall on 22 Jun 41, the **7 PD** of attacking Army Group Ctr encounters armed Soviet civilians who ambush German vehicles and soldiers. During the first **48** hours of the invasion, at least two (**2**) members of the division have been killed and several wounded, while **15** guerrillas are shot in battle or summarily executed. The partisan war in the central USSR had claimed its first victims. (Mulligan, *Cost of People's War*, 27)

Jun 41: In memoirs, etc., some German veterans mention encounters w/ "*Partisanen*" from opening days of campaign. See, for example, *Tagebuch Kurt Kummer* (24.6.41, 13.7.41).

27.6.41: Nikita *Khrushchev* gives instructions for small partisan detachments of between **10-20** men to be organized in *Kamenets-Podolsk*. More than **140** small groups are also set up by local Communist Party authorities in the *Lvov – Tarnopol – Stanislawow – Czernowitz – Rovno* regions – about **2000** men in all. Once organized, they were slipped through the German lines into enemy-occupied territory. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 203)

29.6.41: *General directive* issued from Moscow: Before the Red Army withdraws from a town, the directive makes clear, rolling stock and other moveable items, even food, must be removed, "leaving the enemy not a single locomotive, not a truck, not a loaf of bread, not a litre of fuel."

Cattle are to be driven to the rear; and any food or fuel which cannot be removed “must, w/o any exceptions, be destroyed.” Such is the *scorched-earth policy*; the directive also lays down the rules for partisan activities behind the lines, the task of the partisans being defined as “blowing up bridges, railway tracks, destroying enemy telephone and telegraph communications, blowing up enemy ammunition dumps.” (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 204)

Jul 41: The use of partisans behind the German front proved to be tactically effective, as it tied down German forces that would otherwise have been available at the front itself or in other operations. In **Jul 41**, in addition to the security units and Germany’s allies, these forces consisted of **6** divisions. When one considers how difficult it was for Halder to accept that the left flank of German **6 Army** was still pinned to the Pripet front, where ambushes played a significant part in tying down large numbers of German troops for long periods of time, the difficulty of the German army leaders in incorporating such unconventional forms of warfare into their operational thinking becomes clear. Depending on local conditions, the task of finding a solution to the partisan problem was at first left to the army HQs and subordinate commands. The lack of proper training for such a task and the inadequacy of the security forces soon became evident. Certainly at this time the size of the danger represented by partisan units operating behind German lines was not yet understood. Halder refused to consider it a serious threat to normal military ops. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 583)

1.7.41: At *Mogilev*, two Soviet marshals – *Voroshilov* and *Shaposhnikov* – brief those who are to stay behind as the Germans advance, and set up partisan groups. “Blow up bridges,” they are told, “destroy single trucks w/ enemy officers and soldiers. Use any opportunity to slow up the movement of enemy reserves to the Front. Blow up enemy trains . . . blow up his bases and dumps.” (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 206)

3.7.41 [Stalin’s address]: The first official declaration by the Soviet government on the state of affairs in the country after Hitler’s invasion was a directive prepared jointly on **29 Jun 41** by the Council of People’s Commissars of the Soviet Union (CPC USSR) and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (CC AUCP (B)). Stalin announced the directive in a radio broadcast on **3 Jul 41**. Although the directive formulated only general principles concerning the struggle in the enemy rear area, *it is difficult to overestimate its importance*. . . Stalin’s radio address did contain some remarks on partisan warfare. In that regard, he stated.⁴⁹⁶

Partisan units, mounted and on foot, must be formed in the area occupied by the enemy; diversionary groups must be activated to combat enemy forces, to foment partisan warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges and roads, to damage telephone and telegraph lines, and to set fire to forests, stores, and transport. Conditions in the occupied regions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all of his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step, and all their measures must be frustrated.

Thus, this joint directive set forth the general parameters of a broad programme for partisans in areas occupied by the Germans. . . Hitler called the directive a “cry of despair.” In actuality, however, it did play a genuinely important role. . . (*L. Grenkevich, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 73-75)

⁴⁹⁶ **My Note:** This exhortation to Soviets in rear areas set the stage for a tenacious and savage partisan movement against the Germans.

18.7.41: Of course, the principal body associated w/ kindling partisan warfare in **1941** was the Communist Party. Its Central Committee directed the formation of partisan forces parallel to the Party's existing territorial structure. CC AUCP (B) directive entitled "*Concerning the Organization of the Struggle in the Rear Areas of the German Forces*," dated **18 Jul 41**, specified partisan-warfare missions and tasks to be performed by the Party's elaborate organizational network from the highest Party echelon to underground Party cells in the enemy rear. It specified how to implement this form of warfare. (*L. Grenkevich, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 75)

20.7.41: From the *Polotsk – Vitebsk* area, less than a month earlier Russia's first line of defense, now behind the lines, a German inf. div. assigned to comb the *Polotsk – Vitebsk – Nevel* triangle, describes the area as a "partisan region," and reports that the roads are being mined every day. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 214)

22.7.41 [137. ID]: Es war indessen sicher zutreffend geurteilt, wenn General Geyer [**9. AK**] [an diesem Tage] der Armee berichtete: „Im ganzen haelt das Gen.Kdo. die Gefahr eines Partisanenkrieges mit Unterstuetzung der Bevoelkerung fuer gering.“ [Note: Er fuegte spaeter hinzu: „dass im Bereich des **9. AK** bis in den **Jan 42** die praktische Wirkung des Partisanenkrieges erstaunlich gering blieb. . .“ Suedlich von uns bei Brijansk urteilte man ueber die Partisanengefahr bereits Anfang **Sep 41** ernster (*Hossbach, Infanterie im Osten*, 91).] (*W. Meyer-Detring, Die 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 85)

Aug 41: „Dazu kommt das *Partisanenunwesen* mit der Bedrohung der ruckwaertigen Verbindungen. Wenn wir aus groeuen Teilen des Landes ein Chaos machen und die Leute dadurch gegen uns aufbringen und sie auerdem hungern lassen, werden die Probleme sehr ernst werden, wenn die Bevoelkerung mit den Partisanen mitmacht. Z.B. wollen die Leute gerne ihr Feld aus der Kolchoswirtschaft wiederhaben. Obgleich wir meist so oder so gar nicht mit der Landbebauung fertig werden koennen, koennen wir uns nicht zu klaren Entscheidungen entschließen, obschon die Dinge schon hinter der Front gleich wegen der Ernte drängen, sollte man den Leuten zuerst in Gottes Namen das Land geben. Weiter Kirchenfragen, ??? und alles moegliche! Aber die Doktrin des Kampfes gegen den Bolschewismus u.d. Wille (R.He?) zur Ausrottung und moeglichsten Vernichtung weiter Teile des russ. Volkes, gehen vor alle praktische Erwaegungen und auch fuer den weiteren Krieg absoluten Notwendigkeiten. (*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*)

10.8.41: Ich flog heute frueh im Storch zur Division um mich nach diesen Kämpfen von dem Zustand zu ueberzeugen; sie waren alle guter Dinge – der Flug war sehr schoen, ueberall konnte man die Bevoelkerung bei der Ernte sehen, wenn auch natuerlich groeue Flaechen bestellter Felder mit reifem Korn nicht abgeerntet werden koennen, weil die Bevoelkerung geflohen ist. *Diese Frage der Einbringung der Ernte ist sehr schwierig*, weil doch die Kolchos-Wirtschaften als solche nicht mehr betrieben werden koennen, da die Betriebsfuehrer fehlen u. die Bauern nicht wissen, was sie machen sollen. *In Befehlen u. Flugblaettern wird von der Roten Regierung aufgefordert, hinter unserer Front Partisanen-Abteilungen zu bilden*, die auf unsere ruckw. Verbindungen Sabotageakte anrichten sollen, Mun.Lager sprengen, Betriebsstofflager anzueuden, Bruecken sprengen, Nachr.Verbindungen zerstören u. Staebue ueberfallen u. Aehnliches. Es gibt natuerlich genug fanatische Sowjets, die sich hierfuer bereitfinden, aber wir glauben nicht, daB sich die Zivilbevoelkerung dazu hergibt, die doch froh ist, von den Roten befreit zu sein. (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*)

Summer/Fall '41: The area most infested by Soviet partisans was German Army Group Centre's rear area. Before the winter of **1941/42**, up to 900 partisan detachments and groups numbering

about **40,000 fighters** operated in these regions.⁴⁹⁷ General Guderian reported on the impact these partisan forces had in his region. He stated that, in mid-**Sep 41**, instead of the **70** supply trains required to meet the daily consumption needs of his Army Group, because of the shortage of locomotives and guerrilla sabotage of the rail lines, the Army Group was receiving only **23** trains daily. (*L. Grenkevich, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 168)

Aug-Oct 41: In area occupied by Army Group Ctr, new partisan groups were continuously being set up and employed against German units. By **Aug 41**, partisan committees had already prepared enough stocks of wpns and supplies in the woods around Kalinin, Bryansk and Orel to enable each group to fight for between **4** and **6** weeks. Partisans moved into these bases in **Oct 41**, and were joined by Red Army soldiers who had been cut off from their units during the encirclement battles and had not been captured by the Germans. Thus, some of the partisan groups managed to place experienced military leaders at the top and also provide the groups w/ wpns and ammunition left behind by the Red Army. In **Aug 41**, the Soviet Command had begun to set up special courses for partisans behind the front, run by teaching staff from the NKVD. (*Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 171-72)

Sep-Dec 41: *C. Merridale* addresses *changing attitudes of Russian people* by end of 1941: There had been many willing collaborators in the early weeks, but by that first autumn the people's "hatred of the enemy" was "growing and growing." She also notes *shift in mood of peasants*: The dearest hope of these peasants was for an end to Soviet power. In **Sep 41**, though, they learned that the *Germans had ordered that the collective farms should stay*. Like the pre-war Soviet authorities, the conquerors cared only for the ease w/ which the peasants' grain could be collected and shipped off. *It was an irreversible mistake*. "The mood of the local population has changed sharply," Moskvin wrote on 30 Sep 41. (*Ivan's War*, 133-4) (Note: Author later states that, "once again, the Germans' own atrocities were all that held the Soviets in place." (i.e., speaking about partisans) (146)

10.10.-6.11.41 [137. ID]: Sicherung des Operationsgebietes u. Kaempfe mit Partisanen:

Der Kommandant des rueckwaertigen Armeegebiets **559**, Gen.Lt. v. Unruh (als „Heldenklau“ spaeter in ganz Deutschland bekannt geworden) wies der **137. ID** den Raum Wjasma – Dorogobush – Jelnja – Kirow – Juchnow zu, ein Gebiet von mehr als der doppelten Groesse Luxembourgs. . . Es sollte, bisher nur teilweise von deutschen Truppen durchschritten, befriedigt werden. Die wichtigsten Aufgaben waren:

- 1) Durchkaemmen der Waelder nach Versprengten, Bekaempfung von Partisanen u. Abschieben von Gefangenen;
- 2) Bewachung von Strassen, Bruecken, Bahnlinien u. Versorgungslagern;
- 3) Sicherstellung von Beute, Landesvorraete, Ernte u. Neubestellung des Landes;
- 4) Ueberwachung u. propagandistische Bearbeitung der Bevoelkerung, Einsetzung deutschfreundlicher Buergermeister. . .

In planmaessigen Saeuberungsaktionen wurden im Laufe der naechsten **14 Tage** ueber **15.000** Gefangene – darunter der Befehlshaber einer russ. Armees, ein Div.-Kdr., **7** Generalstabsoffiziere

⁴⁹⁷ **Note:** Grenkevich's source for these figures = The Central Archives of the Russian Federation's Ministry of Defense. (f.n. 49, 216)

u. ein Sohn Molotovs eingesammelt. Bei den meisten Versprengten handelte es sich um waffenlose Soldaten, die, z.T. in Zivil gekleidet, bei den Saeuberungsaktionen aufgegriffen waren. . .

Schwierigkeiten bereitete das Durchkaemmen der teilweise *urwaldaehnlichen Waelder*. Weit auseinandergezogen waren die Rgter, in Kompanien u. Zuegen ueber das Land verteilt. *Rund 150 Quadratkilometer mit 10 bis 12 Ortschaften mussten durch eine einzige Kompanie ueberwacht u. gesichert werden.* . . ⁴⁹⁸

Die Division hatte schon nach **18-taegiger Befriedungsarbeit** am **28 Oct 41** – nunmehr Armee-reserve – in den Raum Kaluga – Malojaroslawez – Medyn vorzuruecken. . . (*W. Meyer-Detring, Die 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 86-91)

14.10.41: On this day, the first German offensive against Soviet partisans, Operation „*Karlsbad*“, is launched between Minsk and Smolensk, where partisans had threatened to cut this essential supply route to the front. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 244)

18.10.41: On this day, between Smolensk and Vyazma, the one effective east-west highway on the road to Moscow was *booby-trapped* w/ high-explosive shells; when detonated by remote control, they caused craters in the road **30** feet wide and **8** feet deep. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 246)

18.10.41: Many German orders issued in the autumn of **1941** contain warnings about partisan activities and, often, instructions on how to fight the partisan menace in the occupied territories. A prime example is an order by the commandant of the German **4 Army** rear area [Korueck?] to the army's **137. ID**, dated **18 Oct 41**. This order required that, in the event of partisan activity, two local inhabitants would be shot for every German serviceman killed by partisans, and three inhabitants would be executed if partisans attacked an important German installation. In addition, peasants found wandering about in the streets after dark or found near railway or highway bridges at any time were to be shot on sight. [**Note:** Army Group Centre's Order No. **607/41**, dated **17 Nov 41**, contained almost identical instructions to its **12. ID**.] (*L. Grenkevich, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 79)

26.10.41: An diesem Tage, einem Sonntag, wurden in *Minsk* zwoelf (**12**) Menschen oeffentlich hingerichtet. Militaerisch understand die Stadt zu diesem Zeitpunkt der **707. ID**. Acht (**8**) Maenner u. vier (**4**) Frauen wurden unter *Trommelwirbel* zu vier verschiedenen Exekutionsstaetten gefuehrt. Um den Hals trugen sie Schilder, auf denen in Deutsch u. Russisch stand: “Wir sind Partisanen u. haben auf dt. Soldaten geschossen.” Die Opfer waren weder Partisanen, noch hatten sie auf dt. Soldaten geschossen. Sie gehoerten einer Widerstandsgruppe an, die genesende Rotarmisten, die sich im Lazarett des Infektionskrankenhauses befanden, mit falschen Paessen u. Zivilkleidung versorgt hatte, um sie anschliessend in Richtung Front zu den eigenen Linien zu fuehren. (<http://www.verbrechen-der-wehrmacht.de>)

31.10.41: German **2 Army** reports executing **1179** partisans, while suffering only **94** casualties in anti-partisan ops from **1.8.-31.10.41**. (*Mulligan, Cost of People's War*, 32)

Nov 41: *Showalter:* By early Nov 41, a combination of Soviet organization, German atrocities, and failure to round up stragglers from the Vyazma-Bryansk pocket had continued to generate a

⁴⁹⁸ **Note:** Great example of how totally insufficient were the human and material resources the Germans allocated for such missions.

vigorous, small-scale *partisan activity* in the rear of *Panzergruppe 3*. The *dense forests in this region* facilitated the operations of guerrilla bands, as did the *inadequate German security forces*. As yet, however, the partisans were by no means the *comprehensive threat* they became after 1942. (K. Fuchs, 149)

Nov 41: Ebenfalls in der ersten Novemberhaelfte verstaerkten auch die *Partisanen*, die schon im Oktober laufend neue Gruppen im Bereich der Hr.Gr.Mitte auf die dt. Verbaende angesetzt hatten, ihre Taetigkeit im Gebiet der **4. Armee** mit Angriffen auf dt. Staebe u. kleinere Truppenteile. (Latzel, *Deutsche Soldaten*, 59-60)⁴⁹⁹

Nov 41: Am **5. Nov 41** fuhr ich mit einem verstaerkten Vorauskommando durch den Wald nach Chwastowitschi u. meldete der Abteilung per Funk die Wegstrecke ueber Polowo. In einem noch heilgebliebenen Haus in Chwastowitschi zogen wir unter. Im Ort selbst war die Kesselschlacht des Bryansker Nordkessels zu Ende gegangen. Die Russen hatten kapituliert u. waren von hier in die Gefangenschaft nach Shisdra gebracht worden. Der ganze Ort u. die Umgebung waren gerammelt voll von verlassenen Fahrzeugen, Kanonen, grossen Zugmaschinen, schwerem Geraet u. allem, was ein Partisanenherz begehrt. Auch in den Waeldern rund um diesen Ort war Geraet, Bewaffung u. Munition fuer mindestens zwei bis drei Divisionen. (Dr E. Bunke, **31. ID**, *Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 457)

7.11.41: . . . **4 Armee:** . . . Hinter der Armeefront ist eine erhebliche Zunahme der Partisanentaetigkeit festzustellen. (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 746)⁵⁰⁰

7.11.41: *Fremde Heere Ost* reported on this day: „Behind the front of **4 Army** there has been a considerable increase in partisan activity during the last few days. . . increased partisan activity has led to breakdowns in the railway, roads and intelligence, as well as several attacks on individual vehicles.“ (Reinhardt, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 179, f.n. 27)

19.11.41 [43. AK]: Partisanen treiben ihr Handwerk. Immer wieder erleben wir Ueberfaelle auf einzelne Wagen oder Leute, die meist dabei ums Leben kommen, Schienen werden gesprengt, Fernsprechleitungen zerschnitten. Diesen Partisanen ist nur mit Unterstuetzung der russ. Bevoelkerung beizukommen. Sie gibt sie meist gern, denn sie selbst wird von diesen Raeubern terrorisiert, ihrer Lebensmittel beraubt usw. Wir kaempfen gegen diese Pest einen andauernden Kampf. . . Fast immer erleiden diese Leute [i.e., die Partisanen] mit stoischer Gleichmut den Tod. Sie verraten nichts u. sagen nie etwas aus. . . Ein **18**-jaehriger junger Mensch, der sich als Chef der Partisanenreiterei bezeichnete, knuepfte sich selbst die Schlinge, rief: „*Ich sterbe fuer den Kommunismus*“ u. sprang hinein. . . Solche fanatischen Kaempfer des Kommunismus gibt es in Menge. Immer wieder findet man sie in den Doerfern baumeln, viel mehr laufen aber herum. Als ich in unserem in Aussicht genommenen Quartier befahl, solche Aufgehaengten zu beerdigen, weil dieser Anblick wohl gewohnt, aber vor den Fenstern nicht gesucht wird, zog die Bevoelkerung den Gehenkten schleunigst die Stiefel u. Pelze aus, nahm sie an sich u. zerrte die Toten an den Stricken ins Grab. So sieht es hierzulande aus. *Es herrschen Sitten u. Gebraeuche, genauso wie im 30-jaehrigen Krieg*. . . **6 ½** Jahre meines Lebens habe ich ja nun im Kriege zugebracht, aber *so etwas habe ich doch nicht erlebt*. (Gen. G. Heinrici, *Kriegsbericht an seine Familie*, in: J. Huerter, *Ein Deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 111-12)

⁴⁹⁹ **Note:** Zu dem Partisanenueberfall auf den Korpsgefechtsstand des **XII. AK** am **24.11.41** see, *Martin Gareis, Kampf u. Ende der 98. ID*, 165.

⁵⁰⁰ **Note:** In KTB OKW numerous references in **Oct-Nov 41** to the “Befh. rueckw. Heeresgebiet Mitte” and the increase in partisan activities.

29.11.41: This day, in the village of *Petrishchevo* behind the Moscow front, as part of their attempt to halt the growing number of *partisan attacks*, the Germans hang an **18-yr.-old** Soviet girl, *Zoia Kosmodemianskaya*. “She set fire to houses,” reads the placard around her neck as she is led to her execution. Her own last words, as she is led to the scaffold, are to one of the German soldiers accompanying her: “You can’t hang all **190** million of us.” (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 265)

Winter 41/42: Die Gegenoffensive der Roten Armee im Winter 1941/42 sorgte insbesondere im Heeresgebiet Mitte fuer einen Abzug starker Besatzungskraefte. Jetzt konnten die inzwischen gut ausgebildeten u. bewaffneten Partisanen hinter den dt. Linien ganze Gebiete unter ihre Kontrolle bringen u. den dt. Armeen militaerisch zusetzen. Deshalb versuchten einzelne Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber, die *pauschale Terrorpolitik* zu aendern u. die „*kollektiven Gewaltmassnahmen*“ gegen die Zivilbevoelkerung einzugrenzen, um sie nicht in die Arme der Partisanen zu treiben. Hitler dagegen draengte darauf, den Kampf gegen die Partisanen weiter mit den „*allerbrutalsten Mitteln*“ zu fuehren. (<http://www.verbrechen-der-wehrmacht.de>)

Winter 41/42: *Kleinkrieg* fought in immediate rear of **31. ID**. The thinly-occupied German lines meant that the Russians could slip *Jagdkommandos* (often on *Schneeschuhen*) into the German rear, where they struck at lines of communication, conducted *Ueberfaelle* against German transports (of wounded, munitions, rations, etc.) (*Hossbach*, 185)

Winter 41/42 [Strength of partisan forces]: Although Soviet partisan warfare lacked a mass nature at [this] time, the numerical strength of partisan forces in the occupied territories was already impressive by the end of **1941**. While official Soviet sources state that about **2000** partisan units of different strength totalling ca. **90,000** men were operating by this time, some Western historians dispute this figure. . .⁵⁰¹ At this stage of the war, Red partisans were most active in the southern region of Leningrad District, in the Kalinin, Smolensk, and Orel Districts, in the western part of the Moscow District,⁵⁰² and in the Vitebsk, Minsk, Mogilev, Sumy, Chernigov, Khar’kov, and Stalino (Donetsk) Districts. . .

The missions of partisan units in the close and deep enemy rear were to slow down the German advance in all regions and by all means. Suffice it say, there was little the partisans could do in support of the retreating Red Army except to sabotage the enemy communications network. All other partisan activities were of a more general nature, such as destroying army supply depots in the enemy rear, sabotaging pump-houses, and hiding collective farm equipment in the forests. Although these actions were much better than nothing, only in the longer run could partisan forces offer real resistance to Soviet forces fighting Germany and its satellites. (*L. Grenkevich, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 77)

1942: Partisans begin to conscript people into their ranks, and sometimes resort to terror tactics against the population too, forcing them to join them by holding their families hostage. As in

⁵⁰¹ **Note:** Another author captures the essence of the dilemma, stating, “It is impossible to say how many partisans were actively engaged during the first six months of what in the Soviet Union is known as the Great Patriotic War. It is only clear that they were more active than the Germans asserted but less active than the Soviet authorities maintained.” (*D. Mountfield, The Partisans* (London: Hamlyn, 1979); quoted in *L. Grenkevich*, 162)

⁵⁰² **Note:** According to Alexander Werth, in the winter of **1941/42**, there were some **10,000** partisans who took part in the Battle of Moscow; they operated in the enemy rear in the Moscow – Tula – Kalinin provinces, and were credited w/ having “destroyed **18,000** Germans.” (See, *A. Werth, Russia at War*, 713-14)

1941, the open spaces of the *Ukraine* were least affected by partisan activities; while about ½ the guerrillas were established in the trackless forests of *Belorussia*. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 142)

Jan 42: Generaloberst Schmidt wurde unmittelbar nach der Uebernahme des Oberbefehls ueber die **2. Pz. Armee** mit der Bekaempfung der Partisanengruppen im rueckwaertigen Armeegebiet konfrontiert. Doch fuer ein wirkungsvolles Vorgehen fehlte ihm im **Jan 42** die hierfuer erforderlichen Kraefte. Schmidt lernte in seinem Hauptquartier den russ. Ingenieur Bronislaw W. Kaminski kennen, der nach der Ermordung des Buergermeisters von Lokot durch die Partisanen dessen Posten einnahm u. im Auftrag der **2. Pz. Armee** die Verwaltung des Rayons uebernahm. Wie sein Vorgaenger, sorgte auch Kaminski fuer Ruhe u. Ordnung u. fuer den reibungslosen Nachschub an die **2. Pz. Armee**. Schmidt setzte Kaminski, zwar mit Billigung der H.Gr.Mitte, aber ohne den Rueckhalt politischer Stellen, zum Gouverneur des Gebietes um Lokot . . . ein. Kaminski setzte in allen Orten Buergermeister ein, schaffte das Kolchossystem ab, sorgte fuer eine gerechte Verteilung von Vieh u. Nahrungsmitteln u. liess zum Schutz der Bevoelkerung eine Miliz errichten. Diese durfte sich mit Genehmigung des Stabes der **2. Pz. Armee** aus dem zurueckgelassenen Material der Roten Armee bewaffnen. Es dauerte nicht lange u. Kaminski verfuegte ueber eine Bde. aus **6** Btns zu je **500** Mann mit **12** Panzern u. **20** Geschuetzen. Schmidt setzte die Brigade Kaminski gegen die Partisanengruppen in seinem Armeebereich ein, u. bereits nach dem ersten Gefecht zwischen der Brigade Kaminski u. den Partisanen verliessen Letztere das Gebiet. Wegen der guten Zusammenarbeit mit Kaminski verzichteten die Deutschen auf die Rekrutierung von Zwangsarbeitern im Distrikt u. ermaessigten sogar die Ablieferungsquoten zu Lasten der benachbarten Rayons. Schliesslich wuchs die Brigade Kaminski auf **5000** Mann an u. wurde auch von der Wehrmacht mit Waffen u. Munition versorgt. (See, *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 149-50)⁵⁰³

ab Jan 42: Auch die Partisanen wurden im **2.** Kriegsjahr immer dreister. Wenn einer zur Latrine musste, gingen **2** Mann mit um aufzupassen, dass er nicht abgestochen wurde. Wenn dann ein Partisan geschnappt wurde, wurde er standrechtlich erschossen, so wie es laut internationalem Recht (Haager Landkriegsordnung) erlaubt war u. von den Gegnern auch gehandhabt wurde. Aus dieser Situation machte man **1993** der Wehrmacht den Vorwurf, verbrecherisch gehandelt zu haben. Selbst die Frauen waren nicht unbeteiligt. Sie urinierten im Stehen vor unseren Augen u. provozierten damit die Landser. Nach dem Kriege haben auslaendische Historiker festgestellt,⁵⁰⁴ dass russ. Partisanen in deutschen Uniformen ihre eigenen Doerfer ueberfallen u. die meisten Einwohner umgebracht haben. Einige durften entkommen, um von den Greueln der Deutschen erzaehlen zu koennen. Das Ganze wurde fotografisch festgehalten u. ueberall publick gemacht. Dadurch wurde der Hass u. die Kampfbereitschaft der Partisanen u. der Bevoelkerung angeheizt. (*Dr. W. Dicke, 26. ID, Memoiren*, 40-41)

18.1.42: Red Army now embarks upon a new and decisive tactic. Beginning on this day, and continuing for six (**6**) days, a total of **1643** Soviet parachute troops are dropped behind German lines SE and SW of *Vyazma*. Linking up w/ partisan units, they begin to harrass and disrupt the

⁵⁰³ **Note:** For Schmidt's so-called "Erschiessungsbefehl" for partisans of **3.3.42**, which earned him by Hitler the characterization as being "*zu weich*," see *Woche*, pp 150-51. As *Woche* writes: "Auf jeden Fall gehoerte Generaloberst Schmidt zu den Offizieren, denen daran gelegen war, die ideologisch angeordneten Massnahmen aus dem **OKW** bzw. aus dem Fuehrerhauptquartier fuer die Kriegfuehrung im Osten zu entschaerfen." (150)

⁵⁰⁴ **Note:** This is a reference to the book by William R. Corson and Robert I. Crowley, "The New KGB," p 202. Yet I must remain skeptical till more proof garnered.

German lines of communication and supply, forcing substantial numbers of German troops to be diverted to anti-partisan activities. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 291)

20.1.42: On this day, as far back as the railway line between Minsk and *Baranowicze*, the Germans report partisan attacks on their railway guards. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 291-92)

ab 29.1.42: From this date at latest [perhaps earlier, confirm!], numerous references to partisan activities around Wjasma and in other areas in the “Geheime Tagesberichte der dt. *Wehrmachtfuehrung*. See, *Mehner*, 166. . .)

31.1.42: Soviet partisans are active in disrupting German movement; on **31.1.42**, a German report notes that in the *Yelnya – Dorogobuzh* area „the partisan movement is gaining the upper hand.“ Not only are ambushes and attacks now a *daily occurrence*, but a partisan field hospital is said to have been set up near Yelnya. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 296-97)

Jan-Mar 42: Elements of **11. PD** took part in Partisaneneinsaetzen from **Jan-Mar 42**. Tank crews who no longer possess tanks are used (among others) to fight the partisans. At least some of this fighting took place around Dorogobusch. (See photos in: *G. Schrodek, 11. Pz.-Div.*, 311-18)

Jan-Sep 42: Early partisan activity is very much exaggerated in Soviet accounts. In **Jan-Feb 42**, there were fewer than **20** attacks a month over the whole railway system. By **May 42**, the attacks had risen to **170** and by **Sep 42** (the peak month of the year) to **730**. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 218; also, *Pottgiesser, Die Reichsbahn im Ostfeldzug*, 85)

Feb 42: Soviet partisans have established a wide zone of ops behind German lines east of *Smolensk*; in an area more than **75** miles long from east to west, and almost **50** miles deep, they work w/ airborne and regular troops to disrupt German troop movements both eastward and on the north-south axis. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 303)

2.2.42: [*Heusinger Brief an seine Frau*] Der erst in Ansaetzen entstehenden *Partisanentaetigkeit*, noch *schlecht organisierte Einzelaktionen*, ausgeuebt von versprengten Angehoerigen der Roten Armee ohne logistische Basis u. zunaechst ohne Rueckhalt in der Bevoelkerung, mass *Heusinger* zu diesem Zeitpunkt noch *keine besondere Bedeutung* bei. Er meinte, dass die Partisanen „mit dieser Methode aber keinen operativ zu wertenden Erfolg“ haben wuerden, wenn sie „auch sehr stoerend“ seien, „weil man sie bei dem teifen Schnee schwer fassen kann.“ Mit der *ab Fruehjahr 1942* sich steigernden Bedrohung des rueckwaertigen Gebietes durch allmaehlich besser organisierte Partisanen-Unternehmen wuchs jedoch dem Ostkrieg eine neue Dimension des *wechselseitigen Vernichtungskrieges* zu...Vorerst war es *Heusinger* aber noch „*schleierhaft*“, wovon die Partisanen ueberhaupt lebten. Er hielt sogar den Verdacht des *Kannibalismus* fest, „an vielen Stellen eindeutig festgestellt.“ (*Meyer, Heusinger*, 176; also, *Das Dt. Reich im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Bd 4, 752 [*Hoffmann*])

14.2.42: Heute habe ich hier *unsere freiwillige Sicherungs-Komp. besucht, gebildet aus Landeseinwohnern, die sich freiwillig zum Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus gemeldet haben*. Sie sind in deutsche Uniformen gesteckt, mit Beutewaffen bewaffnet, vereidigt und haben ihre eigene Standarte mit den ukrainischen Farben blau-gelb; Leute mit dem Bauch voll Hass gegen den Bolschewismus, der ihnen ihre Angehörigen erschlagen und ihnen ihr Hab und Gut genommen hat. *Sie werden zur Partisanenbekämpfung eingesetzt* und haben in den letzten Tagen schon schöne Erfolge darin gehabt.

Das **Partisanenunwesen** nimmt immer schlimmere Formen an. In unserem rückwärtigen Gebiet gibt es eine große Zahl von Ortschaften, die Hochburgen der Partisanen sind, die auch über Funk mit der russ. Front in Verbindung stehen und von dort geleitet werden. Diese Leute werden weiter durch Fallschirmspringer vermehrt und sind mit schweren Waffen sehr gut bewaffnet, sogar mit Artillerie. Ihre Aufgabe ist die Durchführung von Überfällen auf Eisenbahnen, Straßen, Munitions- und Betriebsstofflager und Ausheben von Stäben. Sie bedrohen ständig die rückwärtigen Verbindungen und machen uns sehr viel zu schaffen. Gerade hier in den großen Waldungen, dem Gebiet der Brjansker Kessel sind besonders viele damals zu diesem Zweck zurückgeblieben. Sie sind in diesen Urwäldern auch gar nicht aufzustöbern. Zu ihrer Bekämpfung eignen sich also solche Männer, die ihre Schliche [tricks, ruses] kennen, sehr gut. Es war eine Freude, ihre Begeisterung und ihre gute freiw. Disziplin zu sehen, mit der sie von eigenen Führern als Soldaten ausgebildet werden. (*Tagebuch Lemelsen*)

1.3.42: Summary report of Army Group Center Rear Area [*Befehlshaber Mitte, General v. Schenckendorf*] records **63,257** “partisans” killed in this rear area since **1 Jul 41**. German dead thru **1 Mar 42** are put at **638!** (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War, 32*)

16.3.42 [*Goebbels Tagebuch*]: Gestern: [. . .] Ich lese einen Bericht des **SD** ueber die Lage in den besetzten Ostgebieten. Die Partisanentaetigkeit hat in den letzten Wochen wieder beachtlich zugenommen. Die Partisanen fuehren einen richtiggehenden organisierten Kleinkrieg. Es ist ihnen sehr schwer beizukommen, weil sie in den von uns besetzten Gebieten mit so terroristischen Mitteln vorgehen, dass die Bevoelkerung schon aus Angst sich nicht mehr bereitfindet, loyal mit uns zusammenzuarbeiten. Traeger der ganzen Partisanentaetigkeit sind die Politischen Kommissare u. vor allem die Juden. Es erweist sich deshalb als notwendig, in vermehrtem Umfange wieder Juden zu erschiessen. Es wird keine Ruhe in diesen Gebieten geben, solange dort ueberhaupt noch Juden taetig sind. . . (*R.G. Reuth (ed.), Goebbels Tagebuecher, Bd. IV, 1766*)⁵⁰⁵

16.3.42: “The activity of the partisans has increased notably in recent weeks,” Dr. Goebbels notes in his diary on this day. „They are conducting a well-organized guerrilla war.“ To combat partisan activity, a *special air detachment* had been set up two days earlier in *Bobruisk*, to bomb partisan camps and seek out from the air the movement of partisan units. This air detachment is to be made ready for action as part of Operation „Munich,“ an anti-partisan sweep planned to begin in the third week of March. (*Gilbert, Second World War, 308*)

19.3.42: Operation „Munich,“ an anti-partisan operation, is launched on this day. Supported by the newly created air detachment, German troops strike at partisan bases throughout the *Yelnya – Dorogobuzh* area. In a further sweep, near *Bobruisk*, code-named Operation “Bamberg,“ Russian villages are set on fire and their inhabitants killed in raids which, though punitive in the extreme, and killing **3500** villagers, serve only to intensify hatred of the occupier . . . However ferociously the Germans strike, the partisans fight back, reinforced by parachute drops of arms and men. „There are indications,“ **3. Panzer Army** reports later in **Mar 42**, „that the partisan movement in the region of *Velikiye Luki – Vitebsk – Rudnya – Velizh* is now being organized on a large scale. The fighting strength of the partisans hitherto active is being bolstered by individual units of regular troops“ – men trained in the use of heavy wpns, artillery and anti-tank guns.“ A similar accretion of Soviet partisan strength is reported near *Polotsk*. (*Gilbert, Second World War, 308-09*)

⁵⁰⁵ **Note:** This diary entry of Goebbels highly illustrative of the NS tendency to conflate the partisan movement w/ Jews – and to act accordingly.

Apr 42: H. Haape describes train journey from Rshew via Vyasma to Smolensk, etc., as he began his home leave. Train a shocking site—windows shot out, etc. In front of locomotive were several trucks, two filled with rocks and the one directly in front of engine filled with railway construction machinery and lengths of rails. First two trains (with rocks) were precaution against mines. Train is indeed struck by mine. Later attacked by partisans, etc. When train reaches *Orscha*, it was finally in safe area. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 368-70)

May 42: Im Bereich der am staerksten [von der Partisanenbewegung] betroffenen Hr.Gr.Mitte wurden bis **Mai 42** rund **80,000** Menschen als angebliche Partisanen erschossen, bei **1094** Toten in den eigenen Reihen. Von dem Massaker betroffen war vor allem die juedische Bevoelkerung. (*Mueller, Duell im Schnee*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 123)

May 42: From **Dec 41** thru **May 42**, **2 Army** claims **8,500** partisan “kills,” but acknowledges a loss of **1161** men (bulk of whom are *Hungarian* troops). (**Note:** Compare w/ **2 Army** data – in chronology above – from **31.10.41!**) (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 32)

Jun 42: The **4 Army**, operating in the partisan-infested area north of *Briansk*, conducts the largest anti-partisan sweep of the campaign to date during this month, Operation “*Hannover*.” about **10,500** partisans are killed or captured at a cost of **2500** German casualties. (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 34)

Aug 42: Official German designation for partisans after **Aug 42** was “bandits.” (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 38)

Sep 42: Im suedlichen Abschnitt der Hr.Gr.Mitte nahmen seit dem Fruehjahr **1942** die Aktivi-taeten der Partisanen zu. Nach zwei (**2**) gescheiterten “*Saeuberungsaktionen*” erteilte das Oberkommando der **2. Pz.Armee** am **9.9.42** den Befehl zum “*Unternehmen Dreieck*” u. “*Viereck*.” Das **IR 727**, mehrere koeniglich-ungarische Inf.Rgter, sowie russ. Freiwilligenverbaende sollten die etwa **4.000** Partisanen, die um den Eisenbahnknotenpunkt *Brjansk* operierten, in mehreren “*Kesseln*” stellen u. vernichten. Das “*Unternehmen Dreieck*” u. “*Viereck*” hinterliess weitlaeufige “*Wuestenzonen*.” Mindestens **1.000** Menschen wurden getoetet, Erntevorraete u. Vieh abtransportiert, die Doerfer dem Erdboden gleichgemacht u. die Bewohner des Gebietes, insgesamt **18.596** Personen, deportiert. Fuer die Behandlung von Juden u. “*Bandenangehoerigen*” gab es geson-derte Anweisungen: Sie sollten als “*Minensuchgeraet 42*” eingesetzt werden, das heisst, sie wurden an langen Halsstricken gefesselt u. mit Eggen [*harrows*]⁵⁰⁶ u. Walzen [*drum, cylinder*, etc.] ueber die Minenfelder gejagt. Der Gefechtsbericht stellte zufrieden fest: “Die Bereitstellung zahlreicher “*Minensuechgeraete*” [...] hast sich bewaehrt u. der Truppe viel Blut erspart.” (*Gefechtsbericht ueber “Unternehmen Dreieck” u. “Viereck”* vom 17.9–2.10.42. BA-MA RH 23/25; quoted in: (<http://www.verbrechen-der-wehrmacht.de>)

1942/43: “The recollection of former *Wehrmacht* officer, *Hellmuth Kreidel*, that Army Group Ctr suffered **50** to **60** daily casualties due to partisans during the **1942/43** period matches the Army figures.” (*H. Kreidel, “Partisanenkampf in Mittelrussland,” Wehrkunde*, 4, No. 9, Sep 54; quoted in: *Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 38)

⁵⁰⁶ According to Webster’s *New World Dictionary*, a harrow is “a frame w/ spikes or sharp-edged disks, drawn by a horse or tractor and used for breaking up and leveling plowed ground, covering seeds, rooting up weeds, etc.”

Nov 42-Jul 43: Germans [the SS] conducted at least a dozen (**12**) *anti-partisan sweeps* in “White Russia” [i.e., within and across the borders of the *Generalkommissariat*] during this period. Table 7 in article by *Tim Mulligan* shows the relative losses of the “partisans” vis-à-vis the SS forces. Several examples:

- a) “*Nuernberg*” [19.-26.11.42]: **1151** partisans killed (+ **1833** Jews killed) vs. **16** German “losses;”
- b) “*Franz*” [5.14.1.43]: **2025** partisans killed vs. **34** German “losses;”
- c) “*Draufgaenger*” [1.-9.5.43]: **680** partisans killed vs. **4** German “losses.”

(Source: *Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 42)

Jun 43: The largest and most notorious SS operation occurred at this time: Operation “*Kottbus*,” directed against a partisan stronghold which straddled the border between German civil and military government. The operation encountered stiff resistance and lost nearly **700** men; even Soviet sources acknowledge a loss of **130** partisans killed and **50** wounded. But the expedition degenerated into another slaughter: among the **9751** guerrillas claimed as killed only **950** rifles and submachine guns were recovered. An additional **2-3000** inhabitants died when they were driven through partisan minefields to clear them. The atrocities committed shocked and outraged German civil officials and even SS officers. Yet the operations continued. (*Mulligan, Cost of People’s War*, 42-43)

Jun 44: Nach sowj. Quellen zaehlten die Partisanengruppen im Hinterlande der **HKL** allein im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte **240 000** Mann, die durch Stoerung der Nachschubwege jede Versorgung der dt. Truppen schlagartig unterbinden, diese selbst von rueckwaerts angreifen konnten. Zurueckgehende deutsche Truppen mussten sich einen Rueckweg durch deren Gebiet erst freikaempfen, ihre Waffen dann nach mehreren Seiten richten. (*R. Hinze, Zusammenbruch der H.Gr.Mitte*, 29)

1.17: *War Crimes:*

Quote #1: Der Grundgedanken General Scharnhorsts: In der Armee „die Vereinigung aller moralischen u. physischen Kraefte aller Staatsbuerger“ zu finden seien. (quoted in paper, „*Handlungsspielraeume im Vernichtungskrieg*,” by David Wildermuth, 2007 GSA Conference, 5 Oct 07)

Quote #2: Es ist furchtbar. *Wie wir uns mit Blut u. Grausamkeit besudeln muessen.* . . Es ist ein Rueckfall von Jahrhunderten, wenn nicht Jahrtausenden. (*Tagebuch Muenschhausen, Okt 41*)

Note: Die Mitverantwortung der Wehrmachtfuehrung fuer das verbrecherische NS-Regime u. seine wahnwitzige Kriegfuehrung . . . ist nicht zu bestreiten. Selbstverstaendlich kann das militaerische Prinzip von Befehl u. Gehorsam gerade in totalitaeren Systemen zum Kadavergehorsam entarten, der auch die Generalitaet erfasst. . . Aber die Spitzen der Wehrmacht haben diesen Prozess mitgestaltet u. trotz mancher Bedenken im militaerischen Apparat umgesetzt. Dabei handelte es sich bei ueber **3000** Generalen u. Admiralen um nicht mehr als ein gutes Dutzend, die in hoechster Kommandofunktion dirketen Zugang zum „Fuehrer“ hatten. Hier ist an erster Stelle der Chef des **OKW**, Keitel, zu nennen. . . Die Frage nach der Verantwortung

laesst sich daher nicht kollektiv beantworten, sondern erfordert eine differenzierte Betrachtung, die den Grad der Handlungsfreiheit beruecksichtigt. Fuer die Mehrzahl der einfachen Soldaten stellte sich angesichts eines rigiden Systems von Zwang, Anpassung u. Verfuehrung diese Frage anders. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 119)

Note: Die Millionen einfacher Wehrmachtsoldaten waren seit **1933** einer permanenten propagandistischen Berieselung ausgesetzt – u. die Verteufelung des Bolschewismus sowie die Verunglimpfung der Ostvoelker als „slawische Untermenschen“ gehoerten zu den Grundstereotypen der Goebbels-Propaganda. Angesichts dessen ist es kaum verwunderlich, dass sich die entsprechenden Feindbilder tief in den Koepfen vieler Soldaten eingenistet hatten. Und nicht allein das: Wie der US-Historiker Stephen G. Fritz in seiner Untersuchung ueber Hitlers Frontsoldaten anhand von Feldpostbriefen, Tagebuechern u. Erinnerungen rekonstruiert hat, waren zahlreiche Landser durchdrungen von der NS-„Weltanschauung“: Sie glaubten tatsaechlich, eine Mission zu haben – Deutschland u. Europa vor dem Bolschewismus zu bewahren u. die Welt im Sinne der Nationalsozialismus umzugestalten. (G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 83)

Note: Die sogenannte Wehrmachtausstellung [ca. mid-1990s] schoss in ihrer Botschaft weit ueber das Ziel hinaus. In vielerlei Hinsicht uebernahmen die Betreiber der Ausstellung kritiklos die Beschuldigungen aus den sowj. Schauprozessen gegen Angehoerigen der Wehrmacht. Erst die Korrekturen von Bogdan Musial u. Christian Ugvari setzten den plakativen, auf aeusserst bruechigen Belegen fussenden Vorwuerfen an die Adresse der Wehrmacht eine Grenze. . . Eine tiefschuerfende u. mit grosser Sachkenntnis gefuehrte Untersuchung ruecke endlich einige Jahre spaeter die Unterstellungen u. Fehleinschaetzungen der Ausstellung so zurecht,⁵⁰⁷ dass man *heute ein ehrliches, durchaus gesichertes Bild vom Verhalten der Wehrmachteinheiten waehrend des Ostkrieges besitzt*. Zur Klaerung der Verantwortung ist, so zeigte sich, eine klare Unterscheidung der Vorgehensweisen von Wehrmachteinheiten u. solchen der SS, des SD, der Ordnungspolizie u. der einheimischen Milizen vonnoeten. (H. Mageneheimer, *Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 7)

Note: In historiography of Russo-German War great emphasis often placed on German war crimes, while little note taken of crimes committed by the Red Army. Not to pick on D. Glantz, but his book, When Titans Clashed, provides a good example of this trend: On pp 56-57, he notes German war crimes, criminal orders, etc., in some detail. At the end of this section he writes: “All this being said, from the very start, the Red Army *responded in kind*.” That is the only perfunctory mention of Soviet crimes in this section (in entire book?). (See, *Glantz & House, When Titans Clashed*, 56-57)

Note: In juengster Zeit ist die Frage nach dem Verbrechen der Wehrmacht genauer erforscht worden. . . Das Ergebnis ist facettenreich: Es gab zahlreiche Verbrechen, vor allem an der Ostfront, gegen Zivilisten u. Soldaten, an denen Einheiten der Wehrmacht beteiligt waren. Und es gab immer wieder deutsche Soldaten, die der Stimme ihres Gewissens folgten. *Verallgemeinerungen sind gerade hier nicht zulaessig*. Begriffe wie „manche“, „viele“ oder „alle“ haben einen schalen Beigeschmack. *Viele hatten wenig u. wenige hatten viel zu verantworten*. Zumindest aber waren es „allzu viele“, die nicht nur von Verbrechen wussten, sondern diese auch mit begangen haben. Nach konservativen Schaetzungen waren zumindest 5 % der Wehrmacht-

⁵⁰⁷ **Note:** See, Stefan Scheil, Legende, Geruechte, Fehlrteile. Graz. 2003.

soldaten an Verbrechen beteiligt. Das waeren allein an der Ostfront rund **500 000** Mann gewesen. (G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 11)⁵⁰⁸

Sep-Oct 39 [War crimes in **Poland**]: Before the invasion, Hitler had told his senior commanders to *close their hearts to pity and act brutally*. . . Plans had already been made in **Aug 39** for special task forces (*Einsatzgruppen*) to carry out a “Fundamental cleansing: Jews, intelligentsia, clergy, nobles.” Similar task forces had already been used against Jews and political opponents after the occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia. . . For the invasion of Poland, one force of some **400-600** men was allocated to operate in the rear of each of the five [**5**] German armies. It is estimated that they killed some **60,000** people. They were helped by so-called self-defense organizations of ethnic Germans in Poland, who had suffered discrimination from the Polish authorities and themselves been victims of violence during the invasion. In addition, atrocities were committed by regular troops of the German army, though – unlike the SS – their commanding officers regarded these atrocities as a *breach of discipline to be punished*. Two senior commanders also protested against the actions of the SS, describing them as counter-productive, dishonorable and brutalizing. Hitler dismissed their objections saying “*one can’t fight a war w/ Salvation Army methods*.” (J. Wright, *Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 151-52)

Note: Estimates of the number of German soldiers *directly involved in atrocities* [in Russia] vary from **5%** to **60-80%** [!]. But in any case such figures may be misleading. The worst atrocities occurred in the *rear areas*, while most of the troops were at the front. But, whatever weight should be given to the imperatives of war as an explanation, the war in the East – so different to the war in the West – *cannot be understood w/o the overt racism of German attitudes*. So far as the organized *genocide* against the Jews is concerned, the German army was not the instigator of the process – that was Hitler and the SS – but *army cdrs did nothing to prevent it from happening*. (J. Wright, *Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 181)

J. Wright [attempt to explain atrocities]: Part of the explanation lies in institutional rivalries and lack of planning, leading to unforeseen crises and *improvised solutions* eventually culminating in systematic mass murder. Part of the explanation may also lie in the escalation of war on the eastern front, as it became a desperate struggle for survival, a genuine “total war” where *soldiers no longer felt bound by legal or moral norms*. Another factor was the memory of the food shortages caused by the British blockage in **1917** and the damaging effect it had on morale: this was to lead in **1941-42** to the requisition of supplies from Poland and Russia regardless of the millions who starved as a result.

But the deeper cause was the *power of racial ideology*, the central inspiration of Nazism, which allowed people to think in terms of superior and inferior races and the right to depopulate whole regions in order to resettle them w/ Germans and to engage in mass murder. What Hitler called “*a racial reconstruction of Europe*,” was not an idea confined to Himmler and a small circle of the Nazi elite. It influenced a significant number of *university graduates in the 1920s, scientists, geographers, economists and historians among others*. Their willing cooperation in the occupation regimes helped to turn Hitler’s crude concept of what would now be called “*ethnic cleansing*” into brutal reality. . .

⁵⁰⁸ **Note:** See also the following article: Hartmann, Christian, “*Verbrecherischer Krieg – verbrecherische Wehrmacht? Ueberlegungen zur Struktur des deutschen Ostheeres 1941 - 1944*.” In: VfZ 1/2004. (I believe Hartmann also uses **5%** figure.)

The belief that the *laws of race* had their own compelling morality, overriding humanitarian scruples, had *deep roots*. It was to be found in the irrational *mysticism* of Nazi ideologues, epitomized by Alfred Rosenberg's The Myth of the Twentieth Century, but also in the eugenic ideas of modern science. In a way typical of Nazism, it combined the irrational w/ the scientific, revealing what has been called "the dark side" of modernity. And as the occupation regimes and the war on the eastern front showed, such ideas were not confined to Germany. Indeed, outside Poland and the Russian heartland of the Soviet Union the occupation depended not only on coercion but also degrees of *acceptance and collaboration*. Romanians, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Croats among others *all took part in atrocities against those they saw as their racial or ideological enemies*. (See, *Germany and Origins of Second World War*, 147-48)

Note: Another matter clearly documented in the present volume is concurrency between Hitler and the top military in OKW and OKH on the meaning of the war. It was to be, simultaneously, a war of annihilation and of conquest of living space. These categories were familiar to military thinking. Even before the First World War, military leaders – and certainly not only on the German side – tended to discount the requirements of international law. Military interests, power politics, and scant regard for international law were the obverse of Wilhelminian assurance of strength and power. The Great General Staff's directive on international law of 1902 contained the statement that humanitarian requirements could only be considered to the extent permitted by the nature and objective of the war: "A vigorously conducted war cannot be aimed solely against the combatants of the enemy state or its fortifications, but will and must equally seek to destroy the entire moral and material resources of the same." Such a concept of "total war" explains the readiness to carry the war, as outlined by Hitler in 1941, to the east, esp. as that opponent was the enemy *par excellence* – Bolshevism, on the disastrous influence of which the German defeat in 1918 was explained. For that reason this war acquired a higher degree of inevitability than the war in the West, as well as a character which suppressed any moral scruples. Thus, the political significance w/ which Hitler endowed this war also far exceeded military and economic objectives. . . It far exceeded the objectives of dominion of ordinary imperialism on a Wilhelminian scale. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 4-5)

Note: Sometimes wonder if, w/ all the "hysteria" in Germany over "criminality" in the Wehrmacht beginning in the 1990s (*Wehrmachtausstellung*, etc.), historians and the public at large aren't holding the German Army of WWII to an artificial standard—one that even other armies did not meet. For example, American WWII veteran, "A. J.," a combat engineer w/ the **87. U.S. Inf.-Div.** (the "Golden Acorn" division) who participated in the Battle of the Bulge, recently told me that his unit *engaged constantly in looting*—looting of German POWs and German civilians. In Germany, for example, he and his men took watches and other items of civilians at gun point. He was not proud of this, but it was a "fact of life." (*Tehachapi*, lunch date, 9 Sep 07)

Note: „War,“ Clausewitz wrote, „is an act of force and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. Each side therefore, compels the opponent to follow suit; a *reciprocal action* is started which must lead, in theory, to extremes.“ That is what happened on the eastern front. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 17; also, *Clausewitz, On War*, trans. Howard & Paret, Bk 1, ch. 1, part 3, p 77)

Note: "Atrocities of alarming magnitude have been committed in the ideological war of annihilation in eastern Europe – but it should be pointed out that, practically from the first day onward, both belligerents were equally involved in them." (*Joachim Hoffmann, GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 980)

Note [“Normal” brutality vs. Nazi war crimes]: “First of all, one has to emphasize that – so far as these criminal orders and directives and their implementation is concerned – the point in question is *not* that of ‘normal brutality’ which happened during almost all military conflicts of our century, as in the massacres of *Nanking (1937)*, *Oradour and Tulle (1944)*, *Freudenstadt and Setif (1945)*, *Deir Jassin (1948)* and *My Lai (1968)*, or when the Red Army invaded Germany’s eastern provinces (1945) or during the *French-Algerian War (1954-62)*. Even so, these appalling incidents do reflect the increasing brutalization of modern warfare. . . What distinguished the criminal acts under review here from this kind of ‘normal brutalisation’ is the very fact that the war against Soviet Russia was *deliberate conceived by Nazi Germany’s highest political and military authorities, and was actually waged as a war of extermination and oppression.*” (K.-J. Mueller, *Brutalization of Warfare*, 229)

Note: Concerning criminal orders issued before „*Barbarossa*,” there has been a long-standing myth that the bulk of the officer corps resisted these measures, at least passively. „For far too long the memoirs of German generals, quickly translated into English during the Cold War, shaped the public’s image of the *Wehrmacht*’s record in the Second World War,” argues historian Juergen Foerster. „From Nuremberg onwards, the notion has existed of separating the Fuehrer from his followers, the generals from their supreme cdr, and the *Wehrmacht* from the crimes of the SS. Many a veteran still doggedly perpetuates the myth that the soldiers had nothing to do w/ the ideological side of *Barbarossa*. . . “ This was far from the case. From von Brauchitsch all the way down to the hard-marching grenadiers, the *Wehrmacht* was well stocked w/ men who believed in Hitler, his ideology, and his methods. Three [3] days before Hitler’s address to the senior generals [on **30.3.41**], for ex., von Brauchitsch had spoken w/ the staff officers of **18 Army**, striking a very similar tone to that of the Fuehrer and warning that they must see the upcoming war as a „struggle between two different races and act with necessary severity.” This message was received by many willing ears. (*Newton, Hitler’s Commander*, 117)

Note: „Operation ‚*Barbarossa*’ was unlike previous campaigns because the Wehrmacht made war on the Russian civilian population. . . Whereas the moral seepage occasioned by cruelties was to have a corrosive impact on German motivation and fighting power, it increased the will of the Russian soldier to resist at all costs.” (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 240)

Note: In his book, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, Manfred Messerschmidt has demonstrated how from **1933** onwards the military leadership systematically shaped the *Wehrmacht* as an institution into the “*second column*” of the Nazi system – forming it into a *compliant tool* of Nazi extermination policy . . . The Supreme Command (OKW/OKH) inundated the German army w/ a *veritable flood of pamphlets* describing the “brutish enemy” and the “Russian *Untermensch*.” This, too, was accepted by the soldiers because it evidently coincided w/ their own experience of an *alien and threatening world*. (*H. Heer, War of Extermination*, 329, 333-34)

Note: The recollections of a former *Wehrmacht* soldier reveal that the *blurring of moral categories* had been successful and military operations could no longer be distinguished from genocidal actions: “Even those incidents which in fact clearly indicated the genocidal nature of this ‘war’ were interpreted by me (and probably by most soldiers at the front) as part of the general, if not ‘normal’ process of war, and as military operations. This confusion which, within a short time caused most soldiers to lose all sense of *moral orientation*, was not only a result of the war situation and individual or collective interpretation. It had already started in the prewar period and belonged to most soldiers’ *basic frame of mind*. (*H. Heer, War of Extermination*, 337)

Note: For brief discussion of *Kant* and the categorical imperative outlined in his “*idea of duty*,” and of *Nietzsche*, who postulated a notion of the human subject who is “fortified by wars and victories, for whom conquest, adventure, danger, and pain have even become a need” (man thus conceived is “beyond good and evil” in moral terms) see, *H. Heer. War of Extermination*, p 341. He writes: “This is the person we encounter in the millions under National Socialism . . . Men w/ a ‘*transmoral conscience*,’ as *Paul Tillich* termed it. In their minds misdeeds figure as good deeds, and criminal behavior becomes the enactment of the moral code . . . Which is why, in the belief they were acting morally, the soldiers of the German *Wehrmacht* murdered so well and in such numbers, and why, even up to the present, they neither wish nor are able to remember any crime.”

Note: *W.P. Reese’s* „Confession,” as he subtitles his manuscript, leaves no room for the *myth of a squeaky-clean Wehrmacht*, misled and misused by a criminal Nazi clique. But it leaves plenty of room for *sympathy w/ the fate of the mass of German soldiers* who were on the side of the culprits, while *themselves often being victims*. Even in Hitler’s war in the East, which was so *manifestly criminal*, there is not always black and white, not always a clear distinction between good and evil. The scale of the action is so vast that the single man – his pain, his guilt, his experience – is almost invisible. (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, preface, xvii)

Note: Commitment of war crimes sometimes appears prompted by a *bizarre dialectic*—for ex., Germans used murder of prisoners by NKVD (in western Ukraine, etc.) at outset of war as justification to murder thousands of Jews. Also, Germans in some cases outraged by Soviet crimes they witnessed, which increased their contempt/hatred of the enemy and made it easier for them to commit crimes in turn. Of course, same dynamic held true for the Russians as well. (See, for example, (*Black Book of Communism*, 225-26)

Note: In discussing the several criminal orders pertaining to “*Barbarossa*,” *B. Wegner* notes the key involvement of prominent field commanders, such as *GFM v. Reichenau*, who on **10.10.41** demanded in a *notorious order* that German soldiers in the east should “not only fight according to the rules of warfare,” but should also “avenge all the atrocities committed against Germans and other racially related people.” Such words, *Wegner* notes, “*were sharply rejected by many officers*, but they opened the gates for a barbaric conduct of war in the East *much more widespread than most surviving German officers were willing to admit after the war*.” (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 108-9)

Note: “[Es] wird [ref. is to *J. Huerter’s* book re: *Heeresfuehrer*] von einer sehr einfachen, zuletzt aber haeufig uebersehenen Tatsache ausgegangen: *Die Kriegsverbrechen lassen sich von der Kriegsfuehrung nicht trennen*. Es genuegt nicht, dieses oder jenes Verbrechen an diesem oder jenem Ort aus dem Zusammenhang des mil. Geschehens zu loesen u. quasi in einen luftleeren Raum zu stellen. Statt dessen muss wieder staerker nach den *Wechselwirkungen* u. *Rahmenbedingungen* gefragt werden...Die entscheidende Frage ist: *Wie fuehrte die Oberbefehlshaber in diesem riesigen Land fernab der Heimat Krieg?*“ (*C. Hartmann, et al., Wehrmacht in der NS Diktatur*, 7)

Note: Even more than their basic training, it was the war itself that would rob [German] conscripts of their natural inhibitions about killing. In wartime conditions that imposed both physical and psychological burdens on soldiers, the military’s demand of absolute, unquestioning obedience – even to criminal orders – caused many of them to lose most of their sense of individual responsibility and personal guilt. Soldiers’ sense of humanity and justice became dramatically *deformed*. The *militarization of Germany*, achieved on the basis of general conscription, led during the war to a disturbingly far-reaching loss of humane standards of behavior that had

previously been viewed as a hallmark of civilized societies . . . The course of the Battle of *Stalingrad* is a fitting system. Outwardly the Germans were aggressive and effective enough toward foreigners to advance all the way to the distant Volga, but *inwardly they were virtually paralyzed by a military discipline that suppressed all rational reflection.* (W. Wette, *The Wehrmacht*, 159)

Note: *Fraternization* between German and Russian soldiers had been *not uncommon* on the eastern front during World War One. Easter **1916** had witnessed scenes not dissimilar to those of the notorious unofficial Christmas truce on the Western Front in **1914**. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 57)

Wehrmacht soldiers and junior NCOs had *grown up under Hitler* and had „no reservations about their mission in Russia.“ A significant minority – **29%** in one analysis of three front-line German divisions – were Nazi Party members. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 55, quoting from Bartov, *The Eastern Front 1941-45*, no pg. #)

War crimes: „The sheer number of atrocities committed by the *Wehrmacht* in particular, and not merely by the SS, *so huge that it is difficult to comprehend*, seems only recently to have been made a little more visible in a variety of new historical publications [i.e., *as of 1991*].“ (H.J. Schroeder, *German Soldiers' Experiences*, 318)

D. Irving: „The Russian Jews had few champions. There was almost no German army opposition to their liquidation – it was regarded even by *Manstein* as a salutary preventive measure, wiping out the reservoirs of *partisan activity* before they became active. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 327)

D. Irving: „Hitler's surviving adjutants, secretaries, and staff stenographers have *all* uniformly testified that *never once* was the extermination of the Russian or European Jews mentioned – even confidentially – at Hitler's HQ. Even SS General *Karl Wolff*, Himmler's Chief of Staff and liaison officer to Hitler, was at this time ignorant of the program that now got underway [i.e., in fall of **1941**].“ (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 327)

Second genocide: „Indeed it is right and justified to join *Michael Schneider* in saying that a ‚*second genocide*‘ took place in the Soviet Union. This second genocide has not been registered to anything like the same extent by the West German public as the Jewish Holocaust. The mechanism of deflection and diversion, basic to the process of shuffling off the blame, continues to function: by admitting to the crimes against the Jews, it is unnecessary to consider those against the Russians. As **Heinrich Boell** noted in **1981**, the same *mechanism* is used to keep the blame off the German *Wehrmacht*; because the public knows about the crimes committed by the SS, they don't need to worry about those committed by the *Wehrmacht*...From the top echelons to the rank and file, the *Wehrmacht* were involved in war crimes to a *much greater extent* than the public, and often also historians, would like to believe. Pointing out this fact is not so much to do w/ „rocking the boat,“ but is rather an attempt to calm the waves, not least in the sense of *reconciliation w/ the Soviet Union*. (H.J. Schroeder, *German Soldiers' Experiences*, 323-24)

Omer Bartov: Speaks of the “close tie between the *Wehrmacht's* enforcement of harsh combat discipline by means of sentencing thousands of its own soldiers to death, and its orders to those same soldiers *legally* to implement a policy of murder and destruction deemed criminal by any normal human standard. Put differently, we can say that the *Ostheer* in particular was characterized by *exceptional combat performance*, on the one hand, and a *widespread legalization of criminal actions*, on the other. Indeed, this aspect of the war in the east is crucial to our

understanding of the conduct and *self-perception* of the individual *Landser*. Moreover, the link between *fighting discipline and disciplined barbarism* was forged by the *army's tolerance of the increasingly prevalent 'wild,'* that is unauthorized, actions by the troops, such as indiscriminate shootings, plunder, and wanton destruction. But in stark contrast to the harsh punishment meted for combat offenses, and although unauthorized actions against enemy prisoners and civilians were *expressly forbidden*, there is **no evidence of soldiers' having to bear disciplinary consequences for such crimes.**" (Bartov, *A View from Below*, 331)⁵⁰⁹

Konrad Adenauer to Gen.[a.D.] P. Hausser: „My Dear General, In retrospect, I would like to send you encouraging information, that in my speech that I gave in Parliament on 3 December 1952, one topic embraced the **Declaration of Confidence** for the former German *Wehrmacht*, inclusive w/ the members of the Waffen SS, inasmuch as *they fought honorably for Germany*, their Fatherland. I remain, in deep respect, Adenauer. (Ltr, *Adenauer to P. Hausser*, 17.12.52; quoted in: *Verton*, *In the Fire of the Eastern Front*, 276)

Note: Hier folgte nun die **endgueltige u. aktive Verstrickung der Wehrmacht u. besonders des Heeres in Hitlers Vernichtungskrieg**. Es waren somit zwei Massnahmen – „**Gerichtsbarkerleiderlass**“ u. „**Kommissarbefehl**“ – die der **ObdH** im Verlauf des Mai 1941 in der offiziellen Bekanntgabe des OKW zu erwarten hatte u. mit der er sich *offenen Auges* schliesslich in den kommenden Vernichtungskrieg verwickeln liess. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 233)

Note: Ebenso deutlich ist bereits nachgewiesen, dass selbst hoechste Heeresfuehrer entsprechend dem „*voelkischen Gedankengut*“ waehrend des Feldzuges *weitere Befehle herausgegeben haben, welche auf die Umsetzung der von Hitler proklamierten pol. Ziele des Feldzuges abgestellt waren*. Der Weg aktiver u. passiver Beteiligung an der Beseitigung politischer u. „*voelkischer*“ Gegner, der mit dem sogenannten **Roehm-Putsch seinen Ausgangspunkt** genommen hatte, war an einem weiteren Hoehepunkt angekommen. „Mit Hinweisen auf das *Gehorsamsprinzip*, auf den Mangel an *Zivilcourage* oder gar auf den ‚*Daemon*‘ Hitler, der die Generaele gleichsam *verhext* habe, ist das **nahezu vollstaendige Einschwenken der Wehrmachtsgeneralitaet auf den Kurs Hitlers im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion** nicht zu erklaren. Der *Konnex* war viel enger: In diesem Vernichtungskrieg [...] wuchsen Nationalsozialismus u. Wehrmachtfuehrung in weltanschaulicher Hinsicht endgueltig zusammen.“ (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 241)⁵¹⁰

Der *umfassende Unrechtscharacter* der dt. Kriegsanstrengungen von 1939 bis 1942/43 ist *unbestreitbar*. Die dt. Wehrmacht war in diesen Jahren nichts anderes als ausfuehrendes Organ der wahnwitzigen Hitlerschen Weltherrschaftsplaene...*Kritik hat sich nicht gegen den einfachen Soldaten, gegen den Offizier in unteren Fuehrungstellen zu richten*, die glauben mochten, was ihnen Fuehrung u. Progaganda *vorgaukelten*, die keinen Einblick in die groesseren Zusammenhaenge hatten u. die keine Mitwirkungsmoeglichkeit in den Entscheidungsprozesses besaessen...*Anders sieht es dagegen mit der Generalitaet aus*. Sie war keineswegs so ahnungslos, wie sie es in vielen Darstellungen nach dem Krieg von sich selbst behauptete. Sie hatte eine hoehere Verantwortung u. konnte sich nicht einfach darauf berufen, nur *pflichtgemaess* ihre fachlichen Faehigkeiten in den Dienst der oberen Fuehrung gestellt—oder wie es im Militaerjargon hiess: *Order pariert [obeyed]* – zu haben, mochte dabei geschehen was auch immer wolle – im Gegenteil war *ihr Schweigen zu Hitlers Vernichtungsplaenen fuer Russland*, die einer grossen Zahl fuehrender Vertreter der Wehrmacht bereits deutlich vor Begiff des

⁵⁰⁹ I can't help but think that B. overstates the reality here. No evidence German soldiers were *ever* held responsible for such crimes? And why would the "Army" tolerate such barbarism by its troops; what about the impact on *discipline*?

⁵¹⁰ The quote is from *Wette, Russland-Feindbilder*, S. 52.

Angriffs offenbart worden waren, *eine **einzig moralische Bankrotterklaerung** des fuehrenden Offizierskorps*. Was mag in einem Feldmarschall vorgegangen sein, wenn er beispielweise im Morgengrauen jenes 22. Juni 1941 am Ufer des Bug stand u. hinueber zum anderen Ufer sah, wissend, dass in wenigen Minuten ein Inferno aus tausenden von Geschuetzrohren u. Bombenschaechten ueber ein im tiefen Frieden liegendes Land, ueber ahnungslose, unschuldige Menschen hereinbrechen wuerde? Dachte er wirklich nur an Uhrenvergleich u. daran, ob seine Planung funktionieren wuerde? Musste er sich nicht vielmehr fragen: Was habe ich getan, um das zu verhindern? Oder kamen ihm nicht die Verse von **Andreas Gryphius** in den Sinn: „*Es ist Krieg, Herr, u. ich begehre, nicht Schuld daran zu sein...*“ (*Jagdfliegerverbaende* 6/1, Prien, 2)

Case „*Barbarossa*“ cannot be compared w/ the campaign in the west. The quick operation against the Red Army was planned as a war of *conquest, exploitation and extermination*. For Hitler, expansion (*Lebensraum*), slaughter of Slav masses, extermination of Bolshevism, annihilation of Jewry and global power politics were all *inextricably intertwined*...Hitler's ideologically motivated intentions could become an integral part of mil. ops and rear area security because the *army command and senior cdrs were willing to allow the troops to „do their share“ in the war of Weltanschauungen*, along side the SS. They both were, like Hitler, convinced that there was an *insuperable racial and ideological gulf* between National Socialist Germany and the Bolshevik Soviet Union...The deliberate *fusion* of military and ideological, punitive and preventive, elements in the relevant orders and guidelines of **28. Apr, 13 & 19 May, & 6 Jun 41** contributed to a considerable degree to the *concealment of their unlawful nature*. (*Foerster & Mawdsley, Hitler & Stalin*, 63-64)

David Stahel: Owing to its rapidly-developing ideological nature, “Barbarossa” represents a “clear break from all previous German campaigns of the Second World War. Even apart from the obvious military and strategic implications of open conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union, the campaign in the east represents a watershed in the basic character of the war itself. This differentiation is best understood through **Erich Ludendorff's** definition of ‘total war’ from his **1935** study *Der Totale Krieg*. . . The contention of Ludendorff is unique . . . for its radical, even extremist application of war and at the same time its close approximation to the methods adopted by National Socialist Germany. For Ludendorff, *war should aim for the ‘annihilation of the enemy Army and of the enemy nation,’* the essential aspect being the lack of distinction between combatants and non-combatants. . . Clearly [w/ Barbarossa] Ludendorff's conception of war . . . was reaching its fruition. (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 70)

David Stahel: In spite of the disadvantageous military implications, the army cdrs did more than just accept Hitler's notions of the new “total war.” Like many elements in the genocidal process undertaken within the Third Reich, its advancement was *sustained not in spite of the Army, but largely IAW its wishes and fervent desires*. . . GFM v. Brauchitsch, as C-in-C of the Army, led this new call to arms, rousing his officers to carry out the upcoming campaign as “*a struggle between two different races, requiring [...] troops to act w/ all necessary harshness*.” His subordinate cdrs followed suit w/ even more explicit and harshly-worded orders. [For example, General Hoepner's proclamation of **2 May 41**: “The objective of this battle must be the destruction of present day Russia and it must therefore be conducted w/ unprecedented severity. . . .”] (*And the World held its Breath*, 72)

David Stahel: As Christian Streit has well demonstrated, despite the emphatic post-war denials of Halder and many of his fellow generals, the so-called “criminal orders” were *dutifully prepared by the army, w/ Halder playing a central part*. Indeed, it was through his insistence that a clause was introduced to the Barbarossa Directive [**13.5.41**] which permitted officers to order the razing

of villages and the outright execution of inhabitants if it was suspected that villages were supporting partisans. At AGC, GFM von Bock *made no attempt to protest these orders* and maintained this stance even in **Aug 41** when the mass killing of innocent Jewish civilians was reported to him. (*And the World held its Breath*, 72)

1.17.1: Administration of Eastern Territories:

Note [German occupation of Poland]: German occupation of Poland marked by high degree of *improvisation and terror*. . . The German occupation of Poland was an experiment in every sense. Policies were inconsistent and varied between regions. . . Faced w/ conflicting priorities, the German authorities resorted to even higher levels of coercion. For the overwhelmingly Polish population of the Warthegau and the General Government, life under the German occupation was – and was intended to be – that of people treated as *sub-human, w/o rights, deprived of culture, religion and all but elementary education, and w/ inadequate food*. For the Jews the experience was even worse, driven into ghettos in the major cities, deported into work camps, kept on starvation rations, put to work in conditions where they were not expected to survive and killed when they were considered unfit for work. It is estimated that **6,000,000** people – about **18%** of the population – about half of them Jews died over the whole course of the occupation. . . Hitler was able to carry out his occupation policies in Poland and elsewhere *w/o serious challenge*. German attitudes ranged from willing participation to general support, tacit acquiescence, indifference, shame and the occasional protest. (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 149-51, 156)

Note: The Nazi occupation regime in the Soviet Union turned the possibility of a *war of liberation from Stalinism* into its opposite – the mobilization of the Soviet peoples behind Stalin and against the Nazi conqueror. . . The *twin characteristics of Nazism*, the *escalation of goals* to be achieved by war and the *crude racism* that made enemies of all Slavs, ensured not only that the European war would become a world war but also that it would end in Germany's defeat. (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 148)

„The planning of the war and of the civil administration was guided intermittently by *ideological and pragmatic* considerations. To *rule and exploit* were the proclaimed objectives of the military effort. Military victory was intended to impose German rule and the brutal methods of administration were aimed at consolidating this rule and organizing the exploitative activities. But the methods employed by the totalitarian regime actually *sabotaged* all prospects of maintaining *Lebensraum*. It was **impossible to destroy and to exploit at the same time**. This inconsistency was one of the *characteristic features* of the occupation in Eastern Europe. It stemmed from the *essence* of the National Socialist regime.,, (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 251-52)

As in occupied Poland, administration and government in Soviet areas were entrusted to several *rival forces*:

- a. The *Ministry for the Eastern Occupied Territories* was established, w/ *Alfred Rosenberg* as Reich Minister.⁵¹¹ Its jurisdiction extended over a vast area that embraced the *Baltic States* (to which were annexed part of *White Russia*); the *Ukraine* (two additional planned areas, *Moscow* and the *Caucasus*, were never occupied); the area around *Bialystok*, which was annexed to East Prussia (i.e., to the Reich itself) like the western regions of Poland; *Eastern Galicia* (before the war part of independent Poland, which in **1939** came under

⁵¹¹ Much to the dismay and fury of *Ribbentrop*; see, *Irving, Hitler's War*, 230.

- Soviet rule), now the fifth district of the *Generalgouvernement*; the area between *Odessa* and the *Bug River*, *Transnistria*, was handed over to Rumania, although it had never belonged to that country.
- b. Civil administrations (*Reichskommissariats*) were set up in the Baltic States and White Russia, on the one hand; and the Ukraine, on the other. The former, known as *Ostland* was administered by *Reichskommissar Hinrich Lohse*; whereas the Ukraine was placed under the Gauleiter of East Prussia, *Erich Koch*. Since the Bialystok region was annexed to East Prussia, he administered territory that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea.
 - c. Within Ostland, each of the Baltic States – *Lithuania*, *Latvia*, *Estonia* – as well as White Russia constituted a *Generalkommissariat* ruled by a *Generalkommissar*, w/ subordinate district commissars (*Gebietskommissare*).
 - d. Himmler's forces – dispatched to the region to carry out „special tasks“ – operated *in parallel* to these other bodies. As in Poland, they were made up of police, Gestapo, and SD units. Armed SS units (*Waffen-SS*) also operated in addition to the *Higher SS and Police Leaders* (*Hoehere SS- u. Polizeifuehrer*, or HSSPF) directly subordinate to Himmler.
 - e. Himmler's police units were augmented by the *Einsatzgruppen*, who were directly entrusted w/ the implementation of the „special tasks.“
 - f. While it had been established in principle that these two branches of government – civil administration and police – would rule over the territories, the *army* was unable to forgo apparatus of its own since its supply lines cut across these areas, and the supply bases, repair workshops, and other needs of so vast an army were also located therein. In the battle areas and adjacent territories, *military* rather than civil administration was established. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 248)

Immediate aim of Germany's economic policy in the East was to relieve the German war economy by seizing raw-material and food supplies, and to feed the “whole *Wehrmacht* from Russia in the third year of the war.” The resulting starvation of “umpteen million people” was consciously accepted. The economic war aims were laid down independently by the military and economic bureaucrats in agreement w/ leading representatives of the economy, and ran counter to Rosenberg's idea of the primacy of eastern politics. Hitler's decision to create an economic apparatus independent of the civil and military administration, and under the auspices of Goering, led to chaos in occupation policy. (*J. Foerster*, in: *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 1250)

German Military Administration (Organisation):

- According to standard German operating procedure, the *executive power* in the *zone of ops* (*Operationsgebiet*) was vested in the military. This zone of ops was divided into a combat zone (*Gefechtsgebiet*) and a number of army rear area commands (*Rueckwaertige Armeegebiete*) or *Koruecke* – one behind *each* army operating at the front.

▪ The *Koruecke* were in charge of *supply and administration* and were responsible for military security in their particular zones.⁵¹² To conduct these duties, they were given special security units. For purposes of administration and control, they had several gradations of subordinate HQs: a) *Feldkommandanturen*, or regional military government offices; b) *Kreiskommandanturen*, district offices in rural areas; and, c) *Ortskommandanturen* in the smaller urban areas and towns. For normal police work and security of lines of communication, they were assigned units of the military police (*Feldgendarmarie*).

▪ These *Koruecke*, while nominally agencies of their respective armies, were under the direct control of the Army Chief of Supply and Administration (*Generalquartiermeister – GenQu*). *GenQu* had as his province all the functions of the supply and administration of the field army. Besides the planning and organization of supply in the field, he was responsible for the establishment of security of all lines of communication and supply installations and for military government control of the areas behind the operating armies.

▪ By the time detailed planning for *Barbarossa* was well underway, **OKW** had made it clear that the occupation of the Soviet Union was to be *civilian and political, not military*, and had placed definite limitations on the extent to which a strictly military jurisdiction was to be exercised. The *area under control of the Army was to be kept as shallow as possible*, and as the campaign moved farther and farther east the forward boundary of the political administration zone, which was behind the Army's zone of ops, was to be progressively advanced. (*Howell, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 10-12)

Security Commands:

▪ **Mar 41:** The *GenQu* received his allotment of staffs and troop units. These comprised three (3) *army group rear headquarters (Rueckwaertige Heeresgebiete)* and nine (9) security divisions (*Sicherungs Divisionen*) activated from three (3) regular infantry divisions. These security divisions were units “specially created,” as **OKH** described them, to handle the “security, exploitation, and military administration” behind the front lines. One army group rear area HQ and three (3) *security divisions* were assigned to each of the three army groups established for *Barbarossa*.

▪ In initial phases of the campaign, the *Koruecke* were to be responsible for security, w/ the security divisions assigned to them. As soon as the tactical situation permitted, however, the army group rear area commands would take over, committing the security units laterally according to the army sectors. As in the case of the *Koruecke*, these commands, while subordinated to their respective army groups, were to receive their operational directives from and report directly to *GenQu*.

▪ Each *security division* received one (1) inf. rgt. and an artillery btn from the cannibalized formations. At least six (6) of these inf. rgts., which were to constitute the “alert units” (*Eingreifgruppen*) of the security divisions, had had front line experience in the Polish or French campaigns. The remainder was made up of *Landesschuetzen* btns., formed into rgts. with small

⁵¹² **Note:** The *Koruecke*, and army group rear areas, had as their primary tasks the security of supply installations, supply routes and lateral routes, supply transports (by convoys, if necessary), airfields, and depots of captured materiel; the guarding and evacuation of POWs; and traffic regulation. The heaviest emphasis was on security of the supply points.

complements of signal, engineer, and similar troops. In addition to the strictly army units, each division was assigned one motorized police btn from the *Ordnungspolizei*.⁵¹³

▪ The alert rgts. for the most part were well-armed and equipped, as were the motorized police btms, but in the *Landesschuetzen* btms and the field and local admin. headquarters much organic equipment was lacking and many wpns were sub-standard. In the **281 Security Division**, for ex., all rifles, carbines, and pistols were from stocks captured from the French, Belgian, Dutch, and Czech armies. All vehicles were of foreign make w/ no spare parts. Some had no tires. Division HQs had no vehicles of any sort. (*Howell, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 12-13)

1.17.2: *Background / Basic Orders:*

Crux: German policy toward Soviet prisoners and civilians in the occupied territories had been formulated even before the fighting started in the East. There were **three key orders**:

- a) **13.5.41:** „*Fuehrer decree*“ limiting military *jurisdiction* in occupied areas, passing responsibility for dealing w/ criminals and insurgents to the SS.
- b) **19.5.41:** *Guidelines for the Behavior of the Fighting Forces in Russia*. They were distributed on this day. (**note:** for guidelines themselves see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 25)
- c) **6.6.41:** The *Kommissarbefehl* – the most notorious order of all. Hitler insisted that commissars were not to be regarded as soldiers under the Geneva Conventions, which was *completely illogical*. (*Bellamy*, p 26)

The Fuehrer decree of **13.5.41** was passed on to the army by its C-in-C, von *Brauchitsch*, on **24.5.41**. Fearful that the relaxation of constraints on German troops' behavior against prisoners and local population might lead to a breakdown in *military discipline*, B. added an appendix emphasizing that the *Wehrmacht's* main job was to fight the Red Army and that „search and purge“ actions should be avoided. In an appendix to the second part of the decree he stressed that officers should continue to „prevent arbitrary excess by *individual* members of the army, so as to be in good time to prevent the degeneration of the troops.“ (see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 23-26)

Note: Hitler's main justification [overstatement?] for *ideologizing the conduct of the war* was the fact that the Soviet Union was *not a signatory of the Geneva Convention* (1929); from this he drew the conclusion that German POWs would surely not be treated according to its provisions, and this view was *supported by the behavior of the Red Army and its commissars* in Poland, in the war against Finland, in the Baltic States and Romania. (*Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 207)

Note: *Hitler's orders* were to **capture Moscow** and then to **gouge it from the earth**, to turn the city into a huge lake. (*Ivan's War, C. Merridale*, 117). On **12.10.41**, Hitler ordered that Army

⁵¹³ **Note:** The *Landesschuetzen* were troops of poor quality generally drawn from the *Landwehr* classifications, the **35-45-yr-old** classes. The *Ordnungspolizei* were German regular or uniformed police formed into troop units; they included the municipal, rural, river, and building inspection police, the firefighting police, and the air raid protection services. They should not be confused w/ the *Sicherheitspolizei*, or security police. (13, f.n. 17)

Group Center not accept the city's surrender even if offered. Plan was not to take Moscow, but to surround it, flatten it, and starve its citizens to death. (*Megargee*, 136)

Note: Great majority of *Ostheer* soldiers employed w/in a small strip of territory that made up the so-called *Hauptkampflinie* (HKL). German logistical tail was much shorter than, say, the U.S. Army's; and only a handful of German troops operated full-time in rear areas. For example, in **Jul 43** there were **177** German divisions fighting along the front but only 10 security divisions in the *Hinterland*. [Und] besass gerade dieses Hinterland als *Tatort* der dt. Kriegs- u. NS-Verbrechen in der Sowjetunion erhebliche Bedeutung; wenn der Fuehrer der *Einsatzgruppe B*, **Artur Nebe**, bereits im **Jul 41** berichtete, dass seine Einheit „naturgemaess ihre Hauptaufgabe im rueckwaertigen Heeresgebiet“ faende, so gilt dies wohl nicht allein fuer deren Massaker. (*C. Hartmann, et al., Wehrmacht in der NS Diktatur*, 10)

Background: The Russian campaign, heralded as an “Anti-Bolshevik crusade,” had, in fact, *no other objective but the plain brutal conquest of Russian lands, the plunder of their natural resources and the massive extermination of their inhabitants*, the survivors being expelled beyond the Urals or reduced to slavery for the German settlers who would take their place. But then, as Hitler put it frankly to his generals on the eve of the campaign, this would be no ordinary war; the Russians being by definition sub-humans, there could be no question of soldierly chivalry towards them; indeed not even the most criminal acts committed by Germans in Russia were to be prosecuted, let alone punished...Though in some cases privately aghast, none of the generals batted an eyelid. ***It is to the honor of quite a few German military in the field that when the time came, they ignored these criminal orders.*** (Ed. note, *Berlin Diaries, M. Vassiltchikov*, 57)⁵¹⁴

Hitler's basic attitude toward war in East: “As for the natives, we'll have to screen them carefully. The Jew, who destroyed, we shall drive out. As far as the population is concerned, I get a better impression in White Russia than in Ukraine. We shan't settle in the Russian towns, and we'll let them fall to pieces w/o intervening. And, above all, no remorse on the subject! We're not going to play at children's nurses; we're absolutely w/o obligations as far as these people are concerned...For the rest, let them know just enough to understand our highway signs, so that they won't get themselves run over by our vehicles...In this business I shall go straight ahead, cold-bloodedly. What they may think about me, at this juncture, is to me a matter of complete indifference...Everything that resembles civilization, the Bolsheviks have suppressed it, and I have no feelings about the idea of wiping out Kiev, Moscow or St. Petersburg.” (Source: *Bormann, Hitler's Table Talk*, 69-71; quoted in: *Faust's Metropolis, A. Richie*, 1018, f.n. 82)

„If there were some opposition to the „commissar order,“ *it was not widespread*. As the head of the army's Rumanian mission suggested, ***war had returned to the religious and ideological basis of the Thirty Years' War***: Germany's opponents were the financiers, *Freemasonry*, and the financial and political power of the World Jewry. Far too many officers acquiesced in outrages, such as the murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews by SS commando teams (*Einsatzgruppen*), while the starvation of literally hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of prisoners was *directly attributable to Wehrmacht authorities*. The ***widespread acceptance of Hitler's goals and attitudes throughout the officer corps*** made possible the terrible atrocities that occurred. It was not merely a matter of Hitler and the SS...(W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 78-9)

⁵¹⁴ Editor is Missie's brother, *George Vassiltchikov*, who prepared his sister's diaries for publication and profusely annotated them to furnish historical context.

Example of attitudes of German officers (Gen. Lemelsen): Dieser schwere Kampf auf Tod und Leben zwischen zwei Weltanschauungen kostet auf beiden Seiten sehr viele Opfer; sie sind nötig, um die Welt vom Bolschewismus zu befreien, dieser Gefahr, die gar nicht groß genug eingeschätzt werden kann. Es ist gar nicht auszudenken, was geschehen wäre, wenn über kurz oder lang diese Horden in unser liebes deutsches Vaterland eingefallen und dort wie die Bestien gehaust hätten. Davor hat uns der Führer bewahrt. Ohne Opfer war und wird es auch in der kommenden Zeit nicht zu erkämpfen sein. Aber diese Opfer sind nicht umsonst, der Sieg muss und wird unser sein! (*Tagebuch Lemelsen, 2.12.41*)

Feb-Mar 41: Anzeichen fuer eine besondere Regelung oder Weisung in dieser Richtung [re: Vorbereitung des Vernichtungskrieges] hatte es zunaechst nicht gegeben u. erst im Verlauf des Februar u. Maerz 1941 gab es *unverkennbare Hinweise*. Anfang Maerz waren dem OKH die *ersten Richtlinien fuer die sogenannten „Songergebiete Barbarossa,“* zur Stellungnahme vorgelegt worden. Hiernach sollten die Regelungen zur Vollziehenden Gewalt des ObdH durch eine *starke Begrenzung der Tiefe des Operationsgebietes* ersten Einschraenkungen unterzogen werden. In diesem begrenzten Operationsgebiet wurde ferner dem **Reichsfuehrer SS** „zur Vorbereitung der pol. Verwaltung **Sonderaufgaben im Auftrage des Fuehrers**, die sich aus dem endgueltig auszutragenden Kampf zweier entgegengesetzter politischer Systeme ergeben,“ uebertragen. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 229-30*)

17.3.41: Aus einem Vortrag beim *Fuehrer* hatte *Halder* gleichfalls entsprechende Anmerkungen Hitlers ueber die *Vernichtung der von Stalin eingesetzten Intelligenz u. der sowej. Fuehrung* notiert. Zwei [drei?] Monate vor Beginn des Feldzuges war damit der Heeresfuehrung nochmals verdeutlicht worden, dass *es sich keineswegs um einen „normalen“ Krieg handeln wuerde*. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 230*)

27.3.41: [Brauchitsch] hatte wenige Tage vor der Ansprache Hitlers [30.3.41] selbst darauf hingewiesen [bei einer Ansprache in **Zossen**], dass es in der kommenden Auseinandersetzung um einen „**Kampf von Rasse zu Rasse**“ gehen wuerde u. von der Truppe *die notwendige Haerte angewendet werden muesste*. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 231*)⁵¹⁵

30.3.41: From the very beginning **Hitler** intended the war against the USSR to be, as he put it on this day, “a war of extermination.” His soldiers were instructed to “close your hearts to pity” and to “act brutally” as they advanced...Those labeled *a priori* as criminals or “subhumans” were to be killed outright. (*Faust’s Metropolis, A. Richie, 507*)

30.3.41: ...Gab Hitler alle bis dahin vielleicht noch geuebte *Zurueckhaltung gegenueber der hoeheren Generalitaet ganz auf*. Waehrend einer Ansprache in der **Reichskanzlei** folgten, nach den erwarteten Betrachtungen zur Gesamtlage, die *beruechtigten Ausfuehrungen Hitlers* ueber den Kampf zweier Weltanschauungen gegeneinander, bei dem die *Wehrmacht* „[...] von dem Standpunkt des soldatischen Kameradentums abruecken [...]“ muesse. „Der **Kommunist ist vorher kein Kamerad u. nachher kein Kamerad**. Es handelt sich um einen **Vernichtungskampf**...Der Kampf muss gefuehrt werden gegen das *Gift der Zersetzung*. Das ist *keine Frage der Kriegsgerichte*...Vernichtung der bolschewistischen *Kommissare* u. der kommunistischen Intelligenz...Kommissare u. GPU-Leute sind Verbrecher u. muessen als solche behandelt werden.“ (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 230; see also, Halder KTB*)

⁵¹⁵ **Note:** As *Loeffler* makes clear, Brauchitsch could not have had any illusions about the terrible nature of the impending war w/ Russia—after what he had seen in Poland in 1939 concerning the activities of the SS and SD, etc. (231)

30.3.41: Die besondere Qualitaet dieses Krieges, die *voellige Andersartigkeit im Vergleich zu den Kaempfen in West- u. Nordeuropa*, offenbarte sich im Fruehjahr 1941 durch Hitlers Erklaerungen ueber die beachtete [sic] totale Vernichtung Russlands als Staat u. in den Beherrschungsinstrumentarien u. Besatzungsmechanismen fuer den zu erobernden Lebensraum in Osten. Hitlers rassenideologische Vorstellungen traten am **30. Maerz 1941** klar zutage, als er vor etwa **250 hoeheren Offizieren** der Wehrmacht...zur ‚Ausrottung‘ des Kommunismus ‚fuer alle Zeiten‘ und zur ‚Vernichtung der bolschewistischen Kommissare u. kommunistischen Intelligenz‘ aufrief. Sie zeigten sich ferner in den noch vor Kriegsbeginn herausgegebenen Anordnungen, wie den Richtlinien auf Sondergebieten, dem ‚Gerichtsbareiterlass,‘ den Richtlinien fuer das Verhalten der Truppe u. dem ‚Kommissarbefehl‘ sowie beim Sonderauftrag an Himmler fuer die Arbeit der Einsatzgruppen. ***Diese Befehle kamen unter Mitwirkung von OKW u. OKH zustande.*** (Ueberschaer, Gen.Obst. Franz Halder, 62)

6.5.41: OKH issued an order sanctioning the “shooting in action or while fleeing” of all local residents “who participate or want to participate in hostile acts, who by an act of theirs resisted the German Armed Forces.” At the same time German soldiers committing “punishable acts” on occupied soil “out of bitterness against atrocities or subversive work of carriers of the Jewish-Bolshevik system” were not to be prosecuted. The order was approved by Hitler along w/ the note that troops should “defend themselves w/o pity against any threat from the hostile civilian population.” *Some generals were appalled by this and quietly refused to pass the order on to their troops...* But the die was cast, and the *Einsatzgruppen* and even *Wehrmacht* soldiers were permitted—indeed encouraged—to commit horrific acts of violence against civilians w/o fear of censure...(*Faust’s Metropolis, A. Richie, 507-8*)

6.5.41: Um so interessanter ist die folgende Entwicklung bei der *Entstehung der verbrecherische Befehle* im Bezug auf die Sowjetunion. In der zeitlichen Abfolge war es *naemlich das OKH in Person des Generals z.b.V. Mueller*, der die *Anweisungen Hitlers umgesetzt* u. am 6. Mai 1941 dem Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres in form von zwei *Befehlsentwuerfe* vorlegt hat. Diese Entwuerfe beinhalteten den *Umgang mit feindl. Landeseinwohnern* einerseits u. in einem zweiten Befehl die *Behandlung politischer Hoheitstraeger* andererseits...Zwar hatte sich *Halder* mit seiner anschliessenden Zustimmung fuer beide Entwuerfe *deutlich im Sinne der Ansprache Hitlers entschieden*, was ihn nach dem Krieg jedoch nicht daran gehindert hat, ***die Zustaendigkeit fuer beide Befehle im Heer allein dem ObdH zuzuschieben.*** (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 234)⁵¹⁶

12.5.41: General *Warlimont* (OKW/WFSt) drafted an order stating that “Political officials and leaders are to be liquidated.” The text was handed to General *Jodl*. (*Faust’s Metropolis, A. Richie, 507; 1019, f.n. 92*)

19.5.41: “*Richtlinien fuer das Verhalten der Truppe in Russland*,” von der Abteilung *Wehrmachtpropaganda* im OKW in Abstimmung mit dem OKH erarbeitet u. ab Mitte Mai 1941 den einzelnen Wehrmachtteilen zugegangen. Die *Kernsaetze* der Richtlinien: (*Latzel, Deutsche Soldaten, 48*)

⁵¹⁶ **Note:** *Loeffler* makes clear that Halder was in close contact w/ the *Generalquartiermeister (Wagner)*; and therefore fully informed over the latters negotiations with *SS-Gruppenfueher Heydrich* concerning the utilization of the *SS-Einsatzgruppen* in Russia: “Wagners Vorgesetzte [Halder u. Brauchitsch] hatten *keine Einwaende*. Brauchitsch gab am **28.4.41** seine Unterschrift u. machte das Heer zum Komplizen der SS in einer der groessten Mordaktionen der dt. Geschichte. (234)

I. Der Bolschewismus ist der Todfeind des nationalsozialistischen dt. Volkes. Dieser zersetzenden Weltanschauung u. ihren Traegern gilt Deutschlands Kampf. Dieser Kampf verlang ruecksichtsloses u. energisches Durchgreifen gegen *bolschewistische Hetzer, Freischaerler, Saboteure, Juden* u. restlose Beseitigung jedes aktiven oder passiven Widerstandes.

II. Gegenueber allen Angehoerigen der *Roten Armee* – auch den Gefangenen – ist aeusserste Zurueckhaltung u. schaeferste Achtsamkeit geboten, da mit heimtueck-ischer Kampfweise zu rechnen ist. Besonders die *asiatischen Soldaten* sind undurchsichtig, unberechenbar, hinterhaeltig u. gefuehllos. Bei der Gefangen-nahme von Truppeneinheiten sind die *Fuehrer sofort* von den Mannschaften *abzuseondern*.

Note: Many accounts by German veterans speak with bitterness at policies of the civilian bureaucrats who followed them into Russia. These brutal policies disastrous. Some accounts insist it was terrible blunder not to break up the *collective farms* and return land to the peasants.

Note: One veteran, after explaining disastrous nature of German occupational policies in most of Russia, wrote: “Interestingly enough, *it was different in the southern part of the Soviet Union*. There, because the *North Caucasus region was under military administration*, people were treated properly. The troops were ordered to behave as if they were on maneuvers in their own country. *General von Koestring*, the former military attaché in Moscow who was half German and half Russian, was sent to the region to ensure that a situation similar to the one in the Ukraine—where the people were driven back to Stalin—did not arise. In the North Caucasus, *the collective farms were dissolved* and the troops behaved properly. The result: *no partisans whatsoever*.” (Note: Later he writes: “There was *no family in the Soviet Union which had not suffered under Stalin*.”) (*Hans Herwarth v. Bittenfeld*, in: *Voices from the Third Reich*, 130)

15.6.41: Noch *sieben Tage vor Angriffsbeginn* notierte *Hassell* sich, “*Brauchitsch* u. *Halder* haben sich nun bereits auf das *Hitlersche Manoever* eingelassen, das Odium der Mordbrennerei von der bisher allein belasteten SS auf das Heer zu uebertragen; sie haben die Verantwortung uebernommen u. durch einige an sich gar nichts aenderung, aber *den Schein wahrende Zusaetze* (ueber die Notwendigkeit die Disziplin zu wahren, usw.) sich selbst u. andere getaeuscht. Hoffnungslose Feldweibel!“ (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 240)

1.17.3: Kriegsgerichtsbarkeiterlass:

The *Decree on Military Justice* of **13.5.41** withdrew crimes committed by enemy civilians on the eastern front from the jurisdiction of military courts, required that partisans be “brutally eliminated” and ordered that *Wehrmacht* soldiers committing crimes against the civilian population no longer needed to be prosecuted.” (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 108)⁵¹⁷

Keitel’s „jurisdiction degree“ was issued on **13 May 41**. It was drafted by the legal branch of the **OKW** and permitted the harsh German treatment of hostile civilians outside normal military law.

⁵¹⁷ See here the exhaustive account by *J. Foerster*, in: *Das Deutsche Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Vol. 4, pp. 426 ff.

It also allowed group reprisals even on suspicion of guerrilla activity. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 11)

„Decree Concerning the Implementation of Wartime Military Jurisdiction in the Area of Operation ‚Barbarossa‘ and Specific Measures Undertaken by the Troops.“ This decree exempted almost all conceivable crimes against Soviet citizens from the jurisdiction of the military courts. In a detailed listing of specific exemptions, the document flatly stated that „there exists *no obligation* to punish offenses committed *by members of the Wehrmacht* and its attend-ants against *hostile civilian persons*, even if the act at the same time is a military crime or offense“ (emphasis in original). (*Newton, Hitler’s Commander*, 117)

13.5.41: The “Barbarossa Directive”⁵¹⁸ issued on this day decreed the execution of all civilians who “attacked” German soldiers, w/ the formal interpretation of “attacked” extended to include such innocuous acts [?] as the distribution of leaflets or the failure to follow German orders. The Barbarossa Directive also exempted German soldiers from prosecution for all offenses against the Soviet population deemed “ideologically motivated.” (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 72)

13.5.41: Herausgekommen war Mitte Mai der Erlass Hitlers „die mil. Gerichtsbarkeit im Kriege gegen die Sowjetunion betreffend.“ Danach sollte fuer Angehoerige der *Wehrmacht* gegen „feindliche Zivilpersonen“ kein „Verfolgungszwang“ bestehen, auch dann nicht, „wenn die Tat zugleich eine mil. Verbrechen oder Vergehen ist.“ Begrundet wurde dies damit, „dass der Zusammenbruch des Jahres **1918**, die spaetere Leidenszeit des dt. Volkes u. der Kampf gegen den Nationalsozialismus mit den zahllosen Blutopfern der Bewegung entscheidend auf bolschewistischen Einfluss zurueckzufuehren war u. kein Deutscher dies vergessen hat.“ (*Reuth, Hitler*, 526)

13.5.41: Directives issued on this day in name of the Fuehrer by General Keitel. The principal one *limited the functions of German courts-martial*:

Punishable offenses committed by enemy civilians [in Russia] do not, until further notice, come any longer under the jurisdiction of the courts-martial . . . *Persons suspected of criminal action will be brought at once before an officer. This officer will decide whether they are to be shot.* With regard to offenses committed against *enemy civilians by members of the Wehrmacht*, prosecution is *not obligatory* even when the deed is at the same time a military crime or offense.

The Army was to go easy on such offenders, remembering in each case all the harm done to Germany since 1918 by the “Bolsheviki.” Courts-martial of German soldiers would be justified only if “maintenance of discipline or security of the Forces call for such a measure.” (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 831)

13.5.41: Ueber die Einschraenkung der Kriegsgerichtsbarkeit, die im uebrigen von den Heeresgruppen-befehlshabern *mit Protest aufgenommen werden sollte*, da sie negative Auswirkungen auf die Disziplin der Truppe befuerchtete, *waren sich OKW u. OKH mit wenigen Differenzen grundsaeztlich einig*. Am 13. Mai in revidierter Form als „*Erlass ueber die Ausuebung der Kriegsgerichtsbarkeit im Gebiet ‚Barbarossa‘ u. besondere Massnahmen der Truppe*“ herausgegeben, war dieser Erlass die neue, erschreckenden Basis. Hiernach waeren die *Kriegsgerichte u. Standgerichte* bei Straftaten feindlicher Landeseinwohner gegen die *Wehrmacht bis auf weiteres ausgeschaltet gewesen* u. die Truppe selbst haette mit aller Haerte vorzugehen.

⁵¹⁸ **Note:** This is the first time I’ve ever seen this order referred to as the “Barbarossa Directive.”

Schon verdächtige Personen konnten auf Befehl eines Offiziers erschossen werden u. gegen Ortschaften, aus denen die *Wehrmacht* aus dem Hinterhalt angegriffen wurde, konnten **kollektive Strafmassnahmen** angeordnet werden. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 235)

Wie Brauchitsch selbst nach dem Krieg ausgesagt hat, kamen unmittelbar nach Hitlers Ansprache [30.3.41 in Reichskanzlei] eine Reihe der Heeresgruppen- u. Armeebefehlshaber zu ihm, *um gegen diese geplante Art der Kriegfuehrung zu protestieren*...Es muss aufgrund der spaeteren Entwicklung allerdings bezweifelt werden, dass sich die Einsprueche der Befehlshaber u. des Generalstabschefs [Halder] an diesem Tage tatsaechlich gegen den „Kommissarbefehl“ gewendet haben. Vielmehr ist wahrscheinlich, dass sich die Proteste nur gegen die *Einschraenkung der Kriegsgerichtsbarkeit*, welche die OB der Heeresgruppen unmittelbar in ihren *ureigenen Befugnissen* getroffen hatte, richteten. Gestuetzt wird diese Vermutung, wenn Brauchitsch, Halder u. den hoeheren Truppenfuehrern **eine rassistische u. weltanschauliche Abneigung gegen die bolschewistische Sowjetunion** unterstellt wird, die schliesslich zu einer *Verbindung von mil. u. pol. Auffassungen* gefuehrt hat. In der Betrachtung der spaeteren Entwicklung kann diesen Protesten also keine nachhaltige Bedeutung zugemessen werden...Immerhin besteht kein Zweifel, dass Brauchitsch...auf einen direkten Einspruch bei Hitler zu diesem Thema – *Gerichtsbarkeit* oder „Kommissarbefehl“ – verzichtet hat. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 232-33)

Disziplinarerlass: In attempt to ameliorate the impact of the “*Erlass ueber die Ausuebung der Kriegsgerichtsbarkeit*...” of **13.5.41**, Brauchitsch had drawn up a number of special orders (*Zusaetze*), which together are known as the *Disziplinarerlass*. In doing so, he risked Hitler’s displeasure: In Bezug auf die Straftaten feindlicher Landeseinwohner verfuellte der ObdH mit seinen Zusaetzen, dass der Erlass nur bei besonders schweren Faellen der Auflehnung in seiner gesamten Haerte zu Anwendung kommen sollte...In einem weiteren Zusatz legte der ObdH fuer die Offiziere *strenge Massstaebe zur Aufrechterhaltung der Manneszucht fest*: „Unter allen Umstaenden bleibt es Aufgabe aller Vorgesetzten, *willkuerliche Ausschreitungen einzelner Heeresangehoeriger zu verhindern* u. einer Verwilderung der Truppe rechtzeitig vorzubeugen...“...Doch der Disziplinarerlass hatte nicht bei allen Stellen die erhofft Wirkung. So notierte der **OB der Hr.Gr.Mitte [Bock]** in seinem KTB, dass der Disziplinarerlass nur unzureichend den *Grundtenor es OKW Erlasses* abschwaechen koennte. (Loeffler, Brauchitsch, 235-37)

27.7.41: Keitel orders all copies of this “most secret” directive *destroyed*, though the “validity of the directive,” he stipulates, “is not affected by the destruction of the copies.” The 27 July order, he added, “would itself be destroyed.” But copies of both survived and turned up at *Nuremberg* to haunt the High Command. (Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 831)

1.17.4: Commissar Order:

Note: By the end of the Eastern Front war, **160,000** captured “commissars” had been killed by the Germans. (G. Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 85)

Note: Tatsaechlich hat die Auswertung der deutschen Akten ergeben, dass der Kommissarbefehl bei ueber **80%** der deutschen Divisionen ausgefuehrt worden ist. (G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 11)

Note: Apparently, not clear who the *prime mover (Auftraggeber)* behind this order was, although it was drafted by *General Mueller* of OKH. Nevertheless: “Steht jedoch ausser Zweifel, dass die

hoechste Heeresfuehrung keine Massnahmen gegen die Vorlage des Entwurfes unternommen hat.“ (see, *Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 237-39)

Note: German war diaries indicate that the order was „almost universally followed.“ (*Hart, Guderian*, 71; see also, *C. Streit* article in: *War of Extermination: The German Military in WWII*,“ ed. by *H. Heer*, 84)

Note: According to *Evan Mawdsley* – who appears to be quoting *J. Foerster* in *GSWW*, pp 481-521) – “this order was actually instigated by the Army High Command.” (*Thunder in the East*, 11; 433, f.n. 14)

Marcel Stein: Das Ausmass, in dem dieser Befehl durchgefuehrt wurde, konnte bisher nicht festgestellt werden. Auch in kuenftigen Jahren duerfte dies kaum moeglich sein. Die vorhandenen Archivdokumente sind in dieser Hinsicht unvollstaendig u. widerspruechlich. Fest steht, dass eine Mehrzahl der Befehlshaber der Wehrmacht dem Befehl, der jeder soldatischen Tradition widersprach, ablehnend gegenueberstanden, jedoch war das nicht bei allen der Fall. (Generaloberst Ritter v. Schobert, zu Beginn von „Barbarossa“ OB der **11. Armee** hatte eine positive Einstellung zum Kommissarbefehl u. liess ihn auch ruecksichtslos durchfuehren.) . . . Der Befehl wurde ausgefuehrt, jedoch nicht in dem vorgesehenen Ausmass. . .⁵¹⁹ Als Tatsache bleibt nur die Feststellung, dass der Befehl verbrecherisch war, dass er allen voelkerrechtlichen Normen widersprach, dass er in gewissen Ausmass durchgefuehrt wurde u. dass er sich im Endeffekt als wirkungslos erwies. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 252-53)

Note: Per *Loeffler* – „Das die Zeit zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen u. die *antikommunistische Einstellung der Reichswehr* aus diesen Jahren ihren Anteil an der Handhabung u. Akzeptanz des „Kommissarsbefehls“ haben, fuer die Person Brauchitsch nicht ausgeschlossen werden.“ (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 241)

Hitler’s notorious order to shoot commissars and other party officials out of hand was *suppressed in many headquarters*. But enough senior officers welcomed it; enough others passed it on w/o comment, to establish a dangerous precedent. The Wehrmacht was by no means immune to racism. Sharpened by Nazi ideology, it could encourage indifference to the fate of prisoners and civilians. (*J. Steinhoff, Voices of the Third Reich*, 125)

W.K. Nehring: Responds to Dr Williams’ letter from 28.5.75, providing details on several new books (A.J.P. Taylor, Martin Kitchen, etc.) In Nehring’s view, these books just perpetuate the old lies about Germany and WWII. Nehring goes on to insist: „Der *Kommissarbefehl* ist ohne Wissen des Oberkdos. des Heeres erlassen worden. Die Befehlshaber des Heeres u. der Armeen *haben ihn abgelehnt u. verboten, nach ihm zu handeln*. Beispiel: mein Commanding General *Guderian* (Panzergruppe Guderian) u. mein Korpskommandeur *Lemelsen*, ich selbst als Kdr. der 18. Pz. Division. Mir ist *keine Erschiessung auch nur eines russ. Kommissars bekannt geworden*. (*Ltr, W.K. Nehring to Dr. M.G. Williams*, 1.6.75)

Note: From the earliest days of the eastern campaign, *most German formations complied w/ Hitler’s infamous Commissar Order* to execute summarily captured Soviet political officers. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 94)

D. Irving: The decision to liquidate the political commissars attached to Red Army unit’s was to Hitler a „logical extension of the fight against the tentacles of Soviet authority – the eradication of

⁵¹⁹ Contrast Stein’s conclusions w/ Hart’s above!

the ruling classes.“ The commissars could be identified as such by the *red star* embroidered w/ a *golden hammer and sickle* on their sleeves . . . The role played by *Halder* and the army *general staff*, not to mention German military lawyers, in drafting these orders was „less than glorious.“ After Hitler had undoubtedly given the initial impetus in his blunt secret speech of **30.3.41**, *Brauchitsch*’s staff had drafted *two separate orders* and discussed them w/ the **OKW**. The first was the *Commissar Order*, and the second an order restricting the *jurisdiction of courts-martial* on Russia soil (basically to enable the SS task forces to operate at will). According to Irving, it was „Halder who proposed the clause reading: ‚Immediate collective punishments will be enforced against towns and villages from which ambushes or treacherous attacks on the *Wehrmacht* are made, on the orders of an officer of not less than battalion cdr’s rank, if circumstances do not permit the rapid arrest of the individual perpetrators.‘ Many of the front-line generals were „sick at heart“ when these two orders (*Kommissarbefehl*, *Erlass ueber Kriegsgerichtsbarkeit*) reached them. (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 264)

6.6.41: ...so folgte am 6. Juni 1941 mit dem sogenannten „*Kommissarbefehl*“ ein Erlass mit *weitaus schwerwiegenderen Konsequenzen*. Ausgangspunkt bildete der Entwurf des *Generals Mueller*, den dieser zusammen mit dem „Gerichtsbareiterlass“ am 6. Mai bei Halder vorgelegt hatte...Der Entwurf Muellers zum „Kommissarbefehl“ folgte denn auch den Ausfuehrungen Hitlers vom 30. Maerz u. ordnete den sogenannten pol. *Hoheitstraegern* eine *besondere Gefahr fuer die Kampfhandlungen des Heeres* zu. Die Truppe sollte daher im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion jede als pol. Kommissar in Frage kommende Person festsetzen u. diesen einem Offizier mit Disziplinargewalt vorfuehren. Unter Beteiligung von zwei weiteren Soldaten, *Offiziere oder Unteroffiziere*, musste sodann entschieden werden, ob die pol. Taetigkeit des Verdachtigen ausreichend begruetet sei, um dann die *sofortige Erschiessung* zu veranlassen. Den Truppenteilen war es zudem untersagt, die Kommissare in das rueckwaertige Gebiet abzuschieben. *Die Anerkennung der Kommissare als Kombattanten im Sinne der Haager Landkreigsordnung mit den sich daraus ergebenden Rechten u. Pflichten als Kriegsgefangene wurde ausdruecklich verweigert*; diese Bestimmungen sollten bei ihnen nicht zur Anwendung kommen. Es bleibt der zweifelhafte Verdienst des *Generals Warlimont* den vom OKH eingereichten Entwurf durch seine Vorgehensweise soweit abzumildern, dass schliesslich am 6. Juni 1941 eine zwar *gemaessigte aber weiterhin verbrecherische Fuehrerweisung* herausgegeben werden konnte...Aber auch der *entschaerfte Befehl*, soweit musste man sich im OKW u. im OKH darueber klar sein, *enthielt den Auftrag zur planmaessigen Vernichtung von wehrlosen Gefangenen* u. versties damit gegen bestehendes Voelkerrecht, das die Behandlung der Bevoelkerung des gegnerischen Staates im Sinne der *Menschlichkeit* verlangte. (see, *Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 239)

Jun-Aug 41: Acceptance of the Commisar Order by most army authorities was „direct and immediate.“ From **22.6.-19.7.41**, **Pz.Gr.4** reported **172** commissars liquidated; up to **24.7.41**, **2. Army** claimed **177**; up to beginning of **Aug 41**, **Pz.Gr.3** had shot **170**. The **OKW** provided the driving force behind much of the criminal behavior. Its *decree* of **17.7.41** stated: „The special situation of the Eastern campaign therefore demands *special measures* which are to be executed free from bureaucratic ... influence and w/ a willingness to accept responsibility. While so far the ... orders concerning POWs were based solely on *military* considerations, now the *political* objective must be obtained which is to protect the German nation from Bolshevik invaders and forthwith take the occupied territory in hand.“ (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 140-41; see also, *C. Streit, Keine Kameraden*, 90)

1.8.41: An diesem Tage hatte Stalin seinen Kommissaren befohlen, den Stern am Aermel ihrer Uniform, das Zeichen der Politkommissare, zu entfernen. Damit war die Aussonderung der

Kommissare aus der Masse der Kriegsgefangene fast unmöglich. (Seidler, *Wehrmacht im Partisanenkrieg*, 163; quoted in: *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 128)

17.9.41 [Kommissarbefehl]: An diesem Tage verlangte General Schmidt die sofortige Aufhebung des Kommissarbefehls, nachdem er seinen Truppenkommandeuren die Erschiessung von Kommissaren ausdruecklich untersagt hatte. Schmidt meinte: “Solange die Kommissare sich gemeinsam gegen den sicheren Tod wehren muessen, werden sie wie Pech u. Schwefel zusammenhalten. Wenn aber der einzelne Kommissar weiss, dass er als Ueberlauer sein Leben retten kann, wird die innere Geschlossenheit des politischen Fuehrungskorps aufhoeren.” (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 127)

Fall 41: When the German advanced slowed, **OKH** supported initiatives to get the *Commissar Order* cancelled, because, they said, it was counterproductive. Soviet resistance was getting stiffer. On **5.11.41**, GFM v. **Bock** objected to transferring POWs to the *Einsatzgruppen* and emphasized that the army’s responsibility for POWs could not be shared w/ other authorities. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 26-27)

Mai 42: Viele Oberbefehlshaber machten aufgrund der Eingaben der Fronttruppen ihre Einwaende gegen den Kommissarbefehl beim **OKW** geltend u. verlangten seine Aufhebung. Das OKW schlug Hitler die Aussetzung des Befehls vor, doch nach einem Vortrag bei Hitler am **26.9.41** wurde jede Aenderung des Befehls verweigert. Erst im **Mai 1942** gab Hitler dem Draengen der Frontruppen nach u. setzte den Kommissarbefehl ausser Kraft. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 127-28)

1.17.5: Russian POWs:

Note: In the summer of 1941, the Germans were *astonished* by the numbers of prisoners they took. By end of **1941**, **3,800,000** Soviet servicemen and women had surrendered or been captured. Even if the Germans had wanted to apply the generous provisions of the *Geneva Conventions* – that prisoners of war should be fed and accomodated to the same standard as ones own rear echelon troops – they were simply *unworkable* in these circumstances. The infrastructure in the western USSR was relatively *primitive*, and the Germans had their own very serious logistical problems. As for moving the POWs back to Germany, the camps there could hold **790,000** prisoners, including those from countries who had signed the Geneva Conventions. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 23)

Note: According to journalist/historian *David Irving*, “On both sides, prisoners were frequently shot out of hand – the Spanish “*Blue Division*” [**250. ID**] took the fewest prisoners.” [!] (*Hitler’s War*, 347)

Note: A Russian state commission in the **1990s**, while admitting that exact data for Red Army POWs was lacking, suggested that there had been a grand total of some **4,100,000** Red Army POWs: „nearly **2,000,000**“ in **1941**; **1,339,000** in **1942**; **487,000** in **1943**; **203,000** in **1944**, and just **41,000** in **1945**. . . A quarter to a third of all of the USSR’s **10,000,000** military deaths were soldiers who died in captivity. The exact figure can never be calculated, but the most commonly accepted German figure is **3,300,300** Soviet POWs dying in captivity, some **58%** of the **5,700,000** taken prisoner. The Russians accept a lower figure of Red Army POWs, **4,559,000**

and **2,500,000** deaths, but w/ a similar death rate of **55%**. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 103)⁵²⁰

Note: „Das Los der Hunderttausenden von sowj. Gefangenen gestaltete sich in vielen Faellen tragisch. . . Obwohl sich von Bock bemuehte, Abhilfe zu schaffen, konnte er letztlich nur eine bessere Bewachung erreichen, um ein Entweichen zu den Partisanen zu verhindern. *Von einem geplanten, absichtlich herbeigefuehrten Hungertod fuer Abertausende von Gefangenen kann keine Rede sein.* Allerdings kam es zur Erschiessung von Gefangenen, die infolge voelliger Erschoepfung nicht mehr weiter konnten u. die man nur so davon abhalten zu koennen glaubte, sich Partisanen anzuschliessen oder diesen Informationen in die Haende zu spielen – eine Uebeltat, deren Kunde sich schnell unter der Bevoelkerung verbreitete u. von der sowj. Propaganda geschickt vermarktet wurde.“ (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 153-54)

Note: *R. Kershaw* discusses the formidable – indeed insoluble – logistical problems the Germans’ had dealing w/ such unexpectedly huge numbers of prisoners. For example, **12 ID** took **3159** prisoners in period from **31 Aug – 8 Oct 41**; **18 PD** took **5500** Red Army prisoners during first five [5] weeks of campaign. Yet few soldiers were available to guard these captured men. The sheer scale of the problem can be measured against German inf.-div. strengths. By end of **Jul 41**, the Germans had to administer **49** enemy division equivalents in terms of medical care, transport and rations in addition to their existing order of battle. One single German inf.-div. required **70** logistics tons per day of supplies, of which **1/3** constituted rations. There were insufficient logistics resources available to maintain the advance, and even les for POWs. Even if one [1] German soldier was allocated to secure **50** men each, **18** bns or six [6] rgts were needed to administer the **800,000** POWs taken by end of **Jul 41** alone. Inability of Germans to cope w/ this POW problem resulted in appalling conditions and, ultimately, millions of deaths among the POWs, who were thoroughly dehumanized. *Kershaw* points out that the German policy resulting in this “second Holocaust” [as it has been called] was “deliberate.” (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 139; *van Creveld, Supplying War*, 152)

Kesselschlachten (1941): In seven (7) large „cauldron“ battles between **Jun–Oct 41** – the Germans took a total of **2,256,000** prisoners, **9336** tanks, and **16,179** guns. The details are as follows:

1) <i>Bialystok-Minsk:</i>	324,000	(prisoners) /	3332	(tanks) /	1809	(guns);
2) <i>Smolensk:</i>	310,000		3205		3120 ;	
3) <i>Uman:</i>	103,000		317		1100 ;	
4) <i>Gomel:</i>	84,000		144		848 ;	
5) <i>Kiev:</i>	665,000		884		3178 ;	
6) <i>Sea of Azov (near)</i>	107,000		212		672 ;	
7) <i>Bryansk–Wjasma:</i>	663,000		1242		5452 .	

(Source: *K. Uebe, Russian Reactions to German Airpower*, 19b)

Overview:

⁵²⁰ **Note:** Two sets of figures are given for total Soviet POWs in German captivity. Moreover, a Russian report published in **1996** gave a considerably lower figure for POW deaths in captivity: **1.23 to 2** million (445, f.n. 33)

Christian Streit, in his now *classic examination*, conclusively proved that the decimation and annihilation of Soviet POWs was *part of a calculated programme*. (*H.J. Schroeder, German Soldiers' Experiences*, 323)

Abschliessend versucht *Streit* die Frage zu analysieren, weshalb die *Wehrmacht* – zu deren Tradition es keineswegs gehoerte, wehrlose Gefangene misshandeln, erschliessen oder verhungern [verhungern?] zu lassen – sich seit **1941** in die Vernichtungspolitik einbeziehen liess. (*Ueberschaer, Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 21)

Nach dem Angaben von *Christian Streit* starben von den etwa **5,7** millionen gefangenen Sowsjetsoldaten etwa **3,3** Millionen in dt. Gefangenschaft, also etwa **57%** der Gesamtzahl ... Nach heutigem Wissensstand [i.e., **1984**] der auch die *niedrigeren Zahlen* in der Untersuchung von *Alfred Streim* einbezieht, der sich weitgehend auf die Prozessakten der Nachkriegszeit stuetzt, waehrend *Streit* das Schriftgut der NS-Zeit auswertet, laesst sich feststellen: Die Zahl der umgekommenen sowjet. Kriegsgefangenen schwankt zwischen **2,5** u. **3.3** Millionen. Exakt wird sich die Schreckensbilanz wohl kaum je ermitteln lassen. (*Ueberschaer, Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 20)

B. Wegner: Of the **5,700,000** Soviet prisoners captured by the Germans by **Feb 45**, at least two to **2.5** million, more probably about **3.3** million, that is **57%**, died by the end of the war, the great majority before the summer of 1942. In contrast, deaths among British and American prisoners in Germany during WWII amounted to only **3.5%**. Of the **3,150,000** German soldiers captured by the Russias, **35-37%** died during a usually long period of captivity. (*B. Wegner, Road to Defeat*, 109)

The attack on Russian in 1941 gave rise to many military medical problems, not the least of which was *typhus*. The disease reached *serious proportions in the fall of 1941*, and typhus vaccines were so scarce that only doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel in exposed positions could be given inoculations. (*Mazal Library, Nuernberg Military Tribunal, "Typhus and other Vaccine Experiments,"* at: <http://www.mazal.org>)

The evidence shows that hundreds of thousands of Russian POWs *died from hunger, cold, lack of medical care, and ill-treatment*. Later on in the war the German authorities apparently realized that, due to these deplorable conditions and ill-treatment, they had *lost for Germany a tremendous source of manpower*. Thereafter, the treatment of POWs was apparently to some extent based on the principal that "it was better to work them to death than merely let them die." (*German High Command Trial, Trial of W. v. Leeb and 13 Others, U.S. Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, Dec 47 – Oct 48*, at: <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/WCC/ghctrial4.htm>)

Klaus Reinhardt addresses terrible treatment of Soviet POWs in his book, but also notes that troops at the front „repeatedly“ asked their superiors to „alleviate the misery of the prisoners, which our propaganda has hitherto contradicted,“ and warned of the poor „state of health of the prisoners“ and the rising „mortality rate in the [POW] camps, especially in prisoners‘ hospitals.“ . . . Conversely, Reinhardt quotes report from Count Bossi-Fedrigotti to the German Foreign Office, in which he states that soldiers at the front „had little sympathy for the misery of the prisoners of war, whom they see every day. Cases of cannibalism, as a result of the terrible starvation in the camps. . . give rise to widespread revulsion. . . Goering was in charge of the 4-Year-Plan, and ought to at least have had an interest in providing the German armaments industry w/ as many prisoners as possible. However, the hopeless plight of the Russians in the German camps did not prompt him to intervene. On the contrary! He found the plight of

the Russian prisoners so amusing that he joked about it during a visit to Ciano in **Nov 41**. (See, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 263-65)

The directives issued by the OKW for the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war *intentionally violated international laws*, including the **Geneva and Hague Conventions** regarding war on land. The Soviet prisoners were denied all the protections guaranteed by international law, such as the aid of the *International Red Cross*. During the Second World War, a total of over **5,000,000** Soviet soldiers were taken prisoner by the German Army. Some **3,000,000** of them *did not survive their captivity*. The deaths of so many Soviet prisoners were not caused by violence, but by **systematic malnutrition ordered by the OKW**. In 1941/42 in particular, rationing orders were issued in the *full knowledge that thousands of prisoners would die of hunger* as a result. This **policy of annihilation** was the counterpart to the German policy of starving the civilian population in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. (*Stiftung saechsische Gedenkstaetten*, at: <http://www.stsg.de>)

Especially in **1941/42**, epidemics of *dysentery* and *typhus* broke out among the Russian POWs, killing tens of thousands. Because of chronic malnutrition over long periods, combined w/ the debilitating work details and inadequate medical attention, the Soviet POWs remained susceptible to infectious diseases throughout the second half of the war. Their mortality stabilized at a high level, mainly due to the high incidence of *tuberculosis*. In “selection” or “weeding out” programs (“*Aussonderungsaktionen*”) in 1941/42, party and state officials, commissars, academic scholars and Jews in the POW camp [at *Zeithain* apparently] were identified by Security Service units, called “*Einsatzkommandos*” or task forces, and selectively transferred to concentration camps, where they were subsequently murdered. This systematic selection in German territory ended in mid-1942, and then shifted to the camps in the occupied territories of Poland and the Soviet Union. (*Stiftung saechsische Gedenkstaetten*, at: <http://www.stsg.de>)

Anecdote: [*what might have been*] In **Feb 42**, General Raus’ command (**6. PD**, *Alarmeinheiten*, etc.) in 9th Army sector south of *Rshew*, made prisoner of an 18-year-old female sergeant. She was treated so well during her days in captivity she asked to return to her unit, insisting she would come back w/ a friend. She was allowed to leave. Two weeks later, she indeed returns w/ another deserter. While back with her unit, she had told others of the good treatment she had received during captivity; they believed her “and spread the tail like wildfire.” Eventually, Raus used the girl for propaganda purposes, even recording and transmitting her voice over loudspeakers near enemy lines. “The number of deserters along the entire sector *increased so much that it exceeded 400 only three weeks after the start of this improvised propaganda campaign*. This figure was much higher than the combined total of deserters on all other sectors of 9th Army’s front.” [!!] (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 129-31)

Chronology (POWs):

Jun 41: The first sign of savagery was revealed in the **abuse of Soviet prisoners of war** captured in the first days of the fighting. The treatment of these men *remains one of the most appalling and unexplored chapters in German history*. The Soviet soldiers were *not protected by the Geneva Convention* and many were simply murdered... When *Kiev* was taken in mid-Sep 41, the Germans captured 3/4 of a million Russian prisoners. *Only three out of every 100 men returned alive*. Of the total of **5.7 million Soviet POWs** captured by the Germans, **3.3 million** had died or been

killed by 1945. (Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, 409-27; quoted in: *Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 506)⁵²¹

ca. Jun 41 [*Russian prisoners*]: To one German officer at start of campaign, they appeared “apathetic and expressionless. Their simple uniforms created the impression of a huge dull mass.” (S. Knappe, **87. ID**, *Reflections*, 211)

Jul 41: First Soviet prisoners arrive at the *Zeithain* POW camp (*Stalag 304 (IV H)*). After registration, medical examinations and de-lousing, the prisoners were at first left to fend for themselves in the open. The camp consisted of little more than a *double fence of barbed wire*. *No huts or tents were provided*. The prisoners dug burrows for shelter against the elements. The construction of huts, latrines, kitchens, and wells for the prisoners began only once there were enough prisoners present to do the work. Due to the lack of water, the *severely undernourished prisoners* were reduced to drinking from puddles of rain water. Under these conditions the prisoners, already weakened by deprivation during combat and the long journey, were further ravaged by *rapidly spreading nutritional edema*, *scurvy*, and *chronic diarrhea*. The lack of latrines, water for washing, and de-lousing resulted in abysmal hygienic conditions. The OKW knowingly tolerated these disastrous conditions in *Zeithain*, as in the other camps occupied by Soviet prisoners. This favored the outbreaks of dysentery and typhus in 1941/42 that claimed thousands of lives at *Zeithain* as elsewhere. From **Dec 41 – Mar 42**, the camp was placed under quarantine due to a typhoid fever epidemic. Of the **10,677** inmates in the camp before the epidemic, only **3,729** were alive when it ended in April 1942. (*Stiftung saechsische Gedenkstaetten*, at: <http://www.stsg.de>)

7.7.41 [*Soviet POWs*]: Nie werde ich diese unendlichen Kolonnen von *Kriegsgefangenen* auf den staubigen Wegen Russlands unter der heissen Sonne vergessen. Viele von uns waren verwundet, die Waechter erschossen diejenigen, die nicht mehr mitmarschieren konnten...Oft standen beiderseits der Strasse dt. Soldaten, die unsere vorueberziehenden Kolonne beobachteten...Manche von ihnen waren dabei nachdenklich, vielleicht empfanden sie auch Mitleid mit uns oder dachten an das Schicksal: Heute du u. morgen ich...Es gab auch welche, die uns lachend *Obszoenitaeten* in unserer Muttersprache zuriefen. *Ohne Koppel u. Feldmuetze, viele barfuss, unrasiert, die Uniformblusen auf dem Ruecken mit grauweissen Flecken bedeckt, ungewaschen, hungrig u. von Durst gequaelt*, schleppten wir uns der Ungewissheit entgegen...(Russ. Soldat *Jakov Diorditza*, *Echolot*, 275-76)

10.7.41: Information reaches *Berlin* of the terrible conditions in the newly opened POW camp of *Maly Trostenets*, just outside Minsk, where hundreds of Soviet soldiers in captivity are dying every day from disease, starvation and the brutality of the guards. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 210)

16.7.41: Soviet prisoners were captured in *first six months* of war in numbers that *stunned* the Germans, including Hitler himself . . . The German army's preparations to absorb prisoners were *provisional* and in no way adequate. Nor was the army willing to allocate to its prisoners any of the food that was supplied to its own troops w/ great difficulty. As a consequence, it was

⁵²¹ *Martin Gilbert* has pointed out that the story of the mass murder of Russia POWs in German hands “is one of the least known atrocity stories of the Second World War.” He notes that of a total of 5,700,000 Russian soldiers captured in WWII, 2,500,000 died in captivity. Of them, it is estimated that one million *were shot by the Einsatzgruppen* and the rest died from hunger, cold and disease in camps where they were often denied even the rudiments of shelter and medical attention.” (*Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 1018-19, f.n. 87)

concluded that the POW camps should be „purified,“ To this end, SS units were brought into the camps in the summer of **1941** . . . to eliminate the „intolerable“ elements – i.e., Communist activists, all officials and intellectuals, all those defined as agitators or fanatic Communists, and *all Jews*. This directive was issued on **16 Jul 41**. However, the cruelest suffering was inflicted on prisoners during the *death marches* from distant regions westward. Endless processions of defeated, wounded, sick, and starving men were driven by the SS along Russia’s poor roads, and those who fell behind were shot on the spot. The strongest of the prisoners survived these death marches, only to die, for the most part, in the camps in which they were incarcerated. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 251)

Aug 41: . . . **Ic** H.Gr.Mitte sagt: „Ungeheure Anzahl von Gefangenen durch mangelhafte Verpflegung u. rücksichtslose Behandlung geht zu Grunde u. wird auch abgeschossen.“ (*Tagebuch Muenschhausen*)

Aug-Oct 41: From middle of August to middle of October 1941, **18,000** Russian POWs are murdered at the *Sachsenhausen* concentration camp alone – an average of **300/day**. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 243)

22.8.41: Acts of brutality have occurred while POWs are being shipped to the rear; ***I have objected strongly*** in a toughly-worded letter to the armies. With the exhausted state of the prisoners and the *impossibility of feeding them properly on the long marches* through vast, uninhabited regions, their removal remains an *especially difficult problem*. (*Bock War Diary, Gerbet*, 290)

Sep 41: The first large-scale experimental use of poison gas for mass execution is actually undertaken against Soviet POWs; this is at Auschwitz in early **Sep 41**, where several hundred are killed. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 103)

Sep 41: Als Admiral **Canaris** Mitte Sep 41 angesichts der Todesraten in den Lagern gegen die voelkerrechtswidrige Behandlung sowjetischer Kriegesgefangener u. gegen die Liquidierung „pol. unerwunschter“ Gefangener protestierte, wies ihn der Chef des Oberkommandos der *Wehrmacht*, **GFM Keitel**, folgendermassen zurecht: „Die Bedenken entsprechen den soldatischen Auffassungen vom ritterlichen Krieg! Hier handelt es sich um die Vernichtung einer Weltanschauung! Deshalb billige ich die Massnahmen u. decke sie.“ (*Ueberschaer, Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 21)

Sep 41: At *Babi Yar* outside of Kiev, **SS-Sonderkommando 4a** murdered **33,771** Jews and other Soviet citizens in a two-day orgy of violence in revenge for the Soviet destruction of Kiev. The local army cdr, Maj.Gen. **Kurt Eberhard**, cooperated enthusiastically, even providing the SS w/ an army propaganda company to persuade Kiev’s Jews that they were moving for resettlement. On numerous occasions troop cdrs ordered their men to participate in „*special actions*“ against Jews and Communists. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 141)

ca. Sep 41: Ein uebles Debakel ist die Gefangenenfrage. Schon das jeder Kommissar erschossen wird, ist eine schlimme Massnahme. Dann die Leute ohne Unterkunft u. mit mangelhaftester Verpflegung wochenlang lassen! *Sie sterben wie die Fliegen*. . . (*Tagebuch Muenschhausen*)

8.9.41: An **OKH** decree states that Soviet POWs have forfeited all rights. Why and how is not explained, but any and all measures are now permissible. On receipt of the order, some army units simply machine-gun their captives. The majority were left in barbed-wire compounds,

deprived of food and warm clothing and allowed to starve or freeze to death in conditions of indescribable squalor. (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 56)

8.9.41: The “*Instructions for Guarding Soviet Prisoners of War*” (“*Merkblatt fuer die Bewachung sowjetischer Kriegsgefangener*“) of 8 Sep 41 called for „ruthless enforcement at the least sign of resistance and disobedience! Weapons are to be used mercilessly in breaking resistance. Escaping POWs must be fired upon immediately (without) warning, w/ intent to kill. Nor is softness called for against the industrious and obedient POW. He interprets it as weakness and draws his own conclusions.” Such orders often *paved the way for the arbitrary and excessive use of force* that characterized the guards’ treatment of the prisoners. (*Stiftung saechsische Gedenkstaetten*, at: <http://www.stsg.de>)

Summer 41: *C. Merridale* discusses *treatment of POWs by Germans*. The knowledge of how badly they would be treated made Soviet troops fight bitterly and fueled deeper hatred. By late summer, terrible stories had begun to spread about treatment of Red Army soldiers captured in June and July 1941...Many executed, used by German guards for target practice, beaten to death, tortured, victims of epidemics (typhus, dysentery), died of cold, starved to death, cannibalism, etc. (140-2; 145) She also addresses concentration camp in town of **Rshev** with 15,000 Red Army POWs and 5000 civilians (Dec 41). (*Ivan's War*, 141)

Summer 41 [*Soviet POWs*]: „We suddenly saw a broad, *earth-brown crocodile* slowly shuffling down the road towards us. From it cam a subdued hum, like that from a beehive. Prisoners of war. Russians, six deep. We couldn't see the end of the column. As they drew near the *terrible stench* which met us made us quite sick ... We made haste out of the way of the foul cloud which surrounded them, then what we saw transfixed us where we stood and we forgot our nausea. Were these really human beings, these grey-brown figures, these shadows lurching towards us, stumbling and staggering, moving shapes at their last gasp, creatures which only some last flicker of the will to live enabled to obey the order to march? All the misery in the world seemed to be concentrated there. There was also that gruesome barrage of shouts and wails, groans, lamentations and curses which combined w/ the cutting orders of the guards into a hideous accompaniment. We saw one man shuffle aside from the ranks, then a rifle butt crash between his shoulder-blades and drive him gasping back into place...“ (See remainder of this chilling quote – Russian prisoners tearing dogs to pieces for food, etc. – from *Benno Zieser*, quoted in: *Flower, The War*, 213-14)

Okt 41: Eine graessliche Angelegenheit ist die Gefangenenfrage. Es fallen in den Kesseln so grosse Mengen auf einmal an, dass mit ihnen nicht fertig zu werden ist. . . Es mag vielleicht im Grossen nicht zu aendern sein – entgegen unserer Propaganda zum Ueberlaufen, die alles herrlich darstellt, aber das mir Furchtbare ist die Gesinnung, in der die Frage auch bei uns hier betrachtet wird, u. die *jede Moral u. Ethik vermissen laesst* u. zwar eigentlich nur bei der neuen Generation bis zum Hauptmann. Die Alten vom Weltkrieg denken anders. Man sieht das alles ungeruehrt. – Gut, wenn von diesem Volk moeglichst viel verrecken! Bezeichnend ist das Erlebnis von Gehrholz mit einem Arzt bei s. Bataillon. Vorbei kommt ein eben gefangener Russe mit zerschossenem Arm. Wahnsinnig blutend. Der Arzt hat keine Deutschen zu versorgen. Den ganzen Tag geruht. Russ. Verbandsmaterial in Massen. Er tut nichts. Auf Frage Gehrholz erwidert er: Ach, die Russen sind ja der Genfer Konvention nicht beigetreten u. muss erst n.G. in Trab gebracht werden! (unverstaendlich!). (For remainder of this chilling account see, *Tagebuch Muenschhausen*)

Oct 41: Some 665,000 Soviet troops captured at *Bryansk* and *Vyazma*. “One of them was Kachalov’s son, *Vadim Shverubovich* [who was in the *opolchentsy home guard*]...Vadim and his

comrades had exhausted themselves trying to find a way out of the German encirclement. They woke up one morning, stiff from an early frost and snowfall, to find German soldiers standing over them. They were marched to a camp near *Yukhnov* and began to experience the *horrors of capture on the eastern front*. They received no shelter, little drinking water and hardly any food. From time to time food was thrown over the fence, and the guards laughed to watch them fight each other in their desperation to grab morsels from the mud. With *no huts, tents or latrines*, the conditions were *unspeakably squalid*. Soon real winter arrived, and ‘they were left to die in the snow.’” (*A. Beevor, Mystery of Olga Chekhova*, 169-70)

Oct 41 [Wjasma]: Auch bei den Offizieren in Trent Park meldete sich offenbar das Gewissen, was die furchtbare Behandlung der sowj. Gefangenen anging:

„Der Ruecktransport der Russen [nach den Kesselschlachten] von Wjasma usw. war grauenhaft!“, erklarte Gen.-Lt. Neuffer. „Grauenhaft, wirklich“, pflichtete Reimann ihm bei. „Ich habe so einen Transport erlebt. . . Auf den Stationen schauten die Russen aus diesen schmalen Lucken heraus u. bruellten wie die Tiere auf Russisch zu den russ. Einwohnern, die da standen: ‚Brot, Gott wird euch segnen!‘ Da kamen Kinder u. brachten ihnen Kuerbisse [*nuts?*]. Die Kuerbisse wurden hineingeworfen, u. dann hoerte man in dem Wagen nur noch ein Gepolter u. ein tierisches Gebruell, da haben sie sich wahrscheinlich gegenseitig erschlagen. Ich war fertig, ich habe mich in eine Ecke gesetzt u. mir den Mantel ueber den Kopf gezogen. Ich fragte den Wachfeldwebel: ‚Ja, habt ihr denn nichts zu fressen?‘ Er sagte zu mir: ‚Herr Oberstleutnant, woher sollen wir was haben, ist ja nichts vorbereitet.“ „Nein, nein tatsaechlich, das sind unvorstellbare Graeuel“, fuhr Neuffer fort. „Da sind die Gefangenen ja auch zu Fuss zurueckgefuehrt worden. Ich bin diese Strecke oft gefahren – die Strassen-graben waren voll von erschossenen Russen. Mit den Autos reingefahren, also, es war grauenhaft.“

Auch im Hinterland hatten sie oftmals weder Verpflegung noch ein Dach ueber dem Kopf zu erwarten. Zumeist wurde nur ein Stueck offenes Gelaende mit Stacheldraht abgezaeunt u. die Masse der Gefangenen hineingepfercht. Mit blossen Haenden mussten sie sich Erdloecher graben, um sich zumindest notduerftig gegen Wind u. Wetter schuetzen zu koennen. Vielfach kam es zu Kannibalismus. (*G. Knopp, Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 108-09)⁵²²

ca. Oct 41: Hermann Goering tells the Italian foreign minister, Ciano: “This year between **20** and **30** million persons will die of hunger in Russia. Perhaps it is well that it should be so, for certain nations must be decimated. But even if it were not, nothing can be done about it . . . In the camps of the Russian prisoners they have *begun to eat each other*.” (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 854)

Nov 41: For illustrative *anecdotes* on issue of *war crimes* (shooting of Russian POWs; murder of Jews in *Kharkov* in Nov 41, German general weeping over order to destroy all towns and villages in a zone to be evacuated, etc.) see, *B. Haering, Embattled Witness*, 54-59)

Nov 41: Conditions [of POWs] by early November could be described as catastrophic. **Korueck 582**, a rear area security unit supporting **9 Army**, took over Army POW Collection Ctr **7** at *Rzhev*

⁵²² **Note:** “Sie haben ihre eigenen Kameraden geschlachtet. Wenn ein Russe nicht mehr ganz konnte, haben sie den umgebracht u. haben sich davon ernaeht.“ (*Heinz Niewerth, Wehrmachtsoldat*; quoted in: *Knopp, Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 109)

from its forward formation at the end of the month. Each single-storey accommodation block, measuring 12m by 24m, sheltered 450 prisoners. Disease was endemic because there were only two [2] latrines for 11,000 prisoners. These had consumed all vegetation w/in the barbed-wire perimeter long before. Prisoners were *subsisting on bark, leaves, grass and nettles* until eventually isolated cases of *cannibalism* were reported. Watchdogs received 50 times the ration of a single Russian prisoner. Inevitably, *typhus* broke out in the autumn of 1941. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 140)

9.-11.11.41: [Mzensk] Uebernehmen ein Gefangenenlager, Lt. Franke wird Ortskommandant, schlimme Verhaeltnisse. – *Im Lager, die „Aufseher“ sind Polen* die auch in der Roten Armee waren. Schlimme Quaeler u. *Schleimscheisser*. Sie widern mich an; die Russen sind mir lieber. (*Tagebuch Rupp*, 17. PD)

20.11.41: Germans used Russian POWs for just about any task imaginable. Here: „Über Nacht bauen die Pioniere zusammen mit den Gefangenen eine Brücke über den Schat.“ (*Tagebuch Rupp*, 17. PD)

Nov-Dec 41: Gefreiter Vetter's unit was surrounded by Russians on the second day of Christmas, in temperatures of -35 C. Still, some 3000 Russian POWs were taken out of their prison camp at nearly *Kaluga* and driven toward *Roslavl*. Vetter observed: „Many, weak w/ hunger, fell onto the road and were shot. After the road was empty again of prisoners one saw countless dead lying by the sides. A number of the prisoners were seen carrying bits of human bodies [an arm, or foot, etc.] in their pockets [to eat]. If one fell the others would immediately fall on him to strip him of clothing and take anything to eat. They all appeared starved and in terrible condition and had an animal look about them.“ Soviet prisoners were transported by rail, in open goods wagons [freight cars], even after the retreat had started. Exposed to cold, rain and snow, up to 20% perished before they reached their destinations. One-fifth of 5000 Russian POWs transported over 200 km from *Bobruisk* to *Minsk* between 20-21 Nov 41 froze to death. Obergefreiter Franz Wesskallnies, w/ 161 ID, saw Soviet prisoners arriving at *Ebenrode* in East Prussia in mixed open and closed goods wagons in temperatures of -18 C. „The cars were so overfilled the prisoners could not lie down, and had to sit there [in the open] for six [6] days w/ no food.“ They were so hungry and thirsty that they subsisted on snow and grease scraped from the wagon wheels. (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 231; P. Kohl, *Ich wundere mich*, 78; H. Dollinger, *Kain, Wo ist dein Bruder?*, 114)

Winter 41: A pattern of mutual retaliation and mutual escalation brought an end by the winter of 1941 to an era of easy surrenders that had put over three million Soviet soldiers behind German barbed wire. (J. Steinhoff, *Voices of the Third Reich*, 125)

Dec 41: International Committee of the Red Cross attempts to mediate between Russia and Germany. In Dec 41, they propose sending clothes and food from America to both German and Russian POWs. In addition, the names of 30,000 to 380,000⁵²³ German and Russian prisoners of war were to be placed in Geneva and vaccine provided to inoculate prisoners against typhus. While the OKW and the *Auswaertiges Amt* agreed to this proposal, Hitler again rejected it, as he feared that the signing of such an agreement would lead his soldiers to conclude erroneously that “if they were taken prisoner they would be treated in accordance w/ the treaty.” [i.e., the Hague Rules on Land Warfare; Hitler had spurned all attempts by the Soviet Union to urge Germany to abide by this treaty]. . . However, the real reason for his rejection of the proposal was his fear

⁵²³ **Note:** The maximum figure of 380,000 prisoners was mentioned because Stalin claimed that only this number of Russian soldiers had been taken prisoner. (273, f.n. 20)

that, if he did accept it, this crime for which he was accountable [i.e., the deaths of tens of thousands of Soviet POWs] would be exposed. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 265)

Dec 41: At German POW camp at *Hola*, in Poland, **100,000** Soviet prisoners are herded together in an open field and given no food. Desperately, they dig holes in which to try to get shelter from the wind and snow, and ate grass and roots to keep alive. Any nearby villagers caught by the Germans throwing food into the field are shot. By the end of the month, the POWs are dead. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 282)

Dec 41: Bestaetigte der nach einer Frontreise Anfang Dezember 1941 erstellte Bericht des 3. Generalstabsoffizier im Stab der Hr.Gr.Mitte, Major Freiherr von *Gersdorff*, dass „die Erschiessungen der Juden, der Gefangenen u. auch der Kommissare fast allgemein im Offizierkorps“ der besuchten Verbaende u. Staebe der **4.Armee** „abgelehnt“ u. statt dessen „als eine *Verletzung der Ehre* der Deutschen Armee, in Sonderheit des Deutschen Offizierkorps betrachtet“ wurden. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa*, 158)

Dez 41 [Anecdote Sowj. Kriegsgefangene]:⁵²⁴ Ich kann es nicht sagen, woran es gelegen hat, dass die ueber **100.000** russ. Kriegsgefangenen, die nur an unser Autokolonne vorbei marschierten ins Lager keiner Winterausruestung trug [i.e., after *Wjasma Kesselschlacht*, I assume]. Sie trugen auch nur ihre normalen langen Wintermaentel u. Pelzmuetze. Auch die ca. **1.000** Gefangenen, die anfangs **Dez 41** durch Wolokolamsk zogen, *trugen auch keine Winterbekleidung*, lediglich normale Wintermaentel. Sie wurden in einem grossen Haeuserbau vorerst am Abend in Wolokolamsk untergebracht. Die Nacht kam es in diesem grossen Haeuserbau zu einem grossen Brand, wo viele Kriegsgefangene am nachfolgenden Morgen, *wo ich als Zeuge war*, halb verkohlt u. viele verletzt im kalten Schnee lagen. Die Gefangenen waren noch nicht getrennt von ihren Offizieren, die aber immer wieder das Wort „Diszipline“ laut schrien. Der Hunger der Gefangenen war auch hier ueberbetont. Es herrschte ein hoellisches Durcheinander. Das auch hier Menschenfleisch von den Verletzten vor lauter Hunger am brennenden Feuer verzehrt wurde, will ich nicht in Abrede stellen. Hunger kann zum Wahnsinn treiben. Auch hier trugen die anwesenden [russ.] Offiziere keinerlei Winterbekleidung. (*Ltr A. Gassmann, 106. ID, to C. Luther, 7 Apr 06*)

7.12.41 [Kriegsgefangenenlager bei Cottbus]: “Wir sahen die ersten Kolonnen von gefangenen sowjet. Soldaten ankommen. Niemals werde ich diesen tiefbetruerblichen, verletzend peinlichen Anblick vergessen. Nur ein krankes Hirn kann sich diese abnormale Szenerie vorstellen. Von Weitem hatten wir sie schon wahrgenommen: lange Kolonnen von Schattengestalten, Gespenstern gleich, die von einer anderen Welt zu kommen schienen...Der Anblick war Schrecken erregend, ihre Koerper waren mit Wunden u. Ungeziefer bedeckt. Nur die Pupillen in den Augen verrieten bei diesen Menschen noch etwas Leben.“ (for complete entry see, *Maurice Legros, Echolot*, 323)

20.12.41: According to official German military records (*OKH/GenQu/Abt. I*), by **20.12.41** the Ostheer had taken **3 350 639** prisoners (**15 179** of them officers). (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Anlage 5*, 1106)

21.12.41: Near *Minsk* on this day, several thousand Soviet POWs are frozen to death during a march across open fields. In *Vilna*, several hundred Soviet prisoners, most of them half naked, many w/o even boots, are forced to clear snow from the railway lines. A Jewish woman, taking pity on their plight, offers one of the Russians a piece of bread. This is noticed by one of the

⁵²⁴ **Note:** Easy to forget that many Russian soldiers also w/o winter clothing in winter of **1941**.

German guards, who at once shoots dead both the Russian and the Jewess. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 281)

31.12.41: By 31 December, Army Group Ctr alone claims **1 912 376** Soviet prisoners, and the overall count exceeds **3** million. (*H.Gr.Mitte H 3/158 Gefangene u. Beutemeldung von 4.1.42*, quoted in: *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 208, f.n. 53)

Feb 42: By this date, of **3 900 000** Russian soldiers the Germans claimed to have captured, only **1 100 000** remained alive; of these, only **400 000** were capable of being moved to the *Reich* to work in industry. (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 99-100)

Nearby [near town of *Rusa*], a POW camp had been set up. The sight of the Russian prisoners was truly shocking. They all appeared exhausted and disheveled; more importantly, they were starving. Whenever they stumbled across a horse carcass they would all fall upon it, ripping off as big a piece as possible and eating it raw before moving on. (*For Germany, Otto Skorzeny*, 116)

20.3.42: According to **OKW** statistics (*Greiner Aufzeichnung*), as of this date the Germans had taken **3 461 338** Red Army prisoners. (See, *KTB OKW*, Bd. 1, 489)

1942-45: The situation of Soviet POWs did improve, from an extremely low point, in the spring of **1942**. The camp system had been stabilized, w/ the construction of at least primitive facilities. Yet even in **1942-45**, Soviet POWs were still held under atrocious conditions involving heavy labor, poor diet, inadequate housing, and minimal medical treatment. Overall, the death rate among Soviet prisoners was much higher than among Western prisoners in German hands: British and American deaths amounted to some **3.6%** of **232,000** POWs. . . According to figures released in the **1990s**, **1,550,000** POWs were repatriated to the USSR, up to **Mar 46**. The *repatriants* were treated w/ suspicion. They were restricted as to where in the USSR they could reside, and they had limited career opportunities. In the *Khrushchev* years of de-Stalinization the government noted the wrongs suffered by returned POWs and their families. . . Discrimination, however, continued until after the fall of Communism. In **1994**, a Presidential Commission passed a decree granting them full formal rehabilitation. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 104-05)⁵²⁵

1.17.6: Einsatzgruppen:

Summary: The vast area stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea was divided into four (4) areas, w/ one *Einsatzgruppe* in each. They were known as groups **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D**, and each was commanded by an officer from the RSHA; each group was composed of several commando units, and most of their cdrs were professional SS and Gestapo officers. Each of the *Einsatzgruppen* was attached to an army corps and, IAW prior agreement, acted in *collaboration* w/ it . . . The *Order Police* (**ORPO**) took part in the ops under the command of the Higher SS and Police Leaders (**HSSPF**) and their local collaborators. But to the surprise even of the SS, the *army cooperated of its own volition*, and in certain areas army units *played a very active role in mass murder*. The first wave of murders came to an end around the beginning of winter, and it is estimated that by then more than **700,000** Jews had been murdered in these actions: at least **400,000** of them in Soviet Russia [see *Table 4*, p 270]; close to **200,000** in the Baltic states; and

⁵²⁵ **Note:** Mawdsley says virtually nothing about Soviet war crimes vis-a-vis the Germans.

the remainder in the areas that had belonged to Poland before the war. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 255-56; 270)⁵²⁶

Note: About a million Soviet Jews were massacred by the Germans, mostly during **1941/42**. The main instrument of this mass murder were the *SS Einsatzgruppen*. Initially, the *Einsatzgruppen* were tasked w/ killing able-bodied Jewish men. However, in **Aug 41**, Himmler gave the order for the wholesale slaughter of entire Jewish communities to commence - and women, parents and children, old and young, the sick and the healthy. Illustrative of the change in policy was the shooting of **30,000** Jews at Babi Yar, a ravine outside Kiev, at the end of **Sep 41**.

The reason for this transition from selective killing of Jewish males to the mass murder of all Jews has been the subject of extensive discussion among historians of the Holocaust. It seems to have been connected to the escalation of German anti-partisan tactics. . . There was an intimate connection between the Wehrmacht's anti-partisan tactics and the anti-Jewish campaign of the SS. All Jews were stigmatized as communists and partisans, and all partisans branded as Jews. "*The Jew is a partisan. The partisan is a Jew.*" "A Jew is a Bolshevik is a partisan." These were the German slogans that served the dual purpose of rationalizing the mass murder of Soviet Jews and legitimizing the harsh and indiscriminate anti-partisan measures. . . (*G. Roberts, Stalin's Wars*, 87)

Note [*Judenvernichtung*]: *Andreas Hillgruber* geht von einem *direkten Zusammenhang von Ostkrieg u. Judenvernichtung* aus, nicht bloss von einem eher zufaelligen zeitlichen Zusammentreffen ... Vom Beginn des Russlandkrieges an bestand die Absicht, „alle Juden im dt.-besetzten Teil der Sowjetunion sogleich zu toeten.“ Dies beweisen die „*Ereignismeldungen UdSSR*“, in denen seit **23.6.41** ueber die Judentoetungen berichtet wurde ... Die *praktische Zusammenarbeit* von Heer u. *SD-Einsatzgruppen* fand ihren Ausdruck in einer Uebereinkunft zwischen Himmler u. Brauchitsch vom **28.4.41**. Dort hiess es, dass der „Einsatz der Sicherheitspolizei u. des *SD im Verbaende des Heeres*“ einvernehmlich geregelt werde. (*Ueberschaer, Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 22)

Note: Nicht zuletzt das Wueten der *Einsatzgruppen* fuehrte zu haerter werdendem Widerstand der Roten Armee, festigte die Position Stalins im Apparat u. langfristig die der kommunistischen Partei in der Bevoelkerung u. war damit eine der Voraussetzungen fuer den vom Sowjetdiktatur ausgerufenen „Grossen Vaterlaendischen Krieg.“ (*Reuth, Hitler*, 531)

The „operational elements“ of the four *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile SS killing units) were a dozen or so *Einsatzkommandos*. Although the *Einsatzgruppen's* place in infamy relates to the genocide against the Jews, the role the Nazi leadership originally intended for them was quite different: they were to destroy the Soviet political leadership. Only when that task proved impossible were they turned on the remaining Jews. [Is this accurate assessment?] (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 101)

⁵²⁶ **Note:** Before the occupation, there were some **2.5** million Jews in the Baltic States and those parts of Russia conquered by the Germans. Between **1,000,000** and **1,500,000** managed to escape, particularly from the original Russian areas. By the beginning of winter, the *Einsatzgruppen* had managed to exterminate only about 2/3 of the remaining Jews. This was partly because of *economic constraints*, that is, the need for skilled laborers, and that the number of people who were engaged in these murderous activities were insufficient to cover the entire area. (258)

Four of these Special Task Groups, which included *Waffen-SS* troops, executed by shooting some **1,500,000** Jews, communists and other „racial undesirables“ in the east between **1941** and **1943**. (Hart, *German Soldier*, 77)

The SS and police cdr responsible for *Einsatzgruppe B* that operated alongside Army Group Ctr reported „no difficulties“ w/ any of the army cdrs, which implies direct and willing cooperation from Guderian (for ex.). In fact, advance *Einsatzgruppen* detachments were *attached on multiple occasions to front-line combat units of Army Group Ctr* within Guderian’s area of operations. (Hart, *Guderian*, ca. 72)

Killing squads composed of commandos of up to 1000 men—hardened SS men, members of the SD, the Gestapo, the police and local volunteers. *Heydrich* and *Himmler* had carefully worked out where each group would be sent and an order issued from the **SS Office IV** in Berlin on **17.7.41** confirmed that they were to *target Communist functionaries, members of the Soviet intelligence, and “all Jews.”* The methods of killing were extremely brutal. (See, *Faust’s Metropolis*, A. *Richie*, 509-10, for details).

28.4.41: Dass [*Halder*], der in *engem Kontakt mit dem Generalquartiermeister [Wagner]* gestanden hat u. ueber dessen *Verhandlungen mit SS-Gruppenfueher Heydrich zur Verwendung der SS-Einsatzgruppen* im kommenden Feldzug *bestens unterrichtet* gewesen ist, kann ebenfalls nicht bestritten werden: “Wagners Vorgesetzte [*Halder* u. *Brauchitsch*] hatten *keine Einwaende*. *Brauchitsch* gab am 28. April 1941 seine Unterschrift u. machte das Heer zum Komplizen der SS in einer der groessten Mordaktionen der dt. Geschichte.“ (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 234)

Mid-Nov 41: According to a report submitted by *Einsatzgruppe B*, **45,467** were killed up to this time, within its area of operation – White Russia. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 256)

1.17.7: Ausbeutung (Raubkrieg):

Generalplan Ost: First produced in draft form in mid-**July 41**. Foresaw the settlement of the entire Polish territory, the Baltic, White Russia and parts of the Ukraine by Germans within 30 years. **31** million of the indigenous population were to be banished to Siberia. (see, *Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 443)

Generalplan Ost: In the autumn of **1941** enthusiastic planners in *Himmler’s* SS would draw up a Generalplan Ost, which envisaged the deportation over the course of several decades of **31** million people, mostly Slavs, to Asiatic Russia. Even in the immediate campaign and its aftermath, however, the population of Russia were to be treated as slaves, their leaders wiped out. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 10)

Note: Hitler intended nothing less than the extinction of the USSR/Russia as a state. . . The treatment of defeated Russia was planned by Hitler and the highest civilian and military authorities in Third Reich to involve ruthless economic exploitation. The objectives of “*Barbarossa*” were genuinely imperialistic, more so than Lenin could have imagined back in **1916** when he wrote Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism. . . The lightning war had as one general goal the transformation of the whole territory of European Russia into a colony. From the outset it was planned that conquered Russia would provide food and other raw materials to give Germany autarky. The Third Reich would then have a “large-scale economy” (*Grosswirtschaftsraum*) as vast as the economic systems of the United States and the colonial

great powers. Hitler never made any secret of *Lebensraum*, of his vision of the Ukrainian “breadbasket” as an economic panacea for Germany. He echoed here traditional ideas of the German nationalist Right. In the months before the invasion, elaborate projects for the economic exploitation of Russian territory and people were put forward, and overall responsibility given to Goering as head of the “Four-Year Plan.” The short term proposals involved a German Army of several million men living off the land in Russia and the export to German Reich of **8-10,000,000** tons of grain per year. This exploitation would be at the expense of the population of the conquered territories where, w/ extraordinary callousness, the Reich authorities expected mass starvation. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 9-10)

Note: „Kein Teil der dt. *Besatzungsherrschaft* hatte fuer die sowjet. Gesellschaft insgesamt so furchtbaren Folgen wie der *gnadenlose wirtschaftliche Raubbau* der dt. *Besatzer*. Schon vor Feldzugbeginn war von den dt. Wirtschaftsexperten der Hungertod von ‚zig Millionen Menschen‘ mit einem stupenden Gleichmut ins Kalkuel gezogen worden. Von diesem unmenschlichen Ausbeutungsprogramm haben alle Angehoerigen des dt. Ostheers profitier. Trotzdem waere es entschieden zu einfach, diese Soldaten dafuer verantwortlich zu machen, dass sie das aufgegessen u. verbraucht haben, was eigentlich den Einheimischen zugestanden haette. Denn *es gehoert zu den traditionellen, voelkerrechtlich fixierten Anspruechen einer Besatzungsmacht, dass sie die wirtschaftliche ‚Hilfsquellen‘ eines okkupierten Landes fuer sich in Anspruch nehmen konnte*, allerdings nur so weit, wie es der wirtschaftlichen Leitsungsfahigkeit des Landes entsprach. Dabei waren Pluenderungen ‚*ausdruecklich untersagt*,‘ Requisitionen sollten in geordneten Bahnen ablaufen. Ueber voelkerrechtliche *Spielregeln* dieser Art wollten sich die Detuschen aber von vornherein hinwegsetzen, ja schlimmer noch: *die Ausbeutung des besetzten Landes verfolgte mehr oder weniger offen immer auch das Ziel, die dort ansaessige Bevoelkerung ‚auszueduennen*.‘ Solche Intentionen aendern nichts daran, dass die im Osten eingesetzten dt. Soldaten *einen Anspruch auf Versorgung besaessen, einen existentiellen wie auch einen rechtlichen*. Nicht die Requisition an u. fuer sich war problematisch, sondern deren Umfang u. deren Umsetzung.

Dies Umsetzung lag nur z.T. in den Haenden der dt. Soldaten, wahrscheinlich sogar nur zu einem geringen. Pluenderung oder *Vandalismus* wurden noch am ehesten durch den Kriegsbeginn u. das Chaos der Rueckzuege beguenstigt. ‚Durchziehened Truppen haben die Kuehe auf der Weide erschossen. Statt Geld geben die Soldaten den Bauern Zigarettenschecks oder Zettel, auf denen steht geschrieben: ‚*Der liebe Gott bezahlt’s*‘ oder, ‚*Leck mich am Arsch!*,‘ berichtete ein Augenzeuge. Ein General schrieb im Juni [24.6.41] kurz u. buendig nach Hause: ‚Huehner, Schweine u. Kaelber lassen in reichlichem Masse ihr Leben.‘ Allerdings wurde schon damals von OKW festgestellt, dass an dieser Art der *Selbstversorgung* ‚ueberwiegend die *rueckwaertige Dienste* u. die *nichtmilitaerischen Organisationen* beteiligt‘ seien. ‚*Die kaempfende Truppe hat hierzu weder Zeit noch Gelegenheit*.‘ [source: *Schreiben des OKW vom 17.8.41*, quoted in *Hartmann*].

Oekonomische konnte dies jedenfalls nicht lange gutgehen; bald ‚wird das Land wohl schwer ausgesogen sein,‘ erkannte man schon im Juli 1941..Schon deshalb wollte man dieses aufwendige, schwierige u. nicht selten verfuehrerische Geschaeft dem gemeinen Mann keinesfalls ueberlassen. *Wilde Pluenderungen* sollten – so die *Richtlinien des OKW* – ‚mit den schwersten Strafen geahndet‘ werden.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ See, *Richtlinien des Chefs OKW fuer das Verhalten der dt. Truppen in der Sowjetunion*, vom 19.5.41. Hartmann: ‚Diesen *Rahmenbefehl* hat dann die Truppe entsprechend umgesetzt. (37) See also order of 34. AK quoted here (3.8.41).

[**Note:** *C. Hartmann* goes on to discuss the *Wirtschaftsorganisation Ost*, whose specialists (both military and civilian) were responsible for securing the conquered economic potential of the USSR and helping the *Ostheer* live off the land as much as possible. The *Ostheer*, he states, cooperated closely—if not always w/o friction—with this organization.] (*C. Hartmann, "Verbrecherischer Krieg,"* 36-38)

1941-44 [*Weissrussland*]: Als Chef einer Zivilverwaltung im „*Generalkommissariat Weissruthenien*“, wie die Deutschen das Gebiet [i.e., die Sowjetrepublik Weissrussland] nun nennen, ernennt Hitler zum **1. Sep 41** den fruheren NSDAP-Gauleiter *Wilhelm Kube*. Die neuen Untertanen sind fuer diesen „Weissruthenen, nicht Russen.“ Er umschmeichelt die Weissrussen als „gesundes Bauernvolk“ u. verheisst ihnen eine „Auferstehung des weissruthenischen *Volksbewusstseins*.“ Doch hinter dem duennen, durchsichtigen Schleier der Nazi-Propaganda tobt im Land ein *beispielloser Terror* der Besatzer vor allem gegen Juden u. vermeintliche Partisanen. Die *Einsatzgruppe B* u. *A* erschliessen ab **Jul 41** Zehntausende von Juden bei „*Sonderaktionen*. Bis Jahresende werden ebenfalls mehrere zehntausend ehem. Sowjetsoldaten als potentielle Partisanen von Wehrmachtseinheiten ermordet. Das **Polizeibataillon 316** bringt bie *Mogiljow* sogar Frauen u. Kinder um.

Bald zeigen sich deutsche Helfer beim vermeintlichen *Aufbau Ost* frustriert u. verunsichert. Viele der Zugereisten, so urteil **1944** ein Beamter nach 2 1/2-jaehriger Taetigkeit, haetten vor allem Sinn fuer „*zwei grosse W – Weiber u. Wodka*.“ Hinzu kommt, dass dem Personel deutscher Dienststellen in aller Regel *jegliche Sprach- u. Landeskenntnisse* fehlen. Zu den inkompetenten „*Ostnieten*“ [*Niete* = failure, flop] gesellen sich gescheiterte Existenzen u. Abenteurer. Ein Reichsrevisor [inspector, auditor] kommt **1944** zu dem Schluss, ein Grossteil der in Weissrussland verwendeten Beamten habe die Stellung nur genutzt, *um sich zu bereichern*. Deutsche Kolonialbeamte legen sich geraeumige Dienstwohnungen zu u. kommandieren Bedienstete wie *Leibeigene* [serfs]. Waehrenddessen holen Landwirtschaftsfunktionaere den Kleinbauern vielerorts die letzte Kuh aus dem Stall: Die Besatzer treiben die Doerfler in den Hunger. Im *Berlin* schwant *Goebbels* das *Desaster der NS-Ostpolitik*. Er vermerkt im **Feb 43** in seinem Tagebuch: „Wie sollte sich ein denkender Mensch aus den Ostvoelkern fuer unsere Politik einsetzen koennen, wenn sie ihm nicht einmal das nackte Dasein laesst?“ (*Klussmann, Gegenwelt im Wald*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrige, Burgdorff* (Hg.), 133-34)

20.4.41: Hitler appoints Alfred *Rosenberg*, the “befuddled Balt and officially leading Nazi thinker,” “Commissioner for the Central Control of Questions Connected w/ the East-European Region.” By early May, Rosenberg has drawn up his first wordy *blueprint* for reorganization of eastern territories, which, to begin w/, were to be divided up into so-called Reich Commissariats. (See, *Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 832-33)

23.5.41: Goering’s *Economic Staff East*, in a long directive on this day, lays down that the surplus food from Russia’s black-earth belt in the south must not be diverted to the people in the industrial areas, where, in any case, the industries would be destroyed. The workers and their families in these regions would simply be left to starve – or, if they could, to emigrate to Siberia. Russia’s great food production must go to the Germans. (**Note:** Goering had been placed in charge of *economic exploitation* of the Soviet Union.) (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 833)

20.6.41: Two days before the troops jump off, Alfred *Rosenberg* addresses his closest collaborators who were to take over the rule of Russia:

“The job of feeding the German people [he said] stands at the top of the list of Germany’s claims on the East. The southern [Russian] territories will have to

serve . . . for the feeding of the German people. We see absolutely no reason for any obligation on our part to feed also the Russian people w/ the products of that surplus territory. We know that this is a harsh necessity, bare of any feelings . . . The future will hold very hard years in store for the Russians.” (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 833)

16.7.41: At an important five-hr. meeting in the Fuehrer HQ, attended by Goering, Rosenberg, Lammers, Keitel, and Bormann, Hitler established the *basic guidelines of policy* and practical arrangements for administering and exploiting the new conquests. Once more, the underlying premise is the *social-Darwinist* justification that the strong deserved to inherit the earth. As Hitler states at one point, “Basically, it’s a matter of dividing up the giant cake so that we can first *rule* it, secondly *administer* it, and thirdly *exploit* it.” (See, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 405-06)

8.-11.8.41: Hitler’s musings on the prospect of a German equivalent to *India* continues on three successive days and nights from **8-11 Aug 41**. India had given the English pride. The vast spaces had obliged them to rule millions w/ only a few men. “What India was for England, the eastern territory will be for us,” he declares. For Hitler, India was the heart of an empire that had brought Britain not only power, but prosperity. Ruthless economic exploitation had always been central to his dream of a German empire in the east. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 402)

Oct-Nov 41: Russian population in captured German areas experiencing acute food shortages. As German soldiers at the front were trying to help the Russian people, the **OKH** felt compelled to intervene. It issues a secret directive on **1 Nov 41**, concerning “*Die Ernaehrung der Front u. der Heimat. Richtlinien fuer die Behandlung in Frontzeitungen. . .*” It orders absolute ruthlessness in behavior of German troops. For details see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 103-04; 124, f.n. 187)

Nov 41: Like all German formations in the east, the troops of the armored divisions *ruthlessly plundered the villages* through which they advanced, seizing meat, bread, wheat, livestock, milk, etc. The **18. PD** requisitioned **40 tons of meat** from the local population during **Nov 41** alone. (*Hart, German Soldier*, 44)

Fall 41: *Willi Reese (95 ID)* makes numerous remarks to how his soldiers stole food, clothing, etc., from the Russian villagers. Speaks of one incident in **Nov 41** when a soldier forced his way into a farmhouse and, although offered food, wanted more. When farmer and his wife tried to resist, the soldier smashed in farmer’s skull, shot his wife and torched their home. That evening, the soldier was killed by a stray bullet. Reese: “But we shouldn’t ask after God’s justice in war.” (*W.P. Reese, Stranger*, 41)

1.17.8: Hr.Gr.Mitte & War Crimes:

Note: For attitudes/actions of *Generalfeldmarschal von Bock* on issues pertaining to occupation policy and “war crimes” see, his biography in this document (Section: **2.7.4**) See also following diary entries: a) **4.6.41** (concerning OKW order governing conduct of field forces toward Russian civilians) (217-18); b) **22.7.41** (his meeting w/ his rear area army cdr, *Schenckendorff*: “I told him that the *last thing we needed was a hate-filled population in our rear* and that we had to try to get the people to work w/ us willingly...”) (259); c) **4.8.41** (re: opening of churches, etc.) (272-73)

J. Huerter:⁵²⁸

- a. *Oberkommando der Hr.Gr.Mitte* well informed—for the most part—over the killing of the Jews by *Einsatzgruppe B*, police units (*Ordnungspolizei*), *Waffen-SS* (SS cavalry regiments, etc.). From the beginning of the campaign, the high command of *Hr.Gr.Mitte*, the AOKs, etc., gave these killing units great freedom of action.
- b. Cooperation between the SS, police and Wehrmacht was for the most part excellent, as the commander of *Einsatzgruppe B*, Arthur Nebe verified in his reports.
- c. Wehrmacht often provided support to the murderous activities of these killing units, ranging from rounding up Jews to participation of regular military units/personnel (*Geheime Feldpolizei*, *Feldgendarmarie*, etc.) in the killing actions themselves
- d. Wehrmacht began to consider the mass killings communist, functionaries, Jews and others behind the front a key *military objective*. Gradually came to conclusion that *Jews were partisans*, and *partisans were Jews*. In this manner, in summer of 1941, the racial/ideological objectives of Hitler's regime came into alignment (dovetailed with) the military objectives of the Army.
- e. The *Judenmord* in area of *Hr.Gr.Mitte*—just like on the other two army group fronts—began gradually and witnessed a slow but inexorable radicalization, reflecting in part the course of military events. The start of Operation “*Taifun*,” the culminating military campaign of *Barbarossa*, witnessed the beginning of the systematic extermination of all Jews behind the front of *Hr.Gr.Mitte* by *Einsatzgruppe B*, etc.
- f. During “*Taifun*,” cooperation between *Sicherheitspolizei* and Army units often close. For example, *Sicherheitspolizei Vorkommandos* were attached to each of the three *Panzergruppen* (the attach spearheads), so that the killing squads could operate in their combat areas.
- g. Typical attitude of German generals was that the executions should be conducted inconspicuously and out of (their!) sight. See, for example, GFM v. Bock's request to Nebe following mass killings in the vicinity of his (v. Bock's) HQ at *Borisov* in Aug 41. Despite small signs of discomfort on the part of the *Generalitaet*, they made no attempt to stop the murderous activity.
- h. The first murder action to cause serious consternation to *Hr.Gr.Mitte* was the massacre at *Borisov*, on 20/21 Oct 41. This action, in which 7000 Jews were murdered by the *Sicherheitspolizei* and White Russian militia, in the direct vicinity of the army group HQ, made a deep impression on the staff of the army group. Assaulted the collective conscience of some of the younger officers on

⁵²⁸ Source: J. Huerter, *Hitlers Heerfuhrer. Die dt. Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion 1941/42*. 2006. (Kapitel 5, Section “Die Oberbefehlshaber u. der Judenmord – eine Topographie,” offers many insights into the role of the Wehrmacht in the *Judenmord* and the beginning of the Final Solution in Russia. *Hr.Gr.Mitte* is covered from pp 549-567.)

the staff (v. Tresckow, v. Schlabrendorff, Gersdorff), and pushed them over the edge into Resistance.

- i. Still, according to Huerter, “*die haeufigste Haltung zur ‘Judenfrage’ in den Oberkommandos, im Offizierkorps u. in der Wehrmacht ueberhaupt war jedoch wohl vor allem: **Attentismus**.” (566).*
- j. *GFM v. Bock*—avoided taking any clear position on the systematic murder of the Jews; certainly did not intervene to stop it. Only once, when a murder action threatened to interfere w/ military operations, did v. Bock register a protest. That was in Nov 41. (564-65.) Huerter: “*Sein [v. Bocks] ganzes Verhalten in diesem Feldzug laesst nur die Vermutung zu, dass dieser oberste Truppenkommandeur angesichts der ‘welthistorischen Aufgabe,’ den sowjet. Erzfeind zu besiegen, die immer radikalere Judenverfolgung hochstens als eine zwar sehr unangenehme, aber nicht zu aendernde Marginalie betrachtete.*” (565)

End Huerter material.

1.17.9: Reactions of Ostheer to Criminal Orders:

„As to the execution of political commissioners [commissars] of the Red Army and other categories of POWs singled out for liquidation, *broadly based quantitative analyses are not yet available*. . . How many political commissioners and other ‘politically suspected’ POWs were executed by the combat units or other units of the regular army, immediately after their capture or in the DULAGs (POW transit camp) *cannot be ascertained correctly*. However, many sources show, *beyond any doubt*, that army units not only co-operated w/ the Special Units of the Security Service (SD) and the Security Police by transferring the specified categories of POWs to the SD/Police *Einsatzgruppen* for ‘special treatment,’ but in some cases also tried to *improve the implementation of the directives*.

“On the other hand, there were also officers who tried to prevent the executions in their own divisions. We know only of a single case – that of *General v. Arnim*, of **17 PD** – where the *Commissar Directive* was not implemented. For good reasons, one may assume that the application of the directives varied widely, but available sources suggest that *generally* they were ‘correctly’ executed by the *great majority* of the army units, at least during the first six months of the campaign.” (K.-J. Mueller, *Brutalization of Warfare*, 230-31)

From late **Aug 41**, initiatives were taken by some officers commanding combat units to get the „Kommissar-Befehl“ cancelled because of the *negative effects it produced*. The **OKH** supported these initiatives, but the **OKW**, not to mention Hitler, turned them down. It is significant that these initiatives came at a moment when the German army’s advance in Russia began to slow down owing to increasingly stiffer Soviet resistance. Taking into account the *difficulty in interpreting the relevant sources*, one nevertheless, gets the impression that during the last three months of **1941** there was an *indirect controversy* on the implementation of the directives between certain German generals on the eastern front. On the one hand, there was *General Schmidt’s* memorandum of **18 Sep 41** – favoring cancellation of the “Commissars Directive” – as well as *GFM v. Bock’s* initiative of **5 Nov 41** – raising objections against transferring certain categories of POWs to the *Einsatzgruppen*, and particularly emphasizing that the Army’s responsibilities towards

POWs could not be shared w/ other authorities. Some weeks later, GMFs *von Reichenau* and *von Manstein* and *Col-Gen Hoepner* – all prominent army cdrs – issued Orders of the Day, which attracted a certain *notoriety*. In these orders, they tried to *justify the war of extermination*, demanding that every soldier readily accept “ruthless, but justified measures to be taken against Jewish sub-human gangsters.”

Admittedly, it is difficult to *interpret* these Orders of the Day. . . Were they only destined to brush aside opposition against these directives or even to intensify relevant actions and attitudes? Or may they also be taken as a reaction against soldiers’ reluctance to implement the directives? Other sources are *equally difficult to interpret*. *Col.v. Gersdorff’s* report, submitted to C-in-C of **4 Army in Dec 41**, referred to fact that the execution of Jews, prisoners and political commissioners of the Red Army was almost generally rejected by the officer corps, and that it was regarded as being contrary to the honor of the German army. Despite those strong words, the question is, however, how *representative* they are for the majority of officers and soldiers. It is equally difficult to ascertain whether official demands, made by commanding officers, to withdraw the so-called “*Kommissar-Befehl*” were simply motivated by practical purposes, as they pretended, or whether tactical arguments were put forward because ethical arguments were regarded as useless in the eyes of the *Fuehrer*. (*K.-J. Mueller, Brutalization of Warfare, 231-32*)

Another question is how Germany’s military elite reacted to these directives. First of all, the sad truth is that neither Hitler’s speeches to his generals nor the directives issued by the **OKW** caused any official or outspoken protest from the Army’s High Command [**OKH**]. On the contrary, the highest Army authorities reacted like “subordinate functionaries” by obediently transforming Hitler’s general directives into precise orders. However, acts of *individual protest* w/in the ranks of the High Command against such orders have been recorded. In this respect, the controversy between *Admiral Canaris*, Chief of Intelligence of the *Wehrmacht*, and GFM *Keitel*, head of **OKW**, is significant: Canaris, in a statement of **8 Sep 41**, protested against an **OKW** directive which openly referred to a possible *mass execution of Soviet prisoners*. Keitel turned Canaris’ intervention down, stating in a marginal note that the Admiral’s scruples reflected “traditional ideas of gentlemanlike warfare; but this war is an ideological war of extermination; I, therefore, approve and authorize the measures stipulated in this directive.” (*K.-J. Mueller, Brutalization of Warfare, 232*)

The *controversy* highlights the fact that in those days *two entirely different ideas about the nature of warfare and of the military ideal coexisted in the German officer corps*: one ideal was represented by *Canaris*, who was still conditioned by the *traditional values* of European military elites, whereas *Keitel’s* attitude was definitely determined by the *new model of the ideologically motivated soldier*. To the Admiral, war was still a military conflict between armies and nations; to the Field Marshal, war had become an all-out struggle between irreconcilably antagonistic ideologies and their protagonists. It is difficult to *quantify* the number of representatives of either attitude w/in the Army. In this respect, we have to take into account that, owing to the precipitated rearmament of the *Wehrmacht* in the **1930s** and the increasing ideological indoctrination, the *homogeneity of the officer corps had been disintegrating* w/ all the weakening effects on the traditional code of values.

Some figures are significant: in **1935**, the Army had ca. **3800** officers; in **1938**, however, the number had jumped to **22,000**; and in **Dec 41**, it enveloped more than **35,000** professional officers. If one adds to those figures those of *reserve officers*, the results are even more stunning: in **1939**, there were more than **38,000** reserve officers and in **1944** more than **125,000**. In **1943**, the total officer corps numbered close to **250,000**. It is clear that traditional attitudes and the traditional code of values must have been severely affected by such gigantic increases in

personnel. Restraints in behavior, hitherto determined by traditional values and socially enforced conformity, were likely to have dissolved among an increasing number of officers. (K.-J. Mueller, *Brutalization of Warfare*, 232-33)

Attitudes of Officer Corps: Recent research has shown that „there was a *substantial ideological agreement* between Hitler and the officer corps.” This does *not* mean that these officers were particularly indoctrinated by genuine Nazi ideas; but there were some elements of Nazi ideology which were shared by Germany’s traditional elites and, to a certain extent, by other social strata.

First of all, there was *anti-Semitism*. It was not so much a racial factor, but rather a “strange mixture of *xenophobia*, Christian prejudices and cultural arrogance combined w/ political scapegoatism.”

There was also a sort of *anti-Slavism*, familiar but not exclusively limited to Prussian Protestant upper classes. This was “another strange mixture of cultural and religious feelings of diversity, of [-----?] dominance and of unconscious anxiety caused by the imagined nightmare of the Slavic masses steamrolling towards the German west.” All this had become ideologically virulent since before WWI by the increasing antagonism of both *pan-Slavism* and *pan-Germanism*.

Finally, there was a *militant anti-Bolshevism*. . . which was shared even by those members of the traditional elites in Germany who kept their distance from Nazism. Since the Russian Revolution of **1917**, and the revolutionary waves which in its wake swept over Europe, Bolshevism had become the *absolute enemy*, particularly to those officers who were still imbibed w/ traditional values and ideals of old pre-revolutionary Europe. To them, *Bolshevism* was not only challenging their own social and political position but, above all, was *the very negation, the antithesis of all their political, social and moral values*. Bolshevism was perceived as a deadly enemy which not only needed to be defeated in the traditional way, but also had to be *completely and totally exterminated*. Traditional standards of fighting were no longer feasible against this sort of enemy. *No quarter could be given in a fight between good and evil* – this was the rule of fighting which had already developed during the conflicts of revolutionary Germany in the years **1918-20**. Militant anti-Bolshevism, therefore, had the *tendency of neglecting traditional codes of value in peace and war*.

To most of these officers, Hitler’s war on Soviet Russia was as much a repetition of *Hindenburg’s* and *Ludendorff’s* Grand Strategy of **1917-18** as it was a continuation of the anti-revolutionary fight against the absolute evil of Russian Bolshevism which was – in their view – responsible for Germany’s breakdown in **1918**, for the demoralization of the German army, and for all the post-war turmoil of the early **1920s**. Given the general *anti-semitic feelings*, **Hitler’s identification of Bolshevism and Jews** was thus digested w/o much reflection. In this respect, the officers’ perception of the enemy was, to a large extent, *identical w/ Hitler’s* ideologically motivated perception. Here we have all the elements which might provide a fairly convincing explanation of the Army’s involvement in inhuman warfare in Russia. (K.-J. Mueller, *Brutalization of Warfare*, 234-35)

Obwohl Hitlers Vorgaben nichts mehr mit dem soldatischen Ethos zu tun hatte, fuegte sich die **OKH**-Fuehrung widerspruchlos dessen Willen u. erarbeitete zusammen mit dem **OKW** entsprechende Ausfuehrungsbestimmungen. . . Hitler erleichterte dabei der Heeresfuehrung die *Selbsttaeuschung* u. das *Wegschauen*, indem er die eigentlichen rassischen Vernichtungsaktionen wie schon waehrend des Polenfeldzuges nicht dem Heer zumutete. Der *Wehrmacht* fehle es hierzu an der fanatischen Entschlossenheit, die seine SS auszeichne, meinte er. (Reuth, *Hitler*, 526-27)

The Army’s involvement in Hitler’s war of extermination had *exogenous* as well as *endogenous* origins/causes. This happened in a *transitory phase* in which “modern” phenomena – like that

under review here – and more traditional reactions co-existed: there was the Army’s involvement in Hitler’s war; but there was also the military’s rebellion against its dictator – involvement as well as resistance. This gives evidence of what is often called “*die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*” (the *simultaneity of differences*). (K.-J. Mueller, *Brutalization of Warfare*, 236)

Die Fuehrer einzelner Armeen und Einheiten *handelten oft sehr unterschiedlich*, was die Art der Kriegsfuehrung, die Behandlung der Zivilbevoelkerung und den Umgang mit den Kriegsgefangenen betrifft. **Ein einheitliches Bild laesst sich daher nur schwer zeichnen.**⁵²⁹...Waehrend einige Truppenfuehrer glaubten, den Krieg mit der Unterstuetzung der Zivilbevoelkerung schneller gewinnen zu koennen u. sich an Kriegs- u. Voelkerrecht gebunden fuehlen, folgen andere schnell der Vorstellung Hitlers u. ermahnen die eigene Truppe sogar, wenn sich diese zu ruecksichtsvoll gegenueber der Zivilbevoelkerung verhaelt. (*Anmerkung Dr Tauber* in: *Loewer Memoiren*, f.n., 30; *Soldatische Grundregeln* in deutschem **Soldbuch**, 31; see also following web site: www.wehrmacht.org)

In his review of book *Die Ostfront 1943-44* (Band 8 of „*Das Dt. Reich u. der Zweite Weltkrieg*“), J. Huerter takes authors to task (primarily Frieser) for not addressing war crimes of Germans in Russia. He notes that one of book’s authors contradicts Frieser: “Diesem beschoenigenden Bild widerspricht im selben Band Wegner, der in seinem Strategiekapitel einige Seiten ueber die „*Verbrannte Erde*“ einbindet und dabei unmissverstaendlich die Begriffe Auspluenderung, Ausbeutung, Verschleppung, Devastation und Vandalismus gebraucht. Dabei gingen, wie Wegner zeigt, die vorgesetzten Staebe wiederholt gegen „*falsche Humanitaetsduselei*“ in der Truppe vor, um die befohlenen Grausamkeiten durchzusetzen.”⁵³⁰

Perspective of Dr Dennis Showalter, in response to K. Fuch’s disdainful comments about Bolshevism (5.7.41 diary entry): “This reaction, common to German soldiers on the Eastern Front in both world wars, contributed significantly to the *Wehrmacht’s* complicity in the Nazi war of conquest and extermination. The high-riding *Landser* felt little common humanity toward the peasants whose fields and villages they overran—a pattern dating to Sep 39.” In his introduction, Showalter states: A wave of archival scholarship has demonstrated the [German] soldier’s *direct and comprehensive involvement* not only in Hitler’s accession to power, but in the Reich’s vilest crimes against humanity.” As examples, he cites the recent *Wehrmacht Exposition* (by the *Hamburg Institut zur Sozialforschung*), and book by H. Heer and K. Naumann, *Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht* (1995).

20.7.41 [Anecdote]: Helmut Martin describes shooting of a Russian POW following his capture. His *Panzerjaegerkompanie* had been attached to the I. Btn. of **IR 53 (14. ID (mot.))** the day before to support an attack. The next day, the Russians had attacked and broken through; during the withdrawal, Martin’s unit had taken a young Russian soldier prisoner. The company command ordered that the prisoner be shot: “Diese Anweisung brachte mich ziemlich aus dem Gleichgewicht u. das *Ansehen der Fuehrung stark ins Wanken*, denn ich hasste solche Massnahmen...Tonn, der Richtschuetze vom 2. Geschuetz, war der *Auserwaehlte*, der die Exekution in einer kleinen Mulde...ausfuehrte...Ich hoerte in der Bodensenke zwei Schuesse fallen, ehe

⁵²⁹ Note: **I agree with Dr Tauber’s point here entirely.** This is also what, in my view, made the *Wehrmachtaustellung* of the mid-90s so treacherous and dishonest, because it tarred *all* German soldiers with the brush of criminality.

⁵³⁰ **Note:** This entry also shows that many German soldiers resisted the harsh, sometimes criminal orders of their superiors, even if ultimately they had to submit to such orders, given their very real lack of room to maneuver (*Spielraum*).

Tonn mit Begleitung wieder erschien. Eine kleine Genugtuung empfand ich damals, ausser unsagbarem Abscheu vor dem Mord: Diese Tat war selbst Tonn *in die Glieder gefahren*, denn sein Gesicht war vom Geschehen gezeichnet. Kreideweiss sah er aus. Das was er sprach, blieb Gestammel, u. die Festigkeit in seinen Knien war gewichen. So also sah es mit ihm aus. Die Flecken dieser *Schande* hafteten damit auch an meiner Uniform, u. ich war stets bemueht, sie sauberzuhalten. Ich spuerte zum erstenmal, wie unangenehm es sein kann, ohne Schuld doch mitschuldig sein zu muessen.“ (H. Martin, *Weit war der Weg*, 27-32)

1.17.10: Verbrannte Erde:

Die Politik der verbrannte Erde geht auf Jahrhunderte zurueck. Bereits Ludwig XIV liess grosse Teile der Pfalz abbrennen. Im amerikanischen Buergerkrieg wurde sie laufend angewandt. Im Zweiten Weltkrieg wurde sie im Osten beiderseitig durchgefuehrt. Den Generaloberst Dr. Rendulic, dem die umfassende Zerstoerungen in Finnland vorgeworfen wurden, sprach das IMT zu diesem Anklagepunkt frei, mit der Begruendung, dass, wenn nach seiner Auffassung eine militaerische Notwendigkeit bestand, keine strafrechtliche Handlung begangen wurde, selbst wenn es sich von der historischen Perspektive aus erweisen sollte, dass eine solche Notwendigkeit nicht vorlag. Model (9. AOK) wandte mehrmals die Politik der Verbrannten Erde an, waehrend der „Bueffel“-Bewegung nach den Schlachten bei Rshew u. waehrend des Rueckzugs auf die Hagen-Stellung nach „Zitadelle.“ Dass in diesen Faellen mil. Notwendigkeiten bestanden, duerfte kaum bestreitbar sein. Model gehoerte zu den Generalen, die von Seiten der Sowjets als Kriegsverbrecher auf Grund der Verbrannte Erde namentlich bezeichnet wurden. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 255)

Waehrend Rueckzugbewegungen in Osten wurde eine Politik der verbrannten Erde, die die Zerstoerung der aufgegebenen Gebiete vorsah, von allen Verbaenden der Wehrmacht betrieben. Inwieweit dies als verbrecherisch oder al seine durch die Umstaende bedingte Fuehrungsmethode angesehen werden kann, ist ein offener Diskussionspunkt. In den ersten Monaten des Russlandfeldzuges wurde eine solche Politik von Stalin persoendlich angeordnet:

Befehl Nr. **0428** vom **17. Nov. 41** – die Stawka des Obersten Befehlshabers befiehlt:

1. Alle Siedlungspunkte, an denen sich dt. Truppen befinden, sind auf **40** bis **60** Kilometer ab der HKL in die Tiefe zu zerstoeren u. in Brand zu setzen u. auf **20** bis **30** Kilometer nach rechts u. nach links von den Wegen. Zur Vernichtung der Siedlungspunkte im angegebenen Radius ist die Luftwaffe heranzuziehen, sind Artillerie- u. Granatwerferfeuer grossflaechig zu nutzen, ebenso die Kommandos der Aufklaerung, Skilauefer u. Partisanen-Diversionsgruppen, die mit Flaschen mit Brennstoff ausgeruestet sind.

2. In jedem Regiment sind Jagdkommandos zu bilden, die aus **20** bis **30** Personen bestehen – zur Inbrandsetzung u. Sprengung der Siedlungspunkte. Herausragende, mutige Maenner sind fuer kuehne Aktionen bei der Vernichtung von Siedlungspunkte fuer staatliche Auszeichnungen vorzuschlagen.

(Quoted in: Stein, *GFM Model*, 145; also, *Volkogonow*, 617)⁵³¹

⁵³¹ **Note:** For this entire order of Stalin’s, and “revisionist” interpretations see, “Notebook 3: “Sowjet-russland u. die Rote Armee,” Section **3.8.3**.

Der amerikanische Autor Alexander Werth, der den Krieg in der Sowjetunion verbrachte, beschuldigte General Model [Kdr, **9. AOK**], persönlich die Zerstörung von **5 500** Häusern in Wjasma, **1 300** in Gshatsk u. **5 000** in Rshew, sämtliche Kirchen in diesen Städten u. **137** Dörfern im Raum Ssytschewka veranlasst u. die Deportation von **15 000** Bürgern befohlen zu haben. Einen persönlichen Befehl Models erwähnt Werth nicht u. da er keinen Zugang zu sowj. Archiven besass, ist nicht auszuschließen, dass er Behauptungen von russ. Seite einfach uebernahm. Es ist auch moeglich, dass die von ihm erwaehten Zerstörungen in den genannten Bereichen durch die montagelangen Kampfhandlungen verursacht wurden. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 145; also, *Werth, Russia at War*, 631)

Acting IAW the directive of the Communist Party Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of **29.6.41**, as well as w/ Stalin's broadcast address of **3.7.41**, Red Army troops, along with specialy created destruction battalions, whenever there was an opportunity during their retreats, had applied the "tactics of scorched earth" and destroyed "all valuable chattels" on the greatest possible scale w/o regard for the needs of the population. As a result of the Soviet counter-offensive in winter of **1941**, this was the first time that German troops were forced to abandon a vast territory, and there is no reason to doubt that they applied the principle of destruction just as unscrupulously as the Red Army. (*GSSW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 906)

1.17.11: Russlandkrieg = Praeventivkrieg?⁵³²

a. Definition of terms:

a) **Pre-emptive war:** Action to forestall or deflect a threat which is „*imminent and overwhelming*.“ It has a respectable pedigree in international law.

b) **Preventive war:** Action to *prevent a threat from materializing* which does not yet exist. It enjoys less legal favor. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 102)

b. Background & Analysis:

O. Will: "Was 'unseren' Krieg betrifft, finde ich meine Auffassung in der Notiz des Dr. Bogdan Musil [sic] nur wieder bestaetigt. Wie ich Dir in frueheren Briefen u. Anlagen versucht habe deutlich zu machen, war der Einmarsch in Russland **1941 kein Ueberfall Hitlers**. Vielleicht war er weltgeschichtlich zu dumm, oder zu naiv, veilleicht auch falsch beraten, oder sogar bewusst rein gelegt, dass er damit angefangen hat, um ihn damit heute anzuspargern. **Gekommen waere der Krieg, so oder so**, das haben auch viele andere kluge Maenner u. Generaele bereits festgestellt, ebenso wie Herr Musil [sic]. Nur die linke ‚Bagage‘ will das nicht begreifen, oder wahr haben.“ (*Ltr from Schuetze Will to C. Luther*, 25 Jun 08)

R.-D. Mueller: „Tatsache bleibt, dass seit **Jun 40** in Berlin kein Praeventivkrieg gegen eine akute Bedrohung durch die UdSSR geplant wurde, sondern ein verbrecherischer Raub- u. Eroberungskrieg. . . Man wollte den guenstig erscheinenden Zeitpunkt nach dem Frankreich-Feldzug nutzen, um durch die ohnehin beabsichtigte Eroberung der russ. Reichtuemer die *deutsche Weltmacht-*

⁵³² **Note:** For more on this topic see, Sections **5.7 & 5.8** below.

position endguelting absichern u. den „Kampf gegen Kontinente“ fuehren zu koennen. Uebermut, nicht Sorge vor den Risiken praegte die militaerischen Vorbereitungen. . .“ (*Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 90)

M. Messerschmidt: [Barbarossa] was not a case of a preventive strike against the Red Army. Time and again estimates of the enemy’s position and assessments of Stalin’s intentions suggested, both to Hitler and to the military planners, that for the time being there was no danger of an attack by the Red Army. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 5)

P. Carell: The Soviet General Staff, possessing the same secret information [as Stalin] about the German offensive plans, set its mobilization in train and deployed its forces in the hinterland, *not for an attack but, in the summer of 1941, for defense*. . . „Whatever view one inclines to, Stalin quite certainly *did not intend to attack* in the summer of **1941**. The Red Army was in the middle of a complete change-over in equipment and a reorganization, esp. of the armored groups. New tanks and new acft were being supplied to the units. That, most probably, was the reason why Stalin did not want to provoke Hitler into action.“ (*P. Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 64-65)

G. Roberts:⁵³³ “To say that the Soviet Union was preparing to take offensive action against Germany is not to endorse the idea that Stalin was preparing a *preventative war* against Hitler and intended to launch a *pre-emptive strike*. Stalin’s political and diplomatic maneuvers show that he was *desperate for peace in summer 1941*. Had Stalin succeeded in delaying war until **1942** it is possible that he might have decided to take the initiative and strike first, but his *inclination was always to postpone war for as long as possible*. . . His generals, however, were focused not on defence but on their own plans for attack and counterattack. There was, in practical terms, a *mismatch between Stalin’s diplomatic strategy and his generals’ military strategy*. Arguably, this ***dangerous disconnection between political strategy and operational doctrine***, plans and preparations was *the most important factor in the calamity that befell the Red Army on 22 Jun 41*.” (*Stalin’s Wars*, 70)

W. J. Spahr: Anatolii Ivanov-Skuratov argues that Zhukov as chief of the General Staff knew the state of readiness of the Soviet Army. If he was only proposing the launching of a preventive strike on **15 May 41**, then prior to that time there was no such plan. Suvorov’s theories therefore fall apart because they were based on preparations said to be in train long before that date. Ivanov-Skuratov judges that the plan was not adopted by Stalin, otherwise his conduct in the early days of the war would have been very different. One can add that if there was such a plan, Soviet Army artillery would have been w/ its infantry and tank units and not *collected in summer training camps where it was on 22 Jun 41*. ***Contingency planning*** is a normal function of general staffs; in fact, it is surprising that such a plan was not developed until **May 41**, considering conditions existing in eastern Europe in **1941**. . . The historian Aleksandr Nekrich has no doubt that Stalin intended to participate in the European war at an appropriate time but that **1941** was not that time. The military buildup that was under way in the Soviet Union was to reach its fruition in **1942** or **1943**. (*Zhukov*, 48)

Bogdan Musial: „Neue Forschungen belegen: Nicht nur Hitler plante einen Angriffskrieg auf die Sowjetunion, auch Stalin u. seine Genossen ruesteten frueh auf zum Kampf gegen den Westen. . .

⁵³³ **Note**: In a footnote here (#39, p 387), Roberts notes that this section of his book „owes a great deal“ to ideas of J. Erickson, C.A. Roberts, E. Mawdsley and Gorodetsky. Also, other than a tantalizing reference – i.e., “had Stalin succeeded in delaying the war until **1942** it is possible that he might have decided to take the initiative and strike first. . .“ – he sees Stalin’s intentions vis-a-vis Germany as purely defensive in nature. This perspective is in line w/ views of Erickson, C.A. Roberts, etc.

Die neuesten Aktenfunde in den Moskauer Archiven belegen naemlich, dass die Sowjetunion ab Ende der **1920er** Jahre, besonders intensiv nach dem sogenannten Schwarzen Freitag (Beginn der Weltwirtschaftskrise, **25 Okt 29**), zum ideologisch bedingten Vernichtungskrieg gegen den Westen massiv aufruestete. Stalin u. seine Genossen gingen davon aus, dass die Krise bald in einen ‚imperialistischen Krieg‘ muenden wuerde, der wiederum die Voraussetzungen fuer den revolutionaeren Angriffskrieg schaffen wuerde. . .“ (Note: For remainder of fascinating Musial article (3.15.08), see my, **Notebook 4**, „Bibliography“, **Sect. 4.3.12**)

Bogdan Musial: Diese Ueberlegungen [i.e., desire to become economically self-sufficient via takeover of Russian resources], die mit Sicherheit bei der Entscheidung Hitlers fuer den Angriff auf die Sowjetunion eine wichtige Rolle gespielt hatten, stehen jedoch in keinem Zusammenhang mit dem angeblichen Praeventivschlag. Der dt. Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion, darueber gibt es keinen Zweifel, war von langer Hand vorbereitet u. in erster Linie doch ideologisch bedingt. Die mil.-wirtschaftlichen u. strategischen Gesichtspunkte erleichterten Hitler die Entscheidung fuer den Angriff u. dienten zugleich als Vorwand. Denn Adolf Hitler war zeitlebens davon besessen, dass Geschichte den Kampf um “Lebensraum” nach den Regeln des “rassischen Determinismus” bedeutete. . .

Nach der Machtergreifung im Jahre **1933** erhob Hitler die Lebensraum-Idee zur Staatsideologie des neuen Deutschland. Am **3. Feb 33** erklarte Hitler den dt. Generaelen den Zweck der neu aufzubauenden Wehrmacht wie folgt: “Eroberung neuen Lebensraum im Osten u. dessen ruecksichtslose Germanisierung. . .” Es beseht keinen Zweifel, dass der dt. Ueberfall auf die UdSSR ideologisch bedingt war u. unabhaengig von den sowj. Vorbereitungen zum Angriffskrieg erfolgte. Die Behauptungen von der sowj. Bedrohung Deutschlands, die zwar real war, von der Hitler aber in Wirklichkeit keine Kenntnis hatte, dienten nur als Vorwand vor seinen Generaelen u. Verbuedeten, um den Ueberfall zu rechtfertigen. (*Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 461-62)

B. Musial: „Unbestreitbar ist, dass im Fruehjahr **1941** Stalin dabei war, entlang der dt.-sowj. Grenze die groesste Invasionsarmee aller Zeiten aufzubauen, um im geeigneten Moment seinen dt. Verbuedeten zu ueberfallen. Diese Absicht resultierte nicht aus der Furcht, Deutschland wuerde die Sowjetunion bald angreifen, sondern aus der kommunistischen Ideologie der Weltrevolution. Das Ziel war, Mittel- u. Westeuropa, ja ganz Europa zu sowjetisieren, die naechste u. entscheidende Etappe der Weltrevolution zu realisieren. Den ein Sieg ueber Deutschland waere damals der Herrschaft ueber ganz Europa gleichgekommen. Der dt. Angriff vom **22. Jun 41** ueberraschte diese Invasionsarmee inmitten ihrer Vorbereitungen. Die sowj. Vorbereitungen zum Angriffskrieg sind trotz allem kein Beweis fuer die sogenannte Praeventivkriegsthese, wonach Hitler die Sowjetunion ueberfallen habe, um dem sowj. Angriff, der unmittelbar bevorgestanden haette, zuvorzukommen.“ (*Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 456)

Hitlers Feldzug gegen die Sowjetunion war kein Praeventivkrieg, wie von Goebbels verbreitet u. noch heute zu hoeren. Es war ein „Aggressionskrieg par excellence.“ Doch war ist auch, dass die Sowjetfuehrung unter Stalin seit den **20er** Jahren, verschaerft in den **30er** Jahren, ein gigantisches Aufruestungsprogramm verfolgte, um einen Angriffskrieg gegen Westeuropa zu fuehren. . . Was in jenen dramatischen Jahren hinter den Mauern des Kreml vor sich ging, ist immer noch weitgehend unerforscht. Bogdan Musial zaehlt zu den wenigen westl. Historikern, die breiten Zugang zu den Moskauer Archiven haben. Als erster hat er systematisch die einschlaegigen Protokolle u. Sonderakten der sowj. Fuehrung, vor allem des Politbueros u. des

streng geheimen Verteidigungskomitees, ausgewertet.⁵³⁴ Lueckenlos kann er die klaren Angriffsabsichten der Partei- u. Militaerfuehrung nachweisen. Erstmals lassen sich auch die brutalen Industrialisierungskampagnen u. der stalinistische Terror der **30er** Jahre, die Millionen Opfer kosteten, in direkten Zusammenhang mit diesen Kriegsplaenen stellen. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland, Front Book Jacket*)

B. Musial: Entscheidend in der ganzen Debatte [ueber die Praeventivkriegsthese] ist jedoch der Umstand, dass die dt. Seite keinerlei Kenntnis vom Stand der sowj. Streitkraefte, geschweige denn ueber den Stand der auf Hochtouren laufenden Vorbereitungen zum Angriffskrieg hatte. Somit bestand aus dt. Sicht kein unmittelbarer Anlass zum Praeventivkrieg. . . Hitler u. seine Generaale hatten weder eine Vorstellung ueber das tatsaechliche Kriegspotential der Sowjetunion, noch wussten sie, dass die sowj. Vorbereitungen zum Angriffskrieg seit Jahren auf Hochtouren liefen. Sie waren nicht „im Bilde“ u. unterschaezten ihren Gegner „gaenzlich,“ wie es Goebbels formulierte. (*Kampfplatz Deutschland, 457-59*)

E. Mawdsley: Hitler’s Russian adventure was not a preventive war, although Hitler also claimed this in his **1945 Testament (15.2.45)**: “There was a second compelling reason, which would have been enough on its own: that from the very existence of Bolshevism there was a threatening danger. From this side one day must inevitably come an attack.” Three years before, early on morning of **22 Jun 41**, the noted handed to Foreign Commissar Molotov by Germany’s ambassador had given the same grounds: German action was justified by the “steadily growing concentration of all available Russian forces on a long front from the Baltic to the Black Sea.” This note charged that “[r]eports received in the last few days eliminated the last remaining doubts as to the aggressive character of this Russian concentration. . .” Later that day, in a radio msg to the German Volk, Hitler spoke of a build-up of **160** Russian divisions on “our border” and described the Axis task as the “defense of the European continent.” The accusations continued right thru the war. Goebbels, in one of his “Total War” speeches after Stalingrad [speech was given on **18.2.43**], would declare that for Germany in **Jun 41**, “It was two minutes before twelve!”

The Nazi arguments were repeated by the Russian emige writer Rezun-Suvorov in the late **1980s**, and incorporated into the arguments of German right-wing writers. This extreme “revisionist” historical argument has two distinct sides to it: 1) the USSR was planning offensive ops against Germany; 2) the German attack was therefore preemptive and, at its heart, defensive. A discussion of the first part requires a closer look at Soviet military and political preparations; the second part, however, can be readily dismissed right here. Germany did not invade Russia because its leaders knew about, or feared, an imminent Soviet onslaught. Goebbels summed up the perception of top Nazi leaders in a diary entry of early **May 1941**: “Stalin and his people remain completely inactive. Like a rabbit confronted by a snake.” (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 7-8*)

⁵³⁴ New sources used by Musial include: An erster Stelle sind die geheimen Protokolle des Politbueros zu nennen. Ein sehr wichtiger Quellenbestand zum Thema sind Unterlagen der einzelnen sowj. Anfuhrer, in erster Linie Stalin. Hinzu kommen Bestaende von Molotow, Andrej Schdanow, Georgi Malenkow, Leo Trotzki, Kliment Woroschilow, usw. Bedeutsam sind auch Unterlagen von verschiedenen sowj. Institutionen wie dem Revolutionaeren Kriegsrat, dem Politbuero, dem Zentralkomitee. Eine herausragende Bedeutung fuer seine Darstellung hat der Bestand des Komitees fuer Verteidigung. Das Komitee fuer Verteidigung befasste sich ausschliesslich mit Kriegsvorbereitungen. Fuer das Thema von grosser Bedeutung sind darueber hinaus russischsprachige Quellenpublikationen, die in den letzten Jahren zahlreich erschienen sind – wie z.B. die zwei grossen mehrbaendigen Quelleneditionen zur sowj. Dorfpolitik, die sechsbaendige Dokumentensammlung zur Geschichte des Gulag, die Dokumentedition des Hauptkriegsrates der Roten Armee.

Re: *Suworow*: Die Kontroverse ueber die Praeventivkriegsthese wuerde Ende der **1980er** Jahre durch das Buch Eisbrecher von Viktor Suworow (Wladimir Resun) ausgeloeset. Suworow hatte keinen Zugang zu den einschlaegigen Archiven u. hat ihn bis heute nicht. Als ehemaliger Offizier der Roten Armee u. der sowj. Militaeraufklaerung hatte er jedoch das kommunistische System von innen kenngelernt. . . Suworow stuetzte seine Aussagen auf veroeffentlichte Memoiren, Zeitungsberichte, Heeresinformationen u. andere gedruckte Quellen. Waehrend seine Interpretation der Ziele u. Absichten Stalins durch heute zugaengliche Archivalien weitgehend bestaetigt wird, ist seine These von dem im Sommer **1941** bevorstehende sowj. Angriff auf Deutschland nicht zu halten. (*Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 12)

J. Foerster: In **1929** the Soviet Union had launched an immense rearmament process which inevitably developed its own dynamic. The Soviet planned economy was transformed into an armaments economy in which all the important economic measures were placed either directly or indirectly at the service of rearmament. By **1941** the Soviet fighting forces had acquired a multiple superiority over the German army in the east in tanks, ordnance, and acft. . . From the spring of **1941** its formations moved closer to the border, creating “operational configurations” in the areas around Bialystok and Lvov. Nevertheless, the Soviet armed forces were not ready for war. Moscow did not nurse any offensive designs in 1941, and made every effort to avoid giving Berlin a reason to attack, though Stalin did not rule out the possibility of war w/ Germany in 1942. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 1250-51)

D. Glantz, re: “myth of Stalin’s preventive war.” On **15 May 41**, General G.K. Zhukov, then Chief of Red Army General Staff, sent Stalin a proposal for a preventive offensive against German forces concentrating in Eastern Poland. Although Defense Commissar S.K. Timoshekno initialed the proposal, there is no evidence either that Stalin saw it or acted upon it. The proposal and other fragmentary evidence provides the basis for recent claims that Stalin indeed intended to conduct a preventative war against Germany beginning in **July 1941** and that Hitler’s Operation *Barbarossa* preempted Stalin’s intended actions.⁵³⁵ Current evident refutes that assertion. As subsequent events and archival evidence proves, the Red Army was in no condition to wage war in the summer of **1941** either offensively or, as the actual course of combat indicated, defensively.⁵³⁶ (*Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 19)

H. Magenheimer: Legt man einen eng gefassten Begriff des „Praeventivkrieges“ zugrunde, wonach die bedrohte Seite konkrete Kenntnisse von den gegnerischen Angriffsvorbereitungen haben muss u. aufgrund dieser Kenntnisse den Entschluss zum Erstschlag fasst, dann kann man den deutschen Angriff vom **22 Jun 41** nicht als Praeventivschlag bezeichnen. . . Der Entschluss zum Angriff auf die Sowjetunion wurde deutscherseits nicht als Antwort auf eine befuerchtete, bevorstehende Offensive gefasst.

Legt man einen etwas weiter gefassten Begriff des „Praeventivkrieges“ zugrunde, ergibt sich eine andere Beurteilung; denn bedenkt man, dass der Entschluss zum Angriff aus einer Lagebeurteilung entsprungen ist, die seit **Jun/Jul 40** der sowj. Expansion im Baltikum, in Bessarabien u. in der Bukowina entgegenwirken wollte u. die nicht zuletzt als Antwort auf die

⁵³⁵ **Note:** By focusing on **Jul 41** as intended date for Soviet attack, I feel Glantz defines the problem much too narrowly. Clearly, Stalin was not ready at that time, but as Musial and others point out, he may very well have been planning to attack at a later date.

⁵³⁶ **Note:** Glantz does go on to say that Stalin’s program to “reform, reorganize, and reequip the Red Army“ would have been “fully completed by the summer of **1942**.” (19)

von Molotov im **Nov 40** gestellten Forderungen zu verstehen ist, so kann man der deutschen Offensive *sehr wohl eine **praeventive Funktion** zusprechen*. . .

Die sowj. Kriegsvorbereitungen hatten . . . eindeutig offensive Zuege, die auch dem deutschen Generalstab in den letzten Wochen u. Tagen vor dem **22 Jun 41** immer klarer vor Augen traten. . . Man steht vor der Tatsache, dass die *Wehrmacht in einen uebermaechtigen gegnerischen Aufmarsch hineinstiess*, der allerdings noch nicht beendet war. Die Wehrmachtfuehrung plante zwar *keinen **klassischen Praeventivkrieg**, fuehrte aber einen **de facto***.

Um welche Zeitspanne die Wehrmacht der Roten Armee im Aufmarsch u. im Angriff zuvorgekommen ist,⁵³⁷ bleibt ungeklaert, da man ueber den voraussichtlichen Abschluss der sowj. Kriegsvorbereitungen nur Schaetzungen anstellen kann. . . [Es erscheint aber vertretbar], von einer Beendigung der Vorbereitungen zwischen dem **15. u. 20. Jul 41** auszugehen. Massgeblich bleibt jedoch der Wille der Fuehrung, am Offensivaufmarsch im geplanten Ausmass festzuhalten. Jedenfalls sollte man nicht von einem deutschen Praeventivkrieg, sondern besser von einem „**Krieg zweier Angreifer**“ sprechen. (*Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 32-34)

Joachim Hoffmann: After a thorough examination of nature of Soviet deployments along the frontier, suspension of all work on strengthening fortifications along the old state frontier (and slow progress being made in building fortifications along the new state frontier), etc., he wonders if such “measures and omissions” might be interpreted as the “start of Soviet offensive planning.” Writes Hoffmann:

If in even Zhukov’s judgement the disposition of troops in the exposed frontier sectors of the western and south-western front was “mistaken” for defense, then this can only mean that there was a different motive behind it. This conclusion is too inescapable to be simply dismissed by the suggestion that the Soviet deployment was no more than a mistaken decision “dating from **1940** and not corrected by the time the war began.” Such a formulation actually reveals that the Soviet Union’s military preparations cannot be interpreted as a reaction to the German deployment, which in **1940** had not even begun, but as a reflection of its own ambitions. Seen thus they are in line w/ certain indications that the Soviet Union, in connection w/ its plans in the Balkans between the German campaign in the west and the Balkan campaign, may, “perhaps in the winter of **1940-1**,” have briefly considered entering the war.

Hoffmann goes on to quote contemporary Soviet sources, mainly Lt-Gen Vlasov, who during his interrogation in **Aug 42** stated that offensive intentions by Stalin had “undoubtedly existed” in **1941**. “The troop concentrations in the Lvov district suggested that a strike against Romania, towards the oilfields, was planned. The formations assembled in the Minsk area were intended to contain the inevitable German counter-thrust.” On the same occasion, the captured cdr of Soviet **41 RD**, and future deputy chief of staff of the Russian Liberation Army, Col Boyarsky, likewise observed that “the Kremlin. . . would have struck no later than in the spring of **1942**.” The Red Army would then have moved in a “south-westerly direction,” i.e., against Romania. Hoffmann: Against the background of such evidence it is necessary to state once more than, if in **1940-1** the Soviet leadership did for a while have “offensive intentions,” it certainly abandoned these again, while at the same time, as the troops dispositions along the western frontier unambiguously reveal, keeping its options open “for all eventualities.” The unfinished state of military prepara-

⁵³⁷ **Note:** Magenheimer’s assumption appears to be that Soviet Union was planning to attack Germany, perhaps as early as **Jul 41**. Hence, his analysis not far from Suvorov’s.

tions in **1941** was alone compelling reason for Stalin to dismiss for the time being any idea of warlike adventures. . .

All these discussions relate to **22.6.41** and have no bearing, naturally, on the Red Army's readiness for war at a later date, nor on the subsequent intentions of the Soviet leadership. Given that the military and political situation of the Soviet Union did not allow her to enter the war in **1941**, was it not conceivable that, following the consolidation of its war-machine and given a favorable development of the overall situation, i.e., in the event of a decisive weakening or pinning-down of Germany, the Soviet government might have been prepared to intervene militarily, just as it did in **1945** in the war against Japan? Possible reflections along those lines are suggested by Stalin's well-known speech to the graduates of Soviet military academies on **5 May 41**. . . In discussing this event he notes the account of it by Alexander Werth. According to Werth, Stalin explained that it was necessary to delay war against Germany until the autumn, because by then it would be too late for a German attack. War w/ Germany, however, would "almost inevitably" take place in **1942**, and indeed under much more favorable conditions, because the Red Army would then be better trained and equipped. . . Notes Hoffmann: The conviction that there would "almost inevitably" be a German-Soviet war in **1942** and that the Soviet Union would then have to take the initiative appears, according to Werth, to have been widespread in the Red Army. (See, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 85-91)

Ian Kershaw: "Though two of the top-ranking Soviet generals, Marshal Semyon *Timoshenko* and General Georgi *Zhukov*, had put forward a plan on **15 May 41** for a *pre-emptive strike* against Germany, Stalin had dismissed such a notion out of hand, fearing it would provoke an attack he wanted to avoid. There were *no plans to invade Germany*. A preventive war against an imminent Soviet invasion of the Reich was a *Nazi propaganda legend*." Kershaw also notes that the war in the east was presented to the German public as a preventive war. At any moment, the Bolsheviks had been planning to strike against the Reich and to overrun and destroy Europe; only the Fuehrer's bold action had prevented this.

More extraordinary than this *propaganda lie* is "the fact that Hitler and Gobbels had *convinced themselves of its truth*." As Goebbels noted in his diary on **9.7.41**: "The Fuehrer is blazing about the Bolshevik leadership clique which intended to invade Germany, and thus Europe, and at the last moment, w/ the Reich weakened, to carry out the attempt to bolshevize the continent that had been planned since 1917." "The preventive war is always still the surest and mildest, if there is certainty that the enemy will in any case attack at the first best opportunity; and that was the case w/ Bolshevism." "Without doubt the Kremlin wanted this autumn, when we had no further possibility of aggressive action against Russia on account of the weather, to *occupy Romania*. Through this the Kremlin would have cut off our petroleum supply."

Hitler told his entourage on **17.-18.9.41**: "It needed the greatest strength to take the decision last year for the attack on Bolshevism. I had to reckon that Stalin would go over to the attack in the course of this year. It was necessary to move as soon as at all possible. The earliest date was June 1941." (*Hitler*, 394, 399; 942-44, f.n.4)

E. Ziemke: Ziemke's account of Soviet strategic/operational planning is based on Soviet official histories, memoirs of Vasilevskiy, Zhukov, etc. His account depicts Soviet plans as being defensive in nature, but in some cases calling for counterblows into German-held territory. He does not address the **15 May 41** "preventive war" plan, nor the issue of Soviet preventive war intentions at all, except for following statement: "The initial three-echelon deployment [in the so-called "special plan for the defense of the state frontier" completed early in **1941**] conformed to the best Soviet offensive doctrine of the time so much so, in fact, that it has been cited

occasionally as evidence of a Soviet intention to attack Germany.” Ziemke’s opinion seems to be that Stalin knew he was not ready for war and was desperately playing for time. As he writes: “For Stalin, time had become a most precious strategic resource.” (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 15-22)

B.H. Liddell Hart: In his 1948 book, Hart interviewed former German generals – such as v. Rundstedt, v. Kleist – who insisted that Hitler argued [to them] that his planned attack on Russia was a *preventive* measure – that Germany had to strike before Russia became too strong, and that she was much nearer to attacking Germany than was imagined. (*German Generals Talk*, 143-45)

D. Irving: “Finding a suitable incident was traditionally the difficulty of launching a *premeditated preventive war*, which is what Hitler’s eastern crusade had now become. Neither Hitler nor his military advisors were any longer in doubt as to Stalin’s long-term intentions.” Halder was to state that if the Russian deployments were shown to an impartial military expert he would have to concede that they were offensive in design. Throughout **Mar 41**, Russian troop movements close to the frontier had been *so intense*, w/ a heavy flow of reinforcements from Moscow toward Smolensk and Minsk, that eventually Halder felt anxiety about the threat of a Russian preventive action. The danger would be acute at least until **20.4.41**, for until then the Russians would have great superiority in strength. “The disposition of Russian forces gives food for thought,” Halder wrote on **7.4.41**. (*Hitler’s War*, 235-36; *Halder KTB*)

D. Irving: Stalin’s pact with Belgrade, coupled w/ a communiqué of **24.3.41** [Russia had reaffirmed her nonaggression pact w/ Turkey to encourage her to adopt a more aggressive role against Germany in the Balkans] provided further justification for “*Barbarossa*.” At the end of it all he was to say: “I didn’t take the decision to attack Moscow lightly, but because I knew from certain information that an alliance was being prepared between Britain and Russia. The big question was, Should we strike out first or wait until we were overwhelmed some time in the future?” According to his army adjutant, Hitler’s decision was reinforced by Intelligence reports on feverish airfield and arms dump construction by the Russians throughout the spring; there were also reports from Polish agents of Russian troop movements from as far away as the Far East, and of the creation and deployment of new armies for what could only be offensive purposes. The Russians were also instructing their commissars, for ex., in Leningrad, to get ready for a long and grueling war w/ Germany. (*Hitler’s War*, 236)

E. Bauer: “Von Beginn des Konfliktes an hat die Propaganda des Dr. Goebbels versucht, diese letzte Aggression des Dritten Reiches als einen *Praeventivkrieg* hinzustellen, der es allein ermoglicht haette, den finsternen Plaenen zuvorzukommen, die *Josef Stalin* nicht aufgehoeht haette, gegen Deutschland unter dem Deckmantel einer trueegerischen Freundschaft zu schmieden. Auf diesem Gebiet gelingt es den Argumenten des *Weissbuches*, das nach dem Bruch von der *Wilhelmstrasse* herausgegeben wurde, nicht, uns zu ueberzeugen...In Wirklichkeit hatte Josef Stalin...nicht die geringste illoyale Absicht gegenueber seinem Partner des Moskauer Abkommens gehegt...” (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 111)

The events of summer **1940** are the first big argument against the theory, initially propounded in **1985**, that having let Hitler start the Second World War, Stalin planned to attack Germany in 1941. The hypothesis, which caused *furious debate* and is *widely scorned*, was first put forward by a former major in the Soviet Main Intelligence Directorate – **GRU** – writing under the pseudonym *Viktor Suvorov*. His real name is *Rezun*. „Suvorov“ defected to the West in the late **1970s**. Under his prestigious pseudonym – and under sentence of death in the Soviet Union – he argued that Stalin had a *long-term, grand strategic plan to spread communism around the world*.

Suvorov claimed that Stalin had used Hitler as his „*icebreaker*,“ to weaken the western democracies before Stalin himself overran Europe, starting w/ Germany.

Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union could thus be seen as a *preventive* – or even *pre-emptive* – war, eventually launched on **22.6.41**, prior to a Soviet attack scheduled, so Suvorov, for **6.7.41**... According to Suvorov, Stalin engineered the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to provoke conflict between the western powers, enabling Hitler to start the European war which became World War II. Then he would exploit the mutual destruction of competing powers, and overrun Europe. If one accepts that Hitler launched his 1941 attack to preempt Stalin and save western civilization, that *shifts the blame* for starting WWII, as well as the war on the eastern front, from Hitler to Stalin.

Suvorov's thesis was first put forward in the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute* in **Jun 85**, and rebutted by Prof. **Gabriel Gorodetsky** (Tel Aviv University) in the same journal the next year. In **1990**, *Icebreaker* appeared in Britain, where its reception was *lukewarm*; and in **1992** in Russia, where it „burst like a bombshell.“ His thesis, not surprisingly, attracted a *number of supporters in German* [i.e., Hoffmann from MGFA; also H. Magenheimer]. In the West and in Russia, however, some serious historians *slated* Suvorov: *Gorodetsky* followed his rebuttal in *RUSI* w/ his excellent book *Grand Delusion* (**1999**). **John Erickson** was damning: „the Suvorov fantasies and fictions do not bear comparison w/ a horrendous reality.“ Moreover, as *Erickson* pointed out, „Generous spirits might accord a degree of credibility to Suvorov's interpretation of Stalin's strategic design *before Jun 40*, but the fall of France wrought havoc w/ the Soviet leader's plans and equally demolishes Suvorov's theory of his intent. „*The Germans will now turn on us. They will eat us alive,*“ was Stalin's frantic comment.“ (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 102-03)

C. Bellamy: „The present author [i.e., Bellamy] knows Rezun, alias Suvorov, and for six years before completing his book has regularly invited him to address students to explain and defend his thesis. The *thesis is skillful and persuasive* . . . But all Suvorov's *evidence* appears *circumstantial*.“ (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 103-04)

Crux: Until documentary proof of *intent* is found [i.e., that Stalin was preparing to attack Hitler in 1941] the *jury is still out*. Some – *Suvorov, Magenheimer, Hoffmann* – convinced Stalin was planning to attack Germany. Others, like *Gorodetsky* and the late *John Erickson*, have dismissed such ideas. They point out that there is not only *no documentary proof* of offensive plans on the Soviet side – until the very last plan for a limited pre-emptive strike on 15 May – but also no consistent evidence of German knowledge of such plans. As late as **Jun 41**, Erickson points out, *Halder* described Soviet deployments as „*rein defensiv*,“ and dismissed the idea of any major Red Army offensive as „nonsense.“ **The author believes that Stalin was getting ready to attack Germany at some point**, but inclines to the *more traditional view* that **1942** would have been the preferred option. Not until then would the physical component of Soviet military power – new tanks, guns, multiple rocket launchers, acft, etc. – be ready . . . (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 115-16)

Note: For an interpretation of Operation *Barbarossa* as a *preventive measure* against a Red Army „ready to pounce,“ we so far lack not only the objective facts on the Soviet side, but also the *indispensable prerequisite on the German side*: a sense of Germany being directly threatened by the Red Army as a factor in the German leadership's decision to attack the Soviet Union. While Stalin's policy was to *appease Berlin at all costs*, Hitler's main worry was that the Soviet dictator might wreck his aggressive and murderous concept at the last moment by some gesture of concession...In his speech to high-ranking officers at Reich chancellery on **30.3.41**, Hitler gave

various *grand strategic reasons* for attacking Russia. *At no point did he say that Germany's attack was required to prevent an attack by the Red Army.* (Foerster & Mawdsley, *Hitler & Stalin*, 65, 103)⁵³⁸

Preventive War: There are a range of interpretations about what Stalin and the USSR intended, a range much broader than that for Hitler. For many years the *historical consensus* was that in this period (i.e., **Aug 39 – Jun 41**) Stalin's Russia was a *passive force*, perhaps making gains at the expense of his smaller neighbors but w/ no immediate grand ambitions. Then in the **1980s** and **1990s** there emerged *new interpretations*. Initially poorly grounded, they suggested that Stalin's intentions both in 1939 and in 1940/41 were *much more sinister* and on a par w/ those of Hitler. The most notable of the revisions was the *emigre* Russian writer, **V.B. Rezun-Suvorov**. They portrayed Stalin as an *ambitious revolutionary* who hoped to use a European war to further the cause of Communism, and who in **1941** had decided as a final stage of this process to attack Germany. After the collapse of Soviet rule a new generation of Russian historians used their access to the archives to unearth material which suggested that *ideology and an offensive policy were taken seriously by Stalin*. Such an interpretation was vigorously condemned by *neo-traditionalists* both in the West and in Russia. The most effective of these was **Gabriel Gorodetsky**, whose Stalin was a *cautious and rational statesman* w/ the „delusion“ that he could negotiate w/ Hitler. **David Glantz** produced a detailed rejection of the military argument of *Rezun-Suvorov*, agreeing w/ Gorodetsky that the Red Army was *too weak to undertake offensive ops*, and that Stalin was well aware of this. (see, *Foerster & Mawdsley, Hitler & Stalin*, 78-79)

J. Foerster: Da Stalin keine Angriffs-, sondern *Defensivabsichten* unterstellt wurden, waren Hitler u. die mil. Fuehrung auch nicht durch die Kriegsfahigkeit der Roten Armee beunruhigt. Deren Massierung in den vorgeschobenen Raemen um *Lemberg* u. *Bialystok* kam ihnen ganz gelegen. Hitlers groessere Sorge war vielmehr, Stalin koenne ihm durch eine politische Geste des Entgegenkommens sein kriegesisches Konzept verderben. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 172)

C. Winchester: „In the summer of **1940** Stalin asked his surviving senior cdrs to *draft a plan for a Soviet attack on Germany* [...] ... The fortifications Stalin had constructed along the **1939** border between the USSR and German-occupied Poland were to be the *springboard* for his *great invasion of the west* ... In the late **1980s**, „Viktor **Suvorov**“ claimed that the Red Army had deployed forward because it was poised to invade Germany. This was dismissed by the *bien pensants*, but rumors persisted and more recent (and more credible) historians have *concluded he was on to something*, even if he exaggerated the likely timetable Stalin was working to.“ (See, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 39, 43-44)⁵³⁹

Der dt. Angriff auf die *Sowjetunion*, der am 22.6.41 ohne vorherige Kriegserklaerung begann, war ein in jeder Hinsicht *voelkerrechtswidriger Ueberfall*; er war ganz gewiss *kein Praeventivkrieg*. Hitlers Entschluss, die Sowjetunion anzugreifen, entsprang *ausweislich* aller

⁵³⁸ **Note:** On **31.1.41**, a general staff officer in the army's high command recorded Hitler's opinion in his diary: „As long as Stalin lives, the Russians will not attack, for Stalin is *cautious and reasonable*.“ BA-MA N 664/2 (Capt Karl Wilhelm Thilo). Authors of article also noted that „no aggressive *intentions* were attributed to Stalin,“ and that a „large-scale offensive by the Red Army was considered as ‚most improbable.‘“ (69)

⁵³⁹ **Note:** Author also opines that Kirponos' Southwestern Front had been “intended to lead the offensive against Germany,” and that “it was only a month since General Kirponos had been in Stalin's office, discussing plans for a *pre-emptive strike* into German-held Poland.” (49-50)

erhalten gebliebenen Unterlagen u. Dokumente nicht etwa einer tiefen Sorge vor einem drohenden sowjetischen Angriff, *sondern war Ausdruck reinster Eroberungspolitik*...Es kann dahinstehen, ob—wofuer durchaus einige Anhaltspunkte sprechen—die sowjet. Fuehrung ihrerseits sich bereits zu dieser Zeit mit Plaenen fuer einen Ueberfall auf das Deutsch Reich trug... (*Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 3; f.n. 8*)

G. Gorodetsky: “Postscript: Preventive War? The suggestion is occasionally made that the Soviet mobilization in **Mar 41** prompted the implementation of Operation “Barbarossa.” We have seen the complex circum-stances in which the decisions were taken [i.e., the Russo-German competition in Balkans, etc.]. It should be borne in mind that the planning for “Barbarossa” was from its beginning an offensive initiated by the Wehrmacht that *completely overlooked the magnitude of the undertaking and arrogantly underestimated the capabilities of the opponent*. In comparison w/ previous campaigns, Hitler assured Keitel, the war w/ Russia would be “like child’s play in a sand-box.” Consequently, Hitler and the German military *a priori* ruled out the possibility of a Russian pre-emptive strike. Gen.-Maj. Erich Marcks, who was entrusted w/ the drafting of the earlier version of the plan, even complained that the Red Army would not do the Germans “the courtesy of attacking.”

The presentation of the war as a preventive measure was first adopted by Hitler in his statement to Stalin on the launching of the war as well in his address to the army on that same day. He repeated it in **Oct 41**, when he inaugurated an appeal for winter clothing for the soldiers of the Russian front, explaining apologetically that in **May 41** “the situation was so threatening that there could no longer be any doubt that Russia intended to fall upon us at the first opportunity.” . . . Hitler repeated in **May 42** that if he “had listened to his badly informed generals and waited, and the Russians, in accordance w/ these plans of theirs, had stolen a march on us, there would have been hardly a chance of stopping their tanks on the well-constructed road system of Central Europe.”

The presentation of the war as a preventive one was naturally rehabilitated by some of the German generals at the Nuremberg trials. In the appropriate atmosphere of the budding Cold War, they sought to justify their own enthusiastic preparations for “Barbarossa” by claiming that they had supported Hitler’s decision to launch a pre-emptive war intended to contain Soviet expansion. However, German intelligence never pointed in this direction. General von Paulus, who would have been only too happy to produce such evidence at Nuremberg, reluctantly admitted that “no preparations whatever for an attack by the Soviet Union had come to our attention.” Guderian’s memoirs pass a similar verdict. . . Nor was German intelligence misled by the clandestine mobilization which it was scrutinizing. It expected the Russians to establish “defensive concentration points,” from which they could be expected at best to launch isolated and limited counter-attacks. . . The idea of a preventive war as a positive element in military doctrine was deeply embedded in the German rather than the Soviet military tradition. (See, *Grand Delusion*, 86-88)⁵⁴⁰

⁵⁴⁰ **Note:** Gorodetsky also addresses the Soviet demobilization plan of **9 May 40**, which he avers is of the “utmost historical significance.” All in all, **686,329** soldiers out of a total of **3,200,000** were to be immediately discharged: “This demonstrates that no master plan for exploiting the attrition of the belligerents for military expansion had existed in the earlier stages of the war.” The war in France abruptly changed Soviet perceptions and produced a major shift in policy. The measures taken by Stalin from mid-**May 40** onwards were triggered by the realization of the growing German menace. . . In his memoirs, Khrushchev vividly depicts the panic that seized Stalin when the news of the occupation of Paris reached the Kremlin; Stalin, he recalled, “let fly w/ some choice Russian curses and said that now Hitler was *sure to beat our brains in*.” (118-19)

Heinz Magenheimer:

Following gleaned from his article: „*Krieg zweier Angreifer. Der Angriff der Wehrmacht auf die Sowjetunion am 22. Juni 1941 war weder Ueberfall noch Praeventivkrieg,*“ in: *Junge Freiheit*, 20 Jun 08.

„Seit dem Erscheinen der beiden *brisanten* Buecher von Viktor Suworow naemlich „Der Eisbrecher“ (1989) u. „Der Tag M“ (1994), hat die bisherige Grundthese der Zeithistoriker viel an Glaubwuerdigkeit eingebuesst. Diese Hauptthese, die u.a. von Andreas Hillgruber u. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, aber auch von John Erickson u. David Glantz vertreten wurde, besagte, dass sich Hitler vorwiegend von machtpolitischen u. rassenideologischen Motiven zum Angriff auf die Sowjetunion 1941 leiten liess.

Er wollte demnach den „bolschewistischen Weltfeind“ im Zuge eines Vernichtungskrieges ausloeschen, das Land ausbeuten u. die Masse der Bevoelkerung zu Zwangsarbeiten machen. Viele Autoren raechen zwar die umfangreichen Kriegsvorbereitungen der Sowjetunion ein, doch deuten sie diese rein defensiv als Antwort auf den dt. Aufmarsch. . .

Doch Anfang der **1990er** Jahre meldeten sich zahlreiche russ. Autoren u. Historiker zu Wort, darunter:

Michael Meltjuchow
Waleri Danilow
Juri Afanassiew
Pawel Bobylew
Wladimir Neweschin,

die Stalins Kriegswillen u. zahlreiche Einzelheiten der mil. u. pol. Kriegsvorbereitungen ans Tageslicht foerderten. Demnach habe Stalin in Einvernehmen mit Marschall Timoschenko u. Armeegeneral Schukow, dem Generalstabchef, einen gewaltigen Offensivaufmarsch durchfuehren lassen, wobei allerdings die Ansichten ueber den Zeitpunkt der vollen Kampfbereitschaft geteilt sind. Nun treten auch bei diesen russ. Autoren Unterschiede in der Interpretation auf: Waehrend die einen die These verbreiten, Stalin, Timoschenko u. Schukow haetten einen Praeventivschlag vorbereitet, um den Deutschen zuvorzukommen, orten die anderen eine prinzipielle Angriffsabsicht bereits seit den **1930er** Jahren; diese habe schliesslich **1940/41** in die Vorbereitung eines Angriffskrieges gemuendet. . .

Unter Auswertung der *zahlreichen neuen Erkenntnisse* ueber die sowj. Ruestung, Gliederung, Bewaffnung u. den Aufmarsch der Roten Armee aus russ. Quellen entstand im Westen eine publizistische Gegenstroemung zur bisherigen Hauptthese. Zu den Historikern, die diesen Forschungsweg beschrritten u. deshalb in der etablierten Historikergilde sehr umstritten sind, ja sogar als „anruechtig“ [*disreputable*] gelten, zaehlen:

Werner Maser
Stefan Scheil
Joachim Hoffman [MGFA]
Walter Post
Ernst Topitsch,

und auch der Verfasser dieser Zeilen [Magenheimer]. Doch auch in den USA leben Historiker wie etwa:

Richard Raack
Albert Weeks
Cynthia Roberts,

die den sowj. Kriegsvorbereitungen einen offensiven Charakter zuordnen. . .

Ein zweiter Kardinalpunkt, der den „Revisionisten“ immer wieder vorgehalten wird, ist das Reizwort „Praeventivkrieg.“ Allerdings haben fast alle Forscher, die das Faktum betonen, dass die Wehrmacht der Roten Armee im Angriff zuvorgekommen sei, *nicht von Praeventivkrieg gesprochen*. . . Die dt. Fuehrung traf jedoch den Entschluss nicht aufgrund einer unmittelbar bevorstehenden Angriffsbedrohung, sondern aufgrund kaum annehmbarer Forderungen, die eine steigende Abhaengigkeit vom Wohlverhalten Stalins begruendet haetten, u. der Gefahr eines brit.-sowj. Buendnisses. Mit anderen Worten, *der Krieg mit der UdSSR galt **mittelfristig als unvermeidlich**, eine Sichtweise, die auch fuer Stalin zutraf*.

*Indem die Wehrmacht in einen uebermaechtigen, wenn auch unfertigen Aufmarsch der Roten Armee hineinstiess, begann sie **de facto** einen Praeventivkrieg, ohne davon zu wissen*. . . Was allerdings ungewiss bleibt, ist die Frage, unter welchen Voraussetzungen u. zu welchem Zeitpunkt ein sowj. Angriff zu erwarten gewesen waere. *Man sollte daher besser den Begriff „**Krieg zweier Angreifer**“ benutzen*.

Aus diesem Grund entbehrt es der Logik, von einem dt. „Ueberfall“ zu sprechen, da die sowj. Fuehrung genau ueber die dt. Vorbereitungen im Bilde gewesen ist u. auch umfangreiche Vorkehrungen getroffen hat. Dass die Wehrmacht dennoch *enorme Anfangserfolge* verzeichnete, lag nicht an der Ahnungslosigkeit des „Opfers“, sondern am Charakter des Aufmarsches, der sich gut fuer den Angriff, aber kaum fuer die Verteidigung eignete u. somit den Deutschen grosse Vorteile verschaffte. . .

[**Note:** Magenheimer, in section entitled „*Gewaltige Uebermacht der Roten Armee*“, goes on to address the nature of the huge Soviet buildup along the border w/ Germany, the relative size of Germany’s armed forces vis-a-vis the Soviets, etc. However, I disagree w/ following remark: „Aehlich [to tanks] kann die sowj. Ueberlegenheit bei Qualitaet u. Quantitaet der Kampfflugzeuge eingeschaezt werden.“⁵⁴¹ He also writes: „Besonders auffaellig war die Unterlegenheit [der Deutschen] bei der Artillerie, wo einem deutschen Geschuetz die **10-** bis **20-fache** Uebermacht gegenueberstand.“]

Am **13. Jun 41** unterzog General Watutin, der Stellvertreter Schukows, den Aufmarschplan nochmals einer Revision, wobei er besonders die Kraefte im vorspringenden Bogen von Lemberg durch Armeen der Zweiten-strategischen Staffel verstaerkte. . .

*Eigenmaechtigkeit der Generale ist auszuschliessen: Die Annahme, dass die Rote Armee nach Vollendung ihres **riesenhaften Aufmarsches** in ihren Stellungen auf unbestimmte Zeit verharret haette, erscheint absurd*. Insbesondere die durch Aufklaerungsfotos der deutschen Luftwaffe im gesamten Grenzraum belegten Flugplaetze mit grossen Mengen offen gelagerter Abwurfmunition u. die vielen Nachschubzuege unmittelbar hinter den grenznahen Bereitstellungsraeumen deuten

⁵⁴¹ **Note:** I believe in context he means „combat“ acft, not „bomber“ acft.

auf keine allzu langfristige Planung einer mil. Offensivaktion hin [*in other words, the offensive was rather imminent*].

Schliesslich kann man ein letztes Argument ausschliessen, das den angeblichen Friedenswillen Stalins belegen will: dass Stalin naemlich die Offensivplaene seines Generalstabes nicht genehmigt habe, dass somit Timoschenko u. Schukow auf eigene Faust gehandelt haetten. Waere dem so gewesen, haetten die Genannten ein schweres Delikt begangen, da es unbedingte Pflicht war, alle strategischen Plaene zur Genehmigung vorzulegen. . .

* * * *

c. *Chronology of Events:*

Sep 39–May 40: [*Russian buildup*]: „Es wurden im 300 Kilometer tiefen, grenznahen Raum im Sep 39 **65** russ. Grossverbaende, im Dez 39 **106** Grossverbaende u. im Mai 40 **153 + 36** motorisierte = **189** Grossverbaende angenommen oder festgestellt. Die *Dislokation* der russ. Truppen mit starker Massierung in der Mitte – davon allein im vorspringenden Bogen von *Bialystok* rund **50** Grossverbaende – liess sowohl auf *Angriffs- als auf Verteidigungsabsichten* schliessen. Die im grenznahen Raum festgestellten *Flieger-Bodenorganisation* u. ihre Belegung hatte dagegen einen *ausgesprochen offensiven Charakter*, sie *enttarnte damit auch die russ. Heeresabsichten*. Die *These Hitlers, dass der Russe uns im ersten, ihm guenstig scheinenden Augenblick angreifen wuerde, hielt ich fuer indiskutabel richtig*..Ich glaube, dass heute nur unverbesserliche Optimisten waehnen koennen, dass sich Russland mit dem Stand nach Beendigung des Polenkrieges begnuegt haben wuerde. Obwohl ich vielerorts als *Optimist* verschrienen war, -- den Optimismus, an ein Stillehalten des Kremls zu glauben, brachte ich zu jener Zeit nicht auf.“ (See, *Kesselring, Soldat*, 113-14)⁵⁴²

29.7.40: When prospect of attacking the Soviet Union that autumn rapidly ruled out as impractical, Hitler postponed it until May 1941. This was the date he had fixed in his meeting w/ *Jodl* on **29.7.40**, and which he announced to his military leaders two days later. It was a „*momentous decision, perhaps the most momentous of the entire war*.“ And it was *freely taken*. That is, it was not taken under other than self-imposed constraints. It was *not taken to head off an immediate threat of attack by the Soviet Union*. There was no suggestion at the time – the justificatory claim would come later – of the need for a *pre-emptive strike*. Hitler himself had acknowledged 10 days earlier that the *Russians did not want war w/ Germany*. (*Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 68-69; also, *Halder KTB*, 21.7.40)

ab 15.10.40 [*K. Assmann*]: A question on which differences of opinion existed in the German High Command was whether the Russian deployment which had been in progress since the summer of 1940 was accomplished w/ a view to an attack on Germany, or whether it was only a defensive counter-measure to the German deployment. In a conference on the *Brenner Pass* on **15.10.40**, Hitler said to the *Duce*: “*Russia will not attack; the men who rule Russia have good sense*.” But did he actually mean it? German *authoritative opinion* inclined to the view that the Russian troop concentrations provided for a deployment w/ the objective of an *offensive* in the general direction of *Warsaw*. The Chief of the General Staff [*Halder*] said of the situation of

⁵⁴² **Note:** From entirety of this passage, clear that *Kesselring* convinced at time that *time was working against Germany*, given size and scope of Russian rearmament, etc.: “Die zukuenftige Entwicklung sprach bei objektiver Betrachtung gegen uns.”

[on?] **7.4.41**, that “the Russian organization would permit them to go over quickly to the attack; it might be extremely inconvenient.” Conversely, German generals who led their corps to the attack in the border battles declared to the author [Assmann] that they had *struck right into the middle of a Russian defensive deployment*, and that it was still in progress when the German troops crossed the border. (*Assmann, Battle for Moscow*, 312)

Jan 41 [Soviet War Games]: Of the two *war games* conducted during the first two weeks of **Jan 41**, the second, which has come to light only recently, was the most significant. In this game, Zhukov let the “Reds” counter-attacking on the South-West Front. This had been the scenario most dreaded by Stalin. The *eventual build-up and deployment of the troops was derived from the games*. When the three operational directives issued on **22-23 Jun 41** are carefully scrutinized, it is apparent that they were *lifted directly from the war game documents*. . . The significance of the war games *can hardly be overestimated*. . . They comprise an accurate representation of the state of Soviet strategic thinking on the eve of the war. Neither of the two major games presumed a Soviet aggressive or pre-emptive strike. On the contrary, “the set-up created for the games,” as attested by General Zakharov, “was marked by dramatic episodes for the eastern side; it very much resembled the events which occurred on our borders in **Jun 41** [following the German attack]. Both games, therefore, postulated a German offensive on various fronts and explored defensive responses.” . . . The unpreparedness of the armed forces revealed by the war games . . . helps explain Stalin’s desperate attempts to postpone the war and his cautious handling of the deployment in the months preceding the war. (For details of the games see, *G. Gorodetsky, Grand Delusion*, 127-29)

9.1.41: Am **9 Jan 41** waren die Spitzen von **OKW**, Heer, Marine u. Luftwaffe in seinem Domizil auf dem Obersalzberg versammelt. *Niemand hatte Zweifel, dass es gelingen werde*, die „Masse des russ. Heeres“ westlich der Stroeme Dnepr u. Dvina zu vernichten u. die Sowjetunion bis zum Herbst zu zerschlagen. Da Stalin keine Angriffs-, sondern Defensivabsichten unterstellt wurden, waren Hitler u. die militaerische Fuehrung auch nicht durch die Kriegsfahigkeit der Roten Armee beunruhigt. Deren Massierung in den vorgeschobenen Raeumen um Lemberg u. Bialystok kam ihnen operative sogar gelegen. (*J. Foerster, „Hitler als Kriegs- u. Feldherr,“ 7-8*)

ca Mar 41: It was about this time [i.e., when Hitler addressed Wehrmacht leaders in Berlin on 30 Mar 41] that I noted down something of especial [sic] significance. Between **1-3 Mar 41** Oberst (Ing.) Dietrich Schwenke of the Reich Air Ministry had paid a visit to Russia to inspect Luftwaffe [i.e., Red Air Force] facilities there under the Russo-German agreement. I heard about this trip from various service centres of the Ministry. Unfortunately, I did not get to speak w/ Schwenke personally, but the head of the Foreign Air Forces Section at Luftwaffe General Staff let me have some important points from his report. From these there could be no doubt that Russia was arming on a grand scale. Newly built aircraft factories of an enormous size were nearing completion. A huge number of airfields had been laid down. . . When I mentioned this to Hitler, he said that Goering had already told him. One should take this military build-up very seriously. He was firmly convinced that the justification for the war w/ Russia *would be realized at the last moment* [bad trans?]. (*Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler’s Side*, 92-93)

4.4.-5.5.41: German Intelligence collected concrete evidence of long-range Soviet planning. The naval attaché reported from Moscow that the Soviet naval construction program was in the process of building **3** battleships, **11** cruisers, **61** destroyers, and nearly **300** submarines. [!] Most of the fleet would be concentrated in the Baltic. On **4 Apr 41**, German naval code-breakers noticed that the Russians had suddenly adopted completely new radio- and code-systems for two days – evidently a test of war procedures. After **7.4.41**, the German embassy in Moscow observed a steady call-up of reservists and raw recruits. On **8.4.41**, the families of the Russian

trade mission began leaving Berlin. Trainloads of the paraphernalia of war were observed moving westward from *Kiev* to the Polish border . . . On **23.4.41**, there were fresh reports from *Bucharest* of immense Soviet reinforcements in *Bukovina* and *Bessarabia*, some of the reinforcements arriving from as far away as the Caucasus and Finland . . . On **5.5.41**, *Antonescu* was able to tip off the Germans that Soviet troops were massing between Kiev and Odessa and that reinforcements were still pouring westward from Siberia. (See, *Irving, Hitler's War*, 236-37)

25.4.41: Hitler's own mind was made up on the Russian campaign, but he still wanted to convince *Ribbentrop*. On or about this day, Hitler telephones Ribbentrop in Vienna, summons him to his special-train HQ, and tells him he has decided finally to attack Russia. Ribbentrop later recalled the conversation:

He said that all the military Intelligence reaching him confirmed that the Soviet Union was preparing in a big way along the entire front from the Baltic to the Black Sea. He was not willing to be taken by surprise once he had recognized the danger . . .

Thus, Hitler regarded "*Barbarossa*" as that most controversial of campaigns – a *preventive* war. "What can a war historian tell us about the problems of fighting preventive wars?" he asked *Wilhelm Scheidt* at this time. Scheidt, a young, well-groomed cavalry captain, had just been introduced as adjutant to Col *Walter Scherff*, Hitler's personal historian. Scheidt knew about "*Barbarossa*," and replied, "Only somebody w/ the deepest sense of responsibility can take such a decision, and then only after looking at it from every possible angle. Because he will be risking immense dangers in starting such a war." He would have to accept the odium of being the aggressor, in return for the tactical advantages of surprise. (See, *Irving, Hitler's War*, 230-31)

Late Apr 41: According to Hitler's *Luftwaffe* adjutant, the intelligence brought back by a team of *Goering's* engineers from a tour of Soviet acft factories late in **Apr 41** convinced the Fuehrer there was *no time to be lost*. These air ministry experts had been allowed to tour eight (8) or nine (9) of the biggest Russian factories producing ball bearings, alloys, acft, and aeroengines, and to see the advances made by Soviet research. It was clear that the Soviet air force was a far greater menace than Hitler had bargained for – both in size and acft performance. The acft factories themselves were the biggest and most modern in Europe – and more were under construction. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 237)⁵⁴³

Apr-Jun 41: There is now *absolutely no doubt* that in Apr 41 – even before Zhukov's 15 May plan – the Soviet Union had begun a *covert mobilization*. A new mobilization plan – **MP 41** – had been drafted by *Maj-Gen Vasilevskiy* in January and approved in February. It was expected to be ready [*for implementation?*] in May. In some sectors, the plan would not be complete until **20.7.41**, and full implementation of the plan would take place once hostilities had started. However, an interim – and covert – plan was put into action in **Apr 41**. Even the most conservative and, one might reasonably deduce, anti-Suvorov, Russian authorities now acknowledge it . . . Mobilization had „in fact begun on **1 Sep 39**, w/ the adoption of the *law on universal military service*.“ For **22 months**, until **Jun 41**, the paper strength of the Soviet forces *more than doubled* – from **1,943,000** to **4,629,000**. In Apr 41, a „covert mobilization“ began, under cover of major exercises. In all, by **22.6.41**, **805,000** men had been called up. Of them, **310,000** were directed to reinforce the **5** western military districts . . . This was a *limited*, covert mobilization . . . The Germans had also observed the covert, partial mobilization . . . On **25.5.41**,

⁵⁴³ **Note:** Years later, Hitler was to describe this commission's report on the Soviet air force as having finally convinced him of the need to attack Russia now. (237)

Hitler warned the *Wehrmacht* planners that the Russians might take „preventive measures“ over the next few weeks and that the German General Staff should ensure they could defeat them. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 113-15)

5.5.41 [*Stalin's speech*]: Speech given to new graduates of the **Frunze Military Academy** in Moscow. This was not an officer training school, like Sandhurst or West Point, of which the Soviet Union had scores, but at the time, the *most prestigious staff or war college*, attended by promising captains and majors. What Stalin said – now, having rebuilt the Red Army and equipped it for modern war, „we must shift from the defensive to the attack...“ – has been cited as circumstantial evidence that some sort of imminent Soviet offensive was planned . . . Actually, it is *inconclusive* [as to its meaning]. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 115)

5.5.41: Stalin [who, unlike Hitler, rarely gave speeches] gives a major speech in Moscow before hundreds of graduates of the *Military Academy*, along w/ the elite of the Red Army, reps of the Defense Commissariat and General Staff, and important government figures. In all, about 1,500 head Stalin speak for around 40 minutes. He speaks of great advances achieved in modernizing the Red Army, etc. In the reception that followed, Stalin gave *three short toasts*. In the third, he corrected an officer who wanted to toast his peace policy. The peace policy had served the country's defenses well, Stalin said. It had been pursued until the army had been rebuilt and given modern weaponry. But now, he declared, the *Soviet Union had to move from defensive to offensive operations*. „The Red Army is a modern army,“ he ended, „but a modern army is an attacking army.“ Some interpreters have seen in these words the *aim of launching a preemptive attack on Germany* – precisely what Nazi propaganda claimed to justify the invasion of the USSR. But the brief remarks offered no more than a terse restatement of the *long-standing military strategy of converting defense into devastating attack*, though it is certainly true that they presented, or were seen to present, a *new emphasis upon offense*. The outright purpose was to bolster morale. At the time, no accurate account of Stalin's speech found its way to Berlin, or anywhere. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 277-78)⁵⁴⁴

5.5.41: Stalin makes speech before a large audience of some **2000** people assembled in the *Andreevsky Hall* of the *Great Kremlin Palace*, where meetings of the Supreme Soviet and congresses of the Communist Party took place. His ostensible audience were officers who had just graduated from 16 Red Army academies and 9 mil. faculties of civilian high education institutions, but many senior civilian officials were also present. There were several speakers. Stalin's speech was apparently the longest, lasting some **40 minutes**. A *reception was then held* in three grand halls in the same palace. Stalin's speech has been *interpreted in different ways*; in part, because the speech itself was *ambiguous*. Even the function of the speech was not altogether clear. Today, there are *three Russian texts* reporting what Stalin said on 5 May. Central to *controversy* about 5 May are remarks made by Stalin in his *final speech at the reception*: „And now, when our army has been reconstructed...it is necessary to *go from defence to offence*. Defending our country, we must act offensively...The Red Army is a modern army, and a modern army is an offensive army.“ Revisionist historians have grasped on to these remarks to buttress their thesis that Hitler's attack on Russia was an act of *preventive war*...For ex., one *controversial*

⁵⁴⁴ **Note:** For an excellent overview of recent historical scholarship addressing the *preventive war hypothesis* see, Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, p 539-40, f.n., 133) Kershaw notes that the preventive war theory (i.e., that *Barbarossa* was justified as a preventive strike) has been “roundly dismissed.” Concerning Stalin's intentions, Kershaw cites the “balanced appraisal of ‘traditionalist’ and ‘revisionist’ interpretations by Mawdsley, ‘*Crossing the Rubicon*,’ pp 864-65,” who “judiciously concludes that, while offensive war – as a *counter-offensive*, that is – constituted an intrinsic part of Soviet mil. planning in 1940-41, there were *no plans to stage an offensive pre-emptive strike in 1941.*”

historian, the late *Joachim Hoffmann*, entitled the first chapter of one of his books: „May 5, 1941, Stalin Proclaims the War of Aggression.“ Yet, as authors of article write: „Common sense surely suggests that Stalin would not use a semi-public speech before 2000 junior officers to ‚make a proclamation of aggressive war’ at a time when he was doing everything possible to avoid provoking Hitler.“ That said, there *is* strong evidence that Stalin’s 5 May speeches motivated the Red Army command to put forward a *proposal for a pre-emptive strike on Germany*. (see, *Foerster & Mawdsley, Hitler & Stalin*, 78-103)⁵⁴⁵

5.5.41: As the date for *Barbarossa* approached, „the date on which Stalin proposed to resume the Soviet program of expansion, now temporarily halted by Hitler’s obduracy, also came closer. A year later, the proof was in German hands; it will be dealt w/ in its proper sequence, except for one episode which can for the purpose of this narrative be related here. On **May 5**, two *secret speeches* were delivered at a Kremlin banquet by Stalin to a thousand officers graduating from Moscow’s staff colleges . . . There were two generals⁵⁴⁶ and one major who later fell into German hands and independently described the speeches to German interrogators with a high degree of *unanimity*. Had Schulenberg [the ‚lone voice in the wilderness“ re: Russia] been there, perhaps even his optimism about the Soviet Union’s designs would have been dispelled.“ In his speech Stalin gives a „sober account“ of need to modernize the Red Army’s weaponry and prepare for coming war w/ Germany. He sets out these preparations in detail, while also pointing to certain shortcomings in inf. equipment and tactics. He promises that in two months, Russia will have some of the best and fastest acft in the world. He also says:

Our war plan is ready, we have built the airfields and landing grounds, and the frontline acft are already there. Everything has been done by way of clearing out the rear areas: all the foreign elements have been removed. It follows that over the next two months *we can begin the fight w/ Germany*. Perhaps it surprises you that I tell you of our war plans. But we have to take our revenge for Bulgaria and Finland.

As for the pact w/ Germany, that was just camouflage, says Stalin . . . *The moment Hitler crosses into Russia*, so Stalin, he will forfeit the German people’s support. The partisan movement painstakingly built up throughout Europe by the *Comintern* since the war began will assume a vast scale and paralyze the German army’s supplies . . . A lavish banquet followed in the *George Hall* of the *Kremlin*, w/ drinking far into the night. Perhaps Stalin was *drunk* by the time he made his *second speech* – the sources are in conflict on this point. One of the generals, the director of the famous *Frunze* military academy, was toasting Stalin’s genius for „preserving the peace“ of Europe when Stalin irritably waved for him to stop, tottered to his feet, and delivered a speech of his own. He says, among other things: „The slogan of peaceful policies is now obsolete – it has been overtaken by events . . . The era of *forcible expansion* has begun for the Soviet Union. The people must be schooled to accept that a war of aggression is inevitable; they must be in permanent mobilization.“ (See, *Irving, Hitler’s War*, 238-40)

15.5.41 [Pre-emptive Strike]: Zhukov’s directive of **15 May 41** for a pre-emptive strike against Germany is of course the centerpiece in the case produced by the “revisionists.” They assume that the plan had originated w/ Stalin himself and was “appropriately signed,” thus proving Soviet strategy to be “offensive,” that is aggressive. And yet the *directive was never even initialled*

⁵⁴⁵ **Note:** There was no sign in Stalin’s speech that a German attack was seen as an *imminent* threat.

⁵⁴⁶ Irving: “Several generals who had been present were captured and interrogated by the Nazis in **1942** and **1943**; they believed Stalin was preparing an offensive for August or September **1941**. The reports are in AA files, Serials **1083** and **1699**.” Irving also mentions *Weich’s* memoirs (N 19/9)

[i.e., by Stalin, I assume], while the following day Zhukov issued a signed second directive for a defensive deployment of the Red Army in anticipation of a German attack. It is *this directive which, w/ minor alterations, remained in force until 22 Jun 41*. Moreover, a thorough analysis of Zhukov's proposal divests it of its sinister character. Adopting the highly sophisticated doctrine of "operational art" devised in the mid-1930s by the prodigiously talented Generals Tukhachevsky and Triandafilov, the directive called for an *удар*, a well-defined and restricted strike, deep into the rear of the German concentration. It was conceived not as a springboard towards the seizure of the heart of Europe, but as a limited operation aimed at disrupting the German build-up and therefore defensive in nature. (*G. Gorodetsky, Grand Delusion*, 322)

15.5.41 [Soviet plan for *pre-emptive war?*]: Stalin's major speech in Moscow on **5.5.41** had immediate consequences for the military leadership's operational planning, which was also most likely affected by the latest comprehensive assessment by military intel of the number of German divisions massing on the western borders of the USSR. The earlier plans – from **Sep 40** and **Mar 41** – were now rapidly revised by *Timoshenko* and *Zhukov*; who, by 15 May, were ready to present the new plan to Stalin. Though building directly on the earlier plans, it differed in one striking aspect – it now *envisaged a major pre-emptive strike*, as Zhukov later acknowledged, to forestall the enemy by attacking the German army before it was ready to launch its own offensive. The plan has given succour to those anxious to assert that Hitler, as he claimed, launched „*Barbarossa*“ to head off a Soviet pre-emptive strike which was under preparation. But *nothing supports such a far-fetched interpretation*. The Nazi leadership knew, of course, that they were *not invading the Soviet Union to head off a pre-emptive strike*. „*Barbarossa*“ had been instigated months earlier, and for *aggressive, not defensive, reasons*. And the Soviet plan of 15 May provides no „*smoking gun*.“ Certainly, it proposed a pre-emptive strike. In this, it converted the traditional emphasis on the rapid transition from „*deep defense*“ to offense into a stress on attack as a *form of defense*. Unlike the German *fiction of a Soviet threat*, the menace from Hitler's forces was evident to the Soviet military leadership as *daily reports of the build-up of troops and violations of the borders for aerial reconnaissance poured in*. The idea of the pre-emptive strike contained in the 15 May plan arose *directly from the need to protect the Soviet Union*, and was inspired by Stalin's speech 10 days earlier. That is, it was *an offensive plan born out of defensive necessity*. Still, worried as they were, *Timoshenko* and *Zhukov* most probably thought, like Stalin, that the *German attack was not imminent*.⁵⁴⁷ Red Army estimates indicated that the German buildup in the east had not been great in recent weeks, and that a far larger concentration of strength would have to occur before any attack took place. In any case, when *Timoshenko* and *Zhukov* presented their plan (in draft form), **Stalin rejected it outright**. „He immediately exploded when he heard about the pre-emptive blow against the German forces,“ *Zhukov* reputedly commented at a later date. „Have you gone mad? Do you want to provoke the Germans?, he barked out irritably.“ (see, *Kershaw, Fateful Choices*, 278-80; see also, *Mawdsley, Crossing the Rubicon*, 839, 852-53)⁵⁴⁸

15.5.41 [*Soviet war plan*]: We know from documents which have become accessible since **1990** that the Soviet command *did* have plans for attack on the German forces in occupied Poland, and that the Soviet deployment *did* look rather *offensive*. There were in fact four plans: **Jul 40, 18 Sep 40, 11 Mar 41** and **15 May 41**. But the existence of plans is no proof of *political intent* to

⁵⁴⁷ **Note:** Then, according to legal definitions of pre-emptive war – i.e., an enemy attack must be considered absolutely imminent, with no course of action was available to stave it off – the Soviet war plan of 15 May would have been a plan for aggressive (offensive), not pre-emptive war.

⁵⁴⁸ **Note:** *Zhukov* later admitted that Stalin was right in rejecting the pre-emptive strike plan of 15 May. In all probability, *Zhukov* concluded, if the pre-emptive attack had been attempted, the consequences for Russia would have been even more catastrophic. (280)

implement them . . . In **Jan 41**, the Soviet General Staff ran two major war games set . . . It is significant that *neither* war game appears to have envisaged a pre-emptive or preventive strike: merely an immediate and aggressive counterattack.

The final war plan, produced by *Zhukov* (who had taken over from *Meretskov* as Chief of Staff on **15.5.41**), was a development of the three earlier plans, but there was *one key difference*: The **11 Mar** plan had remained *defensive*, overestimating the German threat but deploying **171** divisions to meet a German attack. The **15 May** plan, however, emphatically *did* involve a *Soviet pre-emptive strike* . . . The May scheme for a pre-emptive strike *cannot be dismissed* as one of a number of pure contingency plans. It was presented on **15 May** to Stalin, who acknowledged he had seen it. Knowing how the Soviet system operated, this *indicates approval*, albeit not authority to implement it immediately.

The switch from immediate counterattack to possible pre-emption *must be seen in light of the intelligence* which, by this time, was *raining down on the senior military command*... No date was given for the implementation of what was still a „concept,“ but there are suggestions in the documents that plans were to be finalized in **1942**. With hindsight, *Zhukov* later recognized that, if implemented as a pre-emptive strike – certainly in 1941 – the **15 May plan** would almost certainly have been a *disastrous failure* . . . The Germans would have torn the Red Army apart . . . *Zhukov's* 15 May plan *did not seek the destruction of the German state or armed forces*. It was merely designed to interrupt preparations for a German offensive which *Zhukov* well knew, from the intelligence he was receiving, was „imminent“ and „overwhelming.“ (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 104-10)

ca 24.5.41: Am 10.5.41 wurde die Division [**1. Geb.Div.**] nach *Krynica* verlegt, einem hiesigen polnischen Badeort, wo der Stab das Hotel Patria bezog, das zwei prominenten Kuenstlern gehoerte, Jan Kiepura u. Martha Eggert, die sich damals in den Vereinigten Staaten aufhielten. Lanz wohnte in ihrem Rauemen u. feierte dort seinen **44. Geburtstag [22.5.41]** zusammen mit seinem Bruder Albrecht, dessen **71. ID** in der Naehelag. Beide waren sich bewusst, dass sie nur deshalb jetzt zusammensein konnten, weil ein Angriff auf Russland drohte, der fuer sie u. ihr Vaterland voller Unheil sein konnte. Sie machten einen langen Spaziergang, auf dem sie ihre persoelichen Befuerchtungen ueber die Zukunft besprachen. Die Angst vor dem Angriff auf Russland liess sie mehr als einmal nachdenklich verstummen. . .

Zwei Tage spaeter fuhr er nach *Lancut*, einem alten polnischen Staedchen, zu einer wichtigen Besprechung. Er traf dort auf einen buten Strauss an hoeheren Offizieren. Generaloberst Franz Halder, Chef des Generalstabs des Heeres, fuehrte den Vorsitz bei dieser Zusammenkunft ueber „*Barbarossa*,“ die alle hoeheren Offiziere umfasste, soweit sie der **17. Armee** unter General der Infanterie Carl-Heinrich von *Stuelpnagel* unterstanden. Alle Kommandierenden Generale u. Divisionskommandeure waren mit ihren Staeben anwesend. Halder wiederholte, was sie aus seinen fruerehen schriftlichen Anweisungen bereits wussten. Er vertrat die Notwendigkeit eines *Praeventivangriffs* auf Russland, bevor dieses Deutschland von hinten angreifen konnte. Mit ungewoehnlichem Ernst sagte er voraus, dass die kommende Operation bitter u. schwierig sein werde. Er meinte jedoch, dass nach einem anfaenglichen harten Widerstand Russland zusammenbrechen u. Deutschland siegen werde. (*Burdick, Hubert Lanz*, 99-100)

14.6.41: On 14 June Hitler assembled all the cdrs of Army Groups, Armies and Panzer Groups to explain his reasons for attacking Russia and to receive final reports on the preparations that had been made. . . His detailed exposition of the reasons that led him to fight a preventive war against the Russians was unconvincing. . . The assembled company listened to Hitler's speech in silence

and then, since there was to be no discussion, dispersed, still in silence and w/ heavy hearts. (Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 150)

19.-20.6.41 [Anecdote]: In der Nacht vom **19.** Zum **20. Jun 41** blieben wir in unseren Stellungen [i.e., just outside Brest-Litovsk]. . . Ich unterhielt mich mit einem Zugfuhrerleutnant von der **12. MG-Kp.** des **IR 82.** . . Auch er glaubte wie ich, dass dieser Rummel u. dieser Aufmarsch doch den Russen nicht verborgen geblieben sein konnte, u. wir erwarteten einen heissen Gang in unserem Kampf um Brest-Litovsk. Dann ging ich rueber zu Hans Bachmann, drueben am Eisenbahndamm. Die grosse Eisenbahnbruecke spannte sich in **5 Boegen** ueber das unregulierte Flussbett des Bugs. Hans erzaehlte, er habe Verbindung aufgenommen mit den Infanteristen der **45. ID.** Drei Boegen der Bruecke gehoerten Deutschland u. zwei Boegen den Russen. In der Mitte, an der Trennungslinie, waere ein dicker roter Strich. Das Abkommen sah vor, das jeweils nur ein Doppelposten auf der Bruecke patrouillierten u. die Abloesungen auf der Bruecke stattfinden durften.

Bisher haetten sich die Posten nachts um **2.00** Uhr abgeloeset. Seit einer Woche aber waere dies geaendert worden. Da der Angriff um **3.15** Uhr beginnen sollte, laege jetzt die Abloesezeit einige Minuten vor **3.15** Uhr, so dass dann **2** Doppelposten von deutscher Seite auf der Bruecke anwesend u. somit die Gewaehr gegeben sei, dass diese **4** dt. Soldaten die beiden russischen ueberwaeltigen koennten. Es muesse auf das kleine Haeuschen links am Bahndamm auf der anderen Seite des Flussufers geschossen werden, da hier die Sprengzentrale fuer die Bruecke eingerichtet sei. Tolle Tage, was Hans, meinte ich, jaja antwortete er, das wird ein richtiger Ueberfall. Naja, die Bolschewisten muessen eben mit ihren eigenen Waffen geschlagen werden, denn auch in Finnland waren sie ohne Kriegserklaerung gegen das Land angetreten. (Dr. Bunke, **31. ID**, *Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 211-14)⁵⁴⁹

21.-22.6.41: In his proclamation to the troops - Soldaten der Ostfront! – Hitler justifies attack on Soviet Union as preventive measure. In course of his long-winded examination of recent months of Soviet-German relations, he states:

Meine Soldaten! Ich habe hier eine Haltung eingenommen, die ich als verantwortlicher Fuehrer des Deutschen Reiches, aber auch als verantwortungsbewusster Vertreter der europaeischen Kultur u. Zivilisation einnehmen musste.

Die Folge war eine Verstaerkung der deutschfeindlichen sowjetrussischen Taetigkeit, Panzerverbaende u. Fallschirmtruppen wurden in immer steigender Zahl in eine bedrohliche Naehel der dt. Grenze verlegt. Ihr, meine Soldaten, wisst aber selbst, dass sich noch bis vor wenigen Wochen nicht eine dt. Panzer- oder mot. Division an unserer Ostgrenze befand. . .

Mit dem Siege der Achsenmaechte auf dem Balkan ist aber der Plan vereitelt worden, Deutschland in diesem Sommer in monatelange Kaempfe im Suedosten zu verstricken u. unterdes den Aufmarsch der sowjetruss. Armee immer mehr zu vollenden, ihre Kriegsbereitschaft zu verstaerken, um dann gemeinsam mit England u. unterstuetzt durch die erhofften amerikanischen Lieferungen das Deutsch Reich u. Italien ersticken u. erdruecken zu koennen. . .

⁵⁴⁹ For this entire anecdote, see my Notebook 2: “Vormarsch u. Rueckzug,” Section 2.1.

Wenn ich aber bisher durch die Umstaende gezwungen war, immer wieder zu schweigen, so ist doch jetzt der Augenblick gekommen, wo in weiteres Zusehen nicht nur eine Unterlassungssuende, sondern ein Verbrechen am dt. Volk, ja an ganz Europa waere.

Heute stehen rund **160** russische Divisionen an unserer Grenze. Seit Wochen finden dauernde Verletzungen dieser Grenze statt, nicht nur bei uns, sondern ebenso im hohen Norden wie in Rumanien. In der Nacht vom **17.** zum **18. Juni** haben zum ersten Male russische Patrouillen auf deutsches Reichsgebiet vorgefuehrt u. konnten erst nach laengerem Feuergefecht zurueckgetrieben werden. . .

(Gleaned from: *Dr. Bunke, 31. ID, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 208-09)

22.6.41: The more wide-awake among those [German soldiers] who crossed the border on 22 June between 0300 and 0330 hours were *convinced*, either immediately or during the first few days of the campaign, *that the Russians were unprepared for such an attack*. Private *Max Landowski* (a *pseudonym*) (**AR 253/253. ID**) crossed the Russian frontier w/ 16th Army (Hr.Gr.Nord) in East Prussia near the *Eydtkuhnen* and *Wirballen* border railway stations. He noticed that Russian freight trains were standing at Wirballen, full of grain obviously bound for Germany under the terms of the German-Soviet trade agreement. (*H.J. Schroeder, German Soldiers' Experiences*, 311-12)

ab 22.6.41: German reactions regarding Soviet preparedness are mixed. Lt *Hans Ulrich Rudel*, a *Stuka* pilot who took part in the opening raids, thought it „a good thing we struck,“ as it looked as if the Soviets were building up to invade. Others arrive at same conclusion. Conversely, *Bernd Freytag v. Lorrinhoven*, a tank officer on staff of Guderian's **2 PzGr**, said after the war: „At that time we had nothing to support the present view, often repeated, that the Russians planned an attack themselves. It became quickly apparent the Russians had adopted a *defensive stance* and were partly prepared when the German assault began.“ Infantryman *Emanuel Selder* was in no doubt that „at no time“ on the eve of the offensive „could anyone seriously calculate the Russians were going to strike first.“ His view was that „the Red Army was totally surprised by the attack.“ Unimpressed by any „preventive war hypothesis,“ Selder noted that the Russians in some areas had absolutely *no artillery support*. „Like us,“ he pointed out during interview, the Russians constructed camps w/in woods near the border: „But contrary to our bivouacs, theirs were *not camouflaged*. They were even showing lights w/ hanging portraits of Stalin and red flags. All this is basically contrary to the widely held impression that, despite these factors, the Russians were equipped for an attack.“ This view is echoed by examination of the *radio logs* of the attacking German vanguards. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 37)

23.6.41: The fact that **Stavka** – the Soviet Supreme High Command – not formed until 23 Jun 41, the day after the German attack, further suggests that, at the highest level, war was not expected immediately. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 175)

ca. 23.6.41: Schon nach wenigen Kilometer, die wir als Regimentsspitze zurueckgelegt hatten, passierten wir einen Feldflugplatz, der hier im Bau begriffen war. Riesige Traktoren mit **50** cm breiten Ketten standen herum u. hatten Planierungsarbeiten [*leveling, grading*] durchgefuehrt. Am Rande des Flugplatzes lagen sogar schon die Benzinfassern herum, doch sie waren leer, nur Reste von Benzin oder Diesel waren noch zu finden. Wir konnten also unsere Kanister nicht auffuellen. Einige Kilometer weiter passierten wir einen Ort mit einer Bahnlinie. Hier befand sich eine grosse Verladerampe im Bau. Ueberall seit Brest-Litovsk war zu bemerken, das

Vorbereitungsarbeiten fuer einen groesseren Aufmarsch getaetigt wurden. Jaja, lieber Josef Stalin, Ueberraschung ist eben alles im Kriege. (Dr. E. Bunke, **31. ID**, *Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 238-39)

25.6.41: *OQu.IV* berichtet ueber den unmittelbar vor Beginn *Barbarossa* vom Fuehrer an den Duce gerichteten Brief vom **21.6.41**. In der Aneinanderreihung loser Gedanken ist bemerkenswert folgendes: Begruendung des Angriffs auf Russland mit der russ. *Lagekarte*. (Halder KTB, 14; see also, *Halder War Diary*, 423)⁵⁵⁰

25.6.41 [*Berlin/Geheimer Lagebericht*]: Der Bevoelkerung sei durch die Zahlen der abgeschossenen Flugzeuge u. zerstorten Panzer „erst so richtig klar geworden, welche grosse Gefahr Russland fuer Deutschland war.“ Jetzt sehe man erst ganz ein, wie *dringend notwendig* das rasche Zugreifen des Fuehrers gewesen sei. (*Sicherheitsdienst der SS, Echolot*, 120)

27.6.41: Das OKW gibt bekannt: Die ersten fuefn [5] Operationstage haben bewiesen, dass die sowj. Wehrmacht *zum Angriff gegen Mitteleuropa bereit war*. Auch in jenen, nach Westen vorspringenden Grenzbogen um Lemberg u. Bialystok, die von vornherein einer deutschen Umfassung ausgesetzt u. daher fuer die Zwecke einer reinen Verteidigung ungeeignet waren, fanden unsere Verbaende eine *Massierung russischer Angriffstruppen vor*. (K. Knoblauch, **4.(F)/14**, *Zwischen Metz u. Moskau*, 156)

29.6.41 [*Berlin / Tagesparole*]: Die grossen *Sondermeldungen des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht* sind in ihrer Gesamtheit ein ernstes Dokument der *Gefahr, die Europa aus dem Osten durch die zum Sprung bereite Kriegsmaschine des Bolschewismus drohte*. Die dt. Presse wird mit der Wiedergabe der grossen Nachrichten von dem in entscheidender Stunde sich siegreich entwickelnden dt. *Gegenangriff* [!] ernste Leitartikel verbinden, die dem politischen Gehalt der mil. Meldungen gewidmet sind u. in wuerdiger Form dem Dank an die dt. Soldaten Ausdruck geben, die in mutiger Entschlossenheit sich auf den gefaehrlichen Gegner gestuerzt haben u. *Europa vor der bolschewistischen Invasion retten*. (*Reichspressestelle der NSPAD, Echolot*, 148)

5.-6.7.41: An Grenze im Gen.Gouv. Rollbahnen (Beton) fuer Start schwerer Bomber vorgefunden – *Angriffsabsichten der Russen*. Stalin hat in einer Rede Verhandlungen mit England zugegeben. Ziel 1942 Offensive gegen Deutschland, bis dahin strengste Geheimhaltung Bedingung! (*Tagebuch Thilo*,)

8.7.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: „Mittags gegen 12 Uhr landen wir auf einem Flugplatz in der Naehue von *Rastenburg*. Es herrscht eine bruetende Hitze. Das ganze Gebeit ist von *Mueckenschwaermen* uebersaet, die sehr unangenehm wirken...Eine halbe Stunde Autofahrt, u. wir befinden uns im Hauptquartier...Dann kommt der Fuehrer von den mil. Besprechungen. Sein Aussehen ist ueber Erwarten gut, u. er macht einen durchaus *optimistischen u. glaeubigen Eindruck*. Er entwickelt mir zunaechst in kurzen Zuegen die mil. Situation, die er *ueberraschend positive ansieht*. Nach seinen handfesten u. bewiesenen Unterlagen sind zwei Drittel der bolschewikischen Wehrkraft bereits vernichtet oder doch sehr schwer angeschlagen. Fuefn Sechstel der bolschewikischen Luft- u. Tankwaaffe koennen auch als vernichtet gelten. Der Hauptstoss also, den die Bolschewiken in das Reich hinein vorhatten, kann als gaenzlich abge-

⁵⁵⁰ **Note:** In other words, “attack on Russia explained [to Duce] on grounds of Russian troops dispositions” (i.e., German assault was a “Praeventivkrieg”). (See, *Halder War Diary*, Burdick/Jacobsen edition, p 423). In his original three-volume publication of Halder’s KTB, Jacobsen writes: “Diese Begruendung war wiederum rein propagandistisch, da der Entschluss Hitlers zum Angriff auf die Sowjetunion bereits vom Jahre 1940 datierte u. in erster Linie politischen Erwaegungen entsprang.” (14)

schlagen angesehen werden. Unsere Verluste halten sich in maessigem Rahmen. [...] *Es besteht kein Zweifel mehr, dass die Russen ihre ganze Stosskraft an ihrer Westgrenze versammelt hatten u. diese Gefahr im Augenblick einer Krise, die eventuell im Verlaufe des Krieges ueber uns haette hereinbrechen koennen, fuer uns toedlich geworden waere...* Der Fuehrer hat einein heiligen Zorn auf die bolschewikische Fuehrungsclique, die sich mit der Absicht trug, Deutschland u. damit Europa zu ueberfallen u. doch noch im letzten Augenblick bei einer Schwaechung des Reiches den seit 1917 schon geplanten Versuch der Bolschewisierung des Kontinents praktisch durchzufuehren. [...] Der Fuehrer betont mir gegenueber noch einmal, dass auch die bisher gemachten mil. Erfahrungen eindringlich darlegen, dass es *hoechste Zeit war, dass er im Osten zum Angriff vorging...* Der **Praeventivkrieg** ist immer noch der sicherste u. der mildeste, wenn man sich darueber im klaren ist, dass der Gegner sowieso bei der ersten besten Gelegenheit angreifen wird; u. das ist beim Bolschewismus der Fall gewesen.“ (Joseph Goebbels, *Echolot*, 298-301; see also, R.G. Reuth (ed.), *Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, 1622-24)

15.7.41: Yet there were disturbing facets to that summer of **1941**. Stalin had *obviously laid immense plans for an offensive into Europe*. The Red Army was far stronger than Hitler's experts had believed. On **15.7.41**, *Jeschonnek's deputy* [see, *Waldau diary*], touring the conquered territories, wrote in his diary: „The Red Army's equipment staggers us again and again . . .“ (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 285)

31.7.42: *Heusinger*: Im Sommer **1942** aeusserte er waehrend des Vormarsches auf *Stalingrad* u. den *Kaukasus* nach einem Gespraech mit Hitler am **31.7.42** die Ansicht, man haette diesen Krieg doch „auf jeden Fall fuehren muessen. Die **Russen haetten uns in Kuerze sonst ueberfallen**.“⁵⁵¹ Hitler hatte ihm zurvor auseinandergesetzt, „dass man unbedingt immer *Praeventivkriege* fuehren muesse,“ er wuerde das unbedingt immer machen: „Wo immer sich eine Gefahr auch nur am Horizont abzuzeichnen beginne, muesse man sofort zuschlagen.“ Spaeter gelangte der dann zu der Auffassung, an der er auch nach **1945** festhielt: Stalin haette sich sicher nicht bereitgefunden, „durch fruehzeitigen Angriff“ auf Deutschland „den anderen die Kastanien aus dem Feuer zu holen,“ bevor nicht im Westen „ein hoher Prozentsatz deutscher Divisionen durch eine Invasion“ gebunden war. Und er gab einer „**festen Ueberzeugung**“ Ausdruck, „dass **Russland 1941 u. 1942 Deutschland nicht angegriffen haette**. Heusinger wusste ja auch nur zu gut, wie *zielstrebig* Hitler alles auf diesen Krieg mit seinem Widersacher Stalin angelegt u. es dabei verstanden hatte, *seine wahren Absichten zunaechst zu vernebeln*. (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 152)

1.17.12: Wehrmachtausstellung (1995-99):

Ausgeloest durch die Wanderausstellung „**Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944**,“ des *Hamburger Instituts fuer Sozialforschung*, die in den Jahren **1995-99** in **34** deutschen u. oesterreichischen Staedten zu sehen war, begann sich die dt. Gesellschaft daran zu erinnern, dass sie auch eine mil. Vergangenheit besitzt. (C. Hartmann, et al., *Wehrmacht in der NS Diktatur*, 1)

Zwar hatte die Wehrmacht spaetestens in den unmittelbaren *Nachkriegsprozessen* ihre „Unschuld“ verloren, doch bestand lange ein gewisser *Konsens* darueber, dass sich zumindest die Masse der Angehoerigen *nicht* an Kriegs- oder NS-Verbrechen beteiligt haetten. Einen *ganz anderen Eindruck* suchte die sog. **Wehrmachtsausstellung** zu erwecken. Noch verhaeltnismaessig

⁵⁵¹ **Note:** See also *Heusinger's* letters to his wife from the opening days of the Russian campaign (Section 2.8.4).

vorsichtig formuliert war ihre offizielle *Grundthese*, „dass die *Wehrmacht* an allen Verbrechen [des NS-Regimes] *aktiv u. als Gesamtorganisation beteiligt war* (aus der Einleitung zum Ausstellungskatalog). Im Grunde genommen lief ihre Tendenz darauf hinaus, die Beweislast umzukehren u. *das Verbrecherische zur Regel zu erklären*, so dass **Michael Naumann** als Staatsminister fuer Kulturelle Angelegenheiten 1999 gewissermassen die *regierungsamtliche Bilanz* ziehen konnte – die *Wehrmacht* als „*marschierendes Schlachthaus*“, damit schien diese Armee endgueltig *decouvert*, ihr verbrecherischer Charakter ein fuer allemal festgeschrieben. (C. Hartmann, et al., *Wehrmacht in der NS Diktatur*, 2)

1.17.13: Laws & Customs of War:

a. Hague Conventions (1907):

The first general attempt to restrict the abuse of prisoners and wounded and to protect the civilian population by defining distinctions between combatants and non-combatants culminated in the *Hague Conventions* of **Oct 07**, and esp. Convention IV, the *Laws and Customs of War on Land*. Imperial Russia signed them – indeed, it had played a major part in bringing such agreements about – but as early as **1917-18** the new Soviet government *refused to accept* that soldiers of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army would surrender to their „class enemies,“ and *no longer regarded itself as a signatory*. The USSR did not acknowledge itself as the successor state until **1955**. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 20)

b. Third Geneva Convention (1929):

In **1929**, **43** parties signed the „Third Geneva Convention“ – in fact, two Conventions – covering military personnel who fell into enemy hands, one relating to prisoners of war, the other to the care of the wounded. The USA, Germany, Italy, France, Britain and its Dominions all signed them. Two major players in WWII did not – *Japan* and the *Soviet Union*. USSR did, however, sign the **1925 Geneva protocol** prohibiting the use of *poison gas* and *bacteriological warfare*, and the **1936 London Procesverbal** (diplomatic jargon for a written report) on the *rules of submarine warfare* against merchant ships. The fact that the Soviet Union had not signed the **1929 Geneva Conventions** certainly played into the hands of the Nazi regime. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 20-21)

Unlike the **1907 Hague Convention**, the *Geneva Convention* pertaining to *healthy* prisoners of war specified that prisoners’ names should be released, that they should be able to correspond w/ relatives, and that prison camps should be inspected by neutral observers from the Red Cross. To apply *that* idea on the eastern front was unthinkable for both Soviets and Germans. Ultimately, neither side had any intention of complying with the letter or the spirit of the **1907 Hague** and the **1929 Geneva Conventions**. Furthermore, the provision in the latter for *independent inspection* of prison camps made it a complete *non-starter*. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 21-22)

9.8.41: Averill Harriman tells US Sec of State, Cordell Hull, that the Soviet Union had said it would observe the **1907 Hague Convention**, the **1925 Geneva Protocol** on chemical and bacteriological warfare and *one* of the two **1929 Geneva Conventions** – namely the one relating to care of enemy wounded and sick. The Soviet government had issued a note saying it would observe the *Hague Convention* on **17 Jul 41**, and even early, on **1 Jul 41**, the Council of People’s Commissars had issued a decree on „The Position of Prisoners of War,“ which was in line w/ the

Hague Conventions, even though *it was hardly ever observed*, at least in the earlier part of the war. However, and this was the rub, the Soviet Union said it *would only observe those agreements „with respect to Germany insofar as they are observed by Germany.“* Moreover, the Soviets were *not* going to observe the Geneva Convention relating to *healthy* POWs, because unlike the 1907 Hague Convention, it specified that prisoners' names should be released, that they should be able to correspond w/ relatives, and that prison camps should be inspected by neutral observers from the Red Cross.“ (see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 21)

20.8.40: The Soviet Union had indicated on 20.8.40 its desire to accede to the *Hague Convention* – which since **1907** had regulated the treatment of prisoners and non-combatants in war – but the approach was *tentative*: after **22.6.41**, therefore, its soldiers were protected by none of the Hague or Geneva provisions which spared those of signatory powers from mistreatment. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 186)

1.17.14: Chronology of Events:

13.3.41 [*Army-SS Cooperation*]: The discussion of the line of command begun in **Mar 41** already emphasized „the special role of the *Reichsfuehrer SS*.” The first *official formulation* appeared in a directive issued on **13 Mar 41** by GFM Keitel: „In the area of army operations, the *Reichsfuehrer SS* will be entrusted, on behalf of the Fuehrer, w/ *special tasks* for the preparation of the political administrations – tasks entailed by the final struggle that will have to be carried out between the two opposing political systems. Within the framework of these tasks, the *Reichsfuehrer SS will act independently and on his own responsibility.*“ (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 249; see also, *Jacobsen, Kommissarbefehl*, in: *H. Krausnick, et al., Anatomie des SS Staates*, Bd. 2, 198-201)

30.3.41: Hitler's announcement at end of **Mar 41** that a war of annihilation was to be conducted in the east was received by the **250** assembled army cdrs w/ attitudes ranging from inactive ambivalence to fervent enthusiasm. Embracing a position more in line w/ the latter, Halder observed after Hitler's speech: “cdrs must make the sacrifice of overcoming their personal scruples.” *His diary records none of the shock or moral revulsion that he later claimed to have felt and there was no rush of complaints or criticism from his fellow officers.* Even if one accepts Omer Bartov's well-argued contention that the Wehrmacht was a deeply integrated and willing component of the National Socialist state, this offers only part of the answer for their *complete failure to recognize the military implications of such a radicalized war.* (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 71; also, *O. Bartov, “Soldiers Nazis, and War in the Third Reich,”* 60)⁵⁵²

25.4.41: Am **25. Apr 41** erhielt ich vom Abteilungskommandeur den Auftrag, nach Rembertow bei Warschau zu fahren, um dort an einem dreitaegigen Lehrgang zur Abwehr von Gasangriffen teilzunehmen. . . Die Gasausbildung fuehrte uns ein in die truppenmaessige Gasausruestung der Sowjets. . . Man war sicher, dass unsere Gasmaske u. die Gasplane, die jeder Soldat stets griffbereit haben musste, genuegenden Schutz bieten wuerden. Besonders geuebt wurde aber das Ueberwinden von verseuchtem Gelaende. Chlorkalk musste hier in vielen Faellen eingesetzt werden. In Warschau war man allgemein ueberzeugt, dass der Russlandfeldzug bevorstand,

⁵⁵² **Note:** Warlimont's contention that most officers present failed to follow Hitler's speech or could not grasp the true significance of its meaning is simply untenable. See his, *Im Hauptquartier der deutschen Wehrmach 1939 bis 1945, Band 1*, p 177.

nachdem Jugoslawien u. Griechenland bereingit waren. (*Dr Bunke, 31. ID, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 191)

28.4.41 [*Army-SS Cooperation*]: In wake of GFM Keitel's directive [of **13.3.41**] negotiations commence on the same day between *Heydrich*, as Himmler's representative, and the army quartermaster, *General Eduard Wagner*; the agreement they sign is ratified on **28 Apr 41** by C-in-C of Army von *Brauchitsch*. The SD is empowered to engage in certain activities in the area of the military ops, but its main function was to combat anti-Reich tendencies in the area behind the front line. The *Einsatzgruppen* are to receive their special „professional“ orders from Heydrich as head of the Security Police (*Sipo*) and the SD. A *liaison officer* between the army and the police would be appointed in each Army group. The *Einsatzgruppen* are authorized to act toward the civilian population on their *own initiative*. This document is of *fundamental importance* because it attests, for the first time, to *official collaboration* between the army and Himmler's forces; this had been *avoided in Poland*. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 249; also, *Jacobsen, Kommissarbefehl*, 202 f., in: *Krausnick, SS-Staat*)

2.5.41: In a parallel movement [along w/ German High Command's acceptance of Commissar Order, Jurisdictional Degree, etc.] to accommodate itself to Hitler's will, General Thomas of the military's economic staff accepted the proposal of the senior official of the Agricultural Ministry, Herbert Backe, which had Hitler's support, that the Ukraine should provide the solution to Germany's food needs. On **2 May 41** Thomas and the ministries involved agreed that the German army should be *fed from Russia* and that, in addition supplies should be taken for German needs even though as a result “many millions of people will die of starvation.” Once again, this showed just how far military leaders had come in *accepting the logic of fighting a racial war*. . . Such compliance showed *the extent to which the army command now endorsed Nazi ideology*, though there were some examples of senior officers who refused to implement such measures. . . [**Note:** in Wright's view, “the armed forces had become a *full partner* in carrying out Hitler's plans, where in Poland they had still been a more or less *reluctant accomplice*.” (*J. Wright, Germany and Origins of the Second World War*, 177, 181)]

8.5.41: Am **8 Mai 41** fuehrte ich die Entgiftungsmoeglichkeiten von kampfstoffverseuchtem Gelaende fuer die Abteilung vor. Inzwischen waren in den Kompanien Entgiftungstrupps aufgestellt, die von mir ausgebildet worden waren. In einer Nachtuebung vom **9.-10.5.41** waren entsprechende Gaseinlagen zu bewaeltigen. (*Dr Bunke, 31. ID, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 192-93)

6.6.41 [**4. Armee Ia**, 16.50]:⁵⁵³ Strassenentgiftungs-Abt. 132 in Jezow, **15** Kilometer ostw. Loewenstadt, eingetroffen u. untergebracht. (*Tagesmeldungun*, in: *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 130)

Vormarsch 1941: Occasionally some of the peasants would still be in the villages when we arrived, not having had time to flee. They would be women, children and old men, because everyone else had been drafted...[The civilians] were never mistreated in any way by the combat troops, and they showed no outward hostility toward us...(S. *Knappe, 87. ID, Reflections*, 222)

ca 22.6.41: When, in the bunkers around the frontier village of *Slochy*, on the border, a German army unit finally overran the Russian defenders, it then burned down the village and murdered all **100** of its inhabitants. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 200)

⁵⁵³ **Note:** This is a fascinating reference. Were the Germans preparing for the Russians to use gas, chemical warfare?

ab 22.6.41: Im Gefolge der vorrueckenden *Wehrmacht* fuehrten die bald von Bataillonen der *Ordnungspolizei* u. *oertlichen Milizen* unterstuetzten Einsatzkommandos *Razzien* in den eroberten Doerfern u. Staedten durch. . . Die Exekutionen wurden bald auch auf „gemeine“ Juden ausgeweitet, wobei die Mordaktionen sich in aller Regel *vorerst noch auf Maenner beschraenkten*. Einer der grauenhaftesten Exzesse waehrend der ersten Tage des Russlandfeldzuges ereignete sich in *Bialystok*. Dort pruegelten Angehoerigen eines *Polizeibataillons* **700** Juden in eine Synagoge, die anschliessend mit Hilfe von Benzin u. Handgranaten in Brand gesetzt wurde. (*Reuth, Hitler, 527-28*)

ab 22.6.41 [Cherta]: Der Bereich, in dem die H.Gr.Mitte angriff, lag in den ersten Wochen ihres Vormarsches innerhalb des juedischen Wohngebietes der Zarenzeit, die „**Cherta postayannoi yevreskoy osedlosti**.“ In den meisten groesseren Staedten „Grossrusslands“ hatten Juden kein Wohnrecht. . . Mit der Revolution wurde die Cherta aufgehoben. **94%** der russ. Juden, etwa **5 Millionen**, waren in der Cherta ansaessig. Die Einwohner der Cherta, die dort nach der Revolution verblieben, fuehrten ein einfaches, armes Leben. . . Die Grenze der Cherta verlief im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte ostwaerts Witebsk, Mogilew u. Gomel, im Bereich der H.Gr.Sued ostw. Kremenschug u. Poltawa. Die Staedte der Cherta innerhalb der Grenzen der Sowjetunion von **1939** waren klein – nur Minsk erreichte eine Einwohnerzahl von **100 000**. . . Ueber den Antisemitismus des Dritten Reiches war kaum Kenntnis vorhanden. Die sowj. Presse hatte waehrend der Jahre der Appeasement-Politik die Anweisung, nichts ueber die dt. Massnahmen gegen Juden verlauten zu lassen u. auslaendische Zeitungen waren der Bevoelkerung der Sowjetunion nicht zugaenglich. Viele der Bewohner der fruerehen Cherta hatte die dt. Besatzung des Ersten Weltkrieges in Erinnerung u. betrachtete die Deutschen zunaechst als Befreier. Als die Rote Armee **1939** in Polen einmarschierte, flohen Tausende von Juden in die deutschbesetzten Gebiete, bis ihnen das von den Deutschen verwehrt wurde. Aehnlich war die Einstellung zu Beginn von „Barbarossa.“ . . . Nach den ersten Ausschreitungen der Einsatzgruppen setzte eine Massenflucht der Juden nach Osten ein. Je weiter die H.Gr.Mitte u. die Einsatzgruppe B vorrueckte, desto geringer wurde die Anzahl Juden, die in ihren Wohnorten verblieben. . . Ostwaerts Smolensk waren in vielen Staedten beim Eintreffen der Deutschen keine Juden mehr vorhanden. (For more details see, *Stein, GFM Model, 241-42*)

ab 22.6.41: Dokumente ueber die Einsatzgruppen findet man in der Bibliothek der Gedenkstaette Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Auszuege aus den KTBern u. Ereignismeldungen der Sonderkommandos der Waffen-SS, insbesondere der **1. SS-Brig. (mot.)** u. der **1. SS-Kav.-Brig.**, die gemeinsam mit der Einsatzgruppe wueteten, sind in der Tschechoslowakei aufgetaucht. . . Die **1. Kav.-Brig.** Operierte gemeinsam mit der Einsatzgruppe B u. stand ihr in Mordtaten nicht nach. General v. Schenkendorff, Befehlshaber des rueckwaertigen Heeresgebietes der H.Gr.Mitte, bezeichnete ihr Verfahren as „vorbildlich.“ Sie war nicht in die Einsatzgruppe B eingegliedert u. erhielt ihre Anweisungen direkt von Himmler. (*Stein, GFM Model, 234, 238*)

ab 22.6.41 [Anecdote]: In unserem Buero besuchte uns **1941** unser Kollege Zimpel aus Oelsnitz, der auf Heimaturlaub war. Wir kannten ihn als liebenswerten, lustigen u. netten Kollegen, der *keiner Fliege etwas zu Leide tun konnte*. Er war todernst u. erklarte, dass er uns einen Abschiedbesuch machen wolle. Er wuerde nicht mehr an die Front zurueckfahren, sondern *aus dem Leben scheiden*. Er waere einem Strafkommando zugewiesen worden u. haette auf Menschen schiessen muessen – vermutlich Juden – die ueber einen befehlsmaessigen Steg laufen mussten, um nach den Schuessen sofort in die zuvor selbst ausgehobene Grube zu fallen. Er haette sich dabei laufend uebergeben muessen u. koennte nicht mehr weiterleben. Wir waren erschuettert u. fassungslos u. konnten einfach nicht glauben, dass seine Erzaehlungen wahr sein sollten. Unseren Kollegen Zimpel haben wir damals das letzte Mal gesehen. Hatte er das

Massaker von Borisow mitmachen muessen oder gab es noch weitere solcher Vorfaelle? Wir haben ihn nicht danach gefragt. (*M. Miethe, Rechts zum Friedhof. . . Bd. 2: Der zweite Weltkrieg bis zum bitteren Ende, draft copy, courtesy of author*)

24.6.41: Cdr of **47. Pz.K.** [*Lemelsen*] obliged to protest to his soldiers a only three days after the campaign had begun that „senseless shootings of both prisoners and civilians have taken place. A Russian soldier who has been taken prisoner while wearing a uniform, and after he put up a brave fight, has the right to decent treatment.“ Five days later, he was forced to circulate the corps again: „Still more shootings of prisoners and deserters have been observed, conducted in an irresponsible, senseless and criminal manner. This is murder.“⁵⁵⁴ But his strictures were fruitless. So common did the mistreatment of Russian POWs become at the very outset of *Barbarossa* that by early **1942** another German formation, the **12. ID**, was warning its soldiers that Red Army men were „more afraid of falling prisoner than of a possible death on the battlefield . . . Since November last year . . . only a few deserters have come over to us and during battles fierce resistance was put up and only a few prisoners taken.“ (quoted in: *Keegan, Second World War, 186-87*; also, *Gilbert, Second World War, 200-01*)

26.6.41: The Germans reached *Bialystok* on **26 Jun 41**. Part of the Jewish quarter was burned down immediately; at least **1000** people died when the *synagogue* in which they had been locked was set afire. The *pogroms* lasted until **mid-Jul**, and another **6300** people, many of them young men, lost their lives. Here, too, the Germans used methods that had been used at the beginning of the Polish occupation, and hundreds of *intellectuals* were among the first victims. On **1.8.41**, the ghetto was set up and run by the *Judenrat*, which had been established on orders of the Germans at end of July. (*Yahil, Holocaust, 261*)

26.6.41: Within **48** hours of German troops entering *Kovno*, local *Lithuanians* turn on some of the city's **35,000** Jewish inhabitants, killing more than **1000**. (*Gilbert, Second World War, 205*)

27.6.41 [*Galizien*]...Zermuerbend ist der *Heckenschuetzenkrieg*. Stundelang in gluehender Sonne im Korn liegen u. wenn man nur den Kopf hebt, *huith*, da pfeift es von vorne aus den Baeumen. Mit einer MG-Garbe die *Halunken* [scoundrels] aus dem Baum jagen, geht auch nicht, weil dahinter dt. Truppen sind. Na, schliesslich sind wir doch in den Hof gekommen u. haben uns die Burschen nacheinander gekrallt. Und wo sie nicht freiwillig kamen, haben wir sie ausgeraeuchert. Einfach die Gehoefte angesteckt. Der Tross hat es nachher dauernd so gemacht. Mit den Kolben zusammengeslagen haben sie die Bengels [rascals], wenn sie sie bekamen. Geschah ihnen ganz recht! *Es gibt nichts Gemeineres als diese Schuesse hinter der kaempfenden Truppe!* Schliesslich wurde die Truppe maehlich nervoes. Auf alles, was kein Uniformstueck trug, wurde zuletzt geschossen. Man durfe sogar nicht mehr ohne Stahlhelm schiessen gehen, sonst wurde man als Spion u. Heckenschuetze beschossen. *Die Slawen sind doch grausame Kaempfer*. Kein *Sanitaeter* traegt noch die weisse Armbinde mit dem roten Kreuz, denn auf die Truppenverbandsplaetze schiessen sie zuerst. Z.T. hat es sogar *Bajonettkaempfe* gegeben. (*Ernst-Guenter Merten, Echolot, 120*)⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁴ **Note:** “Yet Lemelsen went on to endorse Hitler’s order that all those identified as political commissars and partisans ‘should be taken aside and shot.’ Only by this means, he explained could the Russian people be liberated ‘from the oppression of a Jewish and criminal group.’” (*Gilbert, Second World War, 200-01*)

⁵⁵⁵ **Note:** Although this example from southern sector of front (Army Group South), it provides another illustration of how infuriated – even “spooked” – the Germans quickly became because of what they

29.6.41: City of *Lvov*, capital of Eastern Galicia, falls to the Germans in what one historian calls a „nightmare of carnage and chaos,” beginning w/ the massacre of **3000** Ukrainian political prisoners by the **NKVD**. Hardly had the Russian troops withdrawn, some having to break out of an encircled city, when *Ukrainian Nationalists* begin slaughtering Jews in the streets. Further south, in Romanian city of *Jassy*, Romanian soldiers go on a rampage, killing at least **250** Jews; a further **1194** die after being sealed in a train and sent southward for eight (**8**) days. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 204-05)

Jun-Jul 41 [*Lemberg*]: Nicht nur ideologische Verhetzung, kollektiver Zwang u. Alkohol enthemmten dabei die Taeter, sondern auch die Konfrontation mit der moerderischen Hinterlassenschaft der Sowjets in den von ihnen im Zuge des Hitler-Stalin-Paktes annektierten u. nun von der *Wehrmacht* eroberten Gebieten. So waren im galizischen Lemberg auf Befehl des sowjet. Geheimdienstchefs *Lawrenti Berija*, alle „konterrevolutionaeren Elemente,“ deren Deportation angesichts der vorrueckenden dt. Truppen nicht mehr moeglich war, systematisch ermordet worden. Als die dt. Truppen u. bald nach ihnen die *Einsatzgruppen* in die Stadt einrueckten, fanden sie Tausende verwesender Leichen – ein Szenario, das das von der Nazi-Propaganda gezeichnete Bild vom „juedisch-bolschewistischen Untermenschen“ zu bestaetigen schien.

Doch nicht allein dies: Die Eroberer *Lembergs* trafen in Ostmitteleuropa auf einen *tiefverwurzelten Antisemitismus*, der seinerseits oft Judentum u. Bolschewismus miteinander gleichsetzte u. sich nun in von den *Einsatzkommandos* noch angeheizten Pogromen entlud. . . In einem regelrechten *Blutrausch* toeteten sie [i.e., die rasch aufgestellten oertlichen ukrainischen Buergermilizen] innerhalb dreier Tage **4000** Lemberger Juden. Mehr als **50** Pogrome wurden in den ersten Wochen allein in den ukrainischen Gebieten gezaehlt. Im *Baltikum* war es *nicht anders*. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 528)

Jun-Aug 41: Like some other Catholic bishops, Bishop Clemens August Graf von *Galen*, the Catholic Bishop of *Muenster* in *Westphalia*, had welcomed the attack on the Soviet Union and offered his prayers for the „successful defense against the Bolshevik threat to our people.“ But in July, as *Muenster* suffered under a hail of British bombs, he delivered a series of sermons denouncing in the most forthright terms the *Gestapo's suppression of religious orders* in the city. Then, on **3.8.41**, in a most courageous sermon in the *St Lamberti Church* in Muenster, Galen openly denounced in plain terms what was happening [i.e., the Nazi's *euthanasia* action]. On **24.8.41**, Hitler forced to stopped the **T4** „euthanasia action“ as secretly as he had started it two years earlier.⁵⁵⁶ He is also sufficiently concerned about morale and popular unrest at such a critical juncture in the war that – even before Galen had delivered his sermon – he issued orders to *Gauleiter* to cease until further notice all seizures of Church and monastic property. (See, *Kershaw*, 426-27)

Jul 41 [*Minsk*]: In capital of White Russia, there were **53,686** Jews in **1926**, about **40.8%** of the population. Now, as refugees streamed in, the number rose steeply, reaching **75,000** in **1941**. The

viewed as the uncivilized practices of Russian soldiers. On such occasions – as here – the Germans responded w/ rage and anger – and sometimes w/ murder.

⁵⁵⁶ **Note:** By the time of Hitler's "halt" order, the **T4** action had already killed more than the **70,000** victims foreseen at the outset of the programme. By the end of **1941**, the number gassed, starved to death, or poisoned w/ lethal injections was nearer to **100,000**. But the "halt" order ended the programme neither completely nor permanently. As for the **T4** personnel, w/in a few weeks they wre already being redeployed to start the planning Poland of a far larger mass-killing "programme:" the extermination of the Jews. (430)

ghetto was established at the end of July, w/ between **80-100,000** inmates as the Germans had also rounded up the Jews of the surrounding areas. This figure remained stable for some time despite the *Aktionen*, because the Jews expelled from Germany and Austria were sent to *Minsk*. The town was an important base behind the German front, serving as a transportation ctr and central supply base. No doubt, the great demand for labor explains why the ghetto was maintained until **Oct 43**. Here, as in many other places, the *intellectuals* were the first victims of the *Aktion*, which was carried out in **Jul 41**, immediately after the Germans occupied the town. Three (3) additional *Aktionen* took place in second half of **Aug 41**, but number of victims is unknown. A *second wave of killings* took place in **Nov 41**, and the number of victims ranged from **20-30,000**. More extermination ops conducted in **Mar** and **Jul 42**. In Minsk, the Germans used the *gas vans* for killing. At end of **Jul 42**, Minsk is declared *Judenrein*; although, in fact, the ghetto was only liquidated in **Oct 43**. The total number of Jews exterminated there is estimated between **90-100,000**, 1/3 of all inhabitants killed in Minsk. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 270-71)

3.7.41 [*bei Smolensk*]: Nach einer Woche war ich schon bei einem in Frontnaehe gelegenen *Etappenlazarett* bei Smolensk. Als stellvertretende Apothekenleiterin habe ich selbstverstaendlich nicht so viele Schrecken des Krieges miterlebt wie die Krankenschwestern...Und die Verwundeten, Tausende u. Abertausende von Verwundeten. Sie wurden gefahren, getragen, auf Planen geschleppt, nicht wenige *starben beim Transport*. Viele kamen auch selbst angehumpelt oder sogar gekrochen, blutend u. erschoeft...Wir hatten meistens keine Betten mehr, keine Zelte fuer die Unterbringung der Verwundeten. Die Leichen lagen einfach auf dem Boden, solange es noch mit dem Wetter ging. Abends liessen wir sie mit Sanitaetszuegen ins Hinterland fahren. Und ich dachte oft daran, dass viele von ihnen ihr Reiseziel nicht erreichen werden. *Die gegnerischen [dt.] Flieger hielten es nicht selten fuer eine Heldentat, einen Sanitaetszug des Feindes aus der Luft zu zerschmettern*. Sie belustigten sich dabei, machten eine Art Jadj mit den Lokfuehrern...(Sanitaetsleutnant Vera Jukina, *Echolot*, 204-05)

5.7.41: The part played by in the massacres of the Jews by *Lithuanians* is raised at Hitler's HQ by a German army officer. In *Kovno*, according to a report by the Special Task Forces [*Einsatzgruppen*], **2500** Jews had been killed by the Lithuanians before the Germans had even occupied the city. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 207)

7.7.41: Mit dem schnellen Vormarsch der H.Gr.Mitte konnte die Einsatzgruppe B zunaechst nicht schritthalten. Ihre ersten Grossaktionen in Staedten erfolgten nachdem die Spitzenverbaende der H.Gr. bereits weit von ihnen entfernt waren. Daher hatten ihre Erschiessungsaktionen im **Sommer 1941** zunaechst einen relativ geringen Umfang, verglichen mit denen der anderen Einsatzgruppen. . . Die „Durchkaemmungen“ u. Erschiessungen [der Einsatzgruppe B] in Minsk begannen am **7. Jul 41**. Auch Verbaende der Wehrmacht waren an ihnen beteiligt,⁵⁵⁷ so das **IR 354** – die hohe Hausnummer deutet darauf hin, dass es sich nicht um eine Kerntruppe der Wehrmacht handelte. Kleinere Einheiten der Sonderkommandos [der Einsatzgruppe B] wurden bald den Truppenverbaenden zugeteilt. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 242)

7.7.41: „Wir kamen in *Minsk* an. Unser Bataillon kriegte die Aufgabe, **6000** Gefangene zu bewachen u. *alle Juden* in der Stadt zu *erschiessen*. Viele Gefangene fluechteten in der Nacht u. wir mussten von der Waffe Gebrauch machen. Wir haben allein **500** Juden umgelegt.“ (*Tagebuch eines Obergefreiten, IR 354/62. ID*, quoted in: *Dollinger, Kain, wo ist dein Bruder?*, 88)

⁵⁵⁷ **Note:** Die drei Armeen der H.Gr.Sued, die **6.**, **11.** u. **17. Armee**, hatten sich von Anfang an um eine enge Zusammenarbeit mit den Einsatzgruppen bemueht. (243)

8.7.41 [*Fuehrerhauptquartier*]: „...Vom Bolschewismus darf nichts mehr uebrig bleiben. Der Fuehrer hat die Absicht, Staedte wie *Moskau* u. *Petersburg* ausradieren zu lassen. Es ist das auch notwendig...“ (*Joseph Goebbels, Echolot*, 300)

16.7.41: Am 16. Juli entwickelte Hitler, vor Goering, Rosenberg, Keitel, Lammers u. Bormann seine Vorstellungen von der kuenftigen dt. „*Ostpolitik*“ in den „Reichskommissariaten“ unter der *Devise*, es komme darauf an, „den riesenhaften Kuchen handgerecht zu *zerlegen*, damit wir ihn ersten *beherrschen*, zweitens *verwalten* u. drittens *ausbeuten* koennen. „Die Bildung einer mil. Macht westl. des Urals darf nie wieder in Frage kommen.“ „Der Riesenraum muesse so schnell wie moeglich befriedet werden; dies geschehe am besten dadurch, dass man jeden, der nur schief schauete, totschiessete.“ (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 444)

21.7.41: Am 21. Juli enthuelte Hitler gegenueber dem kroatischen Verteidigungsminister *Kvaternik* seinen Plan, die seit Beginn des Ostkrieges am 22. Juni auf dem Boden der Sowjetunion von den „*Einsatzgruppen*“ der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD im Gange befindliche systematische Vernichtung der Juden in den eroberten sowjet. Gebieten...auf ganz Europa auszuweiten, denn: „Wenn auch nur ein Staat aus irgendwelchen Gruenden eine juedische Familie bei sich dulde, so wuerde diese der *Bazillenherd* fuer eine neue Zersetzung werden.“ (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 444)

31.7.41: It is well known that Hitler apparently did not issue written orders on the „Final Solution.“ *Heydrich*, however, received an ordinance from *Goering* on **31 Jul 41** [addressing the „completion of the task of solving the Jewish question“]. The directive refers to an „overall solution“ [*Gesamtloesung*] and the final clause even mentions a „final solution“ [*Endloesung*]. We may assume that by the end of **Jul 41**, a *clear-cut decision* had been taken to exploit the conquered territories to solve the Jewish problem throughout Europe in the spirit proclaimed by Hitler time and again. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 254-55)

31.7.41: Am 31. Juli, beauftragte Goering *Heydrich*, „unter Beteiligung der dafuer in Frage kommenden dt. Zentralinstanzen alle erforderlichen Vorbereitungen fuer eine *Gesamtloesung* der Judenfrage in Europa zu treffen.“ Auf dem Hoehpunkt der *Siegesillusionen*, in der Zeit, als Hitler vermeintlich schon ueber die Sowjetunion triumphierte u. die dt. Kriegsmaschine gegen die Seemaechte Grossbritannien u. die USA nach Westen umzudirigieren begann, im **Jul 41**, hat er somit auch die grundsatzliche Entscheidung getroffen, die Juden im ganzen dt. Machtbereich in Europa auszurotten. (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 445)⁵⁵⁸

Late Jul 41: Spaetestens zu dieser Zeit war ueberall auf sowjet. Seite durchgedrungen, dass der von dt. Seite eroeffnete *Vernichtungskampf* gegen Teile der sowjet. Zivilbevoelkerung keine blosse *Begleiterscheinung* des militaerischen Ringens war, sondern *zum System einer Dezimierung u. Ausrottungs-„Politik“* gehoerte. Hitlers Vernichtungskrieg, der weder den Soldaten der Roten Armee noch der...Bevoelkerung, schon gar nicht der sowjet. Fuehrung irgendwelche Alternativen zur entschlossenen Abwehr des Feindes liess, setzte nun in Russland elementare Energien frei, die mit dem Willen zur Abwehr der drohenden *Versklavung* durch den fremden Eroberer der Verteidigung des „Vaterlandes“ damit aber auch der erneuten *Festigung des* in den ersten Kriegswochen offensichtlich schwer angeschlagenen *Regimes Stalins* zuflossen. Die anfaenglich hohe Zahl von *Ueberlaeufern* aus der Roten Armee – ueber **70.000** in den ersten

⁵⁵⁸ **Note:** This decision of Hitler's, at *this* time, shows quite clearly, and chillingly, the intimate link between military and ideological goals in the *Barbarossa* campaign. It would culminate in decision – taken in Nov-Dec 41 timeframe – to use gas chambers in Poland to accomplish the genocide. (445)

drei Wochen – sank in Kuerze auf ein Minimum. (Hillgruber, *Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 454)

Jul 41-Sep 41: „We have now seen how in the *summer of 1941* – concomitant w/ the killings by the *Einsatzgruppen* – preparations for the mass murder of the Jews commenced [i.e., on a European scale]. Toward the end of the summer, the situation of the Jews in the Reich *deteriorated greatly* and steps were taken to isolate them and to deprive them of their remaining rights.“ (Yahil, *Holocaust*, 319)

1.8.41: At Minsk, Reichsfuehrer-SS *Himmler* himself witnesses an execution. He has the “bad luck” on this occasion, his senior liaison officer, SS General Karl Wolff later recalled, “that from one or other of the people who had been shot in the head, he got a splash of brains on his coat, and I think it also splashed into his face, and he went very green and pale; he wasn’t actually sick but he was heaving and turned round and swayed and then I had to jump forward and hold him steady and then I led him away from the grave.” Following this episode, Himmler asks the head of the German Criminal Police, Arthur *Nebe*, who held the rank of general in the SS, and who, since **22.6.41** had been in charge of *Einsatzgruppe B*, operating in White Russia, to find some new method of mass killing. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 220)

7.8.41: German police cdr in the central sector, *von dem Bach Zelewski*, reports to SS HQ in Berlin that his units have conducted **30,000** executions since their arrival in Russia; the **SS Cavalry Bde** also sent in a report to Berlin that day, to say that it had carried out **7,819** “executions” to date in the *Minsk* area. To ensure maximum secrecy, both reports were sent by the most secure radio cypher system available – the *Enigma*. Both were read by British Intelligence. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 221)

12.-15.8.41: In einer Weisung von OKW, die an sich nichts Neues brachte, fiel mir der Stil auf, der sich in Nicht vom Parteijargon ueberheblichster Art unterscheidet und beim Heer nicht ueblich war., z.B. „die russ. 5. Armee ist auszuloeschen“ oder „Kiew ist durch Brandbomben und Artilleriesfeuer zu vernichten“! Schauderhaft, diese Art ., eine Millionenstadt kaltlaechelnd zu zerstören und mehr dazu – eine Hauptstadt eines Landes, das einen uns befreundeten Staat moeglichst bilden soll. Es steht ja noch gar nicht fest, ob es militaerisch absolut notwendig sein wird. Vielleicht räumen es die Russen bei Umfassung freiwillig. Zum Ausräuchern bei richtigem Widerstand , werden wir gar nicht die notwendige Munition heranbringen, denn es ist eine Riesenstadt. Bei Warschau war doch nachher auch das Meiste heil. (*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*)

12.-15.8.41: Ic HGr. Mitte sagt “ungeheure Anzahl von Gefangenen durch *mangelhafte Verpflegung und rücksichtslose Behandlung* geht zu Grunde und wird auch abgeschossen. Gegensatz zu unserer Propaganda, das spricht sich rum und die Truppe muß es beim Kampf ausbaden. (*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*)

14.8.41: Die Aktionen der Einsatzgruppen verliefen des oeffteren in Gegenwart der Truppenverbaende. Oft wurden diese von Soldaten fotografiert. Eine besonders bestialische Judenexekution ereignete sich am **14. Aug 41** in Witebsk. Fuenf SD-Maenner erschossen Juden am laufenden Band. . . Die Exekution ereignete sich **3** Kilometer vom Hauptquartier des Generaloberst Strauss, damals OB der **9. Armee**, entfernt. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 249)

15.8.41: In Minsk, Hinrich *Lohse* issues a decree for the whole of German-occupied Russia: Every Jew is ordered to wear *two yellow badges* – one on the chest, one on the back – not to walk on the pavements, not to use public transport, not to visit parks, playgrounds, theatres, cinemas,

libraries or museums; and to receive in the ghetto only food which was “surplus” to local needs. All able-bodied Jews were to join labor gangs and to work at tasks laid down by the occupation authorities, such as road-building, bridge-building and repairing bomb damage. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 223-24)

30.8.41: Furchtbare Greuel durch den SD in *Biela Cerkow*. Juden beiderlei Geschlechts im Alter von 12 Jahren samt u. anders erschossen. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

ca. Aug/Sep 41: (*Anecdote* re: anatomy of a “war crime”). *S. Knappe* (**87. ID**) describes attack on prepared positions in a wooded area near *Orsha*. Russian survivors in first line of overrun trenches violate unwritten code of honor by not surrendering; instead they fire on advancing German soldiers from behind. German soldiers become infuriated: “Our soldiers went berserk.” From this point on in attack, they take no prisoners, leave no one alive in a trench or a foxhole. Knappe had never experience such brutality in combat, but understood why his comrades had acted as they did. (*S. Knappe, 87. ID, Reflections*, 219-21)

Sep 41: German bombardment of *Leningrad* was inflicting a toll of **4000** civilian casualties a day and starting **200** fires. City has approximately **3,000,000** inhabitants. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 198)

Sep 41: Im September erschoss die **SS-Kav.-Div. 7000** Juden in der Naehue des Feldflughafens [bei Bobruisk]. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 244)

1.9.41: Regulation published which requires Jews of the Greater Reich to wear the *yellow badge*. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 292-93)

5.9.41: ...Und wenn dann noch Belastungen dazu kommen, die in dem System begruetet sind, so dass *man sich seines anstaendigen Deutschtums schaemen muss* (Polen war *gar nichts* dagegen, fuer *Leningrad* hat man trotz aller Vorstellungen die Aushungerung ohne Ruecksicht auf Kapitulationsangebote – das waeren ja doch nur Finten [tricks]– mit allen Einwohnern befohlen, auf ausbrechende Frauen u. Kinder ist zu schiessen!!) – wenn ein wahrer Teufel in Menschengestalt so etwas erfindet, wovor ein *Dschinghis Kahn* vor Neid erblassen wuerde, dann allerdings verliert man den Glauben u. die Zuversicht an der Gerechtigkeit der Sache, fuer die man kaempfen u. arbeiten soll! Dies ist aber bitte alles nur fuer Dich bestimmt. Und nimm den Brief bloss nicht in die Slowakei mit! (*H. Stieff, Briefe*, 127)

Mid-Sep 41: ...nun lehnte **Hitler** von sich aus, entgegen seiner kurz zuvor erteilten Anordnung, eine Eroberung *Leningrads* ab. Vielmehr sollte durch eine Belagerung die *Zivilbevoelkerung ausgehungert* werden. Selbst wenn der Hunger wirkte, so bestand von Seiten der pol. Fuehrung kein Interesse daran, die eventuell fluechtende Bevoelkerung in dt. Obhut verpflegen u. versorgen zu muessen – *Fluechtlinge sollten durch direktes Feuer wieder zurueckgetrieben werden*. (*Loeffler, Brauchitsch*, 250).

15.-29.9.41: Im „Grossdeutschen Reich“ wird am **15.9.41** fuer alle *Juden* vom **6.** Lebensjahr an das Tragen des „*Judensterns*“ (Gelber Stern) zur Pflicht. In der *Ukraine* liquidieren die SS-Einsatzgruppen am **19.9.41** das Ghetto von *Shitomir* (**18,000** Opfer), am **23.9.41** werden in *Auschwitz* die ersten *Versuchsvergasungen* aufgenommen u. am **28.-29.9.41** kommt es in *Kiew* zu einem *Juden-Massaker*, dem **34,000** Menschen zum Opfer fallen. (*Dollinger, Kain, wo ist dein Bruder?*, 91)

Sep-Oct 41: Schon im September war Hitler *einen weiteren Schritt in Richtung auf den Massenmord an den Juden gegangen*. Eine Rolle spielten dabei das offensichtliche Naeherruecken des *Kriegseintritts der USA* u. die Massnahmen Stalins gegen die dt. Minderheiten. Am **11.9.41** hatte Roosevelt einen „Schiessbefehl“ gegen die Schiffe der Achsenmaechte im Bereich der nordatlantischen Geleitzugrouten erlassen...Stalin hatte soeben die *Deportation der Wolgadeutschen* angeordnet, von denen Tausende liquidiert wurden. Hitler befahl nun den *Beginn der Deportationen*, mit deren Vorbereitung *Heydrich* bereits Ende Juli beauftragt worden war. . . Der erste Deportationsbefehl aus der Reichshauptstadt, in der etwa noch **70 000** Juden lebten – im Altreich u. in der „Ostmark“ waren es insgesamt annaeherd **300 000** – erging am **14 Okt 41**. . . Zwischen dem **16.10.-13.11.41** trafen in die Stadt *Lodz* [i.e., das Ghetto *Litzmannstadt*] mehr als **20 000** Juden aus dem Reichsgebiet u. dem Protektorat ein, vor allem aus *Berlin, Koeln, Wien* u. *Prag*. (*Reuth, Hitler, 543*)

Sep-Oct 41: Hitler hatte auch Vorbereitungen fuer die *vollstaendige Vernichtung der europaeischen Juden* treffen lassen, um im Falle einer weltweiten Eskalation des von ihm als *Rassenkampf* begriffenen Krieges den letzten Schritt – die „Endloesung – tun zu koennen. So sagte *Eichmann*, der Leiter des *Judenreferats*, nach seiner Ergreifung aus, dass *Heydrich* ihm zwei bis drei Monate nach Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges, den er in der Rueckschau irrtuemlich auf den Juli legte – also **Sep/Okt 41** – eroeffnet habe, „der Fuehrer hat die *physische Vernichtung der Juden* befohlen.“ ... Mit anderen Worten: *Heydrich* hatte seinen Leiter des *Judenreferats*, der sich lange mit der Auswanderung der Juden beschaeftigt hatte, darauf hingewiesen, dass deren Vernichtung vorgesehen sei. Wann diese beginnen sollte, war damit allerdings noch nicht festgelegt. (*Reuth, Hitler, 543*)

Sep-Nov 41: Hitler's *original plan* to solve the Jewish question *after* the war had been upset because his assumption that the Russian campaign would end quickly had been proved wrong, and by end of **Aug 41**, it was clear that the fighting would go on at least until the following summer. Meanwhile, both *Goebbels* and *Rosenberg* were pressing for vigorous action to deport the Jews from the Reich. It appears that some time in the latter half of **Sep 41**, Hitler *decided to begin deporting Jews from the Great Reich to the East*. In any case, on **18.9.41**, *Himmler* wrote to *Artur Greiser* in *Warthegau*, „The Fuehrer is demanding that the original Reich and the Protectorate be *cleaned out from west to east* and be rid of Jews as quickly as possible...“ About a month later, on **14.10.41**, the chief of the *Orpo*, *Kurt Daluege*, issued the *deportation order*; between **16.10-4.11.41**, there were **19,827** Jews from the Reich sent to *Lodz* in **20** transports of **1000** people each. This was not the first deporation in **1941**; the deportation of Jews from *Vienna* to the east had already begun in **Feb 41**. (*Yahil, Holocaust, 293-94*)

Sep 41-Jan 42: The use of *gas trucks* [for extermination purposes] began in early **Dec 41** in the *Chelmno* extermination camp about **40** miles NW of *Lodz*.⁵⁵⁹ In the spring, the same method was then developed at *Belzec*, *Sobibor* and *Treblinka* in the *Generalgouvernement*; here, too, *diesel engines* were used, but in contast to *Chelmno*, fixed installations were constructed. The same was true of *Auschwitz* in eastern Upper Sliesia; however, there, as later in *Majdanek* near *Lublin*, *hydrocyanide* (*prussic acid*) was used for the killing. This chemical, marketed as a *disinfectant*, went by the trade name of **Zyklon-B**. According to testimony of the commandant of *Auschwitz*, *Rudolf Hoess*, *Himmler* ordered him in the *summer of 1941* to prepare a large-scale extermination camp at *Auschwitz*, stating explicitly that the *extermination of Jews* was being carried out by order of the *Fuehrer*. The first experiments w/ *Zyklon-B* were conducted in **Sep 41** in the bunker at *Auschwitz* on **Russian POWs**; systematic ops, though not yet on a full scale, commenced in

⁵⁵⁹ **Note:** The extermination activities at *Chelmno* began on **8.12.41**. It was the first extermination camp to come „on line.“ (320)

early **Jan 42** . . . In the end, the *death camps* were set up in occupied Poland – not in the Russian areas – most of them in the *Generalgouvernement*, where their construction commenced in early **1942**, on the initiative and under the supervision of *Odilo Globocnik*. (*Yahil, Holocaust*, 310-11)

Oct 41: Ein Befehl zur Totalermordung der Juden wurde Anfang October von SS-Obergruppenfuehrer v.d. Bach-Zelewski an Nebe [Kdr Einsatzgruppe B] uebermittelt. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 243)

Oct 41: Im Oktober wurden waehrend einer Aktion [der Einsatzgruppe B] im Bereich von Mogilew 2200 Juden erschossen. Am **19. Okt 41** wurden **3726** Juden in der Stadt Mogilew erschossen. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 245)

Oct 41: Probably the worst atrocity of the whole Eastern Front took place in the Ukrainian city of Odessa. The port had been held by the Russians during a long siege. Six [6] days after it fell, in late **Oct 41**, Romanian troops began a pogrom in which tens of thousands of Jews were killed. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 101)

7.10.41: During clearing of *Briansk*, *Uffz. Rupp* notes reluctance of German troops to unduly endanger civilians: „*Man will keine Sprenggranaten in die Häuser schießen...zu viele Zivilisten in den Häusern...*“ (*Tagebuch Rupp*, 7.10.41, **17. PD**) (See also his diary entry for 9.10.41: He protects Russian civilians from losing a cow and is angered by accidental injuries to two Russian children caused by indiscriminate German fire.)

12.10.-30.12.41: Die *Massaker an Juden* in den von dt. Truppen eroberten Staedten in Russland setzen sich fort: am **12.-13.10.41** gibt es in *Dnjepropetrowsk* **11,000** Opfer; am **6.11.41** [gibt es] **15,000** in *Rowno*; am **8.12.41** [gibt es] **27,000** in *Riga*; am **22.12.41** [gibt es] **32,000** in *Wilna*; u. am **30.12.41** [gibt es] **10,000** in *Simferopol* auf der *Krim*. Ab **Oct 41** werden auch dt. Juden aus dem Reich nach Osten deportiert u. dort nach ihrer Ankunft erschossen (z.B., in *Riga, Minsk* u. *Kowno*). Ende **Dez 41** wird in *Chmelno* (im „*Generalgouvernement*“) ein staendiges *Vernichtungslager* eingerichtet. (*Dollinger, Kain, wo ist dein Bruder?*, 100)

16.10.41 [3. PD]: Ein Befehl Models als Kdr. der **3. PD** ist in ihrem KTB vom **16 Oct 41** enthalten: “Vorkommnisse der letzten Zeit gegen Veranlassung darauf hinzuweisen, dass das Verhalten gegenueber der weiblichen Zivilbevoelkerung in vielen Faellen dazu angetan ist, das Ansehen der dt. Wehrmacht auf das Schwerste zu schaedigen. Es soll sogar vorgekommen sein, dass Soldaten gegen Frauen u. Maedchen mit der Waffe vorgegangen sind, um sie gefuegig zu machen. Jeder Soldat, der bei einem derartigen Vorgehen angetroffen wird, ist sofortiger schwerster Bestrafung zuzufuehren. Dieser Befehl ist allen Angehoerigen der Division bekanntzugeben u. zum Gegenstand ihrer Belehrung zu machen. Ich erwarte, dass jeder Angehoerige der Division wie bisher dafuer sorgt, alle derartigen eines dt. Soldaten unwuerdigen Handlungen zu verhindern.” (*Stein, GFM Model*, 143-44)

24.-30.10.41: *Eichmann* approves a proposal put forward a week earlier by *Hinrich Lohse*. Proposal was that the Jews who were now being deported by train to *Riga* from Berlin, Vienna and other cities in the Reich, and from Luxembourg, should, after reaching *Riga*, be killed by *mobile gas vans*. Decision to use gas vans to kill Jews was elaborated on **25 Oct 41**, by Judge *Alfred Wetzel*. The judge was advisor on Jewish affairs in the Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories. He noted that Dr *Victor Brack*, the member of Hitler’s Chancellery whose *euthanasia program* was now suspended, had already „coordinated the supply of instruments and apparatus for killing people through poison gas.“ Henceforth, a scheme to kill Jews *out of sight* of the local population, and w/o exposing regular army soldiers or Special Task Force units to the need to

shoot down women and children in cold blood, and then shoot again those who had merely been wounded by the first salvoes, was *increasingly put into effect*. Experimental gassing are carried out in the western Polish town of **Kalisz** for four (4) days, beginning on **27.10.41**. (See, *Gilbert, Second World War*, 249-50)⁵⁶⁰

27.10.41: ...*Michailowka* wird in Brand gesteckt. Grund: Partisanen haben 5 Personen in Nisch-Michailowka angegriffen, einen Leutnant und Gefreiten getötet, zwei verwundet. Ich fühle wie ich mich verfärbte, als ich mein „Jawohl“ sage. *So einen Auftrag hatte ich noch nicht.. „Ganz M. anzünden?“; frage ich! Warum?...zu meinem Trost sehe ich, daß der Chef selbst mitgeht, so daß ich nicht die Verantwortung dafür zu tragen habe. Ich bete dauernd still, noch nie war ich so erregt!..* Mir ist zum Weinen...hinter einem Strohhaufen liegen 2 „verdächtige Elemente“; beide erschossen...neuer Auftrag, sollen „Verdächtige“ sofort erschießen, mindestens einen aufhängen und Häusern abbrennen! Der Chef poltert, weil ich bei mir keinen aufhängen ließ, ich verwies, es seien nur Frauen und Kinder dort gewesen...Unsere Leute brennen Michailowka ab, ich denke an die Leute, die uns dort vor einigen Tagen bewirten haben! Meine Leute sehen das Furchtbare solchen Handelns ein und schimpfen mächtig. Endlich gibt es den Befehl zum Zurückgehen. Nun kommt der Chef wieder mit seinen Vorwürfen. Anderen Tages telefoniert er aber mit dem Battalion, daß er einen solchen Auftrag nicht mehr wünsche. Ein wenig scheint er doch um sein Tun zu wissen. (*Tagebuch Rupp, 17. PD*)⁵⁶¹

30.10.41: Heute kommt Fuehrerbefehl betreffend Leningrad, Moskau u. aehnlich Grossstaedte. *Kapitulation nicht anzunehmen, Bevoelkerung aushungern*, Raum zum Ausweichen nach Osten geben. Moralische Berechtigung, wir koennen uns nicht mit dem Problem der Ernaehrung solcher Grossstaedte belasten. Harte Notwendigkeit! (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

Nov 41: One of those most closely involved in the executions of the Jews, *Hinrich Lohse*, the Reich Commissar for the Baltic States and White Russia, took independent action in early November, when, at *Libava*, he ordered the killings in progress there to cease. Asked by his superiors to explain why he had called a halt to them, he replies on **15.11.41** that „the manner in which they were performed could not be justified.“ Not moral, but *economic reasons*, were his complaint: the destruction of such manpower that could be of use to the war economy. In reply, he is informed from Berlin, by Rosenberg’s Ministry of the Eastern Territories, that the demands of the economy „*should be ignored.*“ (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 256)

Nov 41: When *Kursk* fell, its able-bodied men were rounded up and interned wherever the barbed wire could be unrolled. The lucky ones were headed into the central movie theater; most others shivered in the open air. They were not fed at all. Then they were made to work, and those who

⁵⁶⁰ **Note:** The evolving plans for murder by gas would ensure that most future killings would be done behind a mask of secrecy, by methods which far fewer people would have to see, and in circumstances which would reduce the chance of discovery. On **28.10.41**, Eichmann notes the “approaching final solution of the European Jewry problem.” (251)

⁵⁶¹ This is marvelous example of how many *einfache Soldaten* must have responded to such orders. Uffz Rupp is appalled, despairing. But just how much *Spielraum* does he have? Not enough to prevent town from burning, but enough (apparently) to keep innocent civilians from being shot as “partisans.” Even his coy cdr finds the assignment unappealing. See Rupp diary for more details. **C. Nehring:** „Hier haben wir ein Soldat, der befohlen wird, einen sehr widerlichen Auftrag zu erfuellen—die Niederbrennung eines Dorfes. Und innerlich straeubt er sich dagegen...Aber Befehl bleibt Befehl. Es gibt keinen Ausweg fuer ihn. Ich kann mir vorstellen, dass es genau so gewesen ist „zig“ Mal mit vielen einfachen dt. Soldaten in Russland—d.h., es gab fuer sie keine Moeglichkeit sich solchen Befehlen—die ja als verbrecherisch u. kriminell bezeichnet werden konnten—zu widersetzen. Wie Rupp schreibt, koennen sie nur schimpfen.“ (Email, 15 Oct 05)

failed to satisfy their captors were beaten w/ rubber truncheons and threatened with death. On the second day of the occupation, 15 Communist activists, including four young women, were made to dig graves in the black loam near the central square, and then each one was shot. (*Ivan's War*, C. Merridale, 132-33)

2.11.41: Vor kurzem wurden in **Borisow** (Hr.Gr.Mitte) auf Veranlassung des SD u. unter dessen Leitung im Anschluss an ein „Polizeifest“ 6 500 Juden innerhalb von 2 Tagen hingeschlachtet. *Die Durchfuehrung war viehisch*. Die grundsatzliche Entschlussfassung massgeblicher Maenner zu dieser Handhabung des Judenproblems ist mir unerklaerlich u. unterscheidet unsere „Zivilisation“ kaum von Stalinschen Methoden. Als *vernuenftiger Ausweg* boete sich eine Austreibung der Juden ueber die Kampffront nach Osten an. (*Tagebuch Thilo*)

7.11.41: On this day in *Minsk*, **12,000** Jews are slaughtered in pits just outside the city. Three days later (**10.11.41**), a train w/ **1000** Jews from *Hamburg* arrives in Minsk. “They felt themselves,” an eyewitness later recalled, „as pioneers who were brought to settle the East.“ Almost none of them were to survive the massacres of future months; any more than the **6000** Jews who were sent after them that **Nov 41**, from *Frankfurt*, *Bremen* and the *Rhineland*. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 254)

15.-18.11.41: In dieser Phase [Mitte-Nov] tat Hitler *den letzten Schritt hin zur systematischen Ermordung der Juden*. Am **15 Nov 41** trafen Himmler u. Rosenberg zusammen u. besprachen, ob die „Behandlung des Judenproblems“ eine polizeiliche Angelegenheit sei oder im Rahmen der „Gesamtpolitik“ stehe u. damit in der Kompetenz des Ostministers. Nach einem Abendessen in der „Wolfsschanze“ am **16.11.41**, an dem Hitler, Rosenberg u. Himmler teilnahmen, sprach letzterer tags darauf mit Heydrich ueber „Verhaeltnisse im GeneralGouv. – Beseitigung der Juden.“ Wiederum einen Tag spaeter – am **18 Nov 41** – erklarte Rosenberg gegenueber ausgewaehlten Vertretern des Propagandaapparats, die besetzten sowjet. Gebiete seien „berufen eine Frage zu loesen, die den Voelkern Europas gestellt ist: das ist die Judenfrage.“ Sie koenne „nur geloest werden in einer biologischen Ausmerzung des gesamten Judentums in Europa.“ Gleichzeitig veroeffentlichte Goebbels in der Wochenzeitung „*Das Reich*“ einen Beitrag, in dem es hiess, dass sich am Judentum ein Schicksal erfuelle, „das zwar hart, aber mehr als verdient ist.“ Dafuer spricht auch, dass nun die gesetzlichen Voraussetzungen fuer die Deportationen der Juden aus dem Reichsgebiet ueber dessen Grenzen hinaus geschaffen wurden. (For details see, *Reuth, Hitler*, 547)

16.11.41: In an article published through his mouthpiece, the magazine *Das Reich*, on 16 Nov 41, which was *discussed along the entire eastern front*, **Goebbels** used illustrations from the realm of pathology to describe the danger represented by each individual, and however amiable-seeming Jew – and, in the style of a hygienic prevention campaign, he *announced their impending eradication*. The article, bearing the headline “It’s the Jew’s fault,” concluded w/ ten key points. They stated: “The Jews are our ruin. They plotted and then brought about this war . . . This plan must be thwarted . . . Every German soldier who falls in this war must be answered for by the Jews. . .” This was tantamount to enjoining each soldier to identify the murder of the Jews w/ *military duty*. The timing of this *radicalization* was anything but accidental. The beacon which was lit in the gorge of **Babi Yar** on **29.-30.9.41** marked the *first wave of ghetto massacres*. At the same time, the *Wehrmacht* started its operation “*Typhoon*,” an assault on Moscow as the final attempt to mount a decisive *blitzkrieg* in the hope of winning the war. (*H. Heer, War of Extermination*, 336)

25./29.11.41: In the last week of **Nov 41**, the *Einsatzgruppen* claim their first German-Jewish victims. In *Kaunas*, units from the *Einsatzgruppe A* shoot **5000** men, women and children

recently arrived from Berlin, Breslau, Munich, Frankfurt and Vienna. The intention to destroy the entire Jewish population of Europe „was now firmly established.“ (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 504)

Nov-Dec 41: Judenaktion [der Einsatzgruppe B] in Roslawl fanden in Nov/Dez statt. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 246)

Dec 41 [Bobruisk]: Im Dezember fand eine Grossaktion [der Einsatzgruppe B] statt, bei der **5281** Juden erschossen wurden. Bobruisk wurde danach als „judenfrei“ gemeldet. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 244)

Dec 41: With the gassings at *Chelmno* having proved effective, swift and secret, *Heydrich* calls a conference in Berlin to discuss the „future“ of Europe’s Jews. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 279)

Dez 41: Am **5 Dez 41** begann die sowj. Gegenoffensive vor Moskau; am **7 Dez 41** eroffnete Japan den Krieg im Pazifick durch den Ueberfall auf Pearl Harbor; u. am **11 Dez 41** erklarte Deutschland u. Italien den USA den Krieg. Zu der Dramatik dieser Tage gehoert auch Hitlers Entscheidung, die *Ausrottung der Juden zu beschleunigen u. zu vollenden*. (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 156)⁵⁶²

1.12.41: Die Judenaktion in Konotop wurde von der **SS-Kav.-Div.** am **1. Dez 41** durchgefuehrt, waehrend der **153** Juden zunaechst festgenommen u. dann erschossen wurden. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 246)

7.12.41: On this night, the long planned gassings of the *Final Solution* began to be put into effect, when **700** Jews from the small Polish town of *Kolo*, situated **200** miles SW of Rastenburg, are taken in trucks to nearby village of *Chelmno*. There, on following morning (**8 Dec 41**) **80** of the Jews are transferred to a special van, which sets off towards a small clearing inside the nearby woods. By the time the journey was over, the **80** Jews were dead, gassed by exhaust fumes which had been channelled back into the van. After eight or nine journeys, all **700** Jews had been killed. Henceforth, day after day, Jews from all the surrounding towns and villages are to be brought to *Chelmno* and killed. Told that they are being taken to „the east“ for agricultural labor, or to work in factories, up to **1000** Jews a day are taken to their deaths. No one survives this journey; in all, it is to consume **360,000** lives, and to eliminate Jewish life altogether from more than **200** communities. A new method of mass murder has been devised; *Chelmno* has become its first, but not its last, location. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 274-75)

12.12.41: Die Ueberzeugung diesen Zweiten Weltkrieg durchfechten zu muessen, nahm Hitler auch die letzten Hemmungen, die physische Vernichtung der europaeischen Juden in die Tat umzusetzen. Obgleich das *ausloesende Moment* dafuer im Scheitern des Feldzuges gegen die

⁵⁶² **Note:** R.D. Mueller places Hitler’s decision to exterminate the Jews in the context of the signing of the Atlantic Charter in **Aug 41**, for he had threatened that another “world war” would lead to the destruction of world Jewery. Writes Mueller: „Mit der Atlantik-Charta bekraeftigte Roosevelt am **12 Aug 41** zudem das Zusammengehen mit Grossbritannien. Die USA uebernahmen den Schutz britischer Geleitzuege im Atlantik u. machten deutlich klar, dass sie eine deutsche Vorherrschaft in Europa niemals hinnehmen wuerden. Erste Hilfslieferungen an Stalin unterstuetzten dieses Bekenntnis. Demgegenueber schwanden Hitlers Hoffnungen auf eine schnelle Entscheidung im Osten von Tag zu Tag. *Manches deutet darauf hin, dass die Ausweitung des Massenmords an den Juden eine unmittelbare Reaktion auf die Atlantik-Charta war.*“ (155)

Sowjetunion lag, diente ihm nun die Ausweitung des Krieges zum Weltkrieg als Begründung, so, wie er es seit dem **30 Jan 39** bei öffentlichen Auftritten mehrmals „prophezeit“ hatte. Er kam darauf auch in seiner Rede gegenüber den Reichs- u. Gauleitern am **12 Dez 41** zu sprechen, wie Goebbels notierte:

Bezüglich der Judenfrage ist der Führer entschlossen, *reinen Tisch zu machen*. Er hat den Juden prophezeit, dass, wenn sie noch einmal einen Weltkrieg herbeiführen würden, sie dabei ihre Vernichtung erleben würden. Das ist keine Phrase gewesen. Der Weltkrieg ist da, die Vernichtung des Judentums muss die notwendige Folge sein. . . Wenn das deutsche Volk jetzt wieder im Ostfeldzug an die **160 000** Tote geopfert hat, so werden die Urheber dieses blutigen Konflikts dafür mit ihrem Leben bezahlen müssen.“ (*Reuth, Hitler*, 553)

31.12.41: Bis Ende 1941 betrug die Zahl der Mordopfer der Einsatzgruppe B **45 000** Juden. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 242)

20.1.42 [*Wannsee Conference*]: It is often assumed that the *decision* to launch the *Final Solution* was taken on this occasion, but *this is not so*. It was only after varied experiences had been accumulated, after the practical measures were *already in full swing*, and after certain difficulties had emerged that seemed liable to impede implementation in all the countries of Europe that the planners of the vast operation felt the need to give it the *official stamp of approval* and to harness all the relevant authorities of the Third Reich to ensure coordination among them. Heydrich had sent out the invitations on **29.11.41**, calling the meeting for **9.12.41**. This was after *Implementation Order No. 11* had been published and rendered deportation the proclaimed policy of the government. (See, *Yahil, Holocaust*, 312-16)⁵⁶³

14.2.42: Hitler is in Berlin, for Dr Fritz Todt's funeral. That day, in a private conversation w/ Dr. Goebbels, it is upon the surviving Jews of Europe that his thoughts were set. „The Führer once more expressed his determination to clean up the Jews in Europe pitilessly,“ Goebbels notes in his diary. „There must be no squeamish sentimentalism about it.“ The Jews „deserved the catastrophe that has now overtaken them. Their destruction will go hand in hand w/ the destruction of our enemies. We must hasten this process w/ cold ruthlessness.“ (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 301)

Spring '42 [*Nerve-Gas / Bio-Wpns*]: The British author David Irving claimed that, from the spring of **1942**, some German generals persistently suggested that Hitler authorize the use of poison gas against the partisans, asserting that the best way to deal w/ unlawful partisan warfare was to implement their own unlawful but effective measures. Writes Irving:

Hitler would not hear of it [i.e., the use of gas against partisans]. . . Similarly he flatly forbade the General Staff to study the problems of bacterial attack, except in a purely defensive light. What may have been a hangover from his own gasing

⁵⁶³ Yahil: „The Nazi regime was contemplating the introduction of these measures [i.e., the use gas for mass killings of Jews and other undesirables] at the time it dispatched the *Einsatzgruppen* to execute Jews by shooting . . . This fact serves as additional proof that the Nazi leadership was already devising the extermination of the Jews on a European scale when Goering signed the directive to Heydrich on **31.7.41**, charging him w/ implementation of the „intended final solution of the Jewish question.“ Hence, the deportations from the Reich, which began in autumn of 1941, may be perceived as the *first stage* in the execution of the overall plan.“ (311)

experience in World War I kept him adamant to the end. Although the British employed phosphorus in their bombs, Hitler forbade its use in the Luftwaffe's, as it caused skin injuries and its fumes were poisonous. Since German scientists had developed nerve-gases (Sarin and Tabun) and bacterial weapons to a degree of sophistication unknown to the enemy, Hitler's otherwise inexplicable inhibitions were not w/o effect on the war effort.

(D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 386)

26.3.42: The *first* deportation of Jews to *Auschwitz* takes place on this day, when **999** Jewish women from *Slovakia* reach the camp, and are sent to the barracks. They are followed the next day by a deportation of Jews from France, a so-called „special“ train which left Paris w/ **1112** deportees. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 310)

27.3.42: Als *Kriegsmassnahme* begriff Hitler letztendlich auch den auf der *Wannseekonferenz* in seinen Gruendzuegen vereinbarten systematischen Voelkermord, der seit der Ueberwindung der Winterkrise im Osten nunmehr Zug um Zug umgesetzt wurde. Goebbels notierte am **27 Mar 42**: „Die Prophezeiung, die der Fuehrer ihnen [d.h., den Juden] fuer die Herbeifuehrung eines neuen Weltkrieges mit auf den Weg gegeben hat, beginnt sich in der furchtbarsten Weise zu verwirklichen. Man darf in diesen Dingen keine Sentimentalitaet obwalten lassen.“ (Reuth, *Hitler*, 568)

12.4.42: ...Wir befinden uns jetzt z.Z. im Donezgebiet in *Charkow* u. Umgebung, da haben wir dem Russen schon schwer das Loch aufgerissen...Jetzt bin ich wiederhergestellt [after winter in which he suffered from severe frostbite] u. kam zur Instandsetzungsstaffel als *Panzerwart* bei der Kompanie. Will aber machen, dass ich wieder zur Kampfstaffel komme, denn hier drin ist es nicht schoen, da ist kein Leben. Weisst Du, *wenn es so quietscht, u. so ein Russe liegt unter der Kette, das macht Spass*. Die die Schuetzen nicht umlegen [i.e., *those who our riflemen don't kill*], denen gehe ich nach u. fahre darueber, ha, ist das kein guter Sport?...(Sold. *Walter H., 1./Pz.Rgt.36/11. PD, BfZ*)

Jan 44: “Tonight I dined w/ *Count Schulenburg*...Midway through dinner he announced casually that **Heinrich Wittgenstein** had been killed. I froze. He looked at me in surprise, as he did not know we were such close friends. He had just been to Hitler's HQ to receive from the hands of 'the Almighty' the Oak Leaves to his Knight's Cross. He said on the phone “*Ich bin bei unserem Liebling*” [‘I have been to see our darling.’] and added that, to his surprise, his hadgun had not been removed before he entered ‘the Presence’ (as is customary nowadays), so that it might have been possible ‘to bump him off’ right then and there...When we met a little later, he started to speculate about the possibility, next time, of blowing himself up w/ Hitler when they shook hands. Poor boy, little did he suspect that he had only a few more days to live! And yet he seemed so fragile that I always worried about him. *He had become Germany's most successful night fighter*, was constantly in action and was clearly worn out. ***He often spoke of the agony he felt about having to kill people and how, whenever possible, he tried to hit the enemy plane in such a way that the crew could bail out.***” (Ed.: At the time of his death at the hands of a British long-range *Mosquito* fighter, *Major Prince Heinrich von Sayn-Wittgenstein* had destroyed **83** Allied planes, six of them in one memorable sortie. The night of his death he had shot down another five.) (M. *Vassiltchikov*, 140-41)

1.18: Germany & Berlin 1941/42:

1.18.1: Germany:

ab 22.6.41: *Todesanzeigen* (death notices) produced *rashes of black crosses* across newspaper pages, announcing the *Heldentod* of those “fallen for the Fuehrer and Fatherland.” The handling of *death notices* [of soldiers] attracted intense criticism, as revealed by one lengthy SS Home Front survey. It criticized an insensitive and inefficient bureaucratic system responsible for gross errors. *Probate wills* were being returned stamped “Fallen for Greater Germany,” before families had even been officially informed by the Wehrmacht Army Office. Suffering was, in any case, unavoidable. Hildegard Gratz in *Angerburg* recalled “the first ‘black letter’ for our family” came w/ the advent of the Russian war. Her brother-in-law had perished on the very first day of the campaign: “Suddenly everything changed. The radio carried on broadcasting news of victories. But the daily papers carried endless columns of death notices.” (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 175)

Jul-Dec 41: Roughly at this time, from the point of view of most ordinary Germans, the „good times“ as they remembered them from the **1930s**, were over. Conditions of daily life were *deteriorating sharply*. The cause of this was, they saw, the war. What was needed was an end to war and return to „normality,“ not yet another – unnecessary, as many people thought – extension of the conflict, and now against the most implacable and dangerous enemy. Daily concerns dominated the mood, alongside fears for loved ones at the front. Reports from cities highlighted the „catastrophic state of provisions“ and anger at food shortages and high prices. Industrial workers were becoming increasingly alienated by working conditions and wage levels...In the Alpine reaches of southern Bavaria, the mood was „bad and tired of war.“ Dominated by the „constantly mounting great and small worries of everyday life.“ ... It was while the ferocious warfare was raging on the eastern front that, w/in the Reich, the Nazi regime’s *renewed assault on Christianity*, which had begun in early **1941**, reached its climax. (See, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 423-30)

Late 1941 [Hunger in Germany]: Faced w/ massive, labor-intensive, war-related industries, millions of war prisoners, hundreds of thousands of German nationals incorporated from the occupied territories, and continuous British bombings, Germany soon found itself w/ a *chronically empty stomach*. The elements colluded in this shortage: inclement weather was responsible for a major potato shortage. Always efficient, Nazi officials calculated that by peeling a potato one wastes up to **15%** of the foodstuff – **30%** if the peeling is done by a machine – and banned the peeling of potatoes altogether by late **1941**. (*L. Leibovits & M. Miller, Lilli Marlene. The Soldiers’ Song of WWII*, 133)

Dec 41: Given the extension of the war into the indefinite future [problems in east; declaration of war on America], morale in Germany sinks to its *lowest point* since the beginning of the war. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 446)

Feb-Apr 42 [Rationing]: During this month, a new edict ordered Berlin’s restaurants to remain closed except for a few hours a day, a few days a week, and, best of all, to shut down whenever possible. In **Mar 42**, w/ the situation deteriorating, a new food-rationing system was introduced. Bread allowances, the government announced on **19 Mar 42**, will be reduced from **5 pounds** a week to **4 pounds 6 ounces**; fats from **9.5** to **7.5 ounces**; and meat from **14 ounces** to **10.5 ounces**. By **Apr 42**, even that meager allowance was tough to come by; particularly

in a densely populated urban center like Berlin. (L. Leibovits & M. Miller, *Lilli Marlene. The Soldiers' Song of WWII*, 133)

1.18.2: Berlin (Background):

Berlin, description of: A city of roughly **4,000,000** in fall of 1940. Population of city spread out over a wide area—roughly **341 square miles**. Four-fifths of the city consisted of *streets and squares, public parks, forest, farmland, waterways, building sites*, and other areas upon which there are no buildings. Experiencing nightly blackouts, RAF bombing raids,⁵⁶⁴ food rationing (fat cards, bread cards, etc.).⁵⁶⁵ *Air raid shelters* in city had *yellow signs* w/ the word “*Luftschutzraum*” upon it. According to F., Berlin had *10 railroad stations* scattered throughout the city. One of the parks was the **Tiergarten**—a huge park, two and a quarter miles long and three quarters of a mile wide, in which there are widespreading trees and winding paths past streams and lakes...Not far from the Tiergarten was the **Sieges-Allee**, or Victory Avenue, lined by statues of the *Hohenzollerns* and leading to the **Siegessaule**, Column of Victory, w/ the huge gilt figure of a buxom Victory on the top, but become a worry to the Germans since it *helped guide the RAF in their raids on Berlin*...Best restaurants in the city in the neighborhood of the *Kurfuerstendamm*...(Note: Flannery found Berliners to be, as he put it, “*crude, crass and impolite*.” (Flannery, 49-53, 68-69, 72-73, 170)⁵⁶⁶

Berlin newspapers: In gathering our routine news, we read dozens of German newspapers every day. The most important were those from Berlin: Hitler’s own paper, the official party organ, the **Voelkischer Beobachter**, which was an attractively printed paper w/ well-arranged make-up, the best maps, clear pictures and *unblustering red headlines*; the **Berliner Boersenzeitung**, a business man’s paper; the **Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung**, the most intelligent paper in Berlin, but w/ such lengthy involved German sentences that it sometimes almost defied translation; the **Berliner Morgenpost**; a few tabloids, such as the **Berliner Zeitung am Mittag**, the **Zwoelf Uhr Blatt**, **Der Angriff**, and the **Nachtausgabe**...None of the newspapers printed news, as we know it. The fundamental stories *were the same in all of them*—the **DNB** reports, printed word for word, and sometimes even w/ the same headline. (Flannery, 35-37)

Press Conferences: Harry Flannery describes the **three daily press conferences in Berlin**—two conducted by the Propaganda Ministry and one by the Foreign Office, all in buildings in the *Wilhelmstrasse*...The **first conference** of the day was a select one, to which but a few newsmen were admitted...This conference took place about *noon each day* and furnished us w/ late announcements...**The next conference**, conducted by the Foreign Office, was at one o’clock in the afternoon. It was the *most important of the day*, principally because the spokesman was more able. He was usually **Paul Schmidt**,⁵⁶⁷ a stout, round-faced, red-cheeked German in his early 30s. Schmidt’s thinning dark hair was brushed straight back; he was always well dressed. Generally

⁵⁶⁴ By Dec 40, some 15,000 Berlin children had been evacuated to the *Sudetenland*. (127) Apparently, there were no air raids in first months of 1941. “...we in Berlin hardly knew a war was on during the early part of 1941.” (151, 167)

⁵⁶⁵ Flannery: “The Germans were used to rationing and *had lived on restricted quantities of foods for years*. Many of them told me they were hungry all the time.” (74)

⁵⁶⁶ Description of Reich Chancellery, p 64. **Note:** Flannery assigned to Berlin in Oct 40—to replace William L. Shirer as a “representative of the *Columbia Broadcasting System* in the Nazi capital.” He was leaving his home and family for first time: “I had gone from a bungalow down a tree-shaded street in suburban *St.Louis*, gone from Ruth and Pat, my wife and year-and-a-half-old daughter...” (3-4)

⁵⁶⁷ Paul Carell?

he was calm and good-humored, able to turn questions w/ a quip. On such days he seated himself leisurely, folded his hands before him, and twiddled his thumbs as he answered the correspondents. There were other times, however, when Schmidt rushed into the conference, was impatient at every query, and might even rise again and rush out before we were able to collect our wits. That happened several times *after the Russian campaign began to miss fire...*

The third conference, at half past five in the evening, was again conducted by the Propaganda Ministry. It was held in what was really a theater, w/ a stage at one end of a long, high room. The room was attractively bright, w/ *walls of ivory trimmed w/ gold and decorated w/ royal red drape curtains over the windows*. The large entrance door was set w/ mirrors. *Stage drops were huge maps, showing the position of the German troops in the current campaigns. Red arrows pointed to the thrusts...*[This press conference was particularly important] for military reports during a campaign, since the military spokesmen appeared at this conference. It was also the means of our seeing the *German news weekly* each Wednesday or Thursday before it was released to the theaters on *Saturday*. The news weekly [*Wochenschau*], w/ pictures taken by the German PK reporters at the front lines, traveling in bombers, in tanks, w/ the infantry, the submarines and raiders, was *interesting and informative*—again, during a campaign. *It must be acknowledged that the Germans obtained remarkable war pictures as a result of their system of sending these PK men into the midst of the action, w/ many of them losing their lives.* (Flannery, 39-42)

Rationing (Food): Flannery notes that the foreign correspondents “received the rations allotted to those who did hard labour: twice as much bread, meat, and butter as the ordinary rations.” They received these extra ration cards “as another means of making them feel more contented and less likely to be critical...” Each German family obtained seven food cards from the ration office in his neighborhood, his *Kartenstelle*. Each card was of a different color: Blue cards for meat, yellow for fat and cheese, white for sugar and marmalade, green for eggs, orange for bread, pink for flour, rice, cream of wheat, oatmeal, tea and coffee substitutes, and purple for candy, nuts and fruits. There were cards for almost everything except vegetables, and at times even these, such as tomatoes, were available only in rationed quantities. There were *other ration cards for soap and clothing*, and if you were permitted an automobile, for gasoline...All waiters carried scissors to cut off the rectangles (e.g., meat card in Nov 40 was good for 500 grams of meat and divided into 50-gram rectangles) from the ration cards...With each German able to obtain only about *a pound of meat a week*, there was wide use of substitutes.

Potatoes were the basic food and were not rationed until the fall of 1941, when a long period of cold, wet days damaged the crop...Before they were rationed, potatoes were served w/ every meal in the restaurants, *always boiled*. The Germans did not fry potatoes due to a *lack of fat*, but they did not bake them either. Fish, one of the substitutes, could be obtained only about twice a month, and most German families were able to get fowl only about five times a year. Fish and fowl were not included on ration cards. They could be obtained thru the merchant w/ which a family registered whenever the family’s turn came...The number of *eggs* to be had varied anywhere from none a week, most of the time, to four. A quarter pound of butter could be obtained by each person each week; about 25 additional grams...of margarine, usually used for fat; and about two ounces of cheese...Bread was plentiful, w/ about four pounds a week allowed...900 Grams of sugar, or about two pounds, were available each month.

Real coffee was obtainable but a few times a year and then in such small quantities that little more than a taste resulted. Two ounces were offered in Dec 40 and the same amount in Jan 41. After that, *no more could be obtained legally until the following Christmas season*. Of course, “bootlegged” coffee from the Netherlands was on occasion available to “those who knew the right people.” Coffee became *worth more than currency* and could be used to obtain a sleeper on a train when no more were supposed to be available, or to gain almost any desired favour even from officials. The *ersatz coffee* was made from *chickory roots, acorns, and grains*, with the best

made from *bran*. The Germans became accustomed to this kind of coffee, using plenty of skimmed milk in it. *Tea* was made from almost all kinds of leaves except tea leaves, the Germans preferring peppermint tea. (*Flannery*, 43, 74-77)

Rationing (Clothing): *Flannery* states that, “new soles were needed for my shoes several times. Foreign correspondents were able to get real leather, although we had to wait six weeks before the work was done...The *Germans could not obtain real leather* had had to be satisfied w/ substitute material that would wear through in a month. *Most women decided on wooden soles*, which did not wear out and could be obtained w/o a *Bezugschein* (permit) until the Summer of 1941, when they, too, were not sold w/o a permit...Except for that period when wooden-soled shoes did not require a *Bezugschein*, no new shoes could be bought w/o application at the district office, where you declared you had *only two pairs of shoes* and proved, by showing one pair, that it was beyond the possibility of repair. The *Gestapo visited homes every now and then to make certain that no one, esp. women, had more than two pairs of shoes*. If more were found, they were seized and the owner was liable to a fine...

Each German was given a **clothing card**. The one for the first year of the war included coupons totaling **100 points**, w/ so many to be clipped off for each rationed item. There were **150 points** on the cards for the second and **120** for the third year of the war, but the number required for each article of clothing was so changed that one bought about the same on each card. The number on the 150 basis was sufficient unless one required major items, such as a suit, which was **80 points** on a man’s card, or a wool dress, which was **56** on that of a woman. When 80 points were used, a man would have enough left for no more than two shirts, a suit of summer underwear, and two pairs of socks...The woman’s clothing card was *more complicated* because of the various materials [used to make women’s clothing]. (Note: This appears to be a *complex system*, which would have required everyone to carefully plan his/her clothing needs for the entire year.)

The ordinary German housewife was able to get only **250 g** (about 1/2 pound) of soap powder for washing a month...Toilet soap was rationed; each person could obtain five **50 g** cakes for four months, or about two ounces a month...Once you got the soap, you *found it worse than the gritty kind used in shops to wash off grease*. It was of a dull grey colour, harsh, and made a thick scum on the water...(Flannery, 232-35)

Wochenschauen (newsreels): “During the Russian campaign naked little babies, emaciated so that they were little more than skin and bones except for their stomachs, which had been distended by starvation, were shown w/ flies crawling all over their bodies. The Nazi announcer said they were Russian babies under the Soviet regime, but it was whispered that the pictures were not of Russian children at all, but might have been Polish infants starved by the Nazis.” (*Flannery*, 284)

1.18.3: Berlin (Chronology):

Nov 40: Some time during my first days in Berlin I stopped in front of the cigar store next to the **Adlon** [Hotel]⁵⁶⁸ and studied the display in the window. None of the brands of cigars was

⁵⁶⁸ Flannery was initially stationed at the Adlon, “the leading hotel in Berlin, but it no longer had the best food. On the menu each night was at most two or three choices for the entrée, and there was little variety in them; moreover the food was unappetizingly prepared. Eating at the Adlon *became tiresome in a few weeks*, even though prices were so high that a dinner, at the official rate of exchange, cost upwards of four dollars. But he notes that, “we ate well compared w/ the ordinary German.” (Note: Later, he moved his residence to *pension* on the *Kurfuerstendamm*.) (72-73, 236)

familiar to me, but the window was as attractive, for its kind, as any to be seen anywhere. I told the clerk I would take a half dozen of one brand. He stared at me for a moment. "We're sold out. Didn't you see the sign: '*Cigarren ausverkauft*'?" he said. "Sold out? Why, you have some in the window." "Those are not for sale," he responded. That was my *first lesson in Berlin window displays*, as enticing as they could be, but merely planned, by some queer quirk of reasoning, as a means of maintaining morale. [He discovers that customers cannot pick out the cigars. You got in line, and when you reached the counter, you took what was given you, usually two or three small inferior cigars...] He finds the pipe tobacco, "like a poor grade of mattress filling...unsmokable." *Cigarettes* sold at anywhere from 40 pfennigs to 1.6 Marks, or as much as 60 cents, a package, *w/ no more than 5 cigarettes finally allowed to a customer* and, outside of Berlin, none to women. The best were *North State*, declared on the package to be a product of *Philip Morris*...Most of the tobacco was Turkish and Bulgarian. Cigarettes w/ Virginia tobacco were only a memory, although there were *numerous manufacturers who masqueraded their products as American*, w/ packages that looked like *Lucky Strike, Chesterfield, Camel, and Old Gold*, sometimes w/ similar names, such as *Kemal* and *Lord Chesterfield*. The German people were not deceived by these frauds. (*Flannery, 22-25*)

12.11.40: Vyacheslav Molotov, Premier and Foreign Commissar of Soviet Russia, arrives at the *Anhalter Bahnhof* in Berlin. RR station decorated w/ flowers, evergreens, Soviet & Nazi flags. *Flannery* provides a wonderfully descriptive account of Molotov's visit to Berlin; German dislike for Nazi-Soviet Pact, of the Russians, etc. Virtually no German citizens standing along path of Molotov's motorcade to greet him—indicative of general public attitude toward Soviet Russia. (*Flannery, 46-49*)

Early 1941: "Snow that had fallen in November remained on the ground as the new year arrived, w/ snow flurries every few days. One Sunday, before dinner w/ Joe Harsch on the *Budapesterstrasse*, we walked along the *wooden paths of the Tiergarten* watching the strolling soldiers w/ booted girls on their arms, families striding briskly by, children coasting w/o benefit of sled down slippery mounds of snow, skaters on the ponds, and wild ducks still waddling about the ice on the streams and swimming in the open places made by barges. Crowds milled up and down *Unter den Linden*, stopped to look in the store windows, and slowly wandered on their way. Almost every Sunday there were men and women on the streets rattling their *little red boxes* in collections for *Winter Relief*—a fund for the needy...As I walked down *Unter den Linden* on this Sunday, German bands played on the island spaces between the two roadways, and figures in character, including comic cows and horses, danced to the music...The buses, street cars and subways were crowded, esp. on Sunday, when transportation was curtailed. Among those who road were families going to beer gardens and concerts, the theatres, the cafes and restaurants. Of the common people none was permitted to drive a car unless he was able to prove his absolute need for one...(Flannery, 151-55)

Spring 41: Desultory RAF bombing strikes against Berlin at this time (as *Flannery* catalogues in his book). Crowds would sometimes gather to peer at the damage they caused—which was usually minor—as if it signified some kind of strange new amusement. At this point, RAF bomber "offensive" eliciting but minor concern. Also, at this time, "*more and more talk of a Nazi war w/ Russia*." (*Flannery, 239*)

Late Apr-Early May 41: During the last days of April first days of May, *the RAF came over Berlin regularly*. By this time (1 May), *Flannery* sees first signs in German saloons and restaurants of a *beer shortage*...Signs began to appear saying: "Owing to the curtailment in the supply of beer, it will be sold only between 11.30 a.m. and 3 p.m. and from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m." *Cigarettes* were also becoming harder to buy...The allotment of *five cigarettes per person* was

decreased to three, and outside Berlin, Hamburg and a few other cities women were forbidden cigarettes altogether. (Flannery, 259-60)

10.5.41: RAF conducts bombing raid on Berlin. Demonstrations on the proper way to fight incendiaries were to be seen on street corners (at this time). Posters appeared showing a woman fighting an incendiary bomb, and a boy at the door bringing her a bucket of water. Another poster, warning people to “*Verdunkle*”—“Blackout”—showed the skeleton of Death riding in a plane and tossing a bomb at a building where a light still showed. (*Flannery, 278-79*)

14.5.41: There is a rumor that Stalin has agreed to cede the Ukraine to the Germans for 99 years. I am quite indignant! (*Berlin Diaries, M. Vassiltchikov, 51*)⁵⁶⁹

24.5.41: Paul Metternich has been called back to Berlin, where he will work at OKW; this is a great relief. People are speaking more and more of *troop concentrations on the Russian border*. Nearly all the men we know are being transferred from the West to the East. This can only mean one thing. (Later—10 Jun 41—she notes, “Most of the German army seems to be massing on the Russian border.” (*Berlin Diaries, M. Vassiltchikov, 52, 54*)

30.5.41: Stayed at home to wash, iron, mend, etc. This keeps us pretty busy as nothing can be done elsewhere. *Real soap is non-existent* and one has to make do w/ smelly synthetic substitutes which are also rationed. (*Berlin Diaries, M. Vassiltchikov, 53*)

Mid May-Early Jun 41: The situation was beginning to look more hopeful. Even the weather seemed to improve. After constant rains and even snow in the early part of May, the sun began to shine again. *Poppies and violets* grew in the green lawns and *lilacs* were in bloom in the *Tiergarten* and the *Sans Souci* in *Potsdam*. The people began to frequent the tennis courts, where I noticed that most Germans did not play the game, but were content, in their unimaginative way, merely to bat the ball back and forth for exercise. They went to the beaches, at *Mueggelsee, Tegel, Oberspree, and Wannsee*, swam under stunting bombers from near-by airfields, rode in canoes and rowboats, and on steamers that began regular schedules between Wannsee, Pfaueninsel, and Potsdam. The *Berlin Zoo* began its Sunday schedule w/ a concert at six in the morning; crowds flocked to the three *racetracks* near Berlin, and began to sit in the sun at the café tables along the *Linden* and *Kurfuerstendamm*. (*Flannery, 299*)

11.6.41: Albert and Dicky Eltz dropped in. On their way home later, they stumbled over a man lying dead in the street. He must have been hit by a bus, but, *owing to the blackout*, nobody had noticed. (*Berlin Diaries, M. Vassiltchikov, 54-5*)

21.6.41: This Saturday was an exceptionally warm and pleasant day in Berlin. Most members of the Russian embassy were resting and swimming in the serene surroundings of the Potsdam and Wannsee parks. The few left at the embassy were suddenly alerted and set to frenzied activity. A protest at the increase of German reconnaissance flights over Soviet territory was to be lodged personally w/ Ribbentrop, significantly accompanied by expressions of Soviet readiness to embark on negotiations. The hectic efforts to open a dialogue in Berlin were aimed at gaining direct access to Hitler, to acquaint him w/ the gravity of the situation. . . All efforts, however, to establish contact w/ the Wilhelmstrasse were futile now. Ribbentrop had deliberately left Berlin

⁵⁶⁹ Editor’s note: This was yet another false rumor, sparked probably by *wishful thinking* among the German population that the *much-dreaded looming conflict with the USSR* could be avoided by a last-minute “deal.”

early in the morning, giving specific instructions that Dekanozov [i.e., the Russian ambassador] be kept at arm's length. . . (G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusions*, 309)

22.6.41: The German army is on the offensive along the entire eastern border. Hako Czernin woke me at dawn to break the news. A new phase of the war begins. We knew it was coming. And yet we are *thunderstruck!* (*Berlin Diaries*, M. Vassiltchikov, 55)

22.6.41: At 5.30 a.m. the *Liszt fanfare* sounded and Goebbels began to read Hitler's speech. 'People of Germany! National Socialists! The hour has now come. Oppressed by grave cares, doomed to months of silence, I can at last speak frankly.' The Fuehrer had decided 'to place the fate and future of the German Reich and our people in the hands of our soldiers.' *Barbarossa*, the invasion of Russia and home of the Jewish-Bolshevik beast, had begun.

Berlin was abuzz with excitement. Many people openly said that they had never supported the Hitler-Stalin pact and had "always considered Russia as the great enemy." Some were worried about the possibility of a two-front war but Hitler assured the people that he would crush Russia before Christmas, and his sheer nerve coupled w/ memories of his previous sweeping successes *silenced most doubters*...(*Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 499)

22.6.41: [*Flannery*, after discussing statements read by Goebbels and later Ribbentrop]: ... Within a few hours the first *extra editions* of the papers were on the streets. As usual, *all were single sheets*. The people bought the extras almost as fast as they appeared. *For the first time since the war had begun, there was momentary enthusiasm among the German populace*. The war against Russia was the first popular campaign that had been launched. None of the Germans had ever been able to understand why a treaty should have been made w/ the Soviets, after they had been the main object of denunciation since 1933. Now *they had a sense of relief*, a feeling of final understanding. I listened to their conversations around the newsstands and on the subways. I talked w/ a number of them. *For the first time they were excited about the war*. 'Now,' they said, 'we are fighting our real enemy.'" (Note: Later, he writes that the people of Berlin, after initial rush of enthusiasm on Sunday, 22 June 1941, rapidly returned to their normal patterns of life. States that, because no detailed news was announced, German interest in the Russian campaign "began to slacken even on the second day of the war."(!)) Berliners again thronged to *Ruhleben racetrack* for a horse-race, the Olympic stadium for a German championship *Fussball* game, the waters at *Gruenau* for an international *regatta*, the parks and cafes. (*Flannery*, 361-69)

29.6.41: All week long (since 22.6.41) the reports (on *Barbarossa*) had been scattered and w/o definite information. The High Command said practically nothing, and all that could be learned was in the less than reliable PK reports. On Sunday, 29 June, *the Nazis unleashed their propaganda*. They had erected loudspeakers at intervals along all the main thoroughfares, such as *Unter den Linden* and the *Kurfuerstendamm*. From these and over radios in all parts of the Reich they began early in the morning to release communiqués. An announcer would interrupt whatever program was on the air to tell the people that a military communiqué would be heard in *zehn Minuten*. Military band music and marching songs followed. Five minutes later the announcer said the communiqué would be heard in *funf Minuten*. Finally, after the stirring music, came a *fanfare*, a blare of trumpets and a roll of drums, and the dramatic announcement beginning: *Aus dem Fuehrerhauptquartier gibt das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht bekannt:*" After that, of course, the communiqué and *Deutschland ueber Alles*. Everyone was ordered to *stand in silence* during the reading. Along the *Kurfuerstendamm* the milling crowds halted and those at café tables rose. During the first several of these communiqués the *enthusiasm of the people returned*. I listened and heard them remark: "Fanastic! Unbelievable! Wonderful!"...After the first several announcements [of Russian planes destroyed, cities captured] had been made, single-sheet extras of the newspapers appeared on the streets. The

Voelkischer Beobachter, in huge letters, *underlined w/ red*, shouted: “Victory March.” Underneath, in part: “Advance of the Soviet Army Broken...” *Sound-trucks* began to go up and down the streets playing recordings of the announcements and new PK reports. The show went on all day long, w/ more and more communiqués, additional extras, and continued blasts from the sound-cars.” The Russian war was being presented as a spectacle, but, as might have been expected, the people began to react against it before the day was over. It was not long before the men and women of Germany knew that the whole thing had been planned, and they resented it. “Why,” I heard one German say, “it is obvious that they have saved these communiqués for today. Why didn’t they tell us during the week how the war was progressing? They are making a show of this war.”...*Goebbels*, supposed to be a propaganda expert, *had again revealed himself to be a blundering amateur.* (Flannery, 369-71)

6.7.41: On this day, *DNB* said that the German Air Force “now rules unconditionally over Russia.” [In following days] the Russians were charged w/ atrocities, wanton destruction of crops and property, and a merciless disregard of life. There were reports of *fanatical resistance by the Reds*...The Nazis said that the Russians were *resisting like madmen*, even jumping from destroyed tanks to carry on the fight and remaining in burning buildings, shooting to the last. The news weekly showed pictures of burning fields of grain, and the German people were asked to drink less *ersatz coffee* since it required 100,000 tons of grain a year. The reports said that the fighting was taking place in the most intense heat and along roads that were chokingly dusty. All was far from well w/ the Nazi, *and the campaign was but two weeks old.*

One of the Nazi weeklies [*Wochenschau*] at this time showed burning Russian towns and piles of dead bodies. The announcer cried that the destruction was the work of the Jews, after which the Nazi soldiers were shown beating Jews w/ clubs and gun butts, pommelling many to death. The Nazis didn’t seem to realize that this was incriminating evidence *against themselves*—that they were guilty of completely unjustified and absolutely merciless attacks on the Jewish people...(Flannery, 371-72)

Summer 41: In Berlin the news of the great advance was again *greeted with delight*. On the first day of the offensive the extra editions were sold out in minutes...There was a *sense of exhilaration in the city*...Loudspeakers were erected throughout the city centre and regular programmes were interrupted to warn of an important announcement. Stirring music sound and a voice would boom, “From the headquarters of the Fueher,” followed by the news that *Minsk* or *Kiev* had just fallen. Everyone would stand in silence during the broadcasts; waiters would stop serving, conversation would die down and all would strain to hear. After the announcement they would stand to attention up and down the main streets as a tinny rendition of *Deutschland, Deutschland ueber Alles* crackled out from the loudspeakers. Then they would turn to one another and say, “Fantastic! Unbelievable! Wonderful!” (*Faust’s Metropolis*, A. Richie, 500-01)

Jul-Aug 41: “When I [Flannery] first went to Germany, I saw a wounded soldier on the street only now and then...But after the Russian campaign began, I saw them in every block along the principal streets—young men w/ their arms in slings, w/ an arm gone, walking w/ crutches and canes, or w/o one of their legs. Previously, too, there had been few women in mourning, but I began to see them everywhere.”...

The Russian campaign affected almost every German family...The Germans began to see that the war was not progressing as planned, as they read the reports in the papers. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* [ca. late Jul 41] said: “*The enemy has proved himself harder than the one we faced in the west.* In contrast w/ our opponents on the other front, the Russians have for years equipped themselves for an offensive battle. They show a fanatical hate...Then, too, the beaten army appeared behind the German lines and, even when encircled, continued to fight to the last.” On

3.8.41 the *VB* remarked: “Every German citizen now knows the *fight has been bloody and bitter*. We have recognized that we are dealing w/ the most difficult enemy we have met so far.”

Enthusiasm of the people passed away and *depression set in*...Posters began to appear on the round pillar boards [*Litfasssaule*] that dot the Reich. They displayed maps which compared the advance made into Russian territory in this campaign w/ the progress made during the same period in 1917. Since troop movements were slower in that war, this comparison was obviously an attempt to *bolster morale*...*In store windows maps w/ thumb tacks showing the German positions from day to day attracted constant crowds*. Posters in windows appealed to the German under the caption: “The Fuehrer Commands; We Follow.” About **17.8.41** I noticed new signs in the *S-Bahn* trains reserving the end seats for crippled people and those injured in the war...

One night, after dinner on the *Budapesterstrasse*, Count von *Luckner* spoke of the *stories told by men who had come back from the front*. “*It is a fight like none that has ever gone before*,” he said. “*The Russians do not fight like men and they are crafty*. One soldier told me that the Reds lie in the roads as if they were dead, attach themselves to German motor vehicles when they go by, fasten bombs on them, and then fall off the road again, just before the truck blows up. Another soldier told me the Russians have planted mines in the roads—mines that explode when the tanks go over them. And the Russians have built underground chambers from which they are able to come up and surprise the Germans from the rear.” (*Flannery*, 379-81)

Aug 41: With August, *the air raids began again* [over Berlin]. The first were *Russian planes*, although the High Command refused to admit it for several days...The Russians *came over Berlin night after night for a time* and then *began to alternate w/ the British*. The Germans said the Red planes came from *bases on islands in the Baltic*...The raids were having their added effect on German morale...The British raids were the most severe I had ever experienced. The planes came over in large numbers and did more effective bombing. I recall several instances in which the bombs fell within a block or so of where I stood...On another night I was at the pension. The whistle of the bombs was frequent, and after one blast I looked out to see the sky lit by near-by flames. The next day I found that the British had been *trying to hit the two huge anti-aircraft towers in the Tiergarten*, but had missed them by half a mile. The towers were at least as tall as a ten-storey building, and had walls that must have been six feet thick...They were of steel-reinforced concrete, built to withstand the largest bombs. The Germans had put their most powerful and manoevrable AA guns...on one of the towers, and huge sound detectors and searchlights on the other. The two were synchronized. Since they were in the *Tiergarten*, they were in a position to defend central Berlin better than the other smaller AAA located on the roofs of buildings all over town. The British bombs *fell in the zoo*, which was in the *Tiergarten*, killing some animals...As I walked around the Eden the next day, *people were peering through the gates of the closed zoo*...The reports were that the British had sent **100 planes** over Berlin and lost **19**. The British, interestingly, said they had lost **20**...The attention given to the raid by the Berlin press told the story...The fact that it had *shaken the German people* was further indicated by the fact that the *Nachtausgabe* took the trouble to declare: “The English fliers cannot shake the courage, the discipline, and the faith of the German people. The people in Berlin know that every help will be given them, that the German State and city and the German people generally are standing by their side.” (*Flannery*, 383-85)

19.9.41: Goebbels introduces the measure forcing Jews to wear the *Star of David*. The *Jueische Gemeinde zu Berlin* still had bolts of 60 cm-wide yellow cloth stamped w/ printed stars which were to be distributed after 19 Sep 41. Berlin Jews had to pay 10 Pfennig for the “privilege” of having the star; failure to wear it or to display it prominently could lead to immediate arrest and deportation. (*Faust's Metropolis*, A. Richie, 515; 1023, f.n. 121)

Summer/Fall 1941: [*Measures taken against air attack*]: During this time, the Germans worked hard to make it more difficult for the RAF to hit Berlin. The most “pretentious” undertaking was along the *East-West Axis*. That *five-mile long street*, so wide that five cars could pass abreast on either side of the centre island, was a *guiding arrow to the heart of the capital* for the “men in the clouds” [RAF]. As it passed thru the *Brandenburg Gate*, the Reichstag, Kroll Opera House, and Lehrter Bahnhof [RR station] were off to the left; the Wilhelmstrasse w/ the Chancellery, the Foreign Office and Propaganda Ministry, and two RR stations [the Potsdamer and Anhalter Bahnhof], were to the right, and the old palaces and the Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof almost straight ahead.

West of the Brandenburg Gate, for more than 2 miles the *Tiergarten* lay on each side of the Axis. In this section workmen *erected steel poles 15 feet high, stretched over them wire netting covered w/ green shreds of cloth, and here and there placed rows of the tops of pine and other trees*. Traffic could continue under the netting, but the Axis, as far as bombardiers was concerned, had been *blended into the Tiergarten*...[Note: Other key sites had been camouflaged by *erecting covered scaffolding to represent buildings*. For example, a lake, the *Luetzensee*, which shone as a guide to aviators, had been covered in that fashion. It was interesting to note that the wild ducks which had swum on the Luetzensee in other days were still there under the fake buildings.] *Deutschland Halle* and other prominent landmarks in that region were covered with netting so that they appeared as parks w/ paths running thru them. To further the illusion, open spaces, as in the *Adolf Hitler Platz*, and a park near the Axis, were filled w/ the *pseudo structures*. Hamburg also was camouflaged. (*Flannery*, 414-15)

Fall 1941 [Berlin]: By the fall of 1941, Berlin was a depleted city. Hitler’s invasions had steadily drained the capital of its manpower, and the German people struggled w/ constant shortages of even the most basic goods. The lack of nutritious food in Berlin was causing its residents’ teeth to dissolve, according to a local dentist, “like sugar cubes in water.” With its cabarets tamed long ago, the main draw of the Kurfuerstendamm was now the revolting “*razzle-dazzle*” cocktail mixed from grenadine and whatever cheap alcohol could be sourced from the city’s nearly empty stores, while on the world-famous Unter den Linden, the lack of customers and upkeep had transformed the once-prosperous and elegant sidewalks into a streetscape of shuttered businesses. (*L. Leibovits & M. Miller, Lilli Marlene. The Soldiers’ Song of WWII*, 109)

Autumn 41: The mood in Berlin was *at its height that autumn*. Berliners thronged to the *Ruhleben racetrack*, to the *Olympic Stadium* for German championship football, to the lakes at *Gruenau* for the international *regatta*. By October the headlines were screaming of imminent victory: THE GREAT HOUR HAS STRUCK! they read, or, LAST GREAT DECISIVE BATTLE. Rumors that Stalin had sued for peace were greeted with sheer joy. *People hung wreaths of late summer roses on German tanks rolling through the city*. Bookshops now stocked Russian grammar books and street maps of Moscow...But in Dec 41, “for the first time Berliners heard *whisper of defeat*.” (*Faust’s Metropolis, A. Richie*, 501, 503)

Autumn 41: [Germans settle in for long war]: During my last two months in Germany I tried to learn two main things: the extent of the bomb damage in the Reich and the *reaction of the people toward the war*. Everywhere I presented the idea that the war could last only two more winters. I suggested that as I talked w/ officials of the ministries after a press conference, as I chatted w/ the censors at the radio station, as I had cocktails at the homes of the wealthy, in the apartment that *Lindbergh* had occupied on the banks of the Spree and at another on the Kurfuerstendamm, as I sat in the homes of the middle class, in restaurants, in trains, on boats, and in stores. The reaction was everywhere the same: “*Two more years?*” everyone asked. “*Impossible. This war will last five years or more.*” Aw we talked, some people told me why

they had such an opinion. “*It did look as if it would end soon, before the Russian campaign began,*” they said, “*but we can see now that the days of blitzkriegs are over.*” Others said that it had begun to appear that there never would be an invasion of England. “American aid has saved Britain,” they said. Some showed that *they had begun to wonder whether they could win.* “Germany, in the fall of 1941, *was steeled for a war that might last five years or more.*” These were the opinions of Germans in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Dresden, Frankfurt am Main, Cologne, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg, Mannheim, and in other cities where I talked w/ the people during my final months. (*Flannery*, 411-12)

Oct 41: By second week of October, rumors are circulating throughout Berlin that *Moscow had already fallen*; that Stalin was seeking an armistice and the troops would be *home for Christmas*. A Berlin post official from the post office in *Nuernberger Strasse* sent a housewife home when she requested “front postcards” claiming, “you will not need them any longer.” Sausage was given away free by a butcher in *Hausvogteiplatz*. On **10 Oct 41**, the *Voelkische Beobachter* claimed, “the eastern offensive has achieved its aim: the annihilation of the enemy,” adding triumphantly, “Stalin’s armies have been wiped from the face of the earth.” Newspaper banner headlines [throughout Germany] announced that German troops were already far beyond the *Vyazma* and *Bryansk* pockets. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 187)

16.10.41: In Oct 41, while all attention was focused on the Russian front, the *Gestapo* prepared for deportations of Berlin Jews to ghettos in Poland. Late on the night of 16 October groups of *Gestapo* agents spread out over Berlin and began to knock at the doors of Jewish homes yelling out the ridiculous charge that they were “hoarding goods.” The prisoners were permitted to pack one small bag before being marched through the city past the ruin of the synagogue on *Fasanenstrasse*, which had burned on *Kristallnacht*. The doors of their homes were sealed with *Gestapo* stamps (an eagle gripping a Swastika)...The frightened and lonely people had been betrayed by the city in which they had lived for centuries. Many Berliners turned away as the columns of Jews walked quietly to the stations or were loaded onto trucks late in the evening. *The first deportations left from Berlin on the night of 16 Oct 41*, when **4 187 Jews** were packed into unheated railway cars and dropped at the Lodz ghetto.⁵⁷⁰ Nine transports quickly followed, dispersing Berlin Jews to *Lodz*, *Minsk*, *Kovno* and *Riga*. (*Faust’s Metropolis*, A. Richie)

10.11.41: (“*Missie*” from Rome to her mother in Berlin): “I find the food here quite decent, *with infinitely more variety than in Berlin*. The green leaves on the trees, *after the greyness of our Berlin streets*, are also most refreshing. The Via Veneto, packed w/ young men about town, rather shocked me when I think what it is like in Germany these days.” (*Berlin Diaries*, M. Vassiltchikov, 59)⁵⁷¹

Dec 41: On 11 Dec 41, Hitler declared war on the United States. Berlin was now at the centre of a world war, a conflict which she herself had started. As hope for a quick victory in the east waned *life in Berlin became more difficult*. Rations were cut, casualty lists began to grow and

⁵⁷⁰ Note: As of Mar 41, there were apparently 60,000-70,000 Jews still residing in Berlin. By Mar 43, in a total of 63 transports, 35,738 of the Jews still living in Berlin had been deported to *Auschwitz* and most had been murdered. On 19 May 43, Goebbels proudly declared Berlin “*judenfrei*,” a feat which he termed his “greatest political accomplishment.” Richie does state, however, that “the anti-Jewish measures were not popular among Berliners although only a few brave individuals did anything to help.” (See, *Faust’s Metropolis*, 514-18)

⁵⁷¹ Note: *Missie*’s diaries from 22.6.41 on are *missing for almost two years*, despite the fact that she kept on writing almost daily. References to her “diary” after this date refer mostly to letters she wrote, as well as a few “random scraps of diary” found among her papers after her death. With these, it was possible to somewhat reconstitute her life for the period after Jun 41. (55-6)

people began to question the wisdom of attacking Russia. But it was too late...It was the Russian campaign which *finally brought the seriousness of the situation home to Berliners*. Up until then the Germans had lost only 200,000 men, a minute percentage in an army of up to 6.5 million troops. The Russian campaign changed this; *the death notices filled ever longer columns and the newspapers of Berlin were thick w/ black rimmed pages...Berlin filled with wounded troops*. Flannery [CBS correspondent] noticed them “in every block along the principle streets—young men w/ their arms in slings, with an arm gone, walking w/ crutches and canes, or w/o one of their legs. Previously, too, there had been few women in mourning, but I began to see them everywhere.” The sight of these broken bodies and minds began to remind people of the worst scenes of 1918. The maze of tracks around the big stations were now *filled w/ long trains covered w/ red crosses*, and as the hospitals were filled hundreds of untrained women started working as nurses. The hospitalized soldiers brought bad news: some described what they had seen in the east and declared that they would rather die than go through another winter; others blurted out that the war could not be won.

Goebbels countered these rumours by demonstrating what would happen if the Germans fell in the clutches of the enemy. *Newsreels [Wochenschauen]* released at the cinema *each Saturday* suddenly became remarkably brutal. The films were made by Goebbel’s PK units, who went into the thick of the fighting and traveled w/ the troops in everything from bombers and tanks to submarines. Many of the reporters were killed, but *their footage was remarkable*. The newsreels always opened with a German eagle clutching a Swastika to the sound of rousing military music but now, rather than jovial scenes of soldiers marching through Paris, there were graphic pictures of enemy dead and wounded. Flannery remembered that “some were so horrible that many German women, picturing their own men in the same scenes, could not look at them and stopped going to the theaters...they were some of the most revolting pictures I had ever seen.”

Goebbels second strategy for controlling Berliners was *to increase the terror in the city itself*. As the war turned against Germany, top Nazis became ever more obsessed by the fear of “another 1918,” when the home front had “stabbed the German army in the back.” (*Faust’s Metropolis, A. Richie, 504, 526-28*)⁵⁷²

Dec 41: ...Berlin, the former city of light and frivolity, had fallen on difficult times. Earlier one of the most exciting metropolises in all Europe, it had metamorphosed into a drab, lifeless urban mass at war. All of the grand hostelrys which had entertained the famous and infamous of the past survived on their reputations; the splendid restaurants discarded their gaiety in favor of immediate survival; the legendary cultural milieu with its spiritual vitality simply disappeared into darkness. With paint peeling off the exteriors, bomb-shattered windows covered with plywood, empty store shelves protected by undated promissory notes, every building reflected the sudden, dramatic change in the great city. Everywhere the uncertain grim faces of the citizenry revealed their fearful prophecy of the future.

All consumer goods were in short supply, rationed by circumstances if not by regulation. No repairs to buildings, equipment, vehicles, or any decaying object were possible. Barter had already replaced money as the basic form of exchange. The pleasantries of life were gone in favor of the war effort. Even alcohol, which made some of these difficulties bearable, was in limited supply and obtainable only on the black market. Many bars had attractive arrays of

⁵⁷² *Richie* notes: “In all the discussions, interviews and conversations I had w/ Berliners it became clear that despite the vast amount of information available about the Nazi period *few understood the enormity of the role played by their own city in the unfolding terror of the Second World War*. Thousands of Berliners were deeply involved in these events. Berlin was unique—it was no Frankfurt, Braunschweig, Hamburg or Cologne—for it was the centre from which the crimes and the mass murder in the east were directed...The blackest crimes committed in the name of all Germans are inextricably bound up in the history of Berlin.” (*Faust’s Metropolis, A. Richie, 505*)

bottles filled with colored water, but purveyed only the rawest of spirits. Christmas, 1941, was the *driest in German history*. Berlin provided a bleak, somber, and depressing image for anyone fated to seek survival in its environs. The dizzy, downward spiral made the essentials of life: food, clothing, and shelter very dear for everyone not well connected in the party. By Dec 41, the *war was clearly not progressing as well as the omnipresent mobile street loudspeakers proclaimed*, in ever shriller terms.

At night the city turned into a foreboding, dead sea of darkness. Officials enforced the strick blackout regulations w/ a ferocious Teutonic efficiency which made compliance a cardinal rule of human behaviour. Anyone moving about the city in the pervasive blackness did so at considerable peril. Even the simplest stroll was an adventure in uncertainty. One needed some knowledge of the neighborhood before venturing out.

By day the bizarre efforts at camouflaging the city and its landmarks created a macabre sense of unreality. With phoney stage props, guy wires, and varnished canvas erected to confuse and detour enemy bombing attacks, the artists posed scenes of colorful intensity but counterfeit reality. *Huge, newly constructed, concrete towers*, ugly pedestals for the shining anti-aircraft guns, provided a sobering harbinger of the future. Uniforms were in profusion. The voluble Berliners were reduced to *incendiary witticisms* about their brown-shirted leaders. They were a hardy people able to cope w/ the vicissitudes of life although few underestimated the *manifest decline in their fortunes*. While maintaining their individual dignity, many believed that the world—both in a global as well as in a personal sense—was out of control. The removal of the 1940 victory platforms in late 1941 confirmed their pessimism. (*An American Island...Charles B. Burdick*, 1-2)⁵⁷³

1942: Dancing was permitted in Berlin as late as **1942** and was prohibited in **1943** as a result of the danger of air raids and as a *gesture of respect for German soldiers fighting on the Eastern Front*...Dance music continued to be played for listening, however; many of the listeners being soldiers on furlough. Overzealous party officials naturally objected to overly-grotesque or distorted “primitive” dance styles, esp. when accompanied by gestures indicating opposition of the regime...but the *music itself was not prohibited*. (“*Swing Dancing ‘Verboten’*,” trans. of article by *E. Wardin*, in *VffG*, “*Swing tanzen verboten*.”)

1.19: Napoleon & his Grand Armee:

Anecdote: After the *Battle of Borodino* the great cavalry leader, *Murat*, upbraided his generals. He said that the cavalry attacks had not been pushed home w/ sufficient vigour. To which the cavalry cdr, General *Nansouty*, replied: „It’s the fault of the horses. They’re not patriotic enough. Our soldiers will fight well, even w/o bread, but the horses won’t go along w/o their hay.“ (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 73-74)

Anecdote: „There is a famous picture of Napoleon, mounted on his charger, sunk in thought as he rides eastwards at the head of a column of his Imperial Guards along a sandy Russian road. This picture is entitled: ‘They grumbled, but they followed him loyally.’ That is the best description

⁵⁷³ **Note:** There are few descriptions of life in 1941 Berlin. Useful accounts include Howard K. Smith, *Last Train from Berlin* (N.Y.: Alfred Knopf, 1942), p 128f; Arvid Friedborg, *Behind the Steel Wall; a Swedish Journalist in Berlin, 1941-1943* (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1944), p 56f; George F. Kennen, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston: Little Brown, 1964), p 107f. The best single account, although the author departed by Dec 41, remains William L. Shirer, *Berlin Diary. The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934-41*. (N.Y.: Alfred Knopf, 1941).

of **1812** and of **1941** alike. For there can be no doubt that the German troops, too, did their utmost.“ (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 74)

1.19.1: Campaign of 1812/13:

Betrug das Tempo des dt. Vormarsches auf Moskau, ueberwiegend von Pz.-Verbaenden bestimmt, von der Grenze bis **40 km** vor Moskau **180 Tage**, im Durchschnitt etwa **7 km** pro Tag. Die „*Grande Armee*“ mit mehr als **100.000** Pferden erreichte bereits nach **85** Tagen Moskau u. war gegenueber Hitlers „Blitzkrieg“ mit **15 km** pro Tag doppelt so schnell. Dabei ist allerdings zu beruecksichtigen, dass Napoleon nicht auf breiter Front angriff, sondern in einem schmalen, spitzen Keil. (Source: *K.W. Andres*, **20. PD**, *Napoleon vs. Hitler*, 12)

Evidence has come to light indicating that the winter of **1812-13** was an *ordinary one*. See, Dr. J.M. *Angervo*, “How Cold was 1812?,” *Time Times* (London), 8 Feb 61, p 14, where the writer notes that the temperatures in late **Nov 12** along Napoleon’s retreat route were *only slightly colder than normal*. (Stolfi, *Chance in History*, 216)

War of 1812: Bonaparte had crossed into Russia in late **Jun 1812**, hoping for a quick victory. In early **Sep 12**, he finally engaged the main Russian Army **75 miles** west of Moscow, at Borodino; it was a bloody but inconclusive battle. The Russians let the French enter Moscow, but the deserted city was soon ravaged by fire. With the Russian Army under Kutuzov still intact, w/ his own line of communications threatened, Bonaparte abandoned Moscow after five [**5**] weeks’ occupation. The withdrawal took the weakened and increasingly undisciplined *Grande Armee* through areas ravaged by its original advance. The *rasputitsa*, winter snows, and harsh cold slowed the retreat march. Napoleon’s forces were increasingly harassed by Russian irregulars. Retreat degenerated into rout. At the ice-laden Berezina River in late **Nov 12**, the French were nearly trapped two two Russian armies. Some of Napoleon’s troops fought their way through, but half the surviving army had been lost. On **5 Dec 12**, Napoleon left the remnants of the *Grand Armee*, and set off for Paris on his own. The Napoleonic Empire never recovered. The myth of French invincibility had been shattered. Napoleon’s enemies at home began to work against him. In the following months, Prussia & Austria changed sides, and in **1813** Napoleon’s raw new armies were defeated in battles in Germany. Pursued into France, in **Apr 14**, the Emperor was forced to abdicate. (*E. Mawdsley*, *Thunder in the East*, 118-19)

Niemand kennt den Verfasser des nachstehendes Gedichtes mit **6 Strophen** ueber den Untergang der Grossen Armee in den Schlamm- u. Eiswuesten Russlands. Zwei ausgewaehlte Strophen hier zittiert:

Mit Mann u. Ross u. Wagen,
so hat sie Gott geschlagen.
Es irrt durch Schnee u. Wald umher
das grosse, maechtige Kaiserheer.
Der Kaiser auf der Flucht,
Soldaten ohne Zucht.
Mit Mann u. Ross u. Wagen,
so hat sie Gott geschlagen.

Speicher ohne Brot
aller Orten Not

Wagen ohne Rad,
alles mued u. matt.
Kranke ohne Wagen
So hat sie Gott geschlagen

(Source: *K.W. Andres, Napoleon vs. Hitler*, 10)

1.19.2: Tolstoy (*War and Peace*):

“Die Historiker sagen mit naiver Selbstueberzeugtheit, die Ursachen dieses Ereignisses [i.e., Napoleon’s attack on Russia] seien Napoleons Herrschaft. . . die Soldaten u. Generale – die Diplomaten – die Kaufleute – die Mitglieder des englischen Parlaments sehen andere Hauptursachen. . . *Milliarden von Ursachen haben zusammengewirkt, um die Geschehnisse herbeizufuehren*. Nichts war also ausschliessliche Ursache; vielmehr musste jenes Ereignis einfach deshalb eintreten, weil es eben eintreten musste. . . Es konnte eben nicht anders sein; es war ein Zusammentreffen zahlloser Umstaende notwendig, von denen auch nicht einer fehlen konnte. Ohne Fatalismus kommt man in der Geschichte bei der Erklaerung unvernuenftiger Erscheinungen nicht aus. . .“ (*L. Tolstoj, „Krieg u. Frieden;“* quoted in: *F. Belke, „Infanterist;“* 25)

English Text:

364: “Toward the end of the year 1811, a mobilization and concentration of forces began in Western Europe; and in 1812, these forces – millions of men, counting those who transported and fed them – were moved from west to east toward the borders of Russia...On the 24th of June, the forces of Western Europe crossed the Russian frontier, and war began: In other words, *an event took place opposed to human reason and human nature*. Millions of men committed against one another a countless number of crimes, deceptions, treacheries, robberies, forgeries, issues of false money, depredations, incendiary fires, and murders, such as the annals of all the courts in all the world could not equal in the *aggregate of centuries*; and yet which, at that period, the perpetrators did not even regard as crimes...”

365: “...To us it is incomprehensible that millions of Christian men killed and tortured each other because Napoleon was ambitious, Alexander firm, English policy astute, and the Duke of Oldenburg affronted.” [Note: See remainder of this page for Tolstoy’s on *causation in history, fatalism, free will vs. destiny*, etc.]

366: [Napoleon watches his troops cross *Niemen* into Russia]: “Early on the morning of the 23th he emerged from his tent, which had been pitched on the steep left bank of the river, and looked through his field glass at the torrents of troops pouring forth from the *Vilkovik forest* and streaming across the 3 bridges thrown over the *Nieman*...”

392: “On the 24th of July, the evening before the engagement, there was a *severe thunderstorm*, with rain and hail. That summer of the year 1812 was throughout *remarkable for its thundershowers*.”

406-7: “It is not plain to us what caused the *destruction of the French army* in the year 1812. No one will attempt to dispute that the cause of the destruction of Napoleon’s French troops was, on the one hand, their *plunging into the depths of Russia too late in the season*, and w/o sufficient

preparation; and, on the other hand, the character given to the war by the *burning of the Russian cities*, and the consequent *awakening in the Russian people* of hatred against the foe..." The luring of Napoleon into the heart of the country was *not in accordance w/ any plan* – for no one believed in the possibility of such a plan – but came about from a complicated interplay of intrigues, desires, and ambitions of the men who took part in this war and had no conception of what was *destined to be*, or what would prove, the only salvation of Russia. Everything proceeded *in the most unexpected way.*"

444-45: "Though the enemy was approaching Moscow, the Muscovites were not inclined to regard their situation w/ any greater degree of seriousness; on the contrary, the matter was treated w/ *peculiar lightness*, as is always the case w/ people who see a great catastrophe approaching...Moscow had not been so gay for a long time as it was that year."

464-81: [*Borodino*] "The principal action in the Battle of *Borodino* took place on a space of seven thousand feet, between Borodino and *Bagration's* earthworks...From the *Shevardino redoubt*, where Napoleon had taken up his position, the distance to Bagration's fortifications was about two-thirds of a mile, while Borodino was more than a mile distant in a straight line, and, consequently, Napoleon could not see what was going on there...[**Note:** Tolstoy goes on to describe Napoleon's "gloomy feeling;" how this battle – this campaign – against Russia was so terribly different from all the earlier ones; how what had worked in the past, for the time here, at Borodino, failed; etc.]

481: [*Borodino*] "The moral force of the French attacking army was exhausted. Victory is not something signalized by the fastening of certain strips of cloth called flags to poles, nor by the space on which troops have stood or are standing; *victory is moral*, when the one side has been persuaded as to the moral superiority of the other and of its own weakness; and such a victory was won by the Russians over the French at Borodino. The invading army, like an exasperated beast of prey, having received as it ran a mortal wound, became conscious that it was doomed; but it could not halt...the French army was still able to *crawl to Moscow*; but there, w/o any new efforts on the part of the Russian troops, it was doomed to perish, bleeding to death from the *mortal wound received at Borodino*. The direct consequence of the Battle of Borodino was Napoleon's causeless flight from Moscow..."

521: "At four o'clock in the afternoon [**14 Sep 1812**] the troops under *Murat* entered Moscow. In front rode a detachment of Wurtemberg hussars; next followed the *King of Naples* [i.e., Murat] in person, mounted, and surrounded by a large suite..."

593: The French troops started the *retreat* [from Moscow] on the night of the **18th of October**...

599: [*Kutuzof* is patient; avoids temptation – and supplications of his lieutenants – to attack the retreating French army] "He knew that it is not good to pluck the apple while it is green. It will fall of itself when it is ripe; but if you puck it green, then it spoils the apple and the tree, and sets your teeth on edge as well. Like an experienced huntsman, he knew that the wild beast was wounded – *wounded as only the whole force of Russia could wound*; but whether or not the wound was mortal was as yet an undecided question..."⁵⁷⁴

603-4: [Tolstoy re: *partisan warfare*]. "This sort of activity is always seen in wars which *assume a popular character*...Warfare of this sort is called "partisan" warfare, and people suppose that

⁵⁷⁴ **Note:** In words of Tolstoy, *Kutuzof* was a portly, old man. Tolstoy paints a very positive image of the general in his book.

when it is thus named its meaning is explained. Such warfare, however, *not only fails to come under any rules...*The so-called partisan or *guerrilla war* began w/ the arrival of the French at *Smolensk*. Before this guerilla warfare was officially recognized by our government, thousands of the hostile army – marauders left behind and foraging parties – had been *exterminated by Cossacks and peasants*, who killed these men as instinctively as dogs worry to death a mad dog that has run astray. The partisans demolished the “Grand Army” in detachments. They trampled down the fallen leaves that fell from the dried tree – the French army – and now and again shook the tree itself. In October, when the French were on their way back to *Smolensk*, there were *hundreds of these bands*, of various sizes and characters...”

626-27: After the 9th of November, when *hard frosts* began, the flight of the French assumed a still more tragic character because of the many who perished of cold or were burned to death at the campfires...From *Moscow* to *Viazma*, the **73,000** composing the French army, not counting the Guard – which throughout the whole war had done nothing except *pillage* – the 73,000 of the army were reduced to **36,000**. Out of the number lost, not more than **5000** perished in battle...The French army melted away and was destroyed in the same proportion from *Moscow* to *Viazma*, from *Viazma* to *Smolensk*, from *Smolensk* to the *Beresina*, from the *Beresina* to *Vilna*, independently of the greater or less degree of cold, the pursuit of the Russians, the obstruction of the road, and all other conditions taken singly...”

635-36: Tolstoy notes that Russians – due to exhaustion from marches of up to 30 miles a day, etc. – also suffered tremendous losses during the pursuit of the French: “...the Russian army, on leaving *Tarutino*, had **100,000** men, and lost during the whole march not more than **5000** in killed and wounded and less than a hundred taken prisoner, they had only **50,000** men when they got to *Krasnoye*. [Note: T. writes that in 1812-13, *Kutuzof* “was openly accused of serious mistakes. The sovereign was displeased w/ him; and in the history of the campaign, written not long since, by imperial orders, it is declared that *Kutuzof* was a *crafty court liar*, who trembled at the name of *Napoleon*, and who, by his blunders at *Krasnoye* and the *Beresina*, deprived the Russian troops of the glory of a complete victory over the French...”

638: The 17th of November [1812] was the first day of the so-called Battle of *Krasnoye*...Not far from *Dobroye* a huge crowd of ragged prisoners, wearing whatever they happened to have laid their hands on, were loudly talking...As the C-in-C approached, the talking quieted down and all eyes were fixed on *Kutuzof*, who in his *white fur cap w/ a red top*, and *wadded cloak* hunched upon his stooping shoulders, slowly moved along the road...He...kept gazing attentively and fixedly at the figures of the prisoners, who presented a particularly sad spectacle. Most of the French soldiers were *maimed*, w/ *frostbitten noses and cheeks*, and almost all of them had *red, swollen, festering eyes*...”

640: “The French troops melted away in a *regular mathematical progression*. Even the crossing of the *Beresina* River, about which much has been written, was only one of the intermediate steps in the destruction of the French army...If so much has been written...about the *Beresina*, it is...simply because the misfortunes that the French army had up to that time endured steadily, here suddenly accumulated in one moment at the *broken bridge on the river* – one *tragic disaster*, which remained in the memory of all...”

1.20: Clausewitz On War:

Note: The Russo-German War 1941-45 was the prime example of Clausewitz's famous *trinity*: *primordial violence*, hatred and enmity; the *play of chance* and probability; and the *political direction* to which it is, and must remain, subject. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 19; also, Clausewitz, trans. Howard & Paret, Bk 1, ch. 1, part 28, p 89)

Note: Although the Germans would win great victories by sticking to the *precepts* of Clausewitz, they tended to overlook his conclusions on total war. „Russia,“ he wrote, „is not a country that can be formally conquered.“ He thought it too large to be occupied by the armies of the early 19th century, and certainly not by the **500,000** men Bonaparte had employed in **1812**. Clausewitz argued that only *internal disunity* could bring Russia down. Yet by pursuing Hitler's racist vision, the German Army did not stoke dissent in the USSR; it left the people no choice but to fight or die. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 18)

Note: “The generals . . . were the less able to put a brake on Hitler because their outlook was *too exclusively military*, besides being continental. That narrow vision tended to offset the effect of their greater caution. In this connection, Kleist contributed some significant reflections in the course of one of our talks: ‘Clausewitz's teachings had *fallen into neglect* in this generation – even at the time when I was at the War Academy and on the General Staff. His phrases were quoted, but his *books were not closely studied*. He was regarded as a military *philosopher*, rather than as a practical teacher. The writings of Schlieffen received *much greater attention*. They seemed more practical because they were directed to the problem of how an army inferior in strength – which was always Germany's position in relation to the whole – could overcome enemies on both sides who, in combination, were superior in strength. . . .’” (Quoted in: B.H.L. Hart, *German Generals Talk*, 162)

G. Blau: “Clausewitz observed of Russia that ‘it was a country which could be subdued only by its own weakness and by the effects of internal dissension. In order to strike these vulnerable spots of its body politic, Russia would have to be agitated at the very center.’ In reading this study,, the military student will realize how dearly the Germans had to pay for ignoring Clausewitz's advice. (G. Blau, *German Campaign in Russia*, iii)

1.20.1: Military Career:

Clausewitz was the „greatest of all Western writers on war.“ His *Vom Kriege* first published in **1832**. In his mid-20s, he began to take a serious interest in military theory. There followed his participation in the disastrous campaign of **1806**; a period spent as a POW in France, and an appointment to the General Staff in Berlin, where he helped *Scharnhorst*, his revered master, rebuild the Prussian army. By **1811**, his talents as a *theoretician* were already sufficiently well known for him to be entrusted w/ teaching the *Crown Prince* (later, *Friedrich Wilhelm IV*) about war. In **1812**, he was in Russia fighting Napoleon. During the campaigns of **1813-15** he was active as a *staff officer* and in **1817** assumed administrative control of the Berlin staff college, or *Kriegsakademie*. Rising to the rank of general, it was there that he produced his great work, „*Vom Kriege*.“ (Crevelde, *Art of War*, 108)

Citino: Clausewitz acquired a position as the *preeminent philosopher of war* in the mid-19th Century that he has still not relinquished today. The terms crowd in one after the other. *Auftragstaktik*. Striking at the enemy's „*center of gravity*.“ *Kesselschlacht*. „War is the

continuation of policy by other means.“ *Schwerpunkt*. „No plan survives contact w/ the enemy’s main body.“ Modern military operations, in both theory and practice, are unthinkable w/o these **Prussian concepts**. Such terms define the German way of war. (R. Citino, *German Way of War*, 142-43)

1.20.2: *Philosophy of war*:

On War is a *romantic work*, it cannot be understood apart from the *intellectual paradigm* that it challenged: the *rationalism of the Enlightenment*. In the 18th Century, there were many who argued that war was, above all, a *science*, a *rational activity susceptible to natural law*. This point made most forcefully by the *Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini*, a Swiss officer who served w/ both the French and allied armies during the Napoleonic wars. He used that experience to *distill Napoleon’s art of war into a small number of universal principles*. (R. Citino, *German Way of War*, 144)

Clausewitz painted a *radically different portrait of war* than Jomini’s. Far from being a rational activity, war arose out of „*primordial violence, hatred, and enmity*.“ Far from being the servant of rules and regulations and Jomini’s „*one great principle*“ (i.e., his concept of *interior lines*), war was about „the play of *chance and probability* within which the *creative spirit* is free to roam.“ (Note: „*On War*“ attempts to establish a „*metaphysic of war*.“) One could understand war, he wrote, only by giving equal weight to each leg of this „*paradoxical trinity*.“ („*eine wunderliche Dreifaltigkeit*, *On War*, book 1, chapter 1, p 89) (R. Citino, *German Way of War*, 144)

Germane to Barbarossa: „Im Vietnam-Krieg haetten alle drei Seiten, amerikanische Regierung, Armee u. Bevoelkerung, einer nach dem anderen geschaut u. Antworten gesucht, die niemand geben konnte – alle drei haetten sich voneinander *entfremdet*. Zuletzt hatte die pol. Fuehrung zwar weiterhin den *Primat*, war sich jedoch vollkommen im unklaren ueber *einen Grundsatz von Clausewitz*, der allzu haeufig vergessen wird. Dieser Grundsatz lautet, dass *sich die pol. Fuehrung dessen bewusst sein muesse, was das Militaerwesen leisten koenne, was militaerisch machbar ist u. was dessen Moeglichkeiten ueberschreitet*. („*Den Sieger gibt es erst, wenn der Verlierer aufgibt. Clausewitz oder Sun Tzu? Ein Scheideweg der amerikanischen Kriegfuehrung im Irak*“, *Andreas Herberg-Rothe*, in: *FAZ*, 30 Oct 06.)

Martin v. Creveld (Clausewitz’ theory):

- Like almost all other military writers since **1800**, Clausewitz wanted to *penetrate the secret of Revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare*, which, as he and the rest saw, clearly differed from what had gone before.
- Clausewitz was not simply a thoughtful soldier, but a *true philosopher in uniform*. In his study of French Revolution and Napoleon, he *sought to go back to first principles*. This he did by focusing on two questions: **what was war and what purpose did it serve?** From the answers to these...he sought to deduce all the rest.
- To answer the first question, C. In his last book of *On War* constructed an *imaginary picture of ,absolute war,* that is, war as it would have been if, stripped of all practical considerations concerning time, place and intent, it had been able to *stnad up naked*, so to speak. This devise,

which he borrowed from contemporary physical science by way of **Kant**, enabled him to *define war as an elemental act of violence in which all ordinary social restraints were cast off*.

- Since force would naturally invite the use of greater force, war also possessed an *inherent tendency towards escalation* which made it essentially uncontrollable and unpredictable, „**a great passionate drama**.“

- It represented the domain of *danger, friction and uncertainty*. Its successful conduct was above all a question of possessing the qualities needed to counter and master these inherent characteristics. Hence, C. had *much to say about will power*, bravery and endurance, both in the commander – whose ‚genius‘ they formed – and in the army. Though allowing the use of every expedient and requiring the full participation of the intellect, *at bottom war was a question of character*.

- C. argues that no theory of war (system) ought to obscure the *elemental fact* that war *consisted of fighting and that fighting – in other words, battle – determined the outcome of wars*. „The best strategy,“ he wrote, „is always to be very strong, first in general and then at the decisive point.“

- War was a „*physical and moral struggle by means of the former*.“ Since the enemy’s strength was concentrated in his armed forces, the **first objective of strategy ought always be to smash them**; this achieved, his capital could be captured and his country occupied. Thus, Clausewitz’ *On War* puts forth a *brutally realistic doctrine*. In other words, C. emphasizes that *war is brutal and bloody and seeks to achieve a great victory*.

- To defend was easier than to attack; and the further an attacker got from his base, the greater his logistical difficulties, need to safeguard lines of communication, etc. Conversely, falling back on *his* base would make a defender stronger. This is where C. *shows his originality over his predecessors*, by positing that inevitably there would come a „**culminating point**.“ The attack would turn into a defence, and the defence into an attack; that is, unless the enemy had first been smashed and a decisive victory won.

- War was not simply a phenomenon in its own right; rather, it was, or at least ought to be, a *deliberate political act*, „a continuation of policy by other means.“ It is true that *war had a grammar of its own* – i.e., rules which could not be violated w/ impunity – but it was equally true that it did *not have a logic of its own*. That logic was to be provided from the outside, so to speak. Unless its higher conduct and general character were *governed by policy*, war would be a „senseless thing, w/o an object.“

- C. argued that *war was morally neutral* – as he says – thus once again allowing his *tendency towards brutal realism* to come to the fore. There can be *no war w/o bloodshed; in dangerous things such as war, errors committed out of a feeling of benevolence are the worst*. Or as C. put it: „...war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst.“⁵⁷⁵

- In the entire massive work, the only sentence which is devoted to the *law of war* is the one which says that it is so weak and unimportant as to be *virtually negligible*. Among Western writers on war, the *position of C. is unique*. To use a metaphor, his is no ordinary cookbook full of recipes, concerning the utensils and ingredients which, correctly used, will yield certain foods;

⁵⁷⁵ See, Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. 1976 (Chapter One, “What is War?”)

instead it contends itself w/ explaining the *nature of cooking* and the *uses to which it can be put*, leaving readers to proceed on their own. Thus, when technological progress caused organization, tactics and much of strategy to change, *he alone retained his relevance.* (Crevelde, *Art of War*, 108-14)

Robert Citino:

- Clausewitz: Problem of accurate information in war was ever present. Information always sketchy at best: „all action takes place, so to speak, in a *kind of twilight*, which, like fog or moonlight, often tends to make things seem grotesque and larger than they really are.“ All generals were commanding into the unknown. Hence, war could never possess mathematical certainty but was instead a matter of assessing probabilities, a gamble: „*No other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up w/ chance.*“ (*German Way of War*, 146)
- Clausewitz' discussion of *genius*. Here is clear evidence of *Napoleon's* impact on his contemporaries. C. writes of the role of the great commander, his boldness, his audacity, his will. *Genius*, he wrote, „*rises above all rules.*“ (*German Way of War*, 146)
- German military intellectuals in 19th and 20th centuries believed C. was the „teacher and guide to present day officers, even if in the majority of cases it was unconscious.“ (i.e., even then *On War* was „far more often quoted actually read.“) Certain *narrow portions* of *On War* thus became *foundation stones of Prussian-German military discourse* over the next century: the claim that war was an *art and not a science*, and was, therefore, not susceptible to a schema or system, for example, and its corollary, that the *commander was an artist and had to be allowed absolute creative freedom.* (*German Way of War*)

Nikolas Gardner:

- Author notes the value of some key concepts in On War, including the importance of *understanding the nature of a conflict* before embarking on it, the inevitability of friction and fog, the relationship between military strategy and political objectives, and the “paradoxical” trinity. He states that one contemporary critic of On War contends that C. clearly and consistently emphasized “*the primacy of slaughter in war.*” In this critics opinion, the Clausewitzian obsession w/ slaughter has “tainted the doctrine, educational institutions, and strategy of the U.S. military.” (“*Resurrecting the Icon,*” 120)⁵⁷⁶
- However, historians concur that Chapter 1 of On War represents “C.’s ideas in mature form. It also outlines his conception of war in general terms.” Entitled “What is War?” this chapter begins by positing that when considered thru the lens of a pure (and artificial) logic, war should escalate to extremes, as each belligerent intensifies its efforts to defeat the enemy. It then explains that the political objectives sought by the belligerents, the relative advantage of remaining on the defensive, and the inherent imperfection of intelligence, all tend to limit the escalation of conflicts in reality. This leads C. to the counterargument that war is a *continuation of political activity by other means*. He then reconciles these opposing ideas in a conceptual model that aims to shed light on the *nature of any conflict*: his “*paradoxical trinity*” of *emotion*, *chance*, and *reason*. (121)

⁵⁷⁶ **Note:** All notes under “Gardner” gleaned from his article, “Resurrecting the ‘Icon.’ The Enduring Relevance of Clausewitz’s *On War*,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Spring 2009.

- Clausewitz did not consider the development of policy to be a wholly rational undertaking, as John Keegan has alleged. Ideally, he assumed that states would develop rational policies aimed at enhancing their own power. In reality, however, he recognized that the political decision-making process was often far from rational. That he understood the influence of nonrational factors – such as ideology, religion, nationalism, and revenge – on the development of policy is evident in the first aspect of the trinity “*composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity.*” In the words of C. Bassford and E. Villacres, “The ‘remarkable trinity’ is, in fact, C.’s description of the psychological environment of politics, of which ‘war is a continuation.” (126)

- As Peter Paret has noted, C. was unique in his own era in that he “took the decisive step of placing the *analysis of psychological forces* at the very centre of the study of war.” . . . C. considered the desire for status to be of utmost importance in a military commander. As he explains in Chapter 3, Book 1: “Of all the passions that inspire men in battle, none, we have to admit, is so powerful and so constant as the longing for honor and renown. . . It is primarily this spirit of endeavor on the part of commanders at all levels, this inventiveness, energy, and competitive enthusiasm, which vitalizes an army and makes it victorious.” Thus, C. recognized that neither politics nor war was completely or even predominantly a rational process. Emotional, cultural, and psychological factors profoundly influenced both political objectives and the way in which they were pursued on the battlefield. (127)

- Author states that American military circles have been greatly influenced by C.’s concept of center of gravity: As Colin Gray has commented, “It may be no exaggeration to suggest that the American military has seized on the concept of ‘center of gravity’ and sought to apply it in a distinctly Jominian spirit. After all, here is a concept w/ direct practical use. Unlike friction, or the culminating point of victory, and other difficult concepts, center of gravity appears to be ready for the strategic primetime.” (128)

- Despite the occasional expose proclaiming the danger and/or irrelevance of On War, scholars generally agree that Clausewitzian concepts *provide a very effective framework for understanding the fundamental dynamics of war, adaptable to any time and place.* (129)

- To read On War as a work of advocacy is to misunderstand its purpose. Clausewitz sought not to provide instructions for victory in battle but to illuminate the nature of war, regardless of time and place. (130)

- More than any other work, On War provides a foundation for understanding the nature of war, which is an essential first step in the process of devising sound strategy. Rather than casting him aside, we need more than ever to read C. carefully. (131)

1.20.3: Theoretical concepts:

a) Culmination point:

„In an earlier piece, I mentioned a military concept called the *culminating point*, „...where an attack, no matter how successful inevitably begins to stall out, to lose power and coherence. After that, the assault can no longer be sustained, and the wise cdr calls a halt to rest and reorganize his forces...“ The concept of the culminating point, like so much else, is *derived from the work of Carl von Clausewitz*. As an invading army advances into enemy territory, it begins to lose its strength through a process of *operational attrition*. These unavoidable losses include

occupation troops, troops needed to screen or engage enemy concentrations and fortresses, and troops needed to guard supply lines going through hostile territory. At the same time, resources become more difficult to acquire, due to long supply lines and hostile activity. Add on the *moral effect*, w/ enemy resistance stiffening as the invading army moves deeper into home territory, and the inevitable follows: at a certain distinct point, *the advantage shifts from attacker to defender*, and it's no longer militarily feasible to continue an advance...Clausewitz is adamant in his insistence that *pushing on past the culminating point is military folly at its most egregious*: „...to overstep this point, is more than simply a useless expenditure of power, yielding no further result, it is a *destructive step* which causes reaction; and this reaction is, according to all general experience, productive of most disproportionate effects.“ (J.R. Dunn, "Clausewitz On Terror," *Real Clear Politics*, 14 Sep 06)

b) Friktion:

Citino: War is not a rational activity. Those men w/ their „pounding hearts“ will not necessarily behave in predictable patterns. Thus, war is the *domain of uncertainty*. Both sides develop plans, and then have to watch helplessly as they are *ground down in an inexorable process that he called „friction.“*⁵⁷⁷ (R. Citino, *German Way of War*, 145)

Concept of friction: „From the inescapable law of nature that, if anything can go wrong, it will.“ (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 18; also, Clausewitz, trans. Howard & Paret, Bk. 1, ch. 7, „on friction in war,“ pp 119-21)

Friction is a concept put forward by Prussian General von Clausewitz. One of his most trenchant quotes concerning friction is: „**Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult**. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war.“ Friction is real. Friction reflects *human frailty* and *uncertainty*. Friction is the element of chance. Friction exists at all levels of military decision-making and operations – from the top leadership down to the foxhole. According to C. there are *eight* (8) sources of the *nonlinear and often irrational concept of friction*: (“*Clausewitz and Chaos*,” book review by R. Adolph, Jr.)

1. insufficient knowledge of the enemy
2. rumors (information gained by remote observation and spies)
3. uncertainty about one's own strength and position
4. uncertainties that cause friendly troops to tend to exaggerate their own difficulties
5. differences between expectations and reality
6. the fact that one's own army is never as strong as it appears to be on paper
7. difficulties in keeping an army supplied
8. the tendency to change or abandon well-thought-out plans when confronted w/ the vivid physical images and perceptions of the battlefield.

Friction is perhaps best described in the nonacademic vernacular as **Murphy's Law**. A similar U.S. Army maxim says: „No plan survives contact w/ the enemy.“⁵⁷⁸ Historical analysis suggests that friction is *unavoidably connected to all military endeavors*. (“*Clausewitz and Chaos*,” book review by R. Adolph, Jr.)

⁵⁷⁷ For Clausewitz' oft-quoted friction analogy of a traveler on the highway see, *On War*, book 1, chapter 7, p 119 (M. Howard & P. Paret, editors).

⁵⁷⁸ **Note:** The elder *Moltke* said same thing.

Barry D. Watts:

- C.'s earliest known use of the term "friction"⁵⁷⁹ to „describe the effect of reality on ideas and intentions in war“ occurred in a 29 Sep 1806 letter written to his future wife, *Marie von Bruhl*, less than 3 weeks before France defeated Prussia at the twin battles of *Jena* and *Auerstadt* on 14 Oct 1806. By the time C. died in **1831**, his original insight regarding friction's debilitating effects on the campaign of 1806 had *grown into a central theme* of the *unfinished manuscript* his widow published as *Vom Kriege*.

- American military officers today most often refer to C.'s *unified concept of general friction* (*Gesamtbegriff einer allgemeinen Friktion*) as the „**fog and friction**“ of war. The diverse difficulties and impediments to the effective use of mil. force that those possessing mil. experience instinctively associate w/ this phrase are generally acknowledged to have *played significant roles in most, if not all, of the wars since C.'s time*. Indeed, close examination of Operation **Desert Storm (1991)** suggests that frictional impediments experienced by the winning side were not appreciably different in scope or magnitude than they were for the Germans during their lightning conquest of France and Low Countries in **May 1940**.

- The *historical persistence of friction*, despite vast changes in the means of war since C.'s time, suggests that his concept may reflect far more than a transitory or contingent feature of land warfare during the Napoleonic era. Moreover, the prospects for eliminating friction entirely – for example, with foreseeable advances in surveillance and information technologies that will sufficiently lift the „fog of war“ to enable future U.S. cdrs to „see and understand everything on the battlefield“ – appear quite dim because *friction gives every evidence of being a built-in or structural feature of combat processes*.

- „The *propensities and constraints* built into humankind by biological evolution provide a wellspring for general friction that seems likely to persist at some level as long as *Homo sapiens* does.“ (“*Clausewitzian Friction and Future War*,” Barry D. Watts, Oct 96)⁵⁸⁰

c) *Vernichtungsschlacht*:

Above all, however, when a German officer referenced Clausewitz, chances are he was referring to *one specific idea*: the philosopher's admonitions – expressed repeatedly in *On War* – that „**the direct annihilation of the enemy's forces must always be the dominant consideration**“ in *wartime*; that „the destruction of the enemy's forces is admittedly the purpose of all engagements;“ and that „the grand objective of all military action is to overthrow the enemy – which means destroying his armed forces.“ This „*annihilation concept*“ (*Vernichtungsgedanke*) was not simply something C. invented, but had its roots deep in the Prussian past. (*R. Citino, German Way of War*)

⁵⁷⁹ As Clausewitz wrote: „Friction is the only conception which, in a general way, corresponds to that which *distinguishes real war from war on paper*.“ (Note: This quote is from the long-obsolete J.J. Graham translation, published in London in 1873. The 1976/84 *Howard/Paret* version is the standard translation today.)

⁵⁸⁰ Located on web at: <http://www.ciaonet.org>.

1.21: ULTRA & ENIGMA:

1.21.1: ULTRA Project:

Background:

ULTRA was the designation for the *signals intelligence* derived from the radio communications which the Germans encrypted on their high-grade cipher machine called ENIGMA. Only now, in the **1980s** is the influence of ULTRA on Allied strategy, tactics, and victory beginning to be widely acknowledged and understood. The German navy began using ENIGMA in **1926**, the German army in **1928**, and the GAF in **1935**. The Germans knew their enemies were listening to their secret radio communications, but they were confident their msgs were undecipherable. The Germans placed *absolute trust* in ENIGMA, which resembled a *typewriter* fitted w/ three revolving rotors, small light bulbs, plug board, wires and batteries. (*ULTRA and the AAF*, Putney, ix-x)⁵⁸¹

The most carefully concealed intelligence triumph of WWII was the Allied ability to read Germany's most secret communications encrypted by the *Enigma* cipher machines. These wireless signals were intercepted by various special receiving stations. Sent by *teleprinter* to Bletchley Park (BP) outside of London, they were deciphered and distributed to *special liaison units* (SLUs) attached to major Allied field commands. The deciphered product was known as „special intelligence,“ and was marked Most Secret-U (which stood for ULTRA), later known as Top Secret-U...ULTRA provided the Allies w/ the ability to read German orders, which the latter believed remained secure. The ULTRA intelligence revealed the German leaders' hopes and anxieties, resources and prospects, vulnerabilities and strong points. It told of actual plans and of planned contingencies should things go wrong. This *insider knowledge* gave a *priceless advantage* to the Allied cdrs...The information received through ULTRA included *advanced warnings on German plans to invade the Soviet Union*...The Enigma machine and the efforts to decipher its msgs through the „*Bombe*,“ an *electromechanical device* built at BP to decrypt Enigma msgs, contributed to the development of modern computer systems. (*Zabecki, Encyclopedia*, 1290-91)⁵⁸²

Ultra remained a secret until **1974**, and some aspects were concealed even in the **1980s** because of their bearing on ops against Soviet codes. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 398)

Note: According to “Wikipedia,”⁵⁸³ the Soviets had “via their own espionage operations, *learned of the British break into important German message traffic*,” which was not, at the time, known to the British.

Note: In his review of Constantine FitzGibbon's, *Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century* (published **1976**), Col. Wendell E. Little, USAF, ret., writes in *Air University Review* (**May-Jun 79**):

The author is more sound in his description of the German Enigma Machine and the Ultra operation at Bletchley, England, where secret German messages were

⁵⁸¹ Putney's introduction provides excellent history of Polish work on the Enigma machines, beginning as early as **1927**. (x-xi)

⁵⁸² Enigma gave the British the German order of battle as early as the *Norway campaign* in 1940. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 400)

⁵⁸³ Wikipedia – admittedly, not always a reliable source.

read through the end of World War II. Having served as an American officer assigned to Ultra and later to General Omar N. Bradley's 12th U.S. Army Group, FitzGibbon is able to depict the whole spectrum of cryptographic intelligence from its collection and analysis to its use on the battlefield. The necessary extreme measures to protect knowledge of Ultra, including use of the Lucy Ring to warn Stalin of the attack by Hitler, are well described.

Note: In his book, *The Waffen-SS at War. Hitler's Praetorians 1925-45*, published in 2004, author Tim Ripley avers:

The British had broken the German Enigma code using an early form of computer, but they were unwilling to reveal to Stalin the full extent of their code-breaking success, and so created a convoluted means to pass so-called "ULTRA" material to Moscow. This involved establishing contact w/ a ring of Soviet agents in Switzerland, code-named "Lucy," and drip-feeding them ULTRA decodes relevant to the war in Russia. The Lucy agents were convinced they were receiving documents from disgruntled German officers within Hitler's inner circle. The result was that within days Moscow had verbatim transcripts of high-level orders being sent from Hitler's headquarters to his senior commanders on the eastern front. These included all the plans for Operaton Citadel. . . Hitler's desire to micro-manage the war down to the lowest level played into the Soviets hands. They knew every move of almost all German units, often before the commanders of those units themselves. (138-39)

ULTRA (in full 'TOP SECRET ULTRA'), British code name for the most secret SIGINT gained in the first place by the attack on the Enigma machine encipherment system widely used by the Axis. (The product of the Allied attack on the different Japanese systems was code-named MAGIC in the US.) Other code names used in this context included the cover name of BONIFACE for a fictional intelligence agent supposedly supplying much of the material, and LUCY on which more below. For the most part it was gained by decryption of radio signals and thus could be negated by a radio blackout, as occurred before the battle of the Bulge.

Growing success against Enigma began with the Luftwaffe, most of whose instructions were sent by radio. ULTRA provided critical intelligence during the battle of Britain and in the sinkings of Italian supply ships in the Mediterranean, contributing heavily to the defeat of Rommel. ULTRA permitted the location and sinking of U-boat tankers and wolf packs, and was instrumental in winning the battle of the Atlantic. In order to conceal the source, ULTRA was *fed to the Soviets through the LUCY spy ring based in Switzerland*, but, despite the fact that he had well-placed agents in the British diplomatic, intelligence, and SIGINT services, Stalin often refused to believe it, most disastrously with reference to warnings about BARBAROSSA. (*Peter Jarvis & Hugh Bicheno*, at: "Answers.com.")

History:

Ultra project embraced a team of mathematicians, linguists, hieroglyphics scholars, crossword-puzzle enthusiasts and assorted other *savants* who were assembled in secret at an estate called ***Bletchley Park*** shortly after the war began. Within a few months of England's declaration of war on Germany, they began to *chip away* at the German code reserved for the most secret military

traffice, *Enigma*. One year into the war, the Bletchley Park team could decipher almost any encoded German transmission in a matter of minutes. (*Time, D-Day*, 112)

The Allied breakthroughs via *Ultra* had their roots in Poland in the 1930s. Fearing Hitler's intentions, Polish intelligence agents bought a second-hand version of the encoding machine developed by German inventor **Arthur Scherbius** in **1919**, which had been *commercially available* until **1933**, when the Nazis classified it secret. Although the version of the machine used by the German military was much improved over the commercial model, the original provided some clues as to how Enigma might be broken. When Poland was overrun by the Germans in 1939, the intelligence service *smuggled the Enigma machine into England*.

Enter **Alfred Dilwyn Knox**, an early scientific leader of the Ultra team, as the Bletchley Park codebreakers were known. Collaborating w/ Cambridge mathematician **Alan Turing**,⁵⁸⁴ Knox used the Polish sample of Enigma to build a decoding device nicknamed „*the bombe*.“ A *primitive mechanical computer*, it randomly tried every possible combination of letters in an intercepted msg, based on an educated guess about a single word in the text, to try and break the code.

Knox and Turing made slow progress at first, but they were *aided by some German missteps*. Central to Enigma's operation was the *daily reconfiguration of its code*. If it was reset each day using a random, three-letter sequence, its code would have been almost impossible to break. But some German operators simply set the machine's alphabetic gears on AAA or XYX and left them there for the duration of the war. Moreover, the machine would never encode a letter as itself (thus, A would never stand for A), and it would always transpose the same letters for each other within a single msg. (for ex., if A stood for B, then B had to stand for A).

These two *predictable features* reduced the staggeringly large number of possibilities the Bletchley Park team had to sort through. Luck also played a role: in **May 1941**, a German U-boat was captured off the coast of *Greenland*. Before the German crew could scuttle their craft, a British officer jumped aboard and retrieved one of the latest Enigma models, along w/ several *code books*.

Although the bombes developed at Bletchley Park were useful in breaking Enigma, they utilized a time-consuming, *brute-force approach* that simply tried every possible combination of letters until a coded msg began to make sense. The next step was to create a machine that could make intelligent guesses and test them on its own, looking for recognizable patterns rather than random strings of text. To do the job, *Turing* built **Colossus**. One of the world's first *binary computers*, it took up several rooms and used more than 1500 vacuum tubes. Turing's Colossus could break Enigma code in a fraction of the time required by the bombe. Colossus began working on **1 Jun 44**. (*Time, D-Day*, 114-15)

Mar/Apr 41: The British at **BP** could not yet decipher all the German [*Enigma*] msgs, including German army traffic, or the much more complex (12-rotor) **Lorentz system** used for high-level communications between armies, army groups and OKH. But they were deciphering *Luftwaffe* communications and also the *railway Enigma*. One reason why the British were slow to pick up the German turn to the east was that many communications about that deployment were made by *landline* w/in Germany, which was not vulnerable to interception. However, the intercepted radio

⁵⁸⁴ Alan Mathison *Turing* was born in London in **1912**. His father was a member of the British civil service in India. The day after England entered the war against Germany in 1939, Turing was summoned to a Victorian mansion north of London, "**Station X**" (as Bletchley Park was code-named) would be the center of his life for the next 6 years. But this *brilliant computer pioneer*, whose war work involved codes and deceptions, had a secret of his own: he was a *homosexual* in a society that scorned gays. In **1954**, accused of a minor sexual offense, he *killed himself by sucking on an orange he had injected w/ cyanide*. (*Time, D-Day*, 115)

traffic indicated that on **26.4.41**, three out of five [?] *panzer* divisions and two mot. divisions, including one SS, had been ordered north to **Cracow (Krakow)** in Poland, close to the new Soviet border, but were then recalled as soon as the Germans learned of the coup in *Belgrade*. Churchill later claimed that this was the moment of *epiphany* when he suddenly had a vision of what was going to happen in the east [i.e., that Hitler was about to invade Russia]. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*)

Assessment of Impact on war:

„ULTRA – *die Mutter der Tauschung*. Wenn man gezwungen waere, eine Aktivitaet herauszunehehn, fuer die „Ultra“ *staendig unverzichtbar war*, muesste man die Tauschung nennen. Mann kann zurecht verallgemeinernd sagen, dass die Deutschen, nach ihrer Invasion in Norwegen u. ihren Triumphen im Westen, von ein paar Ausnahmen abgesehen, *keinen taktischen oder strategischen Ueberraschungseffekt mehr erzielen konnten*. Dies steht in krassem Gegensatz zu den Erfahrungen aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg...Nur Rommels beide ersten Offensiven in Afrika und die Ardennenoffensive kamen fuer die Alliierten ueberraschend.“ (*H. Deutsch, Funkaufklaerung*, 302-03)

„Wenn ‚Ultra‘ in vollem Fluss war, ein nicht immer zutreffender Zustand...wussten die Alliierten alles ueber den Zustand u. die Lage von Hitlers Truppen. Manchal *wussten sie wohl besser Bescheid als der Diktatur selbst*.“ (*H. Deutsch, Funkaufklaerung*, 305)

„Die Aufgabe der Air Force wurde durch die Erkenntnisse erleichtert, die ‚Ultra‘ aus der ***Geschwaetzigkeit der dt. Luftwaffe*** gewann. (*H. Deutsch, Funkaufklaerung*, 306)

„Haette der Krieg ohne ‚Ultra‘ gewonnen werden koennen? Die Russen waeren mit dieser ihrer Meinung nach *egozentrisch* westlichen Fragestellung sicher nicht einverstanden...Es darf bei der Beurteilung ‚Ultras‘ der *rein westliche Bezug* nicht vergessen werden, die Frage kann nur vor dem Hintergrund des westl. Beitrags zum endgueltigen Sieg gestellt werden. Diese Einschraenkung muss solange gelten, bis geklaert ist, *wie viele u. welche „Ultra“-Erkenntnisse, anonym natuerlich, an Moskau weitergeleitet wurden*. Wenn wir bei der Beurteilung von einem bekannten Beispiel ausgehen, *Stalin's veraechtlicher Missachtung der Warnung* vor einer dt. Invasion 1941, haben die Erkenntnisse den Sowjets wenig genuetzt. Er traute keinem aus dem Westen, ob er nun Geschenke machte oder nicht.“ (*H. Deutsch, Funkaufklaerung*, 319)

ULTRA and the Russians:

Note: Under carefully controlled conditions, Stalin was fed in *spectacular detail* knowledge of German dispositions and plans on the eastern front acquired through Ultra. This had a *major direct bearing on the campaign from 1942 onwards* and helped make possible Stalin's spectacular victories in **1943/44**. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 386; also, *F.H. Hinsley, British Intelligence in Second World War*, 11)

John Somerville (Wells).⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁵ Source for Somerville remarks: *J. Rohwer & E. Jaeckel, Kriegswende Dezember 1941*, 220-22.

- „Anfang 1941 waren die brit. Intelligence Staebе dabei, zwei Punkte zu diskutieren. Einerseits war Deutschland tatsaechlich dabei, einen Angriff [auf Russland] vorzubereiten? Und beabsichtigte Deutschland in jedem Fall anzugreifen oder nur wenn es nicht gelang, mit Verhandlungen weitere Konzessionen zu erlangen?
- Das *erste relevante „Ultra“-Signal* in diesem Zusammenhang war ein entzifferter deutscher *Luftwaffen-„Enigma“-Spruch* vom **26.3.41**, der von der beabsichtigten Bewegung einiger wichtiger Verbaende vom Balkan nach *Krakau* berichtete. Das ueberzeugte **Churchill**, dass eine Invasion Russlands vorbereitet wurde. Der brit. Botschafter leitete die Warnung am **19.4.41** an Stalin weiter.
- Zwischen Ende April u. Ende Mai wurden weitere dt. *Luftwaffenfunksprueche* entschlusselt u. deuteten die Verlegung von Luftwaffenverbaenden nach Polen an.
- Am **8.5.41** wurde zum ersten Mal der Name „*Barbarossa*“ in dt. *Luftwaffen-„Enigma“-Funkspruechen* erwaehnt...Mitte Mai wurde der von der **Reichsbahn benutzte „Enigma“-Schluessel gebrochen** u. berichtete ueber Bewegungen von Heeresverbaenden...Von diesem Zeitpunkt an war *London ueberzeugt*, dass Deutschland tatsaechlich einen Angriff vorbereitete, dass aber die Entscheidung noch zurueckgestellt war, um den Ausgang von Verhandlungen abzuwarten. *Bletchley Park* glaubte zu keiner Zeit, dass Deutschland beabsichtigte, *in jedem Falle anzugreifen*.
- Am **7.6.41** hatte BP die „Order of Battle“ der dt. *Luftwaffe* an der Ostfront fertig aufgestellt. Am **10.6.41** gab Aussenminister *Eden* dem sowjet. Botschafter die vollen Details aller verfuegbaren Intelligence ueber die dt. Vorbereitungen.
- Am **12.6.41**, ueberzeugte eine Entzifferung des Berichtes des japanischen Botschafters ueber ein Interview mit Hitler das *Joint-Intelligence-Komitee* in London, dass Deutschland *tatsaechlich beabsichtigte anzugreifen*. Am **13.6.41**, wurde eine weitere Warnung an den sowjet. Botschafter uebermittelt.
- Bei Ausbruch der Feindseligkeiten (**22.6.41**) wurde von britischer Seite alle Arbeit an den sowjet. Codes u. Schluesselmitteln eingestellt...*Unsere beste Quelle* ueber die Situation an der sowjet. Front, war danach die dt. *Luftwaffen-„Enigma“,* waehrend die Informationen von sowjet. Quellen ausserordentlich duertig blieben.
- Wir kannten aus dieser Quelle die Tatsache, dass die *Deutschen eine Anzahl von sowjet. Codes u. Schluesselmitteln gebrochen hatten u. lesen konnten*. Da wir auf keinen Fall riskieren durften, die „Enigma“-Quelle zu *kompromittieren*, in dem wir „Enigma“-Material direkt an die Russen gaben, mussten wir *einen Umweg einschlagen*. Jedoch schon im **Jul 41** wurde beschlossen, das *Risiko einzugehen, die besonders wichtigen Informationen aus den „Enigma“-Entzifferungen in einer getarnter Form an die Russen weiterzugeben*. Es gab von dieser Zeit an staendige Anfragen von *Churchill*, ob bestimmte Entzifferungen an die Russen weitergegeben worden seien u. wenn nicht, warum nicht. Dieses Material wurde an die brit. Militaermission in Moskau zur Weitergabe an die

Russen uebermittelt...Warnungen vor groesseren dt. Operationen wurden regelmaessig gegeben, so z.B. bei dem geplanten Angriff gegen *Noworossijsk* im **Apr 43**, u. im Zusammenhang mit der Vorbereitung der dt. Offensive gegen *Kursk*.

27.6.41: At Bletchley Park, British cryptographers break the *Enigma key* being used by German army on the eastern front. Known as “*Vulture*,” it provides daily readings of German military orders. On following day, Churchill gives instructions that Stalin is to be given this precious intelligence, provided its source can remain secret. An officer in British Military Intelligence, Cecil *Barclay*, who knows of the work being done at Bletchley, and who is serving in the British Embassy in Moscow, is instructed to pass on warnings of German moves and intentions to the head of Soviet Military Intelligence. Yet despite being *well-informed* of German moves against them, Stalin and his cdrs lack the resources to counter the moves. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 203)

7.7.41: Early in July, British Intelligence learns from German Army *Enigma* msgs that the Germans are reading certain Russian Air Force codes in the Leningrad area, as well as decrypting Russian naval msgs in the Baltic. On **7 July**, this information is passed on to the British Military Mission in Moscow, w/ the request that the Russians be alerted to this gap in their security. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 208)

9.7.41: Information is “key to survival.” On **9 July**, a group of British cryptanalysts break the *Enigma key* used by the German army to direct its ground-air ops on the eastern front. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 209)

14.-16.7.41: British Military Intelligence sends a top secret msg to the British Military Mission in Moscow, to pass on at once to the Russians details, culled from the German *Enigma* msgs, of the dispositions and order of battle of German forces. Two days later (**16.7.41**), at Churchill’s specific request, the Military Mission in Moscow is sent an appreciation of German intentions in both the Smolensk and Gomel areas, together w/ the news, once again taken from the Germans’ own most secret instructions, that the GAF had been ordered to prevent Russian withdrawals by attacks on railways leading to the rear. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 210)

17.-18.7.41: British intelligence learns from Germans’ own *Enigma* msgs that they are disturbed by the scale of their casualties in Russia; that they planned to slow down the advance; and that they could no longer provide adequate air protection either to the *panzer* formations at the front or to strategic positions in the rear. On **17 Jul**, Churchill specifically requests that this information be sent to Stalin. News also reaches Britain, through German top secret police msgs likewise sent via *Enigma*, of the mass murder of Jews, first reported and read on **18.7.41**. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 213)

7.8.41: German police cdr in the central sector, *von dem Bach Zelewski*, reports to SS HQ in Berlin that his units have conducted **30,000** executions since their arrival in Russia; the **SS Cavalry Bde** also sent in a report to Berlin that day, to say that it had carried out **7,819** “executions” to date in the *Minsk* area. To ensure maximum secrecy, both reports were sent by the most secure radio cypher system available – the *Enigma*. Both were read by British Intelligence. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 221)

23.-30.8.41: Beginning on **23 Aug 41** and continuing for eight (**8**) days, British intelligence intercepts German police msgs sent from the East by *Enigma* on **17** separate occasions, setting

out the details of the shooting of Jews in groups numbering from **61** to **4200**. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 226)

20.-25.9.41: From London, w/ Churchill's authority, British intelligence sends Stalin a *series of warnings* based upon the reading of the most secret German „Vulture“ msgs⁵⁸⁶ being sent to and from the eastern front. They provide details of German intentions and movements on the *Moscow front*. These details include information on the location and strength of German air and ground concentrations in the Smolensk area. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 237)

2.10.41: As Germans begin Operation „*Taifun*“, Churchill reads the German secret msgs giving details of the assault. „Are you warning the Russians of the developing concentrations?“ he asks the head of the Secret Intelligence Service, and adds: „Show me the last five msgs you have sent.“ (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 239)

16.11.41: A GAF msg, sent by *Enigma* on 16 Nov 41, and read at Bletchley by the British decrypters, was a complaint from a *Luftwaffe* liaison officer w/ the German troops in the *Kursk* sector, to the effect that no German fighters had been seen for two weeks. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 257)

1.1.42: At Bletchley, where **1500** British scholars and academics are now decrypting and analysing the German *Enigma* msgs, the first day of January brings a *remarkable success*, the breaking of four (**4**) separate Enigma keys: „Pink“, used by the GAF command for msgs of the highest secrecy; and „Gadfly“, „Hornet“, and „Wasp“, used by three of the German air corps. The next day (**2.1.42**), a fifth key is broken – known at Bletchley as „Kite“, it carries the German Army's most secret supply msgs from Berlin to the eastern front. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 287)

Feb 42: Another German *Enigma* cypher pertaining to eastern front is broken: „*Orange II*“, the msgs between *Berlin* and the SS formations fighting w/ the German army on the eastern front. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 298)

1.21.2: ENIGMA Machine:

The German military forces purchased a civilian cipher machine produced by *Chiffriermaschinen AG*, a company in Berlin, during the late **1920s**. This machine was modified for additional security; by **1933**, the *Enigma* was also adopted by the *Abwehr*, the SS, the SD, the Nazi Party, and other German orgs. A total of more than **200,00** machines were field by WWII. The Enigma machine was a *device that mechanically enciphered plain text msgs*. It had a 26-letter keyboard and a panel w/ 26 letters illuminated by lightbulbs underneath. The main cipher components were *three cipher drums*, or *rotars* and a fourth stationary reflector or reversing drum, all mounted on a single axle and mechanically geared together...In addition to the cipher machine, the system required a *daily key*, which consisted of a system of settings that the cipher clerks set on the drums...These daily keys were distributed to the cipher clerks in the form of printed tables for an entire month...The machine was *not particularly fast*, but the breaking of its code posed major challenges...The Enigma machine *made possible the secret German military buildup* in

⁵⁸⁶ **Note:** „Vulture“ – code name for German Enigma key used on the eastern front and broken by Bletchley in Jun 41. Writes Gilbert: “Stalin continued to be informed of the contents of the Enigma msgs . . . The only other Russian to be told was the Chief of the General Staff, Marshal Shaposhnikov.” They were not, of course, told of the source of the msgs. (238)

violation of the *Treaty of Versailles*. It provided secure communications support for the new doctrine of *blitzkrieg*. The Enigma machine *led directly to the development of the world's first electronic computer*, which was used to break the texts of these cipher machines. The first copies of the Enigma machines were obtained by Polish intelligence and turned over to the British in late **Jul 39**. Intelligence the Allies received from broken Enigma codes was designated ULTRA. (Zabecki, *Encyclopedia*, 959-60)

Note: Historian **Geoffrey Jukes** believes that the *capture of Enigma machines at Stalingrad*, coupled w/ the work of Russian mathematicians, allowed the Soviets to break the Enigma system. See, G. Jukes, „The Soviets and Ultra,“ in: *Intelligence and National Security* 3, no. 2 (Apr 88), pp 233-47. Sexton [?] calls this a „provocative thesis that remains to be proved.“ For a challenge to Jukes' thesis see, P.S. **Milner-Barry**, „The Soviets and Ultra: A Comment on Jukes' Hypothesis,“ *Intelligence and National Security* 3, no. 2 (Apr 88), pp 248-50.

The German *Enigma Cipher Machine* was the primary device used by the German military in WW2 to produce what they believed were *secure coded msgs*. The machine – housed in a wooden case – had the superficial appearance of a typewriter (few photographs are available that show an Enigma machine in use by the Germans—one very interesting one shows Guderian in his command car, his Enigma machine operators next to him). This was one of the great secrets of WWII: throughout the conflict, the Allies had access to secret German communications, thanks to their mastery of the Enigma code machine. In fact, the very existence of the Enigma machine was so secret that it was *not made public until 25 years after the war ended*. (*Time, D-Day*, 112)

An *early electronic typewriter*, the Enigma machine translated one letter into another by routing the electric current from each touch of the keypad (A, for ex.) through a series of plugs and rotors, which were set by the operator to convert them into the day's translation key. A small light would then come on next to a different letter (indicating, for ex., that A should become P). The test of the msg, now mere gibberish, was sent over telegraph lines or via radio (using Morse code) to an operator w/ another Enigma machine, using the same translation key to decode it. (*Time, D-Day*, 114)

1.22: America, Britain & Japan:

1.22.1: America:

Note [Hitler u. Amerika]: Hitler fand den Hinblick auf die USA keine schlussige Strategie. Hitler rechnete mit dem Jahr **1942** [i.e., fuer den moeglichen Kriegseintritt Amerikas], weshalb er waehrend des „Unternehmens Barbarossa“ im Sommer u. Herbst **1941** sorgsam darauf bedacht war, *jeglichen vorzeitigen Zusammenstoss zu verhindern*. . . Roosevelt betrieb aber eine konsequente Politik des „short of war.“ Die Besetzung Islands durch amerikanische Truppen im **Jul 41** verschlechterte Hitlers seestrategische Lage erheblich, u. der am **11 Sep 41** von Roosevelt erteilte „Shoot-on-sight“-Befehl an die US-Marine gegen Schiffe der „Achse,“ falls sie sich in Seegebiete wagen sollten, die fuer die amerikanische Verteidigung notwendig seien, machte den Zusammenstoss unausweichlich.

Mit der Atlantik-Charta bekraeftigte Roosevelt am **12 Aug 41** zudem das Zusammengehen mit Grossbritannien. Die USA uebernahmen den Schutz britischer Geleitzuege im Atlantik u. machten deutlich klar, dass sie eine deutsche Vorherrschaft in Europa niemals hinnehmen

wuerden. Erste Hilfslieferungen an Stalin unterstuetzten dieses Bekenntnis. Demgegenueber schwanden Hitlers Hoffnungen auf eine schnelle Entscheidung im Osten von Tag zu Tag. *Manches deutet darauf hin, dass die Ausweitung des Massenmords an den Juden eine unmittelbare Reaktion auf die Atlantik-Charta war.*

Das Scheitern des Vorstosses auf Moskau sorgte innerhalb weniger Tage fuer einen Umschwung der Amerikapolitik Hitlers. Die deutsche Bevoelkerung war schon im Herbst **1941** vorsichtig auf den Fall vorbereitet worden, dass der befuerchtete Kriegseintritt der USA stattfinden koennte. Nach dem spektakulaeren Revision der amerikanischen Neutralitaetsakte am **13 Nov 41** schien es nur noch ein kleiner Schritt bis zur Kriegserklaerung zu sein. . .

Seit dem **18 Nov 41** draengte die japanische Fuehrung auf eine Entscheidung Deutschlands fuer eine gemeinsame Kriegfuehrung gegen die USA. In Unkenntnis der japanischen Angriffsvorbereitungen auf Pearl Harbor entschloss sich Hitler vermutlich am **4 Dez 41**, selbst in Kuerze den Vereinigten Staaten den Krieg zu erklaren. . . Wenn das Eingreifen der Amerikaner in den Krieg nicht laenger verhindert werden konnte, dann – so mochte Hitler glauben – war es besser, die *Initiative zu ergreifen*, u. so die *psychologischen Folgen* des dramatischen Schritts abzuschwaechen.

Am **5 Dez 41** begann die sowj. Gegenoffensive vor Moskau; am **7 Dez 41** eroeffnete Japan den Krieg im Pazifick durch den Ueberfall auf Pearl Harbor; u. am **11 Dez 41** erklarte Deutschland u. Italien den USA den Krieg. Zu der Dramatik dieser Tage gehoert auch Hitlers Entscheidung, die *Ausrottung der Juden zu beschleunigen u. zu vollenden*. (R.-D. Mueller, *Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 154-56)

1940/41: In simple terms, one generation after the end of the Great War, America was of three [3] opinions about involmnet in the latest European conflict: *Isolationism, Interventionism* and the *gray area between the two extremes*. The highest levels of government mirrored this. On one side stood President Roosevelt, a rather „hawkish“ cabinet, supporters in Congress (not all of them Democrats) plus a close circle of „New Dealer“ associates favored assistance to Great Britian and China in any manner that American neutrality and Lend Lease laws would allow. Against them stood the *America First Committee*, perhaps best represented by their celebrity spokesman, *Charles Lindbergh*, plus the Congressional opposition (not all of them Republicans) who wanted nothing to do w/ the European or Asian wars. A significant middle group saw benefits and dangers in both courses of action. The President *clearly stood at the pinnacle of the Interventionist camp*. (Kirchuble, *Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 2)

View of Soviet military: Prior to launching „Barbarossa,“ the Germans put great stock in three [3] main factors that indicated Soviet weakness: 1) a general dissatisfaction on the part of many Russians and esp., most subject nationalities, over the Communist system; 2) the debilitating effects of the purges on Soviet leadership, in particular, the military hierarchy; and, 3) the poor performance of the Red Army and Air Force during the occupation of eastern Poland and against Finland. *Most American (and British) military experts subscribed to the same view. . .* Despite ample evidence of Nazi invasion preparations, the Americans believed, as did the Soviets, that war rumors were „German in origin and are being promulgated purposefully“ to force economic concessions from Stalin [as noted by Capt *Ivan Yeaton*, the American military attache in Moscow] . . . In early **May 41** Yeaton noted: „As is well known, the Soviet-German ‚bluff war‘ is going into its final stage. Germany would *undoubtedly beat the Soviet Union in from three [3] weeks to three [3] months this summer*.“ Most American decision makers accepted this appraisal. (Kirchuble, *Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 5-6)

1941: German policy was one of *nonaggravation* – geared toward depriving Roosevelt of any justification for war (at least at this time). „War w/ the United States will come sooner or later,“ Hitler told his adjutants in late **Mar 41**. „Roosevelt, and behind him the big Jewish financiers, want war – they have no choice, because a German victory in Europe would cause the American Jews enormous capital losses in Europe. I only regret we still have *no acft to bomb American towns*. I would dearly like to teach the Jews of America what it’s like.“ Hitler continued to impose *restrictions* on U-boat operations – they were not to attack American warships or merchant ships; not to use their armament even if the Americans were flagrantly violating their neutrality (reporting German movements to the enemy, for ex.,) unless the Americans fired the first shot. Hitler seriously believed that Roosevelt was ill, perhaps even *mentally unsound* as result of his polio. (See, *Irving, Hitler’s War*, 254-55)

6.6.41: Hitler patiently explains to Admiral *Raeder* why he wants to do everything possible to *avoid incidents w/ the USA* . . . Hitler wants to ensure there are no incidents w/ America until the outcome of *”Barbarossa“* is clear. Same order is issued to the *Luftwaffe*. (**Note:** For *Texas* incident, etc. see, (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 271-72; see also, p 292, for comments of the diplomat *Etzdorf* on **13.7.41**, and *Raeder* begging Hitler to regard U.S. occupation of *Iceland* as a *de facto* declaration of war on Germany, and thus as a *causus belli*.)

17.6.41: On this day, Secretary of War Henry Stimson wrote in his diary his belief that the Germans and Soviets were negotiating: „...from all the dispatches, it seems to be Nip and Tuck whether Russia will fight or surrender. Of course I think chances are that she will surrender.“ (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 6)

20.6.41: On this day, General Marshall’s Assistant for Military Intelligence opines that „It is also possible that she [Germany] could totally defeat the Russian Army before the end of **1941**, thereby securing to herself European Russia.“ Thus, in the minds of the U.S. military, the **USSR had no chance**. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 7)

22.6.41: Secretary of State Cordell Hull later wrote in his memoirs that that morning [i.e., „*Barbarossatag*“] he telephoned first FDR, then Wells, saying „We must give Russia all aid to the hilt.“ The President agreed since that had been his intention all along. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 8)

ab 22.6.41: From the very start, the *two main pillars* of FDR’s policy were:⁵⁸⁷ The USA would make common cause w/ any foe of Hitler’s and that the Fuehrer (and Nazi Germany) was America’s main enemy – the „*Germany first*“ strategy. . . Roosevelt lost no time putting his agenda into effect. Already on **25 Jun 41**, he stated his policy to not apply the Neutrality Act to the USSR, the real meaning of which was to keep the Far Eastern port of Vladivostok open to American shipping. . . Four [4] days into the *Barbarossa* campaign, Welles summoned Ambassador Oumansky to ensure that the latter knew that any request for support would receive immediate attention. . . As early as the end of **Jun 41**, the U.S. Army demonstrated a willingness to keep only **80%** of American production for itself and give up **20%** in assistance. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 9-10)

⁵⁸⁷ Moreover, as Kirchubel notes, „keeping the Red Army in the field was a centerpiece of U.S. strategy.“ Throughout his article, K. also makes clear that Roosevelt had to overcome serious bureaucratic and institutional inertia – as well as isolationist sentiments and suspicion, even hatred of, Stalin’s Russia – to bring his policy of aid to fruition. In fact, as early as **1933** he had seen the value in having the USSR act as a balance to Nazi Germany. (18, 29)

23.6.41: On Monday, **23 Jun 41**, Stimson held a War Council w/ his staff and that of General Marshall. . . Largely reflecting the pessimistic reports from the Moscow Embassy, Stimson wrote FDR a memorandum explaining the War Council's conclusions: „Germany will be thoroughly occupied in beating Russia for a *minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three months*.“ . . . However, not everyone in Washington gave the Red Army such slim odds: soon after *Barbarossatag* FDR's friend Davies said “. . . the extent of the resistance of the Red Army will surprise and amaze the world. . . even though Hitler takes a substantial part of the Ukraine his troubles will then just being.“ (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 9)

1.7.41: A lieutenant colonel on Marshall's [staff?] wrote at the time: “there was almost *unanimous agreement* among all military men that Russia would be quickly and decisively [defeated?]. No one I knew of had any other view.“ (*Stimson Diary, 1 Jul 41*, quoted in: *Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 12)

7.7.41: In the Atlantic, the U.S. launched Operation “*Indigo*,” the landing of a Marine bde in Iceland. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 208)

30.-31.7.41: Erst als Ende Juli 1941 erkennbar wurde, dass der dt. Vormarsch im Mittelabschnitt in Richtung auf Moskau zum Stehen kam u. – wie sich dann zeigte – ueber zwei u. einen halben Monat unterbrochen wurde, es somit deutlich wurde, dass die Deutschen nicht (wie von der brit. u. der amerikanischen Fuehrung bis dahin erwartet) in der Lage waren, den zunaechst *faecherfoermig* vorgetragenen Angriff an der ganzen Riesenfront in einem einzigen Zuge bis zur vollkommenen Niederwerfung der Roten Armee fortzusetzen, begann mit dem Besuch des Vertrauten Roosevelts, *Hopkins*, bei Stalin in Moskau am **30.-31.7.41** allmaehlich eine gewisse...Veraenderung in der Lage-Einschaetzung auf Seiten der beiden Westalliierten. (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 452)

Jul-Aug 41: Coinciding w/ confident news brought back from Moscow by Hopkins, encouraging reports reached Roosevelt from traditional channels as well. In late **Jul 41**, General Marshall observed, “The Germans seem to have stubbed a toe in Russia at present and their army has been stalled for more than a week.“ The American popular press also noticed the German slow down. On **4 Aug 41**, *Time* magazine reported, „For a whole week the German *Krieg* has been w/o *Blitz*. . . The obvious fact was the the German *panzer* divisions, although they had sliced through the Russian lines in a dozen places, had divided but not crushed the Russian Army before Moscow.“ . . . Even Steinhardt [U.S. Ambassador in Moscow] had reason to be optimistic. He cabled Hull on **5 Aug 41**, saying, „During the past two [2] weeks or more the main German forces have not advanced appreciably towards either Leningrad or Moscow. . . I find no evidence of any tendency toward a collapse of the Soviet defense.“ True enough, the German main effort at this time pointed toward the Ukraine. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 19)

Aug 41: In second week of August, Churchill and Roosevelt had met aboard their warships off *Newfoundland* and proclaimed the **8-point Atlantic Charter**, affirming that they sought no territorial aggrandizement, etc. More serious than the propaganda dimensions of the Charter were the *secret covenants* that accompanied it: The U.S. now took over the *naval watch* of the *Denmark Straits* (south of *Iceland*) and undertook *escort duties* on *North Atlantic convoys*. Clearly, the distinction between neutrality and belligerency was being increasingly blurred. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 300)

Sep-Oct 41: Roosevelt has by now long gone beyond strict neutrality. Early in **Sep 41**, a U-Boat torpedos the American destroyer „*Greer*“ (which had reportedly been cooperating w/ a British plane chasing the submarine. As a result of this attack, on **11.9.41**, Roosevelt orders the navy to „shoot on sight“ any warships of the Axis powers encountered in seas, „the protection of which is necessary for American defense.“ Hitler no longer believes the isolationists can keep the USA out of the war, in spite of efforts such as those by Charles *Lindbergh*, who uses the American radio networks to denounce „warmongers,“ among whom he includes not only Roosevelt and the British but the Jews. Admiral *Raeder* implores the *Fuehrer* – albeit unsuccessfully – to permit German warships to meet force w/ force. Political risks still too great, in Hitler’s view. (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 323)

11.9.41: Maj-Gen. Albert C. *Wedemeyer*, who had been the American soldier-student at the German Staff College in Berlin from **1936-38**, estimates on this day that Germany will have occupied all of Russia west [?] of the „general line: White Sea, Moscow, Volga River (all inclusive) by **1 Jul 42**, and that militarily Russia will be substantially impotent subsequent to that date.“ (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 233)

16.9.41: A transatlantic convoy, **HX 150**, sets sail from *Halifax, Nova Scotia*. It is the first convoy to be escorted by American warships. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 236)

10.10.41: The German victories in wake of Operation „*Taifun*“ also came as a shock to Washington. By **10 Oct 41**, Stimson wrote in his diary: “It’s Nip and Tuck whether they [the Germans] won’t carry out their plan and finish their campaign before winter.“ . . . U.S. Military Attache in Moscow [now Major] *Yeaton*, once again incorrectly anticipated the *end of Soviet resistance*; and the U.S. Army’s *War Plans Division* predicted a German victory during the first half of **1942**. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*)

16.10.41: When a transatlantic convoy from *Sydney, Cape Breton*, is attacked by German U-boats, five (5) American destroyers from bases in *Iceland* come to her aid. One of the submarines fires its torpedoes at one of the destroyers, the *Kearney*, which is badly damaged; **11** American sailors are killed. Yet Roosevelt is still not prepared to declare war on Germany. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 244)

29.10.41: In the Atlantic, the American destroyer *Reuben James*, which was escorting convoy **HX 156** from *Halifax, Nova Scotia*, is torpedoed by a German submarine and sunk; **115** of her crew, including all her officers, were drowned. For second time in two weeks, Roosevelt takes no action. He was determined *not* to be drawn into the war; at same time, he is equally determined to help those at war w/ Germany. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 251)

13.11.41: By what one historian has called the „chillingly narrow“ margin of **212 to 194**, the U.S. Congress amends the *Neutrality Act*, not only to allow all American merchant ships to be armed, but to permit them passage to the war zones. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 255)

Nov-Dec 41: Firm suggestion from Hitler’s *charge d’affaires* in Washington D.C., *Hans Thomsen*, that Roosevelt – alarmed at the Soviet Union’s imminent collapse – now wanted to avoid armed conflict until his rearmament was ready, persuaded Hitler that war between the USA and Japan might serve his purposes after all: it would tie this powerful enemy down in the Pacific at least throughout **1942**, which would give him time to realize his own ambitions in Russia. Admiral *Raeder* and the hard-pressed U-boat cdrs would certainly *welcome such a showdown*. On **28.11.41**, Hitler has *Ribbentrop* tell General *Oshima* that war between Japan, Britain and America would be in the Axis interest. *Ribbentrop* assures the Japanese that, if Japan became

engaged in a war against the U.S., Germany would of course “join the war immediately.” (See, *Irving, Hitler’s War*, 345-46)

9.12.41: German navy is told that it can begin operations against American ships, even w/in the Pan-American Security Zone. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 276)

1.22.2: Britain:

11.6.41: By and large, the British shared the American’s gloomy view of a potential Nazi-Soviet War. On **11 Jun 41**, Foreign Minister Anthony Eden told the U.S. Charge in London, that the USSR would cave-in if „blackmailed,“ and if current tensions led to war, then Germany will „get what she wants.“ Britain’s low opinion would continue well into *Barbarossa*. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 7)

20.-23.7.41: First British naval vessel, a minelayer, crosses the North Sea on its way to the Soviet Arctic port of *Archangel* w/ military supplies. Three days later (**23 Jul 41**), a substantial British naval force of two (2) acft carriers, two (2) cruisers and six (6) destroyers leaves Scapa Flow to carry out attacks, at Stalin’s request, on German ships taking war supplies between the Norwegian port of *Kirkenes*, and *Petsamo*, the Finnish-controlled base for ops against the Murmansk region. These British warships were to be the first of a series of naval forces sent to help the Russians, or to bring help to Russia, through Arctic waters, beyond the North Cape. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 214)

12.9.41: British RAF Wing first goes into action in Northern Russia. From its base at *Vianga*, 17 miles northeast of *Murmansk*, it shoots down three German acft for the loss of one of its own. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 234)

Dec 41: Erst nachdem mit der erfolgreichen sowjet. Gegenoffensive im Raum um Moskau offenkundig geworden war, dass – nicht zuletzt auch infolge des inzwischen erfolgten Kriegseintritts der **USA**, der den *Endsieg der de-facto-Verbündete verbuergte* – die Sowjetunion ein erstrangiger Faktor bleiben wuerde, entsandte *Churchill* Mitte Dez 41 seinen Aussenminister *Eden* nach Moskau. In den die sowjet. *Kriegsziele* zumindest partiell enthuellenden Auesserungen *Stalins* diesem gegenueber in den Unterredungen vom 16-20 Dec 41 zeichnete sich eine *Kontinuitaet* dieser Ziele ab, wie sie seit den Gespraechen *Molotovs* mit *Hitler* u. *Ribbentrop* in Berlin in Nov 40 bekannt waren. (see, *Hillgruber, Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 463)

1.22.3: Japan:

13.4.41: Russia and Japan sign neutrality pact. (Japan had **39** divisions, **1200** tanks and some **2500** acft in Manchuria in summer **1941**). (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 9)

22.6.41: Hitler did not even consult w/ Japan when planning „*Barbarossa*.“ In fact, Japanese surprise over the invasion *led directly to the fall of the Konoye government*, which leaned toward participating in *Barbarossa*, and its replacement by *Tojo*’s principally anti-American government. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 23)

Jul-Sep 41: Als der japanisch-sowjet. *Neutralitaetsvertrag* am **13 Apr 41** unterschrieben u. damit der Dreimaechtepakt bedeutungslos geworden war, hatten die Oberkommandos der japanischen

Armee u. Marine sogleich festgelegt, ihre grossraeumige Suedpolitik „energisch zu aktivieren.“ Dies wiederum hatte die strategische u. wirtschaftliche Interessen Washingtons tangiert, das Japan seit **Jul 41** mit einem Oelembargo belegt hatte. Monatelang hatten sich Geheimverhandlungen beider Maechte hingezogen, ohne dass allerdings ein Ausgleich gefunden worden waere. Hitler hatte von alldem nichts gewusst, als er sich im **Jul 41** bemuehte, Japan trotz des Neutralitaetsvertrag *zu einem Kriegseintritt gegen die Sowjetunion zu bewegen*. Er hatte diese Hoffnung auch fortan nicht aufgegeben, wie Goebbels' Tagebucheintragung vom **24.9.41** verdeutlicht:

Diese ganze verzweifelte Situation, in der sich die Sowjetunion befindet, macht natuerlich auch auf Japan entsprechenden Eindruck. Der Fuehrer hofft, dass Tokio doch noch eingreifen wird; wann, das kann man zwar im Augenblick noch nicht sagen, aber ist die Situation einmal gaenzlich aussichtslos fuer die Gegenseite geworden, dann werden die Japaner sich die Gelegenheit, mitzuerben, sicherlich nicht entgehen lassen.

Doch Hitlers Erwartungen erfuehlten sich nicht. Zwar hatte das kaiserliche Hauptquartier einen Angriff der in der *Mandschurei* stationierten „*Kwantung-Armee*“ auf Sibirien erwogen, diesen aber am **9 Aug 41** wieder verworfen, nachdem man *infolge des unerwartet heftigen Widerstands der Sowjets vor Smolensk* nicht mehr mit einem durchschlagenden Erfolg des dt. Ostheeres im Jahre **1941** rechnete. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 548-49)

9.8.-6.9.41: Erst die Tatsache, dass das “Barbarossa”-Unternehmen nicht durchschlug, liess die Situation Japans von Woche zu Woche brisanter werden. Aus dem wechselvollen Verlauf der „*Schlacht um Smolensk*“ (**8.7.-5.8.41**), die zum Stopp des Vormarches der Hr.Gr.Mitte in Richtung Moskau fuehrte, zog die japanische Fuehrung jedenfalls den Schluss, dass mit einer Beendigung des dt.-sowjet. Krieges im Jahre 1941 nicht mehr zu rechnen sei. Waehrend sie bis dahin offen gelassen hatte, bei sich abzeichnendem Zusammenbruch der Sowjetunion der in der *Mandschurei* konzentrierten „*Kwantung*“-*Armee* doch noch den Befehl zum Einmarsch nach Sibirien zu erteilen, *beschloss das Kaiserliche Hauptquartier am 9.8.41 definitiv, in diesem Jahr nicht mehr gegen die sich offensichtlich aufrecht haltende Sowjetunion vorzugehen*. Als der japanische Kronrat am **6.9.41** die Eroeffnung des Krieges gegen die USA u. Grossbritannien beschloss, falls die *Geheimverhandlungen mit den USA* nicht bis zum **10.10.41** erfolgreich zum Abschluss gebracht werden koennten, wurde ein Teil der „*Kwantung*“-*Armee* fuer die Suedoperationen freigegeben. (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitischen Entscheidungen*, 458)

15.8.41: Richard Sorge sends a radio msg from Tokyo to Moscow, reporting that the Japanese government had confirmed its unwillingness to enter the war against Russia. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 224)

Sep-Oct 41: Hitler cannot conceal his disappointment at the current *aimlessness* of Japanese foreign policy, which he had closely followed through the telegrams intercepted by the *Forschungsamt* and foreign ministry decoders. The Japanese had refused to show the Germans the texts of their *secret exchanges* w/ the Roosevelt administration, but in **Sep 41** Hitler explained to his staff that he was loath to put pressure on *Tokyo* to enter the war in case this was construed as proof of German weakness. By **Oct 41**, Hitler no longer feared this construction. But Tokyo's secret talks w/ Washington continued. On **16.10.41**, the Japanese Cabinet resigned. To Hitler's annoyance the new prime minister was General *Hideki Tojo*, and his foreign minister was *Shigenori Togo*, the former Japanese ambassador to Berlin. Hitler intensely mistrusted the latter, despite his German wife. Bottom line, however, was, as Hitler revealed in an aside to *Ciano* on

25.10.41, he [Hitler] was *completely in the dark* as to Japanese war plans. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 323-24)

Oct 41: Die am **2.10.41** zunaechst mit grossen Erfolgen begonnene dt. Offensive auf Moskau hat wohl dazu beigetragen, dass dieser Kriegsbeschluss [i.e., decision of 6 Sep 41 for war w/ USA and Britian, I assume] noch einmal revidiert wurde u. das am **18.10.41** gebildete neue Kabinett unter General Tojo den Auftrag erhielt, die Verhandlungen mit den USA, zeitlich begrenzt, fortzufuehren, zugleich aber die Kriegsvorbereitungen zu intensivieren. Am **20.10.41** wurde in den Rahmen der japanischen mil. Planungen auch ein *bis dahin nicht erwogener Ueberraschungsschag gegen Pearl Harbor* eingefuegt. (*Hillgruber, Die weltpolitischen Entscheidungen*, 458-59)

7.12.41: Pearl Harbor. Hitler sees Japan's entry into the war as a *turning-point*. Germany's position is now so favorable that "the conclusion of this mighty continental struggle was not in doubt," Goebbels records in his diary on **10.12.41**. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 446)

1.22.4: Anglo-American Relief Effort:

Summary: The relief effort begins on **1.8.41**, when HMS *Abdiel* delivers mines to the Soviet Northern Fleet. The Royal Navy escorted convoys of Allied merchant ships through the Norwegian and Barents seas to *Murmansk* and *Archangel*. Between **1941-45**, Britain and America supplied the following totals in wpns and equipment: Three-quarters of the British aid was shipped across the *Arctic Ocean*, whereas most US aid was dispatched via *Iran* or the *Pacific*. Britain supplied: **5218** tanks, **7411** acft, **4932** AT guns, **473** million rounds of ammunition, **4338** radio sets, **1803** radar sets, **10** destroyers and **1** battleship. The USA supplied: **7537** tanks, **14,795** acft, **51,503** jeeps, **375,883** trucks, **1981** railroad locomotives, **11,155** railroad wagons, **2.6** million tons of gasoline, **3.7** million tyres, and **345,735** tons of high explosive. The latter may have been the most important, filling the millions of shells that the formidable Red artillery used to pound German defensive positions to oblivion in **1943-45**. The great tank armies with which the Red Army broke the back of the *Wehrmacht* in **1944** *depended on American trucks* to carry their supplies of fuel and ammunition. Their artillery and supporting wpns, as well as accompanying infantry, also relied on US trucks for their mobility. By **1944**, between 2/3 and 3/4 of the Red Army truck fleet was made in the United States. [!] (*C. Winchester, Hitler's War on Russia*, 136-38)

Summary: "Although Soviet accounts have routinely belittled the significance of Lend-Lease in sustaining the Soviet war effort, the overall importance of this assistance cannot be understated. Lend-Lease did not arrive in sufficient quantities to make the difference between victory and defeat in **1941/42**. . . As war continued, however, the USA and Great Britain provided many of the implements of war and strategic raw materials necessary for Soviet victory. . . Without Lend-Lease food, clothing, and raw materials (esp. metals), the Soviet economy would have been even more heavily burdened by the war effort. Perhaps more directly, w/o Lend-Lease trucks, rail engines, and railroad cars, every Soviet offensive would have stalled at an earlier stage, outrunning its logistical tail in a matter of days. In turn, this would have allowed German cdrs to escape at least some encirclements. . . Left to their own devices, Stalin and his cdrs might have taken **12-18** months longer to finish off the *Wehrmacht*. (See, *D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 89-90, for figures of Lend-Lease aid.)

Summary: Note: With Roosevelt's rejection of the *Victory Plan*, he made it clear to all that he would rather arm allies such as the Soviet Union to fight Hitler than have GI's do it. A post-war

U.S. Army study concluded that American aid *equipped the equivalent of 101 U.S. divisions*, by far the bulk of that support going to the Soviet Union. This worked out exactly according to FDR's desires. *Lend-Lease* aid from the USA eventually equalled **10-11%** of the USSR's own industrial output during the war. (Kirchuble, *Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 23, 29)

Jul 41: From London, plans are made to send military and medical aid to the Soviet Union on a substantial scale, even diverting American aid – then on its way to Britain – from British to Soviet ports. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 207)

7.7.41: Churchill writes to Stalin to say that Britain would do “everything to help you that time, geography, and our growing resources allow.” British bombing raids on Germany, Churchill explains, which have recently been intensified, will go on: “Thus we hope to force Hitler to bring back some of his air power to the West and gradually take some of the strain off you.” On day of this telegram to Stalin, Churchill instructs the Chief of the British Air Staff to use Britain's air resources for the “devastation of German cities” in an effort to draw German acft back from the Russian front. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 208)

12.7.41: Britain and the Soviet Union sign a pact pledging “mutual assistance” against Germany. Neither side would make a separate peace. At same time, British bombing raids on Germany begin w/ a renewed intensity on **14.7.41**, when *Hanover* was bombed; followed, in the next nine (9) days, by two more raids on *Hanover*, two on *Hamburg*, two on *Frankfurt* and *Mannheim*, and one on *Berlin* itself. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 210)

18.7.41: In 1941, the monetary value of Lend-Lease Act topped out at **\$1.3** billion. In answer the Stimson's instructions to Oumansky, that if the USSR needed American aid, all it had to do was ask, on **18 Jul 41** the [Soviet] Ambassador brought a request for over **\$1.8** billion! In many cases, the quantities of acft, artillery pieces, AA guns and other items they asked for were *more than the U.S. military had in its whole inventory*. (Kirchuble, *Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 17)

29.7.41: In Moscow, Harry Hopkins spoke w/ Stalin about the American aid that was on its way: **200** American fighter planes were being sent by ship to Archangel. The dispatch of aid to Russia by sea was only feasible because, by the end of **Jul 41**, all German submarine instructions were being read by the British cryptographers at Bletchley “continuously and w/ little or no delay.” Hence, it was now possible to route Atlantic convoys around German U-boat concentrations. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 218)

30.-31.7.41: Roosevelt's friend, Harry Hopkins, after stopping in England (to discuss w/ Churchill possible long-term aid to the USSR) meets personally w/ Stalin on the evenings of **30-31 Jul 41**. . . Hopkins delivered a brief and personal letter from FDR praising Soviet resistance, promising American help and asking Stalin to be tough „for the next three months.“ . . . Elizabeth MacLean [„Joseph R. Davies,“ *Diplomatic History*, (4) 1980] calls the **Hopkins mission** to Moscow the „point of no return“ for American support of the Soviets against Hitler. . . Roosevelt finally had the information from a trusted source which verified his own intuition and would lead directly to increased U.S. aid to the USSR. . . The *main instrument* to convey U.S. aid would be the *Lend-Lease Act*, made law the previous **Mar 41**. (Kirchuble, *Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 15, 17)

Aug 41: On board ship, at *Placentia Bay, Newfoundland*, Churchill and Roosevelt agree, after hearing Hopkins's account of his meetings w/ Stalin, to give *immediate aid to Russia* “on a gigantic scale.” During their discussions, C. and R. agree to issue a public document, the *Atlantic*

Charter, setting out a joint Anglo-American commitment to a post-war world in which there would be “no aggrandizement, territorial or other,” as a result of the war, and no territorial changes “that do not accord w/ the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned.” To give aid to Russia, C. and R. authorize, while on board ship in Placentia Bay, the immediate dispatch of an Anglo-American Military Mission to Moscow, to discuss Soviet needs in relation to American production. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 223)

30.8.41: Barbarossa passed the two month mark and the *level of U.S. material aid going to the USSR still frustrated Roosevelt*. On **30 Aug 41**, he sent a memo to Stimson stating, „I deem it of paramount importance for the safety and security of America that all reasonable munitions help be provided for Russia, not only immediately but as long as she continues to fight the Axis powers effectively.“ [Note: In **Jun 41** only **2900** tons of aid – wpns, equipment, raw materials – went from the *western hemisphere* to the USSR; in **Jul 41** the figure was **27,500** tons. It would rise to **97,400** in **Aug 41**, but then fall to **38,100** in **Sep 41**. **Aug 41** would actually be the high-point in delivered supplies for **1941**. These figures include aid sent from Canada and Latin America, as well as from the United States.] (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 20, 28)

28./30.9.41: The first British convoy of war supplies to Russia, Convoy **PQ 1**, leaves *Iceland* for *Archangel* on the 28th. Two days later, Churchill announces in House of Commons that the whole British tank production of the week just ended is to be sent to Russia. Large quantities of aluminium, rubber, and copper, as earlier requested by Stalin, had already been dispatched. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 239)

Sep-Oct 41: In Moscow, the Anglo-American Mission headed by Lord *Beaverbrook* and *Averell Harriman* was finding out what Russia required, and doing its utmost to meet Stalin’s requests. It is the Americans, for example, who are able to satisfy his appeal for **400** tons of barbed wire a month. On **30 Sep 41**, Beaverbrook agrees to send Russia the whole of Britain’s share of her forthcoming supplies from the U.S.: **1800** fighter acft, **2250** tanks, **500** AT guns, **23,000** tommy guns, **25,000** tons of copper, **27,000** tons of rubber and **250,000** soldiers’ greatcoats. The „staggering“ level of Anglo-American support planned for Russia also includes **1000** tanks/month, along w/ a „proper complement of accessories and spare parts;“ prodigious quantities of aluminium, copper, tin, lead, brass, nickel, cobalt, tons of steel bars for shells; medical supplies, etc. Several convoys laden w/ fighter acft, tanks, bren-gun carriers, heavy guns, etc., reach *Archangel* in **Oct 41**. (For details see, *Gilbert, Second World War*, 239-40, 242)

30.10.41: Roosevelt telegraphs Stalin that he has given his Presidential approval to *one billion dollars* of *Lend-Lease* aid for Russia, w/ no interest to be charged, and w/ repayment not having to begin until **5** years after the war. On **7.11.41**, Roosevelt officially extends the *Lend-Lease Act* to cover Russia, which had already been the recipient of *considerable quantities of American wpns*, and of British wpns which had been manufactured in the United States. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 254)

ab Ende Oct 41: Generaloberst Halder verzeichnete seit Ende Okt 41 in seinem Tagebuch die Anwesenheit *englischer Panzer* an der russ. Front. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 139)

Nov 41: The *Lend-Lease Act’s* wording was vague, which gave Roosevelt broad powers. However, it took him until **Nov 41** to feel that his domestic political position was strong enough to designate the USSR eligible for this assistance. In the meantime, he found other ways around obstacles such as Congressional approval and vacillating public opinion. These technicalities did

not mean the President could not funnel aid to the USSR via Britain. . . In some places, such as Iran, in order to perpetuate the *myth of American neutrality*, all U.S. aid supposedly went to the British, although much of it mysteriously ended up in Red Army hands. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 27)

26.11.41 [2. PD]: Die Waffenhilfe der Alliierten an die Rote Armee: Engl. **Mark II** (lt. Typenschild Serie **Sep 41**), unversehrt erbeutet am **26 Nov 41** bei Ssolnetschnogorsk. (*Steinzer, 1. Pz-Div.*, 126)

31.12.41: The Lend Lease Agreement, signed w/ the USA and Great Britain in Oct 41, provided considerable assistance during this difficult period. By **31 Dec 41**, Lend Lease had provided the Red Army w/ **669** tanks and **873** combat acft – **24.1** and **44.3%**, respectively, of Soviet production. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 228, f.n. 2)

31.12.41: Through Arctic waters, British supplies for Russia had continued to arrive at *Archangel* where, after their hazardous journey, they were hurried southward by rail to Moscow, the railway line itself remaining well behind the German front line. In all, **750** tanks, **800** fighter acft, **1400** vehicles and **100,000** tons of stores reached Archangel from Britain by the end of the year. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 284-85)

31.12.41: By end of **1941**, a total of **360,700** tons of aid – wpns, equipment, raw materials – have been dispatched from the *western hemisphere* [U.S., Canada, Latin America] to the USSR. Of this total, **3.7%** went via the Persian Gulf (i.e. Iran); **53.6%** through the Far East (Vladivostok); and **42.7%** by way of Northern Russia (Murmansk & Archangel). . . These supplies „represented the narrow point of a wedge“ that grew throughout the course of the war. Together w/ the Soviet Union’s manpower and its own prodigious industrial output, American aid *contributed significantly* to the Red Army victory in **May 45**. (*Kirchuble, Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 28)

Early 1942: As a fighter pilot I had first-hand experience of items delivered thru western aid. When I served w/ the Moscow Air Defense Command [**Note:** Mikoyan’s war service „began at the end of the battle for Moscow.“ He flew a **Yak-1** fighter and was seriously injured when his shot-up acft caught fire and crash-landed on a snow-covered field.], our fighter acft were equipped w/ *American radios* and *artificial horizons*. We were vectored on sorties by *British ground radars*. We were even wearing *western flying suits*. (*Mikoyan, Barbarossa and Soviet Leadership*, 130)

Mar 42 [Rzhev]: „Im Maerz 1942 hatten die Sowjets so viele Truppen herangezogen – ausgeruestet mit amerikanischen Waffenmaterial u. Verpflegung – um unsere Armee mit Mann u. Material einzukesseln.“ (*G. Werner [AR 251 / 251. ID]*, „*Unternehmen Barbarossa*“, 28)

1.23: Miscellaneous:

Anecdote (May 42) Poignant description of H. Haape entraining at the *Hauptbahnhof* in Cologne, to begin journey back to Russia following leave in Germany. Trains standing at each side of broad platform, crowded by civilians who had come to see their soldiers off. Great contrast in behavior and mood of civilians at each train, for one was headed for Paris, the other for Smolensk. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 374-5)

Showalter: “Neither British nor American culture has developed a concrete image of the German combat soldier. His Great War predecessor is inseparably identified with the characters created by Erich Remarque...The later conflict produced no similar dominant work...A mixture of pseudo-socialist “realism”—West Germany’s equivalent of Britain’s angry-young-man school—and a conscious desire on the part of the literate to avoid glorifying any aspect of the Nazi experience combined to discourage the creation of any memorable frontline portraits in the gallery created by WWII. The German Democratic Republic was even less hospitable to any fictional treatments of the war that could not be snugly fitted into party orthodoxy...The reunited culture generated no new inspiration.

Shortcomings of written depictions of the frontline experience mean the German *Landser* exists visually rather than mentally. He is the blond god riding his tank past disheveled prisoners in 1940...He is the sinister SS officer torturing a woman of the resistance, and the helpless man in army gray insisting “We are not all like that...” He is the bewildered Sergeant Schultz of *Hogan’s Heroes*, the eternally frustrated Afrika Korps lieutenant of *Rat Patrol*, and one of the thoroughgoing professionals who challenge Sergeant Saunders’ squad in endless reruns of *Combat*. Above all, the German is the opponent, the target, a *universal enemy*, faceless under his *coalscuttle helmet*.

Karl Fuchs cannot be called a typical German frontline soldier, *because no such person exists outside the constructions of the cliometricians*. There are as many individual stories as there were men and women who wore Hitler’s uniform...Karl’s life can do no more than provide a specific illustration of the general assertion that many Germans who supported the Third Reich did so neither for opportunistic self-interest nor nihilistic delight in destruction, but out of hopes for a better future...” (*K. Fuchs*, 155-56)

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