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U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
APO 413



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INTERVIEW: FIELD MARSHAL ALBERT KESSELRING

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I. PERSONAL BACKGROUND.

Q. Describe briefly the several positions you held during the period commencing a few years before the war and continuing throughout.

A. In 1937 I went from the Air Force staff to become Chief of Luftflotte No. 1 in Berlin. In that capacity I was leading Luftflotte No. 1 against Poland and at the same time I was preparing the aerial defense of Berlin, as well as of the area of my Luftflotte. In the Spring of 1940 I became Chief of Luftflotte No. 2 and in that capacity I was taking part in the campaign against France, Holland and Belgium and afterwards I took part in the aerial warfare against England. Immediately after that I was transferred to the Eastern Front and was leading Luftflotte No. 2 against the Russians in co-operation with the Army Group "Mitte". At the end of 1940 (November) I was transferred to Italy, where my main task was to secure the transport of arms to Rommel - the air invasion of Africa was part of the task of my Luftflotte. With the beginning of the Anglo-American campaign in Northwest Africa, I was appointed Commanding Officer of all Forces in the Mediterranean Area and then, during the campaign across Tunisia, Sicily and Italy, I was severely wounded and out of action for three or four months. In that time I had under my command all three Forces, Army, Navy and Air. I was operating directly under Mussolini and under the Chief of Staff of all Italian Armed Forces. Later, after the revolution in Italy, I was directly under

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the command of the OKW and was dependent on close cooperation with Mussolini. After the Remagen crossing I was appointed Commander in Chief in the West and conducted the final campaign until the capitulation.

Q. Have you been a professional soldier all of your life?

A. Yes, I am an artillery officer "by birth".

II. PRE-WAR DEVELOPMENT OF LUFTWAFFE.

Q. Prior to the outbreak of the war, when you were a member of the Luftwaffe Staff, what general plans for the expansion of the Luftwaffe were made?

A. I have to go back a little while. I was very well acquainted with the development of the Air Forces from 1933 to 1937, but from 1937 on, my knowledge is limited to what I know about Luftflotte No. 1, of which I was Chief. Therefore, this question is hard for me to answer. I believe that Goering would be better able to give you information on that. Everything had been done to make the German Air Force from the point of view of airmanship, aircraft, flak, air corps signals, etc., the most formidable in the world. This effort led to the fact that at the beginning of the war, or in 1940 at the latest, from a fighter viewpoint, from a dive bomber viewpoint, from a combat viewpoint, we had particularly good aircraft, even if the standard was not uniform entirely, and our flak was excellent beyond any doubt. The Luftwaffe signals people, at that time, could still acquit themselves well.

Q. Did the Luftwaffe plan a short or a long war?

A. This is a question which I can hardly answer. I do not believe that the thought of any special war entered into the planning as it was the desire of Germany to get back into world competition through possessing a strong air force. But also here Goering will be able to answer better than I. I can only say that, according to our standards, we built it on a very broad basis and that we did our best, as far as aircraft is concerned.

Q. Did Germany conceive air power largely as a supporting arm of ground troops in the planning years?

A. I do not believe so because there was an air force of its own with a complete separation from the armed forces.

Q. At the outbreak of the war, how many operational aircraft did Germany have?

A. I can not say that. I do not know.

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III. AIR IN THE POLISH CAMPAIGN. (1939)

Q. You participated in the first campaign in Poland?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your appraisal of the contribution of the German Air Force toward the success of that campaign?

A. I do not think that a decision would have been made in that short time and so decisively without the Luftwaffe.

Q. Was there any substantial air opposition in that campaign?

A. The Polish fighters were not bad. Apart from this, there was noticeable flak around Warsaw, but otherwise little.

Q. What was your method of employment of air power during that campaign and what were its accomplishments?

A. This campaign is outstanding because of the development of the technique of air support of ground troops as carried out by the Ju 52, striding attacks by Me 110s and bombardments attacks on heavy resistance centers, like Warsaw. Of particular importance were low level attacks of fighters, light bombers and dive bombers against marching columns both in withdrawals and in protection of flanks.

Q. From the end of the Polish Campaign until the beginning of the campaign in the West in the Spring of 1940, what were the plans with regard to the expansion of the Luftwaffe?

A. They are not known to me. The main task was to plug up the holes that were created by that campaign and to smooth out the bugs that were encountered.

Q. Had the losses been great in that campaign?

A. They were entirely bearable. Light bombers suffered the heaviest losses. The fighters, I believe, lost 20% in crews. There were about three or four times that many losses in aircraft.

Q. What lessons did you learn in that campaign?

A. In 1940, I wrote a little article about that, the great importance of ground support through the Air Force working in close cooperation with the ground force, the history-making importance of the dive-bomber, the tremendous accuracy and non-vulnerability of that kind of aircraft, and especially the fact that the light bomber did not have the tremendous results that were expected. ✓

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- Q. With England and France as enemies at that time did you intend to build a long-range heavy bomber?
- A. Yes. We had developed the He 111 and the Ju 88 and they were actually put into the fighting as long range heavy bombers. The Ju 88 was then used in the French Campaign and against England.
- Q. The Ju 88 is not really a long range bomber?
- A. It was considered a long range bomber at that time, but unfortunately we had a low opinion of the 4 engine aircraft, an erroneous belief, which proved to be a mistake in the course of later years.
- Q. Do you consider it a mistake not to have produced four engine bombers?
- A. In retrospect, it would have been important, in view of the large space that the war was fought on, and it would have been better if we had had long range bombers. I would like to say this. The Me 262, manufactured in appropriate numbers, would have been death to the four-engine bomber! ✓
- Q. After the Polish Campaign, did Germany consider its Air Force adequate and did they desist from a substantial increase in production?
- A. This is unknown to me. There was a constant effort to keep on strengthening the Luftwaffe from the beginning of the war, but there was a feeling that the Luftwaffe was up to standards with regard to the French and English Air Forces.

IV. AIR IN THE FRENCH CAMPAIGN. (1940).

- Q. What is your appraisal of the contribution of the air force toward the quick success of the campaign in France?
- A. The whole campaign was very interesting for us because we organized and carried out the first air-borne landings and parallel with it provided air support of ground troops of the type which had proved itself so valuable in the Polish campaign. This became more important in its effect against hostile tanks. Apart from this, the Luftwaffe distinguished itself in strategic operations against harbors, against railroads and marshalling yards. There was also the attack against the enemy air force on the ground, particularly the attacks against the enemy airdromes in the area of Paris. The battles in the air were decided comparatively quickly, although we can not conceal the fact that when a formation of Spitfires attacked our bombers, we had very great difficulties. I may add that the 88 mm gun first proved its immense value in this campaign. ✓

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- Q. Was the opposition in the air as expected?
- A. Frankly, we had expected more.
- Q. Besides the Spitfire, did you find any planes among the opposition that caused you concern?
- A. Only the Spitfires really bothered us.
- Q. How did they compare with the Me 109?
- A. The Me 109 still had the edge.
- Q. Without air power in that campaign, might the results of the campaign have been different in your judgment?
- A. The air-borne operations could, of course, not have been carried out in Holland without airplanes. Apart from this, the fight of our tanks and our infantry divisions and particularly the breakthrough around Sedan - would have been difficult without air power. It was noticed even then that the French and the English were markedly hampered in their movement. I would also like to add that Dunkirk would not have been as much of a catastrophe if the Luftwaffe had not been there.
- Q. Why was it not more of a catastrophe?
- A. All during the six years of war, I have had the conviction that the God of Weather has not played ball with us. There were two days of bad weather when we were not able to fly.
- Q. Did allied air power impede German ground troop movements in that campaign?
- A. Almost not at all, because our fighters and our flak were superior.
- Q. Did the German Air Force encounter much flak from the Allied side?
- A. Relatively very little. To a larger degree around Dunkirk, Rotterdam and Paris.
- Q. Did you consider that the RAF was being held back and was not fighting with full strength?
- A. It was not known to me at that time, but I wondered why the English came over in only small numbers. I considered it a transport problem in bringing up supplies for the aircraft. It had to be assumed, however, that stronger forces remained back there in order to push training.

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- Q. Did you have any experience with American fighters which the French had?
- A. No. The overall picture is undoubtedly that the enemy aircraft, except the Spitfires, could not compare with ours.
- Q. Were the air losses in that campaign substantial?
- A. The campaign was much more costly than the Polish campaign because it lasted longer and, secondly, because we were fighting an enemy with more experience. Low level attacks were costly due to the front line flak. Thirdly, we had some losses of observation aircraft which were shot down by French fighters. Flak was strong around Dunkirk, and also flak protection of ground forces was pretty strong in that campaign.
- Q. What lessons did the Luftwaffe learn from that campaign?
- A. I did not have time to write a book on that because we started very fast to prepare the war against England. The lessons were essentially the same as those in Poland - (1) The importance of the Air Force support of ground troops; (2) the importance of the fighter-bomber, which, however, needed strong fighter cover; (3) the renewed realization of the limited operational use of the Me 110. We set up a specially trained group of these Me 109s and 110s and we had good results later on against England with it. There was also the lesson that the Ju 52 was a suitable but not an ideal aircraft for air-borne operations. Also that the He 111, although it was good, did not live up to expectations and that the Ju 88, which had just been started in production, was better. It was also learned that the observation planes could operate only in favorable weather and at the proper time of the day with fighter protection or at great altitude. From the organizational point of view, the cooperation of the Army and the Air Force proved to be very useful and a special effort was made to unite the different flak units unto a whole flak division. As far as signals are concerned, both campaigns brought a lot of suggestions. There was finally the realization that the most mobile of all air forces is very easily hampered by its dependency on the ground. By that, I mean its dependency on a usable airport, and on the supply of electricity and water. The English and Americans have solved this problem admirably.

V. AIR IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN.

- Q. What about the plan to invade England?
- A. The most opportune time would have been immediately following Dunkirk, but the preparations were not ready at that time. I personally regretted very much that this attack was called off. The preparations were ordered but later on recalled because the September-October period were the limits of the possibility from the preparation point of

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view and from the weather point of view.

- Q. What did the Luftwaffe do in preparation for this invasion?
- A. The preparations were very simple because I and my air fleet were located opposite the target and it was only mental preparation on our part and maybe bringing up additional operational groups and finding air fields for them, and then conferences on the cooperation with the Army and Navy immediately before, during and after the invasion.
- Q. Did the Luftwaffe think it could be accomplished?
- A. I recommended the invasion very strongly to the Reichsmarshal and since a leader can not lead unless he has faith, I believed in it, too.
- Q. Why was the invasion called off?
- A. I am convinced that the preparation as far as procurement of sea-going craft was not sufficient. I must assume this. This is the only thing that could have stopped it. . .
- Q. Is it correct that the Navy played the decisive part?
- A. I should assume so because there was no hesitation on the part of any other branch of the Armed Forces. It must have hinged on the fact that they did not have the necessary tonnage for the ferrying of the Army.
- Q. Was the Battle of Britain - the air battle ^{conducted} -/as preparation for the invasion?
- A. Yes, at any rate, the air attacks as such can be regarded as an introduction to the invasion. I can not recall the exact date at which time we were notified that the invasion was called off.
- Q. Why were the air battles called off?
- A. Because our losses were too high. Because we did not have enough fighter escort for the bombers.
- Q. Was this because of the comparatively short range of the Me 109 and 110?
- A. Yes, partly. It took a long time and a lot of practice to send over proper fighter cover. As for the Me 109, they were able to provide fighter escort all the way back to the French Coast. This was done by increasing their range through the use of the belly tank and a system of relays of escort. We also used Me 110s in

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places where we did not expect very heavy fighter opposition and by pushing our land bases nearer the English Coast.

Q. Was it the loss of fighters or bombers that was disturbing, or both?

A. The losses were much larger in the beginning in bombers, of course, and the Spitfires were not so efficient, at first, but as the English improved the Spitfire, we were outsmarted and the English could dive through our bomber formations and shoot them down from the formation.

Q. What were the strategic objectives of the attack?

A. In the first place, the enemy air force. Secondly, seaports, thirdly, the enemy war production, and in fourth place, the attacks on London, which had hostile vital installations as targets. We had strict orders from Hitler and Goering not to bomb cities under any circumstances - only the industrial production. Hitler had ordered that we should not start the bombing of civilian population, but he did, however, order the bombing of political targets.

Q. What is a political target?

A. The government district - the leadership center. ✓

Q. Do you think that you carried out strictly Hitler's orders?

A. As a flyer I have to say the following. The order was given and carried out, if possible. That there are times when a bomb has to be released by accident, is well known to every aviator.

Q. Were strict orders given to the crews not to let the bombs fall in the city?

A. Until such time as the terror attacks were started by the Allies, this order was never countermanded. The first attacks on London were limited to military objectives. However, the English started very early with their attacks against German cities. That this kind of attack called for counter-measures, became a firm conviction of the Fuhrer. He made a speech to the world on this which everyone knows.

Q. What about Rotterdam?

A. First, Rotterdam was being defended in the parts which were later on attacked. Secondly, in this case one could notice that a firm attitude had to be taken. This one attack brought immediate peace to Holland. It was asked for by Model and was approved by the OKW. It was a very small part in the heart of Rotterdam. I would like to

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add in this connection that Model asked for a second attack. I had my reconnaissance planes fly over the area in question and they reported that they did not think a second attack was necessary. Thereupon, the planes which had already left were recalled.

Q. Did you learn any special lessons as to air power in the Battle of Britain?

A. The war against England taught a very important lesson. First of all that it was necessary to have an airplane which could have a long range and carry a large load of bombs and also have self-protection. Second, that the radius of our fighters was not sufficient and also that our fighters weren't sufficiently armed against the enemy.

VI. AIR IN THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN.

Q. When did you go to the Russian front?

A. Approximately eight days before the attack.

Q. How long were you there?

A. Up until the end of November 1941.

Q. Did you have air superiority over the Russians?

A. I may say that the Russian air force was very far advanced but as far as performance and training is concerned, they were not up to German standards.

Q. What was the principal cause of the failure of the Russian campaign?

A. This is hard to say. I was not in it towards the end, but I do not think that in any case the Russians had the characteristics for aerial warfare. As far as materials are concerned there were certain standard achievements but the technical creative power was not such as to compare with the English and Americans.

VII. AIR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN CAMPAIGN.

Q. Did you go to the Mediterranean after you left Russia?

A. Yes.

Q. What was the situation when you arrived there?

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A. The situation was that the Italians could not cope with their opponents and Rommel's armies were running into difficulty, mainly because the supply lines were not functioning properly.

Q. Why didn't they function properly?

A. Because whole convoys were torpedoed by torpedo submarines.

Q. What about aircraft attacks on convoys?

A. Very unpleasant at a later date.

Q. Where was Rommel when you arrived?

A. Between El Gazala and Tobruk.

Q. What was the reason for Rommel's failure?

A. I have to answer this question on a broader basis. I spent three and one-half years in Italy and believe I know the Italian soldier well. Apart from excellent individual achievements, I have seen failures on all fields of the Italian armed forces which were simply unbelievable. Then you have to add a Southern stubbornness which does not like to accept advice. It would have been best if the Italians had remained neutral. If, however, we wanted to hold the Mediterranean, we would have to make it a main theater of operations, knowing how important the Mediterranean was for the British. Here again, the peculiar traits of character of the Italians showed up in that they would not accept any help and thought that they could tackle the job themselves. They did ask for help now and then but when a division arrived, they said "No, one division is not enough."

Q. What was the aim of the Germans in the Mediterranean?

A. As far as I can see there was no aim for us there. But if Italy was to be in the war, Malta should have been eliminated.

Q. Would you personally have abandoned Italy as a theater of war?

A. No. The German aim, in the first place, was to get the Italians going. German interests were not at stake.

Q. Why did Rommel have no success?

A. This is primarily due to the problem of supply. Before I arrived, there were losses up to 80%. When I arrived with the Air Force, I cut the losses down to 20%, but that was still serious. The second reason was that the Italian divisions employed varying tactics. I told Mussolini personally that he should dissolve this or that division or it will affect all other divisions. One division fought well

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and the other one did not fight at all. But I have to be fair to the Italians. Their equipment was so miserable that, in all fairness, you could not expect anything better from such an army. I would also like to say that I personally was definitely against the campaign against Cairo, but Rommel, who incidentally was the best Army Commander, believed that he would be able to reach the Nile and Cairo. I personally believed that because of the difficulty of supplies for the Army and of bases for the air war and because the English could land fresh troops via the Indian Ocean, the whole operation would be doubtful. I had asked to attack Malta because, first of all one must secure his lines of supplies.

Q. At what point was Rommel at that time?

A. At the Egyptian-Italian border. Sidi Barani.

Q. How much effect did the bombing of Bengazi and ports like that have?

A. They had less effect than attacks on floating targets at sea. It was the same in Tunis and Bizerte. The biggest difficulties were over the sinking of the ships at sea.

Q. What about the attacks on shipping in Naples and Salerno?

A. Looking back on those attacks, which at the time looked very large, they seem to be mosquito bites now.

Q. At what stage of the North African operations did the Allies become superior in the air?

A. From El Alamein on, they definitely had air superiority. The Allied Air Forces outnumbered us and their quality was improving all the time. At the time of El Alamein we could still use dive-bombers, but they had to have fighter protection.

Q. After El Alamein, did you favor holding on in Tunisia?

A. This was a necessity because, at the moment in which we had to evacuate the El Alamein position and no other position had been prepared in view of the terrain, evacuation became necessary. One had to deliberate as to whether there was enough to return to Europe but the naval power was not sufficient for that. An additional difficulty arose when the English and Americans attacked Africa.

Q. Did Allied air attack drive you out of Tunisia?

A. In my opinion, it was the most effective large scale air force employment I have ever seen. If the Anglo-American air forces had not been in Tunisia, Sicily and Italy, the German forces would

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never have retreated there. The air force, at that time, was constantly attacking our supply lines. Furthermore, your air force always kept close on our heels. Besides, the terrain was such that we were dependent on very few roads. In addition, there were the attacks against our harbors, railroad discharge points, etc.

Q. What effect did the bombing of air fields have?

A. Varying. Where there was flak protection the losses were bearable, but in Sicily, through bad leadership, the losses were considerable. Although there were low level strafing attacks, it was the employment of bombers which put the air fields out of use.

Q. How do you explain the failure to supply high quality reinforcements both in quality and quantity?

A. I can not give you any information on that because even among the air force there is no clarity on the subject. The only thing I know is that in about 1942 the highest priority in production was to go to the air force, which in practice was not carried out.

Q. How did you personally explain it?

A. The losses caused in Russia made it necessary to shift the highest priority of production from the air force to the army. The campaign in Russia entailed a great loss in equipment, transport planes and flying crews.

Q. Was there any tendency to consider that your air organization was not functioning well in procuring supplies and replacements?

A. I can not tell you the reason as I was sent to Italy and all I know is that I was very mad about it.

Q. Was the quality of pilots deteriorating?

A. No, training was still good.

Q. Were any representations made to Hitler to change the control of the Luftwaffe?

A. No. I believe that the Fuhrer was not very much elated at the loss of efficiency of the air force, and that at that time he lost most of the confidence he had in Goering.

Q. When you personally noticed this about the Luftwaffe, did you do anything about it?

A. I saw at El Alamein that it was high time to "get going". I was no

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longer under the Luftwaffe. The Luftwaffe was no longer up to par. This was known to both the Fuhrer and the Reichsmarshal and also the rest. At every conversation with the Fuhrer I used to ask "When will the Luftwaffe arrive". I suppose that Keitel will have a better insight into this matter. It was further made more difficult through the bombing of Germany, but Hitler was strong in saying that it was not a commander's business to speak of something that was not under his command. I was often told by Hitler and Goering that they could not give us planes right now, but in two or three weeks we would be given 1,000 or 2,000. I know that they were trying their best to get us what we needed.

Q. Why was not the attack made on Malta in order to bring about a decision there?

A. At the first conference with Hitler shortly after I took over in the Mediterranean, I urged that Malta be taken, but Hitler told me that it would not be done because it would cost too many men and there was no argument about it. After I had learned the possibilities of the theater, I went back and asked again that Malta be taken. Then Rommel came and he thought that the time was very favorable for pushing right through to the Nile. After that operation, however, which was ordered by Hitler, a decisive attack on Malta was ruled out. I also wanted to use Bizerte as a port of entry and Hitler would not allow it because there was a treaty with France and Mussolini. I advised Hitler several times to use the port anyway, but Hitler wanted to live up to the treaty with the French.

Q. Why did you hold out in Italy as long as you did?

A. It was impossible to do otherwise. The position of my troops became very difficult and they just had to stick it out. It is not always wise to withdraw to the shortest line and with regard to the enemy air force, it is best to keep it away from the homeland. Also, in the south of Italy there were Bari and Foggia and I did not want to give them up as bases from which the Allies could carry the war to Germany. I also advocated holding the Apennine Line.

Q. Did you give up Foggia because you were forced to or were you ordered to?

A. It was an order from Hitler and I gave it up with very little resistance.

Q. Why was the heavy attack on Cassino not completely successful?

A. That attack had relatively little success because the troops were well established underground by virtue of the fighting there. Many people remained fit for combat. The fight could be carried on with a good hope for success. Besides, we had very good troops which had gotten over their fear of bombing attacks.

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- Q. How about the effectiveness of the bombing of the Alpine gateways, such as the Brenner Pass?
- A. Through proper organization we were able to rebuild the railroads so that we were always able to get through. I always thought the Allies should have gone all out on a few main lines, rather than switch from one road to another, as was done. We put in technical forces to rebuild the roads as they were bombed here and there and we finished the job on time. We camouflaged some of the bridges by making them appear as not being repaired and we set up fake railroads in the fields.
- Q. Is it more effective to bomb marshalling yards, railway bridges, or railway lines?
- A. The bridges. The lines you can fix up, but the bridges are hard to repair.
- Q. What is the best way to go about bombing a bridge?
- A. I think the best way is by high level bombing, and also dive bombing. The most effective thing is a combination of an attack on the flak positions and at the same time high level attack by bombers.
- Q. Do you have any criticism of the type of bomb used by the British and Americans?
- A. There is no criticism, they are very good. Through years of experience, you have found a system in which nothing of importance can be improved.
- Q. Did you undertake to hamper in any way the 15th Air Force operations at Foggia in their attacks on the homeland?
- A. We intended to establish air fortresses in Northern Italy where we could have sufficient fighters to engage your bombers before they could cross into Germany and inflict considerable damage. These planes were to be 262s which should have been flown to those fortresses, but they just didn't arrive before the war came to an end.
- Q. What were your principal shortages of supply in the Italian campaign?
- A. The most serious were in the air force. We did not have enough fighters. If we had had a few more fighters, many Allied operations would not have succeeded at all. Then, good leadership. One of the biggest difficulties was the shortage of good observation planes. We were developing a good photographic plane which took wonderful pictures and operated at 10,000 meters, and which could not have been caught by your fighters. It was a 238, a Tank airplane. It was also

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impossible to attack your air fields around Foggia because of the shortage of bombers. As for naval craft, I was short of U-boats and assault boats. As far as the Army is concerned, I wanted one or two more Alpine Divisions and tanks. I thought I never had enough tanks, but taking into consideration the terrain, they were probably sufficient on the whole. There was just one period when tanks were very short - this was when I was in Rome. In general, the arms were perfect so that I could not complain. I could have used more artillery. Ammunition, both quality and quantity were good, but never too much of it. It was reported at one time that our light infantry were shooting one bullet to ten of yours, but I made a personal investigation of that report and found that the ratio was in fact about one to two. The greatest difficulty was the longer range of the Anglo-American artillery guns, which made it very disagreeable for an artillery duel.

Q. Did you have plenty of flak ammunition?

A. Towards the end it was short. Periodically during the war there would be a shortage, but basically there was no serious shortage until the end.

Q. Did you lose many supplies by air attacks at dumps and depots?

A. Operationally they were not affected.

Q. During all of this period there was a substantial amount of production, yet there appears to have been a great shortage in operational aircraft. How do you account for that - so few aircraft being available when the production was as large as it was?

A. In Africa we had a shortage of fuel and it was decisive. But in Italy I made many savings in fuel, even down to the fact that artillery and flak had to be drawn by oxen. I managed to save enough to carry out the necessary movements although the situation was tense.

Q. How many gallons did you have in Italy?

A. When I left Italy there were three emergency gasoline units for each vehicle. Each unit was enough to last 100 kilometers.

Q. What sort of rationing methods did you put in in Italy in 1944?

A. First of all, I ordered a reduction in the number of motor vehicles to the most vital minimums. This was near the end of 1944. Something like that was in effect before that but it was

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not rigid, and was according to the situation. I then forced a standstill of all vehicles through non-fighting periods. I introduced the horse-drawn and oxen-drawn equipment, as of Cassino time. These measures were put in several times whenever the situation necessitated it. Heavy trucks were replaced by light ones. We changed to vehicles using light oil rather than heavy oil. In mountains we used cable cars. A special organization of supply transport handled all the vehicles by using the best drivers and by very careful maintenance. It was a strict rule that each vehicle would have to carry a trailer, especially heavy trucks. Continued loss of vehicles by fighter-bomber attacks caused me to put flak guns 20 mm on vehicles and camouflaging old vehicles, which had been bombed, as new ones. We had sentries every 1,000 meters to tell each driver if the passage was ok, or if there was any danger. We used dispersal of traffic for night and foggy driving and camouflage by making traffic on roads when there was no traffic at all, by throwing on water, or lakes, pictures of traffic. You were firing frequently at this camouflaged traffic on the lakes.

- Q. What was the effect of the effort of the Allied Air Forces to isolate the battle area?
- A. At some points down in Italy our supplies became very short, but because Field Marshal Keitel was doing such a wonderful job in sending additional supplies, the effect was not so serious as it otherwise would have been.
- Q. Was there enough gasoline to fly all of the sorties you needed in Italy?
- A. We had to limit our activities in order to build up a reserve for times when the necessity would be great.
- Q. When did you initiate the policy of saving gasoline for that type of necessity?
- A. We were doing that extensively about the middle of 1944, but basically we had been economizing very strictly since before the war.
- Q. How do you account for the fact that aircraft production was so very much above the planes that were available for operational purposes?
- A. From my own point of view my groups were almost up to par. However, I needed more groups and I think the planes were in other theaters of the war. I always had the impression that the numbers which Saur and Speer gave were not correct, because in my groups the planes which were sometimes accepted did not have the optical instruments and thus the planes were not operational. At least part of the aircraft had to be given up to training centers and this accounts for a large part of the difference.

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VIII. THE WESTERN FRONT.

Q. When you arrived on the Western Front, did you think the situation was hopeless?

A. Although the Remagen crossing created a very difficult situation, I would not consider it hopeless, but if I am to speak about this Western war, I would like to say something about the leadership principles. I did not like to take over in the West, because the situation was very tense and I did not know my subordinates and I did not want to take over unless I knew the Army Group personally. I did not know the worthiness or unworthiness of these men, and I did not have the spiritual feeling of leadership. I did not know the state of their training and I did not know whether the divisions were deployed in accordance with their adaptability for the terrain. I could not get an overall view, especially because observation flying was so very difficult. Then the supply of goods and manpower was made tremendously difficult through the constant strain of air attacks. But, nevertheless, I saw no reason for complete pessimism when I came to the Western Front and saw the situation. There were still reserves of manpower and supply to last a little longer, and if we had had a few days longer, they might have brought about a decision. I would like to say that the Air Force was not under my command, but only attached to me. If we had been able to create a large amount of flak troops just behind the lines, we might have shot down more fighters and fighter-bombers.

Q. Did the flak troops that were organized accomplish anything in your opinion?

A. It was not as successful as I had hoped.

Q. Did the bombing of the air fields prior to the crossing of the Rhine keep your air forces from being operational?

A. Losses were bearable on the air fields. Only part of our aircraft at these fields were destroyed, and I understand that some of these fields remained in operation.

Q. Out of your long experience, what would you say about the effect of the bombing of troops?

A. Troops in Italy were immune to these attacks. Contrary thereto, the troops who were stationed on the Western Front showed considerable signs of weakness under bombing attacks. All in all, it has the greatest effect on the morale of ground troops. If the troops can stand that, they are the greatest troops. You can do a lot by passive resistance to it, by camouflage and by digging

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foxholes. Thirdly, by dispersing troops and guiding them through routes which are covered (through woods and forests), and by avoiding roads. I must emphasize again that bombing attacks have a tremendous effect on the troops.

Q. What in your opinion were the critical factors that won the war?

A. As a member of the Luftwaffe, I am naturally prejudiced, but I believe definitely that it was the Allied Air Forces. ✓

Q. How old are you?

A. Sixty.

Q. That's all.

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