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Country - Germany (Sovzone)
 Subject - Volkspolizei 'Army' Concentrations in the Prenzlau-Pasewalk
 Frontier Region/ Organization of Motorized Regiment/ Supply
 Sources/ Significance for Polish Escapees.

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Place Acquired [redacted]

Date Acquired - [redacted]

Date of Information - Early April 53 and prior

Source [redacted] He has developed

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Preface

1. [redacted]

2. "The number of refugees to reach Berlin from Poland has of late decreased considerably - this report is dated 25 April 53. This decrease - according to opinions voiced by many experts in Berlin - is not only a result of a stricter guard of the Polish-German frontier by Polish security and border organizations. It is a result of the reinforcement of units of the new [Sovzone] German Army in certain areas along that frontier. Such troop concentration can be observed primarily in areas where previously, for geographical reasons, border-crossing was less difficult.
3. "Even if it be the policy not to encourage anybody in Poland to escape to the West, I believe that as much information as possible should be broadcast over Western radio stations about conditions in the frontier areas. Such facts could save many would-be refugees from running straight into a trap. Many Poles with whom I have talked in Berlin are requesting such broadcasts.

Projected Area for 1953 Volkspolizei Manoeuvres

4. "It has been reported by Volkspolizei [VOPO] officers and soldiers who escaped to the West during the last weeks [prior to 25 April] that a good-sized concentration of new [Sovzone] German Army units is progressing in the areas of Prenzlau and Pasewalk. Already in 1952 these areas were the scene of Volkspolizei manoeuvres, but not to the extent projected for 1953. Not only will the number of participant units be larger but the individual units will be stronger.

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5. "The area in which the 1953 manoeuvres will be held is bounded as follows:

- from the North: the border-line of Szczecin Bay;
- from the East: the Polish-German frontier line between Rieth (Rytka) and Kolbitzow (Kolbas Owo);
- from the South: the autobahn Kolbitzow-Penkun-Schmoelln which merges into the highway Schmoelln-Prenzlau;
- from the West: the highway Prenzlau, Pasewalk-Uckermuende.

North of the highway Lienken-Locknitz-Pasewalk this area is nearly all covered by dense forests with many swamps and marshes. Under such conditions the manoeuvres will present strategic difficulties.

6. "In the large area special unit-concentrations can be observed north of Pasewalk, along the road Pasewalk-Viereck-Jaegerbrueck-Eggesin. Eggesin itself, the Karpin forest, the Droegeheyde forest and the small town of Torgelow are important concentration points. Headquarters for the entire manoeuvre operations are located in the former Napoli Camp on Karl Marx Strasse in Eggesin (This camp was known during Hitler's time as a Nazi political training center for the Army.) Both Eggesin and Torgelow are close to the Polish frontier: Eggesin is about 13 kilometers from the frontier; Torgelow is about 19 kilometers from the frontier. Karpin is only about ten kilometers from the Polish frontier.

7. "As a result of this heavy concentration of military units, the whole area along the Polish-German land-frontier near Szczecin has been reinforced with additional frontier guard-units and many mobile patrols, on the highways and even on the footpaths through the forests. This guard system is in operation around the clock. It is significant that of the limited number of refugees from Poland who have reached Western Berlin without incident within the past few months [prior to late April 1953], only two or three managed to pass through the Szczecin frontier sector. It is likely that escapees who successfully crossed the frontier itself were caught later by the guard units in the Soviet Zone.

(Sovzone) German 'Army' Units in the Prenzlau-Pasewalk Area

8/ "The following description of the new (Sovzone) German 'Army' in the Prenzlau-Pasewalk area indicates the strength of troop concentration. Units that are already [April 1953] in the manoeuver area or expected to be transferred there shortly are as follows:

A. Army Groups of the Northern Command ('Heeresgruppe Nord')

I. Motorized Division, Eggesin, 'Colonel Weiss'.

Under the command of Col. [fnu] Weiss. He is about 40 years old, a fanatic Communist. His deputy is Lt. Col. [fnu] Brandis. The Quartermaster of the Division is Major [fnu] Hitziger. Division

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headquarters are in Eggesin, in the former Napoli Camp on Karl Marx Strasse. The old concrete buildings there have been supplemented by about 40 wooden barracks for warehouse and Quartermaster installations.

To the Eggesin Motorized Division belong the following sub-units:

- a. Motorized Regiment 'Major Franke', under the command of Major [fun/ Franke]. This unit stayed in winter 1952-53 in the pre World War II optical factory in Premnitz, near Rathenow. March 1953 the regiment moved to the tent camp near Droegereide. This regiment has nearly reached its full strength. It has approximately 1,700 men with the following equipment - 31 Soviet-type T-34 tanks, three SFL-guns on caterpillars and 16 field-howitzers (7.62 caliber) Soviet type, mounted on carriages. For the manoeuvres the Major Franke Regiment has been equipped with some heavy Stalin II-type tanks. The only shortage is trucks for transportation.
- b. Motorized Regiment 'Steghbarth'. During winter 1952-53 this regiment was quartered in Schwerin. It is now quartered in a tent-camp in the area Torgelow-Droegheide. This unit is equipped with 'quite' a number of T-34/85 improved Soviet-type tanks. This winter the 'independent' B & C detachments of the regiment were already quartered in newly constructed field-barracks, near the Karpin forest. These barracks comprise 16 one-story buildings, the exteriors of which are still 'unpolished' raw brick.
- c. Motorized Regiment 'Kirchner'. This regiment was quartered in winter 1952-53 in Rostock. It has been the nucleus of the division in Rostock. From there various detachments are set up. [sic].
- d. Tank Regiment 'Klenner', with a strength of about 750 men.
- e. Tank Regiment 'Hoeft'.
- f. Tank Regiment 'Schmidt'. These three tank units [(d) (e) (f)] are now in Spechtberg near Torgelow.
- g. Artillery Regiment 'Durweiler' under the command of Major Philip Durweiler. This unit was previously quartered in Leipzig. It was only recently [date not specified] attached to the Eggesin Motorized Division. The present strength of the unit is around 1,000 men. The projected full strength is 1,300 men. Its equipment consists of 48 field-guns mounted on carriages (caliber and type not ascertained). The unit is presently quartered in the half-finished new barracks on the eastern outskirts of Eggesin, not far from the electrical works.

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h. Anti-aircraft Regiment 'Major Boerner'. The regiment was quartered this winter in Altwarp on Szczecin Bay. The unit has a strength of around 800 men, with an additional 80 men in the special regimental training school. Its equipment consists of around 40 anti-aircraft guns, 3.7 caliber. It is believed that before joining the 1953 maneuvers in the Pasewalk-Eggesin area this unit will participate in some weeks of sharp-shooting exercises near Prora on Ruegen Island. Major [fnu] Boerner's anti-aircraft regiment is fully equipped with the trucks it needs. It has about 70 trucks of Soviet-type ZIS or German (Sovzone) H/3/A production.

i. Reconnaissance Unit 'Colonel Schultz'. Quartered in the headquarters of the Division, near Camp Napoli in Eggesin.

j. In addition to units of Signals and Engineers, the Eggesin Division has a special medical unit under M.D. Major [fnu] Quast.

The present strength of the entire Eggesin Division is estimated to be approximately 14,000 - 15,000 men. The area of Eggesin, Karpin, Droegeheide and Spechtberg is covered with tent-camps and temporary barracks.

II. Infantry Division, Prenzlau, 'Colonel Riedel'.

This Division, under the command of Colonel [fnu] Riedel, is not as well organized as the Eggesin Division. It comprises the following units:

a. Infantry Regiment 'Major Klocke'. This regiment was housed in winter 1952-53 in Pinow, near Angermiende, in the former ammunition depot on the Dorfstrasse. The strength of this regiment is increasing. Companies which should have 120 men have only 50 at present. The Commanding Officer of this regiment, Major [fnu] Klocke, a rigorous, robust type. In March 1953 an attempt was made on his life when he was passing the gate of the Pinow barracks. He was scarcely hurt but a young female passer-by was killed.

b. Infantry Regiment 'Lt. Colonel Berlow'. This regiment was only recently attached to the Prenzlau Division. It belonged until March 1953 to the Army Group South, where it was located in Loebau, near Goerlitz (Zgorzelec). This regiment, it is said, is the best organized of the division, with nearly full strength. It is presently quartered in a tent-camp near Torgelow.

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c. Artillery Regiment 'Gaertner'. During the winter-period this regiment stayed in the Prenzlau area. It was recently transferred to the manoeuver camp in Viereck.

d. Anti-aircraft Unit 'First Lt. Garz', stationed in Stallberg, north of Viereck. This unit is directly under the Division Headquarters. It consists of one commandment battery ('baterie dowodzenie'), four firing-batteries ('baterie ognowe') and one training battery.

The Eggesin Division is concentrating north of Torgelow. The area south of Torgelow has been assigned to the Prenzlau Division. The units are distributed between Torgelow, Stallberg and Viereck. In Stallberg new barracks are under construction. Twelve one-story barrack-buildings, each about 30 meters long are half-finished and partly occupied by soldiers. It is said that the present force of the Prenzlau Infantry Division can be estimated at around 5,000 men. It is planned to bring its full strength up to 10,000 - 11,000 men. New recruits are continuously sent to the area. They pass through what is called 'I. Kommando', a sort of replacement unit stationed in Prenzlau.

III. Infantry Division, Prora, 'Colonel Roehr'

Very little information was obtained through refugee informants on this Division. It is said that the Division Headquarters are in Prora. This division consists of three infantry-regiments, commanded by:

- a. Major (fny) Geisler (quartered in Binz);
- b. Major (fnu) Miertsohin
- c. Captain (fnu) Lehnardt.

An anti-aircraft artillery unit is also attached to the Division. The unit itself is quartered on Ruegen Island, and some detachments, it is said, have been sent to the Pasewalk - Eggesin manoeuvre grounds.

B. Certain detachments have been directed to the manoeuvres which are not otherwise part of the Northern Command. Until recently they have had the character of special training units. According to information received, the following detachments are now in the Pasewalk-Eggesin area:

I. The tank-regiment, regularly stationed in Zeithen near Riesa. This regiment is under the command of the former tank-group officer, Colonel [fny] Fischer. It was recently assigned the task of training NCOs. In winter 1952-53 this regiment shared barracks with a Soviet tank regiment. The two units were isolated from each other by fences but the German tank-specialists were trained under the supervision of Soviet instructors and officers. The German unit is equipped

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with around 35 T-34 Soviet-type tanks and also with a new Soviet-type medium-sized tank, called the 'Turtle'. This tank has been already introduced into several Soviet units. It is equipped with more powerful armament than the T-34. The man-outlet is not in the tower but in the back of the tank. The tank has a combination of four caterpillars instead of the customary two, thus enabling steadier movement on uneven terrain. The informants state that Col. Fischer's regiment has obtained six 'Turtle' tanks and will receive more in due course. The Regiment is now stationed near Eggesin. It comes nearly up to full strength, with 1,300 men.

II. The mixed detachment of 'Major Gutermuth'. This detachment, strength 1,500 men, consists of mixed infantry, artillery and tank units. It is equipped with 31 T-34 Soviet-type tanks and six SFL mounted, armored guns. The artillery unit is equipped with anti-tank-guns of 4.5 and 7.62 Soviet-type caliber, Soviet-type howitzers of 12.2 caliber, anti-aircraft guns of 3.7 caliber and mortars of 12.2 caliber. Up to the first days of April 1953 this detachment was stationed in Torgau. A similar detachment is located in Potsdam.

III. Tank-Officers' School, Grossenhain (Saxony). This unit was transferred to the former cavalry-barracks on the Elsterwerda Strasse in Grossenhain in March 1953 from Primerwald. The quarters of the (Sovzone) German tank-officers' school in Primerwald was taken by a Soviet unit. The tank-officers' school in Grossenhain is located near the Soviet airfield. The school is under the command of a former tank-officer, Colonel Karlheinz Krumm, who is about 38. The unit has a force of about 500 cadet-officers. It is said it will shortly move to the Pasewalk-Eggesin area to join the manoeuvres.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MAJOR FRANKE MOTORIZED REGIMENT.

9. "To get an impression of the organization of the newly created (Sovzone) German 'Army' it is interesting to study the organization of individual units. For example, the Major Franke Motorized Regiment, [7, A, I, a] which is part of the Eggesin Motorized Division, consists of:

A. Headquarters with:

1. Staff
2. Commandment company (with Signal, Reconnaissance and Engineer Sections)
3. Transportation Company
4. Special independent unit 'B'
5. Special independent unit 'C'
6. Regimental School (three sections: one for rifle-men, one for heavy machine-guns and one for mortars.)

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B. Three motorized infantry-battalions. Each battalion consists of:

1. Three infantry companies (divided into three infantry-sections plus one machine-gun section);
2. One heavy machine-gun company (divided into three sections);
3. One anti-tank battery divided into three sections;
4. One mortar company divided into three sections.

SIGNIFICANCE OF 'B' AND 'C' UNIT ATTACHED TO HEADQUARTERS

10. "Note the so-called 'special independent B and C units' attached to Headquarters. Similar units can be observed in other organizational formations lately created in the (Sovzone) German 'Army', as, for example, in the operational group of Major Gutermuth in Torgau. In that group:

The independent detachment 'B' consists of a commandment battery (with Signal personnel, topographers and a reconnaissance section), one anti-tank battery (with 4.5 and 7.62 caliber guns); one battery of howitzers (12.2 caliber), one anti-aircraft battery (3.7 caliber guns); one mortar-battery (12.2 caliber) and one training battery.

The special independent detachment 'C' consists of one reconnaissance section equipped with armoured scouting-patrol cars; one tank-company (with 31 T-34-type tanks) and one armoured artillery battery (with 6 SFLs).

These details clearly demonstrate that the independent 'B' and 'C' detachments have the character of special reserve-units within the regiment or division. They can be used by the commanding officer as reconnaissance units or as artillery units for special support or protection.

11. "Such details are interpreted by the informants as further proof that the newly created 'Army of (Sovzone) Germany' is no longer a provisional organization, although in all Communist propaganda it is still defined as Kasernierte Volkspolizei ('People's Police in Barracks'). It is actually a thoroughly organized, highly trained fighting force.

LABOR UNITS

12. "In addition to the Army detachments in the area Eggesin-Pasewalk-Prenzlau, there are numerous labor units. It is said that around 8,000 workers are employed. Newcomers are recruited and sent there every day to form labor brigades.

SUPPLY SOURCES

13. "These workers are constructing barracks and also new supply-depots. At present [10 April 1953] all of the supplies for the 'Army' are coming to this area from fairly distant points. The ammunition, for example, has

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been brought from Zinna near Torgau, from Primerwald not far from Guestrow, or from Doberlug-Kirchenthain. The Doberlug-Kirchenthain depot is located around 200 kilometers from the Northern Command Area. Uniforms and medical supplies have been coming from such distant points as Prossen near Bad Schandau, close to the German-Czech border. Only certain food supplies are obtained locally. Flour must now be supplied by the millers in Paschwitz, Jatznick or Grambow. Grambow is directly on the Polish-German frontier-line.

VOPO ESCAPE PENALTIES

14. "Refugees from the Eggesin area report that within the short period from 1 January 53 to 1 April 53 at least 300 VOPOS (officers and NCOs as well as soldiers) escaped to the West from the Eggesin Motorized Division. All these escapes have been kept secret, but the news circulates among the men left behind. In early April the soldiers were formally notified that an attempt to escape will be punished with 25 years' imprisonment and hard labor, and in some cases even with a death sentence.

'ARMY' LIVING CONDITIONS

15. "Refugees report the living conditions of the 'Army' units in the Eggesin-Prenzlau area as follows:
- A. Food is not bad, not even in the field-camps.
 - B. The poor sanitary conditions within the manoeuvre areas are striking. There is a complete lack of real shower or bathing facilities. Only after four or five weeks' time are soldiers given the opportunity to take a bath. Laundry equipment is also scarce. Only one regular weekly change of underwear is possible. This is utterly insufficient under field conditions.
 - C. When recruited, all VOPOs were promised a short two- or three-days' furlough every three or four weeks. A new ruling has now been introduced by which such furlough can only be had every tenth week, with permission of the commanding officer.
 - D. The soldiers are over-trained. They only have a free evening on Sundays and from time to time on Saturdays. The promised free evening on Wednesdays has been eliminated in some units.
 - E. Politics are stressed. All officers must be SED (Communist Party) members or candidates. Soldiers are urged to join the Communist youth organization, FDJ (Free German Youth). All units have political officers who are trained either in the East Berlin suburb of Treptow, or (higher echelons) in Potsdam. Political indoctrination is obligatory. In some units it is even given in the late evening between 10 and 11 p.m. The training is divided into three phases:- The first phase started on 1 December 52 and lasted till 31 January 1953. This training phase was

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called 'training of the individual soldiers'. The second phase, 'training a team', was started on 1 February 53. It will be completed by 1 May 53. On 1 May 53 the third phase will be started, 'training in units and inter-units'.

All political training activities are supervised by Soviet officers or by German officers who have attended educational courses in the USSR. Major [fnu] Franke, the Commanding Officer of the motorized regiment in the Eggesin Division, spent two years on such training in the USSR. Nearly all text-books employed are translations of Soviet Army manuals.

PROHIBITED REGIONS

16. "To summarize the 'Army' set-up in the Eggesin Prenzlau Area, it should be stated that in the described area there are presently 23,000 to 25,000 soldiers. It is planned to increase this number to 40,000 or 45,000 in order to bring each unit up to its prescribed level.

All units are kept in intense training operations. They are only exempt from the task of guarding the frontier. For such purposes the Grenzvolkspolizei (Border Control VOPOS) detachments have been strengthened. The 'Army' units do guard work in certain prohibited areas: Eggesin, Karpin, and Droegeheide. It is said that in due course the Stallberg, Viereck and the Loecknitz areas will also be considered prohibited regions.

FRONTIER 'TRAPS' FOR REFUGEES

17. "It is therefore evident that Polish refugees who try to reach the West by crossing the land-frontier in the Szczecin district can easily be trapped not only in the nets of the frontier-guards but also in those of the 'Army'. Certain traditional frontier points through which many refugees safely escaped can now be considered especially dangerous. They are:

- A. Nowe Warpno (Neuwarp)
- B. Rytka (Rieth)
- C. Cieszkowice (Herrnhof)
- D. Zwalki (Beek Bruecke)
- E. Wielki i Maly Musliborz (Gross - u. Klein-Muetzelburg)
- F. Glogi (Rosenort)
- G. Stolec (Stolzenburg)
- H. Sulislaw (Boenigshof)
- I. Buk (Boeck)
- J. Linki (Alt-Lienken)
- K. Dobra (Dabern)
- L. Lubieszyn (Neu-Lienken)
- M. Daluje (Neuenkirchen)
- N. Koscino (Koestlin)

18. "If these places are especially dangerous it can not be assumed that other points are safer. The chance of being caught at the above points is merely greater."

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