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Frentz II/1
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Notes on a Second Interview of Herrn Walter Frentz,
at his home in Überlingen, from 7 to 11.50 p.m.,
8 December 1971

1. Frentz was during the war Leutnant, and then Oberleutnant, der Luftwaffe, attached to the Führer's headquarters for the purpose of photographing official visitors, and carrying out photographic missions on Hitler's instructions. As such he came under Wedel (OKW/WPr) and hence under Jodl at FHQu. He was with Hitler's staff from 1939 until approximately 23 April 1945 when he flew out of Berlin (Tempelhof) to the Berghof; there he was arrested in the course of the arrest of Göring et al., but was subsequently set free.

2. Documents and Photographs: During the war he wrote what he describes as a "Kalender" (this in answer to the point made by Frau Schmudt). This and the negatives of a large number of the 35mm films he took were unfortunately destroyed by enemy action in the last days. However he did rescue all his negatives of still photographs taken privately by him (he was officially a film photographer) and he still has these and excellent albums of contact prints from them, filed in chronological order and frequently with precise details of date and place. (These albums were inspected for the period 1939 to 1942).

3. In detail, these black & white photographs include: Hitler's front line visits in Polenfeldzug 1939 mit Mercedes dreiachser Feldwagen. Rommel als Kommandant des FHQu. Hitler's Blitzbesuch in Paris Juni 1940: Invalidendom, Nôtre Dame, leere Strassen usw. Besuch in Straßbourg (Munster). Scenes at Schwarzwald Führerhauptquartier. Scenes in the Berghof, Reichskanzlei,

Führerbau. Morell, Wünsche, Engel, Hoffmann u.a. Various scenes in Führer's Sonderzug, including Hitler reading Depeschen in the corridor. Heinrich Heim. Von Papen auf dem Obersalzberg. Kehlsteinhaus: marriage of Frl Daranowski (Nov 1942). Führer and Speer inspecting architectural models (Berlin, Neubau München, Hbf München usw): film 1940, #32ff. Visit to Bismarck in 1940. Weihnachten im Führerzug 1940: the Salonwagen, with Christmas trees, etc. Visit to Boulogne: 1940, last film. Frau Bormann, portrait, five photos: 1941, film #10. Hitler at Wolfsschanze 26.-29.6.1941, with Morell, reading Depechen, with Christian usw: 1941 film #13. Ten photos of Julius Schaub: Juli 1941, film #16. Photos showing Scherff, Lorenz u.a.: 1941, film #19. Hitler's Sportpalastrede 30.1.1942: film 1942, #01. Portraits of Hans Junge, 1942, film #02; of Frl Chr. Schröder, #03; of Scherff, 1942, films #05 and #31; twenty-four portrait photos of v.Below, #11. Hitler inspecting model of München Bhf with Prof.Giesler on 28.4.1942: 1942, film #12. The well-known photographs of Hitler with little girl (Uschi Schneider) on his knees, 30.4.-2.5.1942:1942, film #14 (ca fifteen photos). Hochzeit von Frl.Daranowski 1942, film #27. Photos of Else Krüger, Bormann's secretary (and one-time Verlobte of Frenz) film #27. Führer bei Prof.Giesler November 1942, film #32.

4. In addition, Frenz possesses a very impressive collection of colour photographs, which fall into two categories. He commenced a series of colour photographs of objects, scenes and events (Ukrainian women, architecture in Kiev, usw) from which he prepared large-format colour prints by a special three-colour process: these are large, unfaded and very beautiful. All these were prepared either from colour negatives or from diapositive ~~neg~~ films (Agfa). In addition he showed me about 12 sheets of about 15 negatives each (diapositive colour photographs, approx.6cm x 6cm, of Führer-interest: Hitler's Lagebesprechungen, the Wolfsschanze, usw.

Since these have virtually never seen daylight, the colour in them is still remarkably vivid. Of major historical interest are however his colour portraits.

5. This collection of colour portraits was commissioned by Hitler after the death of Todt in February 1942: Frentz had completed a large colour photograph of him, and showed it to Hitler on the day after Todt's death. Hitler: "Sie müssen alle unsere grossen Männer für die Geschichte aufnehmen, damit sie in die Geschichte eingehen, (etwa)" Bormann soon learned of this important commission und gab sofort Zuschüsse to aid Frentz in his work. The result is a collection of diapositive film portraits in full colour of the leading personalities of the Third Reich: Himmler, Göring, Jeschonnek (who was very reluctant to be photographed) Speer, Todt, Bormann, Canaris (five excellent photographs in uniform) Milch, Bodenschatz, v. Below, Engel, Krupp, Himmler (including an eerie profile photograph of him without his spectacles), Manstein; in general the collection seems to include all leading generals, Reichsleiter, Führer adjutants, Gauleiter, Ministers (a list will be obtained from Frentz later). Altogether about 3,000 colour portrait photographs are in his alphabetical collection, of the highest technical quality.

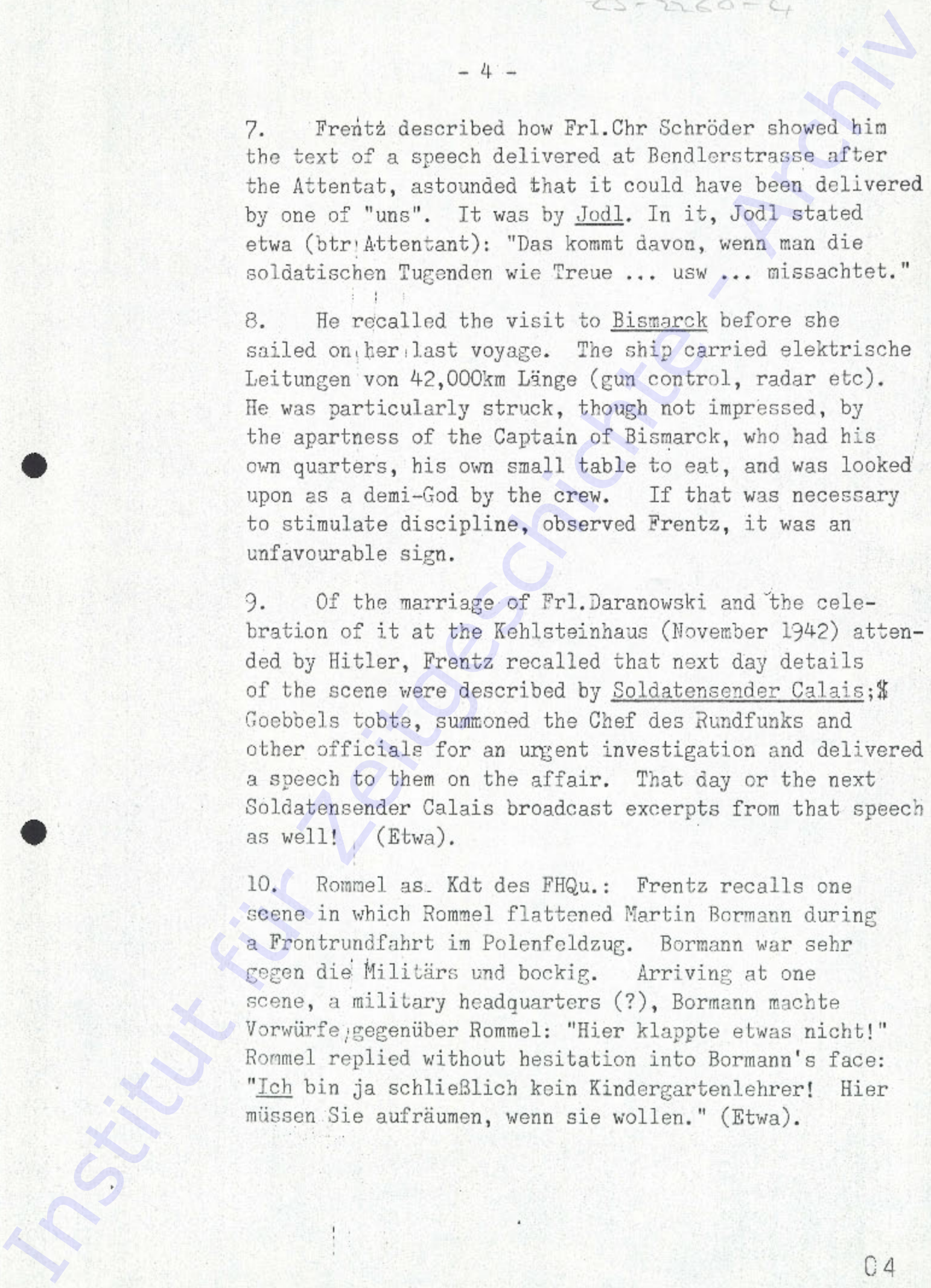
6. Frentz states that at the start Scherff was convinced of Hitler's genius, but that later in the war he began to show his doubts. At the time of the Attentat (Frentz cannot recall whether before or after) Scherff asked him, etwa: "Glauben Sie denn, daß das noch gut geht?" (Vgl. Dittmar's quotation of similar statement by Scherff, Juli 1944, in Dittmar Tgb v. ... 1945.)

7. Frenzt described how Frl. Chr Schröder showed him the text of a speech delivered at Bendlerstrasse after the Attentat, astounded that it could have been delivered by one of "uns". It was by Jodl. In it, Jodl stated etwa (btr: Attentant): "Das kommt davon, wenn man die soldatischen Tugenden wie Treue ... usw ... missachtet."

8. He recalled the visit to Bismarck before she sailed on her last voyage. The ship carried elektrische Leitungen von 42,000km Länge (gun control, radar etc). He was particularly struck, though not impressed, by the apartness of the Captain of Bismarck, who had his own quarters, his own small table to eat, and was looked upon as a demi-God by the crew. If that was necessary to stimulate discipline, observed Frenzt, it was an unfavourable sign.

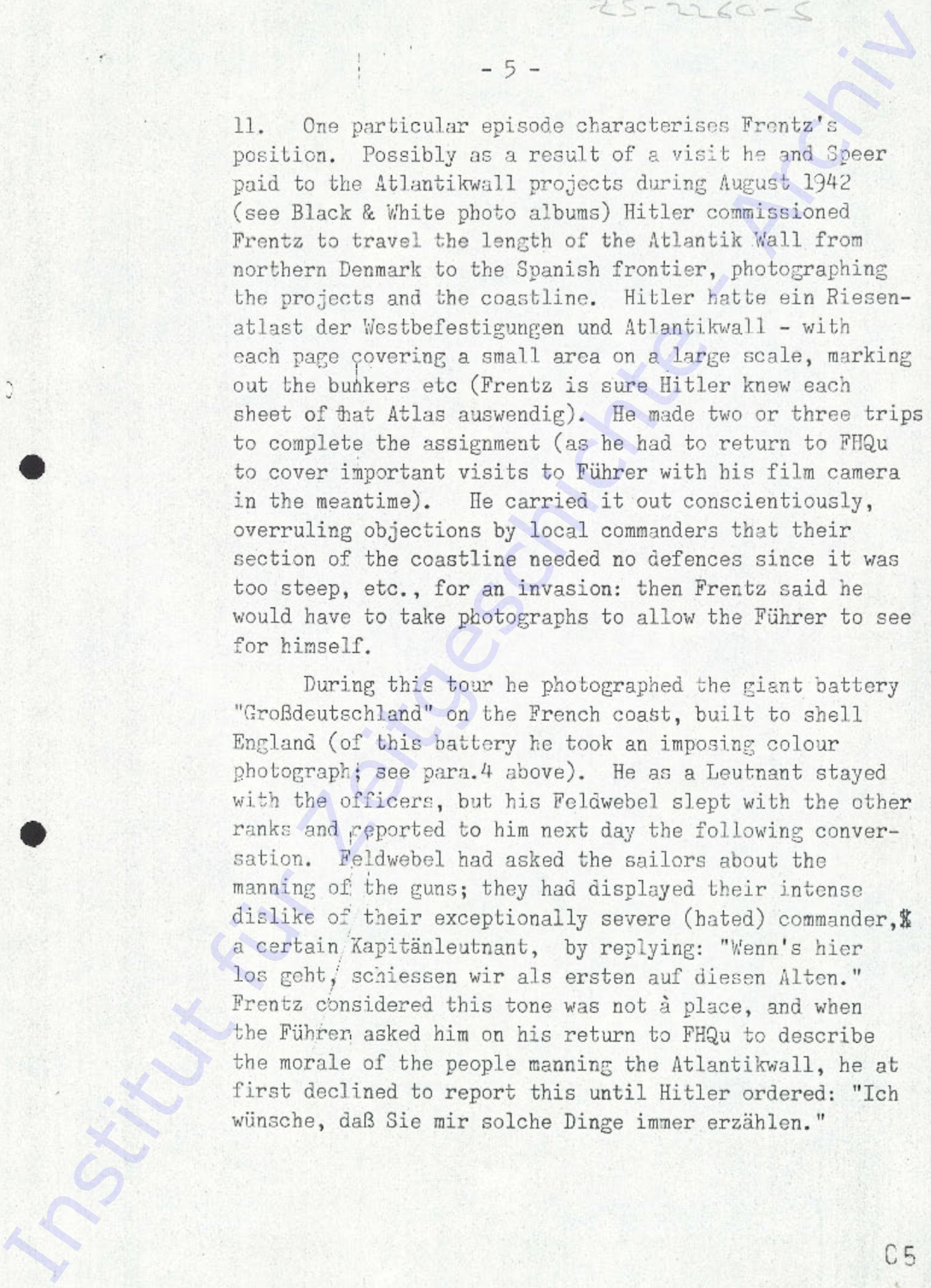
9. Of the marriage of Frl. Daranowski and the celebration of it at the Kehlsteinhaus (November 1942) attended by Hitler, Frenzt recalled that next day details of the scene were described by Soldatensender Calais; Goebbels tobte, summoned the Chef des Rundfunks and other officials for an urgent investigation and delivered a speech to them on the affair. That day or the next Soldatensender Calais broadcast excerpts from that speech as well! (Etwa).

10. Rommel as. Kdt des FHQu.: Frenzt recalls one scene in which Rommel flattened Martin Bormann during a Frontrundfahrt im Polenfeldzug. Bormann war sehr gegen die Militärs und bockig. Arriving at one scene, a military headquarters (?), Bormann machte Vorwürfe gegenüber Rommel: "Hier klappte etwas nicht!" Rommel replied without hesitation into Bormann's face: "Ich bin ja schließlich kein Kindergartenlehrer! Hier müssen Sie aufräumen, wenn sie wollen." (Etwa).



11. One particular episode characterises Frenz's position. Possibly as a result of a visit he and Speer paid to the Atlantikwall projects during August 1942 (see Black & White photo albums) Hitler commissioned Frenz to travel the length of the Atlantik Wall from northern Denmark to the Spanish frontier, photographing the projects and the coastline. Hitler hatte ein Riesenatlas der Westbefestigungen und Atlantikwall - with each page covering a small area on a large scale, marking out the bunkers etc (Frenz is sure Hitler knew each sheet of that Atlas auswendig). He made two or three trips to complete the assignment (as he had to return to FHQu to cover important visits to Führer with his film camera in the meantime). He carried it out conscientiously, overruling objections by local commanders that their section of the coastline needed no defences since it was too steep, etc., for an invasion: then Frenz said he would have to take photographs to allow the Führer to see for himself.

During this tour he photographed the giant battery "Großdeutschland" on the French coast, built to shell England (of this battery he took an imposing colour photograph; see para.4 above). He as a Leutnant stayed with the officers, but his Feldwebel slept with the other ranks and reported to him next day the following conversation. Feldwebel had asked the sailors about the manning of the guns; they had displayed their intense dislike of their exceptionally severe (hated) commander, a certain Kapitänleutnant, by replying: "Wenn's hier los geht, schießen wir als ersten auf diesen Alten." Frenz considered this tone was not à place, and when the Führer asked him on his return to FHQu to describe the morale of the people manning the Atlantikwall, he at first declined to report this until Hitler ordered: "Ich wünsche, daß Sie mir solche Dinge immer erzählen."



Hitler, unfortunately, challenged Dönitz about this matter at the next Lagevortrag (Hitler fühlte sich ja immer betrogen.) As Dönitz emerged from the conference he caught sight of Frenzt and rebuked him, "Sie sind ein Schuft". Der Kapitänleutnant wurde abgesetzt.

12. American author John Toland visited him, saw the black & white photos only, offered DM 100 for US publication fee and DM 300 for world fee in connection with his book. Toland expressed no intention of returning

(David Irving,
9.xii.1971)

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