

SECRET

HEUSINGER, Adolf (ex-Major General)

FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY

Personal data: Born August 4, 1897, at Holzminden, Hannover;
Lutheran; married; two children.

Education: Graduated from Humanistisches Gymnasium, Helmstedt,
1915.

Languages: Some English, French.

Decorations: Clasp to the Iron Cross 2nd Class, Clasp to the
Iron Cross 1st Class.

Career:

1915 Entered German Army as private;
Promoted to Officer Candidate and assigned to
96th Infantry Regiment.

1916 Commissioned as Leutnant (Second Lieutenant).
1916-1917 Infantry platoon leader, Western Front.
1917-1919 Prisoner of war, England.

1920 Assigned to 21st Infantry Regiment as special
missions staff officer.

1921 Transferred to 15th Infantry Regiment.
1925 Promoted to Oberleutnant (First Lieutenant).
1927-1930 Staff training assignments with 5th and 3rd
Infantry Divisions;
Theoretical instruction and training duty with
artillery, signal, cavalry and motorized units.

1930 Staff assignments under Chief of Infantry, Area II.
1931-1934 Operations and Training Division (Truppenamt T-1),
Defense Ministry.

1932 Promoted to Hauptmann (Captain).
1934 Assigned to 3rd Cavalry Regiment;
Reassigned to 18th Infantry Regiment as commander
of a mortar company.

1935-1937 Operations Section, General Staff, 11th Infantry
Division.

1936 Promoted to Major.

1937-1940 First assistant to the Chief, Plans and Operations
Division (O Qu-1), Army General Staff.

1939 Promoted to Oberstleutnant (Lieutenant-Colonel).
1940 Promoted to Oberst (Colonel).
1940-1944 Chief, Operations Division (O Qu-1), Army General
Staff, October 1-July 20.

1941 Promoted to Generalmajor (Brigadier General).
1943 Promoted to Generalleutnant (Major General)
1944 Arrested by Gestapo as suspected participant in
plot on Hitler's life, July 20; released because
of lack of evidence but placed in inactive status
under surveillance.

1945 Surrendered to United States Army authorities, May 4.

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1945-1948 Periodically used as research consultant without pay, Office of United States Chief of Counsel for War Crimes, Nurnberg.

1946-1948 Employed by Historical Division, European Command, U.S. Army.

Remarks:

Early in his military career Heusinger was singled out for eventual high level staff work, and most of his subsequent training and duty assignments were designed to better equip him for this special field of activity. His background became extremely broad; by the time he attained his captaincy he had already undergone training and duty assignments in the artillery, signal, cavalry and motorized services.

In the former Truppenamt (T-1), a title used to disguise the German General Staff outlawed by the Versailles Treaty, Heusinger dealt with matters of troop training and with the possibilities of surmounting or evading the limitations imposed by the Treaty. Among the evasions discovered and developed were the participation of former reserve officers in military exercises, the utilization of paramilitary organizations such as the Stahlhelm, the release of combat personnel by the employment of civilians in many military capacities, and increased motorization. 1/

In 1937 Heusinger was assigned to the Operations Division of the General Staff, the Ground Forces High Command office charged with the operational responsibility of planning the occupation of Austria, the Sudetenland, the interior of Czechoslovakia and Poland, as well as the Polish campaign, the French campaign of 1940, the Balkan campaign of 1941, and the first stages of the war against Russia (until Hitler assumed command of the Army on December 18, 1941). In October 1940 Heusinger became chief of this Division, remaining in this position until July 29, 1944.

His performance in the latter capacity has been favorably described by his superiors. In 1941, General Halder, his superior as Chief of the Ground Forces General Staff, wrote that Heusinger was "of fertile mind, enthusiastic in his work, and scrupulously exact. The example he sets and his warmheartedness have earned him the unconditional respect of his subordinates, both within the General Staff and among the troops in the field." 2/

HEUSINGER, Adolf (3)FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANYRemarks: (continued)

Since the close of the war, some controversy has arisen as to Heusinger's possible implication as a war criminal. The principal basis for these allegations appears to be his connection with the forwarding of the so-called Kommissar Order of June 1941, which provided for the execution without trial of captured uniformed political indoctrination officers (commissars) assigned to Russian army units; the Kommando Order of September 1942, under the terms of which captured Allied commandos were to be turned over to the Gestapo of SD (Sicherheitsdienst - Security Service) for ultimate liquidation; as well as other orders which were declared to be criminal per se at the International Military Tribunal, in Nürnberg.

When interrogated at Nürnberg, Heusinger at first not only denied having had any connection with these orders, but even refused to admit knowing of their existence. Subsequently, copies of the original orders were produced, and many were found to bear Heusinger's initials. When confronted with this evidence, Heusinger defended himself by claiming that in many cases he had been used as a messenger or proof-reader by the Chief of Staff, and that the initialing of scores of orders was a part of the daily routine of his job, and he could no longer remember the details of all the papers he had automatically initialed.

However, in another connection, it was decided at the Nürnberg trials that even this degree of participation (initialing and forwarding) of a criminal order might in itself be sufficient reason for indictment as a war criminal, especially in view of the fact that Article 48 of the German Military Code specifically states that any member of the Armed Forces may refuse to carry out or associate himself with any order which to him appears to be criminal per se.

Because Heusinger was throughout his war-time assignment a staff officer rather than a commander of troops, it was decided not to try him since, for legal reasons, troop commanders could be held more responsible for their orders than staff officers who do not issue orders, but merely participate in drafting and passing them on for compliance. 3/

Heusinger was interrogated many times, both by Nürnberg trial officials and by U. S. Army interrogators. The evidence shows that in most cases he was cooperative, and it is reported that his willingness to admit criticism of the German regime went far beyond the usual German officer's condemnation of specific strategic measures and included the war as such. 4/

In 1946 he accepted the first of two positions he was to hold with the Historical Division, European Command, U. S. Army. His first position was that of consultant on studies concerned with the organization of the Ground Forces High Command (OKH). Later he served as Deputy Director in charge of the preparation of selected studies of German military operations in World War II.

HEUSINGER, Adolf (4)FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANYRemarks: (continued)

For several months late in 1950 Heusinger was a member of the committee of experts (Expertenausschuss) which advised General Schwerin, who for several months served as security consultant in the office of the Federal Chancellor. 5/ This body was dissolved early in November 1950. Recent reports indicate that Heusinger will be appointed a member of the committee which will conduct discussions with General Eisenhower on the question of possible German participation in a European army.

General Heusinger is described as a congenial but shy and quiet man, possessing a pleasing personality and a good sense of humor. His demeanor is not that of a "typical Prussian". His intelligence is said to be only slightly above average, and he is not regarded as an exceptionally deep thinker on political and military affairs and theories. It is generally believed that he was not a Nazi at heart, but rather just a "good German". 6/

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January 5, 1950

- 1/ HQ, EUCCM Intermediate Interrogation Report (OI-IIR) No. 14, January 11, 1946 (Confidential)
- 2/ Excerpt from General Heusinger's Army Service File (Confidential)
- 3/ BI source (Restricted)
- 4/ HQ USFET Preliminary Interrogation Report No. 6, September 13, 1945 (Confidential)
- 5/ CIA Report, October 19, 1950 (Secret)
- 6/ BI source (Restricted)