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U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
APO 413

Interview No. 2

RG 243

ENTRY 32

BOX 3

Subject: Lt. General Werner Junck.

Interviewed by: G.R. Perera, Col., AC.

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MEMORANDUM for the Chairman of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey.

SUBJECT: Interview with Lt. General Werner Junck.

I. Time and Place of Interview.

Lt. General Junck was interviewed on several occasions between 20 and 24 April, 1945, at the Bade-Hotel, Bad Eilsen, Germany, by Colonel Perera and Major Holtzerman.

II Lt. General Junck's Career.

1. Lt. General Werner Junck became a pilot in 1916. He remained in the army until 1923 when he resigned his commission. During the post war period, Germany was not permitted an air force and he served in the 18th Infantry Regiment under the command of General von Rundstedt.

2. In 1923, General Junck resigned from the army with the retirement grade of captain. His reasons were twofold. First, he wished to be able to fly again, which was impossible in Germany, and, second, he wished to earn some money. He went to South America and acted as a pilot for Scadtoa in Columbia, Venezuela and other South American countries. During the years of 1925 and 1927, he was in Russia working for the Junkers Company, manufacturing aircraft, building up air routes and training pilots. In 1933, he became chief test pilot for the Heinkel Company. His business income varied from 50 to 70,000 RM a year. In 1934, against his own desires and at Goering's insistence, he was called to active duty in the Luftwaffe in the grade of a captain. He was promoted to major in 1935, to lieutenant colonel in 1937 and to colonel in 1939. He was promoted to major general in 1943 and, in 1944, to lieutenant general. In the first world war he received the Iron Cross, first and second class. He received a bar to each in the present war and was also awarded the Ritterkrous.

3. General Junck became Inspector General of fighters in 1939 shortly before the outbreak of the war. In June 1940, he was given command of all fighters in Luftflotte 3, which were assigned to support the 9th Army Group, commanded by General von Kleist. In this capacity, General Junck participated in the swing south across the river Somme after the breaking of the Meunot Line. Luftflotte 3 was commanded by General Sperrle.

4. After the defeat of France, his fighter command was moved to the French coastal area opposite the Isle of Wight, whence it participated in the campaign against Great Britain. Sorties were flown against various British objectives, including attacks on Portsmouth, London, the Vicker's Supermarine Works at Southampton, and the Bristol Aircraft Company at Bristol. On several occasions General Junck himself flew on missions.

5. In the early months of 1941, he was sent on a special mission to Iraq for the purpose of assisting in stirring up a "holy war" by the

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Moslems. This assignment involved close cooperation with the German ambassador to that country and this relationship did not turn out to be a happy one. General Junck stated that he was obliged to report "as black" what the ambassador and others were reporting as white". General Junck became incensed at what he considered inaccuracy, dishonesty and inexcusably bad judgment in a situation where the political aspects outweighed the military. Shortly after the invasion on Crete, General Junck was called to Athens to confer with the Chief of the Air Staff, General Jesconneck. The two men found themselves in open conflict. It turned out that General Junck's estimate of the situation in Iraq was correct but, notwithstanding, many serious personal attacks were made against him. He finally demanded exoneration and satisfaction under the German Army officer's code. Instead, charges were preferred against him and he was placed on inactive duty pending trial by court-martial. When the trial took place, he was acquitted. He immediately submitted his resignation but it was received with hostility and refused. General Junck believes that the fact that he knew of a deplorable situation in the Foreign Office had a great deal to do with the above course of events. He has a very low opinion of Ribbentrop, who, he feels, has been both arrogant and extremely stupid in his policies.

6. In the middle of August 1941, General Junck was appointed air defense commander for the area of Germany from the mouth of the river Schelde to Jutland with headquarters in Jever and Oldenburg. He held this command until April 1942. The command included both day and night fighters and the period was one in which the development of German night-fighter tactics occur.

7. In April 1942, he was given command of the 3rd fighter division with headquarters at Metz. The mission of this command was to defend the southern and western approaches of Germany from Belgium to the Swiss frontier.

8. Immediately after the death by suicide, in August of 1943, of the Chief of the Air Staff, General Jesconneck, General Junck was given command of Fighter Corps II of Luftwaffe 3 under Marshal Sperrle. This corps consisted of 2 divisions and 3 brigades. The command comprised both day and night fighter groups and totalled about 80,000 men, of whom 40,000 were engaged in signals and air raid warning activities. General Junck's headquarters were at Chantilly. His mission was the air defense of all of France. The divisional headquarters were at Metz and Paris and the brigade headquarters at Avignon, Bordeaux and Rennes. General Junck retained this command until July 1944.

9. July 1944 he was removed from his command. This was in direct result of his objections to carrying out an order which originated in Goering's office and which provided that his command should fly more sorties. General Junck pointed out that any intelligent person reading his reports would realize at once that they showed his men were flying an average of four sorties a day, which he considered a maximum. Marshal Sperrle said to

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him at the time, "You are in good company, because Marshal von Rundstedt is leaving and I shall be the next one to go"! The exact circumstances surrounding General Junck's refusal were that, after telephoning Marshal Sperrle that Goering's order was rubbish, he issued the order as directed but with the insertion of his own written comments thereon. General Junck was glad to be relieved of his command, as he was thoroughly exasperated at the fact that, at that time, he could not get more than 20 aircraft a day as replacements, a figure below his normal daily wastage, which averaged 30. Under such circumstances, he was unable to maintain his strength and to conduct efficient operations in opposition to our invasion forces.

III. The Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain.

1. The British evacuation from Dunkirk was made possible by a combination of circumstances. To begin with, the German commanders did not believe that Britain would be in a position to continue the war after the collapse of France and they therefore did not apply sufficient pressure. To illustrate this point, General Junck's division engaged in no air activity for three weeks after it had been moved up to the north coast of France. This was because of Ribbentrop's idea that the British could be shortly prevailed upon to withdraw from the war. In the second place, the weather was poor for aerial operations. In the third place, the RAF obtained local air superiority.

2. In the Battle of Britain, the Luftwaffe had two tactical disadvantages: (a) German fighters had inferior engines to British fighters; (b) German bombers were insufficiently armed. Plans had been made for the installation of heavier armament but German bombers then had only one .30 calibre machine gun to defend their tails. A plan had been prepared by the Air Staff for the destruction of selected British targets. This plan was not based on the concept of concentrated attack on selected industrial systems; instead, a series of important objectives was selected from diversified industries. General Junck believed that the existence of numerous British "shadow-plants" had led the authors of the plan to conclude that their intelligence as to specific target systems was insufficient to justify such concentrated attack. He stated that one target system considered for bombers was radar-stations; this system was never attacked. The first objective in point of time were British fighter aircraft and airdromes. Thereafter aircraft plants were attacked as well as Channel-shipping ports. General Junck participated in the attack on the Vicker's plant at Southampton. In this attack the accuracy was good and the German photo-interpreters felt that the plant would be out of operation for a long time.* At Bristol the interpreters thought that a good job had been done, but later on they decided otherwise.

3. General Junck advocated at an early date in the Battle of Britain that night attack be substituted for day attacks. This was finally done because of these severe losses in daytime raids. General Junck felt that the Battle of Britain was a sort of air-Verdun, in which the

(*No attempt was ever made to rebuild at this site.)

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Germans were at a By ED NARA Date 5-25-11 did they suffer severe losses of aircraft, but such of their pilots as succeeded in parachuting out were made prisoners. Although British losses were high, the edge lay with the RAF.

4. General Junck agreed with Dr. Tank that the younger aces who had been placed in high positions were incapable of doing a proper high staff job. However, except for Galland, who finally was promoted to the grade of general, he did not think that they had been much involved in strategic planning. Galland did well. Peltz, who was in charge of bombers, was merely a favourite of Goering and was incapable.

5. General Junck's experience, in his own commands, did not indicate to him that there was any general lack of pilots. The quality of pilots, however, was constantly deteriorating after the Battle of Britain. On the other hand, he did not obtain as many aircraft as he wished at any time. This was true as early as 1943.

IV. The Luftwaffe in the Campaign against Russia.

1. The campaign against Russia suffered from the initial disadvantage that the German High Command grossly underestimated Russian production of aircraft and tanks and Russian transportation capabilities. The General Staff had come into prominence after the successful campaign against France. It had not done so well, however, in the Balkan campaign.

2. The Russian campaign went very well until September 1941. Russian armies were seriously damaged and some two million prisoners were captured. In September 1941, there is good ground to believe that Hitler, who had taken the credit for the success of previous campaigns, became anxious to take the entire credit for the Russian campaign. When, therefore, the leading generals such as Halder and von Brauchitsch informed him that winter was coming and that Moscow could not be captured before the cold weather set in and advised that the Germans withdraw to a tenable defense line, Hitler overruled them and ordered that the armies stay where they were. It was at this point that General Junck first submitted his resignation from the service.

3. When the cold weather came the Russian launched an offensive with the divisions brought from Siberia and which were quite at home in arctic conditions. The Germans lost enormous quantities of materials as a result of the first winter campaign.

4. It is possible that the Japanese may have been encouraged in their aggression against the U. S. by the withdrawal of Siberian divisions. General Junck does not know. He was unaware of any close cooperation between Germany and Japan.

V. The Air Defense of Germany.

1. There was no definite or comprehensive long range plan for the development of counter-measures against allied air attack. Instead there was constant improvisation.

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2. The development of German night fighters caused a severe reduction in RAF night attacks. It was thought that the Germans had achieved as high as a 20 per cent rate of destruction on the RAF. At one time in 1943, 134 out of 650 RAF bombers were shot down attacking Stuttgart, Pilsen and Nurnberg. With the introduction of "Window" at about the time of the Hamburg raid of July 1943, German night fighters and flak were helpless for some months. The existence of "Window" had been known, but a method of overcoming it was not immediately developed. The Hamburg attack, incidentally, did comparatively little damage to high priority industry and its morale effect was to harden German resistance. Later HX 2X (bommerang) and PFF had good results.

3. Unquestionably, the chief threat to Germany was the attack on German industry carried out by the precision methods of the U.S. Air Forces. These attacks were accurate and the formations were so flown as to be difficult to intercept.+ The American fighter-escort was of great effectiveness from the very beginning and caused the Germans heavy fighter losses.

4. General Junck agreed with Dr. Tank that the program for increased German fighter production was principally directed to defense against day-precision raids.

VI. The Luftwaffe in the Defense of the Atlantic Wall.

1. In January 1944, General Junck held maneuvers designed to repel an enemy landing on the French coast between Cherbourg and Abbeville. He was convinced that this was the only practical area for an invasion, as the Pas de Calais coast was too strongly fortified and held. In the early spring of 1944, Marshal Rommel was sent down to the invasion area and considerable confusion resulted as to whether he or Marshal Rundstedt was to be in control. General Junck believes that Rundstedt was by far the abler commander. Rundstedt favored a defense in depth whereas Rommel wished to concentrate forces along the shores. General Junck told Rommel that he thought that any such policy would result in the troops being pulverized by our air superiority. The only innovations that Rommel made in existing defenses was to place stakes with mines upon them in the water along the beaches and in certain spots where parachutists or gliders might land. Very bad judgment was used in executing these orders; in one case stakes were placed beside power lines, which any parachutist would naturally try to avoid.

2. The invasion did not come as a surprise. Photo-cover had been obtained regularly. This showed the progress of our invasion plans and disclosed the existence of our artificial harbours. On the early morning of D Day, General Junck ordered his total fighter strength to bases between Le Mans and Beauvais. He did not understand why ground forces were not moved immediately. The fact that the mechanized troops in the Pas de Calais and Lille areas were not moved up was not due entirely to transportation difficulties.

+(Note: Geschwader-Kommodore Meyer of the Richthofen-Geschwader was responsible for developing the most successful form of attack on B-17's. This was the head-on attack.)

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3. On 6th June 1944, D. Day, General Junck had only 60 operational fighters under his control. Between 50 and 55 per cent of his total strength - 160 was non-operational, principally due to battle damage. During the month of June 1944 he only received a total reinforcement of about 580 aircraft. This was insufficient to meet his requirements as at no time did he have more than 50 per cent of his strength operational and his wastage rates were averaging 30 a day or 600 a month.

4. German fighter strength was retained within Germany up to D Day because of the necessity of meeting our bomber attacks which were effecting very heavy damage on German industry.

5. There was no shortage of oil in France for operational flights prior to D Day, but the disorganization of rail transportation, beginning in March 1944, made it difficult to move supplies about. After the middle of May, there was no dependable rail service at all. The attacks on the marshalling yards and bridges and the strafing of the railways and roads were most effective. The pattern of these attacks as they moved west and, particularly, the pattern of the destruction of railroad bridges, gave a direct indication of both the proximity and the place selected for the invasion.

GUIDO R. PERERA
Colonel, Air Corps

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