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UNDERGROUND FACTORIES - NIEDERSACHSWERFEN AREA

(July 1944)

1. The following information on underground factories in the Niedersachswerfen area was obtained from the Dutchman, who was the subject of A.P/W.I.U. (2nd T.A.F.) 3/1945. Representatives of A.I.2(a) and A.C.I.U. were present at the interrogation and due thanks are rendered for their co-operation.
2. According to informant's story he began to work for the Germans in January 1942, when he was employed as a labourer by the O.T. in connection with the electrical installations on Lorient airfield. Thanks to diligent work, spare-time study, judicious bribery and his self-assertive nature, he claims to have risen rapidly in the world and to have acquired something of a reputation both as an electrical engineer and as a reliable satellite of the Germans.
3. After working as a foreman electrician on the Dutch coastal defence works between Flushing and Den Helder, he was given the task of supervising the installation of electrical equipment at the Vught concentration camp. Finally, he asserts that at the beginning of 1944 he obtained employment on the staff of S.S. Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen S.S. Dr. Ing Kammler (see A.D.I.(K) 522/1944), who was entrusted with the task of constructing important secret underground aircraft and armament factories.
4. According to informant's account, Kammler placed him in charge of the Abteilung Energieversorgung of Amt C.III of his staff, which was charged with supervising the provision of electric power to underground factories in course of construction under the aegis of the S.S.
5. In this capacity, informant stated that in June 1944 he was sent to Niedersachswerfen to arrange for the provision of electric current to a number of underground sites which the S.S. proposed to construct in the area, but at the end of six weeks he was called away to undertake similar work at other projects

at Litomerice (Leitmeritz), Czechoslovakia, which will be dealt with in a separate report.

6. It was apparently intended that he should return to Niedersachswerfen on 1st December 1944 but before that date he had decided, for motives best known to himself, to desert the S.S., and in due course he arrived inside the Allied lines.

7. As the well-known underground factory at Niedersachswerfen itself was already working at the time of informant's visit, it did not fall within his province and he only entered it on one occasion. His information on this factory was therefore disappointingly meagre, but he was able to make some general remarks on the Niedersachswerfen complex as a whole which, although based on impressions gathered during a short stay, sound reasonably plausible.

8. As regards the function of the already native Niedersachswerfen plant informant could not enlarge upon existing knowledge. He was aware that Junkers were installed and thought they were making "the turbine for the V.1 and V.2".

General.

9. According to informant, no less than seven underground factories were projected by the S.S. in the Niedersachswerfen area, and the project as a whole was known as Bauvorhaben X.

10. These sites comprised the already active factory at Niedersachswerfen, the Woffleben site which was numbered B.3. and on which construction work had already started by July 1944, another site some 800 yards to the North West of the Woffleben one to which the code name "Nie" had been allotted, and four other projected sites numbered B.8, 3.9, B.11 and B.12 of which informant pinpointed two.

11. It was pointed out that the letter 'B' stood for Bauvorhaben and that in theory the number indicated the original order of priority in which it was intended that construction work should be undertaken.

12. Informant stated that all seven sites in the area were destined to be occupied by Junkers and that all the plans were drawn up by Ing. Spott, the chief construction engineer of the parent Junkers works at Dessau. The factories, however, formed independent units in that there were no underground connections between the various sites.

13. The scheme was carried out under the supervision of S.S. Sonderinspektion II, who were responsible for the provision of labour and materials and, of course, security precautions, but

the actual construction work was in charge of the "Wifo" organisation, a fact which may explain rumours which have connected the Niedersachswerfen project with P.O.L. storage and or production.

14. The S.S., however, provided technicians to assist in the construction work and they also installed their own agents, such as informant, in order to exercise a general supervision and to keep an eye on developments. There was said to be continual friction between Junkers, who desired the best possible standards of accommodation, and the S.S., who insisted that the utmost economy must be exercised in every respect.

15. According to the planned schedule, the six new factories were to be ready for occupation by February 1945 but in informant's opinion they would not be able commence work before July at the earliest, chiefly owing to the difficulty of obtaining transformers.

16. In July 1944 the original Niedersachswerfen factory was of course in operation, and construction work had started at Woffleben, where informant thought that work had begun on two tunnels, and possibly also at the site 800 yards to the North West of Woffleben.

17. In August 1944 the underground sites at Litomerice were given priority over the projects of the Niedersachswerfen area, but informant did not know whether this was on account of the urgency of the activity to be accommodated at Litomerice or because of the greater rapidity with which these latter projects, which largely occupied existing workings, could be pushed forward.

Niedersachswerfen.

18. As P/W had only been inside the Niedersachswerfen complex on one occasion he could only give a very general and not particularly reliable impression of its internal layout. He confirmed a previous informant's statement that the workings consisted of two main tunnels serving a number of workshops, but thought that the workings, though quite level, were not straight, and that the standard gauge railway line did not run into the tunnels.

19. He had noted that the entrances were strengthened with concrete reinforced by railway metals, and that inside the galleries weak places were also reinforced with concrete for

distances of up to 100 metres in some cases. He could make no statement on overburden.

20. Informant believed that in the floor of the galleries there were a drainage channel one metre wide and another channel 75 cm. wide for the piping of the air conditioning system. Some of the power cables were installed in third channel in the floor and others, together with the wires for the lighting and the telephone cables, were carried on iron supports along the walls of the galleries.

21. Informant believed that a power supply of 600 kW was required to run the air conditioning plant and that the capacity of the Niedersachswerfen stand-by plant was insufficient for this. He therefore believed that, if normal supplies could be cut off, the air conditioning system would necessarily cease to function and that the galleries would start to drip, with disastrous results to the virtually irreplaceable machine tools.

Woffleben. (B.3).

22. In July 1944 the Woffleben site enjoyed the highest priority of the six new projects envisaged in the Niedersachswerfen area. At this date two entrances giving access to two parallel main tunnels running roughly N.W. - S.E. through the hill were said to have been started, and several subsidiary galleries running off the main tunnels had also been commenced. It was believed that considerable difficulty was being met with on this project owing to underground springs and streams encountered in the course of the excavations.

23. It was believed that when construction work was completed the site would be taken over by Junkers for the manufacture of aero-engines.

Woffleben West ("Nie").

24 The project 800 yards North West of the Woffleben workings and designated by the code name "Nie" was the last of the Niedersachswerfen sites on the official priority list but, strangely enough in July 1944 it was the only site besides Woffleben on which construction activity appeared likely to begin in the immediate future.

25. One entrance only was planned, and this was to be located at the south-western corner of the hill. This entrance was to give access to the main tunnels running the length of the hill, and these tunnels were to be connected by a network of some 40 or 50 cross-galleries. A servicing gallery was to run round the whole site in order to facilitate transport; the workshops were to be arranged to give a production flow running northwards from

the entrance, the finished articles being collected at the northern end of the site and brought round to the entrance by the servicing gallery.

26. This factory also was earmarked for Junkers, but informant had no reliable information as to the purpose for which it would be utilised. In July 1944 instructions were given to extend the existing power cables as far as this site, so that construction work could be commenced.

Ilfeld.

27. Besides the above-mentioned sites, another underground Junkers factory was planned in the hills a short distance to the West of the village of Ilfeld some two miles North of Niedersachswerfen. The entrance was to be in the vicinity of 110360 GSGS 4416 Sheet Q5, and this was to serve a complex of galleries arranged on the conventional grid pattern. In July 1944 construction work had not begun but a small group of contractors' huts had been put up near the proposed entrance.

Appenrode.

28. Although informant knew that a total of seven underground factories was envisaged, the only other projected site which he was able to identify was in a hill between the villages of Appenrode and Ilfeld and to the North of the road connecting the two. It was understood that the entrance would be located in the neighbourhood of 087361.

29. In July 1944 two contractors' huts had been put up on the site but at that date construction work had not been started and power cables had not been brought up to the area.

Power Supplies.

30. Informant alleged that in July 1944 all power supplies both for the already active Niedersachswerfen factory and for construction work at the other sites was supplied exclusively by the 110 kV line from the Bleicherode power station. At the new sites the 110 kV line was to be led directly into the tunnels and the transformers intended to serve the factory machinery were to be installed inside the workings, and informant understood that this system was already obtained at the Niedersachswerfen factory.

31. It was intended that when other sites came into operation, power would also be supplied by a new 110 kV line running from a power station at Frose in the Magdeburg area to Woffleben, where it would join the grid serving the underground factories in the Niedersachswerfen district. As in the case of the existing line

from Bleicherode, the power was to be stepped down in the Niedersachswerfen complexes to 20 kV and 6 kV in the first instance.

32. According to informant's story, the power stations at Bleicherode and Frose would therefore be the sole sources of electricity supplies for the underground plants around Niedersachswerfen. He explained that it was not intended to draw on other sources partly on account of the load already carried by other power stations and partly because of the acute shortage of materials needed for the construction of transmission lines which made it necessary to rely on generating stations located reasonably near the factories.

33. The new line from Frose was said to be intended to run South-West across country from Frose for about one third of its length and thence almost due West to Woffleben. The most direct route was chosen in order to effect the greatest possible economies in cables and pylon.

34. In July 1944 the holes for the pylons had been excavated and sufficient pylons were on hand at the Frose and for completing about one quarter of the proposed line. In the following month, however, some of those pylons were requisitioned for the Litomerice projects, which in the meantime had been given a higher priority, and some of the new pylons on order were also later diverted to Litomerice.

35. The contract for supplying the pylons was held by the firm of Seidl of Falkenstein (Vogland) who were said to be able to deliver three daily.

Emergency Power Supplies.

36. Unfortunately informant did not claim to be conversant with the emergency power supply system in the Niedersachswerfen complex. He stated, however, that he understood that it conformed to the general instructions on the subject issued by Generalleutnant Kammler on 1st August 1944, and he had the foresight to bring with him a photostat copy of the document in question.

37. In his instructions Kammler draws the attention of his Sonderinspektionen and S.S. Führungsstäbe to the fact that the emergency power plants proposed by these bodies are of excessively high capacity. He adds that as a measure of fuel economy emergency plants are only to serve such appliances as necessary for the safety of the personnel, i.e. lighting, water supplies and air conditioning.

38. The two last-named systems are to be confined to the absolutely necessary minimum and Kammler formally forbids the connection of any normal equipment to emergency generators.

39. Future demands for emergency sets are to show the capacity of the act divided into the requirements for lightening, water supplies and air conditioning. The projected requirements for lightning are to be cut down to the necessary minimum since, if the normal supplies of power fail, normal activity will cease ipso facto. For the same reason, good grounds are to be shown for the maintenance of air conditioning and water supplies during the period when normal power is cut off.

Railway Services.

40. The plans for the Niedersachswerfen complex of underground factories provided for a now ring railway connecting Ellrich, Ilfeld and Nordhausen and serving the whole of the sites. For the convenience of workers proceeding between their quarters and their place of work as well as between the various factories, a train was to be run every three minutes on this line.

41. In addition, a large marshalling yard was envisaged on both sides of the village of Woffleben and on both sides of the existing Nordhausen - Ellrich line.

Personnel.

42. Appendix I contains a list of some of the principal personalities connected with the Niedersachswerfen complex of sites. Construction work at Woffleben was being carried out by inmates of the Buchenwald concentration camp under the supervision of "Wifo" personnel.

43. When all the factories were in operation it was expected that they would employ a total staff of some 45,000 workers. In July 1944 some personnel was already billeted in Ellrich and Nordhausen and it was rumoured that when the various sites came into production these towns and the area surrounding them would be evacuated to provide accommodation, especially for married employees and their families.

A.D.I(K) and
U.S. Air Interrogation.
5th February, 1945.

S.D. Felkin
Wing Commander

APPENDIX.

SECRET.

PERSONALITIES CONNECTED WITH UNDERGROUND ACTIVITY IN THE
NIEDERSACHSWERFEN AREA

S.S. Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen S.S. Dr. Ing.
H. Kammler.

Entrusted by Himmler, in his capacity as the head of the
S.S. Wirtschaftsverwaltungs Hauptamt, with the execution of
the Deutsches Geheimbauprogramm, which comprised important
secret underground factories.

Head of the so-called Stab Kammler which was created for
this purpose (see A.D.I.(K) 522/1944).

S.S. Hauptsturmführer Dipl. Ing. Geissen.

Head of S.S. Sonderinspektion II, which was charged with
the supervision of construction work on the sites in the
Niedersachswerfen area.

S.S. Sturmbannführer Fleto.

Head of Amt C.III (Technische Fachgebiete) of the Stab
Kammler and in this capacity in charge of the technical
side of construction work.

Sturmbannführer Skowronneck.

Head of the Abteilung Maschinen of Amt C.III of the Stab
Kammler. A subordinate of Flote and responsible for the
provision of the necessary machinery.

Major Regierungsbaurat Dr. Dr. Ing. Trautvetter.

In charge of the section of the S.S. Wirtschaftsverwaltungs
Hauptamt responsible for the provision of materials.

Dr. Neu.

"Wifo" representative in charge of construction work in the
Niedersachswerfen district.

Ing. Schwatz.

Chief "Wifo" engineer at Niedersachswerfen.

Ing. Reinzhagen.

"Wifo" engineer in charge of the electric,
gas, heating and air conditioning equipment.

at Niedersachswerfen.

Ing. Spott.

Chief Junkers constructional engineer. Responsible for the plans for all the Niedersachswerfen sites.

Dipl. Ing. Pönitsch.

Junkers constructional engineer responsible for electricity, gas and similar supplies.