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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR (Latvia)
 SUBJECT The Liepāja Naval Base

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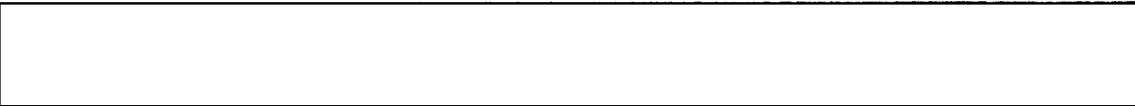
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1. The original Liepāja (Lepaya; Libau) naval installation was begun in the 1890's as a naval base and arsenal. The original plan envisioned a larger installation, but German intervention in 1905 prevented its completion. During World War I, the base was used by the German Navy. After the war, only a portion of the yard was used for ship repairs; the remainder was converted to produce railroad cars, machine tools, agricultural machinery, and aircraft. The eastern section of the former naval base, along with the dock installations, was released for the establishment of a sugar factory.
2. In 1940, Soviet authorities took over the Liepāja dockyard and operated it until the Germans replaced them in the summer of 1941. The German Navy used the installation to good advantage, since its geographical location rendered it immune from western air attacks. After July 1943, a number of improvements were carried out in the yard.
3. Activities at the Liepāja naval base centered around its two drydocks. These were approximately 280 meters long at the top and had a top width of forty-five meters. The heavy cruiser Lützow was just able to squeeze its 256 meters into the eastern dock, which was equipped with a front lock ponton (Vorsatz-Verschlussponton). The cruiser could not enter the western dock, which was equipped with a slide lock ponton (Schiebe-Verschlussponton). The draining of a dock took approximately four to six hours, depending on the water level and the size of the ship. The docks could be filled in approximately one and one-half hours. Running along the inner edge of each dock was a tower revolving crane with a maximum load capacity of five tons. For unloading purposes, the cranes reached a little past the centers of the docks, with a corresponding decrease in their carrying power. The docks are simply constructed and are operationally safe; they operated reliably even during the most severe winter cold spells.
4. The location previously occupied by an 800-ton floating drydock, which was transferred to Riga, was assigned by the German Navy as a mooring place for a 1,500-ton floating dock. Since the harbor floor could not be dredged to a suitable depth, it was necessary to decrease the immersion depth of the new dock. A 6,000-ton floating drydock was also moored along the quay to the east of the permanent drydocks; here, too, the immersion depth was decreased.

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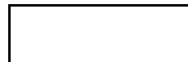
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 2 -

5. Approximately 230 meters of the quay on the western side of the Liepāja base are serviced by three tower revolving cranes with a load capacity of three to five tons each and an unloading sweep of up to thirty-five meters. All moorings and docks are fully equipped with direct electric current outlets and with pipes for the steam heating of ships. In 1944 the direct current was supplied by two rectifier plants; the erection of two more was planned. The steam heat was supplied by two boiler houses; the third boiler house supplied heat for the buildings and steam for the steam hammers.
6. The Liepāja base had no plant of its own for the manufacture of electric power. Power was provided by the municipal plant through a ground cable which delivered a three-phase current of 6,000 volts. This was transformed to 3,000 volts and supplied to the individual consumer points through shop transformers as 220/230 volt currents; maximum power consumption was about 750 KVA. A compressor plant between the permanent drydocks supplied the main moorings with compressed air; a second plant was to set up in the northern part of the base. The base also provided oxygen for the welding shop and also produced some for sale to outside consumers. The oxygen plant delivered approximately 200 regular-sized containers every twenty-four hours. Water was pumped from two wells into a tank installed on the roof of one of the buildings.
7. The following paragraphs describe the equipment contained in the various shops of the Liepāja naval base during 1944:
- a. Ship Construction Shop: Here the steel plates from the storage yard were brought for processing in the straightening and bending rollers. The plates were transported on rollways, but ceiling cranes with capacities up to three tons were also in use and reached out into the storage yard.
 - b. Boiler Shop: The equipment in this shop was similar to that contained in the ship construction shop, including heavy bending rollers for bending plates up to 25 mm. in thickness. This shop also contained the rib furnace and several ceiling cranes with a load capacity of about twenty tons.
 - c. Forge: The forge contained a five-ton steam hammer, four smaller steam hammers graduated to a ram weight (in Bargewicht gestuft), two air hammers for lighter work, and two friction presses for the finishing of ship and boiler rivets.
 - d. Machinery, Gun, and Torpedo Assembly Shop: This workshop was located in a very long, relatively narrow, and very high glass-roofed hall. It contained two mobile cranes, each with a twenty-ton load capacity.
 - e. Machine Shop: This was well equipped with lathes of all types, most of them up-to-date. Propellers were turned on two horizontal lathes. The large and medium-sized machines were located in shops near the permanent drydocks; the smaller units were on the ground floor of the administration building.
 - f. Coppersmith's Shop: This shop contained regular equipment with screw vises, flange lathes, a pipe pit, and a long furnace for the working of long pipes.
 - g. Foundry: The foundry was equipped with two cupola furnaces of medium capacity, a jolt molding machine, and compressed air tools. Aluminum and various bronze alloys were smelted in a coke-fired crucible.

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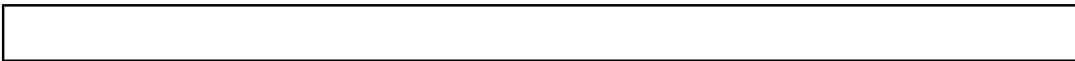


CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 3 -

- h. Tinplate Shop: This was fully equipped with obsolescent straightening and bending rollers, plate shears, folding machines, bending machines, and bulging lathes.
- i. Paint and Glass Shop: This contained a spraying installation and two machines for the grinding and polishing of glass.
- j. Electrical Shop: Work here was done by AEG personnel, who also supplied the required tools, parts, and cables.
- k. Electro-plating and Galvanizing Shop: This contained several copper, nickel, and chromium baths, as well as three coal-fired melting vats.
- l. Boat Shop: Boats under construction were brought to the center nave of the three-nave hall through a loading canal. Cranes, platforms, and boat carts made possible the storing of a large number of boats in several layers during the winter. The shop undertook the construction of new boats as well as repairing old ones. Planing machines and saws and three steam chests for plank and rib bending were on hand.
- m. Model Construction and Ship's Carpentry Shop: This modern installation contained a thicknessing machine for planks, a smooth planing machine, a grooving machine, a routing machine, a chain cutter, drills, and circular and hand saws.
- n. Sawmill: The mill was equipped with two frame log saws, a drying room, lathes, cutting and planing machines, drills, electric and oxygen welding torches, a forge, and a well-equipped electric plant with testing and experimental facilities, including armature winding machines.

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