

THE GÖRING INTERROGATION

Second Installment of the Luftwaffe Leader's Dissertation on His Air Force and Its History

INTERROGATION of Hermann Göring by MIS officers of Ninth Air Force Air Prisoner Interrogation Detachment, partially reviewed in SUMMARY No. 81, (page 10), covered numerous and assorted subjects. It should be borne in mind that while the Reichsmarschall was willing enough to talk, he was not considered by his interrogators to be particularly well informed about all subjects on which he was questioned. This fact, coupled with the knowledge that Göring has by no means given up hope of convincing his captors of his own innocence of war guilt, should be used to temper the value placed on the information he supplied.

Intelligence

Göring said that intelligence information in the GAF was accorded strict attention, since it was frequently the basis for defensive and offensive operations unless discarded by Hitler. As in Allied headquarters, intelligence of general value and interest was disseminated in intelligence publications.

Sources of information included foreign newspapers, magazines and broadcasts; pertinent excerpts were wired to Berlin. Göring cited the instance of Allied newspapers announcing the intention of the USAAF to employ Russian air bases long before the plan materialized. He mentioned that radio interceptions—the German "Y" service—were used extensively to obtain information regarding missions of Allied air forces. Interception of radio tune-up traffic made it possible for the GAF to form an idea of impending Allied operations. As President of the Research Council, Göring had access to intelligence gleaned from telephone calls made within the Reich. Conversations were subject to monitoring by a department of the Research Council.

Göring considered most important the information derived from prisoner of war interrogations at the various Dulags. He said the results often enabled Germany to take effective countermeasures. Although the regular Dulag interrogation was concerned only with matters pertaining to the air war, Göring said that prisoners were available for questioning by SS interrogators on morale and other general issues. The Reichsmarschall asserted that interrogations by Dulag personnel concerning the air forces were conducted on a "comradeship basis" (whatever that could imply in a German prison camp). Göring said that Hitler suspected that some interrogators at the Dulags were Anglophiles, and had consequently ordered their transfer.

Information gathered from these interrogations

was voluminous, and only excerpts from the most important items were referred to Göring. Occasionally he even saw an important prisoner himself.

Tactics

Although Göring seemed ready to talk on any subject, he admitted that his knowledge of GAF matters was confined generally to that of an organizational nature, in accordance with his office as Supreme Commander. Technical details had been farmed out to his various staff experts.

Night Fighting had been practiced before the war with a small force of He-51s and Me-109s. Results had not been very satisfactory. Then, in the summer of 1941, Korps 12, composed of four night-fighter groups, was formed. It was equipped with Me-110s and assigned to defend the Reich against British four-engine bombers. Korps 12 was gradually enlarged to include many more groups and was finally formed into Jagdkorps 1. Ju-88s and He-219s supplemented the original force of Me-110s.

Göring said that lately only five Me-262s were available for night defense of Berlin, and of this number only one or two were operational at any one time. Claims by these jet aircraft were, according to Göring, one or two Allied aircraft shot down every night.

Single-engine night fighting at the beginning of the summer of 1943, was considered effective only if there were enough aircraft to allow fighters to stay close to a definite target, since they were not under radio control. Twin-engine aircraft were considered to be more effective for night fighting.

By fall, 1943, night fighting had improved because experienced bomber pilots were flying Me-109s and FW-190s. Newly trained pilots were at a disadvantage because of their short course and lack of sufficient training flights (due to fuel shortage).

Day Fighters : In attacking bombers, tail approaches were preferred to head-on attacks, according to Göring. This was because the closing speed during head-on attacks allowed too short a firing time. In this connection, Göring mentioned that fear of fire power from the tails of four-engine bombers had so lowered the morale of members of Jagdgeschwadern that he found it necessary to visit all squadrons personally to give pep talks.

Göring maintained that there was no specific point where the GAF fighters were to concentrate their attack on Allied bomber stream. Demonstration maps were prepared to show the best points

of the jet as well as balance it. (Hitler, in his ignorance, explained Göring, did not realize that the consumption of the extra fuel in flight would restore the original lack of balance.) Göring added that Hitler even went so far as to have him issue an order forbidding the aircraft to be referred to as a fighter. It was henceforth to be called a "Blitz-bomber."

(Because of disagreement with Hitler over the value of the Me-262 as a fighter, Galland tried to alter the Führer's decision. Göring was compelled to dismiss him from his office as General der Jagdflieger as a result of this quarrel.)

These arguments held up the use of the Me-262 as a fighter for several months, much to Göring's regret. However, when, as Göring put it, "Mustangs were practically doing training flights over Bavaria," Galland was recalled. He was given command of a small unit of 16 Me-262s for which he picked the most experienced pilots he could find.

Finally, at the end of 1944, Hitler allowed the Me-262 to be flown as a fighter on a large scale. According to Göring, Hitler was ultimately convinced of the effectiveness of the aircraft when 10 jets attacking a bomber stream claimed to have shot down 10 Allied bombers early in 1945. Once Hitler had "decided" that the Me-262 was an effective fighter plane, he wanted it to become operational immediately. Göring said that he himself preferred to wait until he was able to equip a complete Geschwader with the aircraft. This was not approved, however, and the informant said that death was threatened anyone who tried to keep a jet aircraft from the front lines.

Armament for the Me-262 called for two 5.5-centimeter cannon. Since this cannon had not yet been produced, Hitler favoring heavy armament, demanded that the long-barrelled five-centimeter cannon used by tanks should be substituted. The Luftwaffe chief said that it took a long time to convince the Führer that this was not advisable. The cannon barrel would have protruded from the aircraft by about six and a half feet, like a "damnable asparagus," as Göring said.

When finally installed, armament for the Me-262 was not standardized. In most aircraft it consisted of four three-centimeter cannon, and in a few aircraft, six three-centimeter cannon. Göring said it was proposed to make the choice of armament optional with each unit.

The R4M rocket was mounted in racks holding 12 missiles under each wing, when installed on the Me-262. The rockets had such terrific explosive power, Göring claimed, that no matter where they hit on a bomber, it would cause the aircraft to go down. The loaded racks were said to reduce speed of the aircraft by about 57 m.p.h., or by 32 m.p.h. when the rockets had been released.

Göring said Hitler believed jet aircraft with

rockets should not approach enemy bomber formations closer than 4,000 feet. Considering the additional distance which the aircraft would travel after the last rocket was launched, the rocket would have had to be fired from a distance of approximately 6,500 feet. It was Hitler's intention to keep the Me-262 beyond the range of Allied gunners.

The Me-262 was used on a small scale for reconnaissance work, Göring said, and on rare occasions made such flights over south-east England.

Ar-234 Production : The Ar-234 was at first produced in B series with twin jets. Altogether, only 225 aircraft of this sub-type were manufactured. Göring said mass production of the C series with four BMW 003 jets, carrying a bomb load of 3,300 pounds (see page 25), was supposed to start in March, 1945. The projected initial output was 500 aircraft per month. Production schedule for the Ar-234 gradually fell to 50 aircraft per month and was finally abandoned altogether in favor of the Me-262.

The Ar-234B was first used in reconnaissance over England shortly before the invasion, Göring said, and later as a light bomber.

The general effect of Allied strategic bombing on the production of jet aircraft resulted in the decision to give absolute priority to Me-262, and speed its manufacture to the utmost.

Power Units : Göring said that the Junkers jet propulsion unit was used because it was ready when needed. It was planned to replace it with the Heinkel-Hirth power unit, which Göring thought superior. The BMW 003, to be ready by the fall of 1945, was also to be used.

Fuel used by the jets was J-2. Göring said that it was simple and inexpensive to produce, being an ordinary synthetic with low octane content.

Jet Pilot Training : It was Göring's opinion that no special training was necessary for Me-262 and Ar-234 pilots. Since there were a great many inactive bomber pilots in the GAF, Göring decided that they should be converted to the Me-262 for interception of Allied bomber formations during bad weather.

Pilots converting to the Me-163 were required to go through glider training before they actually flew the rocket jet.

Jet Tactics : Because of Göring's remoteness from operations, he was perhaps not the best person to question on the subject of tactics for jet aircraft. This, however, did not stop him from giving freely of his opinions.

He told interrogators that tactics for jet aircraft were still in the experimental stage: they were based on the number of Me-262s available for an attack. So far, only general directives on tactics had been issued by Luftwaffe headquarters and apparently no more

than 40 Me-262s had been employed on any one mission.

Orders were that when attacking a bomber formation, a formation of two flights of four aircraft each were to be used. A third flight of four aircraft was to fly high cover in loose formation. The attacking flights were to take position below or above the bomber group and leap-frog one group of bombers after the other along the entire bomber stream. They were not to turn back and reattack. The third flight of four was to continue its top cover. Jet pilots were instructed to avoid dog-fights with Allied fighters.

Cooperation between the Me-262 and conventional fighter aircraft was similar to the tactics used by the He-162: the Me-262 was to engage Allied fighters, forcing them to jettison drop tanks. With their range thus shortened, the intruders would be subject to attack from conventional fighters. Ordinary fighter aircraft were supposed to protect jets during their rather perilous landings.

Research

The Reichsmarschall said that in the main, research was conducted by the government-sponsored research institutes. Industry was expected to contribute suggestions, but lacked initiative in this respect. Göring regretted that Germany had no financially independent private aircraft industry on a competitive basis. He said that there was nothing he envied the Allies more than this.

When the GAF wanted a new airplane, orders were given to the industry specifying the general requirements. From the plans submitted, three were handed to Göring, who made the final decision as to which was to be used. Then when the first three prototypes were completed, they were sent to Rechlin for testing.

Göring mentioned several new projects which were being developed at the end of the war. One was the "Natter" interceptor (see page 23); others were "Wasserfall," "Enzian," and "Rheintöchter"; all radiocontrolled flak rockets (see page 27.)

V-Weapons

"You were extremely lucky that the war did not last another year, or that we were unable to start to use our weapons one year earlier," Göring commented.

The development of the flying bomb began during the war. Originally in the hands of the Luftwaffe, it was later turned over to the German flak organization. The construction of V-1 was quite simple, said Göring, and did not require much material which might be used more effectively in other aircraft.

V-2, on the other hand, was more complicated, and used more essential material; although not enough to handicap German aircraft production. In this connection, Göring referred to the "ridicu-

lous" Navy program, which he claimed had slowed aircraft production, particularly by building heavy battleships. (An undercurrent of Göring's antagonism for the German Navy is apparent throughout the interrogation report.)

Göring said research work on V-2 had begun before the war. It was based originally on the idea of developing an express mail service to the United States. The German Army took up sponsorship of the project and developed it for its subsequently well known purposes.

Because of the impossibility of exact aiming, only larger cities could be attacked with V-weapons. Overwhelming success was not anticipated, however, because insufficient missiles were available.

"V-2 was impressive!" enthused Göring when he related how he had seen one in the process of being fired. The irrepressible actor gave his impression of a V-2 firing, and the interrogation officers who witnessed the performance report the effect to have been almost as unattractive as the actual firing.

Flak

Personnel: Flak personnel on D-Day numbered about 500,000 in Germany proper, and totalled more than 1,000,000 when occupied countries were included. According to the Reichsmarschall, Flak personnel was originally very good, but with the war taking a great toll in the Army, much of it had to be transferred to other units. About a third of the members of the flak units were transferred into the infantry and SS. Formation of parachute regiments took more flak personnel. Replacements were made from foreigners, women, and GAF Helferinnen down to 15 years of age. Generally speaking, women were employed only on searchlight batteries.

Flak Batteries: Flak emplacements were constantly being enlarged, and batteries of four guns were increased to six, eight, and 12 pieces. After the beginning of American day bombing attacks, flak batteries grew as fast as guns could be produced. AA guns had first priority in production. At the end of the war, Germany had approximately 12,000 heavy guns.

Göring said that the ratio between fighter and flak "victories" was approximately two to one. Flak estimates were usually so conservative that they were taken for granted as correct.

With reference to certain breaks in flak lines guarding the Reich, Göring said that the reason was simply that Germany lacked enough AA guns to protect everything. This situation existed despite the fact, Göring claimed, that Germany had the greatest flak force in the world. He said that there was a heavy flak barrage behind the West Wall and behind this barrage numerous flak forts were located.

Because the Flak Führer was in the CP of the Jagdivision, cooperation between fighters and anti-aircraft establishments was very good.

D-Day

Göring stated that invasion through Normandy German Army head preparations on the would come in the I avoid crippling the L limited force in Nor in reinforcements fr they were needed. B superiority of Allie lacked sufficient stre Göring's aide, Bra they had only two Ge combined strength o The next day they tr the Reich to airbase: bined total, only 200 their home bases.

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D-Day Preparations

Göring stated that the GAF had anticipated an invasion through Normandy and planned accordingly. German Army headquarters, however, had based preparations on the assumption that the invasion would come in the Pas de Calais area. In order to avoid crippling the Luftwaffe, Göring had left only a limited force in Normandy and was ready to throw in reinforcements from Germany when and where they were needed. But due to the immense numerical superiority of Allied air forces, the GAF simply lacked sufficient strength to cope with the invaders. Göring's aide, Brauchitsch, said that on D-Day they had only two Geschwaders (JG 2 and JG 26) with combined strength of 80 aircraft in Northern France. The next day they transferred 700 to 800 aircraft from the Reich to airbases in the Paris area. Of this combined total, only 200 to 250 aircraft ever returned to their home bases.

New Year's Day, 1945

Although the attack of 1 January, 1945, was ordered by Göring, he claimed that the cause for it was once again Hitler's interference with GAF affairs.

Prior to the surprise attack by GAF fighters, Göring said he had deployed his entire fighter strength in a long line from the west to the east of Germany. It was his intention to engage Allied fighter escort along the entire line. In the middle of November, 1944, Hitler had ordered that the line be turned; the fighter force was redeployed in a north-south line from Holland to Basel. Only NJG 300 and 301 remained near Berlin. Hitler's purpose, Göring said, was to raise morale of the ground forces, who until then, had seen only Allied planes overhead.

In order to make the best of Hitler's order, Göring planned the New Year's Day attack on Allied airfields, hoping to inflict heavy damage upon the Allied fighter force. The attack was scheduled to start an hour earlier than it did, but for various reasons was delayed. Nevertheless, Göring thought that 600 Allied aircraft had been destroyed, as against 100 German pilots lost. (These figures do not tally with facts.)

Radar

Göring believed radar warfare to have been almost as important as aerial warfare itself, and stated that the purpose of the air forces was two-fold, comprising aerial combat and radar warfare.

The Luftwaffe chief said the GAF refrained from using window for about nine months, anticipating that once started the RAF would soon take it up. The GAF did not want this, since their counter-measures had not yet been fully developed. The RAF used window first, however, so the Luftwaffe followed suit. Window had been very effective in the beginning, Göring said, but was largely overcome later on.

According to Göring, Allied "spoof" attacks were not very successful. Somehow, the Germans knew when assemblies were being faked. They took weather conditions into consideration and thereby obtained experience in anticipating whether Germany was to be attacked, and if so, in what section. It was Göring's opinion that Allied penetration tactics did not cause great confusion to GAF fighter controllers.

Aircraft

Göring gave some interesting information regarding the fate of several German aircraft.

The manufacture of the Me-410, he said, was discontinued because it did not prove effective.

The Ju-88s-3 supplanted the Ju-188 because its engine (BMW 801D) was needed for the FW-190.

Production of the Ar-240 and Me-264 was stopped in the development stage by General Milch. Göring called this "two missed opportunities," attributing it to Milch's antipathy for Messerschmitt. The Me-264 was to be a four-engine bomber with a range "as far as New York." The Ar-240, a bomber of the Me-410 class, could have come out within six months, Göring believed.

A third new bomber, expected to be ready in the summer of 1946, was a combination of jet and engine propulsion. Three types under consideration were submitted by Messerschmitt, Junkers and Horten.

Battle of Britain

As Supreme Commander of the Luftwaffe, Göring was key man in planning the part the GAF was to play in the invasion of England. Primarily, the Luftwaffe was to gain absolute air supremacy over the British Isles, and secondly, it was to destroy the British fleet. Because "fighter planes were the only British air asset" at that time, the GAF aimed to destroy the fighter forces.

It was Göring's own opinion that the reason for Germany's failure to invade England was "lack of sufficient shipping space." In particular, he mentioned a totally inadequate number of landing craft. If the German Navy had possessed sufficient landing craft, the German fighter force would have been able to protect a landing, Göring believed, "especially since England had no bombers at that time." Once Germany's invasion force had established a bridgehead, Göring was sure that invasion would have been successful. There was nothing to offer effective resistance, he said. No army, no flak, no bombers. "Only Volkssturm," said Göring, in self-mockery.

Strength in GAF aircraft increased slightly during the Battle of Britain. At least, Göring said, this was so at the end of the Battle. According to the informant, GAF losses over Britain were not too severe. He could not, however, give even approximate strength and loss figures without referring to

Luftwaffe statistics. These, of course, were not available. He considered RAF claims for the Battle of Britain fantastically high. But when pressed for an answer about Germany's losses, interrogators said that his guess sounded so much like a Goebbels statement that it does not bear repetition. Brauchitsch could not remember accurate figures for that period either, but said that they were such that the GAF effort could not be maintained. To the best of his knowledge, Brauchitsch thought monthly production of bombers in 1940 totalled about 280 aircraft. Fighter production was estimated at 400 per month.

Göring said that the plan for the renewal of raids on England early in 1944 originated with Hitler himself. But the switch in production from bombers to fighters, in addition to GAF requirements for night fighters and the withdrawal of an entire Geschwader from the West, made it impossible to carry out bombing on any great scale. Finally, the policy of the Supreme Command of the Luftwaffe to build and maintain a reserve for the coming Allied invasion caused the 1944 attacks on England to peter out.

"Giesela" was the code name for Göring's plan of another attack against England late in 1944. This time his idea was that German night fighters should intercept British bombers while landing in England on their return from night bombing missions. The plan was disapproved by Hitler on the ground that it was not worth the effort. The idea was carried out only on a minor scale after failure of the Ardennes offensive.

There were extensive reconnaissance flights over England in the spring of 1944, Göring said, and limited reconnaissance of British ports shortly before the Allied invasion. In the fall of 1944, reconnaissance was successfully resumed, using Me-262s and Ar-234s, but there was no full cover of west coast ports and London after spring, 1944.

Russian Campaign

Göring, besides being busy with his Luftwaffe, had ideas of his own regarding German foreign policy, and a plan which included anything but an attack on Russia.

He said it was "known" that Russia in 1941 intended a second campaign against Finland, and at the same time planned to expand to the south in the direction of the Dardanelles. With this in mind, Göring suggested that after the defeat of France, some arrangement should be made whereby the French would allow German forces to move through France into Spain. Göring believed that Germany could then take Gibraltar from the rear. The Spanish were inclined to be "friendly" with the Germans, and as Göring put it, grateful for the assistance rendered them in their "liberation from Communism." He personally considered them weak, and believed they would have expressed no

opposition to a German move for that reason. Göring believed that Franco would have granted the Nazis use of Spanish ports for their U-boats, as well.

With Gibraltar lost, and the Dardanelles threatened by Russia, Göring counted on using British anti-Soviet sentiment (aroused by Russia's renewed attack on helpless Finland) to aid in bringing England to terms with Germany. With this neat bit of strategy, Göring hoped to end the war, leaving Germany holding the position of strong man in Europe.

But instead, Hitler decided to attack Russia. "The decision to attack the East made me despair," said the Reichsmarschall. He tried to influence Hitler by referring to "*Mein Kampf*," in which the Führer had himself warned against a two-front war. "I knew," Göring continued, "that we could defeat the Russian Army; but how were we ever to make peace with them? After all, we could not march to Vladivostok!"

His efforts, however, proved futile. Hitler, probably advised and supported by Ribbentrop, persisted, and the attack on the Soviet Union was carried out. Göring mentioned his own dislike for Ribbentrop. But Hitler was impressed with Ribbentrop's success in concluding the Japanese alliance, and had called him the "best Foreign Secretary since Bismarck."

The Germans used all types of aircraft in the Russian campaign. Göring explained the comparatively late use of FW-190s as fighter-bombers in Russia, saying Ju-87s were considered good enough. They were to be expended before they were replaced with newer aircraft.

Italy: The successes achieved against the harbor of Bari and the Corsican airfields were attributed by Göring to very minute and careful preparation of these operations. He admitted to luck at Bari, when the GAF scored hits on four Allied ammunition ships.

Poltava: Regarding success in the airfield attack at Poltava, Göring stated that US bombers had been discovered landing there by an He-177 pilot. The German aircraft had joined an American formation and followed it to the airfield. Then the pilot had returned to a German base and reported his findings.

Iceland: Germany had contemplated occupying Iceland. However, the island lacked airfields, and Germany could not afford to invade anywhere that she could not use her air force. The German Navy was so inferior to the British fleet, Göring believed, that it could not be depended upon for protection. Besides, Germany was trying to keep America out of the war and strategy would have called for an occupation of Greenland, had Iceland been invaded. This move, Göring correctly assumed, would find little sympathy in the United States.

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fields. In addition, the GAF made use of frozen
lakes for landing strips.

Azores : If the Gibraltar scheme had worked out as
Göring had hoped, the Azores were to be invaded
and occupied.

Japan

Göring professed to know very little about the
JAF and Germany's relations with it. He emphasized
that he had no particular liking for the Japs, and that
Germany's alliance with Japan should not be looked
upon as an alliance based on friendship. Rather it
was the fruit of military expedience and necessity.
According to Göring, Germany traditionally leaned
more towards China than Japan.

Liaison with JAF : The GAF may have been in
contact with the Japanese Air Staff, but Göring
maintained it was not through himself. He thought
liaison was probably conducted through the attachés.
The Japanese and German navies were in closer
harmony than their armies and air forces. Göring
professed to know nothing of Japanese secret weapons
or of Japanese plans to withdraw to the Chinese
mainland for a final defense. He was apparently
ignorant of Japanese weaknesses and deficiencies in
aircraft, production, and methods.

New Developments : Göring was not sure, but he
thought it possible that the Japs had blueprints for
V-1 and V-2. "There is still a difference between
having blueprints and being able to use them," he
added drily.

He stated that Hitler had ordered the blueprints
for the Me-262 to be handed over to the Japs despite
his own objections. These were given to the Japanese
in Germany and sent to Japan in a U-boat during the
first months of 1945. None of the German construc-
tion experts went to Japan, Göring said, and no
Japanese pilot ever flew an Me-262 in Germany.
He stated emphatically that neither plans for the
jet bomber nor any projects for weapons being
developed had been given to the Japanese.

Exchange of Aircraft : At the beginning of the
war with the US, Göring said the Japanese had
promised to send aircraft to Germany. He said that
they had never arrived.

On the other hand, Japan wanted Germany to send
He-177s and Ju-290s in 1942 and 1943, flown via
Persia and India. The Germans insisted that they be
flown the shorter route via Siberia. The Japs would
not agree to this, because of their neutrality pact with
Russia. The same argument, Göring said, prevented
the new German air attaché for Japan from flying
to his post in a Ju-290, even after Russia renounced
the non-aggression pact.

Göring referred to the "Japanese thirst for know-
ledge," saying that their extensive searching led them
particularly to investigate German underground
installations.

The Göring Personality

The Reichsmarschall, as is apparent from the
length of this interrogation report, was willing
enough to talk and answer questions. On certain
subjects and details, however, he was not particularly
well informed. This may be due in part to what his
adjutant called his "easygoing nature." But it
should be attributed, too, to his unwillingness to
face unpleasant facts, which often led to his subordi-
nates, like Hitler's, to conceal the truth from him.

Interrogation officers point out that not only did
his "waning star" and Hitler's constant interference
dampen his desire for hard work, but he had become
soft and afraid for his life.

Göring's self-deceit remained up to the very end.
His ruthlessness towards those under him is illus-
trated by his statement, "I never signed a man's
death warrant, or sent anybody to a concentration
camp; never, never, never—unless, of course, it was
a question of military necessity and expedience."
This presumably includes the thousands of Com-
munists, Socialists, Democrats and Jews of whom he
disposed in his role as Prussian Minister of State
in the early days of Nazi power.



It's All Clear Now

APPARENTLY this publication was not the only party confused by the mystery of the
designation "8-248 (8-263)" for the Junkers version of the Me-163C. Some light
has been shed upon the subject by Dr. Willi Messerschmitt, who really ought to know.

Reported in SUMMARY NO. 80, *et ante*, under ambiguous terms, the beclouded
nomenclature of the aircraft was "clarified" for puzzled interrogators when Dr.
Messerschmitt told them that although he designed the aircraft to replace the
Me-163B and C, the 248 was later turned over to Junkers for development and
manufacture. The original name was "8-248," but the Reich Air Ministry insisted
that the number "8-263" should be used as it was "in keeping with established
procedure." A report on the exact nature of "established procedure" is now
awaited—not breathlessly.

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S-6695/K-16535

UNITED STATES
HISTORICAL DIVISION
STRATEGIC AIR FORCES
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Date 20 Aug 95

AIR INTELLIGENCE
SUMMARY No. 82

25 June, 1945

COPY NO. 1128

IRIS Public Record

Key Information

Main: UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE

Document Type:

Call Number: 519.607A

IRIS Number: 00217347

Accessions Notes:

Old Accession Nbr: 4555-55

Title:

Beginning Date:

End Date:

Publication Date: 1945/06/25

Classification UNCLAS

Media Roll #: 6752

First Frame: 918

Last Frame: 949

Linear Feet: 0

Old MFlm Roll # A-5724

Audio Rec:

NUMPAGE 0

Title Extensions:

Abstract INCLUDES NOTICE OF DISCONTINUANCE OF PUBLICATION.

Descriptive
Notes:

Title AIR INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 82

Added

Entries

Author:

Subject:

Major Command:

Doc Link:

Administrative Markings

No Administrative Markings Listed

Security Review Information:

Rcvd:	Rel	1987/08/11
Indexer ID: 35	Entered Date:	
QC ID:	QC'd Date::	
Scanner ID:	Scanned Date:	
Acc ID	Acc Date:	