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OF

FRANZ HALDER

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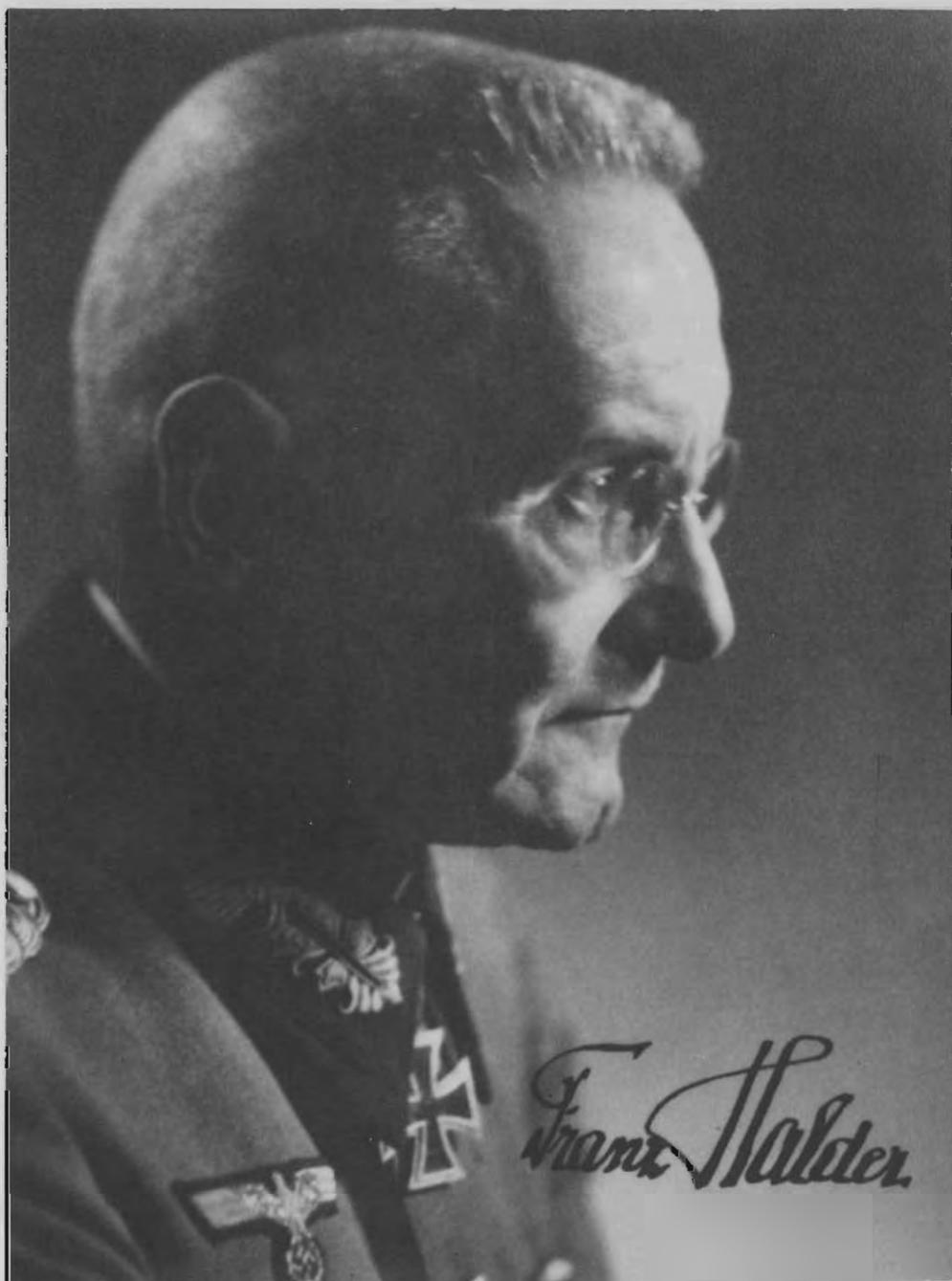
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THE PRIVATE WAR JOURNAL
OF
GENERAL OBERST FRANZ HALDER

**Chief of the General Staff
of the
Supreme Command of the German Army (OKH)**

14 August 1939 to 24 September 1942

VOLUME I

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PREFATORY NOTE

The private war journal of former Generaloberst (Four Star General) Franz Halder, who was Chief of the General Staff of the Supreme Command of the German Army (OKH) from 1 September 1938 to 24 September 1942, comprises seven volumes and covers the period from 14 August 1939 to 24 September 1942, the date of Halder's dismissal by Hitler.

The journal was kept by Halder personally in his own shorthand notes jotted down in connection with conferences, memoranda, staff talks, lectures, reports, etc., as they occurred during the discharge of his functions as Chief of Staff. They are not to be confused with the official War Diaries kept by the Supreme Command of the German Army, but are rather to be considered the personal notes, views, and impressions of Halder contemporaneously recorded.

The entire journal was introduced by the Prosecution as a documentary exhibit (No. 1359) in the record of the case entitled the United States of America vs. Wilhelm von Leeb et al (Case # 12) brought before Military Tribunal V. Excerpts from the journal which either the Prosecution or the Defense wished particularly to bring to the Court's attention were translated in the record during the course of the trial.

The journal was reduced to typewritten form from the original notes written in the Gabelsberger system of German shorthand under the guidance of Mr. Phillip Willner, Chief of the Court Reporting Branch (German) of the Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes (OMGUS). In order to prepare an authoritative text, the entire journal was reviewed with Halder by Mr. Arnold Lissance, Interrogator and Editorial Analyst, Evidence Division, Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes (OMGUS). A very few words, mostly cut of context, could not be reconstructed, or, allowing more than one interpretation, remained doubtful. They are so indicated in the text. The work of assembling the final mimeographed version was completed under the supervision of Mr. Ludwig R. Borinski, Language Division, Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes (OMGUS). The entire project was carried out under the supervision of Mr. Walter H. Rapp, Director, Evidence Division, Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes (OMGUS).

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The seven volumes of shorthand notes which have become known as the Halder Diary do not technically represent a personal diary. Gen. Franz Halder has always insisted that they were mere notebooks for matters reported to him and which he in turn had to take up with Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, and the interested Chiefs of the various OKH Sections. This description is an accurate one for the earlier entries, but in the later volumes the notebooks change into something more rounded out and personal.

As such records go, the Halder Diary is unique in scope and continuity, and probably has few equals in importance among individual contributions to the records of this war. Their value to the military student requires no emphasis. The interest for the general reader will be in the drama of the war as seen on the highest military level, in the picture of the functions and activities of the Chief of Staff of a huge army, and in the better comprehension it will afford of the position of the German General Staff in the German State in the recent past.

Like any diary, this one is fragmentary in that the author noted only the striking details and omitted the contemporaneous setting which often alone gives them significance: it was unnecessary for him to put down what was common knowledge for him and for others. As a result, the reader will often need some further information to understand the entries. The footnotes, based on Gen. Halder's explanations, will serve this purpose and will help to reconstruct the settings for personalities and events.

Intended to serve as a notebook, the Diary does not furnish a complete record of all activities during the war years they cover. There was no

need, for instance, to put down as an aid to memory all those matters that were discussed daily or hourly, for everyone would be expected to have them fresh in his mind. Thus it sometimes happens that a secondary issue receives more attention than one of first-rank importance. A case in point is the almost total lack of notes on the planning for the breakthrough at Sedan, in 1940, while that for the subsidiary effort of Army Group C, to the south, appears in great prominence. The reason for this is that in preparing for the thrust through the Ardennes, the author was in continuous contact with his planning staffs and needed no notes to refresh his memory. On the other hand, the conferences for the operation "Gelb" and its train of secondary operations on the southern part of the offensive front were so widely spaced that notation of important details was essential.

As the war went on, the entries began to lose their original character of mere memo notes. In the pressure of campaigns when, late at night, the members of the planning staffs were not available for consultations and the quiet after a day of high-pitched tenseness favored such an activity, Gen. Halder would find it very helpful to do his thinking on paper, when working out the fateful decisions he had to make or suggest. In the notes, which were not destined for any readers (except perhaps in later years a select few German military historians), and certainly not for the eyes of non-Germans, we find a day-by-day and phase-by-phase account of the development of the French campaign that, incidentally, throws an interesting light on some controversial aspects of it. The record becomes even more complete and revealing throughout the preparations for, and execution of, the campaign in Russia. Looking backward, it is possible to fix the date almost to the day in the earliest phase of the invasion, when the foundation was laid for the eventual defeat of the German Armies by the Russian.

A decisive change in the character of the Diary comes at the end of 1941, when von Brauchitsch resigned. It now became Gen. Halder's function to present the daily situation report to the Fuehrer. The entries in the Diary generally diminish. The notes for the situation report were now made on slips of paper destroyed after the conferences;

it would have been unwise to use the book in the presence of the Fuehrer, who had taken a sharp dislike to Gen. Halder's notebooks on previous occasions. At the same time the personal entries increase. Often these meetings with the Fuehrer ended in clashes of opinion and personality, and the Diary became the only outlet for the author's exasperation in the bleak winter of 1941/2 when many of his old associates had left General Headquarters.

The Diary closes with the removal of Gen. Halder from his post, after a period of racking strain, on September 24, 1942, just as Gen. Paulus's Sixth Army was battling its way into the gigantic man-trap that was to be Stalingrad.

It was recognized very early that an adequate translation of the Diary required amplification. Explanatory annotations would have to indicate significant connections and supply essential information which did not appear in the original entries, because it was part of everyone's knowledge at General Headquarters. Plentiful though they may seem, it became increasingly evident as the editing progressed that there are actually not enough footnotes for best understanding. This deficiency is due to several factors, some of which could not be controlled.

Chief among these factors was the time limitation set on the availability for consultation of Gen. Halder, which could not be offset by his cooperativeness. The mere reading of the 1,200 pages of German text to verify the correctness of the transcript from the shorthand notes, took up nearly one half of the aggregate 400 hours spent with him.

Next among these factors is that Gen. Halder obviously could not answer questions that were not asked. Sometimes the need for an explanation became apparent only long after the period of consultation; in such cases elucidation was obtained by letter. But there may be other instances where the meaning seemed plain and clarification appeared unnecessary; some notations, therefore, may have been unwittingly misconstrued in the translating. In a very few instances, neither

Gen. Halder, who had to rely solely on his extraordinary memory, nor any of his associates, could furnish the desired explanation in the absence of the original OKH records. And finally, there is also one category of unexplained subjects, where a certain blockage to answering the questions may have played a part.

By the time the working relationship had developed to the point where questions were more freely asked and answered, the limitation of time prohibited reviewing the volumes already gone over. It is thus fully realized that the body of footnotes obtained leaves many areas uncovered. The rich material would justify considerably more intensive consultation with Gen. Halder to fill in all the spaces of the mere skeleton that is the Diary. Conceivably it might be found desirable after obtaining additional information, to make its contents more accessible by rewriting it on a topical basis.

Another unavoidable omission in the translated version of the Diary, due to the fact that time grew short toward the end, is the absence of at least diagrammatic situation maps for a score of key dates. Many of the developments can be fully appreciated only against such a background. Indeed, but for the fact that a number of the original situation maps were available for checking the translation of the part of the Diary that covers the period winter, 1941, through summer, 1942, it would often have been impossible to render the true meaning of the entries. The reader will be saved some confusion by a few editorial footnotes which, for instance, clear up the seeming contradiction when the Diary, in the Russian Campaign, refers to an eastern and a western front in addition to the main front.

How necessary it was to exercise the greatest care in translating the highly condensed telegram style of the Diary, and continually to check with the context, may be illustrated by the following two examples. The sentence "Es fehlt noch Royal Oak" could easily be interpreted, e.g., that the Royal Oak was still unaccounted for. It was so translated until it was found out in some other connection that the Royal Oak had been sunk some time

before; accordingly, in the context of the entry, the correct rendering was to the effect that the British Navy had not yet replaced that capital ship. Or, "Verhalten der 4. Armee" had nothing to do with the conduct or action of the Fourth Army, but referred to "ver-halten", to hold back, which checked with the plan of attack for that Army.

An effort was made in translating the terse entries of the Diary to keep on the same linguistic level as the original, that is, neither over-formal nor altogether colloquial. Lapses into colloquialisms follow the author's in expressing some pent-up feeling. Eschewing the more colorful language which a war correspondent can and must use, the translation may sometimes seem repetitious or pedestrian; it could not, after all, depart too freely from the text. The author himself is frank in acknowledging the stylistic deficiencies of his Diary.

Apart from lacking a motivation for choice writing, he rarely had the time to organize subject matter and sentence structure or to ponder over better words for those that came into his head first. Many of the notations were made at the telephone or while visitors talked to him, when all that mattered was to catch the gist correctly. (During the Fuehrer's speeches at the full-dress meetings before or after major events, Gen. Halder would keep the 8 x 12 ledger-type books on his knees and make notes, much to the annoyance of the Fuehrer, who could not bear divided attention, and held the notebooks in abomination; Gen. Halder continued to make notes at such meetings but he had to do so behind someone's back.) The telescoped sentences and the endless periods which often resulted from this type of writing were unscrambled in consistency with the context, with the aid of the author's explanation of what he had wanted to say at the time.

A peculiarity of the text is the seemingly repetitious and redundant use of the words "apparently" (anscheinend) and "reported", "alleged", "believed to be", etc. (angeblich). The former is applied to any occurrence not observed at first hand or lacking confirmation; the latter is reserved for

frontline reports pending verification, and mentally discounts the professional over-optimism to which field commanders are prone in announcing successes.

A note would appear to be indicated on the meaning of the word "political" in the Diary, which varies with the context. Used in connection with the Fuehrer and the Foreign Office (von Weizsaecker, von Etzdorf) the term refers to international relations; "political channels" means "Foreign Office" channels. In connection with von Brauchitsch or other Generals and with civilian visitors, the term refers to the domestic political situation. It is interesting to note here that Dr. Goerdeler, whose name is prominently associated with the events of the 20th July, 1944, appears in the Diary twice: the first time referred to as "Dr.", in longhand (17 March, 1940), and the second time with his full name written out in shorthand (2 Oct., 1941), and thus almost as invisible as if written with sympathetic ink.

Very eloquent use is made of exclamation points in the Diary. They may indicate speechless amazement, perplexed or amused incredulity, or forthright indignation. The intensity of the feeling can be gauged in the original by the size, boldness or duplication of the mark; only the latter method could be reproduced by the typewriter.

A change in handwriting often indicated a time lapse between two notations within an entry, or a comment on the first notation. The inflexibility of the typewriter precludes rendering of such inflections, as it were. Longer horizontal spacing (six spaces) or dropping to the end of the following line was resorted to in order to indicate these differences. The notations ObdH, Org. Sec., Op. Sec., etc., set off from the text, indicate that the subject referred to had to be taken up with the person or Section in question. Striking out an entry is another means to indicate that the matter has been attended to. Markings on the notes that could not be reproduced on the typewriter were translated into words placed between brackets to indicate that they were not part

of the original text.

Some of the military terms in the Diary were coined by Gen. Halder and found general acceptance throughout the German Army. Their translation is based on the author's explanations. The other military terms used are based on Handbook of German Military Forces (War Dept. Tech. Man. TM-E, 30-45) and Dictionary of United States Army Terms (War Dept. Tech. Man. TM 20-205, Jan. 1944). German terms and abbreviations used in the translation are listed in a glossary following this foreword.

The foregoing notes which, it is hoped, may give some guidance to the reader, must be concluded with the acknowledgment of the untiring cooperation of Mr. Ludwig R. Borinski who did the first draft translation of six of the seven volumes of the Diary, attended to all details of production supervision, checked proof-read material, organized the footnotes and, with his unusual memory, made possible that measure of coordination that the translation may show. Credit is due to Mr. Fred. L. Pera for his competent proofreading. And finally, to the German typists, Fraeulein Annemarie Joeckel, Frau Annemarie von Kleist, Fraeulein Ingeborg Schulten and Frau Else Stich, goes sincere appreciation for their unflagging interest in the work which was a sustaining factor throughout the arduous production of the difficult English text.

Arnold Lissance

NOTE! The asterisks found throughout the text were inserted to mark the subjects for which footnotes were prepared. Owing to the shortage of time, these footnotes could not be included in the body of the Diary and must be supplied in a separate volume. They will be arranged to facilitate clipping and pasting on the bottom of the pages to which they refer.

FREQUENT GERMAN ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS.

<u>Abwehr</u>	Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Section of OKW.
<u>BdE</u>	Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres - C in C of the Replacement Army, i.e. the home organization of the Field Army, inducting and training replacements, activating new Divs., etc.
<u>BvTO</u>	Bevollmaechtigter Transportoffizier - RTO at Corps or Army level.
<u>Central Branch</u>	Zentralabteilung (GZ), Personnel Office of the Gen. Staff.
<u>General</u> (German ranks)	In order to avoid confusion, the German designations for general officers were used. (In a number of instances equivalent U.S. ranks were used by oversight. No one, however, will mistake, e.g., Lt. Gen. for Gen. Lt.)
Gen. Maj.	U.S. equivalent Brig. Gen.
Gen. Lt.	Maj. Gen.
Gen. (der Inf., Arty., etc.)	Lt. Gen.
Gen. Obst.	Gen. (full)
<u>Gen. Qu</u>	Chief Supply and Administration Officer in the General Staff, with two main Sections: a) Supply; b) Military Administration of Occupied Territories.
<u>Gen. Stb. San.</u>	Medical Corps Officer of rank of Major General.
<u>Gen. Stb. Vet.</u>	Veterinary Corps Officer of rank of Major General.
<u>Gen. Vet.</u>	Veterinary Corps Officer of Brigadier rank.

Geschwader Largest mobile, homogeneous formation in the Air Force, normally consisting of about 100 aircraft, organized into three Gruppen (q.v.).

Gruppe Basic combat unit of the Air Force, mostly with a T/O strength of 27 aircraft, in the case of single-engine Fighter Gruppen with 36 aircraft.

Ia Operations Officer (roughly corresponding to G 3).

Ib Supply Officer, mostly referred to as OQu or Qu (roughly corresponding to G 4).

Ic Intelligence Officer (corresponding to G 2).

IIa Personnel Officer (Officers).

Kette Consists of three aircraft.

Landesschuetzen Consistently translated as "Regional Defense units". They are local security units, normally composed of infantry men drawn from the Landwehr (q.v.) and Landsturm (trained and untrained men between 45 and 55) or younger men unfit for service.

Landwehr Two categories of Reserve Troops are covered by this designation:

- 1) Landwehr I: Trained men between 35 and 45.
- 2) Landwehr II: Untrained men between 35 and 45 (usually identical with Third Draft, q.v.).

ObdH Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres -
C in C of the Army (von Brauchitsch).

OB id.

OKH

Oberkommando des Heeres - Army High Command.

Its main components were:

- I. Army General Staff (Chief Gen. Obst. Halder).
- II. Army Personnel Div. (for officer replacements).
- III. Chief of Army Equipment (Chef der Heeresruestung - Ch H Ruest) and Commander of the Replacement Army (Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres - BdE), comprizing among others: General Army Office (Allgemeines Heeresamt - AHA), in charge of NCO and EM replacements; Army Ordnance Office (Waffenamt - WA).

The components of the Army General Staff were: OQu I, II, III, IV, V, Gen Qu and Central Branch (q.v.).

Attached to the Army General Staff were the Arms Chiefs (Waffengeneraele), who represented the respective arms and services and included the Generals on special assignment (zbV), e.g. for legal matters.

OKW

Oberkommando der Wehrmacht - Armed Forces High Command.

Chief: Gen. Obst., later Field Marshal Keitel, directly under Hitler. (Appears in Diary as "Keitel OKW", to distinguish him from his brother "Keitel (Personnel Div.)", head of OKH Personnel Div.)

Its operational Section was the Armed Forces Operations Staff (Wehrmachtsfuehrungsstab - WFSt), which constituted the main advisory body to Hitler on strategy and planning, and was headed by Gen. Obst. Jodl. Other Sections included the Armed Forces Central Office (Wehrmachtzentralamt - WZA), and the General Armed Forces Office (Allgemeines Wehrmachtamt - AWA), etc.; all PW matters were handled through these two Sections.

Political matters were the exclusive domain of OKW.

OQu I Oberquartiermeister I - First Senior Gen. Staff Officer: Operations, including the Operations Section (Op. Sec.).

OQu II Oberquartiermeister II - Second Senior Gen. Staff Officer: Field Army Training, including the Training Section (Tng. Sec.).

OQu III Oberquartiermeister III - Third Senior Gen. Staff Officer: Organization, including the Organization Section (Org. Sec.).

OQu IV Oberquartiermeister IV - Fourth Senior Gen. Staff Officer: Operational Intelligence, with Sections Foreign Armies East and Foreign Armies West.

OQu V Oberquartiermeister V - Fifth Senior Gen. Staff Officer: Military History.

Reichsbahn German State Railroad system.

Sofortfall Operation "Emergency", i.e. if enemy attacks first, all restrictions on offensive action in the West are automatically removed.

Staffel Smallest Air Force operational unit. T/O strength 9 aircraft.

z.b.V. For all tasks where the Table of Organization provided no permanent agencies, Officers z.b.V. (on special assignment) were appointed.

"Draft" is a translation of the German term "Welle".

First Draft : Active Divs.
Second Draft: Reserve Divs.
Third Draft : Limited Employment Divs., con-
sisted of age-groups 1900 - 1913
with short-term training.
Fourth Draft: Divs. with active cadre and per-
sonnel with short-term training.
Fifth and Sixth Draft (only in winter 1939-1940),
had Czech equipment.

The other abbreviations follow the standard U.S.
terminology (Rcn. Bn., Btry. etc.).

MILITARY DISTRICTS.

(Note: In order to avoid confusion with Corps combat sectors the conventional designation of Corps Area was dropped for Military District.)

- I East Prussia - Koenigsberg.
- II Mecklenburg and Pomerania - Stettin.
- III Brandenburg - Berlin.
- IV Saxony, Eastern Thuringia - Dresden.
- V Baden, Wuerttemberg, Alsace - Stuttgart.
- VI Northern Rhineland, Westfalia - Muenster.
- VII Southern Bavaria - Munich.
- VIII Silesia - Breslau.
- IX Hesse, Western Thuringia - Kassel.
- X Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Oldenburg,
Bremen - Hamburg.
- XI Hannover, Braunschweig, Anhalt - Hannover.
- XII Palatinate, Southern Rhineland, Lorraine -
Wiesbaden.
- XIII Northern Bavaria - Nuernberg.
- XIV Non-territorial - Magdeburg, for mot. Divs.
- XV Non-territorial - Jena, for light Divs.
- XVI Non-territorial - Berlin, for Armd. Divs.
- XVII Upper and Lower Austria - Vienna.
- XVIII Rest of Austria - Salzburg.
- XIX Non-territorial - Vienna, for Austrian Armd.
and light Divs.
- XX West Prussia - Danzig.
- XXI Wartheland - Posen.
Bohemia and Moravia.
Government-General.

Notes on flyleaf opposite page 1:

"Weseruebung" / According to Gen. Halder, this was the designation of a yearly Eng. Corps field exercise, usually named after river where held. /

Party Rally? / The question was, whether Party Rally would be held. /

Advance notice Reichsbahn 16/ August / 1900.