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THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE ARMY
(GERMAN)
HIGH COMMAND AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

1938 — 1945

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THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS OF THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND
AND THEIR SOLUTIONS:

1938 - 1945

by

Burkhart Mueller-Hillebrand, Generalmajor a.D.

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Historical Division
Headquarters
UNITED STATES ARMY, EUROPE
1953

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Hermann Burkhardt MUELLER-HILLEBRAND
Generalmajor a.D.
Date of Birth: 26 December 1904.
Place of Birth: Dieuze, Lorraine

MUELLER-HILLEBRAND received training in the Ohrdruf Officer Candidate School in 1925, after having served since April 1923 in the 16th Cavalry Regiment, and later underwent further training at the Hannover Cavalry School, in 1925/26, and at the Berlin War College, in 1934/36.

Just after World War II broke out, on 15 September 1939, he was transferred from the Organization Division of Army General Staff to the 93rd Infantry Division as Operations Officer. On 1 October 1940 he was assigned as adjutant to the Chief of Army General Staff and in April 1942 was appointed Chief of the Organization Division of Army General Staff. In 1944, after two brief spells in the Army High Command Officer Reserve and an assignment as Commander of the 24th Panzer Regiment, MUELLER-HILLEBRAND was assigned as Chief of Staff to XXXVI Panzer Corps in the Ukraine and Poland, remaining in that position until transferred as Chief of Staff to the Third Panzer Army.

During the war he served in France, Italy and on the eastern front and was finally captured near Schwerin, Mecklenburg, on 2 May 1945.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PRE-WAR CONDITIONS IN THE FIELD OF ORGANIZATION

When World War II broke out in 1939, the German Armed Forces (Wehrmacht) and hence the Army were still in a process of expansion. During this period of development, particular importance was attached to the problems of organization.

Prior to 1935 Germany possessed a 100,000 man professional army, but without modern armament, and lacking an air force and reserves. A small navy was authorized by the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1935 new German laws pertaining to defense were enacted. The principle of conscription was proclaimed and Germany like all the other major European powers again possessed a military statute or code.

Several years would elapse, however, before this development showed any result; and Germany's military expansion was far from being completed in 1939. Beginning in 1935 an Air Force was in process of being formed concurrently with the expansion of the Army and Navy.

The Army hitherto had inducted 10,000 recruits

per year for a 12 years term of service. After 1935 it recruited annually nearly an entire age class of the male youth, consisting of some 300,000 men. Most of these soldiers left the army after serving two years and were placed on reserve status. An age class was discharged to the reserve in the autumn of 1937 and again in 1938. Consequently only two classes of fully trained reservists were available for call at the beginning of the war. Although several other classes were given short periods of military training, the war potential of Germany's military manpower was available only to a small extent. In contrast to this, the countries adjacent to Germany each had approximately twenty classes of fully trained reservists at their disposal.

The materiel situation was similar. In 1935 there was no armament industry worth mentioning. Even though the large industrial capacity of Germany constituted an excellent prerequisite for the establishment of an armament industry capable of meeting the requirements of the Wehrmacht, the military equipment of the Army at the beginning of the war was mostly in a process of development and insufficient to

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meet the Army's requirements.

The legal basis, as well as the organizational framework for administration and supply, for recruiting, and for preparing mobilization plans, was to some degree in existence. However, the whole process was not yet as smooth and perfect as was desirable. In September 1939 Germany was not from a military point of view in a position to wage war on more than one front or for a period of more than a few weeks. It is beyond the scope of this study, however, to support this contention in detail. The fact that Germany was not at the end of her resources after the war had been conducted for a short period can be attributed to the fact that the campaigns in Poland and Norway were unexpectedly short and were conducted with negligible losses in personnel and materiel. Ammunition expenditures were also low. No operations worth mentioning took place in the West for eight months. The campaign of 1940 was also completed quickly and with very little loss. Finally, the war in Russia, which did entail heavy losses, did not start until a whole year later.

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CHAPTER 2

THE ORGANIZATION BRANCH OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF
AND ITS RELATION TO THE WEHRMACHT HIGH COMMAND

The Organization Branch (Branch 2) of the Army General Staff, which was the agency of the Army High Command chiefly concerned with the solution of the problems mentioned in Chapter 1, was directly under the Chief of the Army General Staff. In December 1938 the then Chief of the Organization Branch was appointed to the newly created position of Assistant Chief of Staff III. The Organization Branch and the newly created Technical Branch (Branch 8) were placed under his direction. The position of the Organization Branch was virtually unchanged by this measure, and when the war broke out the position of Assistant Chief of Staff III and Branch 8 were discontinued. It had been the task of Branch 8 to examine technical developments for military purposes and to keep the Chief of the Army General Staff informed. Branch 8 was expected to exert some influence on certain agencies of the Army High Command by submitting suggestions and promoting projects.

Within the Army General Staff the Organization Branch cooperated closely with the Operations Branch (Branch 1) so that all organizational planning would conform to the intentions of the top-level command. All branches of the Army General Staff submitting measures which would affect the organization of the Army or mobilization, requested the initiation of these measures from the Organization Branch. The Operations Branch raised specific questions such as those regarding the number of the high-level staffs and divisions required in wartime, completion of fortifications, and the schedule of mobilization. Branch 6 (Supply) brought up matters concerning the amount and organization of supply facilities and supply troops as a result of the operational concepts communicated to it by the Operations Branch. Branch 5 (Transportation) was concerned similarly with the transportation agencies and railway operating troops. Whenever questions of principle arose or whenever the different concepts did not conform, a decision was sought from the Chief of the Army General Staff.

In principle, the Organization Branch was the ser-

vant of the top-level command and fulfilled the latter's desires as far as was possible. Consequently, the Operations Branch guided organizational procedures along such lines so as to provide the command with an instrument organized as definitely as possible and yet flexible enough to adapt itself to changing requirements. The activities of the Organization Branch served mainly to accomplish this purpose. It was the duty of the Branch to prevent the command from being hampered by any inflexibility in the organization of the Army. A further responsibility of the Branch was to insure that the agencies of the Army High Command, in spite of their large number and the wide ramification of their activities, adjust themselves properly within the framework of the Army and that individual components did not play an excessive role at the cost of others and prejudice the over-all effectiveness of the whole system. On the other hand, the Branch was to foster new developments by submitting suggestions to the higher command. The Organization Branch was the only close, continuous contact between the Chief of the General Staff and the numerous other agencies of the Army

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High Command. It was to limit the number of its personnel as far as possible but nonetheless keep itself thoroughly posted on the practicability of all the desires of the Army High Command without getting lost in the maze of details which each organizational change involved.

Outside the Army General Staff it was essential that the Organization Branch maintain close contact with the General Army Office.

The Army General Staff was to study in peacetime the problems of commanding the Army during a war; and to plan the operations which the Army would conduct. Consequently, the Army General Staff presented its requirements to the other offices of the Army High Command with respect to the following points:

- a. Training of troops; command and organization of divisions and larger units; supply, to include the means of transportation, weapons, equipment, and ammunition.
- b. Development of the most essential equipment and weapons.

The Army General Staff issued through the Organi-

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zation Branch the orders for the mobilization of the Army, and through the Operations, Transportation, and Supply Branches orders for the concentration of the Army on the borders. The Staff issued through the Operations Branch the orders for the conduct of operations.

The General Army Office, after studying the effects of the requirements of the Army General Staff, fulfilled them to the extent of the available finances, men, and materiel. In case the requirements of the Army General Staff in the opinion of the General Army Office were impracticable and an agreement could not be reached, the Commander in Chief of the Army was requested to decide the issue. The Commander in Chief of the Army was currently kept informed on all essential problems. The General Army Office, supported by its subordinate inspectorates and other agencies, prepared the modifications and issued the directives to the corps staffs. The General Army Office coordinated armament requirements with the Army Ordnance Office; officer requirements with the Army Personnel Office; and administrative matters with the Army Administration Office.

The Organization Branch of the Army General Staff secured the data for its studies when necessary from the Army Personnel Office, the Army Administration Office, the Army Ordnance Office, and the inspectorates of the General Army Office.

The Organization Branch represented the Army High Command in its relations with the Wehrmacht High Command in matters such as the top-level organizational structure in wartime, areas of authority, drafting legislation which also concerned Wehrmacht affairs, principles of mobilization, the use of non-military agencies in mobilization such as the custom guards.

After the war began the position of the Organization Branch changed with the constant alteration of the position of the Army General Staff vis-a-vis the Wehrmacht High Command. Consequently, the accomplishment of the organizational tasks was handled through different channels that will be described later.

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CHAPTER 3

THE PRE-WAR ORGANIZATIONAL TASKS

I. THE TASKS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ORGANIZATION
BRANCH OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF.

In 1935 the defense system of the 100,000 man professional Army was abandoned and the formation of a new Army based upon conscription was initiated. This was so big a task that the main efforts of the Branch had to be devoted to it.

In organizing such an Army these main functions had to be performed:

1. Enactment of laws for the execution of universal conscription, including provisions for registration, medical examination, term of service, and supply.
 2. Establishment of an organization for registering persons subject to conscription, for examining their fitness, for classifying and drafting them. For these purposes the Armed Forces Replacement Organization was established which operated agencies throughout the Reich down to include the urban and rural district level.
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3. Enlargement of the Army from 100,000 men serving a twelve-year enlistment to 700,000 men serving a term of generally two years. All this naturally resulted in an expansion and change of the command structure, housing, training facilities, and administration.

4. Creation of new branches of the service which had been lacking so far and of new types of arms and equipment hitherto forbidden. For example, provision had to be made for the arms and equipment for the newly formed armored troops, heavy artillery, railway engineer troops, signal troops, and chemical troops. The Luftwaffe should also be mentioned here; it had been developed from the Army but later became an independent branch of the Wehrmacht.

5. Construction and organization of the fortification system which had hardly existed up to 1929.

6. Securing equipment, armament, and ammunition. An armament industry worth mentioning did not exist.

7. The accomplishment of these tasks necessitated an adequate expansion of the Army High Command and the establishment and coordination of new agencies.

The numerical expansion was based upon the 100,000

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man Army containing only 4000 officers.

In view of the wide variety of these tasks the other enormous problem of preparing the organization for the wartime army was for the time being relegated to the background. Broadly speaking this task consisted of:

1. Creating the legal basis for national defense in wartime, which included legislation for drafting reserves, for requisitioning personal and material services as well as material goods such as horses, motor vehicles, equipment and quarters, for establishing security measures, and for solving budgetary and financial problems.
2. Giving military training to all persons eligible for service in order to provide a sufficient number of reservists for wartime expansion.
3. Registering and classifying the reservists and preparing their orders for reporting to active duty. Similar measures for horses, transportation facilities, and equipment which would be required by the Army in wartime was carried on. For accomplishing these tasks, it was possible later to utilize the Armed Forces Replacement Organization

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which, for the time being, however, was fully occupied with accomplishing other tasks.

4. Organizing the Army when it had been brought up to wartime strength by inducting reservists. This included the organization of commands and of troop units and expanding both to war strength.

5. Preparing the wartime transportation system by making use of the national railway system for shipment of troops during mobilization, for concentration on the frontiers, and for the transfer of units during operations. For these purposes, transport control agencies were established to coordinate the Army requirements with the national railway system. Additional agencies were planned in case of mobilization.

6. Obtaining wire communications by requisitioning the telephone system of the Reichspost in case of war. For this purpose it was necessary to complete the civilian wire network and to establish military signal agencies to work with the Reichspost.

7. Securing the necessary supplies of arms, equipment, ammunition, special vehicles, clothing, money, rations, and fuel for the initial issue to new-

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ly activated units. For the time being, adequate supplies could not be set aside, since the entire industrial output was required to equip the peacetime Army which was still in the process of expansion. An adequate supply organization had to be established to insure proper distribution and speedy delivery to the troops in case of mobilization. This organization included, for example, ordnance administration agencies and ordnance centers for arms, equipment, and vehicles; Wehrkreis¹ administration offices; garrison administration offices; and supply offices for rations, clothing, and billets.

8. Securing a reserve of supplies necessary for meeting the daily requirements of the troops in the field until war production reached a level high enough to cover these needs; providing for the storage and administration of these supplies.

9. Determining the requirements for and planing a reorganization of the Army High Command adequate for its wartime responsibilities.

¹ Basic military area of Germany in some respects similar to the pre-war corps areas in the U.S.A. (Translator's note).

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When these two main tasks are compared and analyzed, i.e. the formation and organization of a peacetime Army, and the formation and organization of a wartime Army, the impossibility of finding a perfect solution for both simultaneously can be realized. Evaluation revealed that these tasks overlapped each other and consequently their accomplishment provoked reciprocal reaction. Since the problems were to be handled by a single agency they were assigned to the Organization Branch.

After 1935, the emphasis was initially on forming and organizing the peacetime Army. It was not possible to shift the emphasis to the wartime Army until the development of the peacetime Army had generally reached its target level. Then the eventual and more important task of organizing the wartime Army was undertaken.

The so-called mobilization measures, intended for the preparation of the wartime Army, existed only on paper. These measures were not actually undertaken in peacetime but were carried out according to plans when war broke out. Mobilization is the conversion, systematically prepared in peace-

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time and initiated upon the outbreak of war, of the peacetime Army into the wartime Army including the initial measures taken to safeguard the frontiers.

Immediately after mobilization was ordered in 1939, the concentration of those elements of the Field Army, which first completed the process of mobilization, commenced along the borders.² In the attached chart the organization of the Organization Branch is represented as it existed shortly before the war. In accordance with its two main tasks, the Branch was divided into two section. Shortly before the war, the strength of Section II was somewhat reduced since the expansion of the peacetime Army was nearly completed. Section III was increased since the process of organizing the wartime Army was still in full swing and the principles applied in preparing mobilization were still subject to constant fluctuations in accordance with the sporadic development of the political situation. Subsection RV was of minor importance, because the tasks of the Reich Defense Board were increasingly taken care

² The Operations Branch together with the Transportation Branch, the Supply Branch, and other agencies was responsible for the concentration.

of by the Wehrmacht High Command.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE TOP-LEVEL COMMAND.

The solution to all organizational problems of the Army was to a large extent depended on the organization of the Army and the Wehrmacht top-level commands and on the authority which the latter possessed. The organization of the top-level command of the 100,000 man Army (Reichswehr) was no longer adequate in every respect for that of the new Wehrmacht. The older structure constituted a basis for the development of the new command structure and exerted some influence upon the latter. The solution to the problem of organizing a high command was influenced to a more or less large extent by such factors as:

1. The nature of the political regime. With the end of the parliamentary state and the assumption of power by a single political party which was totalitarian in its ideology, the Wehrmacht, accustomed to enjoying a position independent of party ideologies, was eventually certain to be found in opposition to the new regime.

2. Increased importance must be attached to this circumstance when the head of the state assumed direct command of the Wehrmacht, after the Minister of War and

Commander in Chief of the Wehrmacht, Generalfeldmarschall von Blomberg, resigned early in 1938.

3. The organization of the Luftwaffe as an independent branch of the Wehrmacht. This situation was made even more difficult by the personality of the new Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Goering, whose position within the political regime excluded his integration into the military system. For political reasons Goering took the antiaircraft artillery from the Army and transferred it to the Luftwaffe.

4. The ideologies of the new regime were partially opposed to traditional concepts in Germany. The "Leadership Principle", which was destined to dominate the new governmental machine and which the Nazis claimed was adopted from the military sphere, actually constituted a distortion of the military concept of leadership. The impossibility of transferring a military system to a political administration was disregarded. The "Leadership Principle", as it was applied by the new regime outside the Wehrmacht, delegated to high-ranking officials a command authority which was held only lightly in check by laws that were interpreted very loosely or by orders issued from a superior level.

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The legal procedures which were designed for the protection of subordinates were extensively restricted. An intensive propaganda veiled this development. Thus the opportunity for a healthy interplay and counter-balance of forces was increasingly restricted until all vitality was completely killed. As the old legal system began to collapse, this unhealthy circumstance was revealed in special Nazi tribunals which were not comparable to lawful courts, in arbitrary executions, and in the release of the superiors from their obligations to act in an exemplary manner. Under such conditions a disintegration of the leading class was bound to take place.

Within the old German Army a vitalizing tension was traditionally fostered by:

1. The independence of the various military agencies within an adequate scope of responsibility.
 2. The use of a mission directive, leaving freedom in the method of accomplishing the tasks.
 3. The obligation to contradict a superior whenever questions of conscience were involved.
 4. The protection insured a subordinate by law and by adequate arrangements for submitting grievances.
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5. The right balance between centralization and decentralization. A correct solution to this last principle was an organizational task; organizing the top-level command. During the time under review this task included the establishment of the proper relationships between the staff of Wehrmacht High Command and the high commands of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Also included in the task was the establishment of the proper relationships between the Army General Staff and General Army Office on one hand and in the inspectorates of the different arms on the other. Both were directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief of the Army whose responsibility it was to establish the proper balance between them. Within any office and any branch a correct balance between centralization and decentralization was maintained by officials who were there for that purpose.

The main problem involved in organizing the new Wehrmacht was to establish the relationship of the Wehrmacht High Command to its branches. The new Wehrmacht was to have its High Command which was to be at the disposal of the Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht as a military advisory staff

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and which was to exert a coordinating influence upon the branches of the Wehrmacht. The branches of the Wehrmacht were intended to be independent bodies. Their commanders in chief were to be directly subordinate to the Fuehrer. It shall be left undecided here, whether this solution was in principle the correct one. In any case the major problems encountered in reorganizing the Wehrmacht led towards this solution. The Army claimed a predominant role with respect to the other branches of the Wehrmacht, and, when the geographic position of Germany is taken into account, this claim was rather justifiable. Even aside from this the Army would have assumed a predominant position had the powers of the individual branches of the Wehrmacht been considerably restricted and a real unification taken place within the Wehrmacht. In this latter case the positions of the commanders in chief of the individual branches would have been abolished. All branches of the Wehrmacht, however, strictly opposed such a solution for reasons of self-interest; and for the Luftwaffe with Goering at its head such a solution would have been inconceivable. Another reason for opposing such a solution was the anxiety on the part of top-

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level Army figures that such a fusion would have exposed the Army to the new political regime and its ideologies which were in diametrical opposition to the traditional concepts of the Army. They desired to keep the Army in its former position of aloofness from politics. The Commander in Chief of the Army wanted to keep the Army remote from the regime of dictatorship. This was an insoluble problem which was either bound to lead to a conflict with that dictatorship or to a conversion of the Army into an instrument of the regime without a free will of its own.

This divergence of interest produced an inadequate organizational structure of top-level command and incessant controversies over it. Its final culmination was the abortive revolt of the "generals" on 20 July 1944³ which, aside from other motives, was the last opposition of the Army High Command to the murderous grip of dictatorship. No longer a professional army, the Army was unable to maintain its isolated position. It had become a part of the popular organism interspersed with the new ideology, following the political

³ The attempted assassination of Hitler (Editor).

complexions of the millions of its members. For this reason the Army soon became unable to risk an open conflict with the regime. Increasingly the Army High Command had to adjust itself to the development of the political state. The latter continued to restrict the scope of responsibility of the Army High Command and threatened to sap its vitality entirely until the Army finally subjected itself to the new ideologies. For questions concerning the development of the top-level organizational structure the reader is referred to the "Graphic Representation of the Top-Level Command of the German Army From 1938 to the End of the War With Explanations".⁴

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY.

Prior to 1933 the organization of the Army had been determined by the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles. The territory of the Reich, as far as it was not demilitarized, was divided into seven Wehrkreise. Within each Wehrkreis an Army division was stationed. The division commander was at the same time commander of the Wehrkreis. His staff was

⁴ Organization of the Army High Command. Foreign Military Studies Branch, Historical Division European Command. OKH Project # 7, MS # P-041a.

simultaneously Wehrkreis staff. Three cavalry divisions were maintained among the seven Wehrkreise. Two group commands⁵ were interposed at a level between the Reich Ministry of Defense and the divisions to take care of training problems. For all matters of administration, such as food, quarters, and finances and for all matters of supply such as arms, equipment, ammunition, clothing, the command channels led from the Reich Ministry of Defense through the Wehrkreis commands. The recruiting of replacements, which was left to the units since the yearly requirements amounting to only some 10,000 recruits, did not involve any difficulties. There was no registration of fit persons for military service.

After 1933 the organization was greatly expanded. The number of the Wehrkreise was increased to thirteen, exclusive of Austria. A Wehrkreis command now became a corps headquarters with from two to four infantry divisions. The cavalry and armored divisions as before were distributed throughout the Reich and were for training purposes placed under the command of special corps headquarters. The number of group commands, now army group commands, was likewise increased. In consequence of the introduction of uni-

⁵ Similar to an army group command (Translator).

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versal service the Wehrkreis commands were assigned additional missions. For this reason an Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement Organization was formed and attached to each Wehrkreis. This organization accomplished such missions as the physical examination, classification, and drafting of persons registered for military service by the police and, after they had served their term of active duty, keeping them registered in the event of war with the police. The Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement Organization was also used in preparing for mobilization (see Chapter: "Mobilization") and to a limited extent for training reserve officers. Two to six recruiting area inspectorates were attached to each Wehrkreis command, as determined by the size of the population and by the size of the local police organization. The recruiting areas were divided into recruiting districts under whose headquarters the draft boards, the lowest agencies, operated. Within the Army High Command all questions concerning the Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement Administration fell within the sphere of the Replacement and Army Matters Group of the General Army Office. Navy and Luftwaffe staffs were attached to the agencies of the Wehrkreis commands in order to

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look after their special interests.

The 100,000 man Army with its 4000 officers did not provide an adequate basis for the expansion of the new Army. To meet the necessary officer requirements the following expedients were used:

1. The period of training required to win a commission was shortened.
2. Numerous noncommissioned officers were awarded commissions.
3. Police officers were transferred to the Army.
4. Officers who had been discharged in 1918 were brought back into service.
5. The new term "officer on the supplementary list" was established. Officers on the supplementary list were particularly re-inducted officers who, as a result of their age and state of health, were no longer fit for duty with line units or who were eligible for such re-induction only because of their special knowledge and qualifications. Positions for the assignment of officers on the supplementary list were established within the Army High Command and within high-level staffs and were also assigned to positions within the Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement

Organization, the frontier guard organization (Grenzwacht), and the Landwehr.⁶ (See next chapter.)

The Army normally would have required many years to obtain the trained reserves necessary for war, because after 1935 only one age class was drafted yearly for military service. To overcome the lack of reserves, in 1937 trained reserves were discharged for the first time, special organizational measures had to be taken for a period of several years. For this purpose replacement units were formed, consisting of replacement battalions and replacement batteries. These units contained persons eligible for military service but not subject to the two-year term of service; they were given basic military training for a period of three months. Prior to the war this made it possible to provide some 700,000 short-term trained reservists (Class II Reservists) and 500,000 reservists (Class I Reservists) fully trained by regular units.

In spite of this fact, however, approximately 3,250,000 men of those eligible for military service within the age groups from twenty to forty years remained untrained up to the outbreak of war. Since the Army was ill prepared for war during the expansion

⁶ Reserves. Age groups 35 - 45 years (Translator).

period, other expedients had to be found for strengthening the national defense. A frontier guard was formed from members of the border population who had received military training and were fit for service. The frontier guard served on border duty and manned such fortifications as existed.

The preparatory measures for this organization were taken initially for the eastern border and later for the south and west. A group of chief instructors, organized and placed under the command of Army agencies, were placed in charge of organizing and training the frontier guards. The training was carried out in the form of weekend exercises and short-term training courses. Upon the outbreak of war the frontier guard constituted a security screen only which had, for instance, no artillery whatever. Arrangements for the formation of Landwehr divisions were made throughout the Reich. In the first place, the veterans of World War I were allocated to serve with these divisions in order to fill the gap caused by the untrained age classes. Since the regular Army units could not be charged in peacetime with the training of these divisions in addition to their other missions, a Landwehr commander was appointed for each Landwehr division and several

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chief instructors were assigned to him. This organization prepared for the organization of the Landwehr divisions⁷ including its training which took place in the form of exercises for reservists and short-term training courses.

IV. MOBILIZATION.

As was explained earlier mobilization was the conversion of a peacetime Army into a wartime Army which was systematically prepared in peacetime and started at the beginning of war. Certain measures for the purpose of border protection were also taken in connection with mobilization. The basic principle of all mobilization arrangements was to reduce to a minimum the time required for mobilization, since during this period the Army would not be fully operational. In view of the limited space in Europe, this state of weakness was, in the era of motor vehicle and airplane, especially dangerous. All nations on the continent had to take this circumstance into consideration and, consequently, they refined their systems of mobilizing to such an extent that, at the beginning of mobilization, a complex schedule was set in motion. The periods of time required for mobilization were dif-

⁷ In the Spring 1939 the Landwehr divisions were re-named Infantry Divisions of the Third Wave.

ferent for the various units. While some elements were required to be ready for marching within a few hours, other units were allowed from two to eight or even more days for this purpose.

In carrying out a mobilization, the men, horses, motor vehicles, equipment, arms and ammunition were concentrated at mobilization points. This required the formation of numerous railway transports or shipments that also had to be arranged for in peacetime. Many thousands of such transports were moved during mobilization. Simultaneously there began the transportation of those troops who had terminated the process of mobilizing and were ready for marching. This movement no longer pertained to mobilization but was a part of the concentration for action, whose time schedule was closely integrated with that of mobilization. The corps headquarters received orders from the Army High Command indicating which elements of the wartime army were to be established within their respective Wehrkreise in case of mobilization. In order to calculate this allotment on a practical and time-saving basis the Army High Command took into consideration the circumstances existing in the various Wehrkreise, such as the regular army units already stationed there, the condition of the Wehrkreise in regard to

population, stocks of horses available, traffic conditions, motor vehicles available, and the number of trained reservists. It was the responsibility of each corps headquarters to distribute the mobilization units allocated to it within the area under its command on the basis of these conditions. The corps headquarters were responsible to the Army High Command for the performance of mobilization.

These fundamental provisions were laid down in a secret regulation, the Mobilization Plan (Army)⁸, compiled by the staff of General Army Office of the Army High Command. This regulation included the following provisions:

1. Definitions and responsibilities.
2. Issuance of orders for mobilization.
3. Principles and methods for drafting personnel.
4. Methods to be used in requisitioning horses, motor vehicles, and other equipment to be drawn from the national economy. Arrangements for the issue of supplies from the Army administration stocks.

⁸ The Luftwaffe and the Navy issued mobilization plans very similar to that of the Army.

5. Principles for the maintainance of the mobilization schedule in peacetime.

The mobilization plan was supplemented yearly by new directives issued by the Army High Command which were based upon the contemplated changes in such things as revised plans for the size of the wartime army. These directives, which were highly classified, were issued annually by the Army High Command as "Special Supplement to the Mobilization Plan (Army)⁸" in accordance with the following pattern:

Special Supplement:	C o n t e n t s :	Issued by:
1	Size and organization of the wartime Army by the Wehrkreise	General Army Office
2	Size and organization of the wartime Army	Organization Branch
3	Wartime organizational structure of top-level Army command	Organization Branch
4	Establishment of organization deadlines for all troops	Organization Branch
5	Advance measures	Organization Branch
6	Directives for expediting the process of preparation for marching	General Army Office

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Special Supplement:	C o n t e n t s :	Issued by:
7	Formation of construction troops from the Reich Labor Service	Organization Branch
8	Establishment of tables of wartime organization and equipment	General Army Office
9	Directives for the use of the Reich telephone system in case of mobilization	General Army Office/ Inspectorate 7
10	Administrative stipulations (rations, finances, indemnities, etc.)	Army Administration Office

The special supplements contained the following:

Special Supplements 1 and 2: Total size of the wartime Army with its various unit staffs, the tables of organizations and equipment for all types of divisions and all non-divisional troops such as GHQ troops, army headquarters troops, corps troops and other troops of all types down to company level or the equivalent within the various arms; the Replacement Army with all its elements such as staffs, replacement units, instruction and experimental units, schools, and guard troops.

Special supplement 3: The wartime organization of the Army High Command which deviated considerably from

the peacetime organization, established the scope of responsibility of the high-level commanders.

Special supplement 4: Mobilization deadlines were determined by immediate circumstances. The mobilization of units which existed in peacetime naturally did not require as much time as those which had to be activated at the beginning of a war. Command requirements had to be considered in light of concentration objectives and transportation facilities.

Special supplement 5: Single or collective measures that could be ordered in advance and independently of actual mobilization. In order to insure a smooth process of mobilization and concentration, these were measures taken in times of political tension, such as security measures at the borders, and measures for preparing but not for expediting mobilization.

Hundreds of measures could be ordered singly or collectively and were graduated according to their extent and perceptibility. They were graded, for instance, from intensified border control, through the closing of border crossing points, up to the mobilization the frontier guards (naturally according

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to the individual situation on the national borders of the neighbor states.) They ranged in importance from a check of all arrangements for mobilization, through a cessation of all field exercises and the return of troops to their barracks, up to dispatching advance parties of high-level staffs, preparing the Reich telephone system as command net for war, and expediting readiness for the march.

Special supplement 6: Provided directives for troops to be dispatched on frontier protective missions before mobilization was terminated, including orders which designated the elements to remain behind. After mobilization was terminated and concentration began, these elements followed as rear echelons the units that had marched to the front.

Special supplement 7: Provided for the use of the Reich Labor Service. Numerous construction units (in 1939: 427,000 men) were organized from the Reich Labor Service for working on border fortifications.

Special supplement 8: The tables of wartime organization and equipment specified the personnel strength, arms and equipment for each unit of company size.

Special supplement 9: Contained directives for the methods of taking over certain wire communications and their operation by signal troops.

In addition to the special supplements, an "Annual Mobilization Directive" was issued each year by the Army High Command which contained everything not included in the special supplements. These directives particularly covered personnel problems, such as the composition of the various age classes and the employment of the recruits of units which had not yet received adequate training. The mobilization year was originally calculated from autumn to autumn, but as of 1939 from spring to spring due to various organizational considerations. In the mobilization order a differentiation was made between what was publicly announced and that which was not. Appropriate legislation was enacted to accomplish this purpose. Eventually, the system of mobilization provided for the possibility of having mobilization ordered for specific Wehrkreise only, or of having mobilization put only partially into effect.

As directed by Hitler, the mobilization order was, upon the order of the Commander in Chief of the Army, communicated in telegraphic style to the various corps headquarters by the Organization Branch of the Army

General Staff.

The corps headquarters were responsible for passing the order to all the agencies of their Wehrkreise as well as for the regular performance of mobilization.

Carrying out mobilization was the duty of the units, the agencies of the Recruiting and Replacement Administration, and the ordnance offices and the administrative agencies such as garrison administration offices and the ration supply offices.

A mobilization schedule was established for each unit of the wartime Army down to company level either by a unit of the peacetime Army or by an agency of the Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement Administration. The units of the peacetime Army kept a time schedule for their own mobilization and for those units that were to be activated from its elements, the so-called cadres detached from the peacetime units. The agencies of the Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement Administration kept the mobilization time schedules for the rest of the units. Each mobilization time schedule determined in detail how mobilization was to be implemented. In the case of an infantry company it was accurately established which personnel this unit was

to receive, from whom, at what time, and through what channels. The same was specified in detail with respect to horses, vehicles, arms, and equipment. The mobilization schedule included the exact time, date and hour, at which these measures were to be taken as well as the channels to be used and the means to be used. Consequently, after all measures had been carried out the new unit had its required personnel strength, was fully armed, equipped, supplied, and ready to march at the established mobilization deadline.

All materiel in short supply, such as arms, ammunition, special types of vehicles, and army equipment, was either issued from supply stocks or was drawn from the national economy as was the case with horses, vehicles, motor vehicles, and equipment purchased in the open market.

The supplies obtained from the national economy were registered beforehand by commission of the Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement Administration in cooperation with civilian authorities. The owners were informed of their obligation to deliver the horses or other items in case of mobilization. The reservists, too, were informed in peacetime when and where they would report for induction into the armed forces.

It was mentioned previously that for the purposes of mobilization thousands of shipments of horses, reservists, and materiel were arranged in detail and entered on the schedule. Similar measures were prepared to expedite the delivery of induction orders and orders relative to the special operation of wire communications and railway systems, to the Reichsbank for financing the armed forces to the Reich custom guards, and many other military and civilian authorities.

In case of mobilization, the peacetime Army of 730,000 men could increase to a wartime Army of 3,750,000 men in the course of a few days.

V. WARTIME ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR.

Planning the size and organization of a wartime Army constituted a particularly difficult problem as long as the pre-war Army was still in process of expanding and the number of trained reservists as well as the amount of all kinds of materiel available was rather limited. However, the efforts taken for solving this problem at the outbreak of war in 1939 will be presented.

In 1939 the expansion of the peacetime Army was

almost complete as far as organization was concerned. But the formation of armored troops, heavy artillery, engineer and signal units for use by high-level headquarters was still not accomplished. The preceding rapid expansion had, as a matter of course, resulted in a lowering of the quality of officers, noncommissioned officers and other ranks so far as training was concerned. Great efforts were made to overcome this deficiency.

Preparing for mobilization also revealed, as far as matters of organization were concerned, some deficiencies the correction of which was worked on with utmost energy. The deficiencies resulted from the fact that the units were concerned with training and their internal integration to such an extent that they were unable to devote as much energy to the preparatory measures for mobilization as was prescribed by the schedule. The conditions in the Armed Forces Recruiting and Replacement Administration were similar. This organization was struggling to get its organizational structure in shape and was so overstrained by conducting medical examinations and carrying out inductions that not much time was left for the extensive mobilization duties such as registration, filing,

and working on schedules. The conditions existing within the ordnance, administration, railway transport, and other agencies were similar.

Furthermore, the entire mobilization system was repeatedly subjected to essential modifications as a result of experiences and new conditions encountered as a result of the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland. The personnel and materiel situation had to be re-examined. The number of trained reservists and of all those men fit for military service had to be taken into consideration. The same applied to the amount of materiel that was available; the horses and motor vehicles as well as the level of the industrial capacity used for war purposes.

Since the conditions in the field of materiel were most assuredly unsatisfactory, it was necessary to decide whether one should be content with a small but highly qualified wartime Army or enlarge it regardless of the considerable number of deficiencies which would be entailed by such measure.

A compromise solution for organizing the wartime Army was adopted.

1. Field Army: A core consisting of the armored units and the divisions of the peacetime Army

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was only slightly weakened by detaching cadres. The additional units, using cadres from the peacetime Army, were formed in such a manner that, after a brief period, they could acquire adequate fighting qualities. The rest of the wartime Army was considerably weakened in order to reinforce somewhat later the Field Army as strongly as possible.

2. Replacement Army: From the very beginning this Army was organized on a rather broad basis without regard to a considerable number of deficiencies that developed. The Replacement Army was intended eventually not only to meet the requirements of the Field Army for trained replacements, but also to form from its own personnel additional field units, provided there was enough materiel available for such purposes.

The personnel situation in the autumn of 1939 is shown by the table below. Only a small portion of the personnel at the disposal of the Army at that time had been given military training.

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	Age classes	
	21 to 35 years of age	36 to 45 years of age
Regular army, approxi- mately	730,000	
Reservists I (fully trained), approximately	500,000	
Reservists II (short-time training) approximately	600,000	
Reservists (no training since 1918) approximately		1,700,000
Total number of men who had received military training:	1,830,000	1,700,000
Total	<u>3,530,000</u>	
Total Available Manpower	4,750,000	2,500,000
Total	<u>7,250,000</u>	

Only 38 percent of the available manpower, especially the younger age classes, was trained, because the introduction of universal conscription in 1935 had not been able to take full effect. The organization of the replacement units contributed considerably to the training of the type II reservists.

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The wartime Army of 1939 was composed as follows:

Field Army (without construction troops)	2,314,000
Construction troops ⁹	427,000

Replacement Army:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| a. Replacement units, schools, and instruction troops | 768,000 |
| b. Guard units and other agencies in the zone of the interior | 197,000 |

Other forces stationed at the border or in the zone of the interior	48,000
	3,754,000

A comparison of these figures reveals that only about half the manpower was being used by the wartime Army. This was due to shortages in equipment. The trained personnel, however, was made use of fully.

⁹ The disproportionately numerous construction troops were brought about by making a virtue of necessity. In view of the Army strength which was rather inadequate in proportion to the neighboring states, the organization of the Reich Labor Service was used to the fullest extent in order to strengthen national defense by means of the latter's manpower. In the course of the war the number of construction troops was considerably reduced and these members of the Reich Labor Service were included as recruits.

The difficulties due to lack of officers and specialists will not be treated here in detail. The materiel situation governed the size of the wartime Army to an even greater extent than did the manpower situation. The armored units and peacetime divisions were well armed and equipped. Concerning all other troops, however, some serious deficiencies existed initially as to armament and equipment, In some fields they were gradually overcome; in others they were irremediable. There was a constant deficiency in motor vehicles of both quality and quantity and, as far as the Replacement Army was concerned, an armament lack. As the materiel situation improved new units were activated.

The armament and ammunition supplies to meet combat requirements were so limited at the beginning of war that they would not have permitted combat activities by main elements of the Field Army, for instance against France, for more than a few weeks. Later on any continuation of fighting would have been impossible. The campaign against Poland lasted only a short time and required little ammunition, which made it possible to produce the necessary quantities of

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ammunition by the beginning of the campaign against France.

To solve the problem of the organizational structure of the wartime Army divisions of different value were formed. Since the motorized and cavalry divisions were not required to detach very many of their personnel as cadres for units to be activated, they retained their full combat value. An infantry division that had existed in peacetime was designated as an infantry division of the first wave and detached cadres for the formation of infantry divisions of the second wave. The infantry divisions of first wave were replenished with Class I reservists of the youngest age classes. The mountain divisions were rated equal to the infantry divisions of first wave.

The infantry divisions of the second wave were not activated until mobilization started. Their organizational structure was rather similar to that of the infantry divisions of the first wave and they had cadres from the latter which constituted twenty-five percent of their total strength. As replacements they were given Class II reservists as far as this was possible. Their motor vehicle equipment naturally was

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of lesser quality since these vehicles were drawn from the national economy. These infantry divisions were ready for action after a brief period.

The infantry divisions of the third wave had no cadres from peacetime units. They were formed only of reservists, including officers, of whom the majority were more than forty years of age and had not received any military training since 1918. Organization, armament, and other equipment were rather deficient. Most of these divisions were concentrated and trained at training centers. It took them from four to eight weeks to become operational.

The cadres of the infantry divisions of the fourth wave, which amounted to about fifteen percent of the authorized strength, consisted of personnel from replacement units. These divisions were brought up to required strength by the assignment of reserves. If possible, they were assigned Class I reservists, but the majority of the personnel were Class II reservists and a sizeable number of them were World War I veterans. The organizational structure of these divisions resembled that of the divisions of the second wave. It took them a few weeks to become operational.

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The following figures represent the strength of the Field Army, broken down by divisions and other units:

10 armored divisions ¹⁰	116,000
4 motorized infantry divisions	66,000
1 cavalry brigade	7,000
35 Infantry divisions of the first wave	625,000
3 mountain divisions	60,000
16 infantry divisions of the second wave	240,000
21 infantry divisions of the third wave	380,000
14 infantry divisions of the fourth wave	210,000
4 divisions of fortress troops ¹¹ approximately	67,000
Frontier Guards	120,000
Corps-, army-, GHQ troops	430,000
Construction troops	427,000
Other units	17,000
Total strength of Field Army	2,765,000

¹⁰ Actually, nine armored divisions. The tenth armored division was activated from various instruction and other units in East Prussia immediately before the beginning of the war.

¹¹ Fortress troops, officially called Frontier troops were intended for manning the Westwall between the Rhine and Moselle Rivers and the fortification system east of Frankfurt an der Oder or in East Prussia.

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The following figures pertain to the Replacement Army:

Replacement troops	750,000
Guard units	196,000
Schools, instruction troops	18,000
Other agencies	<u>25,000</u>
Total strength of Replacement Army	989,000
Total strength of the Field Army	3,754,000

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CHAPTER 4

ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS DURING THE WAR

I. PRIOR TO THE 1940 CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST.

When the Western Powers declared war on Germany on 3 September, 1939, the top-level command of the Army had to face great organizational problems. It has been explained in September, 1939, why the Army was by no means equal to the task of waging war on two fronts and why this did not lead to a military collapse at that time. The efforts taken to overcome the deficiencies within the organization of the Army and to complete it for its new and more extensive tasks required the entire period before the beginning of the western campaign. The solution of the organization problem was, in the first place, dependent on the logistical potentialities. The production of arms, equipment, tanks, motor vehicles, ammunition, and clothing governed the speed by which the Army could be expanded. The additional efforts made to improve training, discipline, and combat morale of the troops will not be treated in detail here. Further tasks were entailed by the occupation of foreign countries. Aside from the immense number of constant alterations in the organizational

field the following measures were taken for solving these extensive problems:

1. The wartime Army was activated by mobilization at the beginning of the war in the form as described in the foregoing chapter. On the whole only the motorized units and the infantry divisions of first wave took part in the campaign against Poland. Almost all the other divisions were not employed in combat and were either concentrated along the quiet western border, assembled in training centers for training purposes, or moved subsequently to Poland as occupation troops. All these units were deficient in varying degrees. In some divisions a rather high percentage of the officers and lower grades were not fit for combat; also their equipment was incomplete. These deficiencies were remedied during the winter. The unfit personnel were gradually replaced from the Replacement Army. In particular the World War I veterans who had been mobilized in default of trained reservists of younger age classes had to be transferred from the infantry to service troops or other units more suitable for them. Several hundred thousands of men were affected by this exchange program.

2. New units for the Field Army were formed from

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the Replacement Army whenever the materiel situation permitted. As the first step, five infantry divisions of the fifth wave were activated at the end of September, 1939. The equipment was drawn from stocks of the Czech Army taken over in Bohemia and Moravia in the summer of 1939. During the winter increased armament production permitted activating new infantry divisions of the sixth and the seventh wave. The infantry divisions were classified by "waves" in order to designate the divisional types. Even in peacetime the lack of materiel prevented all infantry divisions from being organized and equipped according to the same pattern. All infantry divisions which had the same organizational structure and equipment were, therefore, classified according to certain waves and were numbered consecutively. These activations were followed by the formation of new units of GHQ troops such as artillery and signal units.

3. The enormous amount of traveling done by military personnel created new problems that had not been fully anticipated in peacetime. For this reason special trains were constituted for military personnel on leave and for individuals traveling on duty. Additional problems were raised in the maintenance of discipline and the welfare for these masses of people

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on the move. What made these matters so difficult was the fact that the integration of the Army was at first rather disjointed as a result of the induction of hundreds of thousands of men who had received little previous military training. To overcome these difficulties an Army patrol service was organized and given military police authority. The members of the military patrol service were assigned to this organization only on a temporary basis in order to avoid the creation of another organization which would require too much manpower and to make men with especially high qualifications available. Eventually the Army Affairs Branch of the Army General Staff was established through which the Commander in Chief of the Army exerted a direct influence upon the troops with respect to welfare, education, and discipline.

4. After the campaign against Poland the former provinces of West Prussia, with Danzig, Posen and other parts of Poland were incorporated into the Reich. New Wehrkreise were established within this area, and the organization of recruiting centers was expanded to include them.

5. A military occupation organization was estab-

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lished as the Government General of Poland. At the same time the railway as well as the signal communications system within this territory were prepared and completed for national defense purposes and connected with the corresponding systems of the Reich. Under the prevailing war conditions these tasks were accomplished with comparative ease according to the desires of the Army General Staff.

6. The decision to undertake an offensive against France and her northern neighbors required planning a military government for these territories. Military commanders for France and Belgium were appointed by the Army as subordinates to the Commander in Chief of the Army.

II. FROM THE END OF THE WESTERN CAMPAIGN IN 1940 TO
THE BEGINNING OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUSSIA IN 1941.

Immediately after the campaign against France, the Wehrmacht High Command regarded the war's objective as having been attained to such an extent that a partial demobilization of the Army was ordered initiated. These measures, however, were soon halted. The order to prepare a campaign against Russia was presented to the top-level Army command and involved it in new organi-

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national tasks. The Army required additional forces and an organization suitable for traversing large areas and for conducting combat and supply operations in them.

The armament industry was required to increase production as well as to carry out new technical developments in signal, tank, and motor vehicles construction in order to meet the peculiar demands of the new theater of war. Here again, organizational planning was limited by materiel potentialities, although the industrial capacity of the occupied territories as well as the captured materiel from the stocks of the defeated armies was fully utilized to meet the new requirements. The efforts made to increase production permitted the following essential changes:

1. The number of armored divisions was increased from ten to twenty and the number of motorized divisions from five to ten.

2. Although the bulk of the Field Army still consisted of infantry divisions in which the horse was the primary means of transportation, the number of these divisions was reduced when several of them were reorganized as armored or motorized divisions. In their place, however, an even larger number of new infantry divisions were formed.

3. In Russia bad roads and severe weather necessitated the equipping of the horse-drawn columns of the infantry divisions with lighter vehicles. Additional "panje"¹ trains were formed for these divisions equipped with the light vehicles commonly used in Russia and drawn by the hardened "panje" horses. During the campaign these trains became more and more important and were continuously increased in number.

4. Other divisions were made largely independent of motor vehicles in order to keep the units mobile under any Russian weather conditions. These divisions were called light divisions and later, Jaeger divisions.

5. Signal troops, engineers, railway operating troops, and supply troops were reinforced and allotted special equipment.

6. The motor vehicle requirements were met by inadequate expedients. Since 1935 the production of military motor vehicles had been insufficient. At the beginning of the war the troops had to resort to motor vehicles drawn from the civilian economy. They were neither properly designed for military purposes nor built for rugged service as the wartime output always

¹ German Army adaptation of a Polish word which came to be used in connection with the small Russian type farm horses, and the vehicles and sleds which they pulled.

lagged far behind requirements, the armored units and signal troops were given priority. The major part of the Field Army had to manage with an inadequate supply of motor vehicles of relatively low quality. The campaign in Russia imposed extremely severe strains upon motor vehicles so that the repair requirements were very high and numerous motor vehicles were lost entirely. The exploitation of the French automobile industry brought only slight relief since French vehicles were unsuitable for use in Russia, not being sturdy enough and having too low a road clearance.

The repair and maintenance service had to be re-organized, since in Russia an exploitation of indigenous installations was out of the question. Repair and maintenance, therefore, remained dependent on supply, which constituted a problem that could never be adequately solved in view of the long supply line and the excessively large number of different types of motor vehicles. Regarding this question, the reader is referred to the studies: "The Chief of Supply and Administration" and "The Chief of Army Equipment and Commander of the Replacement Army"².

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7. The administration of the theater of operations required an adequate organization. For the areas within the zone of the interior which were to be placed under civilian administration, there was established an office to represent the interests of the Army. It was planned to establish the positions of Military District Commanders which, as organizations of Wehrmacht, were not placed under the Commander in Chief of the Army but were directly responsible to Hitler.

During the period between the French and the Russian campaigns, German units were employed in Africa for the first time and other forces were transferred to Rumania as instruction troops. Service in Africa required a different organization and special equipment for the desert and tropical climates. Experience soon dictated a rapid modification in the organization and in armament, equipment, clothing, and rations. The establishment of an overseas transport organization was demanded. To complete divisions as instruction troops, numerous instruction detachments were sent also to Rumania.

III. FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN IN 1941 TO AUTUMN 1942.

At the beginning of the campaign against Russia,

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the Commander in Chief of the Army retained by Hitler's order the responsibility only for the operations of those Army units that attacked Russia from Germany and Rumania. All the other theaters of war became directly responsible to Hitler as far as the conduct of operations was concerned. The Wehrmacht High Command was Hitler's operations staff. While Russia became an Army High Command theater of war, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Africa, the Balkans and eventually Italy were Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. The reason for this strange measure was Hitler's desire to lighten the load of Commander in Chief of the Army in favor of the operational tasks he had to accomplish in the East. Another reason was the fact that within the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war negotiations with foreign powers played an important role and only the Wehrmacht High Command was competent for such negotiations. It was rather obvious that these two arguments were specious. In any case, a uniform conduct of war by a superior authority was abolished by this measure, and this happened at the very moment when the war situation was most critical.

The Wehrmacht and Army High Commands in the various

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theaters of war now existed as coequals in operational commands. This was especially true because the Wehrmacht and Army theaters of war had become of equal importance since the beginning of the Allied invasion in 1944. Aside from the grotesqueness of this measure an additional peculiar situation arose. The bulk of the Army was engaged in combat operations in Russia. Other forces of considerable strength were stationed in France and Belgium as occupation forces or were engaged in preparing defensive measures against an expected invasion of the continent. Smaller elements of the Army were employed in the other Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. The organization and equipment of the troops as well as their training and supply were subject to constant change as a result of the serious supply situation and later on also because of manpower shortages. The troops employed in the East were, of course, given priority in this respect. The troops stationed in France and Belgium were the reinforcements and replacements for the forces engaged in the East. In spite of these close interrelations between the eastern and western theaters of war, these parts of the Army were subordinate to different commanders.

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The Army High Command was also responsible for the organization, equipment, training, and supply of the troops employed in Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. Despite the disinterested efforts on the part of low-level agencies within the Army and Wehrmacht High Commands to bring about a loyal cooperation, a shifting of responsibilities took place which was bound to entail serious consequences. The Wehrmacht High Command, for instance, had no intelligence agency at its disposal. Such an agency had not been necessary for the former activities of the Wehrmacht High Command. For an operational command staff, however, it was indispensable.

To cite another example the Chief of the Army General Staff was responsible for the conduct of operations only on the eastern front. The Organization Branch, however, which worked under him was also responsible for arming those troops employed in the Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. As a result of the increasing shortage of arms, an equality in armament for all units was not possible. Who was to establish priorities? This was also the problem of the Chief of Supply and Administration with respect to supply matters.

The crisis of war was to be met with this disorgan-

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ized top-level command of the Wehrmacht and the Army! When the reverses before Moscow occurred the Commander in Chief of the Army, von Brauchitsch, was relieved from his post and the Chief of the General Staff, Halder, was subordinated directly to Hitler. No changes, however, were ordered on the division of the Wehrmacht and Army High Command theaters of war or on the responsibility of the Army High Command for matters of organization, supply, and training of troops employed in Wehrmacht High Command theaters of war. The reverses on the eastern front during the winter inflicted heavy losses upon the Army troops. Large quantities of arms, tanks, motor vehicles, and equipment were captured by the enemy. A resupply of these items for about ten divisions had to be procured and in some fields even more. In the armored and motorized divisions the losses of materiel were especially high. In some sectors of the front the infantry divisions suffered heavy losses in arms and equipment; their personnel losses, which were high all along the front since they had been in combat for months, had come with surprising suddenness. Casualties exceeded what had been calculated and were not anywhere balanced by replacements.

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The situation was made even more serious in October 1941 when Hitler ordered a severe reduction in the armament production program for the Army in favor of the Navy and Luftwaffe. Hitler's order was a result of his complete misjudgment of the situation. The Chief of the Army General Staff was not informed of the measure until later. Meanwhile precious time was lost, with the result that production in many fields such as the manufacture of guns did not really build up again until the summer of 1942.

From that time on, any organizational measure was simply economizing with inadequate means, living from hand to mouth, working with moderate expedients and improvisation often associated with considerable risks. Above all, the lack of manpower again became a factor to reckon with; it had limited the size of the Army as early as at the beginning of the war but had been overcome during the winter of 1939-40. The manpower shortage thenceforth persisted until the conclusion of the war. When the winter ended, the Army command was confronted with the difficult problem of replacing the casualties, the rate of which was very high, and of preparing the troops for an offensive in the summer of 1942, which had been ordered by Hitler.

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This operation was to be launched on the southern half of the Russian front. Hitler did not accept the argument brought forward by the Army General Staff that such an offensive was irresponsible since it could be carried out only by depriving the other sectors of the reserves which they needed so badly. He insisted upon carrying out his offensive on the southern part of the eastern front, for the purpose of which the majority of the forces in the East were to be employed.

In order to bring the Field Army employed in the East to operational condition with respect to the new mission the following decisions were made:

1. Three armored divisions in France and a large number of infantry divisions in Germany were to be sent as reinforcements for the army employed in the East.
2. Exhausted infantry divisions were to be transferred from the east to France for rehabilitation and returned later for employment in the offensive.
3. Other exhausted infantry and armored divisions were to be transferred from the east to France in order to stay there for the purpose of gradual rehabilitation. In their place, occupational divisions in France were

to be reorganized and shipped to Russia.

4. All divisions employed in the east were to be rehabilitated by the following system:

a. All divisions of the army groups intended for offensive operations were to be brought to full strength in personnel and materiel by replacements.

b. A part of the infantry divisions and all armored and motorized divisions were to be transferred temporarily to special areas for the purpose of rehabilitation as described above, while the majority of the infantry divisions were to be rehabilitated by improvisation at the front.

c. Those divisions on the other parts of the front that were not resupplied for participation in the offensive operations were to be rehabilitated to a limited extent only. They were reorganized and their strength was reduced from nine to six battalions.

5. During 1942 the Replacement Army was to provide personnel replacements equal to the expected casualties for the entire eastern front.

These measures were begun during the winter. The offensive was to start at the end of June at the extreme southern wing. Adequate schedules for the transport and march movements were to be established and kept

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in conformity with the logistical capabilities of the Chief of Armament and Commander of the Replacement Army. The inadequate capacity of the railway system in the East made it necessary for all armored and motorized divisions as well as for the majority of the infantry divisions coming from the Reich and France to advance from the German border, or from railway stations far behind the front, in marches that often took weeks. In addition, thousands of motor vehicles were moved in long columns from Germany into those areas behind the eastern front that were used for rehabilitation purposes. The animal replacements for the immense losses that had been incurred during the winter were brought from the zone of the interior to the front by large-scale march movements.

The program was carried out generally according to plan, though the events at the front at that time caused additional and unforeseen problems. The Eleventh Army, for instance, which was employed in the Crimea, was transferred on the order of Hitler across Russia into the area east of Leningrad after the Crimea was conquered and could not be used in the operations in the south. The Russian offensive south of Kharkov in April which threatened a breakthrough of the German

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front finally resulted in a serious Russian defeat, but it also upset preparations for the offensive.

The troops available at the beginning of the offensive were established and rehabilitated as had been planned.

The attack of the armored units was to play the decisive role. When the attack began, the armored and motorized units of the Army were distributed and equipped as follows:

	<u>armored divisions</u>	<u>motorized divisions</u>	<u>number of tanks (approx)</u>
<u>In the East:</u>			
a. Spearhead of the offensive	15	7	2,400
b. rest of the front	5	3	200
<u>In the West:</u>			
(in process of re-habilitation)	3	-	50
<u>Norway:</u>			
(in process of formation)	1	-	30
<u>Africa:</u>	2	1	200
Total:	26	11	2,880

[REDACTED]

Each armored division within the sector of the front where the offensive was to be launched had three tank battalions with a total of about 140 tanks. Each motorized division had one tank battalion equipped with forty-six tanks. The latter was an innovation based upon experience, for until this time the motorized divisions had no tanks. This measure was to be the first step in the gradual conversion of the motorized divisions into armored divisions, as planned by the Army General Staff.

The three armored divisions stationed in France had each completed their rehabilitation by the end of August, September, and October, respectively. They were equipped with newest armor and were also bound for employment in the East. The landings of the Western Allies in French North Africa, however, prevented this projected use. As the units were being rehabilitated their tanks were rearmed with the long-barrelled guns which had secured the superiority of German over Russian armor in 1942. An additional factor was that the anti-tank equipment of all units was improved by allocating to the Army in the East considerably more than a thousand towed antitank guns as well as

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self-propelled antitank guns and assault gun batteries for the infantry divisions.

What had been planned could not be carried out in one important respect: The personnel requirements calculated by the Army General Staff could not be met. The strength reductions for divisions not participating in the offensive had not been originally contemplated but was now taken as a necessary expedient. Even so, it was still not possible to provide replacements equal to the estimated casualty rate. Although the Wehrmacht High Command was responsible for allocating persons eligible for military service to the Commander of the Replacement Army, a rivalry over manpower developed with the Reich Minister for Armament and Ammunition, the Gauleiter³ within Germany, and other agencies. The personnel requisitions of the Chief of the Army General Staff, originally acknowledged, were not fulfilled and their correctness was questioned. Hitler, to whom this important question was submitted, decided against the Chief of the Army General Staff. Thus the Army, though brought to full strength, had to start the decisive offensive

³ Regional leader of the NSDAP. (Translator)

operation without adequate replacement reserves. Consequently, the armies reached their objectives with their units in a battered condition at the moment when the enemy counteroffensive produced the crisis which was to lead to the defeat at Stalingrad. Before the offensive the eastern front was 2,000 kilometers long. It was to increase to 2,500 kilometers after the objectives were reached. The Army in the East, however, was supposed to accomplish its mission with a strength below that of the summer of 1941.

At this time hundred thousands of able-bodied laborers were employed in Germany for purposes unimportant for the conduct of war, such as construction work in Berlin and in other "Gau" capitals.⁴

The Luftwaffe and the Navy, whose losses were small compared to those of the Army, had substantial personnel reserves at their disposal. Since the Wehrmacht High Command was unable to impose its will on those two branches of the Wehrmacht as firmly as its mission demanded, it could not support the hard-fighting Army by transferring reserves from the other branches.

⁴ Gau - district of the NSDAP (Translator).

The relatively small number of replacements, about 100,000, which the Army required for accomplishing its mission, but which were not allocated to it, led to considerably higher losses later without even making it possible to prevent catastrophe.

After constant pressure was exerted by the Chief of the Army General Staff, Hitler decided in September, when it was almost too late, to order the immediate transfer of 200,000 men from the Luftwaffe to the Army. This group, consisting of young soldiers who had received infantry basic training, were available at once. It would have been entirely possible to transport 100,000 men during October and November as replacements for the severely mauled armies employed on the Don and in the Caucasus, but a few days later Hitler revoked the order for reasons which are not quite clear but, in any case, quite subjective. The Luftwaffe was ordered to organize new units, the so-called Luftwaffe field divisions. This action eliminated the last possibility of sustaining the offensive wing of the Army in the east by means of reorganization.

The condition of the Army at the beginning of the winter of 1942-43 was critical. All types of divisions of the southern army groups in the east were worn out

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and there was no prospect of adequate replacements. Those divisions within the central sector and in the north had recovered somewhat. However, as a result of their reorganization the number of their battalions was reduced from nine to six. The divisions were weakened to such an extent that in the long run they were unable to perform their tasks without replacements, since an excessive strain was imposed upon the infantry of these divisions. Moreover, almost no reserves were stationed in rear of the army groups within the central and northern sectors. The manpower potentials of the German forces in France and Belgium were also considerably depleted. The units stationed there were poorly armed and badly equipped with motor vehicles and had many officers and men who were no longer fit for employment in the east owing to their age, wounds, and disability from freezing. The defeat in Egypt had likewise caused casualties that could not be easily balanced. The Replacement Army could make available only a small number of trained men.

The Army High Command was forced to seek further expedients. Rumanian, Hungarian, and Italian troops had participated in the offensive. The fighting

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abilities of these troops, however, were so poor as a result of their inexperience and, above all, of their bad armament, that their employment was rather risky. The unsatisfactory materiel situation of the Wehrmacht permitted only a limited support of them by allocating arms, tanks, and other equipment and by detaching some German troops.

As early as 1941 the German troops began to induct as auxiliary personnel into their supply trains, sometimes even into their combat units, those indigenous people and eastern prisoners of war who volunteered for such service. Balts, Ukrainians, and Turkmenians and other members of Mongoloid tribes volunteered in large numbers. Their treatment as well as their status constituted a new, fundamental problem. Since 1941 the Army High Command had vainly made great efforts to persuade Hitler to approve a large-scale activation of troops from these peoples. Any activation, however, should have been preceded by a fundamental change of policy in the treatment of the population within the Baltic Sea states by the civilian Reich Commissioners. It was not before the summer of 1942 that Hitler gave his limited approval to these plans. Meanwhile the readiness of the eastern

population to take part in the fighting had decreased in consequence of the policies followed by the civilian Reich Commissioners. This readiness had given way to a waiting attitude, and in White Russia even to a hostile one. Even so, it was possible to organize numerous units from these eastern peoples in the course of the following years and to use in the military service many hundred thousands of indigenous auxiliary personnel.

The high rate of casualties together with the impossibility of bringing the infantry divisions up to full strength made it advisable to consolidate divisions in order to restore a reasonable ratio between the number of men employed in combat and those employed in the auxiliary service. Such a method would have made it possible to introduce the increasingly necessary measures for economizing in officers, noncommissioned officers, specialists, as well as in motor vehicles, horses, and equipment. Any endeavor to give reality to such a solution was frustrated by the decided resistance of Hitler. For this reason it was impossible to prevent the majority of the infantry divisions from losing much of their inherent value during the further course of the war.

The physical and psychological strain upon the soldier at the front became excessive. Aside from his extreme readiness to make sacrifices, it was the knowledge of being confronted with a fierce, inexorable enemy, that gave the German soldier, who was often fighting singly or in small groups, the stamina for enduring inconceivable privations. This knowledge also increased the morale of those troops fighting in those encircled pockets which became so common during the later years of the war.

IV. FROM THE AUTUMN OF 1942 UNTIL THE CLOSE OF THE WAR.

In autumn 1942 the strength of the Army dropped to such a critical level that catastrophic consequences could be prevented only if the top-level command adopted a strategy which would avoid large scale reverses and minimize losses. But Hitler was not ready to accept such a policy. After the catastrophes at Stalingrad in January 1943 and in Africa in the late spring of the same year that had caused the Army losses of more than half a million men, great efforts were made to provide the necessary replacements. It might have been possible to replace the losses numerically, but not with respect to quality.

The increased armament production yielded a larger

output of materiel and other equipment but this improvement was outweighed by the decreasing combat value of the troops.

The personnel and materiel losses, therefore, continued to increase. They increased more rapidly than all measures taken to improve the situation could become effective, no matter how comprehensive they were. The decline of combat value was not due to sinking morale. On the whole, devotion to duty and loyalty remained extraordinarily high, high enough to balance to an astonishing extent the deficiencies in command, training, and armament. The high rate of casualties of senior commanders, junior leaders, and old, battle-hardened, front-line infantrymen, however, could no longer be adequately made up. The efficiency of the troops declined, although intensive training was conducted with the utmost vigor in the Replacement Army and in the Field Army. The lack of capability increased inexorably, however, and entailed a corresponding increase in personnel and materiel losses. Finally, failure in offensive actions on both a large and a small scale became more frequent.

It should be pointed out that the numerical ratio between German and Russian forces, as far as fighting

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power was concerned, always showed an excessive superiority of the Russians. The numerical ratio in the West also was heavily in favor of the Allies after the invasion started. The front lines were always greatly extended. This fact imposed an excessive physical strain upon the infantry divisions which could scarcely ever be relieved, and which increasingly impaired the physical strength of the individual soldier. In this respect, only the armored units were better off. Great efforts were made to keep armored units at a level above average, since they were of decisive importance in the conduct of operations. More and more they became the hard core at the focal points of combat, both in the offensive as well as in the defensive. Sometimes it was possible to equip adequately and completely a more or less large number of armored divisions. But a decline in the efficiency of command and troops became obvious here, too, which often deprived an operation of its expected success.

Steadily fighting with inferior forces, in compliance with the often senseless demand of Hitler never to give up an inch of ground without fighting, led to increasing exhaustion. After the great reserves in 1944 in Rumania and in the central sector of the eastern

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front and after the revolt of 20 July 1944⁵, the Party agitated against the high-level Army commanders, and undermined official confidence in the Army command. How could the combat value of the Army be raised by organizational measures in view of this development? This problem became insoluble.

In spite of this situation efforts were made to improve the armament and the equipment of the troops by increasing armament production. A considerable increase in many fields was actually achieved. However, because of low productive efficiency, these measures were unable to affect the situation at the front to the same extent as had been possible one or two years before. Coincidentally with this increase in output there was a decline in productive efficiency because important, individual spare parts were frequently lacking. The lack of certain types of ammunition such as armor piercing shells, gasoline, certain arms, especially of spare parts, optical instruments, and prime movers for guns became increasingly obvious, and, in turn, materiel losses were increased. The troops, for instance, received tanks or other weapons which were in technical respects not yet fit for use at the front.

⁵ The attempted assassination of Hitler (Translator).

Sometimes the lack of materiel at the front was due to a tactical situation which did not permit regular supply, or it was a result of the increasing effects of Allied air attacks against the homeland.

The most critical of all wants, however, was that of personnel. The manpower of Germany had approached the stage of complete exhaustion.

The following expedients were used to overcome the shortage of personnel:

1. Exchange of personnel fit for combat duty taken from staffs and from establishments within the zone of the interior for personnel not fit for combat duty.
2. Issue of new tables of organization which provided fewer men for all units not employed in combat.
3. Transfer of Luftwaffe and Navy personnel to the Army.
4. Increased induction of volunteers from the eastern territories into the Army.
5. Personnel working in industry to be made available for military service by employing women and foreign laborers.
6. Employment of women in signal units, in high-level staffs, and in antiaircraft units.

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7. Constant monitoring of the above measures to include combing-out actions.

In the course of time hundred thousands of men were thus made available for service in the Army. It was only natural that sometimes they did not contribute to the fighting power as far as morale was concerned and that some of the remedial measures appeared imposing on paper but in practice showed little or no effect.

Measures were sometimes ordered that were dangerous in their self-deception and resulted from need and nervousness. An example was the invention of alert units, in which personnel of the staffs and of units employed in rear of the front were in an emergency employed in the front line. Entirely disintegrated divisions with the strength of a regiment or even less, were designated division-groups.⁶ Three of such division-groups were designated a corps-group.⁷

Impractical organizations such as armored brigades, assault gun brigades, and engineer brigades, the strength of which amounted to one or two battalions

⁶ A unit formed by transferring the designation of a partially destroyed division to one of a consolidation of its regiments (Translator).

⁷ Two or three understrength divisions assembled into a tactical unit under a corps commander, with an improvised corps staff (Translator).

and which had nothing to do with the term brigade, were established. These chaotic measures led to a further increase in personnel and materiel losses.

Most of the Luftwaffe field divisions should have been disbanded and taken over by the Army as early as in 1943, since they had little or no combat value. But their valuable personnel was lost in the maelstrom of misorganization. Instead parachute divisions were formed by the Luftwaffe. The Navy, too, organized several navy grenadier divisions in 1945 which were bound to lack combat value in spite of their extremely good personnel.

After 20 July 1944 the people's grenadier divisions (Volksgrenadierdivisionen), the people's artillery corps (Volksartilleriekorps) and similar organizations were established for the sake of which the old divisional units that still possessed a highly valuable core were increasingly neglected and sacrificed.

Desperate measures such as the activation and employment of troops formed of youngsters had nothing to do with organization. The continuous disorganization of the top-level command created an increasing organi-

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national chaos: The Wehrmacht High Command, the Army General Staff, the Command of the Armed SS (Waffen-SS), the Luftwaffe High Command and, finally, the Navy, too, were organized so as to be parallel with each other and often even against each other as far as ground warfare concerned. Under these circumstances a methodical control of armament was hardly possible. At the beginning of this study it was stated that organization as well as armament were planned to be controlled according to the demands of the top-level command. This principle took it for granted that top-level command would place its requirements so far in advance that organization as well as armament industry would have enough time to make the necessary adaptations. However, this was taken into consideration to a constantly decreasing extent and the result was an increasing confusion in the field of armament.

The top-level political authority avoided the main issue, namely that the war potential had hopelessly shrunk in comparison to that of the enemy. Instead of tackling this problem and drawing the necessary conclusion, the top-level political authority deceived itself by going around it at an increasing speed.

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A phenomenon, parallel to this development, which increased to its fullest extent after 20 July 1944, was the reign of terror perpetrated by the top-level authority which destroyed the confidence and sincerity of the high-level commands. The end of the war saw a complete disintegration of an organization that had started at peak-performance.

In order to complete the story the formation of the Volkssturm⁸ must be mentioned here. The organization, however, is not to be blamed on the Wehrmacht since it was a creation of the Nazi Party. The same applied to the Wehrwolf⁹ which, however, probably existed only in the press and radio.

The solution to the organizational problems with which the Army High Command was confronted, was influenced by deficiencies during the entire period of time treated in this study. It was always necessary to resort to expedients. The Organization Branch made the greatest efforts to meet the requirements of the Army Command and to provide organization, armament, and equipment as effectively as possible for the troops

⁸ People's militia, assembled during the last years of the war, resembling somewhat the wartime state guard in the United States and England.

⁹ Nazi attempt to organize an underground movement.
(Translator)


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who were fully devoted to their duty and fought gallantly during the war. If, in the later course of the war, the Branch was dragged into the whirlpool of collapsing dictatorship, it was the fault of persons under whose command it was placed and who had become servants of the chaotic forces and no longer had wills of their own.




Chart

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION BRANCH
OF THE ARMY GENERAL STAFF OF SUMMER, 1939.

	Officers (GSC)	Officers (on the supplemen- tary list)	Officials	Clerks Printers
<u>Chief of Branch</u>	1			1
<u>Subsection RV: Data for the Reich Defense Board</u>		1		
<u>Section II: Organi- zational structure of 1 peacetime Army Subsection IIa (Simultaneously chief of section II): Organi- zation at peacetime Ar- my:</u>				2
<u>Subsection IIb: Or- ganization of command channels, command au- thority, personnel re- quirements of the Army General Staff for the peacetime Army</u>	1			2
<u>Section III: Organi- zational structure of wartime Army, mobili- zation</u>	1	1		1
<u>Subsection III A: Pre- parations for mobili- zation by agencies out- side the Wehrmacht (Armed SS, Reich Labor Service, Reich Bank, Reich Ministry of the Interior) in cooperation with the Wehrmacht High Command</u>	1	1		1

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Chart

Officers (GSC)	Officers (on the supplemen- tary list)	Officials	Clerks Printers
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Section III B: Mo-
bilization: a. Prin-
ciples, b. Wartime or-
ganization of the Army, 2
c. Mobilization dead-
lines, advance measures,
personnel requirements
for the wartime Army
Attached: Printing of-
fice

1

3

2

Section III C: War-
time organizational
structure of top-le-
vel Army command,
command authority in
wartime, materiel re-
quirements (armament,
production, equipment,
arms, development of
arms)

1

1

1

Registration Office:
Bureau, file adminis-
tration.

2

2

Total personnel:

8

5

2

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