



Reflections On German Military Reform

S. J. Lewis

History has shown that introspection and self-examination can be critical to an army's training and preparation for war. In this article the author recounts the unique German experience of the winter of 1939-40, when the army reviewed its performance in Poland, conducted a massive reorganization and retraining program, and . . . prepared for war.

ON 3 OCTOBER 1939, General Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb,¹ the general responsible for defending Germany's western border during the Polish Campaign, met with General Walter von Brauchitsch,² commander in chief of the German army. The German armed forces had just overwhelmed Poland in a remarkably rapid and efficient campaign, and although England and France had declared war on Germany, the West Front had remained inactive.

Instead of rejoicing and congratulating one another, however, the two senior officers expressed foreboding. Von Leeb ob-

served that the dictator, Adolf Hitler, their supreme commander, was the only one who wanted war and that the German people looked forward to peace. Von Brauchitsch noted that apparently even Hermann Göring wanted peace, but it was not easy to dissuade the Führer. While von Brauchitsch could do little to affect German strategy, he could still ensure the professional military's emphasis on military work and efficiency.³

Williamson Murray has ably recounted how the German army critically examined its combat experiences after the Polish Campaign, realized that significant reforms were necessary and instituted one of the

largest (re)training programs in German military history. This was indeed a remarkable achievement in military institutional reform, but, as will become apparent, one that in all probability will be incapable of duplication.⁴

Although the Nazi dictatorship had forced many of the senior army generals into retirement and had given the outward impression of having wedded the army to the National Socialist state, the military elite's values and behavior patterns had not yet changed. The senior army leaders were the product of the efficiency oriented *Reichsheer*, which in 1939 and 1940 continued to examine military performance and organization with its traditional professional detachment. What transpired, therefore, was a unique event in Prusso-German military history—the brief flowering of *Weimar* military culture. The Nazi attacks upon the German army continued, culminating in the revolutionary changes of 1942 which, coupled with the dynamics of wartime change, fundamentally altered both the army and officer corps.

The Problems

German military records do indeed reflect serious internal criticism of the army's performance in the Polish Campaign. It would be a major error, however, to ignore the senior officer corps' overall satisfaction with the Field Army's performance, for the army and individual soldier had indeed fought well. The army's doctrine and fundamental structure remained sound. The army's specific problems involved several organizational flaws and poor unit performance in these critical areas: discipline, tactical errors, a general lethargy, camouflage, reconnaissance, security and fire discipline. These flaws were the result of the excessively rapid military expansion following 1935 and the consequential inexperience of the junior and mid-level officers. These flaws

could only be corrected by a major training effort.⁵

In peacetime the Army General Staff would have evaluated troop performance through its arms inspectorates (Infantry Inspector, Artillery Inspector and so forth),

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but those offices, upon mobilization, had been transferred to the commander of the Reserve Army. Von Brauchitsch consequently established similar arms inspectors for the Field Army that would be under his direct authority. As these new inspectorates became operational, they coordinated the retraining effort with Colonel Edgar Röhricht's⁶ Training Branch of the Army General Staff.⁷

Although the divisional experience reports constituted a major source for examining German army strengths and weaknesses in the Polish Campaign, personal visits and reports to the chief of the Army General Staff, Colonel General Franz Halder,⁸ by senior commanders and staff officers were probably of equal importance. On 10 September 1939, General Fedor von Bock,⁹ commander of Army Group North, informed Halder that the German infantry was not up to the quality of that of 1914. He reported that the troops did little more than follow their leaders, which explained the high officer casualties. The troops lacked impetuosity. Machineguns at the front often did not



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open fire at the enemy because they did not want to reveal their location.¹⁰ Over the following month a number of senior army officers informed Halder of the poor leadership in the corps of junior and mid-level officers. Most often, these reports emphasized the lack of discipline in the army.¹¹

The German General Staff issued its major policy statements on 13 and 15 October 1939. By that time, most of the divisional experience reports had not yet arrived from the field. Furthermore, the captains and majors who drafted such statements undoubtedly required some time to assemble data, draft the documents and have them approved.¹² In the first statement, von Brauchitsch followed the recommendations of the infantry branch and reorganized the smallest tactical units—companies, platoons and squads—throughout the entire army. Thereafter the squad consisted of nine men and one noncommissioned officer (NCO) equipped with an MG 34 machinegun.¹³ The second statement originated from the General Staff Training Branch, concluding that although the fundamental doctrine and structure of the army remained sound, the Polish Campaign had demonstrated serious flaws that required immediate attention.¹⁴

The General Staff also resolved that the motorized divisions required organizational reform. The Polish Campaign demonstrated that the light Mark I and Mark II tanks were obsolete. The motorized infantry divisions proved unwieldy, so the Army High Command (hereafter *OKH* [*Oberkommando des Heeres*]) directed each division to give up one infantry regiment (leaving each division with two infantry regiments). The panzer divisions used these disbanded regiments to increase the strength of their infantry regiments from three to four battalions. Before the war, *OKH* had already planned to upgrade the four light divisions into panzer divisions and therefore resolved to execute the reorganization in the winter following the campaign in Poland.¹⁵

The group of officers who created the German mechanized forces (officers in several offices of the General Staff) formed the light division as a mechanized reconnaissance force capable of scouting and screening the

front and flanks during a war of movement. Realistic training exercises demonstrated that they did not possess sufficient combat power and that the panzer and motorized infantry divisions could perform the same functions. Furthermore, creation of a third type of mechanized division violated the organizational principle of uniformity.¹⁶

A detailed examination of the massive (re)training effort the German army undertook from October 1939 until early May 1940 lies beyond the scope of this paper. It should be emphasized, however, that although German units trained as thoroughly as possible during that period, *OKH* viewed officer training as the crucial factor. Most reserve officers had not seen combat since 1918 and had received little training. Furthermore, the excessively rapid military expansion after 1935 prohibited serving officers from developing their professional skills. *OKH* entrusted company and battery training to each field army headquarters in December 1939. This program proved so successful that it led to the creation of permanent company commander schools.¹⁷ *OKH* assumed responsibility for the training of battalion and regimental commanders. The army placed an infantry division at Königsbrück at the disposal of this training program, where groups of 300 battalion commanders trained for four weeks.¹⁸

Rain, Training and Political Interference

One might well wonder why *OKH* waited until December to institute the Battalion Commanders School if officer training was of such importance. The answer is quite simple—politics. Given the opportunity, *OKH* would have remained on the defensive in the West throughout the winter: training, planning and building up its stores of weapons and ammunition. As soon as the Polish Campaign ended, however, Hitler made his first concerted effort to interfere in the military decision-making process, di-



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recting the German armed forces to invade France and Belgium as soon as possible.

It lies beyond the scope of this paper to address the complex, long and losing struggle of the army General Staff against the Nazi



The first major training dilemma for the German army was to carry out the reorganization of the infantry companies and then train the lieutenants and sergeants in leading their platoons and squads. This proved a major problem, for the divisions along the West Wall spent most of their time improving the still incomplete defensive positions. . . . The army's reserve divisions had an even more difficult task, fielding new units that were lacking experience and equipment.

dictatorship. Hitler's demand to invade Belgium and France kept large portions of the German army tied down along the western border until December, when it became obvious that bad weather would prohibit an offensive in mid winter.¹⁹

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On 24 October the VI Corps headquarters

resolved to use the suggested 14-day training schedule, but stipulated that it could be used for both training and resting troops. The 16th Infantry Division, on the other hand, directed that units would train both at the front and when in reserve. General Gotthard Heinrici directed his division to create special NCO courses within the companies and batteries in which the platoon leaders would also participate. The 16th Division's two-week training periods emphasized offensive action and used both terrain walks and discussions. Heinrici directed units on the line to develop individual military skills within the squad and platoon.²⁰

One battalion at a time underwent reorganization in late October and began to train the new squads and platoons. But, in the heavy October rains, the 16th Division

had difficulty executing its training program—lacking time, ammunition and training areas. The VI Corps headquarters attempted to establish a combat school in Bitburg, but could not secure the required weapons, equipment and ammunition. On 31 October the corps announced that the school would open at a later date and directed all individuals and units at the school to return to their original units.²¹

The army's reserve divisions had an even more difficult task, fielding new units that were lacking experience and equipment. On 2 November 1939, von Brauchitsch met with a number of commanders in Düsseldorf, where he inquired about the condition of the divisions. General Ewald von Kleist, commander of XXII Corps, reported that his two reserve divisions lacked combat experience and weapons and were consequently suited only for defensive employment. Three days later XXII Corps finally directed its divisions to carry out the reorganization of their infantry companies, even though the required weaponry had not arrived. By the end of the month, heavy rains ended any possibility of large-scale military operations, swelling the rivers, inundating low areas and rendering large-scale troop movement impossible.

On 12 December, OKH foresaw the opportunity for the Field Army to undertake a more systematic training program. Von Brauchitsch directed Army Groups A and B to use the quiet period leading up to December 27 to train as thoroughly as possible, focusing on exercises from reinforced battalion up to division level. Again, the major purpose was to train the mid-level and junior officers, and would be administered by corps headquarters by selected commanders and instructional personnel. OKH directed the combat infantry of the motorized and non-motorized divisions to continue their fire exercises using the new company organization.²³ The Sixth Army on the following day

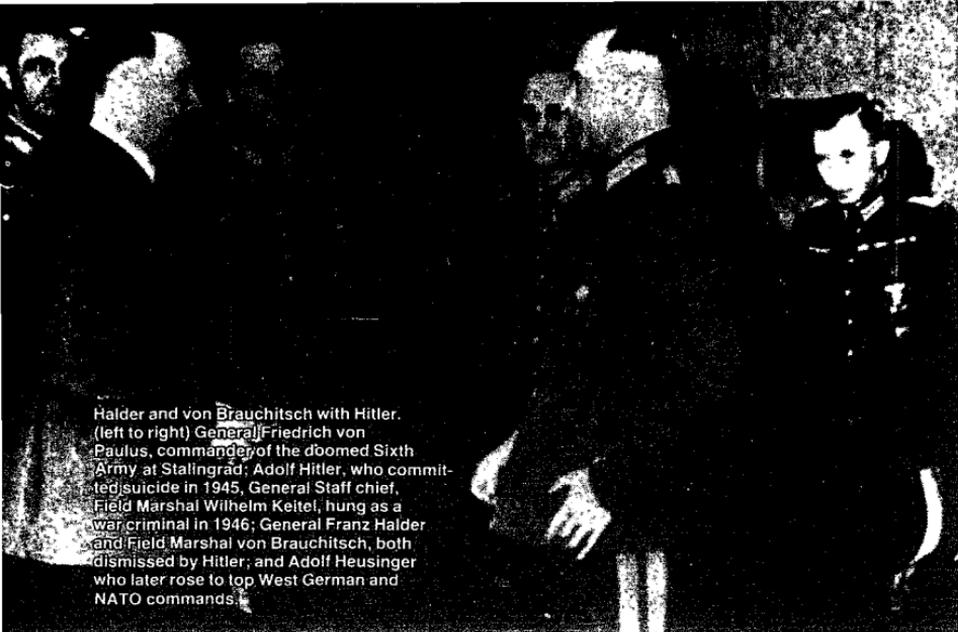


A platoon of Mark I tanks during Army maneuvers in 1939.

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doubled the number of men authorized to go on leave—from 5 to 10 percent of its total force.²⁴

By December, it became possible for several Field Army divisions to use army training areas, where they came under the authority of the Reserve Army. The railways, however, could not be used, so most divisions trained in their bivouac areas. The



Halder and von Brauchitsch with Hitler. (left to right) General Friedrich von Paulus, commander of the doomed Sixth Army at Stalingrad; Adolf Hitler, who committed suicide in 1945; General Staff chief, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, hung as a war criminal in 1946; General Franz Halder and Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, both dismissed by Hitler; and Adolf Heusinger who later rose to top West German and NATO commands.

National Archives

One must of course ask if such a massive retraining effort was really necessary. Was this not simply a delaying tactic. . . Von Brauchitsch [had] demonstrated a definite reluctance to launch a winter offensive. . . In this instance, however, the stated need to improve military performance, in all probability, resulted from the senior officers' real desire to qualitatively improve the army. The unit afteraction reports and the verbal reports received by Halder and von Brauchitsch displayed a surprising uniformity.

10th Panzer Division, for example, remained in the Limburg area, while eight of its subordinate units conducted training programs.²⁵

The severe weather in November and December provided the army little chance to carry out Hitler's bizarre demand for a winter offensive in the West. In early January, however, an event transpired that significantly altered the situation, when an aircraft carrying a *Luftwaffe* staff officer became lost in bad weather and landed in Belgium. The officer, contrary to all orders, carried a copy of the planned German advance through Belgium and northern

France and he was unable to destroy all the papers. This compromise of the German operational plan along with the bad weather led to an immediate cancellation of the planned attack and provided the German High Command the respite necessary to adopt the "Manstein Plan." It also freed the German army to undertake more detailed training efforts.²⁶

On 19 January 1940, the training branch of the Army General Staff freed the Field Army to undertake more extensive training. The previous month, as mentioned above, *OKH* created a battalion commanders' course in Saxony. *OKH* created a

similar program for officers of the mechanized units at the Wuensdorf Tank School. In addition, *OKH* transferred six divisions from the West Front to separate army training grounds for a three-week period.²⁷

On paper the German army still acted as if it were about to carry out military operations in the West, postponing the planned attack every seven to 10 days. However, with entire divisions (including the mechanized divisions) along with a significant number of its battalion commanders east of the Rhine, an immediate offensive was out of the question. Until the May 1940 operation in the West, the German army returned to training, planning and administering—the tasks with which it was most comfortable.

Reflections

One must of course ask if such a massive retraining effort was really necessary. Was this not simply a delaying tactic, another attempt of the military elite to interfere with the political decision-making process? The aforementioned conversation between von Leeb and von Brauchitsch demonstrated a definite reluctance to launch a winter offensive. Furthermore, a number of senior German officers were indeed linked to an anti-Hitler conspiracy.²⁸ That, along with the ubiquitous German officers' diaries, stating that Colonel X or General Y did not like the idea of a Western offensive,²⁹ would provide sufficient evidence that "the evil empire" of the German officer corps had struck again.

In this instance, however, the stated need to improve military performance, in all probability, resulted from the senior officers' real desire to qualitatively improve the army. The unit after-action reports and the verbal reports received by Halder and von Brauchitsch displayed a surprising uniformity. It is also apparent that several of the organizational flaws had been suspected beforehand and hence received particular

scrutiny. In addition, there is a general tendency for modern armies to experience difficulties in their first combat action—the natural dichotomy between peacetime training

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and the reality of war.³⁰ The German army's difficulties in the Polish Campaign were not therefore atypical. What was atypical, however, was the willingness within the officer corps to identify specific problems.

Such self-criticism is indeed unique, for in large modern organizations there is a tendency to regard as suspect anyone who delivers bad tidings.³¹ The relative absence of this trait in the 1939 German army officer corps resulted from the training received in the efficiency-oriented *Reichsheer*. The following summer after the victory over the Western Allies, *OKH* sent out another questionnaire asking for an evaluation of army performance. In light of the army's spectacular success, one would expect relatively few criticisms. To the contrary, the mid-level and senior officers tended to minimize the success and point out areas in which the army required improvement.³²

The German army reforms following the 1939 Polish Campaign resulted from several factors:

- Even though it was essentially a reliable instrument, the Polish Campaign did demonstrate that it required improvements in both organization and training.

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◦ The senior and mid-level officers who so critically observed the army's performance were the product of a particular military culture—the *Reichsheer* of Weimar Germany. The "efficiency mania" of the *Reichsheer* engendered in that small number of professional officers both the ability and the willingness to identify flaws and correct them (for example, the performance of their normal military work, for which they received their efficiency reports and promotions).³³

◦ The army's senior officers, since the emergence of the Prussian General Staff, had become accustomed to relative independence in internal army affairs. In October and November of 1939, the senior and mid-level officers continued to perform their mil-

itary work as if the army's political relationship to the head of state had not changed.

For the modern military decision maker, this one particular German example should give pause for serious reflection. On the one hand, it represents a remarkable example of a highly skilled professional group, small in number, performing military work rapidly and efficiently. That effort no doubt played a significant role in the German army's successful performance in the subsequent campaign in the West. Very few armies, however, will in all probability be allowed seven months to train, reorganize and plan for subsequent operations after their initial combat experience.

The unique military culture of other national armies, furthermore, would mitigate against critical examination of their own policies. And finally, one must consider the political ramifications of internal criticism. Very few armies have been able to achieve the degree of independence in internal affairs as the old Prusso-German army. It maintained only a semblance of that control through 1941. The military reforms following the Polish Campaign should therefore be remembered as a flowering of the unique *Weimar* military culture, rather than as a template for future action. MR

NOTES

1 Wilhelm Leeb was born in 1876 in Passau, served as an officer in the 4th Bavarian Artillery Regiment and subsequently attended the Bavaria War Academy. The King of Bavaria ennobled Leeb for his distinguished conduct during World War I. In the *Reichsheer*, von Leeb usually commanded Bavarian units. He retired in 1938 but returned to command an army group from 1939 until early 1942. He saw no further service after January 1942. Allied authorities imprisoned him from May 1945 until December 1948. He died on 29 April 1956. Wolf Kelig, *Das Deutsche Heer, 1939-1945 Die Generalität des Heeres* in 2 *Weltkrieg*, vol. 3, (Bad Nauheim: Podzun Verlag, 1957), and von Leeb, *Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb, Tagebuchaufzeichnungen und Lagebeurteilungen aus zwei Weltkriegen*, ed. Georg Meyer, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1976).

2 Walter von Brauchitsch was born in Berlin on 4 October 1881, to a distinguished military family. After serving as a cadet, he became an officer in the 3d Prussian Guard Grenadier Regiment. He attained a reputation as a capable staff officer during the war and rose steadily in the *Reichsheer*, becoming inspector of artillery in 1932, commander of *Wehrkreis I* in 1935, and army commander in chief in 1938. He suffered a rather severe heart attack on 10 November 1941, and Hitler forced him to retire on 19 December 1941. The British incarcerated von Brauchitsch in Hamburg, where he died on 18 October 1948. Kelig, 43.

3 Von Leeb, *Tagebuchaufzeichnungen* diary entry, 3 October 1939

4 Williamson Murray, *The German Response to Victory in Poland Armed Forces and Society* (Winter 1981) 285-98

5 S. J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions German Army Infantry Policy 1918-1941* (New York: Praeger 1985) 96-98 and *Diary of Fedor von Bock*, entries of 8 and 27 September 1939, National Archives Microfilm

6 Colonel (later General) Edgar Röhrich was born on 18 June 1892, in Liebau, Silesia. He entered the 7th Prussian Grenadier Regiment in 1912 but resigned to study law at the University of Breslau. In August 1914 he enlisted in the 157th Infantry Regiment as a lieutenant. He remained in the *Reichsheer* obtained his general staff training, served as operations officer to the IV Corps, and later commanded the 34th Infantry Regiment. He served as chief of the General Staff Training Branch from October 1939 to late October 1940, when he became chief of staff of the First Army. He subsequently commanded the 95th Infantry Division in late 1942 and the XII and XX Corps in 1943. In 1944 and 1945, he commanded the LIX Corps. Following the war he retired to Halbborn and died in 1967. Kelig, 274, and Edgar Röhrich, *Pflicht und Gewissen Erinnerung eines deutschen Generals 1932 bis 1944* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1965)

7 Lewis

8 General Franz Halder was born in Würzburg on 30 June 1884, the son of a Bavarian general. He served in the 3d Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment, attended the Bavarian War Academy and served with distinction as a staff of-

ficer in World War I on Crown Prince Ruprecht's Army Group Staff in the *Reichsheer* he rose to command the Bavarian military district. He served as army chief of staff from August 1938 until September 1942. The Gestapo arrested Haider following the 20 July 1944 attempt on Hitler's life. The US Army liberated Haider in May 1945, after which he served as a witness for the prosecution at the Nuremberg trials. From June 1946 until June 1961 he served as chief consultant of the US Army's Historical Liaison Group, for which in November 1961, he received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award. He retired to Aschau/Chiemgau, where he died on 2 April 1972. *Heimdarne Countess Schall Raabour, Aufstand und Gehorsam* (Wiesbaden, Limbes Verlag, 1972), and *Kellig*, 117.

9 General Fedor von Bock was born on 3 December 1880 in Kustrin. To a non-land-owning military family. After attending the cadet school, he entered the Prussian 5th Guard Foot Regiment. He distinguished himself in World War I as a staff officer, first in the Guard Corps and later on the staff of the German Crown Prince. He rose to become one of the senior *Reichsheer* officers and commanded an army group until 1942, when he retired to northern Germany. He died on 4 May 1945, in an army hospital in Oldenburg/Holstein from wounds suffered during a Royal Air Force strafing attack. Lewis, 90.

10 Franz Halder, *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, vol. 1, ed by Hans Adolf Jacobsen and Alfred Philipp, (Stuttgart, W Kohlhammer Verlag, 1962), entry for 24 September 1939, 84 (hereafter Halder *KTB*), see also entries in the Fedor von Bock Diary for 8, 10 and 22 September 1939, 27—45. On 14 September 1939, while the campaign was still going on, Halder and von Brauchschitz met to discuss the army's performance, agreeing upon several specific requirements (for instance the need to protect the MG 34 from jamming and the need for better reconnaissance). See Halder *KTB*, vol. 1, 75. See also the visits to Halder by F. W. von Chappuis, 5 October, and of Generals von Rundstedt and Blaskowitz, 10 October 1939, in Lewis, 90.

12 Michael Geyer found it somewhat shocking and perfidious that the German army allowed a captain (Wilhelm Geyer) to draft its 1917 manual for defense and 1918 manual for attack. This, however, is a rather common phenomenon in Western military culture: with able young staff officers drafting policy statements and manuals in both peacetime and war. In some Western armies, this function even devolves to senior sergeants, who conveniently store obsolete manuals, borrowing venerable sentences and paragraphs for those awkward moments when the muse needs prodding. See Michael Geyer, *German Strategy in the Age of Machine Warfare, 1914-1945*. *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 539—42.

13 *Der ObdH GenStH. Gen d Inf Nr 17/39*, 13 October 1939. *Neugliederung der Infanterie*, signed von Brauchschitz, and Lewis, 82—98.

14 *OKH, GenStH. OQuAusb Abt (Ia) Nr 410/39*, 15 October 1939. *Taktische Erfahrungen in polnischen Feldzug*, and *ObdH Ausb Abt (Ia) Nr 400/39* geheim, 13 October 1939. *Ausbildung des Feldheeres*, signed von Brauchschitz. For a discussion of these items, see Murray and Lewis.

15 *Wehrkreiscommando IX, Abt Ia/Org Az A 122 Nr 7551/39* geh 18 October 1939, *Umgliederung von mt Verbänden*, Burkart Mueller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-1945*, vol. 2. *Die Divisionszüge 1939-1941* (Darmstadt: E S Mittler & Sohn, 1966), 33.

16 Letter from General Mueller-Hillebrand (Retired) to the author, 8 December 1980, and Ench von Manstein, *Aus Einem Soldatenleben 1887-1939* (Bonn Athenäum-Verlag, 1958), 240—50.

17 *ObdH, GenStH, Ausb Abt Nr 999/39* geh, 22 December 1939, signed by von Brauchschitz, and Röhrichl, *OKH Projekt Nr 7 Army High Commands—Duties of Army Training Branch*. Foreign Military Studies (hereafter *FMS*), no. P-041 g, 10—12. For one example of response to this program see *Generalkommando XIX A K Abt Ia Nr 394/39* geh, 29 December 1939, *Ausbildung von Komp u Batlr Fuhrern*.

18 Röhrichl, "Duties of Army Training Branch", 12—14, see also the following folder in the records of the 164th Infantry Division, Ia, *KTB mit Anlagen und Ic TB*.

19 See Harold C. Deutsch, *The Conspiracy Against Hitler in the Twilight War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1968), and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Fall Gelb Der Kampf um den deutschen Operationsplan zur Westoffensive 1940* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1947).

20 Gottfried Henrici was born on Christmas Day, 1886 in Gumbinnen, East Prussia and in 1905, after having passed his *Abitur*, entered the 95th (Thuningen) Infantry Regiment, receiving his commission in 1906. He distinguished himself in World War I, remained in the *Reichsheer*, where he received his general staff training. Between troop assignments he served twice in the defense ministry, assuming command of the 16th Division on 1 October 1937. He commanded a corps in the West in 1940 and on the East Front until January 1942, when he assumed command of the 4th Army. In late 1944 he commanded the 1st Panzer Army and Army Group Weichsel in March and April of 1945. Following the war he lived in Waiblingen, Württemberg, where he died in 1971. *Kellig*, 127, and *Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch 1969* (Munich: Schöb Verlag, 1968), 3. *Generalkommando VI A K, Abt Ia Korpsbefehl Nr 49*, 24 October 1939, and (fragment) 16. *Divisionstap Nr 22/39* geh, 23 October 1939. *Ausbildung des Feldheeres*, signed Henrici.

21 (Fragment) 16. *Division, Abt Ia Nr 34/39*, 24 October 1939. *Richtlinien für die Erziehung und Ausbildung*, which also decreed that formal drill was to be limited, 16. *Division Abt Ia, Tagesmeldung am 29. Oktober 1939*. *Infanterie-Regiment 79, Abt Ia, Tagesmeldung am 27. Oktober 1939*. *Generalkommando VI A K, Korpsbefehl Nr 51*, 31 October 1939, and *Infanterie-Regiment Nr 64, Abt Ia, Tagesmeldung*, 1 November 1939.

22 *Generalkommando XXII A K, KTB Nr 2*, entries for 2, 5 and 30 November and 1 December 1939. General der Kavallerie Ewald von Kleist (Field Marshal on 1 February 1943) was born on 8 August 1881 in Braunschweig. In September 1901 he entered Field Artillery Regiment 3 as an officer candidate, received his commission, and in 1910, began the three-year course at the *Kriegsakademie*. In World War I, he served both in the East and West, eventually as operations officer of the Guard Cavalry Division. He advanced steadily in the *Reichsheer*, holding both staff and command positions, eventually becoming commander of the VIII Corps. In February 1938, like some 20 other senior generals, he was forced into retirement. Upon mobilization, however, he returned to the army. In World War II he proved to be one of the most able German commanders, commanding in succession the 1st Panzer Group (later 1st Panzer Army), Army Group A and Army Group South Ukraine. On 31 March 1944, Hitler forced both von Kleist and Field Marshal von Manstein into retirement. Von Kleist saw no further military service. He died on 16 October 1954 in Vladimir, Russia, after years of incarceration. Waithe K. Nahrung, *Generalfeldmarschall Ewald von Kleist, Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch 1974* (Munich: Schild Verlag, 1973), 51—60.

23 *Generalkommando XXII A K, KTB Nr 2* entry for 13 December 1939. 24. *ObdH GenStH/Ausb Abt (Ia) Nr 900/39*, 12 December 1939. *Ausbildung des Feldheeres*.

25 *Ibid.*, and 10. *Panzer-Division Abt Ia Nr 506/39* geh, 14 December 1939, *Ausbildung*, signed Schaal.

26 Hans Meier-Weicker, *Aufzeichnungen eines Generalstabsoffiziers 1939-1942* (Freiburg: Verlag Rombach 1982), 47—50. Jean Vanwe'kenhuyzen, *L'armée du 10 Janvier 1940*, *Revue D'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale*, no 12 (October 1953), 33—54 and Jacobsen, *Fall Gelb*, 93—101.

27 *OKH GenStH/Ausb Abt (Ib) Nr 142/40* g, 19 January 1940, *Ausbildung von Battalions- und Abteilungscommandeuren der Schnellen Truppen*, and *OKH GenStH/Ausb Abt (Ia) Nr 135/40* g, 13 January 1940, *Ausbildung des Feldheeres*.

28 *Deutsch*.

29 For example, see Meier-Weicker 53.

30 See *America's First Battles 1776-1965*, ed Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft (Lawrence: KS University of Kansas Press, 1986), and Guy Chapman, *Why France Fell: The Defeat of the French Army in 1940* (New York: Holt Rinehardt and Winston, 1968).

31 Murray.

32 Lewis, 105—14.

33 David N. Spires, *Images and Reality: The Making of the German Officer, 1921-1933* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), and Adolf Reincke, *Das Reichsheer 1921-1934: Ziele, Methoden der Ausbildung und Erziehung sowie der Dienstgestaltung*, vol. 32, *Studien zur Militärwissenschaft und Konfliktforschung*, ed Werner Hahweg, (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1986).

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