

FINAL REPORT No. 39

ITEM No. 30

CONCEALED OIL TARGETS IN THE BRILON - BREDELAR AREA

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**BRITISH INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES
SUB-COMMITTEE**

CONCEALED OIL PLANTS IN THE BRILON-BREDELAR AREA

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Target No. C 30/273

Fuels and Lubricants

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BRITISH INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES SUB-COMMITTEE
32 Bryanston Square, London, W.1.

During the assessment of the Wintershall A.G. works at Lützkendorf, Saxony, mention was made of part of the plant evacuated to the Erilon-Bredelar area. The implication was of five or six hidden oil plants, among which a Fischer-Tropsch plant seemed to be included. The lead was not for the moment pursued, but references to plants in the area were afterwards found in a Geilenberg document, and these plants bore the code names Ofen (distilling plant), Taube (cracking plant) and Lachs (of which the meaning was at that time unknown). It was thought that a short visit to this area would clarify the situation, and accordingly the district was investigated on 17th and 18th July.

It was found that the following plants were in the area:

Ofen 5/6	Messinghausen	}	distillation of petroleum
" 7/8	Mühlenbein		
Taube 2	cracking of residues from Ofen 5-8.		
Lachs	plant for synthesizing alcohols and ethers (this seems to be the connotation of the code name "Lachs")		

OFEN 5/6 Messinghausen M.R. R.B. 6511, sheet L.52, Germany, 1:250,000.

The plant was operated by the Wintershall A.G., and was built of materials and plants from Rheine, near Osnabrück. It consisted of two units for the direct distillation of petroleum from Nienhagen, near Hanover. Each unit had a capacity of about 120 c.m. per day, which gives a monthly throughput of about 2,500 tons.

The process consisted in topping the petroleum for petrol (15%), and running off a middle fraction as diesel oil (25%). It was intended to crack the residue (60%) in Taube 2.

The plant was built in September and October, and started working in November, 1944. About 1,000 O.T. men were employed in building it.

The total of staff was at present about 55, which included a laboratory staff of about three.

OFEN 7/8. Mühlenbein, near Messinghausen (Mühlenbein is the name of a farm). M.R. R.B. 6612, sheet L.52, Germany 1:250,000.

The plant was also operated by the Wintershall A.G. and was built of material and plant from Lützkendorf. It was an exact duplicate of Ofen 5/6, but there was no laboratory. The staff had come from Lützkendorf.

Both plants were situated in disused quarries, and were covered with camouflage; they had good rail and road connexions.

Both plants were working on small reserves of crude oil for civilian and Military-Government use, but transport difficulties prevented the arrival of fresh supplies from the Hanover field. Difficulty would also arise in connection with the disposal of the residue.

TAUBE 2 Bredelar, on the north side of the road to Nieder Marsberg M.R. R.B. 7316, sheet L.52, Germany: 250,000.

The plant was due for completion in August, 1945, and at the moment of the visit part of the plant was being dismantled for emergency use elsewhere; it would have been finished quickly but for damage done by Displaced Persons. It took the form of Dubbs units for cracking the residues from Ofen 5/8 under a pressure of 50 atm., and was stated to give a 50 per cent. petrol yield.

The plant was built by the Deutsche Bergbau- u. Hüttenbaugesellschaft, Frankfurt. The capacity was estimated by the investigators to approach 100,000 tons a year. According to data collected from Ofens 5/8, it should have had to take 72,000 tons. No documents were available, but D.P.'s had burnt many in a hole in the ground, and fragments remaining were of drawings relating to cracking plant by Carl Still, Recklinghausen, and were dated 1937, although one of 21st February, 1945, related to a diesel-oil column, and to Taube II.

The plant was very cleverly concealed in a wood.

LACHS Bredelar, on the south side of the road to Nieder Marsberg, directly opposite Taube 2, M.R. R.B. 7316, sheet L.52, Germany: 1, 250, 000.

This plant had been evacuated from Rheinpreussen, but little progress had been made in its erection. It had been in use at Rheinpreussen utilizing the unsaturated hydrocarbons from the Fischer-Tropsch plant. It was now proposed to use the cracking gases from Taube 2. These gases were said to be poor in ethylene. The propylene and butylene were to be liquefied by compression and converted by esterification with 70 to 80% sulphuric acid, followed by hydrolysis with superheated steam, to yield a mixture of isopropyl and isobutyl alcohols. The esterification was to be carried out in autoclaves working at 40 to 70°C. and 16 to 20 atmospheres. The yield of ethers as by-products increased at the higher temperature ranges. The mixed hydrolysed products were separated by fractional distillation. The total output of alcohols and by-product ethers was to be 200 to 250 tons per month.

The sulphuric acid from the hydrolysis stage had a strength of 20 to 25 per cent., and was reconcentrated up to 60 per cent. in lead-lined circulatory evaporators using a thermo-syphon, with a final concentration to 70 to 80 per cent. in 'through flow' evaporators of ferro-silicon.

Much of this information was obtained by interviewing Dr. Häusser from Rheimpreussen in the C.T. Barracks nearby. He was the production manager. Documents connected with the Lachs plant were said to have been destroyed by Italian displaced persons.

A short interview also took place with Dr. Schmidt, who was to be in charge of the evacuated research laboratory situated at Ludenscheidt. He had worked in the research laboratory at Rheimpreussen on the conversion of higher alcohols into ketones over catalysts, principally zinc oxide.

Both Dr. Häusser and Dr. Schmidt were subordinate at Rheimpreussen to a Dr. Grimme. Dr. Schmidt appeared to have no knowledge of Iso-Synthesis.