

MS # B-019

Goetz Lothar von dem Knesebeck  
Generalleutnant

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Title : Report of Gen von Geyr (12 - 15 Jun 44)  
Author : von dem Knesebeck, Goetz Lothar  
Position : Staff Officer, Inspector General of Panzer Troops  
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Prepared for : Capt D. D. Hazata  
Translator : Mr Alexander Rosenwald

Annex

REPORT OF GEN FZ VON GEYR (12 - 15 Jun 44)

I. Text of Report by Gen Fz Geyr von Schwennenburg to the  
Generalinspekteur der Panzertruppen

1. The Enemy Situation

a. The Allies are conducting a war of combined arms in which decisive results are achieved by the cooperation of the three services—Army, Navy, and Air Force.

b. The Allied Air Force is the decisive factor in the success during the initial period of the invasion. Artillery air observers have been able to oppose by naval artillery fire every forceful resistance exhibited by our troops. During daylight, every maneuver in the combat area up to a depth of 60 km is suppressed in a very effective manner by the Allied Air Force. As a consequence, daylight movement has been rendered impossible. By means of good radio detection, the enemy can locate headquarters and even single unit radios and put them out of action by pattern bombing. Raiding parties are being dropped in rear areas, where they are harassing communications, disrupting wire connections, and, by radio signals, are directing bomber formations to worthwhile targets. Rear railway centers, important road junctions, principal highway towns, and the Seine bridges are constantly attacked by strong bomber formations.

c. The enemy is landing more troops and materiel every hour without our being able to do anything about it.

d. Moreover, there is a threat of an additional landing in force, probably north of the Seine. This landing would have disastrous results, especially since the Seine bridges as far as Paris, with the single exception of a partially destroyed bridge, are no longer usable.

### 2. Recommended Tactics

a. The elastic band of panzer divisions around the beachhead is stretched to the breaking point. When the break occurs, the enemy mobile formations will pour into the interior without any hope on our part of throwing against them an appreciable force of armored reserves. Therefore, our panzer divisions should not hold rigidly on the present front. The terrain features are unfavorable for us and, to a certain extent, the present front lies within range of enemy naval artillery, which we are unable to oppose effectively. It is absolutely imperative to bring up infantry units immediately and to withdraw the panzer units from the present front.

b. In the hedgerow terrain of Normandy, our Tiger and Panther tanks cannot be used with maximum effectiveness because of their long gun tubes and the strong antitank forces of the enemy. Consequently, we should effect a gradual withdrawal to sectors more favorable to us.

c. By employing flexible tactics during the hours of darkness, we can strike against the enemy flanks with our panzer

formations, encircle salients, and gradually "extract the dragon's teeth."

d. A higher staff for the control of the panzer-type forces should be created immediately in order to prevent complete attrition caused by the tactics of the enemy commands. The army commands, thinking only in terms of infantry, are committing panzers in the front lines and splitting them among infantry units, where they are used as an antitank weapon. Thus, one by one, our tanks are being shot to pieces by the numerous enemy antitank guns, so well camouflaged in the hedgerows.

#### 5. Rear Communications

a. It is urgently necessary to prevent the disruption of our rear communications by raids and acts of sabotage, which are becoming more and more numerous. For the protection of these communications and for the security of rear supply depots, it will be necessary to bring up replacement units from the Zone of the Interior.

b. In addition, we shall have to bring up at once military police for traffic regulation and route marking, particularly for night movements and detours of blocked defiles. Cass, for example, is destroyed to such an extent that it is impossible to drive through the town. Individual vehicle drivers must look for detours on their own.

c. If it is not possible to give fighter support to the forward areas, then at least such support ought to be guaranteed the communications zone at certain hours of the day, to which time

daylight traffic could be confined.

4. Problems of the Service of Supply

a. The fact that the panzer staff (NS; the staff of Pz Gp West) has been left without an Oberquartiermeister (general staff officer in charge of supply and administration) has proved to be a serious mistake. The supply of panzer combat troops has been poorly organized, and already an entirely untenable situation has developed. The army commands, who must supply the panzer forces, do not have sufficient transport to carry the necessary ammunition and fuel from supply depots in the Paris area to advance supply points at the front. Because of the limited tonnage allotted to the panzer troops, they must dispatch supply trains to Paris themselves, every day incurring heavy losses en route from low-flying aircraft. Bringing up additional supply trains has become an urgent necessity in order to eliminate the serious supply bottleneck. A basic principle of panzer troops is to send tanks into action only in such numbers as can be safely supplied. At present there are already more panzer units engaged than we can adequately supply. Apart from the tactical considerations involved, further reinforcement of the panzer troops on the invasion front is by no means justified until the supply question has been settled satisfactorily.

b. We must point out the already paralyzing effect of the enemy air forces and sabotage on railway communications. The paralysis of the large-scale transportation system is bound to have a similar effect on such a major supply consumer as the panzer force.

c. A first class panzer supply specialist is urgently needed to organize the entire supply system of the panzer forces at the beachhead. The failure of the Oberquartiermeister West in this respect has already become evident.

5. Replacement of Personnel and Materiel

a. Reports from individual panzer-type units on casualties and materiel losses are not available because of the continuous commitment of these units and the frequency of disrupted communications. It is certain that the panzer grenadier troops, as the mainstay of the fighting, have suffered considerable losses. Moreover, a large number of vehicles, whose debris now litter the roadsides, have been a total loss. In the present guerilla warfare, the wear and tear on tanks is very considerable and is all the more increased as the possibilities of repair in the forward areas are limited by the constant harassing fire from the air.

b. It is therefore absolutely necessary to bring up immediately from the homeland to rear distribution centers replacement battalions of mixed troops—about 70 percent panzer grenadiers. Furthermore, panzers and motor vehicles must be started en route at once, since it will take a long time before they actually arrive at the front.

6. Estimate of the Situation

a. The influence of the almost unhindered enemy air force, both tactically and strategically, is so tremendous that all decisions of our command must be based accordingly. It is no longer

possible to employ a panzer formation above company strength on the invasion front during daylight without heavy losses. All time schedules and plans, as well as the execution of every operation, are entirely upset. The time factor has become a most complicated problem in view of the constantly increasing strength of the enemy beachhead.

b. As our own Luftwaffe is, in fact, entirely absent, the burden of actively containing the beachhead rests exclusively on the shoulders of the panzer troops. These troops, exclusive of the panzers situated north of the Seine, are closely engaged with the enemy and have suffered heavy casualties and considerable loss of materiel. This is especially notable in the panzer grenadier regiments.

c. It is absolutely necessary to replace with infantry the panzer units now engaged in position warfare and to assemble them in the area southeast of Paris. Three panzer troops held in readiness on the coast north of the Seine must be moved to an area east of Paris to enable them to be committed subsequently either to the north or south. Movement of panzer formations west of Paris across the Seine from north to south, or the reverse, is no longer possible.

d. The panzer forces, if disposed east and southeast of Paris, can still turn the tide. Of course, without a certain degree of fighter support, the panzer force alone cannot achieve this aim, even under the most favorable conditions. Here, the decision will be brought about, and all other factors must be adjusted and

acted upon in accordance with this idea; otherwise the war in the West will be lost. There is no time to lose. If this battle is lost the entire Luftwaffe will no longer be of any avail.

II. Effects and Results of the Report

7. The report prepared by Gen Fz Geyr von Schweppenburg on the situation prevailing on the invasion front was submitted to Hitler by the Generalinspekteur der Panzertruppen. The report was considered by Hitler to be pessimistic and defeatist in nature.

8. The Fuehrer's order, to give up not an inch of ground, was maintained. The proposed tactics of von Geyr were not accepted.

9. The panzer forces continued to be employed as infantry. Only a few infantry units were allocated, and even these took weeks to arrive.

10. The organization of a staff to control the panzer forces was delayed until finally the troops played into the hands of the SS under Sepp Dietrich.

11. Because of this and earlier realistic and objective reports, Gen Fz von Geyr was relieved of command. Many weeks elapsed before he was assigned to a minor post in the Home Army. Ever since von Geyr had been military attache in London, Hitler had strongly disliked him because of his realistic and unvarnished reports. On several occasions Hitler had designated him a pessimist and a defeatist. As a result of these remarks by Hitler, von Geyr was virtually black-



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listed by the Heeres Personalamt (Army Personnel Office), which was controlled by pre-Hitler generals. This relationship also influenced his career during the war, although, because of his outstanding military qualifications and extensive experience in panser tactics, which played so important a role in this war, Hitler could not turn him out altogether.

13. After a three day visit with Gen Fz Geyr von Schweppenburg, I was ordered to deliver the above report to the Generalinspekteur der Panzertruppen. The report has been reproduced by me from memory, and, as the events described occurred about two years ago, there may be omissions in this reproduction. However, I have done everything in my power to avoid omissions and additions of any kind whatsoever. For the correctness of the effects and results following the report by Gen Fz von Geyr, as described above, I vouch on oath.