USAF HISTORICAL STUDIES: NO. 173

THE GERMAN AIR FORCE
GENERAL STAFF

By
Generalleutnant Andreas Nielsen

USAF Historical Division
Research Studies Institute
Air University

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FOREWORD

The German Air Force General Staff, by Generalleutnant a. D. Andreas Nielsen, is one of a series of historical studies written by former key officers of the German Air Force for the United States Air Force Historical Division.

The overall purpose of the series is threefold: 1) To provide the United States Air Force with a comprehensive and, insofar as possible, authoritative history of a major air force which suffered defeat in World War II; 2) to provide a history of that air force as prepared by many of its principal and responsible leaders; 3) to provide a firsthand account of that air force's unique combat in a major war with the forces of the Soviet Union. This series of studies therefore covers in large part virtually all phases of the Luftwaffe's operations and organization, from its camouflaged origin in the Reichswehr, during the period of secret German rearmament following World War I, through its participation in the Spanish Civil War and its massive operations and final defeat in World War II.

The German Air Force Historical Project, (referred to hereinafter by its shorter and current title, "The GAF Monograph Project") has generated this and other especially prepared volumes which comprise, in one form or another, a total of nearly fifty separate studies, some of them in multi-volume form. The project, patterned, in part, after an Army program already in existence, was, upon recommendation of Headquarters Air University late in 1952, approved and funded by Headquarters USAF in early 1953. General supervision was assigned to the USAF Historical Division by Headquarters USAF, which continued principal funding of the project through 30 June 1958. Within the USAF Historical Division Dr. Albert F. Simpson and Mr. Joseph W. Angell, Jr., respectively, Chief and Assistant Chief of the Division, exercised overall supervision of the project. The first steps towards its initiation were taken in the fall of 1952 following a staff visit by Mr. Angell to the Historical Division, Headquarters United States Army, Europe at Karlsruhe, Germany. There, the Army, as has been mentioned, was conducting a somewhat similar historical project covering matters and operations largely of primary interest to that service. Whereas
the Army's project had produced or was producing a multiplicity of studies of varying length and significance, (more than 2,000 have been prepared by the Army project thus far), it was early decided that the Air Force should request a radically smaller number (less than fifty) which should be very carefully planned initially and rather closely integrated. Thirteen narrative histories of GAF combat operations, by theater areas, and 27 monographic studies dealing with areas of particular interest to the United States Air Force were recommended to and approved by Headquarters USAF in the initial project proposal of late 1952. (A list of the histories and studies appears at the end of this volume.)

By early 1953 the actual work of preparing the studies was begun. Col. Wendell A. Hammer was assigned as Project Officer, with duty station at the USAREUR Historical Division in Karlsruhe. General der Flieger a.D. Paul Deichmann was appointed and served continuously as Control Officer for the German phase of the project; he also had duty station at the USAREUR Historical Division. Generalleutnant a. D. Hermann Plocher served as Assistant Control Officer until his recall to duty with the new German Air Force in the spring of 1957. These two widely experienced and high-ranking officers of the former Luftwaffe secured as principal authors, or "topic leaders," former officers of the Luftwaffe, each of whom, by virtue of his experience in World War II, was especially qualified to write on one of the thirty-nine topics approved for study. These "topic leaders" were, in turn, assisted by "home workers"—for the most part former general and field-grade officers with either specialized operational or technical experience. The contributions of these "home workers," then, form the basic material of most of the studies. In writing his narrative, the "topic leader" has put these contributions into their proper perspective. The Control Officer and the Project Editor (Mr. Edwin P. Kennedy, Jr.) have, when necessary, indicated the relationship of the particular subject matter of each study to the other studies included in the project.

These studies find their principal authority in their authors' personal knowledge and experience. Thus, these studies are neither unbiased nor are they "histories" in the ordinary sense of that word. Instead, they constitute a vital part of the story without which the final history of Germany's role in World War II cannot be written.
In preparing these studies, however, the authors have not depended on their memories alone. Instead, they have supplemented their knowledge with a collection of Luftwaffe documents which has come to be known as the Karlsruhe Document Collection and which is now housed in the Archives Branch of the USAF Historical Division. This collection consists of directives, situation reports, war diaries, personal diaries, strength reports, minutes of meetings, aerial photographs, and various other materials derived, chiefly, from three sources: the Captured German Documents Section of The Adjutant General in Alexandria, Virginia; the Air Ministry in London; and private German collections donated to the project by its participating authors and contributors. In addition, the collection includes the contributions of the "home workers." Thus, the interested researcher can test the conclusions of the "topic leaders" against the basic documents or secure additional information on most of the subjects mentioned in the studies.

The authors have also made use of such materials as the records of the Nuremberg Trials, the manuscripts prepared by the Foreign Military Studies Branch of the USAREUR Historical Division, the official military histories of the United States and the United Kingdom, and the wealth of literature concerning World War II, both in German and English, which has appeared in book form or in military journals since 1945.

The complexity of the German Monograph Project and the variety of participation which it has required can easily be deduced from the acknowledgements which follow. On the German side: General der Flieger a.D. Paul Deichmann, who, as Chief Control Officer, became the moving force behind the entire project; Generalleutnant Josef Kammhuber, who heads the new German Air Force, and who has consistently supported the project; Generaloberst a.D. Franz Halder, Chief of the German Army General Staff from 1938 to 1942, whose sympathetic assistance to the Project Officer, the Project Editor, and the German Control Group is greatly appreciated; Generalfeldmarschall a.D. Albert Kesselring, who contributed to several of the studies and who also, because of his prestige and popularity in German military circles, was able to encourage many others to contribute to the project; and all of the German "topic leaders" and "home workers"
who are too numerous to mention here, but whose names can be
found in the prefaces and footnotes to the individual studies.

In Germany, Col. Wendell A. Hammer, USAF, served as
Project Officer from early in 1953 until June 1957. Colonel Hammer's
considerable diplomatic and administrative skills helped greatly
towards assuring the project's success. Col. William S. Nye, USA,
was Chief of the USAREUR Historical Division at the project's incep-
tion. His strong support provided an enviable example of inter-
service cooperation and set the pattern which his several successors
followed.

In England, Mr. L. A. Jackets, formerly Chief of Air His-
torical Branch No. 6 of the British Air Ministry and now Librarian,
Air Ministry, gave invaluable assistance with captured Luftwaffe
documents.

At the Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, a
number of people, both military and civilian, have given strong and
expert support to the project. Lt. Gen. Idwal H. Edwards, a former
Commander of the Air University, initiated correspondence with Maj.
Gen. Orlando Ward, USA, which resulted in a Department of the Army
letter outlining the respective USAF-Army responsibilities for the
project's execution. General Edward's interest in the project and its
goals was matched by the assistance given by his successors; General
Todd.

Other personnel at Headquarters Air University who have given
freely of their time and experience include: Dr. James C. Shelburne,
Educational Advisor to the Commander; Mr. J. S. Vann, Chief of
Special Projects Branch, DCS/Operations; and Mr. Arthur F. Irwin,
Chief, Budget Division, DCS/Comptroller.

Col. Garth C. Cobb, both as Director of the Research Studies
Institute of the Air University, and, formerly, as Deputy Director of
that organization, has helped to guide the project through a maze of
administrative problems which, because of the project's unprecedented
nature, have beset it from the beginning. Colonel Cobb's assistance,
and that of his predecessors Col. Curtis D. Sluman, Brig. Gen. Clinton W. Davies and Col. Wilfred J. Paul, was invaluable to the project.

The project is grateful to Col. Fred W. Miller, USAF Air Attache to Germany, and the Assistant Air Attache, Lt. Col. Leonard C. Hoffmann, both of whom gave indispensable aid during the project's last year in Germany. Also in Germany, Mr. Joseph P. Tustin, the Historian of Headquarters, United States Air Forces in Europe, ably assisted the project by solving a variety of logistical and administrative problems. This study was translated by Mrs. Patricia Klambrth, whose skillful contribution to the project is greatly appreciated.

Miss Sara Venable, responsible for the final typing, deserves special thanks for her extraordinary patience and competence. Finally, the project is indebted to all of the members of the USAREUR Historical Division, the Office of the Chief of Military History, and the USAF Historical Division who, through direct assistance and advice, helped the project to achieve its goals.

Dr. Albert F. Simpson, Chief, USAF Historical Division, and Mr. Edwin P. Kennedy, Jr., the Project Editor, collaborated in the final editing of this study. To assure the technical accuracy of the translation, Mr. Kennedy compared the entire text with the original German manuscript. The stylistic peculiarities of the author, when they did not lend themselves to idiomatic English, were left in literal translation.
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PREFACE

The Luftwaffe General Staff grew out of the German Army General Staff, which was the direct descendant of the Great General Staff and heir to almost two hundred years of General Staff tradition. Perhaps because of its newness or because of its stepchild relationship to the Army General Staff, little has been written about the Luftwaffe General Staff. Recent books on the German General Staff concern themselves, almost wholly, with the Army General Staff. One of the goals of this study, therefore, is to provide information which has, until now, been missing and which is essential to an understanding of Germany's role in World War II.

Another goal is to throw light on the relationships which existed between the Luftwaffe General Staff, the Army General Staff, the Admiral Staff, the Armed Forces General Staff, and the National Socialist Party. Some of the problems attendant to these relationships are common to most military establishments and are, and will continue to be, timely and significant.

Although the Luftwaffe General Staff was frequently handicapped by the struggles between the General Staff Chiefs, State Secretary Milch, and Goering, it was, nevertheless, an elite corps with very high standards. Furthermore, during the course of the War it proved to be a remarkable organizational device for shortening the lines of command and making operational control rapid and efficient.

Titles of supporting documents cited in the footnotes to this study are given in both German and English, followed, when applicable, by a file folder designation to enable the interested reader to locate the supporting documents and related materials in the Karlsruhe Document Collection.

Since no standard translations exist for most Luftwaffe administrative titles, office designations and other specialized Luftwaffe terms, a detailed glossary, giving the translations used in this text and the original German terms, is appended to this study. Following the general practice, German military ranks above colonel have not been translated. At the end of this study is a table giving equivalent German
and American general officer ranks.

Changes in the author's style and choice of words have been held to a minimum. The author's opinion has been respected and preserved by both translator and editor; it is in no way to be construed as representing the views of the United States Air Force.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Generalleutnant Andreas Nielsen, a former General Staff officer, was well qualified to write the present study. He was born in December 1899, and died, while working for the German Monograph Project, in April 1957. Until 1933, during the period of secret rearmament, he served as an officer in the Reichshehr. In 1933, already recognized by his superiors as a promising young officer, he was selected to attend the Army War Academy. After leaving the Academy, in 1935, he transferred into the Luftwaffe and a key position as General Staff officer in the Luftwaffe Personnel Office. He continued in the Personnel Office until 1939, serving the last two years there as Chief of the Policy Section.

In 1939, General Nielsen saw active duty in Spain and Poland. In 1940, during the French campaign, he served as Chief of the General Staff of II Air Corps. From 1940 through 1943 he was Chief of the General Staff of Fifth Air Fleet and in 1944 he became Chief of the General Staff of Air Fleet Reich, in which position he served until the capitulation.
INTRODUCTION

During the first half of this century, the German Armed Forces have lost two world wars. Despite this record, they have not lost very much of their prestige, either in Germany or abroad. This rather surprising fact can be attributed chiefly to two factors: (1) the widely-recognized reputation of the German soldier as a competent fighter, and (2) the quality of leadership exercised during all the wars in which the Prussian and German Armed Forces participated in the preceding century as well as in the present one.

And this leadership—correctly or incorrectly—is inextricably identified with the German General Staff. Although the German General Staff lost some of its significance as an effective instrument of military leadership after 1918 and—after a brief period of resurgence during the last war—lost all of its influence, it still figures in the mind of the layman as the ruling power behind Germany’s past military exploits. For this reason, it is often selected as a whipping-boy by factions eager to fix the blame for the mistakes made by political leadership. Even today, the majority of laymen give willing recognition to the historic contributions of the German General Staff, although it cannot be denied that the continual arguments about it have led to a serious decline in its popularity. The facts that its continued existence was forbidden after World War I, and that it was disbanded entirely after World War II have undoubtedly done much to maintain the nimbus which clings to it.

Inasmuch as the Luftwaffe General Staff, as the legitimate offspring of the Army General Staff, was also affected by these events, it seems expedient here to summarize briefly the historical development of the German General Staff. The background thus provided is indispensable to our full understanding of the role played by the Luftwaffe General Staff in World War II.

I should like to point out right at the beginning that there is little chance of our reconstructing a historically accurate picture of the most recent developments. A great many documents have been
destroyed, either during the war or—deliberately—after the war was
over. Thus, in reconstructing the history of the Luftwaffe General
Staff, the author was forced to resort to the aid of several individuals
and to draw on his own memory of events.* Inevitably, there are dates,
numbers, and facts which, in the absence of any means of verification,
differ considerably in the memory of the persons consulted. It is also
unrealistic to expect that events and their significance should not have
been colored somewhat by the awareness of defeat and by the difficult
postwar years following it, and many participants have no doubt eval-
uated certain events otherwise than would have been the case at the
time of their occurrence.

In the present study, I have attempted to weld together the
mosaic bits of information available from the various sources into as
comprehensive a picture as possible of the Luftwaffe General Staff;
its development, the criteria followed in the selection of its personnel,
its organizational structure and the missions assigned to it, and its
relationship to other agencies of military command, to the State, and
to the National Socialist (Nazi) Party. I have also attempted to point
out the lessons which may be learned by posterity from our experience
in this connection. If this study contains material which is contra-
dictory to that appearing in other publications, the reason for such
discrepancies is the one which I have cited above. Complete clarity
and historical accuracy will be attainable only at such time as all the
documentary material extant becomes available for reference.

Before the reader begins his perusal of the material to follow,
I should like to acquaint him with a basic directive issued by Hitler,
which had a decidedly negative effect on the status and operation of
the German General Staff in comparison with the situation obtaining
prior to its issuance. This directive was the so-called "Basic Fuehrer

* The author was intimately concerned with the formation of
the Luftwaffe General Staff in his capacity as an advisory expert on
General Staff officers.
Directive, * issued by Hitler on 15 January 1940. Because of its importance, I feel it should be summarized here, at the beginning of the study.

**Basic Directive**

1. No agency or officer will receive any information pertaining to a classified project unless it is absolutely necessary, for reasons of duty, that they obtain such information.

2. No agency or officer will receive more detailed information regarding a classified project than is strictly necessary to permit them to carry out their assigned missions in connection with it.

3. No agency or officer will receive any information pertaining to a classified project prior to the last possible moment consistent with effective performance of their work on that project.

4. This directive expressly forbids the automatic forwarding of orders whose secrecy is of prime importance in accordance with established distribution lists.

/s/ Adolf Hitler

As desirable a security measure as this directive seems at first glance, it put an effective stop to any independent work on the part of the General Staff as an entity. The directive demoted the

* Based on a report by Dr. Rudolf Baumgärtd, Wuerzburg.

Editor's Note: A similar English translation of this directive is included in Fuehrer Directives and Other Top-Level Directives of the German Armed Forces, 1939-1941; translated and compiled by the Division of Naval Intelligence, Washington, D. C., 1948. Aside from a slight discrepancy in dates—the Navy translation gives the date as 11 January 1940—the wording of the Navy translation is the same as the German text cited by the author of this study.

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individual branches of the General Staff as well as the general staffs of troop units to mere recipients of orders, expected to carry out the tasks assigned to them without being able to evaluate and act in accordance with the over-all plan. This directive must serve as a basis for any evaluation of the development and operations of the General Staff of the Luftwaffe, and of the degree of influence it might be expected to have had on the conduct of the War.
Chapter 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN GENERAL STAFF

In the era of "cabinet warfare" military commanders personally led their forces—usually consisting of a relatively small number of mercenary troops—into battle and directed their movements from the vantage point of a "general's hill." No special operations staff was needed to assure effective guidance of the troops. Orders were usually carried directly to the unit commander concerned by mounted orderlies. This method of directing military operations was common and feasible as late as during the lifetime of Frederick the Great (1740-1786).

Not until the end of the eighteenth century did the new methods ushered in by the French Revolution effect a fundamental change. At this point the mercenary army was replaced by the conscripted national army, and the traditional closed battle order by a more flexible formation in the field. Napoleon, as Field Marshal of the Revolution and later Emperor of the French, became the revered master of modern strategy for all the European nations of his day. For this military genius was the first to succeed in conducting simultaneous operations in several theaters of war and in moving his armies so skillfully as to enable them to strike in unison. It is obvious that this new method of conducting operations could not be carried out by a single individual. The commander needed helpers to carry out the computations necessary for such extended operations, to relieve him of petty details and preparations, and to issue orders in accordance with his instructions.

During the course of the reorganization of the Prussian Army, after its defeat in the war of 1806-07, every effort was made to take this fact into account. As early as 1796 a so-called Quartermaster General's Staff had been established. Its function, however, was primarily the handling of administrative matters, and it had little or no influence on the commitment of the Army. Then, in 1802, Colonel Christian von Massenbach, apparently motivated by his study of
Napoleonic strategy, prepared a memorandum for the King, in which he proposed a reorganization of the Quartermaster General's Staff. The King, in his reply, used the term General Staff. A Cabinet decree of 26 November 1803 gave official approval for von Massenbach's suggested reorganization, with minor modifications, to become effective on 1 January 1804.

One of the new features of the contemplated reorganization was the introduction of examinations for candidates for General Staff posts. These examinations covered geometry, trigonometry, the designing of fortifications, strategy, and military history. In addition, candidates were expected to present proof of blameless personal conduct, reliability, and thorough familiarity with service at the front. These criteria, modified to suit the conditions of the time, were approximately the same as those which General Staff candidates were later required to meet. The first examination took place on 15 February 1804; participation was optional.

The terms Quartermaster General's Staff and General Staff were used interchangeably for the newly organized staff. The three colonels holding posts on the Quartermaster General's Staff were Karl Ludwig August von Phul, von Massenbach, and Gerhard Johann Scharnhorst. Scharnhorst, in particular, devoted a great deal of attention to the training of his officers in military strategy and history. General von Geusa, the elderly Chief of the General Staff, took very little personal interest in this activity. In Carl von Clausewitz's opinion, von Geusa's effectiveness as Chief of the General Staff was conspicuous by its absence. Under these circumstances, he could hardly be expected to have any influence on the events of 1806-07.

The Prussian General Staff, in the form in which it was best known, developed gradually out of the military preparations and requirements of the wars of liberation (1813-15). The men who guided its growth were in part the same ones who later, in 1813, were to make good the tragedies of Jena and Auerstedt. Some of them, e.g. Scharnhorst, Count Neithardt von Gneisenau, and Clausewitz, had already voiced their conviction that military events might have been
different in 1806-07 if their views had been listened to in time.

Historians have not yet reached a unanimous decision in naming a single individual as the creator of the Prussian General Staff. Scharnhorst is selected most frequently for this honor. However, Field Marshal Alfred Count von Schlieffen, one of the greatest General Staff chiefs in Prussian history, maintains that Gneisenau, and not Scharnhorst, was the creator of the General Staff—and this in spite of the many mistakes which Gneisenau admittedly made. Helmuth Carl von Moltke's opinion is also interesting, reflecting his respect for Gneisenau in the words 'His contribution was greater than mine—he led an army from defeat to victory' (Ligny - Waterloo). It is not our place to decide between the two—in any case, it would seem to be largely a matter of perspective. There can be no doubt of the fact that Scharnhorst, as Director of the War Academy, had a profound influence on the formation and intellectual development of the General Staff. Among his students at the Academy were such young men as Clausewitz, Tiedemann, August Riehle von Lilienstern, and Hermann von Boyen, all of them destined to loom large in Prussian military history and to have considerable influence on the further development of the General Staff. In this way, Scharnhorst's role did not end with his death (from wounds sustained in battle)—he continued to live through his disciples. Nearly all the great leaders of the wars of liberation had come from his school; they developed his ideas and thus helped to keep them alive in the Army.

Gneisenau, too, was one of Scharnhorst's disciples. His greatest contribution to the development of the General Staff was probably in the field of the practical training of the General Staff officers. He taught them mental discipline, the difficult art of distinguishing the important from the trivial. His goal was the creation of an officer capable of keeping his mind free for the essential problem. He warned the higher-level General Staff officers repeatedly against permitting themselves to become bureaucrats. He envisioned service on the General Staff as an opportunity to put to use the disciplined thinking of a trained mind, supplemented by military experience, and fortified by a feeling of closeness to the line troops. Gneisenau's organization of the general staff of the Silesian Army,
while serving as Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher's chief of staff, proved to be so excellent, as evidenced by the impressive number of victories won by von Blücher's forces during the Wars of Liberation, that it was soon adopted as a pattern by all the other staffs within the Prussian Army.

In addition to these two--Scharnhorst and Gneisenaue--there is another man without whom the later development of the Prussian General Staff would have been unthinkable. Coming from the Scharnhorst-Gneisenaue circle, this man was to have a profound influence on the intellectual concepts associated with the General Staff; he was General Carl von Clausewitz. Clausewitz shared the fate of a great many leading military historians--he never had the opportunity to apply his tremendous knowledge to a practical situation in a position of importance. His role in the later triumphs of the Prussian Army, as a teacher and mentor of the officer corps of his own day and--through his writings--as a guiding spirit for subsequent generations of General Staff officers, was, therefore, all the greater. We should point out here that his fame as intellectual father of many generations of well-known soldiers and of the Prussian General Staff was due less to his activity as Director of the War Academy* than to his book Vom Kriege (On War),2 written in the quiet solitude of his study. Later generations of military leaders from all over the world have drawn on the store of military wisdom he left behind, and I do not feel that I exaggerate in stating that the thoughts contained in his book have had a formative influence on the mental outlook of the German General Staff officer.

In the periods following, the history of the Prussian General Staff is highly colored by the personality of its chiefs. General Carl Wilhelm von Grolmann, who succeeded in putting to practical use the lessons learned during the wars of liberation, deserves first mention here. In 1817, von Grolmann managed to obtain approval for the conversion of Department II of the War Ministry, to which the Cabinet decree of 28 August 1814 had assigned the General Staff, to an independent operations staff--the Army General Staff.

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* From 1818 until 1829.
The newly designated staff was divided into the following branches:

- Eastern theater of war
- Central theater of war
- Western theater of war
- Military history branch (including archive and library)
- Topographical Branch*
- Operational Planning Branch
- Lithographic Institute

Even during the period of his service as Chief of the General Staff, von Grolmann was a man who carried out his tireless activities behind the scenes, so that only the initiated were aware of the dynamic force of his personality. His good friend, General von Boyen, Minister of War, called him an "ancient Roman." Indeed, his strong and inflexible personality, which refused to bow even before the authority of the King, seemed to incorporate the austerity inherent in the Prussian way of life.

In 1819, when von Boyen was relieved as Minister of War, von Grolmann, fearing that the former's successor might wish to make changes detrimental to the work to which he had devoted so much thought and energy, resigned as Chief of the General Staff. His successor was General Ruchle von Lilienstern, a sensitive man of artistic propensities who had demonstrated his ability in several fields. His tenancy of the post of Chief of the General Staff, however, left no enduring traces on its development.

He was relieved of his post after only one year in office. In his successor, General Friedrich Karl von Mueffling, the General Staff gained a strong personality as Chief, a man who finally was able to free his position from its dependence on the Minister of War. He was instructed, to be sure, that he was to "remain in close contact with the Minister of War and to make certain that the latter concurred

* Branch devoted to the preparation of military maps.
before issuing important orders or bringing forward significant proposals. Thus, the Chief of the General Staff had still not become directly subordinate to his monarch. Field Marshal Moltke later praised von Mueffling's contribution to the training and organization of the General Staff when he said that anyone who had had the good fortune to know von Mueffling personally was bound to feel the greatest respect for him.

Von Mueffling's successor was General Johann Wilhelm von Krauseneck, who was appointed Chief of the General Staff on 28 November 1829. Krauseneck did his best to make the training of the General Staff officers as practical as possible by expanding the General Staff journeys (Generalstabsreise)* and increasing the number of large-scale military exercises, which were always accompanied by the study of some phase of military history. In addition to numerous memoranda, it was his habit to prepare an annual mobilization plan for the King. Some of his students during the long years of his service as Chief of the General Staff were Hugo Ewald Count von Kirchbach, August Karl von Goeben, Hindersin, Eduard Friedrich von Fransecky, Albrecht Theodore Count von Roon, and Moltke, all of whom made names for themselves in the Prussian Army.

In 1848, General Friedrich Wilhelm von Reyher succeeded Krauseneck, then an old man with many years of service behind him. Von Reyher's Army career had been meteor-like; a brilliant soldier, he began as an enlisted man and advanced to the rank of general and to the highest post in the Army. The courage which he demonstrated during the Wars of Liberation combined with an unusual degree of military ability to make him "a man without character faults," as his contemporaries called him.

As Chief of the General Staff, von Reyher's first concern was to establish an ordered scope for the missions assigned to that body.

* Editor's Note: The Generalstabsreise was an annual journey undertaken by the Chief of the Great General Staff with his staff officers for the purpose of studying tactical and strategic problems.
He opposed adamantly the contemplated combination of the General Staff with the Adjutant's Office into a single Army Staff, as well as the proposal to do away with the distinctive special uniform worn by members of the General Staff. He felt that the uniform should be retained as an external symbol of the inner awareness of a common goal and a common concept of honor and duty. He devoted his special attention to the training of young candidates for General Staff posts. The General Staff journeys carried out under his guidance never failed to be extremely valuable for the participants. In addition to the staff journeys, von Reyher also undertook personal inspection trips, during which the railway played a role for the first time in the movement of military forces and in the planning of military operations.

Von Reyher's planning was characterized by unusual clarity. His evaluation of the political scene was remarkably accurate, and some of his thoughts on military operations exhibited his genius. His special contribution was the development of a group of outstanding officers, who were to prove their ability during the wars of unification. His most far-reaching decision, however, was to recommend as his successor a relatively unknown officer--General Helmuth Carl Bernhard von Moltke, the elder.

With Moltke's appointment in 1858, the General Staff gained a highly-trained officer and a man of personal distinction, who was destined to mould the German General Staff, during the thirty years of war and peace in which he served as its Chief, into the instrument of perfection which it was at the peak of its fame. Moltke's position was very difficult at first, because he was subordinate to the Minister of War in many respects. There is little point in our going into detail here regarding the various steps leading to success; suffice it to say that Moltke finally persuaded the King of the validity of his point of view, and the latter issued instructions to the effect that all of his operational orders to troop staffs were to be issued through the Chief of the Army General Staff, with information copies going to the Ministry of War at the same time. From this moment on, the Minister of War was relegated to the background by the Chief of the General Staff, particularly in time of war. During the Franco-Prussian campaign of 1870-71, Moltke even came forward with the startling view.
that the Minister of War did not belong at staff headquarters, but in his Ministry in Berlin. General von Roon, as Minister of War, did take part in the Franco-Prussian War, but the part of a spectator rather than a leader. The relationship between the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War has been subject to many changes since that time, most of them traceable to the personalities and degree of personal initiative possessed by the incumbents of the two positions. Until 1918, the guiding principles for their relationship were those detailed in the Cabinet decree of 24 May 1883. This decree established direct access to the monarch as a right of the Chief of the General Staff and thus made his position, for all practical purposes, equal to that of the Minister of War.

Through his tireless activity, Moltke succeeded in developing a staff of assistants who, with rare exceptions, proved themselves worthy of the authority vested in them during time of war and peace. Moltke wanted most of all to assure absolute consistency in strategic and tactical thinking, so that he could rely upon his instructions and orders being carried out effectively at all staff levels.

Moltke was not only a military genius; he was also adept at that adroit coordination of military and political factors which is an indispensable attribute of the true commander. Whenever his views were contrary to those of Bismarck, he was willing to allow the considerations of foreign policy to come first—an additional indication of the reserve and inflexible self-control which were typical of him and which have since come to be identified with the prototype of the General Staff officer.

Moltke was continually and tirelessly concerned for the political and military security of his nation. Entirely free of the one-sidedness which so often results in blind prejudice, a man of few words, an author of the classical school, a deeply religious person—as befits the sense of responsibility he felt as a leader of men—a conqueror who never lost a battle, in short, Moltke was one of the greatest

*Translator's Note: This is a play on words in the German text, "nicht leitend sondern leidend," literally, not leading but suffering.
of Germany's sons. None of the attempts to write his biography has yet resulted in a monument worthy of his genius.

Moltke has become the ideal--unattained as yet--for all subsequent Chiefs of the General Staff. All of them, to a greater or lesser degree, have been carried by his fame. His day marked the peak of influence of the German General Staff; it should be remembered, however, that history has never again provided an environmental situation akin to the one in which Moltke carried out his work. It is quite possible that political leadership of the quality provided by Wilhelm I and Bismarck would have helped even a less brilliant soldier than Moltke to fame, while even the most gifted commander is doomed to failure if his political leaders are incompetent.

In 1888 Moltke brought the brilliant officer Alfred Count von Waldersee into his own immediate circle of assistants as Quartermaster General, in order to groom him as his successor. Count von Waldersee's contemporaries describe him as an extremely ambitious man. His removal from office after only two and one-half years of service as Chief of the General Staff was due to political reasons. Even so, during his period of service he succeeded--by dint of numerous well-prepared memoranda--in modernizing the training and organizational structure of the General Staff and in establishing a policy of replacing the often elderly incumbents of important staff posts--many of them were inclined to rest on the laurels gathered in past wars--by younger men.

On 7 February 1891 Waldersee was succeeded by General Alfred Count von Schlieffen, a highly gifted officer who was to hold the post of Chief of the General Staff for fifteen years and to make his influence deeply felt both in the Army and among the general public. His significance for the General Staff is exceeded only by that of Field Marshal Moltke. One can appreciate the scope of Schlieffen's work on the General Staff only if one recalls to mind the peculiar position of Germany, the location of her borders, and her potential enemies in a possible war--for the threat of war was becoming more and more imminent. Schlieffen was fully aware of the fact that political developments were leading inexorably to a two-front war, and he attempted--
in numerous studies dealing with the problem--to find a way of averting the catastrophe. Finally, however, he came to realize that events would have to take their course, and from this moment on, he devoted all his energy to devising a plan for mastering the situation when war did come. He recognized that a rapid and conclusive victory would be possible only if he could encircle the French front via Belgium, and his plan (called the Schlieffen Plan, after its author) called for a relatively strong concentration of forces in the West, balanced by minimum coverage of the eastern front.* His successor adopted the basic tenets of his plan in 1914. Its failure on that occasion was due chiefly to the ineptitude of the Chief of the General Staff, who modified it so drastically that he managed to let a sure victory slip through his fingers.

Schlieffen's contributions to the training and organization of the General Staff are unforgettable. He continued to follow the guidelines laid down by Moltke and worked consistently to attain uniformity of training and of strategic thinking as a recognized basis for the successful functioning of a command apparatus which had become fairly extensive, in keeping with the increasing size of the Army. It was chiefly due to the groundwork accomplished by Schlieffen that the German General Staff was able to carry out full-scale mobilization so smoothly in 1914. It was Schlieffen's tragedy that he was unable to carry his work to its logical end, i.e., to put his thinking into actual practice, although he clearly foresaw the coming catastrophe.

The veneration in which the Army held this great Chief of the General Staff found suitable expression after World War I in the establishment of the Schlieffen Society, an association composed of General Staff officers from both the old Army and the Reichswehr† who wished to do honor to his memory and to carry on his work.

* Editor's Note: There is considerable controversy concerning the Schlieffen Plan. For a recent and opposing view, see The Schlieffen Plan by Gerhard Ritter, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1958; particularly the foreword by B. H. Liddell Hart.

† The German National Defense Establishment under the Versailles Treaty.
In 1906 Schlieffen was replaced by General Helmuth Johannes Ludwig von Moltke, a nephew of the greatest of the Prussian General Staff Chiefs. It seems certain that his uncle's name was not without influence on von Moltke's selection, for he was the first to admit that he did not feel himself qualified for such a responsible assignment. However, despite his objections, the Emperor had insisted upon his appointment.

As early as 1908 von Moltke went to work to modify the brilliant Plan devised by Schlieffen—motivated partly by political consideration for Bavaria—and thus completed the groundwork for Germany's defeat in 1914-18. A stronger, more positive personality would no doubt have refused to let himself be swayed by political considerations of this sort.

The problematic position of the German General Staff may be said to have its roots in the fact that it was headed by such a weak personality at the very time it was faced with the patently unavoidable catastrophe represented by World War I. It would be unfair to make the Chief of the General Staff responsible for Germany's defeat; his intentions were certainly of the best. However, the weaker the man at the top is, the greater is the danger that secondary considerations, which would otherwise be brushed aside as irrelevant, will begin to exert their claims, and that subordinate agencies will attempt to win power and influence. The reputation of the General Staff had created an aura of infallibility and authority around the individuals belonging to it, so that it was quite within the realm of possibility to entrust a lieutenant colonel from the General Staff with the decision of whether or not entire armies should break off a battle in which they were engaged. * This example, from the Marne Battle of 1914, illustrates clearly that a development had taken place which was no longer consistent with the tradition of the General Staff. In the last analysis, however, the failure of Germany's opening thrust in 1914—and possibly the loss of the war itself—was due to a lack of direction on

* As evidenced by the dispatching of Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch to the German First Army.
the part of military leadership, personified by the Chief of the General Staff. No one can absolve him of blame in this respect, for he was the one who bore the responsibility.

When World War I began, the Great General Staff* was replaced by the General Staff of the Field Forces, while a Deputy Army General Staff remained on duty in Berlin.

In 1916, when Paul von Hindenburg became Chief of the General Staff of the Field Forces, the position of the Quartermaster General (filled by Erich Ludendorff) was made equal to his own in point of responsibility. This, of course, was an innovation. Inasmuch as Hindenburg very soon took over the task of directing the operations of all the forces of Germany and her allies, the terms Chief of the General Staff for Hindenburg and Quartermaster General for Ludendorff are somewhat confusing. Even though the Emperor was nominally the Supreme Commander, uniting the requirements of both political and military leadership in his person, Hindenburg gradually expanded his position to the point where, for all practical purposes, he alone was responsible for directing operations and Ludendorff was his chief of staff. It was Ludendorff who so increased the authority of the general staff chiefs in the line units that the commanders themselves were no longer capable of making a decision on their own. This went so far that the Field Forces were being controlled exclusively through General Staff channels. It was inevitable that this method of command should lead to a growing conceit on the part of many General Staff officers, and it was bound to have undesirable consequences. In order to prevent the development of a similar situation, the responsibilities of the commanders and their chiefs of staff were clearly delineated prior to World War II.

The developments taking their start after Germany's defeat in World War I stood under the shadow of the Allies' demands that the

* The term usually applied to the central General Staff in Berlin to distinguish it from the Troop General Staffs within line units.
Great General Staff be disbanded entirely. The tiny National Army authorized by the Versailles Treaty was placed under the command of General Hans von Seeckt, a General Staff officer of versatile ability and recognized reputation. He made no attempt to reconstruct the Great General Staff in its old, traditional form. The Allies' categorical refusal to approve the continuance of the German General Staff was based on the erroneous conviction, then prevalent abroad, that the General Staff had exerted an unsuitable and unhealthy influence on the policies of the German government and had forced it into World War I. This assumption grew out of a total misunderstanding of the status and functions of the General Staff and an overestimation of the personality of its Chief, the younger Moltke. History has refuted this view completely, as well as the fallacy, long subscribed to by the Allies, that Germany alone was responsible for the outbreak of World War I.

Of necessity General von Seeckt was limited to assigning those tasks normally the province of a general staff to one of the branches of the Army Directorate. This branch, the Troop Office, was staffed by former General Staff personnel, who continued to wear the distinctive General Staff uniform. Logically enough, the Troop Office soon developed into a kind of anonymous general staff, whose activities, however, deviated considerably from those of the former General Staff because of the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, the altered chain of command, and the many troop-associated duties made necessary by the establishment and training of the National Army.

In addition to this pseudo general staff, a number of posts were created within the troop units, to be filled later by assistant chiefs of staff, (Fuehrerghilfen).*

In order to create a reserve upon which to draw in the filling of vacant posts in the Ministry and with the troop units, particularly

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* Editor's Note: The term Fuehrerghilfen was a cover name for General Staff Officers assigned as aides to higher officers in the troop units.
well-qualified officers were selected by means of annual, mandatory examinations, withdrawn from their units, and trained in special three-year courses. In this way, a body of officer elite gradually came into being again and was informally known as a general staff. It lay in the nature of their situation that the chiefs of the Troop Office should feel themselves to be pseudo chiefs of the general staff. And it is true that only the best-qualified officers were considered in filling this important post, namely those officers who seemed most capable of carrying on the old tradition of the General Staff.

It was not until 1935, when Germany regained her military sovereignty, that the Troop Office was officially redesignated the Army General Staff in the old tradition. General der Artillerie Ludwig von Beck (later Generaloberst), Chief of the Troop Office, was retained as the first Chief of the Army General Staff.

I do not think it necessary here to go into detail regarding the organization and functions of the newly formed staff—they were substantially the same as they had been in the past. There was one extremely important difference, however, between the new staff and the Great General Staff of prewar days. Whereas the Chief of the Great General Staff was directly subordinate to the Emperor and officially responsible only to him (i.e. he had the status of an high-level government agency), the Chief of the Army General Staff was now subordinate to the Commander in Chief of the Army and served as the latter's chief assistant and advisor. The right to present his views in person before the head of State, a privilege of the former Chief of the General Staff, could now be exercised only through channels, i.e. through the Commander in Chief of the Army and, as final reviewing authority, through the Reichs Minister of War in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. When Hitler united these two offices, the channel was, of course, simplified, but by that time the growing distrust in the National Socialistic reliability of the General Staff was

* After Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg was relieved of his post as Minister of War and Generaloberst Walther von Brauchitsch resigned as Commander in Chief of the Army (1941).
great enough to discourage the close coordination which would have been so desirable from the point of view of military effectiveness.

In any case, the Army General Staff could no longer lay claim to an exclusive significance such as that enjoyed by the Great General Staff, for in addition to the Army, the Luftwaffe was coming into being as an independent branch of the Armed Forces and had an undeniable right to claim the same level of leadership. In order to coordinate the administration of the three branches (Army, Navy, and Luftwaffe), Hitler created the Armed Forces High Command out of the Armed Forces Office of the Reichs Minister of War, after he had taken over the latter post himself. Within the Armed Forces High Command, that agency best qualified by its authority and organization to assume the responsibilities of the Great General Staff was the Armed Forces Operations Staff. There were men of vision in all three branches of the Armed Forces, particularly in the Luftwaffe, who saw the value of this development and supported it wholeheartedly. However, apart from the fact that there was an acute shortage of qualified officers to carry out the training courses in the Armed Forces War Academy, which had been set up on an experimental basis, the lack of interest on the part of the Army General Staff precluded any actions being taken to develop an Armed Forces General Staff of this type. Moreover, there is reason to doubt that a man so personally conceited as Hitler was would have permitted for long the existence of a position so strong as that of Chief of an Armed Forces General Staff. As a result, the Armed Forces Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command remained a small personal staff for the exclusive use of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, in short--of Hitler himself. Inasmuch as the Commanders in Chief of the individual service branches had the right to bring their problems directly to the Fuehrer, and utilized their own general staffs for routine work, it is clear that the Armed Forces High Command had very little influence. Under these circumstances, coordinated planning, development, and operations within the Armed Forces grew more and more difficult as more and more decisions were being made by a single man--the more so as this man had tragically little experience in military affairs.

Under the circumstances, it would have obviously been more
to the purpose to reinstate the old Great General Staff in the form of an Armed Forces General Staff in order to guarantee a modicum of consistency in matters of defense and in the conduct of operations. In that case the general staffs of the three individual service branches of the Armed Forces would have had executive rather than planning functions.

Inasmuch as this shift of responsibilities was not feasible, it was perfectly obvious that the Luftwaffe, as a recognized branch of the Armed Forces, had every right to demand a command apparatus just as well-trained and just as effective as the ones already present in the Army and the Navy.

The following chapter will describe in greater detail the underlying reasons motivating the formation of a special Luftwaffe General Staff.
Chapter 2

THE ORIGINS OF THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

In any military force it is usual for the great soldiers of the past to serve as models and mentors for subsequent generations. This is particularly true of the German Army General Staff, which had every right to be proud of the accomplishments of its great Chiefs of the past.

This practice has its disadvantages, however, unless later leaders are strong enough personalities to give new meaning to inherited traditions and so render them useful and significant for their own time. There is the ever-present danger of a sterile conservatism, born of the uncritical acceptance of tradition—a conservatism which stands in the way of further developments in the techniques of warfare. One example of the effects of this conservatism is the inferiority of the Prussian Army in the face of the modern methods used by the French in 1806; the traditional infallibility of Frederick the Great (1740-1786) as a victorious commander had been enough to suppress all attempts at modernizing the Prussian Army for nearly half a century.

The situation of the German Army in 1914 was much the same. It, too, was still living on the glory it had won in the war of 1870-71. Despite isolated phenomena such as Count Schlieffen, its greatest Chief of the General Staff since that date, the Army had done little or nothing to keep up with the technological advances of the following decades. Schlieffen's successor, the younger Moltke, proved to be incapable of taking immediate advantage of the possibilities offered by rapid technical advances just before World War I and of turning these into a modern concept and modern methods of warfare. The General Staff continued to work in its traditional fashion, and was forced to realize at the beginning of the war that the traditionally excellent German Army was far behind the enemy in the application of technological advances to the science of warfare. The phenomenal success of the German Army during the early phases of operations
was due less to the planned exploitation of technological developments and their conscious application to operational methods than to the remarkable fighting ability of the individual German soldier.

The advances accomplished during the course of World War I were in the nature of an inevitable adaptation to scientific developments and not due in any way to the personal initiative of the General Staff. Both Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the chief protagonists during the war, were outstanding strategists, but they were both steeped in the old tradition; they were definitely not creative personalities in the sense that Napoleon and the elder Moltke were creative. Though functioning in an age of inventions and technological progress, the General Staff had no one capable of utilizing this progress to revolutionize the techniques of warfare. On the contrary, at the beginning of World War I, the mistrust of the General Staff in technological developments was so deeply rooted that the reconnaissance reports turned in by the flyers were received with skepticism until they were confirmed by the cavalry.

The conservatism prevailing among the members of the German Army General Staff was not corrected by Germany's defeat in World War I. As a matter of fact, it was taken over almost intact by the General Staff officers assigned to the Reichswehr, and was intensified rather than mitigated by the restrictive provisions of the Versailles Treaty. The majority of the older officers, in particular, lost all contact with the military-technological development being carried out in the rest of the world and with the newer concepts of warfare occasioned by them. This situation went so far that when a young troop unit officer pointed out, in a staff study, the tremendous significance of the air force for a future war, he was threatened with dismissal by his regimental commander (a General Staff officer of repute) for writing "such utter nonsense." 1 As a further example, one might cite the bitterly adamant battle carried on into the thirties by the older generation for the retention of the lance by cavalry regiments.

There were, of course, younger General Staff officers who worked wholeheartedly for the introduction of new means and methods.
of warfare, but they were unable to effect much change in the prevailing conservatism of their older colleagues. Among these younger officers, Captain Heinz Guderian (later Generaloberst) and his tireless fight for the establishment of an armored force as a decisive instrument of war deserve special mention.

During the Reichswehr period, the conservatism of the General Staff overshadowed to a greater or lesser extent all the incumbents of the post of Chief of the Troop Office, inasmuch as the latter felt themselves to be the legitimate descendants of the Chiefs of the General Staff. Since the Troop Office chiefs had a great measure of influence on the education and training of the new generation of officers, it soon became evident that the General Staff as a whole was more concerned with the preservation of tradition than with the encouragement of progressive ideas. Officers outside the General Staff had little chance of making their views heard in the face of the prevailing attitude of resistance towards all things new.

Justifiable criticism notwithstanding, it would be wrong and unfair to belittle the achievements of the Reichswehr leaders, the more so since these achievements were made under the difficult conditions imposed by the Versailles Treaty. Each General Staff officer active during that period must be accorded his share in the achievements of that time, and we have no right to diminish that share. The later development of the Armed Forces would not have been possible without their intelligent and tireless work. It was a piece of good fortune for the Luftwaffe that it gained a number of the most progressive General Staff officers for its leading positions during its most formative period.

Generaloberst Beck, who became the first Chief of the newly formed Army General Staff in 1935, was a typical representative of the Old Prussian tradition. A highly cultured officer and a man of personal distinction, he was the prototype of the Prussian General Staff officer. His outstanding contribution was his deeply felt conviction that the Army should have the final decision in matters concerning the conduct of a war, and that therefore the Army General Staff should have the chief responsibility for the planning and
preparations preliminary to war. He had little understanding for the technological advances of his time or for their potential application to the purposes of war. New thoughts and ideas moved him to skepticism insofar as they were inconsistent with his own conservative thinking. For example, he was against the establishment of an independent Luftwaffe and the formation of an armored force. His pessimistic nature was immediately against any advance which did not fit into the traditional methods of warfare. A typical example of his attitude towards modern instruments of war is the following: during a General Staff journey, whose purpose was the orientation of young General Staff officers destined for positions of command in a potential war (and in which the author participated as a director's aide for the Luftwaffe), the war games included an attack by the entire theoretical strength of the German Luftwaffe (four dive-bomber, ten bomber, and four single-engine fighter wings) on the enemy's attacking armies in a tightly limited area. Generaloberst Beck determined that the air attack had delayed the enemy's offensive by about half an hour, but that the losses suffered by the enemy had been inconsequential! An attitude such as this, based either on prejudice or on complete misunderstanding of the potential effectiveness of any other branch but the Army, was naturally not conducive to the establishment of a feeling of mutual confidence between the branches of the Armed Forces. And this was the atmosphere which prevailed when the National Socialists seized power, and the growth of the Luftwaffe began.

In 1933, after his party--the National Socialist--had come into power, Hermann Goering, the President of the National Parliament, was appointed to the position of National Commissioner of Aviation. It soon became obvious that this energetic man, who had been a successful fighter pilot during World War I, would not be content with directing the administration of Germany's commercial aviation alone. Those in a position to know were well aware of the fact that his goal was the establishment of an independent air force.

In order to nip any such development in the bud, the Reichs Minister of Defense hastily issued a decree (dated 21 March 1933) ordering the establishment of an Air Defense Office. This office was placed in charge of all matters pertaining to the establishment of a
military air force and the utilization of such force in time of war. Colonel Bohnstedt was made chief of the office, with Commander Rudolf Wenninger serving as chief of staff. The Air Defense Office was directly subordinate to the Reichs Minister of Defense and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. One might conclude from all this that it was the intention of the Reichs Minister of Defense to establish an independent air force. It is clear, however, from records pertaining to the Air Defense Office (to be discussed later) that it was created merely to coordinate the affairs of the air force with the other branches of the Armed Forces and was not intended to be developed into the High Command of an independent branch. Even so, the duties assigned to that office were, to a certain extent, those of a Luftwaffe General Staff.

In the face of Goering's ruthless energy, the newly created Air Defense Office seemed to have little chance of maintaining itself for long. On 10 May 1933, the Reichs Minister of Defense announced that Hindenburg, President of the Reich, had authorized, on 27 April 1933, the establishment of an Air Ministry, to be under the National Defense Ministry. Thus, on 15 May 1933, the Air Defense Office and its staff moved from the Reichs Ministry of Defense to the Air Ministry.

Goering, a political revolutionary, realized instantly the potential significance of a strong and independent air force in a future war. In his capacity as Chief of the new Air Ministry, he did everything in his power to assure that all the resources available to the nation were fully exploited in order to build up a strong air force as rapidly as possible. President Hindenburg conferred upon him the rank of an infantry general, so that he might possess the authority necessary to push through his plans for the new Armed Forces branch despite possible opposition from those of his own officers who came from the Army or Navy General Staffs. Unofficially, Hindenburg's action was tantamount to his endorsement of the Luftwaffe as an independent Armed Forces branch, having the same rights and privileges as the other two.

* Later redesignated Reichs Ministry of Defense.
During the period following its establishment on 15 May 1933, the Reichs Air Ministry assumed the functions of a Luftwaffe High Command for the units being activated under camouflage designation. The most important offices and branches of this Ministry, insofar as they were concerned with the activation and administration of the new Luftwaffe, were staffed by former General Staff officers taken over from the Army and, to a lesser extent, from the Navy. The mission assigned to these officers and their staffs was a challenge to their ability as military men, and a very rewarding one. Even the Great General Staff itself had never been faced with a challenge of such scope during peacetime. The establishment of the Luftwaffe had literally to be undertaken from the ground up; the desultory preparations accomplished during the Reichswehr period were hardly worth mentioning. Thus the challenge could be met only with the untiring devotion of every single member of the staff and with smooth coordination with the other branches of the Armed Forces. These other branches, however, were also occupied with the preliminary preparations for enlarging the Armed Forces, and it was inevitable that conflicting interests often made coordination extremely difficult. The final reviewing authority, charged with the settlement of these differences of opinion, was the Reichs Minister of War; however, his Armed Forces Office, later the Armed Forces High Command, lacked the authority necessary to enforce its recommendations. Its role in these conflicts was that of an honest broker who does his best to see that each party receives his due. Thus, the inevitable arguments regarding strategic, organizational, and economic matters had to be settled at a lower echelon by discussions between the parties concerned and by their more or less sincere attempts to find a basis for agreement.

Throughout the period of preliminary preparations and up to the outbreak of the war, each Armed Forces branch had to depend pretty much upon its own initiative. During this period, the Luftwaffe enjoyed comparative freedom in carrying out its plans, inasmuch as Hitler still had a great deal of confidence in Goering. The position of the Luftwaffe officers and their assistants, however, was not an easy one, for a certain amount of coordination with the other Armed Forces branches was inevitable. In fact, the heterogeneous composition of
the Luftwaffe officer corps rendered its position very difficult during the conferences necessitated by this minimum coordination. The Luftwaffe negotiators were usually younger in point of time in rank than their Army and Navy colleagues, and for this reason were at a certain disadvantage. Whereas the insignia of the Army General Staff officers had an aura of traditional authority about it, the Luftwaffe officer had no special insignia of his own. Unless he was personally known to his Army colleagues, he could be assumed to belong to any one of the many categories represented in the Luftwaffe officer corps and thus was often treated with the disdain and irony commonly employed with upstarts. One should not generalize, of course, but on the other hand it is clear that this attitude made the negotiations with other Armed Forces branches, and especially with the Army, unnecessarily difficult.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Luftwaffe officers stemming from the Army General Staff, the younger ones particularly, began to press for the establishment of an independent Luftwaffe General Staff with an insignia of its own, equal in importance to that of the Army General Staff. It is possible, of course, that personal ambition may have played a role in isolated cases, but there can be no doubt that the motivating factor was the urgent desire to equate the status of the Luftwaffe to that of the other Armed Forces branches and thus to give it more influence in the joint planning and negotiations.

The Luftwaffe's desire for a general staff of its own met with bitter resistance on the part of Goering's deputy, State Secretary Erhard Milch, the officers recruited from the commercial airlines, and the members of Goering's circle. They feared, quite correctly, that the formation of a Luftwaffe General Staff would mean a decrease of their own influence, for the older ones among them possessed neither

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* Editor's Note: There is much controversy concerning Milch's role in the Luftwaffe. A former Junkers employee and, prior to becoming Goering's deputy, a director of Lufthansa (the German commercial airline), Milch is well known for his ability as an organizer. See below, pp. 150 ff.
the military training nor the mental agility which would enable them
to become members of such an elite staff. Inasmuch as the thorough-
ly trained, active Luftwaffe officers who had been taken over from
the Army General Staff had, in any case, already moved into most of
the key positions of the Reichs Air Ministry and the higher-level troop
staffs, it was clear that their influence would grow even greater if
they were granted the right to wear the traditional General Staff uni-
form and that they might well become annoying rivals to the reacti-
vated and activated officers from other walks of life.

Generalmajor Walther Wever, Chief of the Air Command
Office* was also unenthusiastic at first regarding the formation of a
Luftwaffe General Staff, chiefly because he felt strongly that the
homogeneity and unity of the Luftwaffe officer corps would be jeopar-
dized unnecessarily by such a step. He feared that it might result in
the development of a separate caste within the corps, which--in any
event--was anything but homogeneous. It was his hope that the offi-
cers needed for missions of command and organization might be re-
cruited from the ranks of the outstanding pilots in the troop units, and
he was convinced that this method of selection was best suited to the
preservation of the indispensable mutual confidence between the front
units and the command staffs.2 He ignored one important fact, how-
ever; it was precisely the best pilot personnel in the units who were
the least ambitious for transfer to command staffs, especially since
such transfer did not offer tangible compensation in the form of a
distinctive uniform, preferential consideration for promotion, etc.,
as was traditional with the Army General Staff. Apart from this, the
past--particularly the last war--has provided proof enough of the fact
that personal courage and a talent for flying aircraft are not always
an indication that their possessor also has the strength of character
and the mental vision required for effective service in the responsible
and often unrewarding positions within the Ministry or the command
staffs.

The postwar writings of well-known flyers whose medals were

* Comparable to the Troop Office in the Reichswehr, the Air
Command Office was the forerunner of the Luftwaffe General Staff.
considered (especially by Goering) to be sufficient qualification for service on the General Staff or in high-level command positions offer sufficient proof that leadership ability and military knowledge cannot always be adequately measured by decorations alone. The qualities which enable a man to function effectively in a higher position of command or on a general staff ordinarily presuppose years of military training and experience as well as a certain amount of worldly wisdom and personal maturity. The wide-spread disregard of this maxim within the Luftwaffe led not infrequently to orgies of dilettantism in Luftwaffe command agencies; Goering himself was an excellent example of this sort of thing. An officer corps capable of top-level performance is possible only if the method of selection guarantees the recruitment of the best officers, in point of strength of character, mental ability, and past performance, and if the training and orientation given them is of the type to assure homogeneity in their attitude towards their mission and in their accomplishment of it. Successful service in a troop unit is, in any case, an indispensable prerequisite.

Colonel Hans Juergen Stumpff (later Generaloberst), Chief of the Personnel Office of the Luftwaffe and a recognized authority in questions pertaining to military personnel administration, was of the opinion that, sooner or later, the Luftwaffe would have to be given a general staff of its own. In his capacity as Chief of Personnel, he was fully aware of the fact that the choice of officers to fill high-level Luftwaffe posts would become increasingly difficult without the preliminary orientation and selective elimination provided by a general staff. Only by service on the general staff could the younger officer, who had already made his mark in combat, acquire the knowledge needed to apply his experience to the mission of command over large groups of forces. Experience had shown that the General Staff, itself composed of officers who had distinguished themselves in services at the front in World War I, provided the best opportunity for the development of a new generation of military leaders. There were sporadic exceptions, of course, but perhaps these served to prove the rule. The formation of a Luftwaffe General Staff also seemed imperative for another reason: the administration of such a complex and many-sided force as the highly technical Luftwaffe demanded the services
of officers with thorough training in a large number of fields. The Luftwaffe technical people even submitted the suggestion--through the Chief of the Air Command Office--that a Technical General Staff be formed, because an officer trained in the field of military operations could not possibly possess the specialized technical knowledge necessary for effective accomplishment of the over-all mission.

Prior to 1936, however, the thinking in regard to these problems was largely theoretical, and they were far outweighed by other, more important problems connected with the establishment of the new Armed Forces branch. The officers most intimately concerned with them, particularly the Chief of the Air Command Office, were so busy with other tasks that they had neither the time nor the opportunity to give any thought to the future form of the command apparatus of the Luftwaffe. It was not until the induction of officer flying personnel completing their courses at the Army War Academy and a number of other officers without flight training of the class of 1936, who had volunteered for transfer to the Luftwaffe, that the question of their future assignment became acute. Their training for General Staff work and their future careers were matters which required an immediate solution. The question of the coming generations of officers was also one which needed thought, for it did not seem reasonable to continue sending Luftwaffe officer candidates to the Army War Academy for training; it was obvious that the training they received there could not be specialized enough to fit them for the highly specialized missions involved in the administration and command of the Luftwaffe.

For these reasons, the decision to create an Air War Academy ripened gradually during 1935. At the same time, plans were discussed for the founding of an Air Technical Academy in order to provide technically trained specialists within the Luftwaffe officer corps to take over the positions in the Reichs Air Ministry and in the command staffs which required familiarity with the technological aspects of the Luftwaffe.

Realizing that the establishment of these two academies would be pointless until a solution had been found for the problem of a
Luftwaffe General Staff, General Wever, as Chief of the Air Command Office, finally agreed to the preliminary planning necessary to set up such a staff. The difficulties experienced by officers from the Ministry and the Luftwaffe command staffs during negotiations with the other two branches of the Armed Forces and with civilian agencies certainly influenced his decision, as did the persistent efforts of the State Secretary (Molch) and Goering's personal circle to increase their own influence and to eclipse those Luftwaffe officers who had been taken over from the Army General Staff. Thoughtful and responsible Luftwaffe officers all saw in these efforts a serious danger for the development of the new force, which could be made into an effective military instrument for the defense of the nation only if it could be kept free of intrigue and from undue influence on the part of civilian and political circles. The only possibility seemed to be the creation of a firmly established command apparatus akin to the Army General Staff.

Goering, his own opinion wavering from one moment to the next, finally allowed himself to be persuaded by the arguments of the Luftwaffe officers. The thought that his own prestige among the public and among his fellow Commanders in Chief would be greatly enhanced by the presence in his entourage of general staff officers in their distinctive uniforms certainly played just as important a role in his final decision as his recognition of the military necessity of establishing a Luftwaffe General Staff.

General Wever, the man who created the Luftwaffe General Staff and who must be considered its first—although anonymous—Chief, was not destined to witness the birth of his intellectual child; he was killed shortly before in an air crash which occurred during a routine troop inspection trip.

The order for the formation of the Luftwaffe General Staff was issued to become effective on 1 August 1936.*

* See below, Chapter 4, IV.
Chapter 3

THE PERSONNEL OF THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

Section I: The Chiefs of the General Staff

Wever

On 15 May 1933, when the Air Defense Office was transferred from the National Defense Ministry to the Reichs Air Ministry, Generalmajor Walther Wever became Chief of the Air Command Office in the new Ministry. Inasmuch as this office was charged with the administration of all questions concerning the command, organization, and training of the new Luftwaffe, it was natural that it should assume the functions of a general staff right from the beginning.

Thus, even though he did not have the official title, General Wever, as Chief of the Air Command Office, was really the first Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. In this man, the Minister of National Defense had selected one of the very best officers—and probably the best organizer—of the Army General Staff to guide the establishment of the Luftwaffe. Without wishing to belittle Goering's contribution in any way, we must admit that all of his plans would have been amateurish piece-work without the outstanding assistance of Wever and his immediate staff.

Greeting his new assignment with enthusiasm, General Wever devoted his full attention to the new mission with typical zeal. His quick intelligence, his remarkable receptiveness towards the developments of modern technology, and his vast store of military experience soon enabled him to grasp the fundamental concepts of his mission. He worked untiringly to exploit the unusually favorable circumstances provided by the time in order to create a military instrument equal to the other Armed Forces branches for the defense of the nation. He was quick to realize that the chance given him was a unique one, and that he might take advantage of all the available national and economic resources in creating a new and unique force. He himself learned to
fly at the age of 46 and soon became one of the most enthusiastic pilots in the Luftwaffe; in this, as in other fields, he set a challenging example to young and old.

Wever got along extremely well with Goering, his Commander in Chief, since both were imbued with a passionate belief in their mission and with a fiery enthusiasm for the new Luftwaffe. His relations with State Secretary Milch, to whom he was subordinate, were also good, despite their occasional differences of opinion. By dint of exemplary tact and a willingness to remain in the background on many occasions, Wever was able to avoid serious friction.

An exemplary superior to his immediate staff, he had no difficulty in infecting them with his own enthusiasm and in persuading them unobtrusively of the validity of his own thinking. Whenever he had a free moment, he was off in his airplane to inspect units being formed and those already in existence in all the various branches of his Luftwaffe. He rarely neglected to bring along a huge box of cake when inspecting a remotely-located air base, and over coffee and cake with the young crew members, he discussed their problems with them, listened to their suggestions, and fired them anew with his own enthusiasm and elan. In this way he soon succeeded in inspiring the troop units as well as his own personal staff to extraordinary accomplishments and to ardent devotion to their work.

General Wever gave a great deal of thought and attention to the training of younger General Staff personnel as well as his own top-level officers. The speech which he made to the students and faculty of the Air War Academy on the occasion of its opening was a classical example of the inspired thinking of this great general.

Wever's death on 3 May 1936 was a tremendous blow to his officers and men alike. With the loss of its first Chief of the General Staff, the Luftwaffe lost the first, and perhaps the most decisive, battle of World War II. After his death, Goering praised his contribution in the following words:

He was not a man to remain within the four walls of his study, unknown to his troops. On the contrary, he was an
inspiring example to all of us - straightforward, modest, and yet a great man and a fine officer. His contribution cannot be adequately described with mere words. The fact that the Luftwaffe exists today is due to his untiring work - to his outstanding contribution. The Fuehrer himself has given him official recognition by bestowing upon him the highest military honor possible. One bomber wing, a part of the force he created, will bear his name forevermore. Thus, his name will be immortal, as we pray to God that our people, their Armed Forces and, with it, the Luftwaffe may be immortal.

Kesselring

Wever's untimely death left a deep gap which no other officer could fill adequately--not even such an outstandingly capable one as General Albert Kesselring (later Generalfeldmarschall). Kesselring, as Chief of the Administration Office, had done an excellent job during the early period of establishment of the Luftwaffe, and now Goering appointed him Chief of the General Staff, as Wever's successor. Kesselring wrote the following in connection with his new assignment:

By now we've come to realize just how much Wever meant for the Luftwaffe. The void left by his death was all the more painful since there were so very few older officers to fill it. As his successor, I am probably the one best qualified to sing his praises, for I have had ample opportunity to become aware of the intuitively gifted touch which distinguished his work. Because of his genius, I have not had to look for new ways, but was able to continue where he stopped. This also led to the rapid establishment of an atmosphere of confidence among myself, the individual branches of the General Staff, and the various Inspectorates. I was very fortunate in having the support of outstandingly well-qualified officers, and this made my work a pleasure.

Kesselring's words would seem to indicate that his assumption of the duties of the Chief of the General Staff was accomplished without difficulty. The close and comradely coordination existing among
the top officers of the Reichs Air Ministry, whom Wever had welded together into an effective team, assured that each one was well informed regarding the functions of the others and their common overall goal. This situation can also be regarded as an indication of the effectiveness of service on the General Staff as a factor in creating consistency of concept and action. As a result, the organization functioned like a machine which continues its work automatically, even though a new operator has replaced the old. The growth of the Luftwaffe proceeded without interruption, despite the change in personnel at the top of the General Staff; the new Chief, hard-working and tremendously energetic, devoted himself to the accomplishment of the plans developed by his predecessor.

Like his predecessor, General Kesselring made every effort to maintain a close association with the troop units. This was not difficult for him, inasmuch as he had always been an extremely popular superior during his assignment as Chief of the Administration Office. Whenever he appeared on inspection visits in that capacity, piloting his own aircraft, and inquired after the needs and wants of the troops, they could be sure that he would do anything in his power to help them. His relations with his colleagues, his subordinate officers, and the members of the troop units were characterized by the warmth and the heartfelt benevolence typical of him. These qualities assured him of the sincere and undivided devotion of his comrades and subordinates, a devotion which persists to this very day.

Although his activity as Chief of the General Staff bore valuable fruit, and his popularity among his subordinates on the General Staff and among Luftwaffe troop personnel remained undiminished, Kesselring's relations with Milch grew progressively more difficult. Milch employed every means at his disposal to maintain--and, if possible, to increase--his influence over the new General Staff. It was inevitable that Milch's efforts in this direction should incur the opposition of a man with Kesselring's strength of personality, and the latter's personal feelings and attitudes led to adamant refusal to accept Milch's interference. In the long run, however, Kesselring was no match for Milch's smooth dialectic and methods, and on 30 May 1937 Kesselring requested that he be relieved as Chief of the
General Staff. He describes the reasons for his request as follows:4

The disagreements, of an official as well as personal nature, between myself and my superior, State Secretary Milch, were the motivating factor in my requesting to be relieved of my assignment. I requested that I be either transferred to service with a troop unit or permitted to resign. In compliance with my request, Goering transferred me to Dresden, appointing me to the post of Commanding General, III. Air Administrative Area (Luftkreis III). My successor was a close friend of mine, General der Flieger Stumpff, who had done such an excellent job in directing the establishment of the Luftwaffe officer corps; the non-commissioned officers and enlisted men under his administration viewed him as a father. As State Secretary, Milch remained Goering's deputy in the Ministry. I felt the deepest respect for Milch as a man of ability, a skilled discussion partner, an outstanding organizer, and an untiring worker, and I was sincerely pleased that the feeling of mutual confidence typical of the early period was gradually restored under my successor.

Stumpff

Prior to his appointment, by Goering, as Kesselring's successor, Generalmajor Hans Juergen Stumpff (later General der Flieger) had been Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office. In that capacity, he had accomplished wonders and had more than justified his reputation as one of the Armed Forces foremost experts in matters of personnel administration. He had solved the problems connected with his mission in an exemplary fashion, and the importance of his contribution cannot be overestimated. The entire future of the Luftwaffe depended upon the quality of its officer corps; no troop can be better than its officers. When Stumpff took office as Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office, he had at his disposal only 200 active officers from the 100,000-man Army (Reichswehr) on which to build a Luftwaffe officer corps. During the early years, a certain number of Army replacement officers were detached to the Luftwaffe until
the Luftwaffe had built up an adequate reserve of its own. Stumpff had had to recruit the majority of his officers, however, from the ranks of the sporting pilots, the pilots of commercial airlines, World War I flyers, and other inactive officers, and had had to try to fit the special capabilities of each individual recruit into the complicated mosaic of the new force. His success in doing so is all the more remarkable when we consider that Stumpff was unable to pilot an airplane when he was assigned to the Luftwaffe. He had to acquire an understanding for the peculiar requirements of an air force from the ground up, and in addition to this, he even learned to fly himself at a fairly advanced age.

Stumpff's mission as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff was a particularly difficult one. To become the follower of two such intense personalities as Wever and Kesselring, at a time when the Luftwaffe was still in its formative stage, was certainly no easy task for a man who had been exclusively occupied with matters of personnel administration up to that time. Stumpff's need to familiarize himself with the fundamental requirements of his new task left him little time to devote to the establishment of a personal relationship with the troop units, as had been the case with both his predecessors. Another source of difficulty was the continual disagreements with Milch, which were becoming increasingly bitter. Moreover, the time had come when the Luftwaffe had expanded to such a degree that a reorganization of the Ministry seemed urgently necessary. Thus, during the period 1937-1939 there were a number of reorganizations, some of them coming in very close sequence, within the Reichs Air Ministry, accompanied by shifts in the responsibilities of the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff. These frequent organizational upheavals were bound to have a detrimental effect on the work of the General Staff as well as on the performance of the troop units.

After several attempts by Stumpff to find a solution commensurate with the problem at hand, Milch brought forth a contemplated organizational structure which was clearly incapable of meeting the military requirements involved. This continual struggle for authority finally decided General Stumpff, in the best interests of the cause, to let his own position as Chief of the General Staff be relegated to the
background and to recognize Milch as the permanent representative of the Commander in Chief.

When it became clear that even this concession had failed to improve the relations between the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff, Stumpff requested reassignment, to become effective on 30 January 1939. The systematic progress made in the development of the Luftwaffe during Stumpff's period as Chief of the General Staff must be considered all the more praiseworthy in view of the fact that it was accomplished in spite of internal difficulties and their deleterious influence on the conduct of business.

**Jeschonnek**

Colonel Hans Jeschonnek, Chief of the Operations Staff, was named as Stumpff's successor. Field Marshal Kesselring has the following to say concerning him:

During the war years, the most impressive personality among the Chiefs of the General Staff was Generaloberst Jeschonnek—an unusually intelligent and energetic person. Even Jeschonnek, however, was not strong enough to oppose Goering successfully (occasionally he did succeed in opposing Hitler) in matters of decisive importance. A very definite lack of harmony brought effective coordination to a standstill.

The following passage by the historian Walter Goerlitz sheds further light on the situation:

In February 1939, Colonel Hans Jeschonnek, former Commanding Officer of the Luftwaffe Training Wing (Lehrgeschwader) and Chief of the Operations Branch (Operationsabteilung) of the General Staff, became the fourth Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. Jeschonnek, the favored protege of General Wever, was truly a representative of the younger generation, extremely gifted, of quick and dependable intelligence, precise in his thinking, a man of few personal wants, but driven by an all-consuming ambition to achieve
recognition for his service branch, the Luftwaffe. He was more of a soldier than a staff man, however. He lacked the ability to handle people, an indispensable quality for anyone who was to maintain himself in the face of Hitler's self-gloration, Goering's moodiness, the tangle of intrigues, and the continual rivalry which were the rule at the Fuehrer's Headquarters. Jeschonnek's youth and short time in rank made it all the more difficult for him to prevail against the older and higher ranking Air Fleet Commanders who came to him with their special requests, and who were not always above using their personal friendship with Goering to overrule him. The roots of his difficulties lay in the fact that he had climbed too high too soon. The exigencies of war gave him no time to attain the inner maturity he lacked; they prevented his becoming the great educator, the fatherly mentor--in short, the Scharnhorst--which the young officer corps so badly needed. Jeschonnek's career may be summarized in the saying "whom the Gods love, they call still young to their kingdom." When he saw that there was nothing he could do to avert catastrophe for his beloved Luftwaffe, and that this catastrophe meant inevitable defeat for Germany, he accepted the last consequence and ended his own life.

These passages by Kesselring and Goerlitz are a fitting summary of the tragedy attending the career of this promising young officer, a tragedy which found its climax in his suicide. Jeschonnek had begun his military career in the Prussian Cadet Corps. At the age of fifteen and one-half, he joined the 3d Company, of the 50th Lower Silesian Infantry Regiment, as second lieutenant. In 1917, at the age of seventeen, he volunteered for duty with the flying forces and, after completing his flight training, was assigned to the 10th Fighter Squadron, as a member of which he brought down two enemy aircraft before the war ended. After a period of service with the Border Patrol, he entered the Reichswehr as a member of the 11th Cavalry Regiment. Completing his training with distinction, he became one of the most promising young General Staff officers of the Reichswehr. One of the General Staff officers who transferred to the Luftwaffe, he was first assigned to the post of Adjutant to the State
Secretary of Aviation, in which capacity he had a considerable share in the preliminary organization of the Reichs Air Ministry. He was given the command of a group in the first bomber wing of the new Luftwaffe, and shortly afterwards was appointed Commanding Officer of the Training Wing. In the latter position, of course, he had had a profound influence on the development of the Luftwaffe and on the methods followed in the employment of Luftwaffe forces. And his influence became even greater as it grew more and more apparent, during the early years of the Luftwaffe's growth, that even the very best training as an Army General Staff officer and the greatest degree of receptiveness for the developments of modern technology were not sufficient to enable the top commanders of the new force to formulate a clear concept of its needs and requirements. In many respects they had to rely on the recommendations of an expert, and what could be simpler than to confer this status upon the efficient young commanding officer of the Training Wing and to avail oneself of his advice on all these matters?

On 1 October 1937, Jeschonnek became Chief of Branch I, Operations Branch of the Luftwaffe General Staff. His appointment to this most important post on the General Staff was fitting expression of the confidence which his superiors felt in him. From this point on, it was generally assumed that he was being groomed for the position of Chief of the General Staff.

If his duties increased greatly in importance with this appointment--on 1 February 1938 he became Chief of the Operations Staff (Fuehrungsstab) and on 1 November 1938 was promoted to colonel--they became even more important when he was appointed Chief of the General Staff on 1 February 1939. On 14 August 1939 he was promoted to the rank of Generalmajor. During the campaign in Poland, he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross, and after the triumphal performance of the Luftwaffe in the campaign in France he attained the rank of General der Flieger. At the age of forty-two, he became the youngest Generaloberst in the entire Armed Forces.7
The brilliant career of Jeschonnek serves as a barometer for the meteoric growth of the German Luftwaffe; at the same time, it is an individual expression of the contribution made by this talented young officer, whose tragedy lay in his youth. His contributions to the training of Luftwaffe officers, the equipment of the Luftwaffe along modern technological lines, and the development of the Luftwaffe into an effective striking instrument were undeniably great. The remarkable success of the Luftwaffe, in coordination with the Army, during the early blitz campaigns of World War II was due largely to his work. The preparation and orientation of the bomber and dive-bomber wings for their missions in these campaigns were matters to which he gave his personal attention. He shared Hitler's conviction* that, if Germany should go to war, she could attain success only if that war were brought to a rapid conclusion.

The equipment of the Luftwaffe and the production goals of Germany's air armament industry were geared to the goal of a quick war. Jeschonnek was perhaps too optimistic and too convinced of the rightness of his own thinking to envision the possibility of a long-term war and to adapt his plans accordingly. Later events bear witness to the fact that he had not taken potential developments sufficiently into account, as it is apparent—in retrospect—that he should have done. In fairness to him, however, we must recall that the Luftwaffe was forced by the pressure of events into a war for which it was not fully prepared, and that Goering and Milch never gave him a free hand in matters of armament production.

Jeschonnek's youth was a decided disadvantage in his relations with Goering. Even though the latter gave full recognition to the character and ability of his Chief of the General Staff, the younger man unconsciously created in Goering a feeling of inferiority which made him hesitate to seek his advice. As a result, Goering often made important decisions lightly without consulting his General Staff Chief in advance regarding their feasibility. This led to frequent

* Although Hitler, on occasion, also admitted the possibility that a longer war might be inevitable.
serious disagreements between the two men, and the effect upon the performance of the troops was anything but salutary. Since Jeschonnek lacked the personal qualities needed to gain his own way in the face of his superior's often amateurish decisions, there was nothing for him to do but to accept the destructive consequences created by them.

Another weakness of Jeschonnek's was his inability to handle people; the historian Walter Goerlitz emphasizes this in the passage quoted above. Jeschonnek preferred the company of younger officers, probably because of their views, based--in his opinion--on greater experience at the front, were more in keeping with his own. As a result, it was his tendency to seek their opinions rather than those of the older, more critically inclined officers. He was all too easily persuaded by the external qualities and smooth dialectic of these younger colleagues, as well as by their not always sincere agreement with him; and he granted them a great deal of independent authority in high positions. In several cases this practice had an adverse effect on the command function as well as on the work of the troops.

More often, however, Jeschonnek's difficulties arose from Goering's penchant for taking things into his own hands and from Hitler's unrealistic demands for Luftwaffe support of Army operations, and both of these factors played a role in weakening the Luftwaffe and in hastening its final decline. After the bloody action at Stalingrad, which--according to reports of the Military History Branch, Luftwaffe General Staff--Jeschonnek had not approved, he foresaw clearly the tragic end of coming developments and preferred to end his own part in them by taking his life on 19 August 1943.

Korten

Another relatively young officer, General der Flieger Guenther Korten, Commanding General of the First Air Fleet, was named as Jeschonnek's successor. There were not many younger generals available from whom to choose. On the other hand, Goering did not want an older officer as Chief of the General Staff, since his confidence in his own authority was too precarious to enable him to deal with an older, more experienced man, especially one with a strong
personality. In Korten, he had a General Staff Chief who was not only an efficient General Staff officer but who also possessed a winning personality, which augured well for his relations with Hitler, the Armed Forces High Command, and other Armed Forces branches, and his subordinate Luftwaffe commanders. And in this respect, Korten certainly lived up to his promise. On 25 August 1943, he took over his difficult assignment.

When one considers that disorganization and deterioration were already wide-spread within the Luftwaffe at the time Korten took office, and that it is extremely difficult, under conditions such as these, for anyone to step unexpectedly into an entirely new position, it is no wonder that the new General Staff Chief required a certain amount of time to work into his new job. Then, too, the industry and perseverance needed for this task were not his strong point, although he did possess a certain degree of gifted intuition. Today, we cannot be sure whether Korten was consciously aware of the coming catastrophe and its significance for the Luftwaffe. It is certain, however, that he was unable to effect any fundamental changes directed towards a thoroughgoing reform—if, indeed, he had any plans of this sort. From the vantage point of the present, we are unable to determine whether or not radical action on Korten's part would have been able to avert the catastrophe. In any case, the conspiracy of 20 July 1944 brought his career to a sudden end, when he was killed by the bomb intended for Hitler. Thus, the post of Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff was vacant again, and the feverish search for a new incumbent began.

By this time, it was clear that there were very few officers acceptable to Goering from whom to choose a new General Staff Chief. An additional difficulty, however, was that none of those who came under consideration was willing to accept this un rewarding post under the difficult conditions attached to it.

Kreipe

It is illustrative of the psychological attitude of the Luftwaffe officer corps at that time that Goering encountered such great difficulty in finding anyone who was interested in the position, which,
after all, was one of the highest the Armed Forces offered. Finally, Generalleutnant Werner Kreipe declared his willingness to accept the post. Kreipe was one of the youngest generals in the Luftwaffe and had a varied career, at the front and in General Staff positions, behind him. It seems certain that he could have become an excellent General Staff Chief if he had had the proper support from his Commander in Chief. Without this support, however, he was far too young to have any influence on the ruling clique at the Führer's Headquarters, or to combat effectively the growing influence of the generals in Goering's personal circle. These generals insisted on having their say on anything and everything, but not a single one of them possessed anywhere near the qualifications needed for the General Staff Chief's position.

Kreipe's activity as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff came to an end just seven weeks after his appointment on 1 August 1944. His attempt to pit his strength against that of Hitler and Goering, especially in the matter of increased home air defense forces, was a failure. He had overestimated his chances and, after a heated argument with Hitler on 19 September 1944, the latter decided that Kreipe's services as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff were no longer wanted, and he was forced to submit his resignation.

Koller

It was tragic for the Luftwaffe General Staff—and, indeed, for the entire command organization of the Luftwaffe—that it was not until 12 November 1944 that Goering was able to find an officer, acceptable to himself, who was willing to take over the orphaned position. During the interim period, Generalleutnant Karl Koller, Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, was placed in provisional charge of the duties of the General Staff Chief, and on 12 November 1944, he was officially assigned to that position, which he was to hold until the end of the War.

Koller was an exemplary General Staff officer, and as the chief assistant of the General Staff Chief (in his capacity as Chief of the Operations Staff), he had rendered invaluable service. He lacked
one very important qualification for the Chief's post, however, -- ex-
perience with the troops in the field. Ever since he had left the Air
War Academy, where his tremendous zeal enabled him to graduate
at the head of his class, he had not had a single day of service in the
field. This, of course, was not his fault, but the fact remained that
he much preferred service in an office, and he was an acknowledged
master of the intricacies of such service. A Bavarian by birth, he
did not hesitate to resort to fundamental four-letter words to empha-
size a point. However, neither his military ability nor his personali-
ty was firm enough to achieve any fundamental reforms in the Luft-
waffe, let alone to defend such reforms before Hitler and Goering.

Thus, the fate of the Luftwaffe ran its course; the young force
never succeeded in finding a personality of the magnitude of its first
General Staff Chief, General Wever, to meet the challenge of guiding
it through its greatest hour of trial.

Section II: The Officer Corps of the General Staff

The transfer of a relatively small number of Army General
Staff officers to the Luftwaffe provided a personnel basis, albeit a
very narrow one, on which to build a Luftwaffe General Staff. A total
of approximately forty Army General Staff officers switched to the
Luftwaffe when the Reichs Air Ministry was established on 10 May
1933. Most of these officers, particularly the older ones, had occu-
pied General Staff positions during World War I. Some had received
their General Staff training under the Reichswehr. A few of the
latter group had come to the Luftwaffe from the Navy, where they
had had similar training for General Staff service.

The selection of officers for transfer was arbitrary. At the
order of the Minister of War, all those officers whose names appeared
on the so-called "pilot roster," i.e. all those who, at some time or
another, had seen service as pilots or had completed flight training,
were automatically assigned to the Luftwaffe. This order also included
officers of the General Staff. Inasmuch as the total number of officers
affected by the order was so small, the Reichs Minister of War
authorized the Luftwaffe Personnel Office, within the framework of its recruiting among inactive officers, to accept former Army General Staff officers who had not had pilot training, provided they volunteered for Luftwaffe service. The success of this recruitment action was fairly slight, however, and it did not relieve the critical shortage of General Staff officers to any great extent.

Since the number of Army General Staff officers taken over by the Luftwaffe was still not sufficient—especially in point of older officers—to fill the top posts of the Reichs Air Ministry, the Reichs Minister of War, with the concurrence of the Army High Command, authorized the assignment to the Luftwaffe of several outstanding officers from the latter agency who had never had anything to do with flying, but who seemed to be eminently well-qualified for the posts they were to fill. As it turned out, it was precisely these officers who played the most decisive part in the growth and development of the Luftwaffe, because the posts to which they were assigned in the Reichs Air Ministry were key positions. Three of these officers in succession moved from their positions into the post of Chief of the General Staff. For this reason, their names and their first assignments in the Luftwaffe should be mentioned at this point:

Colonel Walter Weyer - Chief of the Air Command Office
Colonel Albert Kesselring - Chief of the Luftwaffe Administration Office
Colonel Hans Juergen Stumpff - Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office
Colonel Karl Kitzinger - later Chief of the Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply Office

The Chief of the Technical Office of the Reichs Air Ministry was also a key military position. Under the circumstances obtaining at that time, the Technical Office was equal in importance to the Air Command Office. Since the functions of the Technical Office could not be performed by anyone not well-versed in aeronautical and technological matters, the post of Chief was given to Colonel Wilhelm Wimmer, a former pilot officer—the only chief's position to be so filled. Colonel Wimmer was the only office chief who was not a
member of the General Staff. His qualifications for the job were excellent, however. In the Army Ordnance Office he had been in charge of all matters pertaining to aeronautical developments, and his new office merely required him to continue his work on a larger scale. A specialist in his field, Wimmer did an outstanding job. When the Luftwaffe General Staff came into being, Wimmer's qualifications and contributions were recognized by immediate assignment to that body. His assignment also served to emphasize the significance of the Technical Office for the command function, and to bind it more closely to the General Staff. With Wimmer's appointment, all the key positions within the Reichs Air Ministry were filled by outstanding older General Staff officers, an assurance that the administration of the Ministry and the new troop would be carried out in accordance with recognized military principles.

In filling the command staff positions of the so-called Air Administrative Areas, Luftwaffe leaders gave first preference to older officers who had already retired. All of them had been members of the flying forces during World War I and had gone on to fill General Staff positions. Again, these officers constituted a guarantee that administration at the troop level would also be in line with traditionally tried and proven military concepts. Some of the officers in this group who deserve special mention are Generals Leonhard Kaupisch, Hans Halm, Edmund Wachenfeld, Karl Eberth, and Karl Schweickhardt. It was these men who were responsible for putting into practice the plans devised by the Luftwaffe General Staff—an accomplishment whose importance was certainly as great as that of the work done by the General Staff itself.

There were very good reasons for insisting upon military ability and military experience on the part of the officers selected for the top-level positions in the Reichs Air Ministry. The Reichs Minister of War as well as the members of the other Armed Forces branches, who had a natural interest in the growth of the Luftwaffe, were well aware that the new force could be made into an effective striking instrument only if its key positions were under firm military control from the very beginning. This would offset the effects of an extremely heterogeneous officer corps and of a Commander in Chief,
whose appointment was chiefly the result of Party considerations. Since they knew that Goering's revolutionary thinking and fiery enthusiasm for the systematic development of the Luftwaffe along approved military lines, both the Army and the Navy went out of their way to free their best-qualified officers for Luftwaffe service. And since Goering was kept much too busy by his many and varied offices to devote his personal attention to the development of the Luftwaffe, the main responsibility devolved upon these men. They formed a necessary counterbalance to Milch, who—as former director of the Lufthansa—did his best to minimize the military influence so that he might be free to operate with the civilian methods more familiar to him.

The fact that the General Staff officers were able to prevail to a certain extent over this attitude, and to accomplish as much as they did, was due in great part to the efforts of the young aides who had come with them from the Army and Navy. Although the top General Staff officers had been selected for their all-around military ability, without insistence on training within the flying forces, flight training was a prerequisite in filling the subordinate General Staff positions. Thus the younger officers brought with them a body of expert knowledge and experience, gained through long years of training carried out in secrecy. The Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office was extremely wise in assigning these younger officers to posts as the chief assistants of the older officers who, although undeniably men of outstanding military reputation, did not always possess the necessary specialized knowledge in the field of technology.

As branch chiefs, group leaders, staff assistants, and as chiefs of staff in the Air Administrative Areas, these young men had a decisive share in the development of the Luftwaffe. The names of these officers, who—until the official establishment of the Luftwaffe General Staff in 1936—made up the command organization of the Luftwaffe, are of interest to us, for nearly all of them later became wartime Luftwaffe generals. They were as follows:

Colonels Helmuth Felmy, Hugo Sperrle, Nikolaus Maier,
Ernst Mueller, Heinrich von Dankelmann, and Ludwig Wolff;

These officers, together with the older officers previously named, made up the basis of the Luftwaffe General Staff established in 1936. They were all on the so-called General Staff list maintained by the Personnel Office, and their records were administered separately. Their inclusion on this list authorized them to wear the insignia of the General Staff (crimson collar patch and a double crimson stripe on their uniform trousers) and to add the phrase "General Staff Corps" to their rank.

A few more officers were taken over by the Luftwaffe in 1936 in order to supplement the General Staff roster. These had all had flight training, and most of them had still been in training at the Army War Academy at the time the Luftwaffe was officially established. Ten more officers from the same Academy class, who, however, had had no flight training, volunteered and were accepted for Luftwaffe service in an attempt to bridge the gap in time before the first regular Luftwaffe replacement personnel could be expected in 1938. A like number of officers graduating from the Army War Academy in 1937 were also appropriated for the Luftwaffe. After 1937, however, the Luftwaffe was able to draw its own replacement personnel from the Air War Academy, which had begun operations in 1935.

Inasmuch as the personnel reserve from which the Luftwaffe General Staff was built was extremely small and was, in fact, insufficient to provide the officer personnel needed to fill all the positions in the fast-growing Ministry--not to mention the staff positions in the troop units, which were growing ever more numerous--, it was
necessary even during peacetime to place a number of additional officers on General Staff status, i.e. to add them to the General Staff roster, even though these newcomers might not possess the traditional General Staff training. This was the case, for example, with officers who had completed university or technical college training and who had made their mark as "engineer officers"; or officers who had never had General Staff training but who had served in a General Staff because of a lack of enough officers with the required training, and had proved themselves exceptionally qualified over a period of time. Officers in the latter group were accepted only under exceptional circumstances. Every effort was made to compensate for the lack of formal training of these outsiders by giving them regular staff assignments and by requiring their participation in staff exercises.

When the order for the establishment of a Luftwaffe General Staff was issued, Luftwaffe leaders immediately set to work to determine which positions in the Ministry and troop units should, in future, be filled by General Staff officers. The number of these positions--listed by the Chief of the General Staff in concurrence with the Luftwaffe Personnel Office in the order of their importance to the functions of command, organization, procurement and supply, training, and technological development--was so great that, in the beginning, there was no chance whatsoever of their all being staffed by General Staff personnel. General Staff officers were assigned to only the most important of them, the rest being filled provisionally by officers from any and all sources. A further undesirable consequence of the shortage in officer personnel was the fact that hardly any of the Luftwaffe General Staff officers were qualified, in point of time in rank, for the assignments given them. It lay in the nature of the situation, partly because of the newness of the missions involved (there were no established procedures to follow), that there was a certain amount of non-productive effort. The fact that these young officers were able to accomplish the tasks assigned to them despite the attendant difficulties was a tribute to the thoroughness of the General Staff training they had received in the Army and Navy.

Even by the time World War II began, the Luftwaffe had not yet succeeded in acquiring enough trained General Staff officers to
meet its needs. As the war progressed, the discrepancy between supply and demand became astronomical due to the increase in staff positions and the losses in officer personnel inflicted by enemy action. On 1 March 1944, of a total of 331 Luftwaffe General Staff corps officers, 77 had been killed in action, were missing, or had met death in air crashes, and another 10 had been taken prisoner after emergency landings in enemy territory. We have no information on how high these losses were at the end of the war; we can assume with certainty, however, that they had increased.

The Chiefs of both the Luftwaffe General Staff and the Luftwaffe Personnel Office did their best to increase the reservoir of replacement officers available to the Luftwaffe. In an attempt to master the chronic personnel shortage, they reduced the length of the training courses at the Air War Academy and discontinued the courses at the Air Technical Academy. In recruiting, the entrance requirements were reduced and this, in combination with the necessarily shorter training period, which could not possibly cover more than the bare essentials, inevitably led to a lowering of the performance standards as the war continued. On occasion, in order to meet the demands for replacement personnel, it even proved necessary to assign an entire contingent of officers directly to the General Staff, without first sending them to the Air War Academy for training. The order for this action issued by the Luftwaffe Personnel Office on 6 March 1942, gives an enlightening picture of the personnel situation faced by the Luftwaffe General Staff at this point.

During the war, the personnel shortage was further aggravated by the necessity of periodically assigning the General Staff officers to duty at the front in order that they might bring their front-line experience up to date and maintain their contact with the troops. This meant that approximately twenty-five percent of the General Staff officers were not available for General Staff duty at any one time. The demand for officers with General Staff training also increased steadily with the need to replace older officers promoted to higher positions in the command staffs—this in addition to the need for replacements to fill positions falling vacant because of the death, illness, or the incompetence of their incumbents.

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In the fall of 1942, the shortage in Luftwaffe General Staff officers became so critical that the Chief of the General Staff, after securing Hitler's concurrence, was forced to issue a second order. The text of this order presents a revealing picture of Hitler's disdain for the General Staff on the one hand, and his tacit admission on the other hand that the part played by the General Staff in the guidance and training of younger officers for command responsibility was an indispensable one. The conclusion of the order presents the policies of personnel administration long followed by the General Staff as if they were new ideas conceived by the Fuehrer; and gives emphatic expression to the latter's wish that the General Staff create a generation of younger officers more amenable to his "brilliant concepts" than the older generation, handicapped as it was by experience, could ever be.

The order, however, had only a limited effect on the personnel situation of the Luftwaffe General Staff. An appendix to the order authorized the filling of 82 positions--formerly held, in theory, by General Staff officers--by officers from the troop units, or from other sources. In reality, however, since the personnel shortage had made it impossible to fill all these positions with General Staff officers in the first place, the gain was theoretical rather than practical. The order resulted in very few changes in the incumbency of the really important positions, and the continuing shortage in officer personnel still precluded the desirable frequent alternation between General Staff and front-line duty. Throughout the war the Luftwaffe General Staff was to suffer from the effects of an acute shortage in qualified officer personnel. Attempts to compensate for this lack by utilizing officers who had demonstrated their ability in action proved unsuccessful in the majority of cases. The General Staff officers freed by this practice for duty with the troops were usually specialists, who lacked the all-around training and experience necessary to enable them to handle the over-all command of an operation. As a result, the troop unit staffs were filled with specialists, each of whom considered himself infallible in his own particular field, and the integration of these men into the over-all mission often required more time and effort on the part of the unit chiefs of staff than their ultimate contribution was worth. Moreover, this practice was bad for the troops in the long
run, for specialization of this sort often resulted in so much pointless red tape that the troops lost all confidence in their leaders.

As a result of measures of this sort, most of them desperate attempts to fill the positions for which General Staff officers were considered absolutely necessary, the Luftwaffe command organization—at all echelons—moved farther and farther away from the principles followed by the old, traditional General Staff. The most important thing we can learn from this situation is that the lack of thorough training in wartime and the failure to establish an adequate reserve of trained General Staff officers are bound to have catastrophic consequences. This was just as true for the Luftwaffe as it was for the other Armed Forces branches and, ultimately, for the over-all conduct of World War II.

Section III: The Career of a Luftwaffe General Staff Officer

The selection of candidates for General Staff training was not based in any way on their promise of ability in any one specialized field. Specialization, in the beginning, was reserved for the Technical Academy; later, it was decided to discontinue any further training for personnel of the Technical General Staff because of the lack of qualified instructors. Still later, when the courses at the Technical Academy were abolished, there was only one General Staff.

During the period of their attendance at the Air War Academy it was usual for the candidates to develop certain individual interests and abilities, and these were used as a basis for the recommendations made regarding their future assignments, although such a recommendation did not mean that an officer was necessarily confined to the suggested field for the remainder of his career. The interests and abilities which he had demonstrated at the Academy, however, were used as a basis in determining his initial assignment to the General Staff. An officer's first assignment to the General Staff after successful completion of the Academy course was his so-called "probationary year," during which he was "assigned to service with the General Staff." In case of necessity (and this was the rule rather than the exception), regulations permitted the assignment to the
General Staff of Luftwaffe officers who were "recommended with reservations" from the Academy. Officers in this category were required to serve two probationary years to prove their suitability before they were officially assigned to the Luftwaffe General Staff. At the time of his official assignment to the General Staff, the officer automatically became a member of the General Staff corps and was eligible for any position on the General Staff for which he could prove himself qualified, provided, of course, that he completed his occasional assignments to troop duty satisfactorily.

It lay in the nature of the situation, i.e. the officer's previous assignment to a particular branch, such as flying forces, antiaircraft artillery, or Luftwaffe signal forces, that a certain amount of specialization was unavoidable. His previous assignment was not an arbitrary factor in determining his function in the General Staff; however, in the majority of cases it was the decisive factor, chiefly because of the critical officer shortage and the resultant impossibility of giving each officer all-around practical training prior to his assignment to the General Staff.

The ideal, as it had been envisioned in the preliminary planning, was to give each General Staff officer a kind of universal training, which would permit him to fill satisfactorily any position within the Luftwaffe. At no time during the history of the Luftwaffe was this ideal attained; the reasons have been discussed in part in the preceding sections. Chief among them was the lack of time, which made it impossible to give each individual officer a military education well-rounded enough to familiarize him with all three branches (flying forces, antiaircraft artillery, and Luftwaffe signal forces) and their technical problems to such a degree that he would be able to fill any position in any branch without qualification.

When the Technical General Staff was abolished, the Luftwaffe Engineer Corps assumed its functions. The members of the Engineer Corps had the status of government civil servants; they were technical experts, who rendered invaluable service in their fields during the war, especially in the troop unit staffs or in the troop units themselves. The role they played as advisors to Ernst Udet, the Chief of Luftwaffe
Procurement and Supply, and later to Milch, however, is less worthy of unqualified admiration. It seems certain that many of the decisions made by Udet and Milch would have been different if their advisors had not been pure technical people but rather military men with General Staff training and with sufficient understanding of technological developments to coordinate them fully with military requirements. Weapons development and armament are matters of the greatest importance to the commitment of a technical force during wartime. The failure of military leaders to retain their influence in these matters is tantamount to their renouncing any voice in the decisions concerning the weapons with which they are to fight.

During the short period of existence of the German Luftwaffe, events happened too rapidly to provide an answer to the question of whether or not it might have been expedient to maintain a technical general staff in addition to the Engineer Corps or, possibly, to transform the latter group into a technical general staff. It probably would have been a question of providing sufficient technological training for career General Staff officers to enable them to formulate military requirements in such a way that a technical team could convert them into applicable technological requirements. Such training, however, would not have been feasible for the General Staff, because the training period was far too short. On the other hand, the members of the Engineer Corps were required to qualify for the rank of a Luftwaffe reserve officer during compulsory periods of service in troop units, and in most cases this requirement was met satisfactorily, even during wartime. Engineers were no substitute for a technical general staff, of course, but at least they received enough general military training that they were able to correlate technological potentialities to military requirements. On a small scale, e.g. in the troop unit staffs, things worked out very well, but there can be no doubt that the military background of the Engineers occupying higher echelon posts was inadequate to the missions they were called upon to accomplish.

Once the first classes from the Technical Academy had been assimilated into the General Staff and the Academy itself had been incorporated for all practical purposes (even before its final
deactivation) into the Air War Academy, there was only one uniform training program for all General Staff candidates. The original plans had envisioned a system of assignments for each individual officer designed to help him to familiarize himself with a variety of different fields and the routine procedures inherent in each and to prepare himself to take over an assignment as a higher-level troop officer. This plan did not envision narrowly-defined careers within the General Staff. In theory, each officer was to familiarize himself with the field of supply (Quartermaster) operations first, and then move on to assignments in the Ic (Intelligence) and Ia (Operational Planning) categories. It was only in rare instances, however, that it was possible to carry out this systematic orientation, and limited career fields—the very thing the planners wanted to avoid—were the inevitable result. In the majority of cases, the General Staff officer remained in the field of his first assignment until he transferred back to a troop unit or, in rare instances, was appointed to department chief's post (i.e., chief of an office or branch). Normally, the department chief's posts were reserved for officers who had rendered especially valuable service in operational planning positions.

Like the entire organizational structure of the Luftwaffe General Staff, the career fields which inevitably developed were closely akin to their counterparts in the Army General Staff. They were the following:

Ia - Operations - command, troop commitment, training

Ic - Intelligence - gathering and evaluation of intelligence data, study and evaluation of foreign air forces and the war potential of possible enemy nations

Quartermaster service - organization, procurement and supply, armaments

Communications service - signal communications, aircraft reporting, flight traffic control.

* See below, p. 61.
The operational planning field was naturally the most popular, since the operations officer of a staff is the prince among peers, and his mission, the over-all operational command of the forces at his disposal, has always been the most interesting on the General Staff. Since systematic early selection and preliminary training were not always feasible—in fact, candidates were usually not selected until after they had graduated from the Academy—occasional errors in judgment in filling the operational planning positions were bound to occur. The frequent reassignments resulting from such errors were disrupting, of course, for troop units and the command apparatus alike.

The selection of candidates for the intelligence positions was less difficult, since the missions involved did not require so much troop unit experience as those of the operations officer, but presupposed rather a special talent, easily identified at an early stage of the officer's career. The ranks of the intelligence officers provided incumbents for the department chiefs, group leaders, and staff assistants positions in Branch 5, (Foreign Air Forces) of the General Staff. Whenever air attache positions were filled by General Staff officers, these too were usually selected from among the intelligence personnel.

The Quartermaster service, an extremely important branch and one which served as excellent training for the General Staff officer, required the largest number of personnel, for its comprehensive organization included a great many posts. The strength of the quartermaster officer contingent reflected the importance which Germany's military leaders attached to armament and supply. To be qualified for service with the quartermaster branch, an officer needed organizational talent, a background of long and varied experience with troop units, and a comprehensive understanding of the technological requirements of the Luftwaffe. Beginning their careers as aides to the quartermaster and senior quartermaster officers in higher-level troop staffs or as supply officers at intermediate echelons, these officers usually advanced to posts on the staff of the Quartermaster General or with the agencies responsible for guiding the wartime economy. Occasionally, these officers were also given an opportunity for assignment to an operational planning position, but unfortunately this was the exception rather than the rule.
From the very beginning, signal communication developed into a highly-specialized career field on the General Staff, one which was reserved for officers from the Luftwaffe signal communications units. It was impossible for officers coming from the other branches (flying forces and antiaircraft artillery) to acquire the necessary specialized knowledge during the course of their General Staff training. In a number of cases, however, the reverse proved true, namely that officers from the Luftwaffe signal units moved into the other fields represented in the General Staff. During the war a great many younger signal officers were profitably assigned to intelligence positions, where their familiarity with radio intercepting techniques was put to good use in gathering information.

A General Staff career usually found its climax in assignment to a department chief's post or branch chief's post in the Luftwaffe High Command or in the Reichs Air Ministry. Assignment to one of these top-level posts was not directly dependent on the candidate's past career as such, but rather on his personal and professional qualifications for the position in question. The position of "chief" was the highest goal of the General Staff officer; at the same time it represented eligibility for a position of command in an operational unit staff. This criterion of eligibility was often ignored during the war, to the inevitable detriment of the quality of leadership within the troop units. Goering's policy of favoritism, his unrealistic ideas--borne of his total lack of experience--and the failure of his later personnel chiefs to comprehend the duties and responsibilities of a higher-level commander, often resulted in the assignment to such positions of men who had had no training whatsoever for the responsibility involved and who were thus totally inadequate to their missions. Apart from thoroughly justifiable exceptions, a higher-level troop commander from division level upwards ought to have qualified for and held successfully a department chief's post. For only a man who has served in such a capacity himself is able to judge the competence with which his staff is governed and the effectiveness of his own advisors. His confidence in staff and advisors and his trust in his chief of staff are indispensable factors in assuring him the freedom of action which he needs if he is to attain military success.

The German Luftwaffe was too young and the choice among
experienced General Staff officers too restricted to permit it to reach the theoretical ideal, either before or during the war. In cases where the department chiefs were really excellent, their superiors were understandably reluctant to part with them and often did everything in their power to prevent their assignment to the higher troop positions, for which they would have been so well qualified, until it was too late, and the nerve-racking atmosphere of General Staff service had taken its toll of their energy and elan.

In retrospect it is clear that the tendency towards the development of distinct and narrowly-defined career fields within the General Staff, although made inevitable by the conditions obtaining during the period of its growth, resulted in a highly undesirable kind of specialization, which was detrimental to the command function as a whole and which jeopardized seriously the traditional practice of utilizing the General Staff officer in a variety of capacities.

Section IV: The Officers from the Austrian General Staff

In 1938 the German Luftwaffe General Staff received welcome reinforcements in the persons of Austrian General Staff officers and officer candidates who had completed pilot training within the Austrian National Army. Generaloberst Erhard Raus has given a brief summary of the career of these officers. ¹¹

The Austrian National Army had no provision for general staff training until 1924, inasmuch as this had been prohibited by the Treaty of St. Germain. In 1924, with the knowledge of Italy and the silent consent of the other victor nations, a war academy was created in Vienna under the camouflage title "Military Evaluation Commission." The first course was a selective one for those officers who had been assigned towards the end of the war (1917) to Belgrade and Ljubljana for a three months' training course for candidates for the Imperial and Royal Austrian General Staff. Because these officers were so urgently needed, their training course in Vienna was shortened to three to four months, after which--provided the Commission approved them—they were immediately assigned to General Staff posts. Approximately one-half of this first group was able to qualify for General Staff service under these conditions.
Beginning in 1925, an intensive three-year course was introduced, admittance to which was contingent upon successful completion of an extremely difficult aptitude examination. The new course had even higher requirements than training under the prewar Imperial and Royal Austrian Army. Each course closed with a severe subject matter examination. The chief subjects studied were strategy, tactical warfare, and aerial warfare; which meant that each graduate was required to pass examinations in all three fields. Of 140 candidates who took the qualifying examination with me, only twenty-five passed. After completion of the three-year course, only twelve of us passed the final examinations successfully, and of these twelve, six were accepted for ultimate assignment to the General Staff after serving a probationary period of two years with that body. Prior to beginning the three-year course (which, incidentally, was so difficult that two of my comrades literally worked themselves to death), the candidate was required to serve one year with an armed forces branch other than his own.

There was no separate air force general staff. Generalmajor Loehr* (later Generaloberst) was in charge of this sector of the Austrian armed forces and was permitted to select whatever assistants he might need to help him establish the newly authorized air force. The few Austrian general staff officers later taken over into the German Army were just as well trained and just as competent as their German comrades.

Generaloberst Raus' letter makes it abundantly clear that the Austrian officers who joined the German General Staff had enjoyed thorough and careful training. After a short period of orientation regarding the specific requirements of the Luftwaffe, some fifteen Austrian officers took their place on the Luftwaffe General Staff; their status equalled in every respect that of their German colleagues. Their work, both before and during the war, was uniformly valuable.

* Alexander Loehr, Chief of Staff of the Austrian Air Forces and later Commander in Chief of the German Fourth Air Fleet. Generalmajor Loehr was executed in Jugoslavia in 1946.
Chapter 4

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF
THE LUFTWAFFE GENERAL STAFF

Section I: Definitions

The Armed Forces High Command

The German Armed Forces did not have a single, uniform Armed Forces General Staff. Instead, each of the services (Army, Navy, and Air) had its own general staff, whose structure as well as training were designed to meet its own particular needs. The officers making up the General Staff of the Armed Forces High Command were selected from among the general staff members of all three branches; however, there was no provision for giving them any common training for their new, common mission.

Inasmuch as the majority of the Luftwaffe General Staff, including its leading personalities, had come from the Army General Staff, it was natural that its organizational structure should be closely akin to that of the latter. Neither singly nor together, however, did the general staffs of the three Armed Forces branches ever play such an important role in the preparations for national defense or in the conduct of the war as the Great General Staff of former times. Whereas the Army Great General Staff was an instrument of command which was subordinate only to the Emperor, i.e. responsible only to the chief of state, the general staffs of the three Armed Forces branches had only limited authority within their own services and were subordinate to their respective commanders in chief. They, in turn, were no longer concerned with the conduct of war on behalf of the state, but only with the specific roles to be played by their own services within the framework of such a war. It must be admitted, however, that they had a good deal more freedom in this respect than would have been conducive to effective over-all planning on a joint basis. The Armed Forces High Command, that body which ought to have assumed responsibility for firm coordination of all the various
aspects of national defense planning, was simply too weak for its task. The commanders in chief of the three individual services bowed to the authority of Hitler in his capacity as chief of state and commander in chief of the Armed Forces, but refused to acknowledge the applicability of orders coming from the Armed Forces High Command itself unless they were issued explicitly in Hitler's name.* The position of chief of the Armed Forces High Command was bound to be insignificant as long as it was occupied by such a colorless individual as Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Keitel.

This organization might have functioned satisfactorily during peacetime, but experience has shown us that it was totally inadequate for the successful conduct of a war. War can be waged effectively only if all the components of a nation's armed forces can be brought to bear in coordinated action at the will of a single superior commander. And if this commander is not a soldier himself, it is imperative that he have at his disposal an operations staff which is capable of accomplishing its mission and which has the necessary authority to do so. The Third Reich did not possess an armed forces general staff of this type, and as the war progressed, chaos among her military leaders increased.

The Operations Staff of the Luftwaffe High Command

It is necessary to point out that the Operations Staff of the Luftwaffe, although it bore the designation Luftwaffe General Staff, actually had little in common with the traditional concept of such a body. The responsibilities coming within its purview were, in large part, those normally associated with a general staff; the composition of its personnel, however, fell far short of traditional standards. Only a fraction of the positions--albeit the most important ones--on the General Staff were filled by General Staff officers. Approximately

* See below, pp. 133 ff.
twenty percent of the positions were in this category, * while the remaining eighty percent were filled by reserve officers, civil servants, and technical specialists. Even so, this body was the operations staff of the Chief of the General Staff, and the most important positions on it were occupied by General Staff officers; because of this, both its name and recognition of its essential character seem to be justified.

The Luftwaffe General Staff

Neither the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff nor any member of that staff had command authority over the troops, except for those agencies which were directly subordinate to the Luftwaffe General Staff, such as the Inspectorates and the Air War Academy. The Chief of the General Staff found his primary function in acting as first advisor to his Commander in Chief in all matters pertaining to the operational command, training, organization, and supply of the troop units. Thus, he and his staff actually constituted the operations staff of the Commander in Chief, and the Chief of the General Staff could issue orders to the troops or to subordinate command agencies only in the name of and at the direction of the former. Moreover, the Luftwaffe General Staff was only one part of the Luftwaffe High Command, and thus can hardly be compared with a general staff in the traditional sense. It may clarify our thinking regarding the concept "general staff," i.e. as it existed within the Luftwaffe, if we consider it primarily not as an organizational entity, but rather as a group of individual officers, selected in accordance with specific criteria and trained especially for assignment to the most important command positions within the Luftwaffe. The records of these men were administered separately in the Luftwaffe Personnel Office and were available at all times for inspection by the Chief of the General Staff.

* Editor's Note: The number of General Staff officers in the Luftwaffe was, relatively speaking, small; only 294 as of 1 July 1944, and this number included General Staff officers assigned to front-line units, lower echelon headquarters and various liaison posts, as well as those assigned to the Luftwaffe High Command.
The troop unit staffs preserved the traditional concept of the general staff most faithfully. The organizational structure here was based on traditional principles, particularly the ones followed by the staffs of comparable level in the Army. Even in the troop staffs, however, only the most important posts were slated for General Staff officers, while their aides were all recruited from other sources.

Apart from minor modifications dictated by the shortage in qualified officer personnel, the outward structure of the General Staff agencies remained substantially the same. The personnel limitations which we have discussed must be taken into consideration in any evaluation of the organization of the staff and the responsibilities assigned to its various components.

In order that we may be better able to comprehend the material to be discussed in the following sections, it seems expedient at this point to explain certain terms and concepts.

1. **Top-level organization** - the organizational structure of the Armed Forces High Command during peacetime.
2. **Wartime top-level organization** - the above during wartime.
3. **Battle order** - the organizational structure of a higher-echelon agency, such as an Air Fleet, corps, or Air Administrative Command.
4. **Order of battle** - the roster of subordinate troop units assigned to higher-echelon command agency.
5. **Types of Subordination**:
   a. Administrative subordination - all the units comprising the order of battle of a superior headquarters.

* For original German terms, see glossary.
b. **Operational subordination** - subordination for the duration of a specific operation (also called tactical subordination).

6. **Duty and position roster** - Whereas special wartime strength authorization tables and service regulations, if applicable, were issued for all troop units, headquarters, and staffs, the staffs of the Reichs Ministry of Aviation and the office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe (later redesignated Reichs Air Ministry and Luftwaffe High Command) were not subject to standard authorizations and regulations. The organizational structure of these bodies was determined by the strength authorization and service regulations contained in Special Appendix 1 of the Luftwaffe Mobilization Plan.

7. **Office** - the largest administrative entity within a ministry, such as Personnel Office; the chief of such an office was an **office chief**, and his status was equivalent to that of a division commander.

8. **Department** - an office was made up of a group of departments or branches whose head was the **department chief**. His status was that of a brigade commander.

9. **Branch** - a subdivision consisting of several smaller entities of an office or department and presided over by the **branch chief**. As an example, Branch 1 of the General Staff was made up of the groups Operations Branch, Flying Forces; Operations Branch, Antiaircraft Artillery Forces, etc. The branch chief normally had the status of a regimental commander.

10. **Group** - the group was composed of several substaffs headed by a **group leader**. For example, the Antiaircraft Artillery Group consisted of the substaffs Ia, 1 (operations), Ia, 2 (training), Ia, 3 (technological requirements), etc.

11. **Substaff** - the smallest entity with responsibility for a specifically limited subject matter field; its chief was the **technical aide**.
Section II: Organizational Forerunners of the Luftwaffe General Staff

The Air Defense Office of the Reichs Ministry of Defense

The organizational structure of the Luftwaffe General Staff had its beginnings in the Air Defense Office, which came into being on 1 April 1933 as a part of the Reichs Ministry of Defense. Based on a decree from the Minister of Defense the Air Defense Office was created by combining the various Army and Navy agencies within the Reichswehr which had occupied themselves secretly with matters pertaining to the establishment of an air force for Germany.

As early as 15 July 1932, the Troop Office of the Army had requested a formulation of the principles to be followed in the future organization of an air force. The In1(L), (Inspectorate 1 (Air)), that section within the Troop Office which dealt with such matters, replied with a communication dated 10 August 1932, summarizing a suggested organizational plan for the new air force. The plan provided for the following organizational subdivisions: one branch for air force matters within the Troop Office, i.e., a part of the Army General Staff; one branch for air force matters within the Defense Office; one Inspector for the Flying Forces within the Defense Office; one Air Force Branch within the Armed Forces Armaments Office; one liaison officer in the Armed Forces Supply Office and one in the T-1 (Operations Branch).

According to the suggested plan, the air forces themselves were to be subordinated to the Chief of the Army Directorate. This furnishes conclusive proof of the fact that the contemplated air force was not to be an independent service under the Armed Forces, but rather an Army air force, whose commander would be a member of the Army General Staff (at that time still called the Troop Office). A separate air force, with independent missions within the framework of a war, was still a utopian fantasy in the eyes of the Army General

* A cover name for the forerunner of the Luftwaffe General Staff.
Staff of that day; moreover, it would have meant a weakening of the Army's dominant position in the hierarchy of military command.

Since the beginning of 1932, questions connected with a naval air force had come under the purview of a special air defense group within the Navy High Command.

With the creation of the Air Defense Office as a separate entity within the Reichs Ministry of Defense, both the Army and Navy, of course, had to give up all hope of ever maintaining air forces of their own.

Colonel Bohnstedt became Chief of the Air Defense Office, and Commander (Navy) Wenninger his chief of staff. Branch 1 of the Air Defense Office was divided into two subbranches, L1 (Army) and L1 (Navy). Each subbranch was composed of three groups, as follows: Group I - (Tactics); Group II - (Organization); Group III - (Training).

To all intents and purposes, Branch 1 constituted the General Staff of the contemplated air force. Its personnel roster is of interest, inasmuch as most of the names appearing on it were to attain prominence later on in key posts of the Luftwaffe General Staff:

Office Chief: Colonel Bohnstedt
Liaison Officer to the Reichs Commissioner of Aviation:
  Captain Hans Jeschonnek
Chief of Staff: Commander (Navy) Rudolf Wenninger
Sub-Branch 1, L1 (Army): Lt. Colonel Dietrich Volkmann
  Group I (Tactics): Captain Josef Kammhuber*
  Group II (Organization): Captain Wilhelm Speidel
  Captain Schmepper
  Group III (Training): Captain Gerd von Massow
  Captain Rudolf Meister

* Editor's Note: Later to become the first post World War II Chief of the German Air Force.
The decree issued by the Reichs Minister of Defense on 21 March 1933\(^5\) established the following principles of organization and contemplated responsibilities of the Air Defense Office:

1. The Chief of the Air Defense Office will report directly to the Reichs Minister of Defense.

2. The Air Defense Office will have authority to deal with those aspects of its own subject matter field which pertain also to the Army and Navy.

3. In relation to the flying forces and air defense units, as well as to the air weather service units associated with them, the Air Defense Office will have the status of an Ordnance Inspectorate.

4. The Chief and Chief of Staff of the Air Defense Office will be selected from different branches of the Armed Forces if at all possible.

5. Responsibilities
   a. air strategy
   b. organization and preparation for Case A (i.e., mobilization) in compliance with instructions issued by the Army and Navy High Commands
   c. training in the use of air force ordnance materiel
   d. development of aircraft and aircraft equipment
   e. dissemination of instructions pertaining to the development of all equipment and munitions to the appropriate agencies within the Army and Navy High Commands (all requirements of a tactical nature will be submitted for prior approval by the latter agencies before dissemination)
f. administration of air weather service units (with the exception of those units specifically assigned to the Army or Navy)

g. all aspects of national defense having to do with aviation and air-raid defense and outside the province of the Armed Forces, these matters to be handled jointly by the Air Defense Office and the Army and Navy High Commands

h. budgetary planning

This early attempt to attain some degree of uniformity in the handling of matters pertaining to the air forces shows clearly that one of the most important problems of all, exercise of the command function over the new force, had not yet been settled. From the fact that the Chief of the Air Defense Office was not to be a commander in chief, but rather an Inspector of the flying forces, it seems obvious that a direct subordination of air force units to the Reichs Ministry of Defense was not contemplated. On the other hand, the many qualifications and reservations in favor of Army and Navy control would seem to support the assumption that the air force units were to be placed under these two branches in case of war. Built on compromises, the Air Defense Office could not expect to have any enduring influence, and when the Reichs Air Ministry was established on 10 May 1933, the Air Defense Office was disbanded as an independent office and incorporated into the Ministry.

The Air Command Office of the Reichs Air Ministry

The Air Defense Office, taken over into the Reichs Air Ministry under the new title Air Command Office, was organized into the following subdivisions: Air Force Operations Branch (strategy and commitment of forces); Air Force Organization Branch; Air Force Training Branch; Air Defense Branch; Personnel Branch; Miscellaneous Branch (general aspects of troop administration).

The section dealing with technological matters within the Air
Defense Office, Branch L-2, was divided; the Supply Group and the Inspectorate for Aircraft Equipment being incorporated into the Miscellaneous Branch of the Air Command Office, and the remainder of the section being made a part of the Miscellaneous Office of the Reichs Air Ministry.

From the standpoint of its responsibilities, the Air Command Office was clearly the forerunner of the future Luftwaffe General Staff.

The following months were devoted to necessary groundwork and to the problem of developing the best possible organizational plan for the new Reichs Air Ministry.*

The Chain of Command within the Reichs Air Ministry

Upon its establishment, the Reichs Air Ministry was placed under the Reichs Minister of War and Commander in Chief of the entire Armed Forces. This chain of command was made applicable to all questions of the national defense except for those aspects of defense which clearly fell within the purview of the Minister of Aviation in his capacity as a member of the Cabinet. Naturally, it was not always possible to draw a clear line between these two spheres of responsibility, and in doubtful cases Goering was not above using the authority inherent in his political power to effect an arbitrary decision.

Goering, whose other political functions occupied the majority of his time, named the newly appointed State Secretary of Aviation, Erhard Milch, as his permanent deputy. Prior to his appointment, Milch had been a director of Lufthansa.

In every respect, then, all the offices of the Reichs Air Ministry—including the Air Command Office—were under the authority of the State Secretary in his capacity as permanent deputy to the

* See Figure 1.
Minister.

The service regulations issued for the Reichs Air Ministry provided that the Air Command Office was to issue orders concerning command function, organization, training, and armament equipment to all offices of the Ministry and to the Inspectorates at the behest of the Reichs Minister of Aviation or the State Secretary, as the appointed representative of the latter.

Although the service regulation did not specifically grant superior command authority to the Air Command Office (to all intents and purposes, the General Staff), by inference it enjoyed considerable authority within the Ministry from the very beginning, and was able to exert a great deal of influence on the expansion of the Luftwaffe. Field Marshal Kesselring, as one of the chiefs of the Air Command Office, has the following to say:

At the direction of the Reichs Minister of Defense, the Air Command Office—or Luftwaffe General Staff—was made a part of the Air Ministry. From the very beginning it was recognized as a prince among peers, and its position as a Ministry office permitted it to exercise a decisive influence on the entire field of aviation and on the function of command over the air force troops.*

The organization of the General Staff itself was modelled closely on that of the Army General Staff. The Luftwaffe General Staff was made up of the following: an operations branch; an organization branch; a training branch; a branch for the study of foreign air forces; a quartermaster general branch.

There was no branch to correspond to the Army General Staff's Rail Transportation Branch. Instead, the Aviation Office of the Ministry, which concerned itself with questions

* Underlined by the author. Command authority could be exercised only in the Minister's name.
of civil aviation, assumed responsibility for air transport matters, working closely with all other branches and offices, particularly the operations branch and the Technical Office. This was an ideal solution.

In contrast to the Army, the Luftwaffe Inspectorates (bomber forces, reconnaissance forces, fighter forces, seaplane forces, service schools, signal communications service, motor vehicle transport, and medical service) were directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff. In the beginning especially, this was an undeniable advantage, since channels were as short as they could possibly be. And this was important, for the effectiveness of Luftwaffe organization could be measured only by the ease with which technological developments could be assessed and their correlation to strategy determined. The system was workable, because General Staff service with the Luftwaffe required other, in part less time-consuming, activity than Army General Staff service. The Technical Office, on the other hand, was not officially a part of the Luftwaffe General Staff; however, its offices were in the same building as the latter, and the cooperation between the two was far closer than was the case with the Army General Staff and the Defense Office and Ordnance Office. The fact that their operations were so closely coordinated that the two offices were almost one was a vital factor in the creation from nothing, of an effective Luftwaffe. Since the entire organization was so small, its members knew each other better.

Thus, the Field Marshal, who—as Chief of the Luftwaffe Administration Office and, later of the General Staff—witnessed developments from their inception.

**The Missions of the Air Command Office**

The missions of the Air Command Office, as an unofficial Luftwaffe General Staff, were determined by the objectives
established by the new government and by the plans of the Minister.

Hitler had already outlined the government's over-all objective with unequivocal clarity. Bridging the gap created by fifteen years of inactivity, Germany was to include in her new Armed Forces establishment an air force comparable in every respect to the other two branches of the Armed Forces.

Goering was determined to create the best and largest air force in the world in the shortest possible time. As a deadline for the attainment of this goal, which was to be achieved in several phases, he set 1943.

Accordingly, it was the mission of the Air Command Office to create the premises necessary for attainment of the stated objective. Of primary importance initially were all aspects of troop organization and the structure of the troop command apparatus. Correlated to the above was the urgent need to develop training regulations for use in the flight training and other service schools, then in process of organization, and in the newly activated troop units.

Another extremely important aspect—although not the most urgent in point of time—was the establishment of operational instructions for the employment of the new air units in national defense, insofar as such employment fell within the framework of joint Armed Forces undertakings. This included the organization of supply services, motor vehicle transport, medical services, signal communications systems, and the air weather service, as well as the tentative formulation of technological requirements and the estimation of armament needs.

In the accomplishment of these missions, the Air Command Office was authorized and, in fact, obliged, to issue orders to all the offices of the Reichs Air Ministry, insofar as their cooperation was necessary to assure attainment of the over-all objective.

That this objective, which, although clearly defined, was somewhat difficult to envision practically in the beginning, could be
developed into a firmly conceived work schedule with clear and realistic target dates was due largely to the work of one man, General Wever, first Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff.

There was one factor, a decisive one in the rapid establishment and expansion of the Luftwaffe, which facilitated the work of the Air Command Office. One of the officers who participated in the early developments as a technical aide in the Organization Branch has the following to say:

The factor was the status of the General Staff as a Ministry agency responsible at the same time for planning and for the execution of its plans. For example, a member of the Organization Branch could set up a plan for the activation of certain new units, present it to the Chief of the General Staff for approval, and then prepare the necessary instructions to subordinate headquarters for accomplishment of his plan. A simple, clearly defined channel!

The situation was quite different in the Army, whose General Staff was charged with the planning function only. In the Army, after a plan had been approved by the Chief of the General Staff, it was transmitted to the General Army Office for action. The latter office, frequently after time-consuming conferences and consultations, then issued orders through the Army General Staff to the headquarters concerned for execution of the plan. Very often, however, the original plan was modified, changed completely, or abandoned altogether—sometimes as the result of petty rivalry.

The further missions of the General Staff, as well as that body’s concept of the conduct of air warfare, will be discussed in detail in later sections.

Section III: The Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe

Prior to 1935, of course, all the steps taken towards the
establishment of a new air force had to be carried out more or less secretly. On 26 February 1935, Hitler issued a decree which established the Luftwaffe as a third, independent branch of the Armed Forces, its new status to become effective on 1 March 1935. This decree confirmed officially the double status of the Reichs Minister of Aviation as concurrent Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. In the latter capacity he remained subordinate to the Reichs Minister of War, who was Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, but his status was equal to that of the Commanders in Chief, Army and Navy.

The decree caused no changes in the organizational structure of the Reichs Air Ministry or in the missions of the Air Command Office. The office of the Reichs Minister of Aviation, however, was redesignated as the Office of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

Its functions remained substantially the same, i.e., it continued to handle the missions assigned to the Minister and the Commander in Chief. The State Secretary, of course, was now officially the deputy of both the Minister and the Commander in Chief.

Section IV. The Luftwaffe General Staff (as of 1 August 1936)

As I have already pointed out in Chapter 2, by the fall of 1935 the strongly-felt need to give the Air Command Office a more clearly defined position within the Armed Forces command organization, a position more in keeping with the nature of its missions and with its status as a Ministry agency, had led to various considerations regarding the form and structure of a possible Luftwaffe General Staff. It was not until the early summer of 1936, though, that these considerations were given more substantial form, and not until 1 August 1936 that Goering ordered the preparation of a General Staff personnel roster. When General Wever, first Chief of the Air Command Office, met his death on 3 June 1936, his successor, General Kesselring, was officially appointed Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff.

Despite the change in its chief's title, the organizational
structure, title, and responsibilities of the Air Command Office remained the same—apart from a certain expansion of responsibilities occasioned by the growth of the Luftwaffe. Its new status as the General Staff of the Luftwaffe was apparent in the beginning only in the distinctive uniforms worn by its members and in the special classification of its officers. Since most of the positions within the Air Command Office were held by General Staff officers and since the chief bore the title "Chief of the General Staff," the desired psychological effect was attained in the form of increased authority for the Air Command Office in the eyes of the troop units, the other Armed Forces branches, and the other sections of the Reichs Air Ministry. On the other hand, its new status proved to be the cause of much dissension between Milch, the State Secretary, and the Chief of the General Staff. The disagreement between the two men reached such proportions that Kesselring resigned on 31 May 1937 and was replaced by General Stumpff, former Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office.

Section V: The Reorganization of the Office of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe in 1937

In an attempt to resolve the difficulties existing between the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff, a reorganization of the Ministry and a modification in the chain of command were ordered at the time General Stumpff was appointed. The order redesignated those departments directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff as "Luftwaffe General Staff," and equated the status of the Chief of the General Staff to that of the State Secretary in every respect.

As a result of this reorganization, the following two bodies came under the direct supervision of the Reichs Minister of Aviation and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe:

1. Chief of the General Staff: Luftwaffe General Staff (consisting of Branches I, II, III, V, and VII); seven Inspectorates; the
Air War Academy; the Air Technical Academy; the Luftwaffe Advanced School.

2. State Secretary of Aviation with the following offices:
   General Air Office (LB); Technical Office (LC); Luftwaffe Administration Office (LD); Supply Office (LE); Luftwaffe Personnel Office (LP); Central Branch (ZA); Inspectorate for Antiaircraft Artillery and Air Defense; Inspectorate of Schools; Inspectorate for Air Safety and Equipment.

   The General Staff retained the authority to issue orders in the name of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, to the other sections of the Reichs Air Ministry and to troop headquarters concerning all questions of national defense (mobilization), operational instructions, organization, training, armament, and supply. In all of these matters, the Chief of the General Staff was to report directly to the Commander in Chief and was required only to keep the State Secretary informed.

   As deputy to the Reichs Minister of Aviation, the State Secretary was in charge of the other offices of the Ministry. In matters of policy, if his views should differ from those of the Chief of the General Staff, the State Secretary had the right to present his opinion to the Commander in Chief for final decision.

   The new chain of command greatly curtailed the power formerly enjoyed by the State Secretary, and—since Milch was unable to resign himself to render the fair cooperation necessary to the good of the cause*—from the very beginning there were unpleasant disagreements regarding the limitations of individual authority. This friction was not only nerve-racking and time-consuming but also represented a serious threat to the harmonious development of the new service. General Stumpff's attempts to smooth things over with tact and friendliness were doomed to failure by the offended pride of the State

* For further details of the problems created by the Milch/Chief, General Staff relationship, see also Erhard Milch, ein Versuch (Erhard Milch, an Essay), by Richard Suchenwirth; Karlsruhe Document Collection.
Secretary, whose desire for power had been thwarted and who stubbornly refused to give up his fight to regain the position of sole commander within the Reichs Air Ministry.

In order to facilitate his own mission, the Chief of the General Staff introduced a simplified and clearer organizational structure for his staff on 1 October 1937. The individual branches under his command were combined into integrated groups, as follows:* Chief of the General Staff; Luftwaffe General Staff; Luftwaffe Operations Staff, with Branch I (Operations) (Ia), Branch V (Intelligence) (Ic), Mapping Group; Organization Staff, with Branch II (Organization); Branch IV (Armament and Supply Planning); Training Staff, with Branch III (Training). In addition Branch VII (Signal Communications); seven Inspectorates; Air War Academy; Air Technical Academy; Luftwaffe Advanced Training School.

These regroupings, of course, had no effect on the offices under the direction of the State Secretary, but were intended merely to facilitate the work being done within the General Staff itself.

The rivalry between the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff continued unabated. Under the prevailing conditions, this unhealthy situation could have been ameliorated only if it had been possible to achieve the appointment of the Chief of the General Staff as the permanent representative of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, a step which, objectively speaking, had much to recommend it. However, the political ties of the State Secretary, as well as certain other factors, made it inadvisable for the Commander in Chief to consider taking such a step. It is possible that Goering's subconscious distrust of the "red trousers"† may have played just as important a role here as the resistance of the State Secretary. For it must be remembered that the relationship between Goering and Milch was far from ideal. As far as Milch's political connections

* See Figure 3.

† Editor's Note: The reference is to officers of the General Staff whose trousers bore a distinctive, double crimson stripe.
were concerned, he was much closer to Hitler and the Party than he was to Goering. Thus, even if Goering had wanted to get rid of him, it would have been extremely difficult to accomplish.

General der Flieger Paul Deichmann writes the following concerning the conditions obtaining at that time:

... During this critical period there were rumours in Goering's immediate circle to the effect that he would have liked very much to rid himself of his State Secretary, but that Milch had been shrewd enough to convince the Nazi Party that he was needed in his position as a counterbalance to Goering, whose unwarranted extravagances were beginning to make him unpopular.

Objectively considered, this round of the battle went to the Chief of the General Staff; the General Staff was declared no longer subordinate to the State Secretary, and the Chief was granted the right of direct access to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe—with the reservation that he keep the State Secretary informed of the matters discussed and the decisions reached. The directive of 2 June 1937 relieved the State Secretary of permanent duty as the deputy of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, and instructed that he assume this responsibility only if the Commander in Chief should be away for a lengthy period of time or should be prevented by some unforeseen reason from continuing his work.

It was clear, however, that fruitful cooperation between General Kesselring, as Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, and State Secretary Milch was impossible after all that had happened, and General Kesselring, at his own request, was relieved of the Chief's post and appointed Commanding General, IIId Air Administrative Area. On 1 June 1937, General der Flieger Stumpff was named as his successor.

In my capacity as Chief of Branch I, which at that time included the group responsible for establishing tactical technological requirements, I soon had the impression that, from
the date of Stumpff's appointment on, the technical sections
(which were directly subordinate to the State Secretary, and
not to the Chief of the General Staff) were actively resisting
any attempt at cooperation with the General Staff.

Inasmuch as the State Secretary and the offices under his di-
rection were also responsible for many important missions closely
allied with the military establishment (technological development,
administration, building supervision, supply operations, personnel
administration), it was obvious that the continual friction was bound
to result in total paralysis of the command function sooner or later.
The Chief of the General Staff was fully aware of the danger inherent
in this situation. It was imperative that a mutually satisfactory solu-
tion be found at all costs before the disastrous effects of the split in
command should become too deeply rooted to alter. And, since
Goering was unwilling to take a firm stand on the side of his General
Staff Chief, in late 1937 Stumpff took the initiative and came forward
with the suggestion that he, as Chief of the General Staff, should
once again place himself under the direction of the State Secretary as
the sole representative of the Minister.

In this connection, Stumpff proposed a reorganization of the
Reichs Air Ministry which became effective on 18 January 1938 and
was to be accomplished by 1 April 1938.

Stumpff's proposed reorganization is yet another illustration
of the continuing friction between the offices of the State Secretary
and the Chief of the General Staff, a trend which was to exert a
decisive influence on the final dissolution of the Luftwaffe command
organization at the end of the war.

Section VI: The Reorganization of 18 January 1938

Stumpff's proposed reorganization formed the basis of a
personal conference between Stumpff and Goering, which was to
result in a decisive reorganization of the Reichs Air Ministry and a
fundamental revision of the responsibilities of its top officials. *

The reorganization directive, dated 18 January 1938, named the State Secretary as permanent representative of the Minister, and designated the Chief of the General Staff as his operational staff chief in connection with his duties as deputy. Thus, unity of command within the Reichs Air Ministry was restored, at least theoretically. Even the fact that the Chief of the General Staff now had the right to report directly to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, in all questions concerning operational command and that he was still nominally directly subordinate to the latter changed nothing in the status of the General Staff as being subordinate to the State Secretary. In practice, the Chief of the General Staff still received his instructions from the State Secretary, and was responsible for keeping the latter informed of all policy matters.

The directive altered the status of the State Secretary as a department chief and combined several other functions into newly created offices, such as those of the Chief of Air Defense and Inspectorate General, Luftwaffe. These two posts, like the Chief, Technical Office and the Chief, Luftwaffe Personnel Office, were directly subordinate to Goering. Although the Office of the Chief of the General Staff occupied a very strong position as a result of the reorganization, in the last analysis the Chief's own position was still that of a prince among peers.

The reorganization directed by the order of 18 January 1938 had undeniable advantages over the former organizational structure. Based on compromise, however, it could not succeed in eliminating entirely all the sources of friction. Everything depended on the willingness of the other officials in the Reichs Air Ministry to recognize the Chief of the General Staff as a prince among peers, and on the attitude of the State Secretary towards the General Staff.

In view of the past differences of opinion between the State

* See Figure 4.
Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff, it seemed obvious that petty misunderstandings and minor disagreements would continue to interfere with the orderly transaction of business within the Ministry. This could have been avoided only by a change in the incumbency of one or the other of the two posts, and Goering was unwilling to order such a change. On the contrary, he seemed to feel that the continual rivalry between his two subordinates served to strengthen his own position.

It soon became apparent, however, that the new reorganization could not possibly be maintained in case of war. It was felt that the top-level command organization of the Luftwaffe ought to be brought into at least approximate alignment with its counterparts in the other two Armed Forces branches. In case of war, these command organizations would hardly remain in Berlin; on the other hand, it would certainly not be feasible to move the entire Reichs Air Ministry from place to place. Accordingly, a way had to be found to separate the Luftwaffe military command apparatus from the rest of the Ministry without causing organizational chaos. Serious study was devoted to this problem during 1938, resulting in still another reorganization of the Ministry and revision of the duties of the Chief of the General Staff. This reorganization took effect at the time of Jeschonnek's appointment as Chief.

Section VII: The Reorganization of 1 February 1939

The reorganization of 1 February 1939* was based on a suggestion by Colonel Jeschonnek, Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff and candidate for the post of Chief of the General Staff. The directive, based on his proposal, removed the General Staff from the organizational structure of the Reichs Air Ministry itself, so that it could be separated without difficulty in case of war. All those sections not directly concerned in the conduct of military operations were detached from the General Staff and placed under the newly

* See Figure 5.
THE REORGANIZATION OF 1 FEBRUARY 1939

Ministerial Office

Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe

State Secretary and Inspector General

Luftwaffe Commission

Chief of the General Staff and Chief of the Operations Staff

Br. I Operations
Br. V Foreign Air Forces
Br. III Training
Quartermaster General
Br. II Mobilization Planning
Br. IV Quarter master
Br. VI Armament

Central Branch
Organization Reichs Ministry of Aviation
Attaches

Chief of Procurement and Supply
L. G. Air Technical Office
Supply
Industrial and Economic Planning

Chief of Training

Training Branch
Regulations Branch
T. O. & E.

Luftwaffe Inspectorates:
1. Reconnaissance
2. Bomber and Dive Bomber
3. Fighter Aircraft
4. Antiaircraft Artillery
5. Flying Safety
6. Motor Transport
7. Air Signals Troops
8. Naval Aircraft
9. Flying Schools
10. Education and Training
11. Airlanding and Paratroop Forces
12. Navigation
13. Civil Air Defense
14. Medical Service

Chief of Air Defense

L. B. General Air Office
L. D. Administration
L. P. Personnel Office

Chief of Signal Communications (Luftwaffe Inspectorate 7)

* This organizational structure, with only minor changes, existed until 1944.

Figure 5
created Inspector General (i.e. the State Secretary).

The reduction in staff introduced by the new General Staff Chief did, indeed, facilitate effective supervision of the various elements under his direction; however, it also resulted in the loss of much of his direct influence over several important aspects of military planning. For example, the removal of the section responsible for signal communications operations from the General Staff proper was justifiable from this point of view only because its Chief, General Martini, was an officer who placed the good of the cause above his own person and continued to cooperate in the closest possible way with the General Staff.

In like manner the assignment of the Inspectorates to the Chief of Training—thus, indirectly, to the Inspector General (State Secretary)—undoubtedly facilitated the work of the Chief of the General Staff, but at the same time it precluded his exercising any direct influence on troop training and prevented any direct and immediate evaluation on the part of top-level command of the experience gathered at troop level. During the campaign in Poland it became obvious that this was a distinct disadvantage, and the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, ordered that the Inspectorates be placed under a separate General z.b.V. (special duty general officer), who had instructions to work closely with the General Staff. Later on, the most important Inspectorates and the Technical Service Generals which developed from them were again made directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff.

With its separation from the administrative organization of the Reichs Air Ministry, the General Staff once more took on the character of a personal operations staff for the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. From this point on, the Chief of the General Staff was authorized to inform the State Secretary of matters pertaining to operations after, rather than before, his conferences with the Commander in Chief. In all other matters, however, he still had to report first to the State Secretary and Inspector General and obtain the decision of the latter as deputy of the Commander in Chief. This was a vague and illogical procedure, the success of which depended solely on the good will of
the parties concerned. The fact that this organizational structure was able to maintain itself until 1944, albeit with a great many minor modifications, was due chiefly to the war itself. Geographical separation helped to avoid most of the more serious conflicts; personal connections seemed less important; and the exigencies of war moulded the General Staff into an effective operations staff for the use of the Commander in Chief.

Section VIII: Wartime Top-Level Organization of the Luftwaffe General Staff, from 1939 until 1944

The organizational structure of the General Staff as of 1 February 1939 was also intended to be its wartime structure. Although it was modified somewhat by mobilization directives, it was not fundamentally altered by them.

As the threat of war became greater, the Luftwaffe General Staff transferred its headquarters to Wildpark-Werder (near Potsdam), which had been designated as the wartime headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. The rest of the Reichs Air Ministry remained in Berlin under the direction of the State Secretary and Inspector General. The geographical separation thus effected helped to reduce the otherwise unavoidable conflicts to a bearable minimum.

There were no further fundamental changes in the wartime organizational structure until 1944. The minor modifications accomplished within the General Staff prior to 1944 were as follows:

1940: Certain of the Inspectorates which had been placed under the direction of the Chief of Training were instructed to report directly to the Chief of the General Staff in matters of policy, keeping the Chief of Training fully informed. The inspectorates affected were: 1, 2, 3, 8, 12.

During the summer of 1940, Luftwaffe Inspectorate 16, Inspectorate for the Air-Sea Rescue Service, was formed and placed under the command of the Quartermaster General, thus, indirectly.
under the Chief of the General Staff.

1941: The Luftwaffe Inspectorates 1, 2, and 3 were redesignated General of the Reconnaissance Forces, General of the Bomber Forces, and General of the Fighter Forces. All three were made directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe (who, in the meantime, had become Reichsmarschall). This chain of command made them, technically and operationally, directly subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff. The urgent need, clearly recognized in the meantime, to make the tactical and technological experience gathered at troop level immediately available to top-level commanders served as motivation for this reorganization.

1942: Two new offices were created, a Special Commissioner for Torpedo Weapons and an Inspector for Aerial Mines, both of them under the direct supervision of the Chief of the General Staff. At the same time, the Luftwaffe Inspectorate 8, Inspectorate for the Naval Aircraft Forces, was disbanded. Its duties, insofar as they did not fall within the purview of the new offices, were assigned to the Luftwaffe General with the Navy High Command, or, rather, to the office under his direction, the Inspector, Navy.

Branch VII of the General Staff was formed by combining the Mapping Group, from Branch I, and the Aerial Photography Branch, from the office of the Chief of Training. The newly created Branch VII was placed under the command of the Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff.

1943: During the early part of 1943, the Chief of the General Staff further facilitated his own mission by assigning greater independence to the Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff and placed the following sections under the latter's direct command: Branch I, Operations; Branch V, Intelligence; Branch VII, Mapping and Aerial Photography; Chief, Signal Communications; Chief, Air Weather Service; Air Defense Planning Staff; Senior Commander, Troop Gas Defense.

The office of General of the Close-Support Forces was created and placed under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.
The Supply Office was abolished, to be replaced by the office of the Chief of Supply, which was made subordinate to the Quartermaster General, (i.e. to the Chief of the General Staff).

The Luftwaffe Inspectorate 6, (Motor Vehicles) and the Motor Vehicle Group of the Supply Office were combined into the office of the Chief of Motor Vehicle Transport, Luftwaffe under the command of the Quartermaster General.

In order to reduce superfluous courier traffic and to conserve aviation fuels in all branches of the Armed Forces, the office of the Chief of the Air Liaison Service was established and assigned to the Quartermaster General.

A number of other offices were set up during 1943 (which marked the beginning of the Allied large-scale air attacks) in order to speed the expansion of the Luftwaffe ground organization and to see that the technological prerequisites for increased commitment of Luftwaffe units in home air defense were fulfilled. These offices, which were also under the aegis of the Quartermaster General, were as follows: the office of the General for Air Traffic Control and the Ground Organization; the office of the General for Troop Technical Services, (made up of elements from the office of the Chief of Air Safety (Luftwaffe Inspectorate 5), and the office of the Chief of Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply); the office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe (by this time, the retreats in the east and south made it imperative that the General Staff have a section devoted to administrative matters).

The office of the General for Personnel Utilization, while remaining nominally subordinate to the Chief of Air Defense, was placed under the operational supervision of the Quartermaster General.

In May 1943, all the air transport units were combined under the newly created Headquarters, XIV Air Corps, which was later to become the office of the General of the Air Transport Forces. This General was directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, although he received his instructions from the Quartermaster.
General.

From the modifications in organization and chain of command described above, it is apparent that the wartime top-level organizational structure in effect at the beginning of the war was inadequate to the demands of effective military leadership. The overly simplified organization of the General Staff, with the resultant division of responsibility for important sectors of military activity, also proved to be unsatisfactory in the long run. Since the State Secretary possessed neither the ability to accept a subordinate role gracefully nor the necessary knowledge and understanding of military requirements, smooth cooperation was out of the question. The exigencies of war gradually led to the transfer of more and more responsibility from the State Secretary to the Chief of the General Staff, specifically to the Quartermaster General. As a result, the latter offices were overburdened with work and were unable to maintain effective supervision over the many activities in their charge. Inasmuch as the activation of new units and the redeployment of existing ones were usually not ordered until the military situation or a tactical error on someone's part forced the issue, they invariably came too late to improve the situation appreciably. A fundamental revision of the existing wartime top-level organization seemed urgently indicated, and in 1944 it took place.

Section IX: Wartime Top-Level Organization of the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Ministry of Aviation, 1934

The early war years, especially 1943, had made it evident that a number of organizational changes in the offices of the State Secretary and the Chief of the General Staff were badly needed, and that the partial subordination of the General Staff Chief to the State Secretary was an unsatisfactory arrangement. Accordingly, during 1944 several basic organizational changes were undertaken in order to concentrate the function of operational command in the office of the Chief of the General Staff. The most significant of these was the abolishment of the office of State Secretary and Inspector General, Luftwaffe.
All those elements assigned to the Reichs Air Ministry and Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe which, prior to 1944, had been subordinate to the Chief of the General Staff or to the new office in charge of personnel utilization and supply planning were brought together as the Luftwaffe High Command.

The rest of the Ministry was placed under the Chief of Aviation, who now assumed the title Reichs Minister of Aviation. This office was filled by State Secretary Milch.

These three offices, Chief of the General Staff, Chief of Personnel Utilization and Supply Planning, and Chief of Aviation, were made directly responsible to the Reichsmarschall, and all three chiefs were accorded the status of deputy to the latter for their own particular areas of responsibility.

It is true that operational command was now primarily the province of the Chief of the General Staff; however, the former double channel of authority had now become a triple one, and it was not long before the new system also proved unsatisfactory. To what extent this may have been due to the personalities of the three incumbents need not interest us here. In any case, in December 1944 the post of Chief of Personnel Utilization and Supply Planning was abolished once more, and the elements belonging to it were reassigned as follows: The Luftwaffe Personnel Office was made directly responsible to the Reichsmarschall as were the Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe, the Luftwaffe Defense Office, and the Supply Planning Operations Staff. The Office of the General for Military Training was subordinated to the Chief of the General Staff.

Air armament was turned over in its entirety to the Reichs Minister of Armament and War Production, Albert Speer, at the time of the so-called tripartite organization in the summer of 1944, thus removing it from the jurisdiction of the State Secretary. The office of the Chief, Luftwaffe Procurement and Supply was disbanded and its staff (insofar as it did not move into Speer's office) was utilized to form the office of the Chief of Technical Air Armament, which was assigned to the Chief of the General Staff. This move finally gave the
General Staff Chief the influence he needed over technological development and armament planning; since he had little or no influence over Speer, however, there was little he could do to change the course of events as the war progressed.

The following offices still belonged within Milch's province as Chief of Aviation: Economics Office; Central Office Group; Luftwaffe Administration Office; General Air Office; Luftwaffe Inspectorate 13; Luftwaffe Inspectorate 17; Office of the General of the Luftwaffe Construction Forces, Office of the Chief of Luftwaffe Construction (Organization Todt).

It is clear that the State Secretary was left with nothing but administrative duties, while all his other responsibilities now were under either the direct or (through direct subordination to the Reichsmarschall) indirect influence of the Chief of the General Staff.

Other modifications carried out during 1944 were the following: the former office of the General for Air Traffic Control and the Ground Organization was divided into two parts, the Inspector of the Ground Organization and of Air Traffic Control, under the direction of the Chief of the General Staff, and the Luftwaffe Ground Organization Branch, subordinate to the Quartermaster General. The demands created by increased air activity on the home front, and the introduction of new aircraft models, etc. -- on the long-neglected ground organization within the Reich were the chief motivation for the reorganization mentioned above.

The Chief of Signal Communications, General Martini, received a new title, General of the Signal Forces, and his staff, which had grown steadily in size as a result of the increasing importance of radio communication, was further augmented by the staff of the former Luftwaffe Inspectorate for signal communications matters. Actually, the redesignation was intended merely to bring the organizational nomenclature into line with that of the other technical services generals. As a result, however, signal communications activity was now more firmly than ever under the control of a single person. The office remained, as before, under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.
The position Chief Engineer, Luftwaffe was created to replace the office of the General for Troop Technical Services; the new office being assigned responsibility for directing the operations of all Luftwaffe maintenance units through the Inspectorate of Air Technical Troop Services. The Chief of the General Staff had direct jurisdiction over the Chief Engineer.

The XIV Air Corps, headquarters for all air transport forces until 1944, was deactivated and its units placed under the command of the newly appointed General of the Air Transport Forces, who, in turn, was subordinate to the Quartermaster General.

During the course of the 1944 reorganizations, the post of General of Pilot Training was removed from the jurisdiction of the State Secretary and placed under the command of the Chief of the General Staff.

The activation of the Tenth Air Fleet at the end of 1944 brought other agencies concerned with personnel utilization and equipment planning under the influence of the Chief of the General Staff. Under the command of General von Seidel, formerly Quartermaster General, the Tenth Air Fleet was charged with the servicing and equipping of all training units, a responsibility which had previously been assigned to the Air Fleet Reich, but which the latter was no longer able to discharge inasmuch as it was fully occupied with the direction of air activity on the home front. The mission of the new Air Fleet was a difficult one because of the direct influence which the technical services generals could and— as the personnel shortage assumed ever more critical proportions—often did exert over the units comprising it. In an attempt to ameliorate the situation, the Tenth Air Fleet was redesignated Headquarters, Commander, Replacement Luftwaffe in the spring of 1945.

All of these reorganizations, deactivations, new establishments, and modifications in the chain of command which took place during 1944 were the result of the growing seriousness of the situation at the front and in the home area; all of them were dictated by sober military necessity. It was no longer possible to indulge personal vanity
or petty self-glorification. It was obvious that the situation called
for the concentration of military authority in the hands of the chief
military advisor of the Commander in Chief, the Chief of the General
Staff. Goering made a tragic mistake in not recognizing in time that
such concentration of authority was imperative to the effective conduct
of an air war. All later attempts to remedy the situation came too
late to do any good.

Section X: Organizational Changes during 1945

As Germany's military position became more and more pre-
carious during the spring of 1945, Hitler and Goering ordered sweep-
ing changes in the existing order in a last, desperate attempt to sal-
vage the situation. One of their measures, which, incidentally,
seriously jeopardized the smooth functioning of the Luftwaffe General
Staff, was the appointment of special commissioners. Whenever
catastrophe seemed imminent in any area, a commissioner was
appointed, made personally responsible for seeing that his mission
was accomplished, and—to this end—given all-encompassing authori-
ty which, by order of the Fuhrer, took priority over all existing re-
quirements. The duties and responsibilities of the individual command
agencies were brought into such confusion by the activity of these
commissioners that their appointment resulted in a paralysis of the
command apparatus rather than in a resuscitation of the war effort.

Among the commissioners whose activity interfered with the
orderly functioning of the Luftwaffe command organization were the
following: Commissioner in Charge of Defense against Four-Engine
Bomber Units; General Commissioner in Charge of Jet Aircraft,
directly responsible to the Reichsmarschall; General Commissioner
in Charge of all Rocket Weapons, directly responsible to Hitler;
Special Mission and Troop Recommendations Staff.

The special commissioners were granted unlimited authority
so that they might have access to all available resources to accomplish
their missions. In practice, however, the difficulties—bottleneck,
damaged transportation facilities, and chaos in the fields of war
production and military leadership—had become so nearly insur-
mountable that they were able to accomplish little or nothing. And
their intervention in the established procedures of production and
of leadership only served to hasten the collapse of the entire military
apparatus.

At the beginning of the year, several changes took place within
the Luftwaffe General Staff itself. Increasingly frequent shifts in
personnel, made necessary by the deactivation of aircraft units, the
establishment of new parachute and antiaircraft artillery units, and
the continuing decrease in the production of weapons and aircraft,
often required organizational changes in these sectors on short notice.
Moreover, during 1945 top-level command arbitrarily ordered certain
changes in plans which the General Staff had worked out to compensate
for the acute shortage of materiel. The difficulties resulting from
intervention of this sort finally became so detrimental to effective
exercise of the command function that the Chief of the General Staff
decided to establish a new Luftwaffe Organization Staff, to be composed
of the following: Branch II, Organization, of the General Staff;
Strength and Equipment Authorization Branch; Group II of Branch VI
of the General Staff (which was redesignated Branch IX of the General
Staff).

The concentration of all General Staff agencies having to do
with organizational matters in a single staff was a move which was
long overdue. It was accomplished too late, however, to bear any
fruit prior to the end of the war.

At the beginning of 1945, Hitler ordered the consolidation of
the entire civil air defense system with the Luftwaffe air defense units
(including equipment supply depots, etc.) under the command of the
Reichs Commander of the SS and Minister of the Interior. The former
Air Defense Planning Staff was combined with Luftwaffe Inspectorate
13, Air Defense and, with a new title, Office of the Chief of Air De-
defense, placed under the command of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff.
The latter instance is an excellent example of the practice of organiz-
ing an office around a personality, an office which frequently has no
justifiable raison d'être and no real authority.
In the spring of 1945 the post Chief of High Frequency Communication was created in the office of the General of the Signal Forces to take over the task of coordinating Luftwaffe requirements in the field of high frequency communication. At the same time the Chief of High Frequency Communication was in charge of developmental activity in this field on the staff of the Chief of Technical Air Armament and was a member of the General Staff in both capacities. The final course of the war has shown that, here too, recognition of the necessity of placing this extremely important aspect of modern warfare in the hands of a single individual under the control of the General Staff came too late.

At the request of the Armed Forces High Command, another change was made; General of the Air Transport Forces was redesignated Chief of Air Transport for the Armed Forces. His function as Inspector of the Air Transport Forces and his status as subordinate to the Quartermaster General, Luftwaffe remained unchanged. He acquired the additional duty of coordinating supply drop operations with the Quartermaster General, Army. This measure was necessary since the disruption of transport facilities had become so widespread by the spring of 1945 that it was impossible to keep the troops adequately supplied by normal means.

All of these various measures—and I have named only the most important ones, insofar as they affected the work of the Luftwaffe General Staff—were expressions of the desperately hopeless situation at the front and in Germany herself, a situation which could no longer be salvaged by the means normally available to a military command apparatus. In addition, however, they were evidence of the fact that top political leaders no longer had any confidence in their military leaders, least of all in the leaders of the Luftwaffe. On the other hand, it is clear that the chaos within the military apparatus was due chiefly to intervention on the part of political leaders—a fact which we may mention in passing.

When the Allied forces crossed the Rhine and moved on to join the Russian offensive against Germany's capital, new organizational measures became necessary to permit the command apparatus to
function effectively. As early as January, February, and March of 1945 all offices and branches belonging to the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Ministry of Aviation had suffered a 50% cut in personnel strength, which was intended to make them more mobile. Although the Luftwaffe had hoped to maintain a single central headquarters until the end, this hope was soon dashed by the division of German-occupied territory into two spheres of military activity and the resultant geographical delineation of two major theaters of war. Apart from the newly accomplished reorganization within the Luftwaffe top-level command, additional modifications proved necessary to meet the changing military situation.

In line with the organizational policies followed by the Armed Forces High Command and the various Reichs ministries (i.e. separation into northern and southern headquarters) the following reorganization of the Luftwaffe command apparatus took effect in late March:

1. Most of the Luftwaffe High Command and the Reichs Ministry of Aviation were transferred with the Office of the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, into the southern military area, which was also the seat of the Armed Forces High Command, South.

2. A Luftwaffe Liaison Staff, North was created, made up of members of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff, placed under the command of the Chief of the latter staff, and assigned to the Armed Forces High Command, North. In the beginning, however, it remained operationally subordinate to the Luftwaffe High Command, a chain of command which could function smoothly only so long as the existing communications facilities were in order. Shortly before the end of the war the situation became so critical that there was only one radio channel in operation to connect north and south.

By war's end the Luftwaffe High Command was no more than a token command staff, composed of the following elements:

Chief of the General Staff with Chief of the Luftwaffe Operations Staff; Branch Ia; Pilot Operations (Ia); Antiaircraft Artillery Operations (Ia); Operations Staff, Weather Observation Station; Group I, Army
Liaison; Group I, Navy Liaison; Chief, Air Weather Service; Chief, Intelligence Branch.

Quartermaster General with Organization Staff, Branches II and IX; Branch IV; Branch VI; Luftwaffe Ground Organization Branch; Chief, Motor Vehicle Transport; Chief of Air Transport; Chief Administrative Officer, Luftwaffe.

General of the Signal Forces with Chief of Staff; Branches I through VI; Chief of High Frequency Communication; Chief of the Luftwaffe Personnel Office; Chief Judge Advocate, Luftwaffe.

By war's end, the total strength of the Luftwaffe High Command was only sixty-nine officers and forty-five other personnel.\textsuperscript{12}
Chapter 5

OTHER AREAS OF GENERAL STAFF SERVICE

Apart from the General Staff posts within the Luftwaffe High Command and those positions on the troop operations staffs which were manned by General Staff officers, it was expedient and in the best interests of the Luftwaffe to assign General Staff officers to certain other important positions outside the service branch itself.

Section I: Fuehrer Headquarters

Peacetime organizational plans called for the assignment of one General Staff officer from each of the Armed Forces branches to the adjutant's office of the Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich. This General Staff officer had nothing whatsoever to do with the planning or conduct of military operations; his mission was purely that of an aide and liaison officer. This position, with its aide and liaison duties, was also retained during the war.

Otherwise, as was also the case with the other Armed Forces branches, the interests of the Luftwaffe were represented at Fuehrer Headquarters by the Commander in Chief himself. Normally, the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, the State Secretary, or the appropriate office chief from the Reichs Air Ministry, were also called upon to participate in conferences at the Fuehrer Headquarters.

During the war there were no deviations from this procedure. When the practice of daily situation conferences at the Fuehrer Headquarters was introduced, the Luftwaffe was represented either by the Commander in Chief himself or by his designated representative, usually the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff. The longer the war continued, the more frequently it happened that some other officer had to be designated to attend the conferences, because it was quite impossible for the Commander in Chief or the Chief of the General Staff to neglect his other, more important work for the several hours which the conferences invariably lasted. This practice
resulted in a rather undesirable situation, however, in that the officer designated to attend the conferences was inevitably forced into the position of being the one to receive top-level commands (although technically he did not have the authority to do so). In this way, of course, the Commander in Chief and his Chief of the General Staff were bound to lose a great deal of their direct influence on the top-level decisions made daily at the Fuehrer Headquarters.

As the war continued, and the Luftwaffe chalked up one defeat after another, Goering's attitude of noncommittal helplessness led to a sharp decrease in Hitler's confidence in him, and in 1944 Hitler demanded that a Luftwaffe general be assigned permanently to the Fuehrer Headquarters as Goering's representative. This general was to be one who had Hitler's full confidence and he was to be granted full command authority over the Luftwaffe.

Hitler appointed Generaloberst Robert Ritter von Greim to the newly created post. He felt that this officer was one of the most dependable and capable of the Luftwaffe commanders. Von Greim, incidentally, did not in any respect fulfill the General Staff prerequisites for assignment to such a position—he belonged to the category of reactivated officers. Thus he would, in any case, require the assistance of the Luftwaffe General Staff and its Chief to enable him to accomplish his mission. Hitler's hope of making himself independent of Goering and the Luftwaffe General Staff could not be realized by von Greim's appointment.

The inner conflict created by this assignment in Generaloberst von Greim, who was otherwise an excellent and highly capable officer, caused him—after a short trial period at the Fuehrer Headquarters—to request that he be relieved of his assignment and be returned to his old front-line position as commander in chief, Sixth Air Fleet. As the war neared its end, and Goering was relieved of his various offices, von Greim was officially appointed to the position which Hitler intended him to hold unofficially as Luftwaffe General, Fuehrer Headquarters; he became Goering's successor as Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe. He was unable to face the capitulation of the German Armed Forces to the Allies, and on 24 May 1945, took his own life.
After von Greim's resignation as Luftwaffe General, Fuehrer Headquarters, the interests of the Luftwaffe were represented until the end of the war either by the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff or by the latter's appointed deputy.

Section II: Armed Forces High Command

The Armed Forces High Command has already been covered in detail in another section of this study. Suffice it to say in the present connection that the Armed Forces High Command--and the Operations Staff of that body--was far from that which the world (apart from Germany) imagined. This staff was not a General Staff in the traditional sense; it was not an instrument of command over the entire Armed Forces, but rather the personal staff--and a fairly small staff, at that--of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The command authority of the staff over the various Armed Forces branches was restricted to those orders and instructions which were issued in the name of the Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. In this light, it is clear that the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces High Command had no more authority than the chief of staff of a front-line unit--in other words, the command authority was vested in the commander in chief and not in the chief of staff. As a result, orders and instructions pertaining to basic policy had to be signed by Hitler himself in order to be recognized and accepted by the commanders in chief of the Armed Forces branches.*

The composition of the staff was in keeping with its limited missions. The most important positions on it were reserved for the Army as a matter of principle; the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command, the Chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff, the latter's deputy, and the chiefs of most of the offices making up the High Command were members of the Army.

In 1939 a Luftwaffe Group was established in the Home Defense

* See below, pp. 133 ff.
Branch of the Armed Forces High Command to handle matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe. In keeping with its minor status, the Group was headed by a young General Staff officer, with one or two even younger General Staff officers to assist him. Since these officers were appointed and administered by the Luftwaffe Personnel Office and--as General Staff officers--received their instructions from the Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff, their position was rather dubious one, and their dependence upon the Luftwaffe High Command was obvious. It would be equally inaccurate to speak of independence of any of the Armed Forces operations staffs, since the officers representing the other Armed Forces branches were in exactly the same position as their Luftwaffe colleagues. Thus the Armed Forces High Command was normally in a position to prepare and issue only such instructions as had been discussed and approved in advance by the High Commands of the various Armed Forces branches. Under these conditions, of course, the final result was usually based on the persistence of the individual partners, rather than on objective consideration of the best interests of the whole. The Luftwaffe General Staff officers assigned to the Armed Forces Operations Staff could never be more than liaison personnel at best; they certainly could not function as independent instruments of command authority for the Armed Forces.

In order that the interests of the Luftwaffe in the field of industrial procurement might be adequately represented in the Armed Forces High Command, one position as branch chief was reserved for a Luftwaffe General Staff officer. This position had been created chiefly for reasons of parity, however, and its incumbent had few, if any, opportunities to defend the interests of his service branch. Even so, this particular sector was one in which the Armed Forces was able to make its influence felt at least to a slight degree, despite the fact that the final decisions were ordinarily made by Hitler himself.

All the other positions on the Armed Forces High Command which--for reasons of parity--were reserved for officers from the Luftwaffe, were staffed by reserve or special duty officers. This was a result of the continuing lack of qualified General Staff officers. None of these officers, neither the ones from the Luftwaffe nor those
from the other Armed Forces branches, had been given any special or additional training to fit him for duty in the all-service Armed Forces command. We might point out, though, that the Luftwaffe officers were at least one step ahead of their Army and Navy comrades in that they had already had experience in some other service branch than their own (most of them having been recruited from the Army or Navy) and thus were better prepared to think in terms of the over-all service. This is a point, by the way, which applied to almost all of the Luftwaffe.

Section III: Army High Command

Peacetime planning did not include the assignment of a Luftwaffe General Staff officer to the Army High Command to act as advisor in matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe.

During wartime, however, certain Luftwaffe elements were detached to the Army, specifically air reconnaissance and antiaircraft artillery units, and wartime organizational plans called for a special operations staff to handle the employment of these units. The operational guide-lines for this staff, as well as the limitations of its authority, are given in the "Handbook of General Staff Service during Wartime."*  

The chief of this operations staff was the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army. This officer was personally subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe; operationally, he was subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Army. He served as the latter's advisor in all matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe and as commander of all Luftwaffe units detached to the Army.

His status was that of a commanding general, and his staff—in keeping with the missions assigned to it—was, with a few minor

* An Army handbook, unofficially called the Roter Esel (Red Donkey).
deviations, like that of an air corps. Headed by a chief of staff, it carried out the usual General Staff functions. The General Staff officers assigned to this staff were selected primarily from the ranks of officers who had served previously in the Army and who had spent some time in an air reconnaissance unit.

The employment of the Luftwaffe units under the command of the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army and the coordination of joint operations were covered thoroughly in detailed guidelines contained in the Handbook of General Staff Service in Wartime. These guidelines, in which the Luftwaffe High Command had concurred, were binding for the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army and his subordinate headquarters. They could be rescinded only by the issuance of new instructions by the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, with the concurrence of the Army High Command.

The following agencies were subordinate to the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army:

1. The Luftwaffe Commanders attached to the Army Groups (or Luftwaffe Commanders, Army Command Headquarters, as they were called if they were independent; the abbreviation used in both cases was Koluft).

Subordination and missions: Koluft posts were to be filled by General Staff officers. The Koluft acted as the advisor of the commander in chief in all questions pertaining to the employment of Luftwaffe units detached to an army group for a particular area of operations. As Koluft attached to an army group, he was also the commanding officer of all attached Luftwaffe units; otherwise, he had the status of a service chief over the units assigned to the army group.

In his capacity as branch chief on the staff of the army group or army, the Koluft was responsible to the Chief of the General Staff. It was his duty to present recommendations both concerning the assignment of the available Luftwaffe units to subordinate headquarters within the area of operations and concerning the employment of those
units specifically assigned to the army group or army.

The Koluft was responsible for keeping the headquarters command of the army group or army informed of the results of air reconnaissance operations at all times. He was also responsible for drafting the operational orders to be issued to subordinate flying forces and antiaircraft artillery units as well as to civilian air defense agencies within the area. In accordance with the operational planning of the commander in chief, he took the necessary action to expand and equip ground organization installations for the use of the Luftwaffe units assigned to the army group or army for operations within the area of command. In this connection he was responsible for maintaining the necessary liaison with the local Air Administrative Command Headquarters.

The Koluft was responsible for making recommendations regarding the planning and establishment of signal communications facilities to the signal officer of the army group or army, and for the integration of these facilities with those maintained by the Luftwaffe.

He was expected to maintain constant contact with the Luftwaffe headquarters in neighboring areas, to orient them regarding the air situation within his area, and to obtain information concerning their operational plans for transmittal to the command staff of the army group or army.

A Koluft attached to an army was responsible for coordinating the administration of supply activities for the Luftwaffe units located within the army's area of operations with the local Air Administrative Command Headquarters and with the quartermaster branch of the army command.

The delineation of authority between the Army and the Luftwaffe in operational areas in which both were active leaves no doubt as to the difficulty which must have attended the work of the Koluft and his staff of General Staff officers, and it would be pointless to deny that there were occasions when individual officers were simply inadequate to their missions. It would be equally pointless, however,
to reproach them for their failure, since it is clear that, without any
special training and without peacetime experience in the accomplish-
ment of these very specialized missions, they could not be otherwise
than inadequate on occasion. Thanks to the excellent spirit of co-
operation obtaining between the Koluft staffs and the staffs of the army
headquarters to which they were attached, no serious mistakes were
made.

2. Air Liaison Officers Attached to Army Headquarters.

Air Liaison Officers and Antiaircraft Artillery Liaison
Officers were ordinarily assigned to the command headquarters of an
army corps.

These officers were appointed by the Koluft attached to the
army element concerned, and were usually selected from the
reconnaissance and antiaircraft artillery units assigned to the opera-
tions area under the jurisdiction of the corps.

The liaison officers' function was advisory only; they had no
command authority over the troops assigned to their areas.

As a rule, these officers carried out liaison activity with
their superior headquarters (i.e. the Koluft) and with the Luftwaffe
units assigned within the area by means of signal communications
facilities provided by the Army. They also had at their disposal a
small Luftwaffe signal communications element which was responsible
for establishing radio communication with these agencies in case of
emergency.

According to applicable strength authorization schedules, the
liaison officer posts were not necessarily reserved for General Staff
officers. In the interests of completeness, I have included them here
because they were, on occasion, held by General Staff officers,
especially when it was a matter of a vitally important mission to be
carried out by a particular corps.
Section IV: Navy High Command

Even during peacetime, there was a Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Navy.

During peacetime his staff was very small; in wartime, in keeping with the increase in its activity, it was expanded somewhat. In organizational structure, it resembled the staff of the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Army. The status of the general himself was that of a commanding general.

The responsibilities and authority of this staff were also similar to those of the Luftwaffe staff attached to the Army High Command.

The Commander, Naval Air Forces East and West were subordinate to the Luftwaffe General with Commander in Chief, Navy.

The staff of a Commander, Naval Air Forces was similar to that of a division command headquarters; as was also the case with the latter staffs, the operations officer had the status of a chief of staff.

A commander, naval air forces had command over all the naval air units assigned to the area covered by his navy group command, with the exception of ship-based elements of the "ground organization." The latter were unconditionally subordinate to the captain of the ship on which they were based for the duration of their assignment.

In addition to his function as commanding officer, a commander, naval air forces also served as advisor to the commander in chief of his navy group command in all matters pertaining to the Luftwaffe.

The General Staff officers assigned to duty with the Navy were, without exception, selected from among those who had had Navy service prior to joining the Luftwaffe. This was probably the main reason for the excellent spirit of cooperation which characterized the joint operations of these two services.
Here, too, --as in all higher-level Luftwaffe staffs attached to the other service branches--General Staff officers were assigned to the key posts because it was felt that they would be better able to handle the missions involved, with the double subordination factor which made them so very difficult at times.

Section V: Air Attachés

The majority of the air attaché posts with the diplomatic service of the Reich were also reserved for General Staff officers.

The air attaché was subordinate to the military attaché of the legation or embassy to which he was assigned, unless--as was sometimes the case--he himself was appointed military attaché.

The air attaché received his instructions from Branch V of the Luftwaffe General Staff, and this was also the office to which he submitted his reports, copies of which were forwarded through the military attaché to the Foreign Branch of the Armed Forces High Command. This procedure assured a certain degree of uniformity in the reports submitted; it did not, of course, preclude that the military attaché and the air attaché might express differing opinions regarding the subject matter of the reports.

As a rule, older General Staff officers (usually general officers) were chosen to fill the air attaché posts. Unfortunately it was not always possible to follow this policy, and the result--as the war continued--was sometimes detrimental to the receipt of complete and accurate information by the General Staff.

Section VI: Air War Academy

The Air War Academy, the primary training institution for future General Staff officers for the Luftwaffe, was headed by a pedagogically qualified General Staff officer, whose instructional staff was also made up of General Staff officers. The selection of
these officers was always a difficult matter in the Luftwaffe, since it was extremely hard to find officers who possessed the qualifications and natural inclination for instructional duties and who were, at the same time, experienced in practical General Staff work. Moreover, the entire field of air warfare was a fairly new one, which meant that there were no established procedures to follow. The difficulty was augmented by the fact that the instructional staff was constantly being faced with changes in the length of the courses and with modifications in their subject matter, based on the ever-growing body of practical experience being gathered in combat.
Chapter 6

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS
OF THE LUFTWAFFE TROOP GENERAL STAFF

Section I: Early Development

In conformance with the Army Troop General Staff, it was planned to establish a Luftwaffe Troop General Staff to serve the subordinate headquarters installations under the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe.

Inasmuch as these subordinate headquarters had not yet attained their final and definitive form in 1935-36, there was a good deal of improvisation necessary in the assignment of officers to the Troop General Staff posts. One important factor in this need for improvisation was the critical shortage of General Staff officers which we have already discussed in several connections.

In order that the reader may have a better understanding of the development of the Troop General Staff and its missions, a brief summary of the organizational development of the headquarters installations to be served by such a staff may be valuable.

Until 1938 the air administrative area commands—which existed under the camouflage designation of civil aviation offices prior to the official establishment of the Luftwaffe in 1935—were not only those agencies directly subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe, for execution of the command function, but were also the agencies to which authority over geographical districts had been delegated.

Each air administrative area command was composed of the following subordinate agencies: one senior flying officer (all flying units in the air administrative area—with the exception of flying training units—were under his command); several air administrative commands (they administered and supplied antiaircraft artillery...
units and Luftwaffe ground installations within their respective areas); one senior signal officer; one air ordnance group; one air administrative area medical branch.

All agencies physically located within an air administrative area (troop units, schools, replacement units, etc.) were subordinate to an air administrative area commander in regard to policies and operations affecting the entire area, irrespective of any other chain of command. For example, an air administrative area commander had sole responsibility for disciplinary measures within his area.

The air administrative area commander was also the sole representative of Luftwaffe air sovereignty; in other words, he had supervisory authority over the commercial airfields and over all commercial air traffic within his area.

The geographical extent of each air administrative area was equal to that of several military areas, *its borders having been established to conform with those of the several military areas making up its overall area of responsibility.

The underlying purpose of this organizational structure was to provide a simple system of organization and subordination on a geographical basis so long as the development of the Luftwaffe—in respect to both personnel and materiel—had not yet reached a degree of stability sufficient to permit the definitive consolidation of individual units into larger organizational bodies. The system, of course, was primarily designed to meet the needs of peacetime operations, and its inflexibility—an inevitable result of the emphasis on territorial organization—made it unsuited to the conduct of an offensive, or mobile air war; it was, however, entirely adequate to the needs of a defensive air war under the conditions prevailing at that time.

* Editor's Note: In German, Wehrkreis. This was the basic military area of Germany, somewhat like the prewar U.S. Corps Area, although it had the additional functions of administering conscription and supplying replacements for specific divisions and corps whose home stations were within the Wehrkreis.
Apart from the duties inherent in operational command, an
air administrative area command was also responsible for a great
deal of administrative work and for certain other missions which were
akin to those handled by an executive military agency rather than by a
general staff. In a horizontal compilation of missions and areas of
responsibility, the air administrative area commands were not unlike
miniature ministries.

From the vantage point of the present, it is clear that the bur-
den of executive work necessary for the establishment and development
of the Luftwaffe was placed on the air administrative area commands,
which were not at all adequately prepared to handle it.

In the beginning, then, there was no Troop General Staff in the
sense of the one which was later to serve the air fleet headquarters;
and the provisional status of the air administrative area commands
precluded any definite planning in this direction. The only indica-
tion of the plans in preparation for a Troop General Staff was the fact that
each air administrative area commander was assigned a general staff
chief—without, however, any other General Staff officers to work with
him. It was not until later, when the officer personnel situation had
improved, that additional General Staff officers were assigned.

Even after the assignment of additional officers, these staffs
could not yet be considered adequate, either in personnel strength or
in vested authority, to assume responsibility for the conduct of opera-
tions in time of war. The urgent necessity—in case of war—of freeing
the air administrative area commander and his chief of staff of
responsibility for secondary administrative functions not directly con-
ected with the conduct of operations could have been met only by
carrying out an organizational separation of the air administrative
area command into two agencies—a kind of field command and a
"home," or central command. On the other hand, this would have
meant at least a short transitional period during which the Luftwaffe
would not have been fully prepared for action; and it was clear that
military exigency required that the Luftwaffe, like a fleet which is
ready to set sail at a moment's notice, be prepared for action at all
times without the need for basic organizational changes.
There were, however, certain advantages inherent in this organizational system during peacetime—a system which concentrated the control of many and varied functions within the hands of a few high-level command posts. Since the development of the Luftwaffe was in a state of flux, this system guaranteed a maximum degree of continuity in developmental trends and in basic organizational structure. In any case, during the early developmental period the critical lack of qualified officers (particularly General Staff officers, but also—to a lesser degree—technical experts, special duty officers, civilian officials, and engineer personnel) prohibited an assignment in depth of such personnel to the command headquarters subordinate to the Commander in Chief, Luftwaffe; such assignment could take place only as the available qualified personnel in the above categories increased.

Section II: Reorganization of the Troop Staffs

During the period 1935-1937, individual General Staff officers were gradually assigned to the operations branches of the air administrative area commands as the work, and therefore the need for their services, increased. After 1938, when the offices of the senior flying officers were redesignated air divisions, these divisions, too, were authorized General Staff officers. In order to avoid any delay or difficulty in the smooth development of the Luftwaffe, no basic changes were made in the organization of the troop staffs during this period.

In April 1938, however, during the annexation of Austria, the system proved itself unwieldy, and the Luftwaffe General Staff ordered an immediate reorganization. This reorganization was designed to free the air administrative area commands from a number of purely administrative duties and convert them into primary links in the chain of operational command. Increased mobility was another goal, so that the air administrative area commands, in case of military necessity, could change their location without the need for an organizational split. To this end, the administration of all air defense agencies as well as the responsibility for the administration of the ground
organization, supply and procurement activity, and the supervision of commercial air traffic were transferred from the air administrative area commands to the next lowest echelon, the air administrative commands.

Accordingly, by order dated 1 July 1938, the existing air administrative commands were abolished, and replaced by air administrative commands covering a larger geographical area and vested with far greater administrative authority.

At the same time, the existing air administrative area commands were rechristened Luftwaffe group commands. In their new capacity as the operational command headquarters in case of war they were given full authority over all operational flying units (i.e. the newly designated Air Divisions), long-range reconnaissance units, the senior signal officer, and the newly created air administrative commands.

The air administrative commands were, in turn, responsible for the preparation and conduct of air defense operations (for this purpose they had exclusive authority over the antiaircraft artillery and fighter aircraft forces stationed within their respective areas); and for the supplying of aircraft, weapons, motor vehicles, spare parts, ammunition, gasoline, etc. to all the flying units located within their respective areas.

In order to accomplish the missions detailed above, the following agencies were made unconditionally subordinate to the air administrative commands:

1. The airfield area commands, with their subordinate airfield commandants and advance airfield commands. Organizationally, this meant a separation of the group staff of the aircraft units concerned and the permanent airfield commandant. During peacetime, however, these two posts were filled by the same officer; full separation was not accomplished until wartime mobilization orders went into effect.
2. The air ordnance group, with its subordinate agencies (ordnance offices, ammunition depots, fuel storage points, etc.).

3. The signal communications and aircraft reporting service, (air administrative command), which was under the direction of a signal officer who was the advisor for signal communications matters on the staff and, at the same time, commanding officer of the signal branch, air administrative command.

4. The medical services, under the direction of a medical officer, air administrative command, who was, at the same time, chief of the medical branch, air administrative command and in charge of all matters pertaining to medical services.

In addition, air administrative command had authority over all headquarters installations, units, schools, replacement forces, etc. located within its geographical borders. Moreover, it was charged with supervision of the commercial airfields and was authorized to issue orders to civilian air defense agencies. (At those airfields utilized by Luftwaffe units, the units themselves exercised the supervisory function over commercial air traffic.)

The commander of the air administrative command had disciplinary authority over all the units subordinate to him.

This organizational system was characterized by the clear intention of keeping the chain of command between staff and troops as short as possible. Thus, specialists serving on the staff were also in charge of the units and installations engaged in their own particular activity.

In keeping with their increased area of responsibility, the air administrative commands were theoretically authorized a chief of staff as well as sufficient General Staff officers to make up an operations branch. In practice, of course, only the largest and most important commands could be assigned the requisite number of General Staff officers in the beginning, while the rest had to be content with gradual assignments in keeping with the gradual increase
in the number of qualified officers available. The abilities of the particular commander were given careful consideration in determining the assignment of General Staff officers to his command. In this way an attempt was made to achieve some degree of uniformity in the overall performance of each command headquarters.

After this decisive reorganization had taken effect, the most important prerequisites for the conduct of effective mobile air warfare could be considered fulfilled. The reorganization had resulted in an adequate vertical system of command, an organizational separation of flying units and the ground organization at all echelons, and--parallel to the latter--a fairly complete separation of the agencies responsible for offensive air warfare from those charged with home air defense activity. The top-level command of both these activities still rested with the Luftwaffe group command; during the war, however, this situation was changed by the creation of the Air Fleet Reich to take over the home defense sector and all administrative duties pertaining to the home area, thus freeing the other air fleets for mobile operations.

In 1939 the Luftwaffe group commands were redesignated air fleet headquarters; however, no basic changes were made in organization or chain of command.*

Section III: The Troop General Staff

1. The Chief of the General Staff. The chief of an air fleet headquarters staff, and the chief of staff of headquarters on an equivalent level, bore the title "chief of the general staff." Apart from his capacity as chief of his own staff, a chief of the general staff was also the superior commander of all the General Staff officers filling positions within the geographical area covered by the air fleet. Command and disciplinary authority, however, were limited to the officers serving on his own staff. One of his missions was the

* For further details see Figure 6.
training and development of all the General Staff officers assigned to
the air fleet area. He had considerable influence over the assignment
of General Staff officers within his area, and was responsible for
rating them—irrespective of their assignment or subordinate chain
of command—in regard to their fitness for General Staff service. He
also made recommendations concerning their further employment.

The chief of the general staff was the first and most influential
advisor of his commander. The latter retained sole responsibility for
command of the troops and the conduct of operations; the former merely
served him as primary assistant and advisor, and was responsible
for assuring that the staff functioned effectively and smoothly. Goerlitz
compares this concept of General Staff service with the traditional one,
as follows:

The principle of co-responsibility on the part of General
Staff officers, which had been reintroduced by Beck, the
champion of tradition, and the General Staff's right to direct
access to the chief of state, traditional since Gneisenau's
time, were abolished. Moltke's principle that officers of
higher rank had the right to present and defend a dissenting
opinion was no longer valid. The General Staff handbook
issued in 1939 (the so-called Roter Esel) defined the role of
the General Staff officer as that of an advisor, a staff assistant,
and an executive and relieved him of any responsibility
in questions of command. The commanding officer had sole
responsibility in this regard. The handbook specifically
stated that the Commander in Chief, Army, was to seek the
advice of the Chief of the General Staff before making a
decision pertaining to the conduct of operations, but that the
latter must give him his whole-hearted cooperation in carrying
out his instructions, even though he might disagree
completely.

Although these principles were not specifically applicable to
the Luftwaffe, they served as unwritten guidelines to General Staff
service in that organization. It was not until 1944 that the manual
"Instructions for the Luftwaffe Commander" was published; this
manual defined the role of the chief of the general staff of a higher-
level command headquarters as follows: 2

Each staff is headed by a chief of the general staff; in the
case of division staffs, the chief is the operations officer.
Under special circumstances, an operations officer may be
officially accorded the status of a chief of staff.

The chief of the general staff is subject to the orders of his
commander, and serves the latter as chief advisor in all
matters pertaining to his area of responsibility.

A close and confident relationship between the commander
and the chief of the general staff is an indispensable prerequisite
for effective coordination and uniformity of command. Ideally,
the personal qualities of these two men should complement each
other in order to assure effective performance.

The achievement of uniformity of command depends largely
upon the extent to which the commander and the chief of the
general staff are in perfect agreement. Because such agree-
ment is accepted as a valid premise, the chief of the general
staff is authorized to issue orders in matters directly concern-
ing his own work, and these orders are just as valid as if they
had been issued by the commander himself. In the event that
the chief of the general staff must assume responsibility for
the command function, it is essential that he be familiar with
the thinking of his commander. Likewise the commander must
have the feeling that the action taken by the chief of the general
staff is in essential conformity with his own views. There
must be no grounds for an outsider to assume a dualism in
command.

If the relationship between the commander and the chief
of the general staff is not characterized by the desired close-
ness, then the association between the two should be discon-
tinued in a matter-of-fact fashion and without rancor on either
side. In the majority of cases, such separation is not based
on mistakes or errors in judgment, but rather on factors occasioned by differences in the personalities of the two individuals concerned.

The personal qualities and professional ability of the chief of the general staff must be such that he is able to achieve the acceptance and recognition due his position from his superiors and from the troop units.

The chief of the general staff is responsible for keeping his superiors informed in all matters properly of interest to them. Here he must be capable of distinguishing the essential from the trivial and the urgent from that which does not require immediate action.

It is his duty as well as his right to present his views in the form of recommendations to his superiors. His presentation must be clear, concise, and complete.

He bears the final responsibility for the suggestions and recommendations presented to his superiors by officers, technical personnel, and civilian officials under his command.

The decisions made by the commander are final, and it is the duty of the chief of the general staff as well as of every other officer to accord them his whole-hearted support.

In the event that the commander must be away from the chief of the general staff (or operations officer, as the case may be) for a short time, it is vitally important that he leave behind explicit directions regarding the issuance of orders and the maintenance of liaison during his absence.

In every facet of his work the chief of the general staff must show himself capable of meeting difficulties and surmounting obstacles by skillful improvisation and ingenious stop-gap measures.

The chief of the general staff, either personally or through
his chief assistant, is responsible for orienting signal and quartermaster personnel regarding operational planning, including the contemplated employment of troops. This must be done sufficiently in advance of the operation to permit them to take the necessary action, inasmuch as success in combat is dependent upon the availability of adequate communications facilities and smoothly functioning supply operations.

The chief of the general staff is responsible for assuring that the medical, troop welfare, and administrative agencies are adequately prepared for their roles in the contemplated operations.

The judge advocate and the court martial branch are responsible for keeping the chief of the general staff informed of important developments within their area of endeavor. Their experience and activity places them in an excellent position to provide the staff officers with valuable information concerning morale in the troop units.

The relationship between the chief of the general staff and the adjutant is also important. The closer it is, the more effective will be their cooperation in staff matters and in general personnel questions. Recommendations having to do with personnel administration should be jointly prepared and presented by the chief of the general staff and the adjutant.

The issuance of direct orders to troop elements is the prerogative of the commander, but may be accomplished by the chief of the general staff in the name of the commander. The chief of the general staff must always strive to maintain a correct and friendly relationship with troop commanders. Such a relationship can do much to facilitate the smooth conduct of operations.

The chief of the general staff is responsible for supervising the training and development of the General Staff officers on his staff as well as of other officers on his staff who
are candidates for General Staff appointment.

The chief of the general staff is in charge of the staff of
his particular headquarters installation. In this capacity he
is responsible for maintaining discipline and order within the
staff.

Details of organizational structure, chain of command,
and disciplinary authority are contained in the applicable
strength authorization tables and service regulations.

The chief of the general staff is responsible to his
commander for the smooth and effective accomplishment of
the work assigned to his staff. Keeping the requirements of
this work in mind, he is responsible for setting up the schedules
for staff and front-line duty for the members of his staff.

The chief of the general staff, or a representative design-
nated by him, is responsible for orienting the members of his
staff regarding the military situation, insofar as such orienta-
tion does not entail violation of security regulations.

He is responsible for seeing that the necessary action is
taken to assure that the personnel under his command are
given adequate and uniform combat training, as well as any
other training which he may consider necessary.

He is personally responsible for carrying out National
Socialist indoctrination within his staff. It is his duty to main-
tain a spirit of comradeship among the members of his staff.

At all times and in every respect the chief of the general
staff must display tact and good judgment in his dealings with
higher-ranking officers and civilian officials on his staff. It
is his responsibility to assure that the conduct, both on and
off duty, of all members of his staff conforms to that which
the troops expect of them.

The chief of the general staff must assure that all members
of his staff are regularly given the opportunity to visit troop
units in order that their thinking may not become too far re-
moved from the requirements of the front-line troops, and
that their relationship to the troops may remain close enough
to permit them to act intelligently and fairly in matters con-
cerning the troops.

The prestige of the staff in the eyes of the troops will
grow in direct proportion to the extent to which staff members
are modest and unpretentious in such matters as billetting,
mess facilities, and requests for leave.

The "Instructions for the Commander" quoted above provide
clear and detailed guidelines regarding the duties and the status of
the chief of the general staff of a higher command headquarters.
These guidelines were also applicable to all subordinate Luftwaffe
headquarters having a chief of the general staff.

The permanent representative of the chief of the general staff--irrespective of rank--was the chief of the operations branch. Under
special circumstances, the commander or the chief of the general
staff appointed some other officer to the post of deputy, but these
cases were decided exceptions to the general rule, which traditionally
accords priority to the operations sector within the work of the
general staff.

The chief of the general staff had command over all members
of his staff except those whose rank was higher than his own; the
latter were personally subordinate to the commander.

Further exceptions to this chain of command were the ad-
ministrative officer and the judge advocate and their respective staffs
of civilian officials. These individuals were governed by special
regulations and were directly subordinate to the commander.

Apart from the two last named, the chiefs of all branches and
independent groups (irrespective of rank) received their instructions
and orders from the chief of the general staff. The administrative
officer and judge advocate were responsible for keeping the chief of the general staff informed of current developments within their branches, and if he felt it to be necessary in any matter, he had the right to request a joint conference with the commander and the official concerned in order to present his views. Otherwise, the other two branches, particularly the office of the administrative officer, were instructed to work closely with the branches making up the general staff.

Each commander was allowed a certain amount of leeway in directing the coordination of the administrative office with the other branches. Based on the fact that the administrative office had a great deal to do with supply matters, for example, some commanders delegated their command authority over the administrative officer to the chief of the general staff or the quartermaster in order to assure the smooth functioning of supply operations. In the cases where this was done, it proved to be very effective, particularly in areas where the question of supply was inextricably bound to the transport problem. Thus both agencies became dependent upon the work of the transportation officer on the quartermaster's staff.

2. The Branches of the Troop General Staff. The following staff branches and groups operated in accordance with instructions and orders issued by the chief of the general staff. The order in which they are listed is the one which was followed in all higher-level command headquarters air fleets, corps, and air administrative commands: operations (Ia), intelligence (Ic), weather service, quartermaster, and signal communications.

With the exception of the weather service, all of these branches were normally headed by General Staff officers, while the subordinate positions were filled by officers not belonging to the General Staff. Here, too, the assignments were largely dependent upon and influenced by the continuing shortage of qualified General Staff officers.

Although they, too, were subordinate to the chief of the general staff, the other agencies making up the staff did not appear on the General Staff strength authorization, but were staffed by troop
officers, technical officers, civilian officials, or engineer personnel. They were not really general staff branches, since they had no direct part in the conduct of operations. However, inasmuch as the work of the headquarters staffs was an entity under the direction of the chief of the general staff, the other branches making up a staff were: the adjutant’s office; the chief engineer (air administrative command engineer, corps engineer); the judge advocate; the administrative officer; the medical officer; the air control office; the headquarters commandant.

The organizational structure described above proved to be conducive to close and effective cooperation within the staffs. Only in exceptional cases, i.e. in the event of a special mission, was it necessary to introduce any changes in order to meet the needs of wartime operation.

The basic structure of the troop general staff was the same at all command headquarters. This was a great advantage in that it permitted a certain degree of uniformity in the issuance of orders and in military correspondence between the staffs themselves and from the staffs to their subordinate agencies. Among themselves the staffs differed only in significance and size, in that the assignment of a special mission made it necessary occasionally to increase or decrease the strength of a particular branch or group.

In the air fleet commands, for example, the operations and intelligence groups, which were quite large and worked closely together, were combined in Branch I - Operations. This emphasis on operations was quite natural in view of the fact that the missions entrusted to the air fleet commands were chiefly operational in nature.

In the air administrative commands, on the other hand, these groups were naturally smaller than their counterparts in the air fleet commands. The emphasis--at least the quantitative emphasis--lay on supply and administration. Accordingly, the quartermaster branch and the office of the administrative officer had more personnel than their counterparts in the air fleet commands.
The staffs of the parachute units and the Luftwaffe field units formed an exception to the organizational structure described above. These units were primarily concerned with ground combat operations; thus it is understandable that the organization of the staffs within the Parachute Corps and the Luftwaffe Field Corps and its divisions were modeled on their Army counterparts. Inasmuch as the Army troop staffs at each echelon had served as models for the organization of the Luftwaffe troop staffs in the first place, the differences were not great. Logically enough, the staffs of the parachute units were larger than those of the field units, inasmuch as the parachute units were concerned with flying missions as well as with ground combat. In order to handle this dual mission, their staffs had flying forces and an antiaircraft artillery forces group in their operations branch.

Those headquarters ranking below corps and air administrative command level did not maintain troop general staffs in the sense that we have discussed above. The staffs of the air divisions, antiaircraft artillery divisions, and other headquarters at comparable level were assigned one General Staff officer to serve as operations officer and, depending upon the importance of the unit's mission, one or two others (intelligence officer, quartermaster).

The senior General Staff officer of a division did not have the authority of a chief of staff, despite the fact that he was the first assistant and advisor of the commander. He did not have the authority to issue orders to other members of the staff; his status was rather that of a prince among peers. It was the responsibility of the division commander himself to direct the work of his staff. However, since the senior General Staff officer acted as the commander's deputy in the latter's absence, it was natural that he should gradually assume a status akin to that of a chief of staff—depending, of course, upon his own strength of personality. Inasmuch as it was standard practice within the German Armed Forces during the last war for the commander to remain with his troops in action, the position of the senior General Staff officer within the staff was usually very strong. For this reason the post of senior General Staff officer at divisional level was a very desirable one in the eyes of the younger officers.