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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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PRIORITY

REF : HICOG Frankfurt T-6726, January 12, 1951

SUBJECT: ERNST OSTERMANN VON ROEH

OBF

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Ernst OSTERMANN von ROEH, Corregierungsrat in the Federal Liaison Office to the Allied High Commission, was born on April 12, 1900 in Georgsdorf near Wittenberg, belongs to the Protestant Church, and has no formal party affiliations.

In 1925 he joined the "Gesamdeutscher Jugendbund", after its later transformation into the Hitler Jugend he was to join the SA. From April 1, 1926 to July 30, 1928 he was in the Munich training battalion of "Freikorps Ostland." At that time, he was attending the Rechtswissenschaftliche Gymnasium in Munich, where he took his Abitur examination in March 1928. From 1928 to 1930 he studied law, economics and political science at the University of Munich. He did not take a Doctor's Degree, but passed the State Refereatory examination in 1930, and spent the next three years in the legal preparatory service. In March 1933 he passed his Anwalt examination in Munich, after which he was an attorney at the Landgericht and the Obergericht in Munich. Meanwhile in June 1933 he had joined the SA. Sometime during the early 1930's he made a student trip to the Soviet Union and other European countries.

In April 1934 Ostermann took the Foreign Office clerical examination, and on June 1, 1934 entered the Foreign Office. He was assigned to Berlin until March 1935, and, after an interval of military training, was assigned in August 1935 to the Embassy in Bucharest, where he remained until April 1936. Reassigned to Sofia, he passed the Diplomatic-Consular examination June 11, 1936. He served at Berlin until May 1937, with interruptions in the Foreign Office such for military training. After applying for LWAF membership in December 1933 while at Bucharest, he was admitted to the Party on March 1, 1937, No. 2216722.

From May 26, 1937 until December 1941 Ostermann was a Legationsattaché at the Embassy in Washington, where his duties included protocols. While in Washington he held a number of important positions in the SA and other organizations. Besides being Reich Delegate for the Wehrhilfsfonds (Department 1, 1937) and NSV Deputy Fortrauenmann in the United States, he rose to SA Oberattaché and was listed on the staffs of the SA Bureau and the SA here in Amt. On January 30, 1941 Ostermann was promoted to First Legationsattaché for the duration of his Washington assignment.

In February 1940 Ostermann requested permission of the Reichsführer SS to marry Lisa Helene Davis, daughter of Dwight Davis, former Secretary of War in the Coolidge cabinet and Governor General of the Philippines. The SA

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anted permission, curiously enough, on the grounds that Foreign Office (rather than SS) officials could not carry aliens and continue in the service. Interestingly too, is the fact that Ostermann directed his request to SS Headquarters in the first place, rather than to the Foreign Office. (Further details of the above episode are given in USFOLAD Berlin Secret Despatch 5362 dated April 26, 1943 and enclosures thereto).

In May 1943 he was repatriated to Germany with the other members of the Embassy and entered on duty in the Political Division of the Foreign Office on June 6, 1943. From August 1943 until early 1944 he served in Russia as an SS Correspondent; he performed staff work, and after August 1, 1943 was the Foreign Office liaison officer with the 2nd Panzer Army. From May 31, 1944 until the end of the war he was Geschäftsführer at the Legation in Lisbon, and was in charge of the Information Service.

Ostermann's army career, which is interwoven with his Foreign Office service, is as follows: From March 18 to July 18, 1936, military training with rank of Corporal (Reserve); July 23 to October 10, 1936 and April 4 to 23, 1937, service in the 2nd Panzer Regiment with rank of Feldwebel (Res.); February 29, 1938 promoted to Lieutenant (Res.).

Official records give the details of his SS career as follows: SS No. 178,470, SS ZA No. 72,710; June 20, 1933 SS Anführer; June 1, 1933 to February 1, 1934 service in SS Volksturm I as Deputy Schriftführer; March 7, 1933 SS Sturm January 29, 1937 SS Sturmführer; after April 20, 1938 Untersturmführer and member of the staff of the SS Hauptamt, and from April 20, 1939 to November 1943 on the staff of the SS Fern II and April 20, 1939 (Sturmführer); July 22, 1943 called from SS Hauptamt in Berlin as Obersturmführer (Lieutenant) to the 2nd Panzer Army in Russia. Ostermann's decorations included the Kriegsverdienstkreuz, SA Sportabzeichen and Olympia II Klasse.

When the time came to repatriate Germans from Portugal after the war, Allied officials found Ostermann's attitude very cooperative. He returned to Germany voluntarily and persuaded others to return. After his return, his former First Office did not prevent his clearing his name by the Denazification Panel. It is said that his easy postwar reentry into public life was due in no small part to the friendship that had existed between Ostermann's father (now deceased) and Erhard Heinecke von BRAUER (SPD) before 1933, when Brauer was Mayor of Altona. After serving from 1940 to 1950 as a member of the (British) Zonal Advisory Council in Hamburg, Ostermann was a Regierungsrat and then Oberverwaltungsrat in the Hamburg District from 1953 to 1958, and was a close advisor of Brauer.

In March 1950 Ostermann was assigned by the Hamburg City Administration to the Federal Liaison Office in Bonn as Oberverwaltungsrat. He is responsible for Economic, Labor, Interior and Police affairs. In this capacity he was invited in January 1953 by Herbert DREIERHOFF, Director of the Federal Liaison Office, to take part in the Allied-German discussions at Bonn on Germany's contribution to Western defense.

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Ostermann, who speaks fluent English, French and also Hungarian, has had uniformly friendly relations with United States officials in Hamburg and Bonn. In appearance he is tall, dark-complexioned, distinguished, cooperative and impressively attired. He speaks sometimes with a stutter, which in no way detracts from the favorable outward impression he creates. According to unconfirmed reports he has been married twice; his alleged first wife was named Rita, was British by birth and recovered her British nationality after their divorce, and is now working in the British Foreign Office. There is no mention of an earlier marriage in his Foreign Office or OS records.

His present wife, whom he married in Hamburg on September 20, 1940, was his former secretary in the Legation in Lisbon, and was repatriated to Germany in 1940. Although she is called Fleur, her name is listed in the official German records in Bonn as Gertrude nee WACHTEL. It is understood that she was born in Kiel and lived in East Prussia before going to the Legation in Lisbon, and that her parents are still residing in the East Zone.

A cousin of Erv or Frau Ostermann, Walter RIBBIS, lives in New York. His business address is Room 622, 628 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y. When Ostermann was repatriated to Germany in 1942, the storage charges on his personal effects left in the United States were paid by Mrs. Helen RIBBIS, Stamford, West Redding, Connecticut.

Ostermann resides in Bad Godesberg, Friedrichstrasse 6.

*E. D. White*  
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Director  
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