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Report on the Surrender Of Gen. Kurt Dittmar and Party 1:00 P.M., 25 April 1945

Annex #1 to G-2 Periodic Report No. 312

1. THE SURRENDER

The following events took place at the conference held between the Commanding Officer of the 117th Infantry, (Col. Walter Johnson), and Gen. DITTMAR and Maj. PLUSKAT at 251300 April. Gen DITTMAR, together with Maj. PLUSKAT and party, (consisting of Gen. DITTMAR'S son and two orderlies), crossed the ELBE RIVER under a white flag, supposedly in order to carry out orders of the Chief of Staff of Gen. REGENER, (the Commander of the troops E of the ELBE RIVER). It was brought to light early in the conference that Gen. DITTMAR and Maj. PLUSKAT had come without the knowledge of Gen. REGENER, in order to get aid for wounded soldiers, as well as civilian personnel. The Gen. stated that the number of wounded was quite large, and that the German facilities to handle them were inadequate and getting worse. Gen. DITTMAR had no command of any tactical troops, and stated that he did not, since his capacity was official army news commentator. Gen. REGENER had been the defense commander of the City of Magdeburg, and presently commands the sector E of the ELBE RIVER. Gen. REGENER'S adjutant, Col. KUBAN, had wished to surrender Magdeburg, as well as its garrison to our troops, and it was said to be as a result of his influence the Gen. DITTMAR and Maj. PLUSKAT crossed the ELBE RIVER to negotiate the desired evacuation of wounded cases. Gen. DITTMAR only recently arrived in this sector, having left BERLIN last Thursday. His home was in MAGDEBURG.

During the conference, Maj. PLUSKAT took the opportunity to talk individually to the writer, revealing his desire to surrender his artillery staff as well as the attached troops. Arrangements were made, but the outcome is still pending. It is estimated that this surrender would include approximately 2,000 - 3,000 troops, (Approximately 16 batteries). The Maj. Did not wish Gen. DITTMAR to know of this fact, as it was the Majors desire to surrender, regardless of the outcome of the other negotiations.

Although the demands of Gen. DITTMAR could not be met, individual surrender was offered the party, which Gen. DITTMAR at this time refused. Before returning to the E bank of the ELBE RIVER however, an exchange of notes with representatives of their party on the opposite shore took place. It is believed that the presence of Gen. DITTMAR'S son, the Major's desire to surrender, possible repercussions in the GERMAN

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command over the General's unauthorized visit, plus the fear of the RUSSIANS, were influential in Gen. DITTMAR'S decision to surrender. His observation of our treatment of the GERMAN civilians in the City of MAGDEBURG, and his knowledge of our treatment of the P.O.W.'s, as compared to the probable treatment by the RUSSIANS, are believed to have been important factors. Gen. DITTMAR stated that the GERMAN people, as well as he himself individually, had a strong desire to escape RUSSIAN control.

1. MILITARY INFORMATION GAINED

Maj. PLUSKAT gave the following information, which is believed reliable.

- (a) The unit opposite our Division is commanded by Gen. REGENER. Its sector covers the area along the ELBE RIVER between BURG (Y8016) and DESSAU (E1070). The number of troops occupying this sector is estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000 men. They are equipped with infantry weapons, but not on a large scale. The heavy weapons, including the assault guns under the command of Maj. PLUSKAT, have been withdrawn to BRANDENBURG (Z2835).
- (b) Gen. DITTMAR stated that at the present time, army channels still exist, even though there is little or nothing to report. It was brought out during the conversation that the lack of equipment and troops, made the enemy situation hopeless, and rendered them incapable of doing anything against our tactical moves. The 20th Army CP was located in ALTENGRABOW (Z0409) until a short time ago when it was moved. It was further stated that only defense commands having a varied number of troops and equipment exist on this front. Gen. REGENER has one such command.
- (c) Concerning the WERTEWOLF organization, Maj. PLUSKAT stated that it is active in the region of the LEZINGER HEIDE. This organization is composed of SS men, who are in civilian clothes and who have instructions to carry out sabotage and revenge on both GERMAN and Allied Forces. He further stated that the Chief of the WAEREWOLF in this area is the KREISLEITER of WOLMIRSTEDT (Y6712). This man is to be the Chief of the whole WEREWOLF organization in WEST CENTRAL GERMANY.

2. INTERESTING SIDELIGHTS

Gen. DITTMAR revealed the following additional information:

Concerning the overall military situation, Gen. DITTMAR revealed that it is a known fact that the war for GERMANY had been lost some time ago. This fact, he stated, is accepted by the German General Staff, as well as the public. He further revealed that he had warned the GERMANS of their defeat, first at STALINGRAD, and more recently at the failure of the

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MORTAIN-AVRANCHES counteroffensive, which he claimed was the turning point for the campaign of the BRITISH and AMERICAN forces in EUROPE. Gen. DITTMAR mentioned that the 30th Infantry Division was in action at MORTAIN.

Concerning our invasion of NORMANDY, Gen. DITTMAR stated that it was our superior and immense air power (which was incorrectly gauged by the GERMANS), which gave the Allies the advantage, and prevented the GERMAN forces from forming a quick and strong counterattack.

Gen. DITTMAR stated that two of GERMANY'S mistakes had been very costly. Both were made on the RUSSIAN front. The first took place in the summer of 1942, when the attack was made in the CAUCASUS, instead of building up a defense line on the EASTERN front. The second mistake was at STALINGRAD where men and equipment were lost in large numbers in a futile attempt to obtain an objective which was not worth the price.

Gen. DITTMAR commented on the GERMAN December offensive in the ARDENNES by saying that it was a "poor man's choice". He stated that the most which the offensive could have hoped to achieve, would have been to delay the Allied attack at the RHINE RIVER by four months. Gen. DITTMAR believed that if the offensive had been better led, that it would have achieved that objective. He blames SEPP DIETRICH for not properly employing the Sixth SS Panzer Army in the offensive. Gen. DITTMAR believes that the line of the RHINE could have been better defended if the GEARMANS had abandoned their plans for the December offensive, and had withdrawn behind the RHINE to set up the defenses.

Both Gen. DITTMAR and Maj. PLUSKAT stated that HITLER is definitely in BERLIN at present, having taken over the defense command of that city. They claimed that he would die in this attempt, and with his death, would fall the resistance of all GERMANY, with the possible exception of these SS troops loyal to HIMMLER, who may be located somewhere in SOUTHERN GERMANY.

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Gen. DITTMAR feels that there are three men in GERMANY who are capable of taking over GERAMANY in the event of HITLER'S death. The first man is Field Marshall VON BRAUCHITSCH. The second is GUDERIAN, and the third is VON RUNDSTEDT. Gen. DITTMAR based his opinion on the ability of these men, together with their recognition by the GERMAN public. He does not feel that if any of these men took over GERMANY, that resistance would continue.

Concerning the NATIONAL REDOUBT, Gen. DITTMAR stated that its existence is mainly a paper manufactured idea, although some preparations have actually been made. Both P.O.W.' did not believe that the NATIONAL REDOUBT would have any effect on the military situation.

Gen. DITTMAR stated that his own radio commentary, begun in 1942, although censored by the GERMAN Ministry of Propaganda, was never altered.

The ever present question of "Why do the GERMANS carry on?" was answered with the same old alibi of GERMAN obedience to higher command and loyalty as a soldier. Asked about the future outcome of the war, Gen. DITTMAR believed that it was only a question of a few more days. He also believed that total collapse in NORTH GERMANY would follow swifter than that in SOUTH GERMANY. Gen. DITTMAR stated that although GERMANY has lost the war, no one ever conceived that it would end in such utter destruction and waste of human lives.

Concerning the attempt on HITLER'S life on 20 July, Gen. DITTMAR stated that HITLER was definitely present, but by his shifting his position prior to the explosion, managed to escape death. He further stated that if this attempt had succeeded, the WHERMACHT would have gained control GERMANY and would have surrendered to the ALLIES. Gen. DITTMAR revealed that he was heartily in accord with the spirit behind the attempt on HITLER'S life on July 20. However, he did not agree with the plan, and would not permit himself to be involved in the action. However, he stated that he really gave up hope for GERMANY when this attempt failed.

Gen. DITTMAR's comments on high party officials revealed that HITLER is a dynamic personality, who tries to run things of most importance and the very minute details, showing little interest for the in between matters. As an example of HITLER'S concern over the most minute details, the Gen. stated that if a Machine Gun Battalion was transferred from the EASTERN front to the WESTERN front, it had to be

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on an order signed by HITLER. GOERING, he stated, has lost all his prestige, and is quite ignored by the GERMAN public. GOERING is believed to be hiding in GERMANY or trying to escape. GOEBBELS, a crafty and intelligent man, and close supporter of HITLER, is supposedly with HITLER at present in BERLIN. Concerning HIMMLER, Gen. DITTMAR stated that it was never a question but that HITLER was the boss, and has remained so until the bitter end.

Both P.O.W's stated that the belief that there were SS men with infantry units and on their staffs forcing them to continue the fight is not true. They claimed that the Wehrmacht has never allowed SS interference with Wehrmacht units, although there is always a fear of informers for the GESTAPO being present.

The rapid exchange in command echelons in the GERMAN army was even a mystery to Gen. DITTMAR, who stated that it took place as fast as one changed dirty shirts. (A very apt expression).

Gen. DITTMAR expressed that he was highly impressed by the front line soldiers of the 117th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Infantry Division during the period of arranging the terms of surrender.

NOTE: It is the belief of the writer, that Gen. DITTMAR and his party, had a strong desire to avoid capture by the RUSSIANS, and that this was the deciding factor in his surrender to us. In addition, it is believed that Gen. DITTMAR intended to surrender himself when he first crossed the ELBE RIVER. It is further believed that many other enemy will surrender since the GERMANS think that the area E of the ELBE RIVER is to be RUSSIAN occupational territory, while that W of the ELBE RIVER belongs to the BRITISH and AMERICANS.

H.G. KURTH
Capt. FA
IPW Team 42
117th Infantry

NOTE: This document has been copied from an original copy of the Document. Nothing has been changed to alter the context of the original document. Some minor changes in punctuation, spelling and grammar have been made in order that it be more easily read. Some of the pages, due to age were deteriorating, and were difficult to read.

Frank W. Towers, 30th Inf. Div.

Dittmar Biography

*DITTMAR, Kurt, b, Magdeburg, Germany, January 5 1881;
d, April 20 1959.*

German Lieutenant General, (1941), an officer in the First World War, Dittmar became commander of the Berlin Karlshorst Pioneer School in 1937. In 1941, because of illness from service in the front line, he was transferred to Lappland, where he worked as a military and political expert for Radio Berlin, under orders of the Army High Command. His relatively candid reporting on the situation made his substitution of vague expressions for the truth of the harsh reality of it seem credible, and was therefore permitted to broadcast his messages almost uncensored.

Excerpted from the 117th "Secret" Unit Journal for 25 April 1945.

"Gen. Dittmar, Nazi news commentator and a Major Pluskat crossed river (Elbe), in 3rd Bn's area to join PW's. With Dittmar was the major and 3 EM's which included Dittmar's son. The Major sent a msg to his troops to arrange a group surrender coming across the river in the 119th sector."



GEN. KURT DITTMAR, THE WEHRMACHT RADIO **CLASSIFICATION**
 INTO THE 30TH DIV. LINES WHEN HE CROSSED THE ELBE ON
 WED. 25TH APR. HE SAID THAT HE CAME ACROSS THE ELBE TO
 INTERCEDE FOR THE CIVILIAN WOUNDED, BUT HE ACTUALLY WAS
 AFRAID OF GETTING INTO RUSSIAN HANDS. HE WAS ASKED IF
 HE WISHED TO GIVE HIMSELF UP, AND HE WAS GIVEN HALF AN HOUR
 TO DECIDE. HE FINALLY DECIDED THAT HE WOULD BE SAFER WITH
 THE AMERICANS, AND SURRENDERED. WHEN HE CAME ACROSS THE
 ELBE HE CAME IN WITH THE WHITE FLAG. ACTUALLY IT WAS A RED
 CROSS FLAG, BUT IT WAS VERY INTERESTING IN THIS WAY ---
 HIS 16 YEAR OLD SON CARRIED THE FLAG FOR HIS
 FATHER.
 KEYSTONE PHOTO SHOWS:

General D. 408842.

PICTURE SHOWS: General DITTMAR, on left, coming
 into Magdeburg. His son, aged 16, is
 seen holding the flag. Captain Henry
 C. ABBES is near the son, and Lt. Col.
 S. T. McDONNELL is seen on right.

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Lieutenant General Kurt Von Dittmar
Captured - Magdeburg, Germany on April 25, 1945

Gen Kurt DITTMAR MAGDEBURG late April 1945

