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U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY

APO 413

Interview No. 41

ob Nagel?

Subject: Transportation Units Speer.

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SUMMARY

This report covers the subject of transportation units

1. Early history 1939/40
2. Intervention of Speer following Dr. Todt's fatal accident.
3. Division of Transportation Corps throughout Germany--
Organization.
4. Strength of transportation fleet - 1944.
5. Form of administration--Self-Sufficiency stressed.
6. Performance of Transportation Units
7. Difficulties encountered due to:
 - (a) Unwieldy organization.
 - (b) Ignorance of duties and responsibilities.
 - (c) Obstacles due to military movements.
 - (d) Lack of backing.
 - (e) Lack of fuel and other necessities.
 - (f) Air attacks.

TRANSPORTATION UNITS SPEER

The "Manager of the Transportation Units Speer" Nagel, was Private Secretary of the former General Building Inspector Prof. Speer from 1.3.37 till 1.10.39. The latter, who up to then was occupied in the main with the planning of the new construction of German offices (specially for Berlin) was ordered after the outbreak of the war to organize a certain number of new armament plants for the Airforce. Whereas the other technical conditions were given there was a lack of a reliable transportation apparatus. Speer therefore ordered Nagel who possessed the necessary technical knowledge to form immediately a greater number of transportation formations. These had to be quickly movable and not to be locally bound. That led to the formation of the first units of the later "Transportation Corps Speer" which began its work with 750 trucks and 750 trailers in the winter 1939/40. Speer gathered a certain number of well known architects and building firms for the execution of his order and founded a building organization, operating under the name "Building Staff Speer". To this building staff there were assigned the transportation formations for the feeder-services, with the exception of one unit which was requisitioned by the Army for the supply of the troops in the West-Campaign.

In the winter 1940/41 Speer was ordered to complete the construction of the air-raid shelters in Berlin and to build a certain number of bunkers for the same purpose. It turned out that the trucks alone were not capable to satisfy the mass demand for gravel and cement. Nagel therefore turned to the inland shipping industry. By charter-agreement a great shipping yard business of Berlin was taken over. This formed the foundation of the "Transportation Fleet Speer" which was founded the 1.1.41.

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In the meantime the war with Russia had begun. It brought new technical building tasks for the "Building Staff Speer" and also for the Transportation Units. The railway from Lemberg to Dnjepropetrovsk had to be completed. The electrical power plant Dnjeprostroy was to be reactivated. Great parts of the Transportation Units were shifted to Russia in order to accomplish this labor. In spring 1942 it even could be managed in spite of great difficulties to bring parts of the "Transportation Fleet Speer" over the Weichsel-Bug-Prjipjet to the Dnjeptr.

In spring 1942 the then being Minister of Armaments, Dr. Todt, who was at the same time General Inspector for the German highway system and as the builder of the Westwall the manager of the "Organization Todt", had a fatal airplane crash. Prof. Speer was appointed his successor in all his offices. When he took over the "Organization Todt" (O.T.) he ordered that its motor pool, the transport brigade Todt, was to be assigned to the "Transportation Units Speer." This motor pool, in the main consisting of hired cars of the Economy Department, was managed by a N.S.K.K. (N.S. car driver corps) - Obergruppenfuhrer (superior group leader) and by a number of other N.S.K.K.-leaders. Because Speer was of the opinion that the possibility of an intervention by any group of the Party was unbearable he demanded the dismissal of the Obergruppenfuhrer. This was the cause for many sincere disagreements with the leadership of the N.S.K.K., which, delayed through the death of Corps leader Nuchlein, lead to a complete break after more than one year. Nagel, who since the beginning of his work with Speer held a title of honour within the N.S.K.K. upon intervention of Speer, had to get out of that organization.

Structure of the Transportation Units

Transportation Corps Speer.

The transportation Corps was divided in Germany according to the county-division (Gaueinteilung) into single districts with a district leader for each. All the district-leaders were under the "Inspector Reich" who could draw formations from one district to another according to demand. Besides there were the "Inspector West" (France), "South" (Italy and Balkan), and "East" (Poland, Hungary, Russia) as well as the independent "District Viking" (Norway). Besides there were some "truck transportation regiments" as a part of the army for the purpose of supply, which Minister Speer had, little by little, given to the Army because of urgent need and demand.

All own drivers as well as the drivers of the hired cars were dressed in uniform and were lodged and fed together, because of the necessity for a quick mobility and for the maintainance of discipline. All these people were paid off with wages according to private economy principles. Foreigners (60% of the personnel) were treated in every respect like the German drivers. In 1944 the Transportation Corps Speer reached a force of 50,000 vehicles of which 32,000 real trucks with a personnel of 58,000 men. The vehicles represented a total tonnage of 130,000 tons.

Transportation Fleet Speer.

The Transportation Fleet had no regional subdivision. It only had "guiding places" (Leitstellen) in the single districts. The personnel consisted to 90% foreigners hired as volunteers in normal hire-offices at Antwerpen and Potterdam as well as in Italy.

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Concerning equipment, payment and food the same principles were applied as in the Transportation Corps. In 1944 the Transportation Fleet Speer reached a strength of nearly 4,000 ships with a total of 500,000 loading tons. Among these ships there were a certain number of sea-faring coast-motor-ships as well as 60 self-built motor ships of concrete which were a full success in the over-sea-service. They were used in all European inland water roads and in the coast waters of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, over the Biskaya, the Channel, the North-sea up to Norway and from the Baltic-Sea over Russia to the Black Sea.

Form of Administration.

The transportation Units Speer were built up from their very beginning as a self-sustaining enterprise of the Reich. That means they were obliged to pay their expenses out of their own income. This income resulted mainly from trips which were credited to the account of the building firms, the armaments plants and other enterprises which used their vehicles. The prices were the same as they were settled for private transportation enterprises. When the computation of the Transportation Units increased a deviation from the single trips was made and the vehicles were furnished only for a certain unified remuneration per day. The self-system enterprise was a success. Founded on October 1st 1939 with 300,000 marks, given as a loan, the Transportation Units possessed at the end of 1940 1,000 million marks.

Performance.

It can be assumed that in 1944 130,000 loading tons of the transportation Corps have been turned over 4 to 5 times daily. The following daily transportation performance was achieved:

$$4,5 \times 130,000 = 585,000 \text{ tons or per year}$$

$$3000 \times 585,000 = 175,500,000 \text{ tons transported goods.}$$

Because the average-distance of a single trip was 11 km the performance per year is to be calculated with $11 \times 175,5$ millions = 1,930,500,000 tons = milliards tons per km. The performance of the Transportation Fleet were not maintained in statistical form. However, it may be assumed as a result of the experience that the total tonnage was turned over about 20 times per year. Thus $20 \times 10,000,000$ tons goods were moved and, with a travel-average of 300 km a performance per year of $300 \times 10,000,000 = 3$ milliards tons per km was achieved.

Difficulties.

1. Ignorance. Although all Germany was convinced that the attacks of the German submarines against the transportation system of the enemy automatically under certain circumstances would lead to victory, there was no understanding, not even in the highest places, of what a decisive importance was the functioning of the own transportation system. The Ministry for Traffic, divided into the Departments Railway, Highway-Traffic and Inland Shipping which properly would have had the task to carry through the right opinion was in this regard a complete failure. Until the beginning of the war it itself had still paid rewards for the break up of not fully usable inland ships. It also intervened in a restraining way at the overland-traffic with trucks. Therefore it is not to be considered as a "Traffic-Ministry" but at the best as a "Railway-Ministry". But in the Railway Department too one

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suffered from too high an estimation of the own possibilities. At the beginning of the war, for example, the Reichsbahn was declared as absolutely untouchable by any crisis and fit for every war task with the effect that for a long time their building of substitute parts placed as last item on the lowest priority rating. As a result there was suddenly a considerable lack of locomotives, when the cold Russian winter 1940/41 had a destroying effect on those. Although it was succeeded by a special action to increase the amount, from this time the difficulties of the Reichsbahn came to no end. The German transportation traffic apart from the railway which was not supported by competent authorities remained in low estimation. In the Army this point of view could be explained out of its long history. One still thought of the medieval supplies and trains of former wars closely connected with the thought of the communication zone (Etappe). In contradistinction to the fighting troops to which also the highest staffs counted themselves these were but a kind of second class soldiers.

The industry, in America for example young and experienced in waging war, neglected the German transportation system considerably, too, with an old tradition as a railroad-country had Germany always been well served by the Reichsbahn and possessed not enough experience to consider the necessities of other means of communication. Thus it happened that the inland shipping remained divided into its "patriarchal 5 stream-districts" which required different certificates for ship-captains and forbade the navigators of "their" districts to go over into another. Up to the end of the war no concentration and full exploitation of the tonnage was reached. Also the registration and exploitation of all civilian cars which, besides, according to circumstances, were subordinated to the Ministry of Traffic, Agriculture or Forestry, did not surpass the questionable concentration in Local trip-formations (Fahrbereitschaft). The selection of the types which were to be built for war was made by the Army who ordered these building models not according to the transportation performance and to their economical fuel consumption, but according to the principles of the best application at the front. Cars with more than 4, 5 tons carrying capacity were refused principally. For example, the construction of stotra-car with 220 HP, air-cooled motor, was stopped, although the car carried 12 tons and needed no more fuel than a normal 3 tons-truck. The driving with boosters and trailer was refused, too. This underestimation of the means of transportation by the Army lead to an enormous waste as a consequence of insufficient maintaining and preservation of the vehicles, which could not be replaced by new constructions. In consequence it was always necessary to regress to the vehicle stock at home which together with the retrograde development of the railway lead to the decrease and finally to the complete standstill of the transportation system in the German War Economy.

Fuel and Tiles.

II. While in the main the assignments of tiles for the Transportation Units were sufficient till the end of the war, during the years 1943/44 the assigned quantities of liquid fuel became smaller and smaller. But it was succeeded through a change to the use of solid fuel, driving with trailers and by driving in tow to utilize the motor pools fully operating until the end of the war, though also the supply with solid fuel, particularly with fire-wood and char-coal left soon to be desired.

Air-Attacks.

III. Up to 1944 neither the highway- nor the ship transportation system suffered notably by the air attacks. Only after the destruction of the

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Middleland-Canal which was cut through air attacks several times and was thus emptied, put considerable burden on the east-west inland shipping lines. Many 100,000 of tons per km were lost for the transport, specially the coal. But the highway transportation system remained nearly untouched by air attacks till the end of the war. The only losses occurred because of bomb hits on repair shops and on single vehicles. Road-bridges which had been hit by bombs, could always be detoured without difficulties.

The Reichsbahn naturally had to suffer most under the attacks, because it, as the main pillar of the German transportation system, could not evade the attacks just as the shipping system was not able to evade its destiny. As a consequence of the bombing of marshalling yards there was no more possibility for many districts to use single wagons. It was tried to help oneself with complete trains, which remained together from the departure to the arrival-station without needing marshalling. This was an auxiliary measure which, though it brought some relief, shifted again considerable parts of the otherwise rather complete tasks of the Reichsbahn to the highway transportation system. Whereas the bomber attacks on the open through lines remained without effect because they could be quickly repaired, the strafing attacks of the fighter bombers on moving trains had soon a rather unpleasant effect. By the destruction of locomotives which amounted in 1944 at many places to more than 100 pieces, and by the blocking of the through lines the Reichsbahn was decisively hit. The transportation tonnage was continually reduced.

The year 1944.

For the Transportation Units Speer the year of the extremely increasing air attacks, 1944, was a year of heaviest burden. Bombed out plants and plants which were thought to be in danger were shifted, or better, broken up into smaller units. In a place where formerly a production unit had operated was afterwards only a receiving place for goods and perhaps one or another, rather unimportant, shops, dispersed within a radius of about 100 km, and the traffic among them which had been carried through with electric cranes, cranes or conveyors, had now to be maintained by trucks only. In addition, all vehicles which had to be transferred for such purposes from the transportation corps into the armaments industry had to be taken from the up to the leading part of the building industry. Then, in October 1944, it finally happened: Minister Speer ordered the suspension of all armaments- and defense-buildings, at first for 4 weeks. The railway, in the meantime, refused more and more to accept goods for transportation. During this period there were always more than 2,000 trains accumulated on side-tracks. They were not even able to transport the coal trains which they needed for their own purposes from the Ruhr's, not to speak of their impossibility to solve satisfactorily the industry which more and more frequently had to cut off whole districts from the electric current for certain periods. Even in the Ruhr-area and on the Moser the locomotives were driven with brown coal. This had, in addition to the horrible consumption of coal, the disadvantage that the train could be recognized for long distance from the air during the night because of the glowing ashes which were thrown out to a great extent from the ashboxes of the locomotives. These decreases of performance in the transportation system with their consequences for the armaments industry lead quickly to the end. The production of war material which had reached its highest level of the war during October by working with subcontracted and stored material, sank rapidly. Then came the loss of Upper-Silesia, too. The break down was a question of weeks.

Miscellaneous Questions

1. How long did the Transportation Units Speer believe that they could respond to their task of covering the highest demand of transportation space for the armaments industry?

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Answer: Always, up to the end, because it was always possible to draw sufficient transport space from the building section. Only when the tasks of the railway had to be taken over by the armaments transportation system- at the end nearly completely - the capacity did not suffice any longer.

2. How many trucks had Germany at her disposal at the beginning of the war?

Answer: According to my knowledge nearly 3 millions, including the booty of the first war year.

3. What would, according to your opinion, be the best method to inflict maximum damage upon the transportation system of the enemy?

Answer: That depends on the kind of the dominating means of transport. Damages can be inflicted much easier on "railway-countries" like England and Germany than on highway-countries, like America and Russia.

4. What influences reduced the performance of the truck transportation system specially during the war and how great was that reduction?

Answer: The performance of the truck motor pools was reduced in the main by the insufficient performance in repairs of the repair shops. Although there were 500,000 men occupied with repair works in the Army and another 120,000 men in the private-economy, the result was insufficient. That was due to various causes:

a) The non-consideration of the eminence of the transportation system by the Army lead to the drafting of professional truck drivers and mechanics not to the motorized troops, but to any other formation. They were according to the opinion of the troop untrained soldiers, to be used everywhere. Also the officers in the repair shops were nearly never experts. The troops themselves then trained new truck drivers. The deterioration of vehicles corresponded to the knowledge of the beginners.

b) The formations were nearly never divided according to types. In a single transportation regiment one could find all German and most of the foreign building models. A successful supply of substitute parts was thus made impossible in the mobil as well as in the non mobil substitute parts depots.

c) The maintenance of the vehicles which were changed to the use of solid fuel, demanded much love and care by the drivers. In addition the technical development of the built in gas generators had not reached such a level that it could be called "foolproof". When the car did not get unobjectionable gas some of the careless drivers started the battery empty and when let themselves be towed into the repair shops.

d) The building in of the generators was a great burden for the workshops because the factories which had manufactured these cars did not take into consideration the possibility and necessity of the additional equipment which had to be built in required thus in 1944 still about 300 hours.

e) The cars of the Transportation Units Speer had, because of the supervision by experts, a far longer duration of life than those of the Army. This naturally caused an increase in repair work.

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f) The automobile plants just as the other armaments plants were forced to maximum production. Schedules of the monthly production had always to be fulfilled. Thus they preferred to neglect the production of substitute parts in favour of new productions, because the substitute parts did not show up in their production figures of vehicles.

Because of those factors the performance in km per day per vehicles on hand, i.e. including those in repair, decreased in 50% since the beginning of the war. Considering however only the vehicles in circulation the performance in km per day increased in about 25%.

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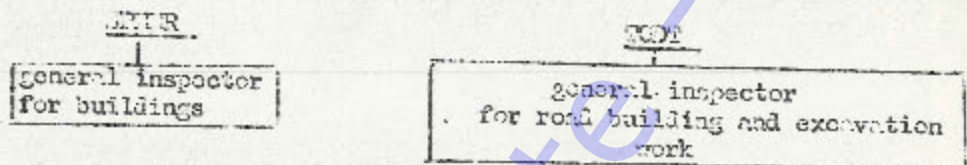
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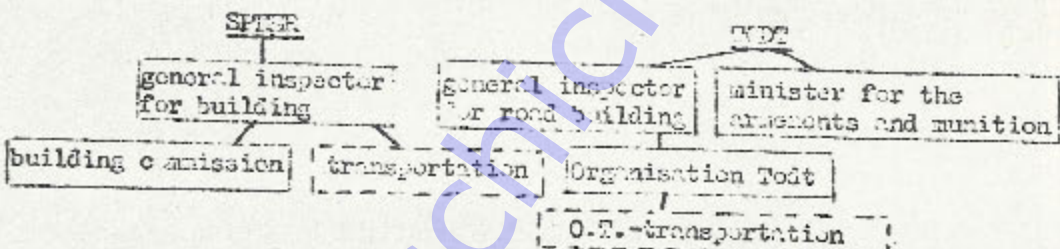
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Chart of Transportation Functions of Speer and Todt.

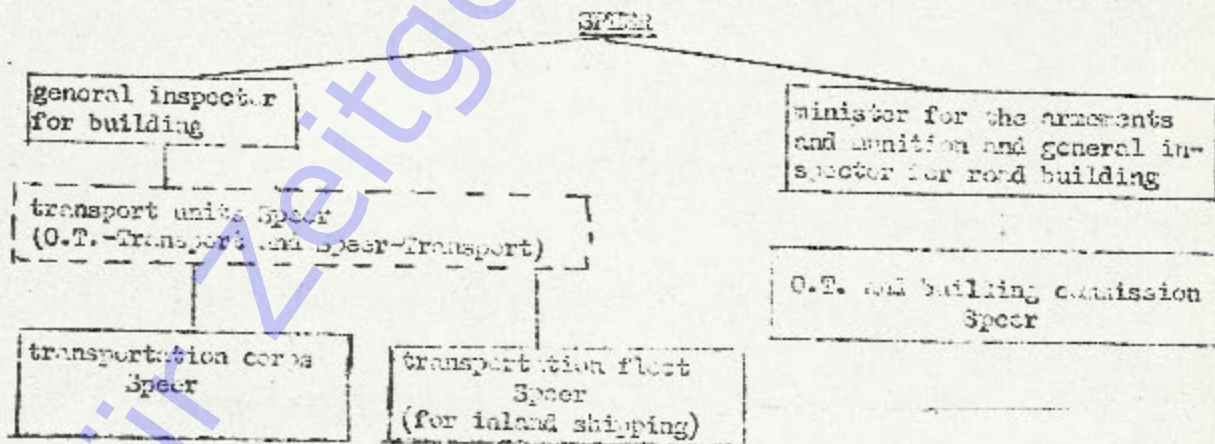
1937:



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Mr. Nagel + "Chief for transport units"

- - - - - = transport organisations
- = building organisations