

**THE DISARMAMENT SCHOOL:  
US POLICY FOR THE DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION  
OF THE GERMAN ARMY, NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1944**

A Senior Scholars Thesis

by

JOSEPH WILKERSON

Submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Research  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLAR

April 2009

Major: Political Science

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## ABSTRACT

The Disarmament School: US Policy for the Disarmament and Demobilization of the German Army, November-December 1944. (April 2009)

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World War II was waged on an unprecedented scale, and the peace which followed was equally unprecedented. The Allies did more than simply call for an armistice; they made their goal the complete destruction of the German *Wehrmacht* and the German Military Tradition. This demilitarization of Germany was the chief goal of victory and means of ensuring lasting peace in Europe. In November and December of 1944, the US Army hosted the Disarmament School, a series of lectures by experts in the field of demilitarization planning. Based in London, these lectures familiarized US staff officers with the history of planning for the disarmament, demobilization, and final disposal of the *Wehrmacht*, as well as the current state of those plans. By accessing the transcripts of these lectures as well as original documents and memoranda of US post-hostilities planning staffs, I demonstrate that these groups at the SHAEF and USGCC levels were caught between the need for post-war security and the call for unconditional surrender as they planned for the control and disposal of the doomed German military machine. Though much would change between the time of the Disarmament School and the final

defeat of Nazi Germany, the lectures of the Disarmament School nonetheless provide a valuable insight into the assumptions upon which Allied planning rested during a crucial stage of the war in Europe.

## **DEDICATION**

To Susan and Joe, who gave me life, and to my stepfather, Gary, who empowered me to make the most of it.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Dr. Adam Seipp for his thoughtful insights, good humor, and limitless patience.

Thanks to Will Schrank and the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, whose generous support afforded me the opportunity to engage history at a whole new level at the National Archives.

A special thanks to Melissa Nieves, my unfaltering friend, assistant, competition, and companion. Without her unwavering support and more than a little proofreading, this work would never have been possible.

Lastly, a mention of the one who was first: Dr. Kyle Ingle, who inspired a young Mississippi boy to turn his attention to the past and put his daydreams to good use.

## NOMENCLATURE

CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
EAC	European Advisory Commission
IAMCC	Inter-Allied Military Control Commission
OKW	<i>Oberkommando des Wehrmachts</i>
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces
USGCC	United States Group Control Council

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

By November of 1944, Germany's military fortunes had sunk exceptionally low. German forces in the East were fighting desperately to halt the relentless Soviet advance, which had entered East Prussia in October. In the West, Patton's Third Army had penetrated the vaunted Siegfried Line, encircling the German forces defending Metz on November 18. Even the most optimistic Germans could plainly see their impending defeat. With victory quickly approaching, the Western Allies feverishly worked to prepare for the challenges which peace would present.

On November 17, 1944, Brigadier General G.S. Eyster formally opened the Disarmament School. Based in London, the School was a series of lectures covering numerous aspects of the demilitarization of Germany, from the primary disarmament of German combat units to the eventual destruction of Germany's military tradition. It was initiated as a means of providing American officers with an idea of the importance of disarming Germany, the historical context of disarmament planning, and the practical aspects of dismantling the German war machine.<sup>1</sup>

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This thesis follows the style of *The American Historical Review*.

<sup>1</sup> Eyster, G.S. "Organization of the School." 17 November 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP Page 1

Eyster's speech would be followed by 30 lectures from distinguished figures within the sphere of Allied post-hostilities planning. Captains, Majors, Generals, and civilian experts came together to present the most complete picture of Allied disarmament policy available at the time. The Disarmament School lectures of November and December of 1944 represented a crucial moment in Allied preparation for Germany's collapse.

Across the enemy lines, Hitler and the OKW formulated plans for the *Wacht am Rhein* offensive in the Ardennes. Running parallel to this last gasp of the German *Blitzkrieg* was the first executive step for American post-hostilities planning. For the first time, Allied plans were being presented to the experts who would soon be responsible for their execution. Though their eventual positions and duties were not yet certain, by the close of the Disarmament School these attendees would be the best informed officers in the US Army regarding Allied disarmament policy.<sup>2</sup>

Nearly every one of the Disarmament School lectures, however, was tinged with the uncertainty which pervaded Allied planning all the way up until the close of hostilities in May of 1945. This uncertainty was defined by the lack of a clear understanding of the eventual goals of Allied occupation, control, and disarmament of Germany. What was known was that any eventual successes would hinge upon the establishment of effective control immediately after Germany's capitulation. As policy for the eventual disposal of the German Army was furiously debated by the upper echelons of Allied authority, staffers at the lower level desperately tried to formulate plans and procedures which

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Page 3

would allow commanders on the ground to pursue the mission of German disarmament without prejudicing the as-yet-undecided goals of the Four Powers.

At the time of the Disarmament School, only one document provided a definite indication to Allied planners of the eventual war aims of the Allied Powers: the Atlantic Charter. Crafted by Anglo-American agreement in August of 1941 and approved in September by the Soviet Union, the Atlantic Charter provided an eight-point vision for the post-war world. The eighth of these called for the disarmament of “nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers.”<sup>3</sup> To fulfill this responsibility, the US and the UK would form numerous commissions, councils, and committees to plan for the enormous endeavor of disarming their most formidable adversary, Germany.

Prior to the initiation of Operation Overlord in June of 1944, Allied staffs had begun working on plans for the initial steps toward disarmament that would need to be taken immediately following German surrender. SHAEF staffers in London worked furiously to update their plans to meet changing conditions across the channel, and the period from May of 1944 until the Disarmament School lectures was characterized by continuous policy changes and eventually a radical shift in Allied Disarmament and Demobilization Planning. One of the first lecturers, Lt. Colonel C.J. Hackett, summarized the effects of military realities on Allied planning:

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<sup>3</sup> Johnsen, Julia Emily. *The “Eight Points” of Post-War World Reorganization*. (New York: 1942)

As the fighting neared the German frontier it became obvious that the end of the war would find the German forces in Germany itself. After the Allied entry into Germany, the stubborn resistance put forth by an obviously defeated German Army gave rise to the possibility that there would never be a formal surrender signed by a German High Command or German Control Authority and that the war would terminate only by a complete collapse of the German fighting machine and the German Nation. This possibility caused a drastic revision in certain disarmament and demobilization plans and is the principal reason for the lack of a definite directive at this time.<sup>4</sup>

After laboring for months on disarmament and demobilization plans, SHAEF staffs were forced to completely abandon the assumptions upon which their previous efforts had rested. November of 1944 found Allied plans in a state of jarring transition. Even so, the US Army took what plans were available later in that month and tried desperately to train their officers, lest Germany's surrender find the US Army with no clear idea of how to complete the defeat of Germany by dismantling the German *Wehrmacht*. During this period of flux the Disarmament School was born, and the prevailing uncertainty of this stage in Allied post-hostilities planning is evident in the transcripts of its lectures.

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<sup>4</sup> Hackett, C.J. "Organization and Functions of Disarmament and Demobilization Personnel." US Army Disarmament School. November 1944. The Disarmament School, Vol. I. National Archives at College Park.

This uncertainty resulted in a major dilemma which pervaded every aspect of disarmament planning: the need for immediate control, disarmament, and disposal of the German Armed Forces versus the long-term goals and war aims of the Allied Powers. The dire necessity of the former was repeatedly enunciated within the Disarmament School lectures; this dilemma was all the more troubling because the latter remained undefined. In principle, short-term military expediency was to take a back seat to the direction of the European Advisory Commission, but in the absence of direction from the EAC, this principle would prove exceedingly troublesome. As a result, the plans formed within the policy vacuum were hesitant, vague, and always subject to change.

A considerable portion of the Disarmament School lectures were dedicated to the lessons of World War I. German evasions of Allied disarmament under the Treaty of Versailles had paved the way for subsequent German rearmament and, by extension, World War II. Firmly resolved to prevent a repetition of the mistakes of post-WWI disarmament, Allied planning staffs carefully studied the factors surrounding the failure of Versailles. Disarmament School lecturers presenting on the subject continually stressed the importance of forming clear disarmament policy to avoid the pitfalls of Versailles.

After instructing their audience on the lessons of WWI, Disarmament School lecturers shifted their focus to the major policies regarding post-WWII disarmament. The proposed Allied machinery for disarmament following World War II was largely the

product of lessons from WWI. By 1944 institutions had been established which, in conjunction with clear policy, would protect disarmament following WWII from the hazards which had crippled efforts after 1919. The lecturers of the Disarmament School covered these institutions and policies in as much detail as possible at the time.

In addition to presentations concerning disarmament, the Disarmament School included lectures over demobilizing and disbanding the German *Wehrmacht*. An integral part of demilitarizing Germany, demobilization would realize the complete destruction of the Germany military machine through the formal discharge of every man and woman in Germany's armed forces. Whereas disarmament plans were based on the lessons of the First World War, demobilization planning was influenced most by shifting combat conditions throughout the course of World War II. Disarmament School lectures on demobilization planning detailed its history from May to December of 1944. The lectures clearly illustrate the evolution of demobilization plans in response to rapidly changing conditions on the ground as US planning staffs worked without direction from inter-allied authorities.

Although most of the policies presented during the Disarmament School were no longer in place upon Germany's surrender in May of 1945, their articulation to the School's attendees represented a crucial step in Allied post-hostilities preparation. Ending a war fought on such an unprecedented scale as WWII would require peacetime measures just as unprecedented, a fact of which the Allies were all too aware. With the Disarmament

School, Allied authorities began the long process of disseminating vital knowledge to those who would play a key role in carrying out the Herculean tasks of disarming and demobilizing the Germany Army, as well as permanently destroying the German impetus to war. Even if the specific orders of these men would be some months in coming, by the end of the Disarmament School they were equipped with the knowledge their superiors felt necessary to carry out these missions.

This moment in WWII history provides a unique opportunity to glimpse into the US Army's process of transition from wartime power to guarantor of lasting peace in Europe. The closing months of the war saw this take place through the gradual transfer of power from combat arms commanders to trained staff officers better suited for peacetime operations. In November and December of 1944, the Disarmament School trained those officers who would, by May of 1945, take the lead in the disarmament of Germany and the delicate task of building and maintaining a secure and peaceful order in Europe.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LESSONS OF VERSAILLES

During Germany's march to war in the late 1930s, Hitler's government held the Treaty of Versailles in utter disregard. From the re-occupation of the Rhineland to *Anschluss* with Austria, Hitler defied nearly every one of its precepts. By the invasion of Poland in 1939, the Treaty and all of its lofty goals were but a memory. Credit for this feat did not belong to Hitler alone, however; Versailles' grave had been dug long before the Nazi rise to power. Even before the Treaty had been signed, elements within Germany were digging.

In addition to a myriad of political and economic restrictions, Versailles contained a set of strict military terms for Germany. In it the Allies called for the disarmament of the German military and demanded the reduction of the German Army to a 100,000 man peacetime force. After the War to End All Wars, German disarmament was seen as the first step in a general, world-wide disarmament and a guarantee of perpetual peace.

Three years into their second war against Germany in a generation, the Americans of the Disarmament School were not subject to any such illusions. Germany had once again become an aggressor, something the Allies blamed in a large part on the failure of the military terms of Versailles. They believed that German evasions of disarmament after WWI were to blame for the unparalleled destruction of WWII, and that the only means



of avoiding another war lay in the comprehensive disarmament of Germany immediately following the end of the War in Europe.

WWII presented the Allies with a rare opportunity. Planning the disarmament of Germany for the second time in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Allies were able to look upon the mistakes of their first attempt to ensure the success of their second. The lessons gleaned from these mistakes underpinned every plan they produced. Before engaging the history and specifics of post-WWII disarmament and demobilization planning, it was vital that the Disarmament School lecturers helped their audience place the subject within this broader context.

The legacy of Versailles was evident throughout the Disarmament School; nearly every assumption enumerated or principle explained could be traced back to the flawed disarmament situation following the First World War. In one of the school's first lectures, "German Propaganda, Obstruction, and Evasion of Disarmament," Brigadier General W.E. Van Cutsem presented a brief overview of the mistakes made and difficulties faced by Allied disarmament personnel following WWI.<sup>5</sup> As the highest authority to present on the subject, the Brigadier's lecture represented the prevailing US view on the failure of post-WWI disarmament. According to the Allies, political disagreements had delayed the establishment of and eventually crippled Allied

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<sup>5</sup> Van Cutsem, W. E. "German Propaganda, Obstruction & Evasion of Disarmament." US Army Disarmament School, 16 Nov 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. National Archives at College Park

disarmament machinery, presenting weaknesses which the Germans actively exploited at the direction of a shadow General Staff.<sup>6</sup>

The first and most glaring defect of post-WWI disarmament was its delayed initiation. Rather than issuing the military terms of Versailles separately, which would have allowed disarmament efforts to commence at the earliest feasible date following the Armistice, the Allies elected to postpone their issuance until the entire Treaty had been completed. Even at this early stage, military expediency took a backseat to politics. As a result, Allied disarmament machinery was not set up until April of 1920; operations did not commence until June of that year.<sup>7</sup>

The Germans used the 17-month interim between defeat and Allied control to lay the framework for evading disarmament. In December 20, 1918, just over a month after the Armistice, the remnants of the General Staff held a conference in Berlin to discuss the future of Germany. At this conference, General Kurt von Schleicher asked for the General Staff's support in building a stable German government. He was convinced that a strong government, followed by economic recovery, was the key to reclaiming Germany's place on the European stage. He was followed by General Hans von Seeckt,

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<sup>6</sup> Gresh, L.D. "Evasions of the Military Terms of the Treaty of Versailles During the Period of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission (1919-1927)." 27 December 1944 US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 3

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Page 5

who advocated a far different approach. Instead of political or economic objectives, von Seeckt argued instead that a strong military should be Germany's primary goal.

Through this, von Seeckt contended, Germany would become a valuable ally to other European powers and recover her place as a major player on the continent. He was convinced that once this had been accomplished, a stable government and reinvigorated economy would soon follow. In the end, von Seeckt carried the day. Thereafter, he devoted his energies to planning for his vision of German renewal.<sup>8</sup>

Twenty-six years later, the Allies viewed this conference as proof that the German General Staff, despite being forbidden under the terms of Versailles, continued to direct the affairs of the German nation. They were seen as the motivating force directing every subsequent evasion of Versailles. The assumption that this elusive, almost ephemeral body lay behind every misfortune which faced Allied disarmament efforts became a primary component of every lesson from WWI shared at the Disarmament School.

Whether or not evasion was coordinated by an underground General Staff or other central authority, examples abounded at every level. Until the initiation of Allied disarmament efforts in April of 1920, only the terms of the Armistice applied to German disarmament. Disarmament under the Armistice was limited in scope; the Germans were required to surrender large quantities of arms, munitions, locomotives, trucks and a

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<sup>8</sup> Van Cutsem, W. E. "German Propaganda, Obstruction & Evasion of Disarmament." US Army Disarmament School, 16 Nov 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. National Archives at College Park. Page 3

major portion of military aircraft. In the absence of a decision on the military terms of Versailles, however, this surrender was left to the Germans themselves.<sup>9</sup> Without Allied oversight, the Germans began smuggling large numbers of aircraft and military vehicles to other countries.

As the specifics of Versailles were hammered out among the Allies, preliminary terms were leaked to the Germans. These leakages were a windfall to the German military as they fought to prepare for coming Allied control. The greatest example of these was their use of coastal fortifications. Aware that the Treaty would allow for the maintenance of coastal forts, the Germans began transporting guns from throughout Germany and positioning them within the forts. By the time Allied control elements entered Germany in January of 1920, the Germans had already completed the preliminary work of evasion.<sup>10</sup>

Evasions were not limited to the period between the Armistice and Versailles. The same political wrangling which had delayed the deployment of Allied control elements continued throughout their years of operation. Versailles provided for the formation of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission, a body comprised largely of representatives from Great Britain, France, and Belgium tasked with overseeing the

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<sup>9</sup> Gresh, L.D. "Evasions of the Military Terms of the Treaty of Versailles During the Period of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission (1919-1927)." 27 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 2

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Page 4

disarmament of the Germany Army and ensuring compliance with the other military terms of the Treaty of Versailles. It was composed of three technical Sub-Commissions: Effectives, Armaments, and Fortifications. Each of these Sub-Commissions were represented by District Committees in major German cities. At its maximum strength the IAMCC would number 383 officers and 737 enlisted men drawn mainly from the ranks of the British, French, and Belgians. Barely more than 1000 men were charged with disarming the entire Germany Army.<sup>11</sup>

German disarmament efforts benefitted greatly from the limited size of the IAMCC; it took little to overwhelm such a small organization. Under Article 206 of Versailles, the Germans were allowed to “attach a qualified representative to each Inter-Allied Control Commission for the purpose of receiving the communications which the Commission may have to address to the German Government, and for supplying the Commission with the information and documents which it may require.”<sup>12</sup> Loose interpretation of this article led to the creation of the *Heeresfriedenskommission*, or Army Commission for Peace, a gargantuan organization which paralleled the IAMCC with representatives at every level. Sub-Commissions were mirrored by *Hauptverbindungsstelle*, Main Liaison Offices; every city chosen for a District Committee soon hosted a *Verbindungsstelle*, or Liaison Office.<sup>13</sup> Posts throughout the German structure were

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Page 6

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Page 4

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Page 6

filled with active and retired German military officers, and under the auspices of Article 206, these men inserted themselves into every aspect of IAMCC business.

German liaisons conducted official discourse with the Allies, supervised the fulfillment of Allied demands, and carried on necessary negotiations with the commissions to which they were attached. All documents and information required by the IAMCC was forwarded through the *Verbindungstelle*, and all German organizations were under orders to work only through these offices. This allowed *Verbindungstelle* officials to delay, suppress, and even doctor the communications passing through their office.<sup>14</sup> Liaisons accompanied IAMCC members on every official visit to units, factories and military installations, and the German Government insisted that local liaisons be notified in advance of every Allied inspection. The advanced warning provided by these notifications prevented surprise inspections which may have revealed to the Allies the true extent of German evasion. Effectively entrenched within the disarmament process, German liaisons were able to disrupt nearly every facet of its execution.

Even more destructive to disarmament than the size of the IAMCC was its limited authority under Versailles. Not only had the Treaty failed to give disarmament staffs clear directions; it also withheld policy-making authority. Allied governments

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<sup>14</sup> Van Cutsem, W. E. "German Propaganda, Obstruction & Evasion of Disarmament." US Army Disarmament School, 16 Nov 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. National Archives at College Park. Page 6

separately retained this power, and growing disagreements among them threatened the formation of a unified disarmament policy.

Even agreement on a common definition of war material eluded the Allies. The Treaty of Versailles contained no definition of war material, nor did it empower the IAMCC to produce a definition. The Germans presented a definition of their own: only material used exclusively for making war and useless for civil purposes should be considered war material. According to this logic items such as uniforms and vehicles were not to be confiscated. The Germans even contended that flamethrowers were not war material because they could be useful for burning vines.<sup>15</sup> Capitalizing on this weakness of Versailles, the German appeals to Allied governments delayed a decision on the matter until 1927, in that same month that the IAMCC was disbanded.<sup>16</sup> According to Van Cutsem, Germans regularly used such direct petitions to Allied government to override the decisions of the IAMCC and postpone disarmament activities. Allied disagreements became the greatest windfall to German evasion efforts.

The Allies later attributed many of these disagreements to German propaganda. Van Cutsem presented German friendliness, shown in differing degrees to the respective Allied powers, as a weapon against disarmament. By favoring the Americans over the

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<sup>15</sup> Gresh, L.D. "Evasions of the Military Terms of the Treaty of Versailles During the Period of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission (1919-1927)." 27 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School, The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 14

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Page 15

British, and the British over the French, the Germans turned them against one another. The close interaction between the IAMCC officers and the German liaisons of the *Heeresfriedenskommission* provided the Germans the opportunity to propagandize on a daily basis. They worked to gain sympathy by continually lamenting their plight under Versailles, criticizing the “unheard of” severity of the Treaty and its divergence from Wilson’s Fourteen Points.<sup>17</sup> They further weakened Allied resolve by promoting a fear of communism, casting themselves as the great “bulwark against Bolshevism” from the East.

The efficacy of post-WWI German propaganda convinced the Allies that it would again be utilized after WWII. They thought it likely the Germans would contest any obscure, complex, or inconsistent order, and would, whenever possible, lodge complaints with higher Allied authorities as they had before done to such great effect. Van Cutsem warned they would likely delay Allied action by extensively contesting trivial or irrelevant issues, as well as directly sabotage Allied operations through misinformation.<sup>18</sup> Strong measures would be required on the part of the Allies to prevent these sorts of evasions and save post-WWII disarmament from suffering the same fate as the military terms of Versailles.

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<sup>17</sup> Van Cutsem, W. E. “German Propaganda, Obstruction & Evasion of Disarmament.” 16 Nov 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. National Archives at College Park. Page 4

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Page 7



German propaganda, which the Allies considered the most insidious and prevalent threat to Versailles, was among the easiest to address after WWII. The comprehensive approach to negating the effects of such propaganda was based upon a simple statement from General Eisenhower: “There will be no fraternization between Allied personnel and the German officials or population.”<sup>19</sup> The resultant policy would dictate the conduct of all US troops in Germany, including those engaged in disarmament.

On 27 December 1944 Colonel C.J. Hackett presented his lecture titled “Non-Fraternization.” He discussed the necessity for and implications of Eisenhower’s statement, submitting the only effective means of combating German propaganda would be total adherence to the Non-Fraternization policy. He went on to briefly outline the specifics of this policy, which forbade all forms of social contact between Allied soldiers and Germans from marriage to playing sports together. Even arguments were forbidden. Germans were permitted to accompany Americans or Brits only upon strictly official business. Non-Fraternization, based upon the experience of WWI and only minimally impacted by the specific conditions of WWII, stood alone as the only policy covered during the Disarmament School which had been definitively determined. By the time of Hackett’s lecture, an extensive orientation program had been instituted for American troops to clearly outline the policy and explain its importance, a necessary requisite to

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<sup>19</sup> Hackett, C.J. “Non-Fraternization.” , 22 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 1

the success of the policy and the safeguarding of Allied operations against dangerous German propaganda.<sup>20</sup>

Though the means of German evasion could be combated with simple shifts in policy, total disarmament of Germany would require the destruction of German militarism at its source. The Allies traced their every difficulty back to the German General Staff. To the Allies, Nazism was far from an aberration. They interpreted Hitler's aggression as the natural manifestation of the General Staff's struggle for power; on their shoulders rested the responsibility for the outbreak of WWII. In this context, the General Staff became the Allies' main target. By crushing the General Staff once and for all, the Allies believed they would pave the way for a peaceful Germany in the future.

Allied fear of the General Staff was not unfounded. They considered their current work the third disarmament of Germany, looking as far back as Napoleon's defeat of Prussia in 1806 and her subsequent rearmament under von Scharnhorst. Von Scharnhorst, like von Seeckt a century later, provided the Allies with the archetypical example of the genius and aptitude for deception of the German General Staff.

The terms of the Treaty of Versailles had outlawed the General Staff, but even before the Treaty was signed, the framework had been laid for its continued existence. In July of 1919 General von Seeckt proposed the establishment of the *Reichsarchiv*, ostensibly a

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., Page 1

civilian organization responsible for the creation and maintenance of national archives under the direction of the former Military Historical Section. The *Reichsarchiv* established itself throughout Germany in the form of *Abwicklungstellen*, district demobilization branches which the Germans claimed were simply responsible for disbursing military pensions. Under this cover the *Reichsarchiv*, as a comprehensive repository for German military knowledge, covertly continued the operations of the German General Staff.<sup>21</sup> To continue the customary three-year training received by General Staff officers before WWI, von Seeckt established two-year staff courses in each *Wehrkreis* in Germany. As the lowest level of German military organization, the *Wehrkreise* would allow for decentralized training without alarming the Allies. After these two-year courses, small numbers of officers from each *Wehrkreis* were sent to the *Reichswehr* Ministry to complete their three-year training. The Allies viewed this resurrection of the German General Staff as the key to the eventual defeat of Versailles.<sup>22</sup>

In 1944 it was clear that the mistakes which had allowed for the General Staff's survival could not be repeated. Elements throughout American society called for the destruction of German militarism as the requisite for peace; by comparing the writings of American intellectuals with the policies being discussed within the military hierarchy, it is possible

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<sup>21</sup> Gresh, L.D. "Evasions of the Military Terms of the Treaty of Versailles During the Period of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission (1919-1927)." 23 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School, Vol. I. NACP. Page 11

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, Page 11

to understand the connection between domestic opinion and US policy, as well as to determine who among the American thinkers and German émigrés were being listened to. The language used in the SHAEF discussions and their appraisal of the nature and capabilities of the German General Staff was reflective of the opinions expressed by several contemporary intellectuals.

Among the most prominent of these was Sumner Welles, former Undersecretary of State and general editor of *The Intelligent American's Guide to the Peace*. His chapter on Germany, after analyzing the history of Germany leading up to WWII, turned to the hazards presented by the German General Staff and its capacity to become a major stumbling block on the road to continued peace. He wrote:

The General Staff, as the embodiment of the military class, is the perennial force that dominates Germany... It always connives at the restoration of German armed might... Therefore, any peace arrangement that enables the occult power of the General Staff to reassert itself, must fail in its purpose.<sup>23</sup>

In an earlier book on the subject, *Time for Decision*, Welles outlined his view of the peculiar nature of the German General Staff among the Western military tradition. Rather than a simple “board of army generals appointed to determine military strategy” similar to general staffs in Britain, France, or the US, Welles argued that for the previous 75 years the German General Staff had dictated all foreign and the greater part of

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<sup>23</sup> Welles, Sumner. *The Intelligent American's Guide to the Peace*. New York: The Dryden Press, 1945.  
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domestic policy for Germany. Unlike other general staffs, the power of the German General Staff did not wane during peacetime. In Welles estimation, the General Staff was the power behind every throne and boardroom chair since Germany's unification. He wrote:

While Bismarck declared that it was the German Emperor for whom they fought, we now know, as he knew then, that the authority to which the German people have so often and disastrously responded was not in reality the German Emperor of yesterday, or the Hitler of today, but the German General Staff...I am not disposed to minimize the importance of other factors...but I am convinced that each of them has played its part only in so far as it was permitted to do so by the real master of the German race, namely, German militarism, personified in, and channeled through, the German General Staff.<sup>24</sup>

According to Welles, Hitler and his cronies, like the Kaiser before them, were simply a tool utilized by the General Staff for its own dark purposes. Though it is now understood that the German military elite offered great resistance to Hitler's military ambitions and that tensions between the *Führer* and his generals ran high throughout the war, it is important to remember that in 1944 no such understanding existed. Regardless of the merits of Welles' opinion, the effect it had on disarmament planning is undeniable.

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<sup>24</sup> Welles, Sumner. *The Time for Decision*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944. Page 338

The spirit of Welles's work can easily be seen in a staff study published in November of 1944 titled, "Disposal of the German Military Caste." The stated object of the study was to prepare a draft cable to the Combined Chiefs of Staff requesting decision on a policy for the liquidation of Germany's military elite. Beyond the destruction of the General Staff, it was thought necessary that the entirety of German military interests, dubbed the "German Military Caste," be removed from the mainstream of German society.<sup>25</sup>

The study began by considering the existing policies of the United States, citing first the "Draft Directive to the Supreme Commander regarding Military Government of Germany following the cessation of organized resistance," in which the US Joints Chiefs of Staff stated:

Of equal if not greater importance (than the elimination of Nazism) in the ultimate destruction of German militarism is the elimination of the German Professional Officer Corps as an institution. All General Staff Corps Officers who are not taken into custody as prisoners of war should therefore be arrested and held pending receipt of further instructions as to their disposition. You will receive further instructions as to how to deal with other members of the German Officer Corps.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> G-3 Division (Main), SHAEF. "Disposal of the German Military Caste." November 1944 Germany-Demobilization and Disposal of German Military Personnel. NACP

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., NACP

Much like many other Allied policies formed during WWII, US plans for dealing with the German Military Caste were rather short-term, allowing for effective control of General Staff officers while commanders awaited final decision concerning their disposal.

Throughout the study the threat posed by the General Staff was continuously stressed. The General Staff is described as the “high priesthood of the German cult of war... exclusive, privileged and immensely powerful.” It is identified as the greatest risk to post-hostilities stability because,

as the repository of expert knowledge, based on intensive and exhaustive study and experience, will plan and develop a future Wehrmacht unless drastic steps are taken to prevent it.. It is no exaggeration to suppose that plans are already being laid for the reconstruction of the Wehrmacht after the conclusion of the present war.<sup>27</sup>

After making the case for the destruction of the General Staff, the Military Caste study called for a policy decision regarding the form which proposed control of the German General Staff would take. It argued that immediate detention of all members would exacerbate the anticipated manpower shortage immediately following the cessation of hostilities, and suggested instead that these individuals should be located and monitored until the Allies were prepared to take further actions against them. In early December of

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<sup>27</sup> G-3 Division (Main), SHAEF. “Disposal of the German Military Caste.” November 1944 Germany-Demobilization and Disposal of German Military Personnel. NACP

1944, when the final draft of the study was presented to Lt. General F.E. Morgan, SHAEF Deputy Chief of Staff, it was disapproved. In his response to the authors of the study, Morgan explained his reluctance to approve its transmittal to his superiors. He wrote:

It is open to doubt whether this is the type of question that need be raised with the Combined Chiefs of Staff...the general ruling has been given that as far as possible we will take decisions here and report our actions, possibly after the event, to the Combined Chiefs...This seems to be eminently one of those cases...In general we can take it that we will follow guidelines laid down by the Joint Chiefs of Staff...We know that in so doing we are assured of at any rate the backing of half of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.<sup>28</sup>

Whereas planning the other functions of military government would be hamstrung by a lack of policy, Morgan suggested that this uncertainty would actually be a boon to controlling General Staff officers. Begging forgiveness was preferred to asking permission. Unlike the problems surrounding disarmament, the desired end regarding the German Military Caste was clear: it was to be destroyed, root and branch. Morgan's suggested approach would allow the ground commanders the latitude required to work toward this goal.

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<sup>28</sup> Morgan, F.E. "Disposal of the Germany Military Caste." 27 December 1944. Germany-Demobilization and Disposal of German Military Personnel. NACP



Regardless of the actions eventually taken on the subject, the language used by those planning for the elimination of the German military caste demonstrated the dread with which the Allies viewed the General Staff. Twice in its history the General Staff had faced total defeat; in both cases they had avoided complete destruction and emerged more powerful than before. It was not unreasonable to believe, as the Allies did, this would be attempted a third time. Their estimation of the General Staff's power over the German people and the threat its existence posed to Europe led them to form assumptions which pervaded every aspect of disarmament planning.

Breaking the influence of the General Staff and marginalizing the effects of German propaganda on Allied disarmament efforts were simply two pieces of the puzzle, albeit large ones. Though these steps were critical to thwart coordinated evasion attempts, preventing a repetition of the Versailles' failure would require the formation of strong Allied control machinery and clear disarmament policy. The balance of the Disarmament School lectures were dedicated to the complexities of accomplishing this, and are covered in Chapter II.

In November and December of 1944, little concerning the eventual execution of disarmament planning was certain. As such, the Disarmament School's importance does not lay in its relation to implementation. The lectures provide instead an opportunity to understand the way in which Allied planners during WWII approached the question of disarming Germany. With little idea of what conditions would prevail after victory and

only minimal policy guidance from their superiors, staffs relied heavily upon Allied experiences following WWI as an example for their post-WWII policies. By devoting lectures to these experiences, the organizers of the Disarmament School ensured that its attendees would have both a firm grasp of the historical context of disarmament and a clear impression of its dire necessity.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **ALLIED DISARMAMENT MACHINERY AND POLICY FOR GERMAN DISARMAMENT**

Allied war aims in Europe were many and varied; at the heart of the Allied goals lay the destruction of Germany's capacity for renewed aggression. In addition to broad measures for reorganizing and demilitarizing German society, the Allies sought the practical destruction of the German war machine. Disarming the German armed forces was the first and most fundamental element of instituting Allied authority and building a new, stable, and peaceful Germany. The German army, spread throughout Germany, represented the greatest threat to Allied control. Effectively disarming the German Army would require inter-Allied cooperation, strong Allied disarmament machinery, and clear disarmament policy.

The German propensity to separately lodge appeals with Allied governments after WWI and the differences of opinion which arose among the respective Allied powers allowed the Germans to delay and eventually defeat disarmament. Fully cognizant of this defeat, and fearful of German attempts to recreate it, the Allies in WWII formed the European Advisory Commission. Formally initiated at the Moscow Conference of November 1, 1943, the EAC was composed of representatives of each of the three powers, assisted by both civilian and military advisors. Its purpose under the Terms of Reference approved at the conference was to "study and make joint recommendations to the three

Governments upon European questions connected with the termination of hostilities which the three Governments may consider appropriate to refer to it.” Unlike in 1918 when the Armistice found the Allies unprepared for victory, the Allies in WWII sought answers to the fundamental questions of peace long before the close of hostilities. By answering these questions through tripartite agreement, the representatives of the EAC hoped to present a united front against German evasion attempts.<sup>29</sup>

According to Brigadier General Vincent Meyer, US representative to the EAC and presenter of the lecture, “Relation of European Advisory Commission to Disarmament and Control Machinery,” the EAC was “a policymaking body” which was not “the ‘boss’ of anybody.” Meyer tried to make this clear to the Disarmament School attendees, lamenting that even the highest circles in Washington were having trouble comprehending it. Rather than an executive authority, the EAC simply provided a forum within which the Three Powers could jointly consider proposals from their respective governments. The role of each representative was limited to bringing forward his government’s proposals and reporting to his government whether the Commission had approved, disapproved, or recommended the proposals for further study. Delegates to

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<sup>29</sup> Meyer, Vincent. “Relation of European Advisory Commission to Disarmament and Control Machinery.” 12 December 1944. US Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 2

the EAC were urged to avoid bilateral agreements; pursuant to this, US policy was not sent through SHAEF channels until it had received tripartite consideration.<sup>30</sup>

Gaining a policy decision through the EAC often proved tedious. The tortuous journey from initiation to decision began with the individual Allied governments. Governments would present either a question or policy proposal to the EAC, where it was examined by the delegates of the other two Powers. Once it received approval at the EAC level, it was then referred to the individual governments. If any government took issue with all or part of the suggested policy, the entire matter would be considered anew. Meyer provided an example of just how difficult such a situation could be, citing the creation of the Unconditional Surrender Instrument. The British had initially brought forward a 70-paragraph proposal clearly delineating terms on nearly every question imaginable, while the US and Soviets insisted on a much briefer document. After a months-long process, the US and Soviets prevailed and the Unconditional Surrender Instrument was agreed on in July of 1944.<sup>31</sup> Although gaining tripartite agreement was not always easy, it was necessary for decisions of such magnitude.

On November 14, 1944, the EAC reached an agreement on the Allied control machinery for Germany after defeat. This agreement gave a basic outline of the system of Military Government to be instituted in Germany. Brigadier Meyer highlighted several major

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Page 3

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Page 4

points in the agreement, primarily that the EAC stressed the need for military governance, as well as prompt disarmament and demobilization following Germany's defeat. It was this agreement which provided for the establishment of a Control Council headquartered in Berlin and composed of the highest military commanders of the US, British and Soviet forces in occupation. It also laid the foundation for the Military Division, Naval Division, Air Division, Political Division and the Economic Division, all of which would operate under the Control Council's authority. After it passed through the EAC, the agreement was referred to each of the Allied governments for approval. At the time of the Disarmament School, only the British government had approved of its terms. Meyer noted that were either the US or the USSR to file objections to all or part of the agreement, the entire matter would be reconsidered.<sup>32</sup>

Although the machinery had not officially been approved, the US had already begun to set up the US Group Control Council, comprised of 12 divisions ranging from the Political Division to the Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons Division.<sup>33</sup> On December 13, 1944, Brigadier General John E. Lewis explained the basic role of the USGCC in his lecture "Military Division, US Group CC." As head of the Military Division, General Lewis proceeded to outline the basic mission of the division and its place within the framework of the USGCC. He read from the "Protocol on Machinery

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Page 6

<sup>33</sup> Struble, H.S. "Disarmament Section, Military Division U.S. Group Control Council." 18 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 4

of Control,” which provided the charter for the formation of a joint Control Council after Germany’s surrender.<sup>34</sup>

In line with this document, General Lewis’ Military Division would be joined with parallel control staffs being formed by the British and the Soviets. The combined control staffs were then expected to mirror the functions of and replace existing German ministries, a prospect of which Lewis seemed doubtful due to the fundamental differences between the concepts of Anglo-American government and those of Nazi Germany. Nazi ministries did not fit well into the 12 divisions. Responsibility for the economy, for example, was divided among a multitude of German ministries, such as Goering’s Office of the Four Year Plan. Even more troublesome was the likelihood that Germany’s defeat would find its ministries in a state of complete disarray.<sup>35</sup>

Those Control Staff divisions relevant to disarmament and demobilization, Military, Naval, and Air, were the only ones capable of clearly paralleling existing German institutions. The *Oberkommando des Wehrmachts*, or OKW, responsible for the coordination of the three German armed services, would become obsolete upon the cessation of hostilities. As such, it was to be disbanded after Germany’s defeat. After this, control of the component branches of the German military would pass to the

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<sup>34</sup> Lewis, John E. “Military Division, US Group CC.” 13 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 1

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Page 4

Control Staff divisions. Responsibility for the *Heer* would fall to the Military Division, while the *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine* would come under the authority of the Air Division and Naval Division, respectively.<sup>36</sup>

The 12 Control Staffs would become the executive arm of the Control Council. Each CS would include an official from the three Allied powers. Acting jointly in accordance with EAC directives, these three commanders would exercise control over their parallel German organizations, act as advisors to the Control Council, and present the decisions of the Council to their respective organizations. The Control Staffs would rely upon indirect control, conserving manpower by issuing directives to the highest level of German ministries and having the Germans carry them out themselves. Under Control Council policies, these divisions were given the leeway to adjust their organizations and practices in light of practical experience, a stipulation which Meyer considered especially useful.<sup>37</sup>

The Control Staffs, much like the greater part of Allied control machinery, were only to last for the period immediately following Germany's collapse. Their major role was to ensure German fulfillment of the terms of surrender, and so had a limited lifespan. The Military Division would be abolished once the demilitarization was complete. The

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Page 5

<sup>37</sup> Meyer, Vincent. "Relation of European Advisory Commission to Disarmament and Control Machinery." 12 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 3



continued existence of other divisions for the long-term control and administration of Germany was to be decided later by tripartite agreement.<sup>38</sup>

The instrument Unconditional Surrender for Germany was the only tripartite guidance provided for disarmament. As a result, divisions' responsibilities were limited to enforcing the conditions of surrender. No specific direction existed concerning the internal organization of the divisions or their relation to the forces of occupation. Lewis approved of this policy vacuum because it allowed the three countries to construct their machinery relative to their respective national characteristics. He mentioned the Soviets specifically, as this latitude would allow them to control their zone in line with their own philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

After covering the basic duties and nature of the Control Council and its subordinate Control Staffs, General Lewis turned to his own, the Military Division. The chief objective of the Military Division was the demilitarization of Germany called for by the surrender instrument. Planning for the division fell prey to the same assumptions which had dominated a majority of post-hostilities planning in SHAEF; most plans were predicated upon an early surrender of Germany finding German ministries still intact. Lewis spoke to the simplicity of these previous plans, saying it was assumed that the Americans, "would walk into Berlin and issue instructions to German ministries and

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., Page 5

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Page 6

they would obligingly carry them out.”<sup>40</sup> Stiffening German resistance combined with developing Allied policy created a much different reality, which called for a more practical approach. As the war dragged on, the Germans seemed intent on fighting until total collapse; this probable collapse became a major factor influencing planning based upon existing German institutions.

Throughout the course of Allied disarmament planning, the balance of initial disarmament work was to be carried out by US ground forces. To supervise and assist in this mission, early planning had provided for the establishment of four types of disarmament staffs to assist US field commanders. The first, the SHAEF War Material Disposal Branch, was responsible for maintaining records of quantity, location, and disposal of surrendered war material, as well as offer advice on their handling and disposal. Control Missions were to be established at the headquarters of every *Wehrkreise*, or German military district. Disarmament Missions were to be attached to the headquarters of German field armies in France to supervise their disarmament in theater. The fourth, Disarmament Mobile Detachments, were designed to operate at the divisional level to supervise the actual process of disarmament. They were to rapidly advance to newly captured depots and secure them pending the arrival of service troops.

As it became evident that disarmament would take place within Germany rather than France, the four disarmament staffs were reevaluated. The SHAEF War Material

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 7

Disposal Branch underwent no changes, its name and basic duties remained the same. The impending collapse of German administration and the *Wehrkreise* system forced a change in the Control Missions. No longer attached to the German headquarters, these staffs were renamed Military District Control Staffs and were at the disposal of District Commanders. Disarmament Missions were abandoned, as the disarmament of German field armies within Germany would now fall within the scope of the Control Missions. Disarmament Mobile Detachments, renamed Mobile Disarmament Units, retained their original duties.

The formation of strong Allied control machinery, from the EAC down to the Mobile Disarmament Units, represented a major step in ensuring the success of German disarmament. The Allies understood that machinery would be worthless, however, without clear policy under which it could operate. According to the lecture by First Lieutenant L.H. Harris, disarmament would be governed by five major principles:

1. The Germans will be ordered to disarm themselves, and the appropriate German commanders will be held responsible for doing this.
2. Disarmament of the Germans will be subject to close Allied inspection at all levels.
3. Disarmament will be carried out as quickly as circumstances permit.
4. The speedy occupation of Germany will not be prejudiced.

5. Disarmament will ultimately be complete, and will initially be as complete as circumstances permit.<sup>41</sup>

These five principles, much like the rest of Allied post-hostilities planning, represented the confluence of WWI experience and WWII realities. The delay of disarmament following WWI had been among the greatest contributions to its failure; in WWII planning, speed was the principal consideration. Disarmament would in large part be dictated circumstances which would prevail after surrender, however, and these principles demonstrated that the Allies understood and prepared for this fact.

Disarmament following World War II was divided into of three major phases. The first, Primary Disarmament, referred to the initial separation of German field armies from their weapons. Secondary Disarmament included the seizure of German ordnance and supply depots, as well as stocks of weapons and equipment not in the hands of German units. The last phase, Final Disarmament, involved the destruction of factories and war production plants, the destruction of all war material not covered during the first two phases, and the destruction of fortifications.<sup>42</sup>

The majority of Disarmament School discussion over disarmament regarded the policies surrounding Primary Disarmament. The initial responsibility of Allied military

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<sup>41</sup> Harris, L.H. "Primary Disarmament." 11 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 2

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Page 3

commanders would be to take control of all German military personnel, separate them from their weapons, and concentrate them in specified areas some distance away from their confiscated equipment. Speed would be necessary to capitalize upon the initial shock of the German defeat and prevent uprisings. The victors would then be required to completely secure the seized weapons and munitions. During the rapid advances in France, Allied forces would often leave such dumps unattended. Within Germany, such haphazard disarmament could be disastrous. Lewis painted a vivid picture of the risks involved:

Every one that gets into the hands of a German that goes underground will be the means of annoying us in the future and we may not get that ammunition back for five years...some night when some particular objectionable official goes around a corner, somebody will assassinate him with one of these weapons, or some office that has been a pain in the neck to the Germans will have a grenade tossed in the window in 3 or 4 years from now, so we better do a 100% job of gathering those things up.<sup>43</sup>

Facing a foe whose head was constantly being filled with the fanatical propaganda of Dr. Goebbels, the Allies took their capacity for violent resistance quite seriously. By preventing the proliferation of small arms and munitions into the hands of German resistance elements, it would be possible to marginalize the threat of an active insurgency.

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<sup>43</sup> Lewis, John E. "Military Division, US Group CC." 13 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 4

Upon surrender, the Allies would utilize OKW channels to submit a general standstill order to the German field armies. German troops would then be required to deposit their arms and equipment in dumps at the divisional, corps, and army level. They would be responsible for inventorying and guarding these dumps until relieved by Allied disarmament personnel. After surrendering their arms, the German forces would be concentrated in specified areas. These concentration areas would be a considerable distance from the dumps and clear of the main axes of the Allied advance. The Germans would be given specific deadlines for this redeployment; if these were not met “offensive air action [would] be taken against unauthorized movement.”<sup>44</sup> The Americans’ readiness to use aerial bombardment against unarmed troops was indicative of the deep distrust with which they viewed their foe.

At the convenience of the Allies, the disarmed German forces would be concentrated on the main German maintenance routes wherever possible without impeding the Allied axes of advance. Allied disarmament units would inspect the weapon and munitions dumps and replace the German guards, though German maintenance and handover parties would be retained as necessary for the continued supervision of the surrendered equipment.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Harris, L.H. “Primary Disarmament.” 11 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 6

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8

The disposition of war material throughout the process of Primary Disarmament was dictated by clear Allied policy. The Germans would be required to render safe all bombs, shells, grenades, mines, and explosives before putting them into dumps. Small arms and equipment would be surrendered intact; bolts would not be removed. Mobile weapons and fixed defenses would be placed in the dumps, while immobile weapons would be deactivated by removing breech blocks and sights. The Germans guarding these dumps would be armed with rifles and limited to only ten rounds of ammunition each. Although the logistics of victory would make the use of German guards necessary, their armament would be strictly controlled to limit their capacity for offensive action.

All of these actions would occur under the supervision of the American District Commanders. Disarmament Staffs attached at the Military District level would assist these Commanders. They were tasked with informing German headquarters of the terms of surrender and instructions of the Allied Commanders. Their subsequent duties would include general inspection of arms dumps and disarmed German forces within their district, keeping records of surrendered weapons and equipment, and facilitating the reissue of war material for United Nations purposes.<sup>46</sup>

Mobile Disarmament Units would be responsible for the direct inspection of German units and depots to ensure compliance with the terms of surrender and Commander's instructions. After collecting lists of material from the Germans, they would check the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Page 4

number and types of weapons, vehicles, and munitions against the German records, as well as safeguard intelligence and technical research material. They would specifically supervise the use of German forces for guard and fire-fighting assignments, enforcing the restrictions on armament and equipment for both. When District Commander ordered the closure of the munitions dumps, Mobile Disarmament Units were empowered to take appropriate action to do so.<sup>47</sup>

The immensity and scope of Primary Disarmament were staggering. Allied calculations in 1944 predicted that over 2 million German servicemen would fall into their hands at the end of the war. This figure did not include the multitude of armed paramilitary organizations which dominated Nazi society. These organizations often contained the most hardcore of Nazi fanatics, and, if left undisturbed, were most likely to form the nuclei from which revolts would spring. Also absent from this figure were those in Himmler's Home Army, the military replacement system, and the *Wehrmacht* training program. Even without these considerations the concept of achieving one hundred percent accountability for every weapon in German hands presented a daunting challenge to the victors. This reality was not lost on the Allies.

Immediate action would also be required for the initiation of phase two, Secondary Disarmament, such as the securing of all German dumps and depots to prevent its removal by Wehrmacht personnel or German civilians. The Military Division would

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Page 5



concentrate on the seizure of the static installations which supplied the *Wehrmacht*. In his lecture, Brigadier General Lewis discussed the complexities of dealing with these supply installations, which included armaments factories. This task, which nominally fell within the scope of Secondary Disarmament, remained largely undefined in December of 1944. It was certain that such facilities would be kept under guard, but the eventual disposal of enemy equipment hinged upon Control Council policy for the overall treatment of the German economy. Because the implications of this action came so near to the realm of Final Disarmament, Lewis made sure to assert that the goal of the Military Division was to halt German munitions production by seizing and guarding the means of production, not to weigh in on later decisions concerning post-war German industry.<sup>48</sup>

By the time of the Disarmament School lectures, no clear policy on Final Disarmament had taken shape. Within this policy vacuum, Allied staffers tread cautiously, formulating plans with little to no idea what the long-term end state would look like. Instead they did their best to set short-term goals while delicately ignoring questions of “political policy” as they waited for tripartite agreement, or at the very least orders from Washington. In December of 1944, answers to these questions would still be some time in coming.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Lewis, John E. “Military Division, US Group CC.” 13 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 9

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

The ultimate disposal of captured enemy war material presented another particularly troublesome question to Allied planners. Necessary for both the protection of the forces of occupation and German citizens, the issue had been the subject of extensive correspondence within SHAEF circles. After some months of discussion, the Combined Chiefs of Staff came to a decision on the subject- destruction would await tri-partite agreement. Only chemical weapon stores would be destroyed before.

Decisions such as the allocation of equipment to United Nations countries would be carried out by tripartite machinery, however allowances were made for resolving short-term questions of military expediency. Under this authority, the US and UK would determine the materials required for continued war against Japan; the Supreme Commander would be authorized to requisition those resources and prepare their transfer to the Pacific Theater.<sup>50</sup>

Two considerations would dictate which captured war materials would be shipped to the Pacific: the quality of the German material compared with its Allied equivalent and the available supply of Allied equipment within the particular theater. At the time of the Disarmament School, four specific types of German equipment were marked for transfer to the Pacific: flamethrowers, colored smokes, horse gas masks, and bulk decontaminants. German flamethrowers, though seen as inferior to the British and

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<sup>50</sup> Gray, C.P. "Chemical Warfare Disarmament Policy." 26 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 8

American models, were necessary to address Allied shortages in Asia. Allied forces in the Pacific were also desperately short of colored smoke, and viewed the German smokes as equal or superior to the American supply. Allied fears concerning the use of chemical warfare by the Japanese made the last two materials, horse gas masks and bulk decontaminants, necessary. Whereas most aspects of Allied disarmament planning worked toward peace in Europe, this specific element of Secondary Disarmament addressed the needs of a continuing war in the Pacific.<sup>51</sup>

Though many aspects of disarmament policy would continue to change in light of evolving combat conditions throughout the end of 1944 and spring of 1945, the policy in place at the time of the Disarmament School displayed the general characteristics which would define disarmament planning until the end of the war. With a clear definition of Allied disarmament machinery and the specific duties of its component organizations, this planning ensured that disarmament after World War II would avoid the major pitfalls which had crippled post-WWI disarmament. More importantly, perhaps, than the strength of the policy, was the “dictatorial” powers which Allied District Commanders would exercise in the execution of disarmament.<sup>52</sup> Allied control machinery would not allow for German evasion, and the totality of Germany’s defeat would render useless any attempts at appeal.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Page 9

<sup>52</sup> Sullivan, Harold W. “Powers and Rights of Allied Commanders over persons and property in Germany.” 13 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP.

Regardless of the eventual changes in policy, the Disarmament School was a critical moment in German disarmament. The attendees of the Disarmament School, familiarized with the policies governing disarmament by the instruction they received in the closing months of 1944, would form the nuclei of disarmament staffs throughout the US Army. Though many specific disarmament policies were still uncertain when Germany surrendered in May of 1945, the instruction which US disarmament officers received at the Disarmament School empowered them to address specific issues under their own informed initiative. They would use the knowledge gained at the Disarmament School to fully capitalize on the initial defeat of the German armed forces without prejudicing the eventual goals of Allied Occupation.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEMOBILIZATION OF THE GERMAN ARMY

In addition to disarming Germany, the Allies in WWII sought to completely demobilize and disband the German *Wehrmacht*. Unlike disarmament, which had been attempted following WWI, the idea of completely disbanding the German armed forces was without parallel. Never before in modern history had victors sought such a thorough liquidation of their defeated foe's military. Such an unprecedented level of victory would require an equally unprecedented level of post-hostilities planning. US planning for demobilizing the German army constantly evolved throughout the course of WWII as planners labored to develop policy in the face of ever-changing combat conditions in Europe and a lack of joint Allied decisions on the subject.

Demobilization, which would be effected in conjunction with the primary phases of German disarmament, was covered extensively by the lecturers of the Disarmament School. Lt. Colonel C.J. Hackett prefaced his lecture, "Organization and Functions of Disarmament and Demobilization Personnel," by explaining the basic character of Disarmament School instruction concerning demobilization:

This subject is somewhat indefinite at this time, since only relatively small amounts of policy and procedure have been definitely decided upon. It has been thought best, therefore, to present the entire subject as a compilation of such theories have been advanced by various responsible planning groups and

agencies, as this method of presentation lends itself to showing the trend of thought over a period of time, with the inevitable changes caused by the constant altering of the military situation.<sup>53</sup>

In the absence of clear policy, Hackett and his fellow lecturers opted instead to familiarize their audience with the overarching characteristics and underlying assumptions which influenced demobilization planning throughout WWII.

Demobilization planning can be separated into two main phases. The first, spanning from May to early December of 1944, was created prior to the initiation of Operation Overlord in hopes of an early German surrender. At this stage of planning, the Allies had assumed that victory would come in the form of a formal German surrender. It was also assumed that this surrender would find the German armies of the West in France, and the German system of military districts, or *Wehrkreise*, intact and available for use by the victorious Allies for the disarmament and demobilization of the German Armed Forces.<sup>54</sup>

In May of 1944, the post-hostilities planning section of SHAEF formulated a staff study titled “Control and Disposal of the German Armed Forces during the Middle Period,”

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<sup>53</sup> Hackett, C.J. “Organisation and Functions of Disarmament and Demobilization Personnel.” 14 November 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. National Archives at College Park

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2

which operated under the assumptions of the first phase.<sup>55</sup> The planners envisioned the creation of a SHAEF Control Echelon which would be grafted onto the existing structure of the OKW, from where they would direct the disbandment by utilizing the German chain of command. This Allied Control Echelon was to be responsible for the formulation of disbandment policy, the issuing of instructions to German staff divisions concerning such policy, the seizure of all records of the OKW, supervision of the German staff divisions, and the issuing of instructions to US and British army groups concerning German forces.<sup>56</sup>

A second means of proposed Allied control was the addition of Allied staffs at the level of *Wehrkreise*, military districts responsible for recruitment and reinforcement. The greater part of the Wehrmacht's personnel documentation was maintained by *Wehrkreis* staffs, and so these staffs were responsible for the disbandment of the units they had recruited locally. Effective Allied control would require supervision at both the OKW and *Wehrkreis* levels.<sup>57</sup>

Upon the cessation of hostilities, OKW channels would be utilized to give a stand fast order to all Wehrmacht units, after which the German field divisions were to be moved

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<sup>55</sup> Planning Staff, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force; "Control and Disposal of German Forces During the Middle Period." 9 May 1944; SHAEF 235- Primary Disarmament of German Forces; NACP

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 4

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 7

into concentration areas, in which their disarmament would be completed. These concentration areas were to be well removed from towns, arms dumps and supply depots whenever possible. Contact between the German forces and civilians would be extremely limited, as would contact between German and Allied soldiers. Those German forces found outside of Germany's 1937 Frontier at the time of the stand fast order were to remain and be disarmed there. At the earliest possibility, they were to redeploy to their *Wehrkreise* of origin, where disbandment would take place.<sup>58</sup> Though no clear policy had been disseminated regarding the territorial reconfiguration of Germany following WWII, the borders of 1937, Allied planners tentatively used the 1937 borders as the basis of their planning. When signing the Atlantic Charter in 1941, the US and UK had affirmed the right of peoples within Europe to self-determination; the 1937 borders represented the extent of Germany preceding the *Anschluss* with Austria, annexation of the Sudetenland and subsequent territorial expansions of the Third Reich.<sup>59</sup>

Maintenance and supply of German forces was to remain the responsibility of the OKW. Citing restrictions on transportation, local purchasing and requisitioning of supplies, as well as anticipated shortages of food in theater, planners warned that reductions in rations would be likely. It was hoped that reduced rations along with limitations placed

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, Page 27

<sup>59</sup> Johnsen, *The "Eight Points" of Post-War World Reorganization*, 35



on alcohol would help to lower German morale and diminish the possibility of active resistance.

In order to further discourage insurrection on the part of idle troops, the planners argued German forces awaiting disbandment should be used by local military commanders for such necessary labor as clearing battlefields and repairing roads. Even before hostilities carried into Germany in the later stages of the war, Allied strategic bombing had reduced a majority of Germany's larger cities to rubble. Allied control and eventual German recovery would require the clearing of these urban areas, an ideal task for disarmed German forces awaiting discharge. German labor was also envisioned as a means of helping the liberated nations on their road to recovery. Germans would be used to rebuild the Europe they had destroyed. Concerning the use of German troops by local commanders, planners suggested that they would be superior civilians, such as those in the Todt Organization, for a number of reasons. First, the Wehrmacht included many specialized units comprising of skilled and semi-skilled workers whose expertise would be a vital asset in reconstruction efforts. They were more disciplined than the civilians, and were expected to conform better to military direction and limited supplies than civilian labor gangs. Transportation between work sites would also be easier, as the military units could utilize their own vehicles. Even so, a wide dispersal of German forces at the end of hostilities was likely, which planners saw as an opportunity to use locally available labor without displacing civilian laborers. Most importantly, German labor organizations were generally composed of foreign workers who, under SHAEF

policy, were to be repatriated at the earliest opportunity.<sup>60</sup> Plenty of work would remain for the disarmed German forces to busy themselves with as they awaited disbandment.

After detailing the means to control the disarmed German forces, the planners turned to discussion of the mechanics of disbandment. Unsure of whether full-scale demobilization would occur during the Middle Period between German surrender and the formation of Occupation Government, the planners nonetheless went forward with outlining the procedures in case early disbandment was required. The discussion began by mentioning the United Nations' lack of a long-term policy for Germany and in so doing, explained the tentative nature of all subsequent plans. During disbandment, UN policy was to take precedence over temporary convenience; in the absence of concrete UN policy objectives, planners approached the issue of disbandment cautiously.<sup>61</sup>

Disbandment was to be characterized by the gradual and systematic transfer of soldiers from military to civilian employment. Discharges would not occur on a unit-by-unit basis; instead, classes of individuals would be released. The discharges would occur in stages determined by the need to reestablish order in Germany, and first priority was to be given to salvage and recovery operations. Major considerations of the policy

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<sup>60</sup> Herbert, Ulrich. *Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis des "Auslaender-einsatzes" in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches.* (Berlin, 1985)

<sup>61</sup> Planning Staff, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force; "Control and Disposal of German Forces During the Middle Period." 9 May 1944; SHAEF 235- Primary Disarmament of German Forces; NACP, Page 19

included the preservation of law and order, even distribution of labor as needed throughout Germany, and the prevention of underground movements under the leadership of former Nazis or members of the General Staff.

To address these concerns, demobilized units which had fought together for an extended period of time were to be broken up. Discharged troops were to be prevented from flooding into regions other than where they were domiciled, and all those demobilized would be required to carry proof of their discharge. The *Wehrkreise* remained the preferred means of control, and movement of soldiers to their home districts was the major concern. Transfers between the British and American zones would be the primary means of achieving even labor distribution. Soviet policy was not known, but it was assumed that large numbers of units taken prisoner by the Russians would be used for labor within Russia, leaving their *Wehrkreise* of origin short of labor.<sup>62</sup>

At the close of the study, two simple alternatives were given: the return of all units to their respective *Wehrkreise* for demobilization, or the demobilization of all units wherever they stood. Neither alternative was viewed as wholly acceptable, and the study went on to outline the compromise between the two. Those within US or British zones would be returned to their *Wehrkreise* of origin if those lay within the Allied zones; in all other cases, discharge would occur where labor was required. Disbandment would be phased based on availability of transportation and labor requirements, and upon release,

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Page 22

every man would be given proof of discharge which contained no reference to his rank or qualifications. In May of 1944, the *Wehrkreise* was the cornerstone of disbandment policy.<sup>63</sup>

By the close of 1944, evolving combat conditions rendered the policy prescriptions of the May study obsolete. Demobilization planning entered its second phase on December 3, 1944, when Colonel T. N. Grazebrook, chief of the SHAEF Post Hostilities Planning Sub-section, submitted SHAEF/21544/PHP to the Deputy Chief of Staff at SHAEF. In it he wrote:

The initial SHAEF disbandment policy was formulated on the following assumptions, namely:

- a. No general disbandment would take place in the SHAEF period, and consequently our task would be limited to statistical preparation.
- b. A state of relative order and authority in Germany after the cessation of hostilities, enabling the stand fast order to be implemented.
- c. The continued existence of the *Wehrkreis* organization which would be fully utilized to carry out an orderly disbandment.

As a consequence the scheme proposed was detailed and complicated. Since the assumptions mentioned above are unlikely now to be fulfilled it was realized that the scheme required drastic modifications.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Page 30

By December the collapse of the German military machine was evident. It was obvious that the *Wehrkreise* system would not survive hostilities, or rather that hostilities would only end with the utter destruction of the “German Military Machine.” Colonel Grazebrook, after discounting the previous policy and the assumptions it had operated under, detailed the new policy being developed by SHAEF’s Post-Hostilities Section. All German forces were to be placed in concentration areas to await disbandment. Information concerning each soldier’s civilian occupation and place of residence would be collected at the earliest possibility. Discharge would still be phased according to the need for labor. No individual would be discharged without obtaining a discharge certificate, which would be required to receive food cards. Upon discharge, Germans would be sent to their home districts. Even without functioning *Wehrkreise*, German personnel were to be utilized as much as possible to carry out the demobilization and discharge processes.<sup>65</sup>

Grazebrook went on to list a number of complications affecting post-hostilities planning. The first is the divergent interests of various staff divisions. Another problem was the lack of a short term policy from the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and SHAEF planners were hesitant to move forward within the resultant policy vacuum. Russian policy remained a mystery as well, complicating the original assumption that a reciprocal

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<sup>64</sup> Grazebrook, T.N. “Disbandment of the German Armed Forces”, 3 December 1944; SHAEF-Disbandment, NACP

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 2

agreement could be reached easily. Uncertainty over what conditions would prevail as well as the staggering figure of 2.5 million Germans falling into Allied hands magnified the problems which plagued SHAEF planners.<sup>66</sup>

Grazebrook closed by asking several questions: How soon would it be possible to organize the occupation on a military district basis? Would a discharge certificate be desirable? Who would be responsible for sorting out security suspects? For how long could disarmed German forces be detained in concentration areas without mass desertions? Would G-5 be responsible for the phasing of disbandment in relation to the two factors of labor requirements and the availability of food? How would labor requirements be met? Would German forces in concentration areas receive payment?<sup>67</sup>

In December of 1944, answers to these questions were not forthcoming. As such, the men who organized and attended the Disarmament School did so without a definite idea of what Allied policy would look like when the Germans finally collapsed. Nonetheless, Hackett and his colleagues were able to provide a very broad picture of what role disarmament and demobilization would play in the occupation of Germany.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 3

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 4

In a later lecture, "US Procedures for Demobilization of the German Wehrmacht," presented on December 22, 1944, Lt. Colonel Hackett further explained the state of demobilization planning at the time.

Hackett identified the preparation of nominal returns as the initial step in the demobilization program. Disbandment authorities would be required to prepare three types of returns. These returns were to be prepared by Allied Commanders, collated at Military District Headquarters, and further consolidated and forwarded through Zone Headquarters to the Berlin Control Council. They would to contain data on both the military and civilian qualifications of each enemy soldier.<sup>68</sup>

Once statistical data concerning the disposition of the surrendered German forces had been prepared, Allied officers were to begin segregating non-Germans in their custody from the general population. These non-Germans were separated into six categories:

1. Allied nationals who can be returned to their own countries at the conclusion of hostilities.
2. Allied nationals who, for some reason, cannot be returned to their own countries for the time being.
3. Nationals of neutral states.
4. Austrians.

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<sup>68</sup> Hackett, C.J. "US Procedures for Demobilization of the German Wehrmacht." 22 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School,. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol I. NACP. Page 1

5. Nationals of countries allied with Germany
6. Co-belligerents (Italians).<sup>69</sup>

Once segregated from Germans and concentrated into national groups, these non-German personnel would await further decision on their disposal. Hackett assumed that members of the first and third categories would be disposed of rapidly, while release of the remaining categories would hinge upon political decisions. As these decisions were of little concern to general disbandment operations, Hackett did not delve into the specifics of the matter.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the inactivation of all German units, demobilization would require the formal discharge of every member of the German Armed Forces. The statistical reviews initially prepared by disbandment personnel would primarily be used for decisions concerning the order of release of German personnel. Those personnel not required by the forces of occupation or engaged in recovery work would be discharged. Those personnel with expertise in medicine, agriculture, or specific industries would be given priority.<sup>71</sup>

Deserters, stragglers, and other Germans who had avoided capture were to be processed and discharged through the same system. This was seen as another means of driving

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 5

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 6



home the totality of Germany's defeat to every German family; those who had fled would be required to report to the forces of occupation and be subject to the established procedure. The fathers, sons, and brothers of every German family would return to their homes, carrying with them their experiences at the mercy of the Allies' unquestionable authority. Any individuals who did not fully understand the totality of this authority and chose to take up arms against the Allies later would not, after their formal discharge from the German armed forces, be entitled to any of the rights of servicemen.<sup>72</sup>

The general disbandment policy called for the discharge of German personnel to their homes. In the case of those captured in the US Zone and domiciled in a different Zone, transfers were to be secured at the earliest opportunity. To facilitate these transfers, Disbandment Reception Centers were to be established near zonal boundaries. Upon transfer, discharge of these personnel would become the responsibility of the receiving authority. In December of 1944, US planners assumed the Soviet Government would agree to proposed transfers and set up these Centers in their Zone.<sup>73</sup>

Fearful that mass discharge of German personnel would cripple the already frail German economy, Allied planners carefully considered their disbandment policies to minimize the impact on German localities. During the period of the Supreme Commander's

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 8

<sup>73</sup> Lauben, P.S. "Problems of Demobilization at Council and Zone Level." 23 December 1944. US Army Disarmament School. The Disarmament School Lectures, Vol. I. NACP. Page 5

authority, the Military Government Division, Supreme Headquarters, would consider the manpower needs throughout Germany and determine the numbers of personnel required in each location. During the period of tripartite control, this responsibility would likely pass to the Manpower Division of the Control Staff.

Each German would upon discharge be issued a discharge certificate. Unlike under the May Study, this certificate would include information concerning the individual's military and civilian competencies to determine their utility to the occupation government. One copy of the certificate would be forwarded to the Military District in which the individual resided for use in determining their capacity for labor, while a second copy would be referred to the headquarters of the Military District in which the discharge took place.

The months of continuous planning and revision preceding the Disarmament School produced a set of policy prescriptions which would remain relevant throughout the remainder of the war. Although demobilization planning was subject to the same uncertainties of disarmament, and would continue to evolve until the cessation of hostilities in Europe, the Disarmament School lecturers were able to inform their audience of the fundamental considerations which had shaped, and would continue to shape, Allied policy for disbandment and demobilization. By the end of the course, the Disarmament School attendees were familiar with these considerations and prepared to carry out the work of disbandment regardless of subsequent changes in policy. The

tremendous task of eliminating the German army would depend upon these disarmament officers; educating them on the subject represented a critical first step toward demobilizing the German army.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

On November 12, 1955, the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Scharnhorst, the *Bundeswehr* was formally established. Barely more than ten years after the total destruction of the *Wehrmacht*, the swearing in of these 101 Officers and NCOs represented the fresh start necessary to maintain peace in Europe.<sup>74</sup> Though Allied planners in 1944 demonstrated no idea that Soviet relations with the West would turn so cold, and at no time mentioned the idea of rearming Germany, it was their labors and the execution of their plans which helped to solidify the totality of *Stunde Null*. The total disarmament in 1945 partially exorcised the specter of German aggression; coupled with the active campaigning of Adenauer, this exorcism was enough to encourage the US to embrace a renewed German military which would stand against the antagonists in the newly formed Warsaw Pact.<sup>75</sup>

In this context, it is evident that the greatest success of Allied staffs was their ability to create workable short-term solutions despite a lack of long-term guidance. Because they had worked for months without the guidance of tripartite agreement, the breakdown of East-West relations had little impact on the execution of their plans, which were adequately flexible to adjust in light of military and political realities. The uncertainty

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<sup>74</sup> Large, David Clay. *Germans to the Front*.( Chapel Hill, 1996). Page 243

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pages 51-56

which had plagued the planning process became, in the end, the source of its greatest strength.

Between the end of the Disarmament School and the close of hostilities in May of 1945, decisions at the SHAEF, USGCC, and Combined Chiefs of Staff levels clarified many of the plans and policies covered in the lectures. The balance, however, would remain in a state of flux all the way through to Germany's defeat. Those which were clarified were formalized in Operation Eclipse, the plan which, upon German surrender, replaced Operation Overlord as the prime directive of SHAEF forces. Attached to Operation Eclipse, the gargantuan plan for establishing Allied control in Western Germany, were two Eclipse Memoranda, 9 and 17, which related to disarmament and demobilization. Eclipse Memorandum 9, "Primary Disarmament of the German Armed Forces and the Short Term Disposal of Surrendered War Material," held true to the principles enunciated by the lecturers of the Disarmament School. It clarified the formation and conduct of Allied disarmament task forces as well as the nature of weapons and equipment to be confiscated by these forces.<sup>76</sup> Eclipse Memorandum No. 17, "Disbandment of the German Armed Forces," followed the same pattern: the basics of disbandment and demobilization discussed in December remained the foundation for the policy while the memorandum established the specific procedures which would be required to carry out these processes. Even though they do not represent the final state

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<sup>76</sup> SHAEF, "Eclipse Memorandum No. 9: Primary Disarmament of the German Armed Forces and the Short Term Disposal of Surrendered War Material" 30 March 1945; USGCC, Papers Relating to Operation Eclipse; NACP

of Allied post-hostilities planning, the Disarmament School lectures clearly illustrate the chief characteristic of such planning, uncertainty.<sup>77</sup>

Although German surrender dispelled the uncertainty over conditions on the ground, the political uncertainties with which Allied planners had wrangled for the duration of their efforts would only become more complex. As the gulf between the East and West widened, effective planning required officers who could function in this dangerously ambiguous political climate. The officers who created and studied Allied plans for disarmament and demobilization had proven with distinction their ability to do so; in the months following the Disarmament School these men would become increasingly powerful within the structure of the military government for Germany. Armed with the knowledge presented at the Disarmament School, these men would be the best prepared to direct one of the most challenging stages of the war: peace.

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<sup>77</sup> SHAEF, "Eclipse Memorandum No. 17; Disbandment of the German Armed Forces" 30 March 1945; USGCC, Papers Relating to Operation Eclipse; NACP

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