NO SENSE IN DWELLING ON THE PAST?
THE FATE OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE'S
GERMAN AIR FORCE MONOGRAPH PROJECT, 1952-1969

Thesis

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By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the German Air Force Monograph Project, also known as the Karlsruhe Project, through which the United States Air Force employed former Luftwaffe generals to record the history of World War II from the German perspective. Historians have explored parallel programs in the U.S. Army and Navy, but the Karlsruhe Project has received little attention; however, the Air Force monographs have proven useful to historians because of their high quality. This paper attributes the Karlsruhe monographs' strength as works of history primarily to the Air Force's limited interest in them, which insulated the writers from outside pressure to produce studies of immediate utility to the military. Whereas policy needs drove the Army and Navy programs and often caused them to search for convenient tactical "lessons" in German history, the German Air Force Monograph Project was effectively autonomous, but this was a mixed blessing. Chronically undermanned and inadequately funded, the project ended with most studies still unfinished. The Air Force ignored the monographs and failed to benefit from the experience of the Luftwaffe. This paper illustrates the inherent tensions in writing official military history and utilizes the Karlsruhe Project as a lense to examine problems plaguing the Air Force during the early Cold War. Still, cooperative historical work proved to be an inexpensive and unexpected way of cementing the critical West German-American military alliance, and both air forces came to value this aspect of the project more than the historical studies it produced.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

AFB	Air Force Base
Bundesluftwaffe/marine	West German Air Force/Navy
Bundeswehr	West German Armed Forces
AFHRA	Air Force Historical Research Agency
AU	Air University
CINC	Commander-in-Chief
CSAF	Chief of Staff of the Air Force
FMSB	Foreign Military Studies Branch
GAF	German Air Force
HD	Historical Division
Luftwaffe	German Air Force during the Nazi regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NHT	Naval Historical Team, Bremerhaven
OCMH	Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army
RSI	Research Studies Institute, Air University
USA	United States Army
USAF	United States Air Force
USAFE	United States Air Forces in Europe

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS (continued)

USAREUR	United States Army Europe
USSBS	United States Strategic Bombing Survey
Wehrmacht	German armed forces during the Nazi era

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

American

Angell, Joseph W., Jr.	Assistant Chief, USAF Historical Division, Karlsruhe Phase (exact dates of employment unknown)
Fletcher, Harry R.	Editor, GAF Monograph Project, 1963-1969
Hammer, Wendell A.	Project Officer, GAF Monograph Project, 1953-1957
Kennedy, Edwin P.	Editor, GAF Monograph Project, 1955-1961
Maurer, Maurer phase*	Assistant Chief, USAF Historical Division, Maxwell
Momyer, William W.	Deputy Commandant for Evaluation, AWC, 1950-1953 Deputy Commander for Air Operations and Commander of 7th Air Force in Vietnam, 1966-1968 Commander, TAC, 1968-1973
Nye, Wilbur S.	Chief, USAREUR Historical Division
Simpson, Albert F.	Chief, USAF Historical Division, 1951-1969

German

Deichmann, Paul	Control Officer, GAF Monograph Project, 1952-1958
Kammhuber, Josef	Chief of Staff, Bundesluftwaffe, 1956-1962 Contributor to GAF Monograph Project, 1953-1956
Plocher, Hermann	Deputy Chief of Staff, Bundesluftwaffe, 1957-1958 Asst. Control Officer, GAF Monograph Project, 1953-1957
Suchenwirth, Richard	German language editor and contributor, GAF Monograph Project, 1953-1958

COMPARISON OF AMERICAN AND GERMAN GENERAL OFFICER RANKS

The different but seemingly similar names of the general officer ranks of the United States and Germany during World War II are a potential source of confusion. Only German air officer ranks are detailed below because of the focus of this work, including *General der Flieger* (General of the Flyers) and *General der Flakartillerie* (General of the Anti-Aircraft Artillery).¹ As the Karlsruhe monographs themselves used the original German ranks, this study does as well, but Wehrmacht (i.e. World War II German military) ranks are italicized for clarity.

As a result of one of the many North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) standardization agreements, the West German Armed Forces or Bundeswehr added the rank of Brigadegeneral (one-star general) to make rank comparison between allies more straightforward. In the text West German officers are simply described in American rank (i.e. a Bundesluftwaffe two-star, Generalleutnant is referred to as Lieutenant General).

American Army/Air Force	German Air Force (1935-1945)	West German Air Force
Five-star General of the Air Force	<i>Generalfeldmarschall</i>	n/a
General (Gen.)	<i>Generaloberst</i>	General
Lieutenant General (Lt. Gen.)	<i>General der Flieger</i>	Generalleutnant
Major General (Maj. Gen.)	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	Generalmajor
Brigadier General (Brig. Gen.)	<i>Generalmajor</i>	Brigadegeneral

Table 1. Comparison of American and German General Officer Ranks

¹ Alaric Searle, *Wehrmacht Generals, West German Society, and the Debate on Rearmament, 1949-1959* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), Xvii-xviii.

INTRODUCTION

At precisely noon on March 6, 1944, the German Air Force launched its most concentrated attack on American bombers of World War II. Attacking the four-engine bombers head-on as they plodded towards Berlin, the first wave of 107 single-seat German fighters ripped through the American defensive boxes. Ten bombers, each with ten crew members aboard, fell from the sky within seconds. Navigational errors had placed that American unit, the 13th Combat Wing, in an exposed position with little fighter escort. Facing one of the Luftwaffe's best combat commanders, Captain Rolf Hermichen, the hapless 13th would lose a total of twenty-five B-17s by day's end. The Americans, with nearly 1,400 aircraft aloft including bombers and escorts, bludgeoned their way through to the German capital but suffered the heaviest numerical loss of the war with sixty-nine bombers destroyed, a 10.2 percent loss rate.²

Skillful ground coordination enabled the Luftwaffe to achieve an especially high concentration of interceptors and thereby inflict heavy casualties. On that day at I. *Jagdkorps* headquarters in occupied Holland, *Generalmajor* Josef "Beppo" Schmid quickly recognized that the Americans' target was Berlin and successfully directed fighters from neighboring commands to meet the Americans.³ Unlike most senior

² Richard Muller and Donald Caldwell, *The Luftwaffe Over Germany: Defense of the Reich* (St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing Co., 2007), 169-170.

³ *Ibid.*, 168, 296. Most famous as the inept chief of Luftwaffe intelligence during the Battle of Britain, Schmid later commanded the *Hermann Göring* Luftwaffe armored division in North Africa. He ended the war at the rank of *Generalleutnant* in command of all air units supporting the German army in the West.

Luftwaffe officers, Schmid never became a pilot, but he proved to be a capable commander of them as he orchestrated the air defense of Germany proper in the pivotal period between September 1943 and December 1944. But even when Fortress Europe's integrated network of radar stations, communications nodes, and command centers worked as intended, the Luftwaffe losses were not sustainable. On March 6 the Germans lost sixty-four aircraft, 19.2 percent of those credited with sorties, a blow this force could scarcely afford. Some resorted to acts of sheer desperation. One German pilot that day, his ammunition exhausted, used his plane's wing to sheer off a piece of an American bomber's tail. He survived, but only two American gunners escaped their spinning aircraft.⁴

The bloody events of March 6, 1944 – perhaps Schmid's finest moment as a commander – provided an ironic backdrop to the ceremony surrounding his internment some twelve years later. *Generalfeldmarschall* Albert Kesselring delivered a heartfelt eulogy, mentioning the handful of old comrades present. One notably absent officer was Josef Kammhuber, the architect of Germany's nighttime air defenses that had ravaged Royal Air Force Bomber Command through 1944. Kammhuber was in England at the time of Schmid's funeral in 1956, negotiating with Germany's new ally as the chief of the reborn West German Air Force. In his place, he sent to the funeral an honor guard of six officers as representatives of the West German Armed Forces, a military that was still highly controversial both at home and abroad.⁵

⁴ Ibid., 171.

⁵ Col. Wendell Hammer to Joe Angell, 12 September 1956, Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA), K113.161-3 v.1 (1952-1962).

Kesselring – a convicted war criminal who had been released ostensibly on grounds of poor health – went on to state the “respect and affection” held for the deceased by his final employer: the United States Air Force. Since 1953, Schmid had been a participant in the German Air Force (GAF) Monograph Project, an effort to record the history of the air war from the German perspective for the benefit of the American military. The writers and editors of this Karlsruhe Project (named after the West German city housing the main office) were almost all German, with only a handful of members of the U.S. Air Force Historical Division supervising. Kesselring was one of the few surviving senior Luftwaffe officers who did not write for the project, but he did it a great service by convincing other veterans to work for the Americans. Schmid, by comparison, had been the primary author of two drafted studies of the Luftwaffe’s air war against the Western Allies, neither of which were completed after his death. Still, out of good nature and in recognition of the importance of building strong bonds with America’s new NATO ally, the project officer, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Wendell Hammer, placed two small wreaths on Schmid’s casket. Before the funeral, Schmid’s widow had invited Hammer and his wife, along with several Luftwaffe contributors to the project, to spend an hour in her home. Hammer provided her enough additional funds to defray the cost of the funeral. She accepted it only as pay for her husband’s efforts and partial compensation for his diaries, which the general had donated to the massive document collection assembled for the project.⁶ American members of the Karlsruhe Project would continue to visit her long after her husband’s death.⁷

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Edwin Kennedy, Jr. to Angell, 2 May 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

How did this show of respect, characterized by the Assistant Chief of the Historical Division as an “extraordinary occasion,” occur so soon after one of the most destructive campaigns in the history of warfare?⁸ This thesis tells the story of the German Air Force Monograph Project for the first time, revealing the crucial part it played in the transformation of the West German-American military relationship from one of victor and vanquished into one of partnership in the defense of Western Europe. Further, it explores why the U.S. Air Force came to value the Karlsruhe Project more for the diplomatic opportunities it presented than for the historical studies it produced.

World War II was a seminal event in the history of the United States and its Air Force in particular, which became an independent service two years after the war ended. It produced the largest documentary trail of any conflict to date, which was not wholly beneficial to [surviving] military thinkers attempting to cope in the postwar defense environment. The abundance of material meant that, as historian Frank Futrell put it, “few persons – military or civilian – would have the time or the incentive to master it.” According to Bernard Brodie, this information overload contributed to “the divorcement of doctrine from any military experience other than that which has been intensely personal with the proponents.” In a lecture at the Air War College in September 1951, U.S. Air Force Major General Orville Anderson put the predicament more bluntly: “If you will only let experience be your teacher, you can have any damn lesson you want... Progress in the development of military science and strategy,” Anderson said, “is vitally dependent upon the soundness of the evaluations of past battle experience and upon the

⁸ Angell to Hammer, 27 September 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

boldness, inspiration and depth of the projected thinking which creates the solution for the future.”⁹

Total Allied victory provided the American military with an unprecedented chance to appraise the war from the perspective of its former enemy owing to the incarceration of thousands of German general officers. This made available to the American military a whole corps of what one historian has accurately called “captive historians.”¹⁰ Beginning within months of the German surrender, the American government employed former high-ranking German officers to write studies of a historical nature, usually with the Germans working on topics of which they had at least some firsthand knowledge. Postwar foreign historical projects were a unique chance to learn what had happened on the ‘other side of the hill’ and to make available to the American military the vast body of knowledge of the German military. The American Army, Navy, and Air Force each sponsored their own projects focused on aspects of the war of interest to them, and work on the German studies continued in one form or another for nearly twenty-five years.

The U.S. Army’s German Military Historical Program (1945-1961) was by far the most prolific of the postwar projects, producing approximately two thousand studies, hundreds of which were translated into English. Recent scholarship has revealed the powerful influence that the German Report Series had on both postwar historiography and the U.S. Army. James Wood has revealed how these studies have thoroughly permeated Western histories of the war. Motivated by staunch anticommunism and “a

⁹ All cited in Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the USAF, 1907-1960*, vol. 1, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1989), 146-147.

¹⁰ James Wood, “Captive Historians, Captivated Audience: The German Military History Program, 1945-1961,” *The Journal of Military History* 69, no. 1 (January 2005): 123-147.

desire to overcome the tarnished reputation of the Wehrmacht,” the German authors produced a large body of influential and often self-serving accounts that, like many Wehrmacht memoirs, sought to separate the army from the Nazi state and Hitler’s failed strategy.¹¹ Kevin Soutor, searching for the origins of the Army’s more aggressive mobile defense doctrine that emerged in late 1949, has identified the German reports as the central factor. The Army even asked its German generals to critique existing American doctrine. Although the Army program began as a more conventional historical effort, it gradually shifted focus to the Soviet-German War, providing sought-after information on the America’s presumed adversary. The historical division disseminated these highly-focused studies across the Army, and officers frequently discussed them in professional journals.¹²

The U.S. Navy, working with the British Royal Navy, attempted to utilize German veterans and archival material to reconstruct wartime events immediately after the German surrender. While the impact of these studies is less pronounced, it is clear that the Americans soon realized the potential value of their ‘historians’ as the Cold War escalated. In Bremerhaven the Navy established the Naval Historical Team (1949-1952) within the office of the Director of Naval Intelligence. After quickly completing historical studies of interest to the Navy, it evolved into a secret intelligence organization that provided German impressions of Soviet activities and capabilities. Douglas Peifer and David Snyder have emphasized the role the team played in West German naval rearmament, a facet of the program that was likely more important than any study it

¹¹ Ibid., 125.

¹² Kevin Soutor, “To Stem the Red Tide: The German Report Series and Its Effect on American Defense Doctrine, 1948-1954,” *Journal of Military History* 57 (October 1993).

produced. In the immediate postwar period, military activities in Germany were met with unease if not outright prohibition. The Naval Historical Team therefore provided a crucial backchannel for German veterans, naval rearmament planners, and American officials.¹³

Chapter I of this work details these older programs as well as the Air Force's short-lived Von Rohden Project, which foundered in 1947 due to the lack of Luftwaffe documentary records and the poor health of its namesake and leader. Beginning in 1952, the Karlsruhe Project combined various elements of its predecessors. Paid for by the Air Force but inspired by and virtually conducted by the Army for its first two years, the Karlsruhe Project managed to follow a distinct path beginning with the Air Force's selection of a drastically reduced number of monographs. Chapter II examines in detail the course of the Karlsruhe Project, which encountered similar obstacles to the Von Rohden Project. Because the Air Force never provided adequate resources or personnel, significant delays occurred and, in the end, the Air Force published only twelve of forty planned studies.

The Air Force began to value the project for reasons other than historical work, mirroring the evolution of the Naval Historical Team. Chapter III explores how the Air Force project officer in Karlsruhe essentially became a military attaché during West German rearmament, much to the surprise of his superiors at the Historical Division. The project became a conduit for officer education textbooks and U.S. Air Force doctrine, and

¹³ Douglas C. Peifer, *The Three German Navies: Dissolution, Transition, and New Beginnings, 1945-1960* (Tallahassee, FL: University Press of FL, 2002). See also David R. Snyder, "Arming the 'Bundesmarine': The United States and the Build Up of the German Federal Navy, 1950-1960," *Journal of Military History* 66 (April 2002). Christian Greiner, "Operational History (German) Section und Naval Historical Team" in *Militärgeschichte: Probleme – Thesen – Wege*, ed. Manfred Messerschmidt (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1982). Because the NHT is depicted in less detail than the German Military History Program and is often addressed only tangentially, the author of the present work has chosen to compare the Air Force Monograph Project primarily to the Army project.

the cooperative enterprise heavily influenced several authors who left early to become the senior leaders of the new West German Air Force, or Bundesluftwaffe. Nearly every former Luftwaffe general still living in the West participated in some capacity, and German veterans began speaking at U.S. Air Force staff schools as part of this exchange. This was especially significant because, as James Corum has shown, the Bundesluftwaffe explicitly modeled itself after the U.S. Air Force and relied totally on the latter's technical expertise, aircraft, and training establishment for at least a decade.¹⁴

After five and a half years, the U.S. Air Force closed its office in Karlsruhe after completing all drafts in summer 1958. Translation and editing of the monographs continued in the United States for another eleven years, but interest waned partly because it was no longer a cooperative effort with a vital NATO ally. Chapter IV places the Karlsruhe Project in the context of the wider Air Force during the early Cold War to explain why it was so starkly different from its contemporary projects in terms of its scale, its impact within the military, and the character of the studies it produced. Briefly, the 1950s was a period of dramatic change in the technology of air warfare, Air Force dominance of the defense budget, and doctrinal complacency and stagnation within the service.¹⁵ This did not incentivize studying the past for the Air Force as it did for the Army in particular. Yet, the Air Force was not totally disinterested in history. Although monographs on the Soviet Union made up only one-sixth of the monographs requested, they comprised half of those the Air Force completed.

¹⁴ James Corum, "Building a New Luftwaffe: The United States Air Force and Bundeswehr Planning for Rearmament, 1950-1960," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 27, issue 1 (2004).

¹⁵ Several scholars have explored USAF doctrinal stagnation during the Cold War. See John Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals: The Problem of Air Force Leadership* (Maxwell, AFB: Air University Press, 1997) and Caroline Ziemke, "In the Shadow of the Giant: USAF Tactical Air Command in the Era of Strategic Bombing" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1989).

Paradoxically, the Air Force's limited interest both strangled and freed the Karlsruhe Project. On the one hand, given the challenges that had doomed the early Von Rohden Project, the Air Force should have provided the resources to better meet the inevitable obstacles. Instead, the service initiated a second historical project with the expectation that it could quickly and cheaply produce high quality studies; perennial delays and eventually cancellation resulted. On the other, the Air Force's neglect insulated the project from the constant pressure to produce expedient works, which had driven the older historical programs towards a narrower, "lessons learned" approach. The Karlsruhe Project created many sound histories, although many others are mere technical reports. Those that reached publication were arguably the best possible accounts given the limitations of the source material and the writers.

Interest in the monographs did not suddenly materialize when they reached publication some two decades after the end of World War II. The Air Force never made official use of its German studies and instead published them publically. Students of history both inside and outside the military have used the monographs, which are excellent references to the massive Luftwaffe document collection assembled between 1952 and 1958. It may have appeared at the time that technological advances had altered the character of air warfare, but this was not the case. Participants in the Karlsruhe Project understood this. In his memoir the senior German staffer, *General der Flieger* Paul Deichmann, recalls asking Air Force Colonel Hammer, the project officer, early on "why a great airpower, which in the end decisively defeated Germany, is particularly interested in our air force." Hammer replied that, "one must know how the German air force, with its 'handful of weapons and aircraft,' was able to resist the world's airpowers

for years.”¹⁶ Others frequently expressed their belief that more could be learned from the defeat of an air force than from its victory. Outside the project offices, however, there was less enthusiasm. The Karlsruhe monographs may have contributed to historians’ understanding of the Luftwaffe, but, as Frank Futrell might have predicted, from the standpoint of the U.S. Air Force they generally faded into the background noise of the mass of World War II historiography.

¹⁶ “Als ich 1952 die Leitung des Studienprojekts übernahm, fragte ich den verantwortlichen amerikanischen Offizier Colonel Hammer, weshalb sich eine große Luftmacht, die letzten Endes den Krieg gegen Deutschland entschieden hatte, in so besonderem Maße für unsere Luftwaffe interessiere. Seine Antwort lautete sinngemäß, man müsse wissen, wie die deutsche Luftwaffe mit ihrer “Handvoll Waffen und Flugzeuge” imstande gewesen war, über Jahre hinaus den Luftmächten der Welt zu widerstehen. Meine Antwort, in erster Linie habe das die Tapferkeit des deutschen Soldaten ermöglicht, fand die volle Zustimmung des Amerikaners.” Paul Deichmann, *Der Chef im Hintergrund: Ein Leben als Soldat von der preussischen Armee bis zur Bundeswehr* (Hamburg, Germany: Stalling, 1979), 10. Deichmann’s continues: “My answer, that it was, first and foremost, the courage of the German soldier that made this possible, found the full agreement of the American.”

CHAPTER I: AN OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN WORLD WAR II OFFICIAL MILITARY HISTORY PROJECTS

The coming of World War II prompted the dramatic expansion of official history programs in the American military, as evidenced by the mammoth series produced by each branch of the American armed forces after the war. Military history had long played a role in American officer education, particularly at the Army's Infantry and Cavalry School and the Naval War College, but as Allan Millett has observed it was not until the Progressive period that officers realized that "historical analysis could pay political dividends." While none of the services produced comprehensive accounts of the Great War, by 1920 the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps each had their own historical offices in Washington, D.C. to support their respective services.¹⁷ During the 1930s, the services attempted to explore, through case studies and historically-informed analyses, the essence of airpower, seapower, amphibious warfare, and the "principles of war."¹⁸ In March 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt, himself an avid student of naval history, ordered all government agencies to prepare an "accurate and objective account" of their activities in World War II, and the services dispatched teams of civilians and military members around the world to collect documents and write histories.

¹⁷ Allan R. Millett, "American Military History: Clio and Mars as 'Pards'," in *Military History and the Military Profession*, eds. D. A. Charters et al. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 7.

¹⁸ One excellent essay on this phenomenon within the USMC is Karen L. Corbett's "Marine Corps Amphibious Doctrine - The Gallipoli Connection," USMC Command and Staff College, (1990); available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1990/CKL.htm>, accessed 11 April 2009.

The resulting official histories were massive and are generally well-regarded: Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison's fifteen-volume *History of U.S. Naval Operations in World War II*; the seven-volume *Army Air Forces in World War II*, edited by Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate; and the eighty-volume *U.S. Army in World War II* Series, better known as the "Green Books." This last project remains the largest collaborative historical undertaking in American history.¹⁹ In "An Improbable Success Story," former Director of Naval History Ronald H. Spector explains the acceptance of these works by both academia and the military, concluding that the official military historians of the mid-twentieth century are the "product of a fortunate series of accidents: the fact of total victory in World War II, the desire of high level readers to inform the public about the services' 'achievements,' and the needs and demands of the services themselves, all coinciding with the maturing of academic history and the willingness of academic historians to lend their expertise to the project."²⁰ Then-Lieutenant General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold's directive to his historians embarking on the Craven and Cate project underscores Spector's conclusion: "we want the public now and after the war to understand what airpower really is; we want credit to go where credit is due."²¹

More than any other postwar program, the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (USSBS) is connected with the U.S. Air Force and its ancestor service and, therefore, cannot escape brief mention. The U.S. government's official review of a bombing campaign that still cultivates controversy, the USSBS not surprisingly has faced

¹⁹ Ronald Spector, "An Improbable Success Story: Official Military Histories in the Twentieth Century" *The Public Historian* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 26.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

²¹ Arnold quoted in Thomas P. Ofcansky, "The History of the United States Air Force History Program," in *Public History: An Introduction*, ed. B. J. Howe and Emory Kemp (Malabar, FL: Krieger, 1986), 311.

criticism on the grounds of supposed bias, inaccuracy, and the immorality and ineffectiveness of the techniques investigated. It is beyond the scope and focus of the present study to evaluate these claims, but a few points are worth highlighting. The survey was a massive effort, established in late 1944 by Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and at its peak it employed 300 civilians and 850 military personnel. Headed by prominent businessmen and economists with high-ranking military officers from the various services in advisory roles, it produced over 300 supporting reports and three major summaries, one each for the defeat of Germany and Japan and the atomic attacks. The survey published its first summary conclusions on the European Theater before the Japanese surrender in the hope that its findings might prove useful. Many of the researchers followed closely behind the advancing Allied armies, scrambling to collect documents and interview prominent persons who could attest to the effects of strategic bombing on the German war effort. The war in the Pacific ended within weeks of the publication of the German report, and the survey completed the rest of its work in 1946.²²

Just as total Allied victory allowed USSBS investigators to scour enemy territory in 1945, it also allowed the United States to launch unprecedented foreign military history projects. The incarceration of so many high-ranking enemy combatants and the capture of masses of enemy records gave the American military a corps of potential

²² The first scholarly treatment of the Survey was David MacIssac's *Strategic Bombing in World War II: The Story of the USSBS* (New York: Garland, 1976), which focuses less on strategic bombing and more on the organizational history and the evolving mission of the survey, to include its justification of an independent Air Force. Numerous shorter pieces have followed, many of which emphasize the Survey's inaccuracies or its illumination of and effects on interservice disputes both during and after the war. Although the survey helped the Air Force gain independence, John McMullen demonstrates that the new Air Force paid little heed to the survey's "lessons" when conducting war planning in the late 1940s and writing its doctrine in the 1950s. "The USSBS and Air Force Doctrine," (Master's thesis, SAAS, 2001). Available online at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/saas/mcmullen.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2009.

historians and the documentary records to support them. The ultimate outcome of the American historical programs differed, but they followed similar courses in their early stages. Brief interrogations of prisoners gave way to more extended interviews. Later, the Americans encouraged certain key former officers to write historical studies, with the captors assigning topics and providing documentary sources as best they could. At the same time, the Americans grouped selected prisoners together into writing teams.

The German historical projects were not unique. In October 1945 the headquarters of the American Far East Command ordered the production of operational monographs by former officers of the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy. The resulting program continued until 1960 under the supervision of the U.S. Army's military history section and produced over two hundred monographs of varying quality.²³

The focus of the remainder of this section will be on those German projects begun in the 1940s by the United States Army, Navy, and Army Air Forces. The courses and receptions of the three projects on a small scale reflect the larger challenges facing the services and illustrate different views of the utility of history for dealing with the future. Overshadowed by the USSBS, the atomic bomb, and rapidly changing technology, the Army Air Corps's Von Rohden Project failed primarily because of practical considerations – the lack of documentary material and the death of its namesake and leader. It ended the same month that the Air Force achieved independence. The U.S. Navy at first commissioned brief historical studies but began directing the German admirals to write historically-informed analyses when relations with the Soviet Union

²³ Guide to the Japanese Monographs prepared by the U.S. Army's Office of the Chief of Military History (OCMH), available online at <http://ibiblio.org/pha/monos/>, accessed 4 April 2009.

deteriorated. This quasi-intelligence and planning outfit also proved crucial as a backchannel between the Navy and its unofficial German counterpart during the sensitive period of German rearmament. Finally, the Army's project shifted focus several times over its sixteen years; it concluded by producing extremely specific "how to" manuals for Army officers hungry for any information on the Soviet Union. Of the postwar projects, the Army's was by far the largest and had the greatest influence on its sponsor service. Several of the German contributors assisted in revising Army doctrine during the early 1950s.

The Von Rohden Project (1945-1947) – A First Draft of Luftwaffe History

The Von Rohden Project, also known as Project "R", lasted from May 1945 until September 1947 and attempted to capitalize on the wartime work of the Luftwaffe High Command's historical section, *Abteilung 8*. American forces captured that organization's chief, *Generalmajor* Hans Detleff Herhudt von Rohden, and members of his team in early May 1945. Interrogators first tried to gain insights through extensive debriefings. At Rohden's urging, U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe historian Dr. Bruce Hopper allowed the former Rohden team to work together to compose a summary history of the Luftwaffe. The manuscript's working title, *European Contributions to the History of*

World War II: The German Air War, 1939/45,²⁴ suggests that the German writers viewed the project as but one contribution to the international history of the war.²⁵

Unfortunately, scarcity of sources hampered progress from the start. Rohden's team had spent years assembling documents, but he informed the Americans that 250,000 files, some dating back as far as 1870, had been burned at Vorderriss in Bavaria in May 1945. The assistant director of those archives afterwards committed suicide, but the director was able to save several important cases. Those documents that had survived the final months of the war were spread across Europe in various archives, warehouses, and aircraft hangars, and in any event they were usually unsorted and often classified by the Allies.²⁶ For Rohden Project participants, who included such famous Luftwaffe figures as *General der Jagdflieger* Adolf Galland and *Generalmajor* Hubertus Hitschhold, their own recollections were initially their main sources of information. Together with Rohden, the permanent team comprised Colonel Werner Baumbach, Rohden's former assistant Col. Otto Kriesche, and Lt. Col. Friedrich Greffath, the director of Luftwaffe archives.

Hopes remained high for The Von Rohden Project in spite of difficulties in obtaining source material, with one American Air Corps major remarking that the project "may furnish future historians with valuable help not only in assessing the effectiveness

²⁵"The Von Rohden Collection," *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal* VI (August 1949): 45-49, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962). "Europäische Beiträge zur Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkriegs: Der Deutsche Luftkrieg, 1939/45."

²⁶ Harry R. Fletcher, "The Use of Captured German and Related Records by the United States Air Force" in *Captured German and Related Records: A National Archives Conference: Papers and Proceedings of the Conference on Captured German and Related Records, November 12-13, 1968*, ed. Robert Wolfe. (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1974), 83-86.

of the German air effort, but will also be a guide for future theorists of air-warfare.”²⁷

Documents requested from England began to trickle into Rohden’s prisoner of war camp in Germany in early 1946. Though the German writers completed two studies on Luftwaffe operations in Russia and the Mediterranean that May, they also complained that frequent relocation to different camps, inadequate office supplies, and lack of access to captured Luftwaffe documents were slowing their progress. A summer 1947 progress report, possibly written by Rohden himself, expressed frustration: “It would be a further relief for us if we had the opportunity to go walking alone for an hour or two, announcing our departure and return, and promising again to make no attempt to escape.”²⁸

These and other obstacles notwithstanding, the team produced ten more studies during the first half of 1947, for a total of over 1,500 pages of German text. The Rohden reports are now grouped in fifteen notebooks and include brief treatments of operations in every theater. However, there was no translator assigned to the project at the time, and two-thirds of the manuscripts produced remain in German form only. This translation problem, a result of lack of time and personnel in the responsible intelligence section of the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, also contributed to a lack of editing and oversight. The German participants demonstrated appreciation that the victors were allowing them to contribute to the history of the Luftwaffe so soon after their defeat, but they desired more detailed direction and greater intellectual interchange between themselves and representatives of the U.S. military and historical community. Owing to these difficulties and the illness of Rohden himself, His project ended abruptly in 1947.

²⁷ Stephan H. Stackpole, “History of the German Air Force,” 10 July 1945, AFHRA, 519.0611-1 USSTAFE.

²⁸ “Development of Project R,” summer 1947, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962), [emphasis in the original].

The summary of the studies upon their presentation to the Library of Congress in 1949 concludes that:

With its undercurrent of tragedy, relieved by rumblings of bombast and half-humorous flashes of hindsight, the manuscript, should it ever be published, seems calculated to appeal to the general reader in style and mood and, with its careful documentation and wealth of operational detail, to command the interest of the serious-minded scholar and professional soldier.²⁹

However, the final Von Rohden studies were so broad and cursory that their greatest value is as a window into the thinking of the writers. Far more important than the studies themselves is the document collection assembled for the Von Rohden Project, which includes wartime studies written by *Abteilung 8*, war journals, Luftwaffe directives spanning all levels of command, and much more. The total collection includes 212 cubic feet of largely unsorted German records, copies of which were preserved at the National Archives when the original collection returned to Germany in 1967.³⁰ Five years after The Von Rohden Project ended, the United States again employed Colonel Greffath, the Luftwaffe archivist, on the German Air Force Monograph Project to exploit the Rohden document collection.

²⁹ "The Von Rohden Collection," AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

³⁰ Fletcher, 85-86.

The Naval Historical Team, Bremerhaven (1949-1952)

Of the three historical programs, the Naval Historical Team (NHT) became the most heavily involved in contemporary operational planning and the production of intelligence reports for its American sponsors. The NHT's early activities reflected its name, but it soon evolved into a naval intelligence outfit in the years before West Germany formed the Bundesmarine. It also provided opportunities for former Kriegsmarine officers to associate at a time when veterans groups were outlawed. As was the case with the Army's history program, the U.S. Navy began commissioning studies from its POWs soon after the war ended. In *The Three German Navies*, Douglas Peifer's study of the transition from the Kriegsmarine into the East and West German navies, he describes the close association between the British and American naval history writing programs. Having captured the entire German naval archives in April 1945, the two allies agreed to share the documents and use them for the purposes of intelligence gathering, historical writing, and evidence discovery for war crimes trials.³¹

Karl Dönitz "set the example" for other Kriegsmarine officers, dictating a study of the naval war while imprisoned.³² Several other officers followed suit but without the benefit of any documentary record. The Allies soon began allowing a handful of German officers to travel to England to exploit the seized Kriegsmarine materials held there. The

³¹ Peifer, 107-108.

³² Ibid., 107.

American Army and Navy funded additional studies in 1947 and 1948 on subjects pertinent to both services like the investigations of various amphibious operations. Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge, who would go on to become the Bundesmarine's first Chief of Naval Operations, was one of the key contributors and was happy to work for the Americans in exchange for extra food.

According to Peifer, the formation of the NHT in 1948 marked a departure from earlier programs. The tension of the Berlin Blockade was the impetus for its establishment by American naval intelligence. In the summer of 1948 the Chief of Naval Intelligence in Germany convinced Ruge and Konrad Patzig, the former head of the Kriegsmarine Personnel division, to recruit former colleagues for the NHT. Although most were loath to cooperate with their former enemy because either they or their former commanders would soon be subject to war crimes prosecution, many eventually came around thanks to the personal appeals of their comrades and the looming Soviet threat. The initial round of studies produced after the NHT's first official meeting at a Bremerhaven villa in April 1949 remained primarily historical in nature, but soon the American intelligence officers began feeding the Germans topics such as "How best to deny Soviet submarine access to the North Sea," which were clearly geared towards present issues facing the U.S. Navy.³³

The team comprised eight Germans, including five former admirals, a Luftwaffe liaison, and a naval engineer, but they also forwarded requests to subject matter experts outside the group. One of the first tasks assigned the NHT by the U.S. Navy was identifying potential amphibious landing sites on the Baltic and North Seas, as the United

³³ Ibid., 112.

States placed such operations prominently in their early war plans.³⁴ In 1953 the group collaborated with members of the CIA-backed Gehlen Organization in a war game.³⁵ That same year the chief of an important East German naval construction project deserted to the West and presented detailed plans to the NHT. The NHT also functioned as a go-between for the U.S. Navy and the German maritime labor forces that the Americans contracted to clean up harbors and disarm mines.³⁶

The NHT was one of the most influential groups in the formation of the Bundesmarine. Peifer argues that the NHT, various minesweeping forces, and other intelligence organizations never amounted to the shadow navy that the People's Sea Police did in East Germany, but these groups saw the first postwar associations of Kriegsmarine veterans, a key first step. The NHT, because of the ties it fostered within that community, became powerful in the rearmament debates, providing advice and support to the naval officials of the West German government. Finally, in the preparations for the establishment of the Bundesmarine, the West German government sought the counsel of the NHT regarding personnel and equipment policy, and the U.S. Navy received timely inside information on developments through the team. Its first chief knew West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer personally, and the team members became crucial behind the scenes "operators" in the German defense establishment, in essence picking the members of and setting the agenda for the naval branch of the *Amt Blank*, the precursor to Bonn's Ministry of Defense.³⁷ NHT members even drafted the

³⁴ Snyder, 481.

³⁵ Peifer, 107-113.

³⁶ Ibid., 150-153.

³⁷ Ibid.: 162, 172-173, 176.

proposals for German naval contributions to the European Defense Community, proposals that the original force structure of the Bundesmarine mirrored closely.

The U.S. Army's German Military History Program (1945-1961)

The U.S. Army's German Military History Program, which began in 1945, produced the greatest volume of documents and had the most significant historiographical and military impact of the American foreign historical projects. The Army's Historical Division had no plans to employ former German officers in May 1945, but early interrogations revealed the potential value of the German prisoners. Of his first interview with the former Deputy Chief of Operations at the Wehrmacht High Command, *General der Artillerie* Walter Warlimont, American Major Kenneth Hechler wrote, "My eyes widened as I saw for the first time what had taken place 'on the other side of the hill.' Each response opened up a new vista...Hitler alone felt we would land in Normandy...Rommel was not on hand on [D-Day] because it was his wife's birthday." Hechler was "overjoyed" with the results, with the proceedings becoming "a real conversation rather than an interrogation."³⁸ More valuable interviews followed, but Helmut Heitman, a South African who was later chief of the Foreign Military Studies Branch and a translator for the German Air Force Monograph Project, characterized the system as "haphazard"

³⁸ Kenneth W. Hechler, "The Enemy Side of the Hill: 1945 Background on Interrogation of German Commanders," in *World War II German Military Studies*, ed. Donald Detwiler (New York: Garland, 1979), 32.

and “unsatisfactory.” In 1946 the effort received its own branch, and writers focused on whichever battle or campaign Army historians in the United States were researching for the Army’s official history.³⁹

Historian James Wood has called the resulting effort “absolutely unparalleled in the annals of military history.”⁴⁰ By the time the project ended in 1961, the German authors, many of whom had begun researching and writing while still prisoners of war but later became civilian employees, had produced about two hundred thousand pages of manuscript histories for the U.S. Army, much of which was never translated into English. In its first few years, the program complemented the Army’s official history of its own operations, *The U.S. Army in World War II Series*, providing narrative accounts of the war against the Western Allies from the German perspective. Initially American officers conducted open-ended interviews with high-ranking POWs without the aid of good maps or other supporting materials, limiting the value of the early interrogations. Months later, the interviewers came ready with batteries of specific issues to address and questionnaires; the improved results helped garner support for an expanded project.

Both official and independent historians have made extensive use of these histories and interviews ever since, coloring the Western historiography of World War II. That said, Wood cautions against blind acceptance of these accounts: “One often gets the impression from these manuscripts that high-ranking German prisoners of war were taking advantage of an opportunity, offered to them by their captors, to let off steam after

³⁹ Helmut Heitman, “German generals helped us to write war story,” *The Cape Argus* (Capetown, South Africa), 9 April 1960, magazine section, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Wood, 124.

a crushing defeat and commit their many frustrations to paper”⁴¹ With war crimes trials as a backdrop, many accounts not surprisingly foisted nearly all the blame for defeat and atrocities on Hitler. In winter 1947 at prisoner camps in Garmisch and Neustadt, the focus of the program shifted towards assembling “lessons learned” accounts of combat against the Red Army as the Historical Division began to coordinate its activities with War Department intelligence needs. With East-West tensions increasing, former German officers had an impressive and unique body of knowledge from years of experience on the Soviet front. The monographs on particular operations or tactics were sometimes rife with Nazi racial ideology, but they nevertheless provided a model, indeed the only model, of an army facing a seemingly unstoppable Soviet opponent in Europe – a proposition with which the United States was faced in 1947.⁴²

A dispute in August 1947 over the Army’s continued support of the program highlights the newfound utility of the German writers. Then Army Chief of Staff General Dwight Eisenhower ordered that the project be continued but with the focus shifted from historical work to the study of topics that were of interest to various Army staffs and schools. In July 1948 the Army gave the program new life, creating a German Control Group under *Generaloberst* Franz Halder that would translate American requests for information and select the most suitable writers to address them. Halder and most of the men working with him were happy to assist the United States in what he termed “its historic mission of combating bolshevism.”⁴³ During the following decade the Control Group continued to produce accounts of the Eastern Front, with the Berlin Blockade

⁴¹ Ibid., 136.

⁴² Ibid., 136-138.

⁴³ Ibid., 143.

prompting a deluge of Army requests for documents that would be useful in preparing the Americans for war against the Soviet Union. *Principles and Experiences of Position Warfare and Retrograde Movements* and *Planned attack against fortified defense positions north of Kursk by the 6th Infantry Division, July 5-8, 1943*, are representative of the later studies in their specificity and clear utility for American Army officers.⁴⁴

More important for the purpose of comparison with the Karlsruhe Project, the German Military History Program heavily influenced U.S. Army doctrinal development. The earliest American war plans foresaw that, in the event of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, American numerical inferiority would make the defense of Germany impossible. American forces would have withdrawn to Great Britain and possibly the Iberian, Italian, and Jutland peninsulas. Following a strategic nuclear air campaign against the Soviet Union, allied forces would have imposed peace on their own terms. In 1948 the United States revised these plans as a result of the revival of Western European economies and the ratification of the Brussels Treaty. Abandoning Western Europe at the first rattle of the Soviet saber was no longer politically acceptable; instead, American forces would defend the Rhine River line and attempt to slow the Soviet advance.⁴⁵

For U.S. Army leaders seeking a historical example to serve as a basis for training, education, and doctrine, the German historical studies were a perfect fit. As late as 1949, Army defensive doctrine was little changed from that of World War II and emphasized positional defense based on static infantry divisions and heavy artillery support; however, the new doctrine for armored forces that appeared in December 1949

⁴⁴ Examples are coded D-133 and P-149/66 in the following series: Donald Detwiler ed., *World War II German Military Studies* (New York: Garland, 1979).

⁴⁵ Soutor, 660-662.

stressed the role of that arm in aggressive, mobile defense. Kevin Soutor shows that there was nothing in the American Army's recent history that presaged this shift and argues that it resulted primarily from the studies produced by the Germans under the leadership of Halder. Before the report series was formally published, the Army's Historical Division distributed fifty-six studies between 1947 and 1949 within the service and included them on officer reading lists. According to Soutor, the reports served as both the partial intellectual genesis for the revised armored doctrine and as a demonstration of its effectiveness, because the techniques FM 17-100 proposed closely mirrored German methods on the Eastern Front. A light defending force on the border would allow the enemy to achieve a breakthrough, and the friendly armored force, held in reserve, would counterattack against the enemy thrust when it stopped to regroup. Still, in 1949 the mobile defense concept far outpaced the Army's capacity to mount such a defense – at the time it had only one armored division and little mechanized transport for its infantry.⁴⁶

The German writers provided other lessons for the interested Americans. Soviet attacks rarely succumbed to a single defensive method so a mix of offensive and defensive measures was ideal. The armored force was strongest if held back from the front because mobility was one of its key advantages. Last ditch holdouts, exemplified by Hitler's "stand fast" orders, that aimed to tie down enemy forces were counterproductive in situations of vast numerical inferiority. Finally, Soutor writes that the studies, although often tinged with racist opinions of the Russian soldier, also conveyed a grudging respect

⁴⁶ Ibid., 669-673.

for Soviet generalship because the Red Army had indeed achieved what they outlined in their doctrine.

Frequent mentions of the German reports in contemporary U.S. Army journals reveal the eagerness with which American officers accepted these lessons. As new studies emerged, Army officers would often review them and compare German and American methods. The studies seemed highly applicable to the contemporary American predicament: the Army would be vastly outnumbered against a Red Army whose technology, methods, and leaders were mostly unchanged since 1945. Moreover, the Germans had delayed the Red Army's entry into German territory for years, a welcome and needed example for an American Army in search of inspiration. Soutor points out that American officers overlooked the fact that the German army had had many more divisions deployed to hold off the Soviets than the Western allies ever had during the Cold War. In sum, he characterizes the American use of the German studies as an exercise in "selective thinking."⁴⁷

The clearest demonstration of the impact of the program was the Army's contracting of Halder and six other former German General Staff officers to critically analyze its current operational doctrine, FM 100-5. According to Soutor, the Germans' harsh critique of the U.S. Army's doctrine in 1953 led to its wholesale revision the following year, when the Army formally embraced both the mobile defense concept and armor as the dominant force on the battlefield. The ideas put forth by the German officers also had notable psychological and bureaucratic components. The German mode of mobile defensive warfare, although ultimately unsuccessful, was not entirely passive in

⁴⁷ Ibid., 679-680.

nature and depended on the counterattack, which appealed to the offensive spirit of any good military officer. Finally, the historical program demonstrated that the Army could do more than merely retreat under the Air Force's nuclear umbrella, a key contribution in an age when the nuclear-armed Air Force garnered the vast majority of funding.⁴⁸

Soutor concludes that, "Mobile defense, inspired by German ideas, prevailed in military literature but lost in the field."⁴⁹ Funding and allocation within the Army and in the Department of Defense changed little as a result of the German studies. The Army did not acquire more tanks to support its new doctrine; instead, in 1954, the same year that its revised doctrine appeared, it fielded its first nuclear units. The historical program may have demonstrated that a well-trained and well-equipped army could hold off the massive Red Army on the potential battlefields of Central Europe, but in the nuclear age the U.S. Army's possession of its own atomic arsenal was its surest path to survival within the Pentagon. After these events and its brief courtship with the mobile defense concept, the Army moved towards a defense anchored on the use of tactical nuclear weapons, and the German Military History Program wound down, finally concluding in 1961.

Although those intimately involved with the German Military History Program and the revision of Army doctrine may have been dismayed by the failure to shift towards mobile defense, Soutor suggests that the Army's conservatism may have been fortunate. He makes clear that "Adopting lessons from the series was an exercise in selective thinking" aimed at showing that a defense against the Red Army could hold, and

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 682.

therefore its supposed lessons for the U.S. Army in the 1950s were often unrealistic.⁵⁰ All along the U.S. Army had glossed over the fact that its forces in Europe and those slated for deployment there were tiny compared to the Wehrmacht of 1941 and 1942, which were, not incidentally, the years of heaviest focus by the program. There was far less coverage of the later years of the war, when a mobile defense had proven either impossible to mount or inadequate to stop the Red Army.⁵¹

Whatever the drawbacks of or falsehoods propagated by the German Military History Program, the resulting mountain of reports powerfully demonstrate that the Army believed it could benefit from investigating the history of World War II from the enemy's perspective. Through the Naval Historical Team, former German admirals also authored studies with the goal of informing policy; simultaneously, these veterans took some of the first crucial steps towards West German naval rearmament. The scope of and support for both programs expanded over time as their focus shifted decidedly towards the Soviet Union. In contrast, the Army Air Force allowed the Von Rohden Project to collapse under the weight of logistical and practical obstacles after it had produced only a few studies. September 1947 not only witnessed the end of the Von Rohden Project but also saw the Air Force become independent, prompting a restructuring of the service's history program. Within five years, the new Air Force Historical Division would recognize the value of the Army's German Military History Program and attempt to benefit from its experience and infrastructure. As before, the Air Force's thriftiness and more limited conception of the value of history eventually constrained the scope and impact of its

⁵⁰ Ibid., 679.

⁵¹ Ibid., 679-681. Soutor enumerates several other key shortcomings of U.S. Army doctrine based on the German model.

studies. The GAF Monograph Project, in contrast its sister service's programs, suffered chronically from shrinking resources and diminishing interest in the historical works it produced.

CHAPTER II: CHRONOLOGY OF THE KARLSRUHE PROJECT (1952-1969)

When the Air Force approved the Karlsruhe Project in late 1952, the service's Historical Division and its parent command, Air University, had unrealistic expectations concerning nearly every aspect of the enterprise. Ignoring the failure of the Von Rohden Project, they believed that it was possible to quickly and cheaply produce studies of interest to the Air Force by outsourcing research, composition, and editing to the Army. To be fair, the U.S. Army Europe Historical Division offered as much, but the late start of the program immediately presented several obstacles that dramatically slowed research and writing. Whereas the older historical projects began when it was possible to simply provide captured German officers extra rations in exchange for writing, by 1952 most former Luftwaffe generals were free men who had found employment in the private sector. An alternative was to pay contributors to write in their spare time, but this, coupled with the poor health of many veterans, slowed composition. With the war growing more distant, the memories of participants faded, and, to their credit, the project staff maintained reasonably high standards of scholarship by insisting that the generals document their sources. Unfortunately, locating reliable source material on the Luftwaffe again proved a formidable hurdle, especially because the British Air Ministry, which held many surviving records and was writing its own history of the Luftwaffe, was often reluctant to cooperate.

On the other hand, the Karlsruhe Project would have accomplished nothing if it were not for the goodwill and expertise of the United States Army Europe (USAREUR) Historical Division. But even though it relied entirely on the Army's well-established historical program for translation and editorial services for its first two years, the Karlsruhe Project developed along very different lines. Eschewing the Army's sponsorship of thousands of studies on a multitude of German units and topics, the Air Force Historical Division polled different offices at Air University and requested just forty monographs. Only six were directly related to the Soviet Union, but these immediately received priority and made up half of the monographs eventually published. The Air Force's reluctance to allot additional resources to the Karlsruhe Project caused its scope and goals to contract as multiple challenges arose. This forced the prioritization of topics as work fell behind schedule. The project had completed no studies by the time the last Air Force historian left Karlsruhe in 1958. From then until 1969, the project had only one employee, a single editor working on some forty book-length rough drafts. Not surprisingly, the editor completed only twelve monographs, and the Historical Division decided to leave the remaining drafts as reference works to the massive Karlsruhe document collection, the assembly of which was one of the few unqualified successes of the project.

Stepchild of the Army's History Program

The general plan for the [German Air Force Monograph] project...is satisfactory and feasible. However, in view of the almost total lack of prior work in the particular field of studies to be undertaken, the fact that the basic documents required for research are in the hands of the English, the constantly improving economic situation in Germany, and the many unpredictable effects which the ratification of the pending contract between the United States and Germany may have upon our German studies program...we cannot give any ironclad guarantees.⁵²

- Acting Chief, U.S. Army Europe Historical Division, November 18, 1952

The U.S. Army's German Military History Program was both the inspiration for and a vital supporter of its sister service's second attempt at a history of the Luftwaffe in World War II. The obstacles foreseen by the Army cited above turned out to be quite accurate, which should come as no surprise given that the Army had more than five years of experience in such work when the German Air Force Monograph Project began. In fall 1952, Joseph Angell, the Assistant to the Chief of the Air Force Historical Division, visited USAREUR Headquarters in Karlsruhe, West Germany, and saw firsthand the Army's historical operation at its peak.⁵³ Colonel W. S. Nye, the Chief of the USAREUR Historical Division, touted the accomplishments of his team and the value of the studies produced thus far. Returning to Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB) in Alabama (the home of

⁵² USAREUR Historical Division (HD) Message to Chief of U.S. Army Military History, 18 November 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

⁵³ Paul Deichmann, *German Air Force Operations in Support of the Army* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), vii-viii.

the Air Force Historical Division, Air University, and the service's staff schools), Angell relayed to his superiors Nye's exciting message – not only had the German studies been very useful to the Army, but if the Air Force were to start its own project, USAREUR Historical Division informally promised to do most of the leg work for the Air Force at minimal cost.

By 1952 the Army's mature and well-supported German program had already completed over a thousand manuscripts. Years of refinements and steady Army support had led to the formation of a large and experienced staff of writers, translators, and editors at USAREUR's Foreign Military Studies Branch (FMSB). In recognition of this "unique organization for the preparation of historical studies and projects of the German war effort," Major General Orlando Ward, the Army's Chief of Military History, encouraged the USAREUR Historical Division to put its resources at the disposal of agencies outside the Army when requested. Ward outlined the general principles governing the FMSB's cooperation with outside agencies. The requesting agency would reimburse the Army for author and consultant fees and costs related to the project. It would also need to provide the Army with a project officer and outlines of the desired studies.⁵⁴ In preparatory discussions during fall 1952, the Air Force agreed to all of these stipulations.

Within weeks of Angell's initial visit to Karlsruhe, the Air Force's Historical Division and Air University formally sought permission to accept the Army's generous offer. In support of the project, the commander of Air University stressed the value of the

⁵⁴ OCMH draft memo to USAREUR HD, original date not given. A copy of this internal Army document was most likely given to Joe Angell on his 1952 visit to USAREUR HD and was dated received by USAF HD on 13 October 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

Army's experience, "administrative organization, facilities, and access to former German key military personnel" and emphasized the necessity of not duplicating effort by creating a parallel Air Force organization.⁵⁵ On November 26, 1952, the Office of the Air Force Chief of Staff approved the German Air Force Monograph Project and earmarked \$50,000 in unexpended Deutsch Marks, the amount and form requested by the Army in exchange for producing forty operational studies and monographs.⁵⁶ The quick approval of the project resulted partly from the belief that it represented a fleeting opportunity given the changing nature of the West German military and political landscape, which soon might make German personnel and documents unavailable.⁵⁷

The tentative deal worked out between the Army and Air Force Historical Divisions was an ad hoc arrangement from the beginning, with both sides clearly aware that the projected cost of the Air Force project depended on multiple variables. No one would have been surprised had the project gone slightly over budget or fallen slightly behind schedule, but as it happened none of Colonel Nye's key assumptions from October 1952 were borne out. In its first three years, the project's cost more than tripled, even though it did not produce a single finished study for the Air Force during that period. Nye had made his initial offer in good faith, but the Air Force did not understand the factors underlying the Army's calculations, in particular the expectation that wages in Germany would remain relatively stable. The costs of American historical projects operating in Germany soon rose precipitously thanks to West Germany's "Economic

⁵⁵ Air University (AU) Request for approval of project and funds to Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), 30 October 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962), Tab A.

⁵⁶ \$50,000 is roughly equivalent to \$407,000 in 2009.

⁵⁷ CSAF approval of project and funds to AU, 26 November 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962), Tab A. West German economic recovery and rearmament created both problems and opportunities for the American historical programs, which are detailed in Chapter III.

Miracle.” Additionally, the Army’s program had determined its ideal German contributors over the course of several years and had acquired the necessary documentary sources to complete studies focused on ground combat. Everyone involved overestimated the transferability of both writers and useful documents from the Army’s to the Air Force’s project. Finally, Nye almost certainly based his estimate on the manpower and time needed to complete Army studies, which were generally shorter than those the Air Force requested. In summary, Colonel Nye’s offers, whether he realized it or not, were overly generous and the Air Force’s expectations were far too high. The Air Force project would need all the help it could get in its early years.

Topic Selection and the Prioritization of Soviet Studies

Even as the Air Force Historical Division’s leadership hoped to utilize the Army’s infrastructure in Karlsruhe to minimize costs and duplication of effort, it charted its own course by selecting a drastically lower number of research topics of generally broader scope.⁵⁸ Before seeking approval for the Karlsruhe Project, the Historical Division polled other organizations at Air University to determine possible research topics and gauge interest in the program. Three offices associated with the Air War College and the Research Studies Institute (of which the Historical Division was a part) responded

⁵⁸ That is not to say that the Karlsruhe Monographs are all general histories of the Luftwaffe. In fact, many are best characterized as technical reports. Having said that, the Air Force did not sponsor hundreds of German unit histories or highly specific battle studies as did the Army.

enthusiastically with detailed lists. Together these lists correspond closely with the final list of monographs shown in Appendices A and B, meaning that the project added or dropped almost no topics over its seventeen years.⁵⁹ The opposite was the case with the Army and Navy projects, which shifted focus and added studies repeatedly. However, the Karlsruhe Project mirrored its predecessors with its emphasis on Soviet topics, which became apparent even before it received formal approval.

Colonel William Momyer of the Air Evaluation Staff set the tone on October 3, 1952, when he suggested that, if obstacles arose that jeopardized the completion of the project, “the entire effort be devoted to recording [the Luftwaffe generals’] experiences on the Eastern Front.” He believed that these studies would provide “a prime source of information about the [German] scheme of employment against the Russians and...as a by-product the Russian scheme of employment.” Momyer felt that, “These two areas constitute a serious vacuum of knowledge at the present time,” and went on to present questions that he wanted the Germans to answer. He was keenly interested in how the Germans conceived of air superiority when planning Operation BARBAROSSA, wondering if they counted on a stunning blow to cripple the Russian Air Force or if they considered the “necessity” of destroying Russia’s aircraft factories, training establishment, and fuel supplies “as a means of guaranteeing control of the air.” He also asked how the Germans organized their air units on the Soviet front to provide support

⁵⁹ The one glaring exception to this trend is the absence of Battle of Britain coverage. This topic initially generated strong interest at AU, and the USAF HD planned two monographs, one of which would become German Navy Captain Karl Klee’s Study #157 on Operation SEA LION. Originally, Wilhelm Speidel was the planned author of both these and two other studies, a common cause of delays (and eventually monograph cancellation in this case) that is discussed later. Incidentally, Klee worked slowly because he was secretly adapting his work both for commercial publication and submission as his doctoral dissertation, which project staffers long suspected and were not pleased with. Kennedy to Angell, 27 February 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-62).

for the ground forces. Did they have a unified air commander or were air assets tied to individual army units? Was the Luftwaffe able to concentrate units to provide close air support in the “decisive segment of the 1000 miles front?” Did a senior officer command all military forces in the theater? Finally, he requested a monograph that dealt specifically with the German commanders’ opinions of the Russian Air Force, including its perceived “stronger features,” “with particular emphasis on what they considered to be malemployment.”⁶⁰

Having recently completed a tour as a student at the Air War College, Momyer was its Deputy Commandant for Evaluation in October 1952. In this capacity he supervised the writing of Air Force doctrine. Thanks to his position, Momyer’s recommendations, more than anyone else’s, shaped the Karlsruhe Project proposal sent to the Office of the Air Force Chief of Staff later that month. Air University commander Lt. Gen. Idwal Edwards sold the project in terms of its utility against the Soviet Union when he promised to give “considerable emphasis to German combat experience with and intelligence on the Russian Air Force.” While the proposal included the full list of forty topics (effectively the summation of all suggestions), the only sample outline included in the approval package highlighted interesting themes that eventually would be spread throughout all six Soviet studies.⁶¹ The emphasis on Soviet studies in the project proposal was not merely intended to increase the chances of approval by the Air Force. In the Historical Division’s early communications with the Army, the Air Force reiterated that all interested Air University agencies agreed that priority should go to these studies, half

⁶⁰ Momyer to Angell, 3 October 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-62).

⁶¹ Edwards to CSAF and Proposed Preliminary Outline of Operational Studies, “The German Air Force Vs. Russia on the Eastern Front,” 30 October 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1/2 (1952-62).

of which were to be narrative operational histories with the remainder devoted to specific topics of interest (studies # 153-155 and 175-177).⁶²

While there was agreement on priority, there were six times as many monographs on non-Soviet topics. In fact, Momyer spent most of his letter to the Historical Division discussing other areas of interest, as did the two other Air University officials who offered suggestions.⁶³ They hoped to gain greater understanding of the Luftwaffe's decision-making during the Battle of Britain and its prewar and wartime conception of strategic and tactical airpower. Another prevailing theme concerned the effects of Allied airpower on German Air Force (and to a lesser extent German army) operations. While Lt. Gen. Edwards called the winnowing of potential research topics "rigidly selective," almost every suggestion received by the Historical Division either became a monograph onto itself or was incorporated into other studies.⁶⁴

A comparison of the questions posed by AU officials on Soviet versus all other topics reveals both ignorance of and interest in the Soviet-German war. Questions about the Eastern Front were typically more general, indicating a dramatically lower level of existing knowledge on the part of the Americans. On the other hand, questions on the Western Front were typically pointed and insightful. For example, one American officer repeatedly singled out for investigation particular enemy tactical formations and battles from the air war over Western Europe and the Mediterranean, while the only Eastern

⁶² Angell to Nye, 14 January 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-5 (1952-53).

⁶³ The USAF HD's Angell received suggestions from Col. L. M. Guyer (AWC Deputy Commandant for Academic Instruction) and Martin Goldman (RSI historian), dated 3 and 6 October 1952, respectively. See also feedback on preliminary outlines: Col. Grover Brown (AWC Deputy Academic Director) to Angell and Dr. Eugene Emme (Director of RSI's Graduate Study Group) to Brown, dated 23 April and 4 May 1953, respectively. Above records located in AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1/2 (1952-62).

⁶⁴ Edwards to CSAF, 30 October 1952.

Front operation mentioned specifically was the Stalingrad airlift. Of course, this disparity resulted primarily from the personal experiences of these Americans and the relative accessibility of literature on the subjects in the West. Still, it more than validates Momyer's statement that a "serious vacuum of knowledge" on Eastern Front air operations existed in the U.S. Air Force when the Karlsruhe Project began.

Assignment of Key Personnel and Early Research Obstacles

By all accounts the Karlsruhe Project was extremely fortunate in the selection of both its German and American leadership. Thanks to delays in the Air Force personnel system, several months passed before the American project officer arrived in Karlsruhe. In the meantime, Colonel Nye wasted no time and asked *Generaloberst* Franz Halder, the head of the Army project's control group, to recommend his ideal Air Force counterpart. Halder chose retired *General der Flieger* Paul Deichmann, who had already written several studies for the Army. According to multiple sources, Deichmann was the best possible choice.⁶⁵ His American counterpart later described him as a "dynamo" who worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week.⁶⁶ Another remarked admiringly that, "I think it is safe to say that without him there simply wouldn't be a program. He has a great

⁶⁵ USAREUR HD Letter to USAF HD, 6 January 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-5 (1952-1953).

⁶⁶ Hammer to Simpson, 8 July 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

deal of enthusiasm and energy and is able to communicate a sense of purpose to his contributors.”⁶⁷

Born on August 27, 1898 in Fulda, Germany, Deichmann was commissioned in the Imperial Army in 1916 and began flying as an observer the following year. After the Great War he served in several different infantry units, left the military briefly, and eventually transferred to the new Luftwaffe in 1934. Promoted to the rank of major while serving on the Luftwaffe General Staff the next year, he went on to hold a variety of staff and command positions during World War II.⁶⁸ Deichmann held his first conference with an Army staffer on the same day the Air Force approved the project. Having obviously put considerable thought into a potential Air Force project, the German general provided four single-spaced pages detailing necessary items, including one dozen reference books, pertinent magazines, and six 110-volt light bulbs “(3 for reserve).” More importantly, Deichmann pointed out that although some documents were already in American hands, the British Air Ministry possessed much critical source material.⁶⁹

According to the original Army-Air Force agreement, the Air Force had to supply its own project officer who would, among other duties, serve as a liaison to the British. Unfortunately, he did not arrive for six months, hampering Anglo-American cooperation. Even though the Air Force Historical Division did not receive its first choice, Lieutenant Colonel Wendell Hammer proved a perfect fit for the project. Hammer’s German skills were mediocre at first, but his passion for the project and deft touch when dealing with often-temperamental former German generals, obstructionist British archivists, and many

⁶⁷ Kennedy to Angell, 18 November 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

⁶⁸ Deichmann, xii.

⁶⁹ Supporting Documents from Deichmann conference, 26 November 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-5 (1952-1953).

others more than made up for any shortcomings. Hammer had a PhD in Social Science from the University of Southern California and had most recently monitored all research projects at Air University, an assignment that left him better prepared for the obstacles he soon faced.⁷⁰ Arriving in Karlsruhe in July 1953, the project officer was part-historian, part-low level diplomat, and part-manager. Hammer later wrote: “The fact that the project is USAF approved, AU monitored, US Army housed, USAFE supported, and German Air Force staffed permits the Project Officer few days without perplexities or surprises.”⁷¹ Hammer proved adept at promoting the project to each of these organizations.

Hammer’s arrival in Karlsruhe in July 1953 facilitated the exploitation of British archives in England, but results were painfully slow in coming.⁷² In the meantime, Deichmann scrounged for any source material he could find, with mixed results. Before joining the Karlsruhe Project, Deichmann had seen “Project von Rohden” mentioned in a journal and requested the studies and document collection as one of his first acts as Control Officer. The Rohden Papers resided at the Air University Library at Maxwell AFB, also the home of the Historical Division. Unfortunately, the Air War College had already reserved them, so the team assembling in Karlsruhe had to wait until August 1953 to gain access.⁷³ Even though the studies themselves may have been of questionable value, the Rohden document collection was indispensable. Forced to turn elsewhere for source material, Deichmann collected the memoirs of Churchill and several German and

⁷⁰ Angell to Lt. Col. Sprague (USAFE), 29 May 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-5 (1952-1953).

⁷¹ Hammer to Commandant HQ USAF ROTC, 4 October 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

⁷² Hammer to Simpson, 8 July 1953.

⁷³ Director of AU Library to Angell, 19 January 1953; Col. Paul to AU Director of Admin., 16 July 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-5 (1952-1953).

Allied commanders. Although they were not immediately available, Hammer eventually obtained copies of the summary reports of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey and distributed several dozen volumes of Craven and Cate's official history of *The Army Air Forces in World War II*.⁷⁴

Both Deichmann and Hammer realized that obtaining Luftwaffe records was crucial because they would be necessary to produce the scholarly, well-documented monographs the Air Force expected. The Air Force had requested forty focused studies that together would provide comprehensive coverage of the Luftwaffe in all theaters and address dozens of major themes. Gone were the days when an American historian or intelligence officer walked into an interview with a German prisoner without even the aid of maps or any background information. Perhaps more than any other participant, Deichmann appreciated the challenges in writing the history of the air war that the Americans sought. In a second formal request for the Rohden papers written in June 1953, Deichmann contrasted the difficulties associated with reconstructing the details of ground and air warfare. Air combat, he said, usually took place hundreds of miles away from the base of operations and lasted only a few hours or minutes. Squadrons often joined different wings for a single operation, and commands were renamed frequently. In summation, he wrote that "contrary to the commitment of Army units, there was therefore a continuous change of units and in time and space" in the air war. He stated that the lack of records had forced him to recruit additional contributors to corroborate the recollections of his team members, which he estimated would increase the cost of the

⁷⁴Hammer to Simpson, 24 November 1953; Hammer to Simpson, 13 July 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

writing phase by 30 or 40 percent. It is possible that Deichmann exaggerated these difficulties to excuse the expanding cost of the project, but certainly it was unsatisfactory to rely memory alone ten years after the events being studied.⁷⁵

The Air Force Historical Division's own directives reinforced Deichmann's point, with Hammer's "Suggestions for Authors" being the prime example. Disseminated to all participants in April 1954, the memorandum made clear the importance of properly documenting sources. Hammer went on to discuss elements of style and organization in quite basic terms, suggesting to authors, for example, that they question whether their work "follows a logical sequence throughout."⁷⁶ That the writers needed such guidance shows the difficulties the Air Force faced in demanding sound historical monographs from men who were not trained historians. Nevertheless, the staff endeavored to maintain high standards, on several occasions forcing authors to totally rewrite of their studies.⁷⁷

One member of Deichmann's team did not need to be lectured on basic writing skills and historical work, but Professor Richard Suchenwirth brought his own baggage. Described in the foreword to his monographs as "a well-known and somewhat controversial German and Austrian historian, author, teacher, and lecturer," Suchenwirth was born in Vienna in 1896 and moved to Germany in the mid-1930s. He had served as Director of the Teachers' College at Munich-Passing until 1944, when he became a Professor of History at the University of Munich.⁷⁸ Suchenwirth was integral to the success of the project. In early 1953, he began working alongside Deichmann as the unofficial German editor, putting his skills to good use by proofreading and scrutinizing

⁷⁵ Deichmann to Helm (Chief, FMSB), 5 June 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-5 (1952-1953).

⁷⁶ Hammer, "Suggestions for Authors," no date given, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

⁷⁷ Karlsruhe Project "Statement of Progress," 20 January 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-2 (1953-1971).

⁷⁸ Richard Suchenwirth, *Development of the German Air Force* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), xv.

other contributors' work. He also personally authored three monographs, *The Development of the GAF*, *Command and Leadership in the GAF*, and *Historical Turning Points in the GAF*, that are arguably the most scholarly and objective studies produced by the project.

Ironically, Suchenwirth was also the only team member who aroused the suspicions of the Americans. The Americans knew that some of their German employees may have had associations with the Nazi party, but it nevertheless came as a surprise when an American editor overheard a conversation between Professor Suchenwirth and another author, *Generalleutnant* Hermann Plocher, during which the professor complained about being unable to sleep in Stuttgart because of commotion on the streets. The police "were beating up some poor devils by the railroad tracks. It must be characteristically Swabian,"⁷⁹ this tendency towards excesses," Suchenwirth said. Plocher retorted, "Now really, Professor, beatings and such things should never have disturbed an old party man like you: you had enough time in the SA⁸⁰ to accustom yourself to such noises." Suchenwirth later explained to the American that he had only been given an honorary SA rank for a particular history he had written. The editor wrote to his supervisor:

All this means, I suppose, is that I watch Suchenwirth more closely than I otherwise would. He is neither black nor white, however, and it is always very difficult to make a distinction between a National Socialist opinion, a German opinion and a just plain individual opinion...In all fairness too, we have to admit that he is making a valuable contribution to the project.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Swabia is a historic region of southern Germany that includes portions of the current states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

⁸⁰ The *Sturmabteilung*, also known as the Brownshirts, was a paramilitary organization of the Nazi Party in the 1920s and 1930s.

⁸¹ Kennedy to Angell, 18 November 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

Suchenwirth was, however, the exception to the rule. In general the Americans had little cause to question the pasts of the German writers, but they did continuously remark on and deal with the personal shortcomings of the generals-turned-historians. Hammer concluded that untrained writers were the “most difficult problem confronting us in our attempt to get scholarly, interestingly written studies.” After working on the project for eight months in Karlsruhe, he judged that the participants were “each intensely determined to tell the true and full story in the best way possible,” but they “were no more researchers and writers than our own generals and admirals, san ghost-writers.” He lamented that the inability of many to read recently published works in English, which, when coupled with the continuing dearth of primary documents, would make it harder for the authors to free their studies of bias, misconceptions, and rationalizations. Hammer recognized that dispassionate historical writing was a tall order for men who had “undergone the ultimate in personal and professional frustration and humiliation,” but he felt that the job of future historians of the air war would be an impossible task if the German side of the story were not told.⁸²

⁸² Hammer to Simpson, 23 February 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

Documentary Sources Become Available, 1954

Whatever their shortcomings, the German contributors were enthusiastic in their cooperation with the Americans, which directly impacted the course of the project by aiding the search for documents. In contrast to the war they were studying, the Germans were themselves the greatest researchers and document finders for the Americans, while the British were usually the biggest obstacle. Because of the Germans' eagerness to tell their side of the story and because the Americans frequently assured them that copies of the completed studies would go to the future West German military, the Germans began coming forward with their own source material. Officers and family members had literally buried many documents in 1945 and brought them to Deichmann in 1953 and 1954. Some donated documents but most requested a nominal fee.⁸³

Much useful material was already in American possession. On a trip to archives in Alexandria, Virginia, Deichmann pointed out a document that the Americans did not know they had. Hidden in a section that the original German owners had innocuously labeled "Propaganda," Deichmann "discovered" the Daily Situation Reports of the Luftwaffe High Command. The general's feigned surprise fooled no one.⁸⁴ One would-be document donor was Colonel Werner Panitzki, the future head of the West German Air Force, who steadfastly asserted that he had personally helped fill three trunks with

⁸³ Hammer to Simpson, 24 November 1953.

⁸⁴ Hammer to Angell, 19 October 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

microfilm of important Luftwaffe documents at the close of the war, which he then buried near his home. He was absolutely sure that the British discovered and removed them, but the British always maintained that they knew of no such source.⁸⁵

Unfortunately for the project, Hammer was never able to track down Panitzki's mysterious microfilm rolls, if they existed in the first place. But taken as a whole, the German efforts at recovering documents were one of the greatest contributions of the Karlsruhe Project.

Werner Panitzki was far from the only project member frustrated by the British, but Hammer finally began to make progress on the British front in 1954. At the outset of the Karlsruhe Project, an Army officer had correctly reasoned that "The project will stand or fall on obtaining access to German Air Force documents now held by the British government."⁸⁶ For over a year the British were hesitant to aid the American. The turning point came in October 1954, when Hammer delivered several sources to Louis Jackets at the Air Ministry's Air Historical Branch, which showed, in Hammer's words, "that our dealings need not be a one-way matter – that we are in a position to help him considerably."⁸⁷ Earlier in the year he and Deichmann had visited archives at Air University and Washington, D.C. and had acquired "horse-trading resources" from the German collections there.⁸⁸ With a two-way relationship between the British and Americans established, Jackets paid a visit to Karlsruhe in December 1954 to survey the American operation. Genuinely impressed, Jackets offered Hammer the services of the

⁸⁵ Hammer to Angell, 29 September 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

⁸⁶ Summary of Informal [USA-USAF] Agreement to Date, 18 November 1952, AFHRA, K113.161-5 (1952-1953).

⁸⁷ Hammer to Angell, 19 October 1954.

⁸⁸ Hammer to Simpson, 23 April 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

Air Historical Branch to help review the drafts, an offer that Deichmann and Hammer seemed eager to accept. Hammer was now on “the closest terms with Jackets,” writing that their time spent together had “uncovered a very human being under his English (forgive me) Jacket.”⁸⁹

The Chief and Assistant Chief of the Historical Division, Dr. Albert Simpson and Joe Angell, saw things differently. While pleased with Hammer’s progress with Jackets, they were uncomfortable giving the British access to their studies at such an early stage. They preferred instead to allow the British to view the studies at some later date. “Our experience in the post-war period has been that we have consistently played openly with Nerney and his shop⁹⁰ and that their play has been very nearly the opposite,” and the Air Force thought they would see more of the same in the coming years.⁹¹ This may have been a self-fulfilling prophecy because Hammer did continue to have occasional difficulties with Jackets. In March 1956 Jackets refused to allow Deichmann to enter the archives even though he had done so in the past. The Americans believed that this decision was related to the forthcoming return of the Air Ministry’s German records collection to the new West German military. Obligated to send back all the original documents, Jackets did not want Deichmann to catalogue the collection for fear that the German government would come looking for particular documents if the British attempted to hoard them, or so the Americans thought.⁹²

⁸⁹ Hammer to Angell, 23 December 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

⁹⁰ Refers to the captured German records section of the RAF, which Hammer would later refer to as the “Court of St. Nerney.” See also Hammer to Emme, 5 June 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

⁹¹ Angell to Hammer, 14 January 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

⁹² Hammer to Simpson, 11 March 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

In spite of British obstructionism, the document collection effort was one of the greatest successes of the project, both in terms of what it provided the writers and what it preserved for historians. The historiographical impact will be discussed in a later section, but for now it is simply necessary to note an important waypoint in the collection program. By December 1956 Hammer was confident that the project had most of the documents it needed to produce satisfactory studies.⁹³ With access to sources finally assured, the project finally had its first chance to begin producing studies at its intended rate.

Personnel Issues Arising from the Late Start of the Karlsruhe Project

Unfortunately, it was more difficult to find and keep contributors owing to the late start of the Karlsruhe Project compared to the other historical projects. Many had found jobs in the private sector as the West German economy recovered. To make matters worse for the project, the aging contributors who joined worked more slowly and were increasingly susceptible to illness. As of April 1954, the average age of the twenty topic leaders was fifty-eight years, and by spring 1956 five of those leaders had been incapacitated for at

⁹³ Hammer to Simpson, 3 December 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

least several months each.⁹⁴ Two topic leaders died before the writing phase ended, as did a handful of lower-ranking contributors. Within months of the end of the German phase, the topic leader of the incomplete Battle of Britain study withdrew (after two years of assurances to the contrary), to the obvious frustration of the project staff.⁹⁵ In contrast, Wilhelm Speidel labored on even when illness caused his writing to become undisciplined and increasingly difficult to translate, complicating the staff's task.⁹⁶ Replacing dead, ailing, or unskilled writers was no simple matter because outsiders had to be taught the techniques of historical writing and needed to become familiar with the literature and available documents before they were useful. All the while, the project continued paying those writers it had dismissed, increasing productive costs and delaying the completion of studies.⁹⁷ Another form of attrition took hold in 1956 that will be discussed at length later: the exodus of writers joining the new West German air force, the Bundesluftwaffe.

The organizational scheme of the project made it especially vulnerable to the loss of certain personnel, and despite the relatively large number of available writers, a delay on one study usually hampered progress on others. The chief cause of these delays was Deichmann's selection of topic leaders. One month before the Air Force finally approved the project, the Air University decided to commission forty studies, and by late 1952 Deichmann had access to the list of topics the Air Force wanted covered. Over the course

⁹⁴ Angell to Perkins (Deputy Commandant for Evaluation, AWC), 6 April 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

⁹⁵ Logbook of project by unknown staff member, entry dated 26 March 1958, AFHRA, K113.161-6 (1955-1962).

⁹⁶ Kennedy to Angell, 18 November 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-62). According to Kennedy, Deichmann suggested that *General der Flieger* (retired) Speidel was "a sick man and is no longer able to think clearly" and considered reassigning his work to other contributors.

⁹⁷ Hammer to Simpson, 29 February 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

of 1953, he carefully selected topic leaders. Almost all were retired generals of one to three-star rank, who were presumably close acquaintances of Deichmann and familiar with the subject matter. For example, Josef Kammhuber, who led the German night fighter force and organized the construction of Germany's air defenses during the war, was the topic leader and primary author of *Problems in the Conduct of a Day and Night Defensive Air War*. With Deichmann's assistance, topic leaders chose key contributors, men who preferably had firsthand experience with the topic in question. These contributors included other generals, many field grade officers, and a handful of captains. The number of contributors writing for each study varied widely, but typically ranged from three to a dozen retired officers, most of whom lived away from Karlsruhe and worked at home.

Having dispersed contributors was unavoidable because most Germans had jobs elsewhere, but this added to the strain on the project by contributing to delays. Dispersion made topic leaders more important figures because they were responsible for collecting the work of contributors and integrating that work into a German draft. With writers working across West Germany during their spare time from inadequate sources, it is not surprising that it took the topic leaders longer than expected to get German drafts to Deichmann, Suchenwirth, Hammer, and the other permanent party at Karlsruhe. It appears that the topic leaders were in fact the sole authors of many studies, with the so-called key contributors serving primarily as interviewees, references, and fact-checkers. Although it is difficult to determine the exact number of former Luftwaffe officers who contributed indirectly to the project, the Assistant Chief of the Air Force Historical Division reasoned that nearly all of the surviving Luftwaffe general officers in West

Germany participated in the writing of the monographs to some degree. In addition, several hundred lower-ranking officers, civilians, and technicians also aided the project in various capacities.⁹⁸

The twenty topic leaders did not bear the burden of composition evenly. In fact, a core of only eight “authors” completed half of the forty-two drafts submitted to the Air Force. Moreover, members of that core were responsible for ten of the twelve studies that the Air Force actually completed and published. Deichmann surely picked his topic leaders with the best intentions, but assigning generals multiple studies usually meant that they had to finish one before beginning the next. For example, Hermann Plocher was responsible for the three-part *German Air Force Versus Russia* series that eventually totaled 2,018 pages in draft form. Deichmann initially tasked Plocher with an additional study on the Spanish Civil War, on which Plocher was a noted expert. Not surprisingly, this was too much for Plocher to handle before he returned to active duty in 1957, and Deichmann took considerable time finding a replacement for the Spanish Civil War study. Deichmann’s assigning himself the topic leader position on four monographs could not have made things any easier. It is hard to say whether the multitasking of topic leaders resulted from over eagerness on the part of the core writers, a shortage of suitable candidates, or a conscious decision to give multiple studies to the best and most knowledgeable writers. Whatever the case, this arrangement, when combined with illness and the initial shortage of sources, slowed composition considerably.

In any event, if Deichmann and Hammer had received all forty drafts at once, they would have been unable to translate them all because the Army had assigned only one

⁹⁸ Angell to Perkins, 6 April 1954.

fulltime translator to the Air Force project and later scaled back even further, in effect withdrawing its support. The multiple obstacles detailed above had caused an increase in the number of German personnel on the payroll. The improving German economy meant that the Americans had to offer higher wages to remain competitive, and costs ballooned in 1953 and 1954. The original interservice agreement had stipulated that the Air Force would pay \$50,000 to the Army in exchange for translation, clerical, and partial editorial services, but Colonel Nye of USAREUR Historical Division had calculated that amount on the basis of forty shorter studies of the type the Army was making at the time. The Air Force wanted monographs that were each several times longer. Soon after Hammer arrived in Karlsruhe in July 1953, with the project little more than six months old, the Army informed him that the \$50,000 was nearly gone. Realizing it was still getting a good deal and that setting up a duplicate organization would be even more expensive, the Air Force continued paying the Army. The two renewed their agreement on nearly the same terms on August 10, 1955.⁹⁹

Neither side seemed willing to end the relationship. USAREUR, with its infrastructure already in place, received considerable compensation for minimum additional effort, while the Air Force benefitted from the Army's organization and only had to provide one Air Force officer and funding. By November 1955 the Air Force had paid \$180,000, but only seven draft studies were complete and none had been fully translated. That month Lt. Col. Edward Barta, Col. Nye's executive officer, recommended that the Army formally withdraw its support, citing budgetary and personnel concerns. Hammer fired back within days, arguing that the Army already was

⁹⁹USA Adjutant General to CINCUSAREUR, 10 August 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

failing to provide all the services laid out in the original agreement. Hammer went on to say that the Air Force Historical Division did not care about these shortcomings and was more focused on ensuring the success of its project. He successfully argued that maintaining the otherwise exceptionally cooperative relationship between the Army and Air Force Historical Divisions was paramount. The Army continued to house the Air Force project. Even though the editorial and translation services the Army provided eventually diminished to nothing, there was never a formal split. In fact, having the Army operation nearby continued to benefit the Air Force because Hammer found experienced Army civilian translators whom he paid to do Air Force work in their free time.

Direct Army support for the Karlsruhe Project was invaluable while it lasted. As the document collection grew, the German authors were able to slowly produce acceptable drafts, and in February 1954 the USAREUR Historical Division loaned one of its best officers, Captain Earle Stewart, as an editor.¹⁰⁰ The project also employed a handful of German historians, a few other Army officers, and a Ph.D. candidate for short periods, but even though they performed excellently it became clear to Hammer and the Air Force Historical Division that a permanent editor would be best. Stewart's hospitalization in December 1954 made the need all the more pressing.¹⁰¹ Colonel Nye had pointed out the limitations of Army editors working on the Air Force project when the project was only one year old, and their lack of expertise in air operations presented

¹⁰⁰ Hammer to Simpson, 23 February 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

¹⁰¹ Hammer to Angell, 23 December 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

challenges.¹⁰² Stewart, an otherwise outstanding editor who eventually received a commendation from the Air Force, “did some rather free editing” of Plocher’s three-part *German Air Force Versus Russia* series, so much so that it “didn’t reflect an Air Force point of view,” much to the frustration of his supervisors.¹⁰³ If the Air Force Historical Division ever wanted its monographs completed, it needed to take ownership of its project and hire a second full-time Air Force employee.

A Second Full-time USAF Employee Comes Aboard, 1955

The Air Force Historical Division finally solicited applications for a dedicated American project editor in November 1954, hoping that it could have that person in Karlsruhe by early winter. Eventually they settled on Edwin Kennedy, Jr., who had served in Europe during World War II in Military Intelligence. After the war he held a variety of odd jobs, including working as a research assistant to the Mexico City bureau chief of Time-Life, an assistant in administering electric coma therapy in Cleveland, and Assistant Chief of the Research and Writing Branch of the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) Historical Division.¹⁰⁴ Possessing the best German language skills of any American his German interviewer had ever met, Kennedy proved to be a perfect fit for the project with

¹⁰² Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

¹⁰³ Logbook of project, entry dated March 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-6 (1955-1962).

¹⁰⁴ Edwin P. Kennedy, Jr., Application Form for Federal Employment, 10 January 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

his “combination of firmness and diplomatic tact.”¹⁰⁵ But Kennedy had to get to Karlsruhe first. One bureaucratic mix-up followed another for six months. The Air Force Historical Division and the Air Force personnel system had no protocols or precedents for assigning him to such a unique position as bilingual historical editor, and while there was a sense of urgency in Karlsruhe, nothing moved quickly. Kennedy finally received his orders in July 1955 and immediately contributed heavily to the project. Like Hammer and Deichmann, he was indispensable and helped compensate for the personnel shortages.¹⁰⁶

None of the obstacles the Karlsruhe Project faced were insurmountable, but they did introduce cumulative delays that led to the ultimate publication of only about one-quarter of the drafted studies. During the Karlsruhe phase the Air Force revised its estimated project completion date repeatedly. The Army had originally guessed that it might only take three years to generate the studies, but Deichmann immediately revised this when he recognized the lack of records.¹⁰⁷ In early 1955 Deichmann and Hammer forecasted that all German manuscripts would be completed by June 30, 1956,¹⁰⁸ and as late as December 1956 they aimed for mid-1957.¹⁰⁹ The Air Force Karlsruhe historical office finally closed on June 30, 1958. Drafts of forty-two studies had been completed, the extra being expanded chapters of other monographs (See Appendices A and B). No studies had yet been published, and translation and editing were behind schedule because of the delays in composition and the limited number of personnel.

¹⁰⁵ Angell to Hammer, no date given (likely January 1955), AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁰⁶ Angell to Hammer, 29 July 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁰⁷ Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953.

¹⁰⁸ Hammer to Angell, 18 February 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

¹⁰⁹ Simpson to Hammer, 27 December 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

Army translators and Air Force staffers had translated roughly 7,000 pages by spring 1958, but 14,000 pages remained. The head of the Air Force's Research Studies Institute (RSI), of which the Historical Division was a part, deemed 5,300 of the remaining untranslated pages "of immediate and primary interest to the USAF." Because it was several times more expensive to translate the remaining studies in the United States, they contracted two translators to handle the work in Germany. The Historical Division had hoped that two other translators who worked at Maxwell would be available to speed the work, but personnel cuts at RSI made this impossible. Therefore, the Air Force Historical Division had only two translators, Helmut Heitman and Patricia Klammerth, working on the manuscripts, both of whom were still employees of the Army Historical Division in Europe. Working on a part-time basis, they completed translation of forty of forty-two drafts by November 1962.¹¹⁰

The Final Phase: Ten Years, One Editor, and Forty Drafts

It would not have mattered if the Karlsruhe Project translated the German drafts more quickly because there was only one dedicated editor at Maxwell. With the completion of the Karlsruhe phase, Hammer left the project, and only Kennedy remained to edit the studies and prepare them for publication. In fact, from 1959 until the project's end in

¹¹⁰ Simpson to Klammerth, 31 October 1962, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

1969, the project editor effectively worked alone. Jane Hanlin, the administrative assistant to the Chief of the Historical Division, occasionally proofread final drafts for typographical errors, but she was the only other person who ever worked on the project. After publishing two studies in 1959, the project published at the average rate of one study per year through 1969.¹¹¹ Kennedy stayed on until 1961, and Dr. John L. B. Atkinson and Gerard E. Hasselwander followed with one-year stints as the editor.¹¹²

In October 1963 Harry R. Fletcher joined the Air Force Historical Division and remained the project editor until its end in 1969. He had served as an enlisted member of the Army Air Corps in a variety of stateside assignments during World War II and received a direct commission into the army engineers after the war. Called to active duty in 1949, he supervised several units during his two and a half years in the occupation of Germany, notably Frankfurt's I.G. Farben Chemical Corporation Casino, then the largest Officers' Club in the world and collocated with the Supreme Allied High Command. He was pursuing a doctorate in history at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1963 when Col. Eldon Downs of the Air Force Historical Division spotted him. The focus of Fletcher's master's thesis (the Condor Legion, the Luftwaffe force dispatched to aid Francisco Franco during the Spanish Civil War) and his fluency in German, made him well suited for the position.

¹¹¹ Very little documentation survives from the second stage of the project. The earlier Karlsruhe phase was quite the opposite because the project had three subunits (German, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Army) working in Europe who corresponded frequently with the USAF HD in Alabama, the Army's USAREUR Historical Division, and United States Air Forces Europe. Unfortunately, after 1958 the project had only one fulltime employee who worked on the same base as almost his entire chain of command, so almost nothing remains.

¹¹² Richard Suchenwirth, *Command and Leadership in the German Air Force* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), vii.

“There was no fixed schedule,” Fletcher recalls of his time with the project, “except for the understanding that I would proceed with my work as fast as possible, while maintaining some level of professionalism.” It was his responsibility to “sharply edit” the studies, correct translation errors, and compose organizational charts and other essential elements that were lacking in the rough drafts. He also attempted to keep in touch with the German authors whenever possible, largely to understand their intentions and background.¹¹³ A few remained interested in the project during the 1960s, including Halder, Deichmann, Plocher, and General Steinhoff, the Chief of Staff of the West German Air Force and later Chairman of the NATO Military Committee.¹¹⁴ He initially believed that the monographs were meant for dissemination as U.S. Air Force (USAF) studies for the use at American military staff schools, and he “was astonished to find that ARNO Press, NYC was publishing all the studies for the general public,” which began in 1968.¹¹⁵

Since the inception of the GAF Monograph Project, Dr. Albert F. Simpson was its champion within the Air Force historical community and Air University. Simpson had served as an active duty historical officer in the Army Air Forces during World War II, and after the war rose to the rank of colonel in the Air Force Reserve. He became the Air Force Historian in 1946, and he was also the Chief of the Air Force Historical Division from 1951 to 1969. In these capacities he was involved in nearly every historical project in the Air Force for twenty-five years, including Craven and Cate’s noted official history of *The Army Air Forces in World War II*. Fletcher writes that Simpson was not

¹¹³ Harry R. Fletcher, questionnaire written by author, 2 November 2008.

¹¹⁴ Reference correspondence between USAF HD staffers and these individuals, e.g. between Plocher and Simpson through 1969, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 2.

¹¹⁵ Fletcher, questionnaire.

surprisingly “very much committed to developing” an Air Force history program.¹¹⁶

Simpson and his longtime deputy, Joe Angell, started the project in 1952 and were instrumental in its successes and survival. As previously discussed, significant challenges confronted the project from the outset, but Simpson and Angell were able repeatedly to convince Air University to provide more funds. As Hammer’s immediate superiors, the chief and his deputy kept close track of progress, helped generate the original monograph outlines, critiqued drafts, occasionally visited Karlsruhe, and prioritized certain studies. During the Karlsruhe phase they conferred with Hammer, Deichmann, or both on at least a monthly basis. With the drafts completed in 1958, Simpson was the only source of oversight for the project editor.

Simpson remained a friend of the project, but October 1965 saw a significant, and realistic, downgrading of expectations. Simpson, Fletcher, and Dr. Maurer Maurer, Simpson’s new deputy, held a conference during which they decided to edit only six more studies. At the time, eight studies were complete, and a ninth was nearly finished. This decision capped the project at fifteen published monographs out of approximately forty. The unfinished studies, which were by this time mostly in English language rough drafts, were to be made available to researchers. At the conference, they settled on three criteria to determine which studies should be edited: level of interest to the USAF, the quality of the manuscript and subject matter, and historical significance for reference purposes. Unfortunately, Simpson’s health soon began to fail. At least twice during the

¹¹⁶ Fletcher, interview by author, 23 October 2008, telephone interview.

late 1950s, he underwent surgery that kept him out of the office for weeks.¹¹⁷ Beginning in 1967, his health deteriorated further as he battled lung cancer. Simpson died on April 21, 1971, and the Air Force Historical Research Agency facility at Maxwell AFB was subsequently named in his honor.¹¹⁸

Maurer assumed many of Simpson's duties during the latter's slow decline, which led directly to the project's termination after publishing twelve, not fifteen, studies. According to Fletcher, Maurer "was fascinated with the organizational lineage and honors accrued by USAF units," but he "disliked the GAF Project intensely."¹¹⁹ Fletcher says that Maurer believed that the Air Force "didn't have anything to learn [from the Germans]. Afterall, if we'd had anything to learn, we wouldn't have won the war."¹²⁰ Fletcher preferred to maintain contact with the German authors to aid in his editing of their work, but Maurer discouraged this. Maurer "had a bad thing about the Germans", says Fletcher, which the latter could never quite understand because, as he puts it, "Maurer certainly isn't an Irish name."¹²¹ Potentially, Maurer felt that the Project Editor's job was taking away one of the Historical Division's salaried positions from work that he considered more valuable.

No one officially cancelled the GAF Monograph Project, and no record exists of its end. At the time Fletcher felt that Lineage and Honors work was essential and that such records must be "meticulously maintained," but he was not very enthusiastic about

¹¹⁷ Angell to Hammer, 21 February 1957; Simpson to Deichmann, 5 May 1959, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

¹¹⁸ "Former Air Force Historian Dies," *Aerospace Historian* 18 (Fall 1971), 114.

¹¹⁹ Fletcher, questionnaire.

¹²⁰ Fletcher, interview, 23 October 2008.

¹²¹ Fletcher, interview by author, 24 March 2009, telephone interview. Fletcher here implies that Maurer may be of German ancestry.

performing such work himself. With Maurer waiting in the wings, he writes that, “It was evident to me that with the demise of Dr. Simpson or his becoming fully indigent, the entire Project would be ended.”¹²² After Fletcher finished editing the twelfth monograph, Suchenwirth’s *Command and Leadership in the German Air Force*, in July 1969, he took a teaching and chair position at nearby Troy State University. With the Project Editor’s position vacant and Simpson almost totally absent, editing of the studies finally ended after nearly seventeen years of continuous operation.

In its eagerness to accept the Army’s offer of support in fall 1952, the Air Force Historical Division overlooked the fact it had taken the Army seven years and a much higher level of investment to accumulate sufficient source material and accustom former generals to the minimum standards of historical writing. A microcosm of the Karlsruhe Project was the experience of Edwin Kennedy, the superb project editor who sat idle in Alabama for six crucial months in 1955 because the Air Force personnel system had never heard of a bilingual historical editor’s position. Kennedy eventually received his travel orders, but this wasted valuable time. Delays of this sort were common and their effects cumulative. Staff members recognized that the project was behind schedule from the start, but the additional funds it received merely allowed it to survive for another fiscal year. In spite of this, the Karlsruhe Project did bear fruit. The 300,000-page document collection brought to the United States has proven useful to researchers, military and civilian alike, as have the unpublished studies, even if most remain in raw form. The six Soviet monographs provided some of the first glimpses into the air war on that front, and several other published studies are of high quality. Finally, the project

¹²² Fletcher, questionnaire.

indirectly involved nearly every surviving Luftwaffe general officer outside the Eastern Bloc and served as the site of cooperative work between erstwhile enemies during the pivotal years of West German rearmament.

CHAPTER III: THE “UNFORESEEN BY-PRODUCT:” TOWARDS A NEW WEST GERMAN – AMERICAN AIR FORCE RELATIONSHIP

There is possibly a much more important facet to the project. It is affording the Air Force its only means of keeping constantly in touch with men who either directly or indirectly will set and steer the course of future military aviation in Germany. These men are now on our team. The lessons of the past and the forebodings of the future demand that they remain on it. These men, moreover, represent a ready source of first-hand information on Soviet aerial tactics, facilities, and operational conditions which would become especially valuable in the event of war. The tremendous potential of this project comes dramatically into focus when one turns from World War II pictures of our contributors working as high-ranking general officers on Luftwaffe problems of the day to see them working across the table, apparently as earnestly, on problems for the USAF.¹²³

- Col. Hammer to Maj. Gen. Barker, AU Deputy Commander, August 31, 1953

The German Air Force Monograph Project was unique among the American postwar military history programs in that it began and saw its years of greatest activity during the momentous period of West German rearmament. Far from merely providing an interesting backdrop for the study of the Karlsruhe Project, the rearmament process could not help but influence the German writers. Many contributors left the project early to take key positions in the West German Air Force or Bundesluftwaffe, sapping the project's manpower. Although this was often frustrating for American staff members with deadlines in mind, this migration provided the U.S. Air Force with highly-placed friends in the Bundesluftwaffe who, heavily influenced by their years of employment with the

¹²³ Hammer to Barker, 31 August 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-62).

Karlsruhe Project, sought to reshape German officer education in the U.S. Air Force mold. These efforts were ultimately unsuccessful, but the project nevertheless forged close relationships between former enemies. Colonel Hammer effectively served as a military attaché during the mid-1950s, transmitting U.S. Air Force doctrine to the burgeoning Bundesluftwaffe and bringing German officers to speak at U.S. Air Force staff schools for the first time. The Air Force seems to have been pleasantly surprised by these aspects of the project and came to value them even more than the strictly historical work being conducted.

Demilitarization, the “Economic Miracle,” and Historical Programs

After instituting strict demilitarization in occupied Germany after World War II, the United States eventually supported the establishment of a West German military to stand against the Soviet Union. The Allies had agreed during the war to demilitarize Germany to punish and prevent it from starting another conflict, although they disagreed on the exact level and character of its disarmament. During the first years of the occupation, the Western victors forbade the wearing of old military uniforms or military memorabilia of any type in order to crush any remnants of German militarism. Also outlawed were veterans groups, any research related to the military, commemorative plaques, the possession of weapons, war-related exhibits at museums, and the maintenance of related collections at libraries. Most important was the official dissolution

of the Wehrmacht, including all legal rights and pensions for veterans and dependents. Agreement on this last measure was not unanimous, as elements of the British occupational leadership contested the efficacy of denying all benefits to Wehrmacht members. Reservations notwithstanding, the Allied authorities eventually decided that cancelling all benefits, which would have been difficult or impossible to pay out anyhow, would “undoubtedly show the German people that the Allies were determined to carry out the terms of the Potsdam Declaration that the German Armed Forces are to be utterly destroyed.”¹²⁴ The Allied governments felt that these restrictions would help purge remaining elements of militarism and Nazism, which they closely linked.¹²⁵

The early employment of former German generals by the United States was illegal and ironic in the context of initial Allied policy towards the German officer corps. In the words of historian James Diehl, the Allies considered the German General Staff the “prime carrier of the virus of militarism,” but they also considered the officer corps in general to be a potential threat.¹²⁶ A June 1945 American intelligence report summarized the history of the German officer corps from 1918 onwards and explained how disaffected soldiers had joined the *Freikorps* soon after the armistice. Trained and organized by former officers, these independent paramilitary units did much to destabilize the young Weimar Republic, and the report saw the insidious hand of the officer corps behind much of the instability and radicalism that followed. Seeking to forestall such developments after 1945, the American report writers proposed exiling the

¹²⁴ Fourth Meeting of Working Party on the Payment of Pensions in Germany, 10 September 1945 FO944/313, Public Record Office, Kew, England. Quoted in James M. Diehl, *The Thanks of the Fatherland: German Veterans after the Second World War* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1993), 59.

¹²⁵ David Clay Large, *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1996), 25.

¹²⁶ Diehl, 55.

General Staff and other influential officers, the so-called “St. Helena” solution, but they settled on interning them in Germany and closely monitoring them upon release so as not to make martyrs out of the officers. This would have the added benefit of providing “a fitting disposition of these persons before the eyes of other Germans.”¹²⁷ Letters from former officers aggrieved by what they considered the unjust criminalization and persecution of the German officer corps bombarded American and British officials, but the Allies gave no ground.¹²⁸

By early 1947 the United States had released most of its German POWs, but many higher-ranking officers and officials remained incarcerated for some time.¹²⁹ Allied policy led to different complications for each of the American history programs. In the case of the Army, the ban on historical research of a military nature and the prohibition of U.S. government employment of former General Staff and senior German commanders almost killed its history program. Its cancellation was planned for December 31, 1947, but General Dwight Eisenhower, then Army Chief of Staff, personally intervened that August on the grounds that, “This is our one opportunity to prevent our own military history from being one-sided.” In recognition of the uniqueness and value of the program, it received permission to employ up to 150 former German officers.¹³⁰ In this way, the Army program was able to acquire German contributors while they were still in American custody. The Naval Historical Team in Bremerhaven attempted to find cooperative admirals in summer 1948. At this time most Kriegsmarine veterans were free

¹²⁷ “Disposition of Potentially Dangerous Officers of German Armed Forces,” 9 August 1945, OMGUS, RG 260, box 135, NARS; quoted in Diehl, 58.

¹²⁸ Diehl, 62-64.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 66.

¹³⁰ Donald Detwiler ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, vol. 1, (New York: Garland, 1979), 5.

men, but they were indignant over the prosecution of their former commanders as war criminals, in particular the still-imprisoned Grand Admirals Raeder and Dönitz.

However, with the Berlin Blockade providing the Germans with an unmistakable sign of the growing threat to the east, the U.S. Navy was able to cajole eight admirals into joining. The Germans, for their part, were happy to have jobs and found that the NHT provided a convenient way to circumvent restrictions on veterans' groups.¹³¹

The West German economy had improved dramatically by the time the GAF Monograph Project began in late 1952, raising new challenges for the American historical programs. Until 1950, West German economic recovery was behind that of the rest of the world, but beginning that year German industry started to catch up with and, in 1953-1954, surpassed the growth rate of the rest of the Western world. The 1955 West German gross domestic product was 55 percent higher than in 1950.¹³² During the early history projects, additional rations had been satisfactory compensation for many of the German authors, both during and after their imprisonment; some officers who had no families even worked so that the families of their comrades would receive extra food parcels.¹³³ Beginning in the early 1950s, however, the authors increasingly preferred to be paid in cash. When USAREUR Historical Division's Colonel Nye estimated the cost of the Air Force project in October 1952, he calculated based on the current salaries of his German contributors. By November 1953, those had risen by sixty percent (to \$145 per author, per month) thanks to the rising cost of living in Germany.¹³⁴ At the same time,

¹³¹ Peifer, *The Three German Navies*, 110-113.

¹³² Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1991), 178-180.

¹³³ Heitman newspaper article; Peifer, 108.

¹³⁴ Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953.

the increasing availability of jobs in business provided a source of competition for the Karlsruhe Project, and the Americans had to offer higher wages accordingly.

German authors on the Karlsruhe Project took longer to complete their assigned work than their predecessors because, instead of sitting idly in prison camps, most had finally found jobs and wrote in their spare time. The authors preferred to be paid secretly because of the national climate at the time. Hammer reasoned that “a majority would refuse to help us otherwise.”¹³⁵ Some were sensitive about their countrymen knowing that they were working with a former enemy. Also, by 1954 the West German government had begun to pay pensions to many veterans, and the project contributors worried that those payments might be cut off if the German authorities discovered they were receiving compensation from a foreign government. With these considerations in mind, the Air Force Historical Division’s master list of German topic leaders circulated in 1954 bore no security classification in the United States but in West Germany was classified “confidential.”¹³⁶

There were, of course, other incentives for the German contributors to the Monograph Project beyond pay. As with the earlier projects, the Americans attempted to induce Germans to join by appealing to their sense of history. If not they, then who would write the history of the Luftwaffe? The American and British official versions of events had already been published by 1952, and for many Germans failing to respond with their side of the story was unappealing. From 1946 onwards American officers had told the German writers that the new German government, once established, would receive copies

¹³⁵ Hammer to Simpson, 28 January 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹³⁶ Angell to Emme (AWC), 23 March 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

of their studies. By 1952 the United States Air Force could add to that the promise the assurance that copies of the monographs would go to the new West German military.

A critical factor in the search for contributors was the personal prestige of retired *General der Flieger* Paul Deichmann and, to an even greater extent, *Generalfeldmarschall* Albert Kesselring. The only air force officer of any country to command an entire theater, the Mediterranean, during the war, Kesselring had enormous credibility with former Luftwaffe officers. Kesselring had contributed to the Army's historical project and, although a convicted war criminal, was released from prison on the grounds of ill health in 1952. His well-publicized and controversial efforts to rehabilitate the reputation of the German military no doubt made him a persuasive person to bring around other veterans to the notion of helping the Americans. The growing distance from the years of American bombing raids against Germany, coupled with the intensification of the Cold War, also made it easier to work for the former enemy.¹³⁷

West German Rearmament

The growing pressures of the Cold War reshaped the international security environment during the 1950s and led to the rearmament of West Germany, which few had anticipated five years earlier. This lengthy process, which began as murmurs in the press in 1949 and culminated in West German fighter squadrons taking to the air in 1957, would influence

¹³⁷ Entry on death of Kesselring, no date or author given, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v.1.

and be influenced by the Monograph Project. West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was the first to float publically the idea of remilitarization in the press in 1949, but it was not until the following year that detailed plans began to emerge, spurring intense debate within Western Europe and in Germany itself. Events around the world, in particular the Berlin Blockade that ended in May 1949, led to mutual defense treaties and the establishment of NATO in April 1949.

Even though Germany was the likely battlefield for a direct confrontation between NATO and the Soviets, most West Germans remained opposed to rearmament because of the utter destruction the last war had wrought. Resistance to a new German army was also exceptionally strong in France. Adenauer created a small council of military advisors in 1948 that secretly began considering some sort of German contribution to the defense of Western Europe. Separately, American officials began similar preparatory work. Still, when Adenauer made a public offer of West German rearmament in French and American newspaper interviews in late 1949, which David Clay Large terms “Adenauer’s trial balloon,” Western governments, including Washington, strongly rebuked him. The proposal encountered an even cooler reception within the newly independent West Germany.¹³⁸ But the Communist invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950 caused a panic in West Germany, where many feared a similar invasion, and spurred governments into action.

In October 1950, fifteen former senior German officers serving as advisers to the West German government met at the Himmerod monastery and laid down the first detailed plans for a new German military. These included plans for an 831-plane tactical

¹³⁸ Large, 54-56.

air force equipped by and organized along the lines of the U.S. Air Force. However, unlike the U.S. Air Force, which was by then an independent service, the air force outlined in the Himmerod Memo was to be subordinate to the army, parceled out to and directly commanded by army divisions and corps. The proposal ignored air defense altogether and assumed other nations' air forces would handle that role. The only air force officer present at the conference was Robert Knauss, a retired *General der Flieger*.¹³⁹ Knauss held a doctorate in Political Science, wrote extensively, and soon became the Stuttgart radio's chief military and political commentator. In 1954 Deichmann and Hammer would bring him onboard the Karlsruhe Project, where he served as a high-level German language editor alongside Suchenwirth.¹⁴⁰ No matter how skilled Knauss was, he was outnumbered by army officers at Himmerod, as the resulting proposal to subordinate the future air force to the army showed.

Adenauer relieved his primary military advisor in October 1950 for making impolitic remarks and replaced him with Theodor Blank. The *Amt Blank*, the proto-West German defense ministry, became the scene of renewed disagreement between former German army and air force officers. James Corum explains the dichotomy of German opinion regarding the United States military in "Building a New Luftwaffe." German army officers saw no need to imitate the U.S. Army and considered much of its equipment and doctrine obsolete. This was partly a result of psychological factors, Corum reasons, because World War II ground combat experience did not clearly demonstrate to either the Americans or the Germans that the German army was inferior on the tactical

¹³⁹ Corum, "Building a New Luftwaffe," 90-91.

¹⁴⁰ Hammer to Simpson, 23 April 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

level. He counts the Army's German Military History Program as evidence that the Americans believed they could learn something from the German army, particularly with regards to the Soviet Union.¹⁴¹

The reverse was true in the air forces. The former Luftwaffe officers had had a quite different experience during the war. Corum points out that the Luftwaffe lost air superiority over the German homeland more than one year before the Nazi surrender. What's more, the rapid pace of technological advancement meant that the German air force and aerospace industry lagged far behind that of the United States and had no hope of catching up without full American support. The Luftwaffe had fielded the world's first operational jet fighter during World War II, but by the time of German rearmament the fourth generation of jets was already in development in the United States. War and demilitarization had hurt all West German industries, but the slower pace of postwar technological advances in tanks and small arms meant that West Germany was not as far behind in the weapons of ground warfare. For example, Corum observes that West Germany was able to produce prototypes of excellent armored fighting vehicles by 1960. For years afterwards, however, the West German Air Force still relied on American and other European designs, with the Federal Republic producing foreign aircraft under license long before they could develop their own.¹⁴²

If the Bundesluftwaffe were to model itself after the U.S. Air Force, its leaders needed to meet with their American counterparts, but this became more difficult when France proposed the Pleven Plan in 1950. France recognized the need for an increased

¹⁴¹ Corum, 95.

¹⁴² Corum, 95-97.

European contribution to defense but remained fearful of Germany, so it sought to confine its neighbor within a European Defense Community. Negotiations over this coalition structure continued for several years, and in the meantime official contact between the militaries was prohibited. The Naval Historical Team served as a crucial backchannel between the U.S. Navy and German naval planners during this period, but the Air Force did not have a similar cover organization in place already. U.S. Air Force officials toyed briefly with the idea of running a clandestine liaison office out of a German historical program, but partly because of poor timing this did not occur.¹⁴³ Instead, those involved decided in January 1952 that sending German officials to USAFE headquarters at Wiesbaden Air Base in Germany would suffice. Ironically, Lt. Col. Hammer wrote his supervisors with the following news two years later: “You would like to know, I am sure, that your boy has finally made the team. The communist radio in East Germany has broadcast that I, along with Field Marshal Kesselring, General Plocher and others, am working on plans for the new West German Luftwaffe. I feel complimented,”¹⁴⁴ to which his boss replied, “You had better stay the Hell out of Berlin and away from the border.”¹⁴⁵

The U.S. Air Force, which had only formally won its independence from the Army in 1947, was horrified to learn that the West German Air Force might become an air corps wedded to ground forces and therefore emphasized maintaining close relations with *Amt Blank*. In August 1952 *Amt Blank* decided that the Bundesluftwaffe would be an independent service, and the following year restrictions on American liaison with

¹⁴³ Corum, 99.

¹⁴⁴ Hammer to Simpson, 23 April 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁴⁵ Simpson to Hammer, 30 April 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

Germany began to disappear as the European Defense Community collapsed altogether. The United States created a military assistance and advisory group in Germany in November 1953, and more detailed German plans emerged for a twelve-division army and an air force of twenty wings and 1,300 frontline aircraft.¹⁴⁶

The Air Evaluation Staff at Maxwell AFB began sending Hammer USAF doctrinal manuals in July 1954 to distribute to German air force officials, which the Project Staff translated into German. Deichmann took the first batch of six translated manuals to Bonn himself “to insure they are placed in the right hands, i.e. the hands of the Luftwaffe people rather than the Army Over Command,” Hammer wrote.¹⁴⁷ Hammer took this opportunity to publicize the Karlsruhe Project, but the Air Force staff was also genuinely concerned by the interservice debates going on in Bonn. He kept translated copies of the manuals at the Karlsruhe office so that any former officer who wanted to could view them. In addition to the manuals, Hammer transmitted American ROTC textbooks to Germany. Colonel Panitski, one of the Bundesluftwaffe’s two ranking planners in October 1954 and its future chief, came across a volume meant for cadet education while perusing Hammer’s files and excitedly requested any copies Hammer could find.¹⁴⁸ The German officers loved the textbooks Hammer acquired from the commander of ROTC. The books were “elementary and superficial,” Hammer knew, but most of the former German flyers had been “almost completely cut off from the stream of aeronautical and aerial warfare developments during the past eight years.”¹⁴⁹ Although

¹⁴⁶ Corum, 100-101.

¹⁴⁷ Hammer to Col. Page (Air War College), 29 July 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁴⁸ Hammer to Gen. Deichmann (Commandant, HQ USAF ROTC), 4 October 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁴⁹ Hammer to Page, 29 July 1954.

the ROTC textbooks were probably not as useful as the translations of American doctrine in the Bonn interservice debates, the Bundesluftwaffe planned to adapt them for use in their junior officer education.

Effects on the NATO Alliance

The Karlsruhe Project dramatically strengthened not just personal bonds among participants but the German-American military alliance itself. Hammer described this “new, unforeseen by-product” at length in a February 1956 letter to Dr. Simpson, stressing America’s desperate need for “the cooperation and loyalty of its Free World allies, especially Germany.”¹⁵⁰ In fact, Colonel Nye of USAREUR Historical Division had foreseen this potential advantage of the project in a letter to Simpson on November 20, 1953, stating that his organization believed that “this project will provide invaluable dividends over many years from the spirit of cooperation and understanding it is fostering,” which he added was “especially significant” given the goal of defending the Western world.¹⁵¹ Hammer’s 1956 appraisal proves Nye’s prediction true and then some:

Through our Project, men who are now entering highly important positions in the West German Defense Establishment have been working with and for the United States Air Force over a period of several years. During that time, the highest respect for their personal and professional worth and integrity was shown them by the Air Force; respect of a type which for over ten years even their own countrymen had denied them. Thus, men who are entering positions

¹⁵⁰ Hammer to Simpson, 29 February 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

¹⁵¹ Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

corresponding to such of our posts as Chief of Staff, USAF; Chief of Staff, U.S. Navy; Commanding General, Air Defense Command or Tactical Air Command; USAF Representative to the Joint Chiefs of Staff[;] Inspector General, U.S. Army[;] Chairmen of the Civil Aeronautics Board[;] and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Procurement, have come to look on the Air Force as a trusted partner and friend – one which came to them for friendship and cooperation not after they had regained their positions of importance and prestige but at a time when they were desperately in need of such friendship. I cannot overemphasize the profound impression this has made and the feeling of deep loyalty which it has inspired among these men. This feeling is reflected by the fact that every one of them who is leaving has requested that he be permitted to work with us until our Project is completed even though such will mean giving us the few free hours left to him by the demands of his new position. And the individual selected to head the new Luftwaffe accepted the post on the condition that he be permitted to wait until May so that he might complete the major part of his work for us. I doubt that such genuine friendship and loyalty on the part of the top generals of a foreign, major military force could have been gained through other means, regardless of cost.¹⁵²

Simpson was duly impressed by the number of contributors who moved into key positions and their desire to continue work “even at considerable personal sacrifice.”¹⁵³

Hammer later went so far as to hope that the accession of contributors to key defense posts might elevate the status of the Air Force’s monographs. Of the hard-working Josef Kammhuber, the first *Inspekteur der Bundesluftwaffe*, the American wrote: “perhaps his new eminence will lend increased value and significance to his otherwise mediocre contributions.”¹⁵⁴ The new head of West German Air Force had gained notoriety within the project for being the first author whom the Americans had asked to resubmit work, and he also became a close personal friend of the Hammer family. As the project was coming to a close in summer 1957, there was even the possibility that there would not be

¹⁵² Hammer to Simpson, 29 February 1956.

¹⁵³ Simpson to Hammer, 21 March 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹⁵⁴ Hammer to Angell, 4 June 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

sufficient funds to pay those authors who had stayed with the project. In spite of this, all the contributors continued to produce work.¹⁵⁵

A Historical Program Director as Air Attaché

A series of visits by U.S. Air Force officers and staff to Karlsruhe and, more importantly, of Germans to the United States further solidified the relationship. American generals and civilian officials from Air University frequently toured the Karlsruhe offices, held conferences with German contributors, and went on short sightseeing trips around Europe. Often the Americans sought to “pick the brains” of the Germans on topics of future warfare and did not want to dwell on the Monograph Project.¹⁵⁶ The handful of German visits to the United States, on the other hand, did not usually include tours of central Alabama and seem to have made a much greater impression on all involved. The first, by Deichmann in July 1954, was primarily a research trip to quickly identify and catalogue useful documents in American holdings in Washington, D.C. and at Maxwell AFB. The occasion also allowed Deichmann and Hammer to hold round-table discussions with groups from the Air University headquarters staff, Air Command and Staff College, and the Air War College and its Air Evaluation Staff, which was the body

¹⁵⁵ Hammer to Simpson, 1 May 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹⁵⁶ Angell to Hammer, 21 September 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

that wrote U.S. Air Force doctrine.¹⁵⁷ The warm reception Deichmann received was a thrill. “It means a great deal to people like himself to be treated as a respected member of the military flying profession,” Hammer later wrote, and the general did not hesitate to inform the other German contributors of his visit.¹⁵⁸

The Karlsruhe Project also prompted the beginning of a speaking series by German officers at U.S. Air Force staff schools. As with so many other good ideas, the Army’s Nye was the first to point out this potentially important, non-historical payoff of the project.¹⁵⁹

Hammer selected *General der Flieger* Egon Doerstling to speak at the Air War College at Maxwell because of the general’s command of English and his experiences during the war. Like Schmid, Doerstling had commanded units that directly opposed the American strategic bombing campaign over Western Europe, so no matter how well the speech went, it would at least be noteworthy for bringing together former adversaries. A week before his speech, Doerstling surprised Hammer by producing ninety typewritten pages of disorganized thoughts. The American knew that the general’s “courtly, dignified bearing” would go far, but the language of the speech itself was “fearsome to behold. Grammatically correct, but stilted, repetitious, and made up of 19th century British words and usage.” However, Hammer was hard-pressed to edit the speech for fear of wounding the general’s pride, and Doerstling, for his part, retorted that the Air War College had told him to speak for as long as he wished. Hammer brought in his wife, Professor

Suchenwirth, and Louis Jackets, the British archivist who happened to be visiting

¹⁵⁷ Simpson to Hammer, 19 July 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957). This last meeting was the one that first put U.S. Air Force doctrinal manuals in Deichmann’s hands.

¹⁵⁸ Hammer to Page, 29 July 1954.

¹⁵⁹ Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953.

Karlsruhe at the time, to suggest alterations.¹⁶⁰ Everyone involved was anxious that Doerstling make a good impression as he departed Germany. Interestingly, Doerstling flew on a plane that carried a German army general to the U.S. Army War College for the same purpose.

When Doerstling finally delivered his speech, the instructors “could not have been more satisfied or more enthusiastic.” Joe Angell considered it “by all odds the best given by any foreigner and as good as any of those that I regard as the best given by Americans.”¹⁶¹ While on his transatlantic flight, Doerstling evidently had decided to speak from the version of the speech his American and British helpers had heavily edited. Doerstling’s visit during January 1955 took him to Washington, Maxwell, and New York City to visit family members. Friedrich von Boetticher, a longtime German military attaché to the United States, gave the next official speech at the Air War College in September 1956.¹⁶² He fielded questions from American officers about the Bundesluftwaffe and its role in the German defense establishment. These early speeches put a face on German rearmament for the Americans and reaffirmed to the Germans that their new allies took them seriously and valued their opinion. More visits to the United States followed, including one that saw General Kammhuber, in his new official capacity as head of the Bundesluftwaffe, and Deichmann travel to Washington, D.C. and Air University.

The project staff was never thrilled to lose authors to the Bundesluftwaffe because it slowed composition. Finding replacement contributors had always been difficult and

¹⁶⁰ Hammer to Angell, 23 December 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁶¹ Angell to Hammer, 14 January 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁶² Hammer to Angell, 12 September 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

time-consuming. Kammhuber was the first to leave during summer 1956, but his two drafts were fairly complete. Grabmann left the following spring, and so did Plocher, who became the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bundesluftwaffe. Plocher had worked as Deichmann's assistant and had also penned over two thousand pages on the air war against the Soviet Union. His resignation from the project, which was postponed several times on account of delays in the West German government, partly accounts for the lack of coverage of 1944 and 1945 in the monographs. Harry Fletcher, the project's final editor, identified another side effect of the impending departures: "Of course some of the studies were pretty superficial, and I wondered [if] the author in such cases simply "called it a day" or decided to work for the emerging [West German Air Force]." ¹⁶³

Colonel Nye told Dr. Simpson in late 1953 that "the historical program is already conducting operations many of which are normally the role of a military attaché, and is establishing friendly, cooperative relations and securing unparalleled channels of information which normally would require years for a new attaché to build up. This feature of the program alone may prove to justify the funds expended." ¹⁶⁴ Indeed, when in 1957 Assistant Air Attaché to Germany Lt. Col Leonard Hoffman took it upon himself to recommend Hammer for commendation, it was on the grounds that "The contacts which he has established, and transferred to this office, with key GAF personnel have been and will continue to be of great assistance in the accomplishment of our primary mission. In addition, he has done a really superb job of selling the USAF to important

¹⁶³ Fletcher, questionnaire.

¹⁶⁴ Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953.

German officers.”¹⁶⁵ Hammer ultimately received the Legion of Merit for his work on the project thanks to strong recommendations from the Chief of the U.S. Air Force Historical Division and the deputy commander in chief of U.S. Air Forces in Europe, then-Major General Herbert Thatcher.¹⁶⁶

The West German Officer Education System Takes Shape

The German project contributors who became most influential in the West German defense establishment sought to model the Bundesluftwaffe’s officer education system on that of the American Air Force. Although they were ultimately unsuccessful in this effort, this does not alter the fact that, if not for the Karlsruhe Project, key German air force officers would have had little or no firsthand exposure to U.S. Air Force methods. The Air Force Historical Division was part of the Air University (AU), the Air Force command responsible for the service’s staff schools, doctrine, and some of its non-technical research. At the time of the Monograph Project, AU was a major command, meaning that it was directly subordinate to Headquarters Air Force, and was separate from Air Training Command, the organization responsible for pilot, aircrew, and technical training. Thanks to their involvement with the project, Kammhuber and Deichmann were able to tour Air University facilities, and the organization impressed

¹⁶⁵ Lt. Col. Hoffman (Asst. Air Attaché) to Simpson, 8 August 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

¹⁶⁶ Simpson to Assistant Air Attaché Hoffman, 13 August 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 vol. 1 (1952-1962).

them enough that they began formulating plans to create a Bundesluftwaffe organization along similar lines. In summer 1956, Kammhuber returned to active duty and began pitching this idea to the new West German Defense Minister, Franz Josef Strauss. When the American staff in Karlsruhe informed the Historical Division of this development, its deputy chief Joe Angell called it “nothing less than thrilling.”¹⁶⁷

Fall 1956 saw Kammhuber and Deichmann, who was still the German Control Officer of the project, in daily telephone conversations as the two ironed out the details of a German Air University. According to Hammer, Strauss and members of the Bundestag tentatively agreed to the proposal in December.¹⁶⁸ Hermann Plocher, who was still with the project but was slated to serve under Kammhuber as the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bundesluftwaffe, weighed in that same month. Political circumstances in Germany demanded that generals undergo additional screening before they could be reinstated in the new Bundeswehr, and Plocher took the opportunity of his speech before his examining board to promote the AU initiative. He explained the role of AU in the U.S. Air Force and noted that copying the organization directly would cost more than West Germany could afford at the time. Nevertheless, he advocated establishing a command based on the American model. “Such an institution would undoubtedly become a rich source of knowledge in the subjects of military history and defense policy not alone for the soldier,” Plocher proclaimed, “but for every individual who acknowledges and serves the State.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Angell to Hammer, 21 June 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁶⁸ Hammer to Simpson, 3 December 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v.1 (1952-1962).

¹⁶⁹ “Address by General Hermann Plocher Before the Examining Board for Reinduction to New German Defense Force,” 20 December 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957). Referenced in Hammer to Simpson, December 18, 1956.

The first serious challenge to the Air University initiative came in January and February 1957. Kammhuber, Deichmann, and Hammer visited Washington, D.C. and Maxwell AFB, where Kammhuber toured AU for the first time. He returned to Germany convinced not only of the need for a German Air War College but also a German version of Air Command and Staff College, the U.S. Air Force's school for midlevel officers. Unfortunately, the party was in for a surprise. German army officers led by General Hans Speidel had taken the opportunity of Kammhuber's absence from Bonn to push through their own plan for a joint German General Staff Officer School administered by the Army in the Heidelberg area. A joint German historical division would be subordinate to this organization. Education and historical programs under the auspices of the whole German Armed Forces or, worse still, the army, would deny the Bundesluftwaffe much of the autonomy that Kammhuber sought. Kennedy, the American project editor who stayed behind in Karlsruhe, found out about this development in the newspapers.¹⁷⁰

Kammhuber, however, was not easily silenced. A friend of Strauss and a fellow Bavarian and Roman Catholic, Kammhuber protested that Heidelberg did not have technical civilian schools or an airfield at which air force officers could maintain their flying proficiency.¹⁷¹ When these arguments proved insufficient, Kammhuber during the first week of March 1957 brought Strauss to Karlsruhe, where Deichmann gave a detailed briefing on the merits of the Air University proposal. Under the plan, the organization would have three separate divisions: a doctrine-writing and research unit that combined the functions of AU's Research Studies Institute and the Air Evaluation Staff; an

¹⁷⁰ Kennedy to Angell and Hammer to Angell, 27 February 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-1962).

¹⁷¹ Hammer to Angell, 27 February 1957.

administrative and inspectoral group that would recommend, provide for, and supervise educational subject matter, methods, and materials; and finally a two-tiered Air Force staff school system. For nearly two hours, the three men conferred and toured the project offices, pouring over the drafted historical studies and document collection. No Americans were present, but a German staffer later told Hammer what had transpired. Strauss had asked, “How are the French and British organized to perform these functions?” to which Deichmann replied, “I don’t know, but I am convinced our guide should be the United States Air Force.” Strauss indicated “enthusiastic approval” for the Karlsruhe Project and agreed to the German Air University.¹⁷²

The success of what Hammer called the “surreptitious visit” was short-lived.¹⁷³ Budgetary restraints and likely the clout of the German army killed Kammhuber and Deichmann’s Air University initiative for good in May 1957. All along the plan had been to set up the organization within the Luftwaffe’s planned southern regional command. Strauss and Kammhuber badly wanted Deichmann to return to active duty, to which he agreed on the condition that he take command of this organization. Deichmann told Hammer that his insistence partly stemmed from his desire to be able to dispatch some of his Bundesluftwaffe personnel to help complete the Monograph Project in Karlsruhe, which is located in southwest Germany.¹⁷⁴ In summer 1957 the German parliament put the planned Southern Germany Luftwaffe Area on hold. “Kammhuber and his boys in making their plans had not yet become aware that it is 1957 instead of 1937,” Hammer judged. “The peoples’ representatives now must approve the General’s plans and the

¹⁷² Hammer to Simpson, 11 March 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹⁷³ Hammer to Angell, 27 February 1957.

¹⁷⁴ Hammer to Angell, 8 January 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

budget committee of the Bundestag walked in with a big axe.”¹⁷⁵ While the parent organization of the proposed German Air University went “on ice,” the Army-backed joint General Staff school proposal moved forward.¹⁷⁶ This setup had the advantage of being cheaper than running separate service schools. It was also intended to educate officers in a joint environment, thereby better preparing them for joint operations.¹⁷⁷ The *Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr*, or German Armed Forces Staff College, was established on May 15, 1957.¹⁷⁸

The USAF Extends the Project at the Request of Bundesluftwaffe, 1957

The West German parliament’s thriftiness also hurt Deichmann’s plans to edit the Luftwaffe monographs in the German language for use in West Germany. Budget cutbacks led to the clearest demonstration of the impact of the project on the German-American Air Force relationship in spring 1957. Two years earlier, the West German government first demonstrated interest in the American project when Hammer visited the Luftwaffe offices of the *Amt Blank* in Bonn. West German officials proposed sending over one or two German historical officers to work with the Air Force team and stated that when the American project was complete, the German government hoped to inherit

¹⁷⁵ Hammer to Simpson, 1 May 1957.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Major William Bruenner, “Professional Military Education in the Luftwaffe” *Air University Review* (March-April 1969).

¹⁷⁸ Homepage of the school <http://www.fueakbw.de/>, accessed 27 April 2009.

the staff and contacts to form the historical division of the new German Defense Forces. The Air Force Historical Division decided to hold off on the German offer for the time being.¹⁷⁹ When Kammhuber and Deichmann began their failed effort to establish a German Air University in mid-1956, Deichmann seemed intent to include historical research in that organization, although there was little direct talk of working on the Luftwaffe monographs themselves.

As the planned termination of the Karlsruhe phase of the Monograph Project at the end of Fiscal Year 1957 neared, Kammhuber and Plocher, then the leaders of the Bundesluftwaffe, requested through the American air attaché in Germany in April 1957 that the U.S. Air Force continue the project for another year.¹⁸⁰ They stated that budgetary limitations and delays in setting up the German Air University would mean that the German government could not support further work on the monographs in FY 1958. However, \$30,000 would be enough, they claimed, to continue the project on a reduced scale until June 30, 1958, when the Germans would be able to fully support the project themselves.¹⁸¹ Within the Historical Division and Project staff, opinions on continuing the project varied somewhat.¹⁸² All agreed that the extra year would be beneficial. According to Hammer, the German phase was well over 75% complete at the end of FY 1957, which left nine studies incomplete at a time when all writing was supposed to be finished.¹⁸³ Still, Hammer maintained that the Air Force should demand

¹⁷⁹ Hammer to Angell, 11 May 1955, and Hammer to Simpson, 31 May 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-1957).

¹⁸⁰ Note: Prior to 1976 and the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act, the fiscal year began on July 1 and ended on June 30.

¹⁸¹ Air Attaché at Bonn to Air University Commander, April 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹⁸² Angell to Kennedy, 8 May 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹⁸³ "Status of USAF Project," 1 July 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-2 (1953-1971).

matching funds from its ally. With the publication of studies in mind, he also argued that some of the money should be used to translate the drafted studies. Hammer nevertheless backed the continuation of the project, even though only Kennedy would remain in Karlsruhe for the final year.¹⁸⁴

With the strong support of Headquarters United States Air Forces Europe and the Air Force Historical Division, Headquarters USAF approved on June 25, 1957 the funds for FY 1958 with no strings attached.¹⁸⁵ It must have been surprising for Hammer or anyone associated with the project to witness the speed and enthusiasm of the Air Force's reaction to this plea from the Bundesluftwaffe. Thirty thousand dollars was not a tremendous amount of money in the grand scheme of 1950s defense budgets, but only one month before Hammer had been scrounging for a few thousand dollars to translate monographs. The Air Force's momentary generosity did not translate into any newfound priority for the project within the United States. In fact, the Karlsruhe Project became even more understaffed than it already was as Col. Hammer moved on to a new Air Force post.

The Karlsruhe Project continued to be starved for money as well. Almost as soon as the Headquarters U.S. Air Force released the additional funds, the Air Force Historical Division informally asked Deichmann and Kammhuber to use some of the money to translate some of the drafted studies into English. The Germans stood their ground, saying that they had always been clear that their priority was to edit drafts in the German language so that the studies could be used by the German Armed Forces. The Assistant

¹⁸⁴ Hammer to Simpson, 1 May 1957.

¹⁸⁵ Simpson and Angell's Report of Temporary Duty, June 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-1962).

Air Attaché, Lt. Col. Leonard Hoffman, pointed out that giving the Germans the money without conditions essentially made it a gift and wrote that “We are therefore, in an extremely awkward position to attempt to ‘take back’ part of our gift so that we may use it for our own translation purposes.”¹⁸⁶ The Historical Division quickly gave up trying to win over Deichmann. The Americans realized that further efforts might create ill will, that with only \$30,000 allotted for all of FY 1958, the project was on a shoestring budget, and that further German language editing of the studies would produce more useful German drafts for the Historical Division.¹⁸⁷

Kennedy and the German team at Karlsruhe finished a considerable amount of work, including drafts of all planned studies, with the additional year. West German historians toured USAREUR Historical Division in November 1958, where copies of the German drafts of the Luftwaffe monographs remained even after the Air Force shop closed down. The German historians said that these were “the most valuable material they had been able to procure so far” because they were written by participants in the events and had corroborating evidence.¹⁸⁸ Deichmann became the director of a study group at the *Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr* after the Monograph Project’s German office closed. In April 1959 he requested through Simpson educational materials from the Air University for use at his new job.¹⁸⁹

Deichmann continued to exchange letters with Albert Simpson and others at the Historical Division during the 1960s. In 1963 he became the first foreigner to receive the Air University Award for “Outstanding Contributions to the United States Air Force’s

¹⁸⁶ Hoffman to Simpson, 8 August 1957.

¹⁸⁷ Kennedy to Angell, 18 July 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹⁸⁸ Helmut Heitman to Kennedy, 5 November 1958, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

¹⁸⁹ Deichmann to Simpson, 27 April 1959, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1.

Officer Education Program.”¹⁹⁰ In a 1964 letter to Simpson, Deichmann lamented that the U.S. Air Force was more interested in the Luftwaffe’s history than the Luftwaffe itself was. The studies in Alabama were, in his estimation, the most complete history of the German Air Force in World War II.¹⁹¹ In none of his letters to the Historical Division did Deichmann hint at continued work on the Karlsruhe monographs after the Americans left in summer 1958.¹⁹² Copies of the studies reside in German archives, as does the original Karlsruhe document collection, which the Americans returned to West Germany in January 1967.¹⁹³

Relational Rearmament

Forging personal bonds between German and American officers was important for the armies and navies during German rearmament, and the Naval Historical Team and German Military History Program were some of the earliest sites of postwar professional interaction between members of the corresponding services. For the air forces this relational rearmament process in the form of the Karlsruhe Project was absolutely crucial. This did not stem from some unique aspect of aerial combat that demanded especially close connections between allied fliers, although it would have been ideal to have all

¹⁹⁰ Deichmann, *Der Chef im Hintergrund*, 8-9.

¹⁹¹ Deichmann to Simpson, 25 June 1964, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 2 (1963-1969).

¹⁹² The author’s tentative conclusion is that the West German government did not continue to edit the monographs after the closure of the Air Force Historical Division’s Karlsruhe office.

¹⁹³ Wolfe, *Captured Germans and Related Records*, 86.

Western air forces on the same page in the event of a war against the Soviet Union. The nature of German aerial rearmament was what really exaggerated the importance of personal ties between allied air officers. As James Corum observes, German air force planners latched tightly onto the American model in the early 1950s for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was to prevent the establishment of a West German army air corps. Moreover, because the Bundesluftwaffe was so far behind technologically, the learning curve was particularly steep as it tried to restart jet operations. Considering the crises that the service faced in its painfully slow rebirth and the level of dependence it continues to have on the U.S. Air Force, it is well that the first generation of West German air force leaders had longstanding, positive relationships with the Americans thanks to the Karlsruhe Project.¹⁹⁴

If the Bundesluftwaffe of the 1950s considered the U.S. Air Force the ideal teacher (i.e. an independent service that had world-class aircraft and the industrial base to support them), then the Bundesluftwaffe was itself a student who took notes religiously. The relationship between the German and American armies was quite the opposite, as evidenced by the German army's disdain for American procedures and equipment and the U.S. Army's appetite for all things German. As previously noted, the U.S. Army submitted its doctrine to review by Franz Halder and members of his historical team in February 1952. The Americans took the resulting harsh criticisms so seriously that they made sweeping revisions to their doctrine.¹⁹⁵ In November 1953, USAREUR Historical Division's Chief, Col. Nye, told Dr. Simpson that Air Force could use the Karlsruhe

¹⁹⁴ For a detailed treatment of the difficulties in setting up a training establishment for the Bundesluftwaffe in the 1950s, see James Corum, "Starting From Scratch: Establishing the Bundesluftwaffe as a Modern Air Force, 1955-1960." *Air Power History* 50 (Summer 2003).

¹⁹⁵ Soutor, 676-679.

Project members in a similar manner. The Air Force never tasked its former Luftwaffe employees to provide, as Nye suggested, “evaluation and criticism of key Air Force documents such as AF Manual 1-2, “Air Force Basic Doctrine.” On the contrary, the Air Force’s historical project provided top Bundesluftwaffe leaders with copies of American air doctrine and even, when the Germans requested it, ROTC textbooks. That is not to say that the Americans did not show respect for their German counterparts. The very act of asking the former German generals to contribute to the Karlsruhe Project showed that the senior partner in the North Atlantic alliance valued them and their opinions. This in itself meant a great deal to men who had suffered such a total defeat and had been deemed criminals after the war.

The manner in which the Karlsruhe Project came to an end reveals striking similarities between the two air forces by showing the relative weight they assigned to historical writing and international cooperation. When the Germans requested additional funding to continue the project into 1958, the U.S. Air Force snapped into action, this after Air University struggled annually to provide adequate funds for Karlsruhe Project. Of course, the \$30,000 that the U.S. Air Force quickly allocated paled in comparison to the \$9.3 million it gave to the Bundesluftwaffe in 1956 to ensure that the organization got off the ground.¹⁹⁶ Still, the speed with which the Air Force allocated \$30,000 to the Bundesluftwaffe, the fact they came not from the Historical Division but from Air Force headquarters, and the decline of the Project after it no longer involved cooperation with the West Germans speaks to the importance the Air Force assigned to the alliance-

¹⁹⁶ Corum, “Building a New Luftwaffe,” 105. Adjusting for inflation as of 2009, \$30,000 and \$9.3 million are roughly equal to \$230,000 and \$73.7 million respectively.

building aspect of the GAF Monograph Project. When the U.S. Air Force's historical office in Karlsruhe shut down in 1958 and the cooperative phase of the project ended, neither side took the monographs as seriously as before. This was partly a result of practical considerations. With composition mostly complete, the studies, edited or not, could at least serve as reference works for the extensive Karlsruhe document collection. The Americans continued to rework the monographs for eleven more years, but with a reduced staff and downgraded publishing expectations.

It appears that the West Germans did not distribute the studies within the military either, even though Deichmann had long said they would be useful for West German staff schools. One explanation for this may have been a shift in mission for the Bundesluftwaffe directed by Chancellor Adenauer in late 1950s. Intent on West Germany reaching the status of a major Western power, Adenauer ordered the Air Force to select the F-104G, a version of the American-made fighter tailored to deliver a tactical nuclear weapon. Owing to a NATO agreement, the United States controlled tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, but the Starfighter provided the Bundesluftwaffe with the nuclear strike capability that every self-respecting air force had to have.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Corum, 109-110.

CHAPTER IV: INSULATED BUT IGNORED: THE MUTED AIR FORCE RESPONSE TO THE KARLSRUHE PROJECT

It is an old axiom that there is more to be learned from defeat than from victory. If this is true, then the defeat of the Luftwaffe in World War II offers many lessons that we cannot afford to ignore. It is the purpose of the German Monograph Project to make these lessons available to the United States Air Force.¹⁹⁸

-Dr. Albert F. Simpson, Chief, USAF Historical Division, August 29, 1958

The logic of the above quotation notwithstanding, the wider Air Force's interest in the Karlsruhe historical studies, as opposed to the diplomatic benefits of West German-American cooperation, had diminished years earlier. Inadequately supported to begin with, the project's delays caused it to focus solely on finishing monographs. As a result staff members became reluctant to cooperate with the operational Air Force. By the end of 1953, it had become an official history project in a bubble, little noticed and given just enough funding to survive. Insulated from outside pressure to pursue a narrow, "lessons learned" approach like the Army's German Military History Program, the Luftwaffe authors generally provided accurate appraisals of the war that were largely free of the distortions that colored Army studies. Although some Karlsruhe monographs amount to technical reports, the Air Force prioritized others for publication based partly on their quality as traditional, broad, and meticulously-researched histories. But the origin of the Historical Division's free hand – the low level of outside interest – persisted when it

¹⁹⁸ Memo for RSI Director, 29 August 1958, AFHRA, K113.161-3 vol. 1 (1952-62).

completed the first German monographs. Thus, the studies have seen significant use by historians but had little direct influence on the military.

This chapter first explores the origins and implications of the Air Force's distinct approach to history-writing in the early Cold War. Whereas the Army's poor position in the 1950s defense establishment incentivized historical work that legitimated mobile defense and therefore the service itself, the opposite was the case for the Air Force. Rapid technological change in air weaponry coupled with the unique capability of long-range bombers to visit nuclear destruction on the enemy's homeland contributed to Air Force dominance of the Pentagon budget and war plans, which discouraged questioning doctrine or evaluating history that might call into question the efficacy of strategic bombing.

The Influence of Rapid Technological Change

If the typical aircraft of 1945 would have dazzled observers in 1935, then the fleets of jets waiting on alert to launch an intercontinental nuclear attack in 1955 would have left those same observers speechless. Engineers made dramatic advances in range, speed, and payload during World War II, and after the war they did not let up. With its pressurized cabin, remotely-controlled defensive armament, range of 4,100 miles, and payload of 20,000 pounds, the Boeing B-29 was ahead of its time when it entered service in 1944, but within a few years other aircraft eclipsed its performance. The B-52, which first flew

in April 1952 and entered service with Strategic Air Command three years later, had a significantly longer range and could be modified to carry four times the bomb load of the B-29. More important than the specifications of particular aircraft was the advent of aerial refueling. Experiments during the 1920s and 1930s had shown its feasibility, but it was not until after the war that it became commonplace. Three in-flight refuelings made possible a nonstop flight around the world by an American bomber in early 1949. The operational use of tanker aircraft dramatically increased the range, striking power, and persistence of military aircraft, making it at least theoretically possible to keep an aircraft aloft indefinitely.

Technological change greatly altered how aircraft fought. The first jet versus jet combat occurred during the Korean War, but fighters still relied primarily on guns or cannon. Fighters had employed unguided rockets during World War II against bomber formations and ground targets, but these weapons were not suited for engaging maneuvering aircraft. Following the introduction of guided missiles and radar into fighters in the mid-1950s, it became possible to engage hostile aircraft when they were still several miles away. The first operational fighter to carry no guns, the Convair F-102A, entered service with the U.S. Air Force in 1956 armed with air-to-air guided missiles. The following year the Air Force deployed the *Genie*, an unguided, nuclear-tipped air-to-air missile intended for use against enemy bomber formations.

Advances in aircraft, missiles, radar, and computers brought changes in anti-aircraft defenses during the 1950s. In World War II defending fighters and anti-aircraft artillery had been the scourge of bomber formations, but new jet bombers could fly much higher and faster. Defenses kept pace, however, with the abandonment of larger and

farther-reaching guns in favor of the development of radar-guided artillery and surface-to-air missiles. An American Nike Ajax missile downed an unmanned World War II bomber in a 1951 test, and the United States started deploying the system in 1953. The Soviet Union matched with its SA-2 in 1957. In 1958, the year the USAF Historical Division's office in Karlsruhe closed, production began on the supercomputers that would form the basis of the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment, an American integrated air defense system that became operational the following year and was able to literally fly American interceptor aircraft towards incoming Soviet bombers by relaying commands to the planes' autopilots.

The ballistic missile threatened to make any defense impotent in the event of nuclear war. The launch of Sputnik on October 4, 1957 famously demonstrated that the Soviet Union was capable of mounting an intercontinental strike, but it would be some time before the superpowers produced substantial numbers of true intercontinental ballistic missiles. The U.S. Air Force deployed a few of its Atlas ICBMs in 1959, and the U.S. Navy followed by testing its own Polaris missile in 1960. The Soviets began fielding ICBMs on a large scale in 1961. By 1964, the number of Air Force ICBMs on alert surpassed the number of bombers on alert.¹⁹⁹

The above list of technological advances is not meant to be exhaustive; rather, it is included to illustrate the key trends affecting airmen's conceptualization of aerial warfare during the 1950s. Rapid technological change called into question most aspects of airpower, from how pilots would engage the enemy to whether manned aircraft would

¹⁹⁹ The aerospace developments summarized above can be found in Chris Bishop, ed., *The Encyclopedia of 20th Century Air Warfare* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2001).

remain the preferred mode of attack. In short, air warfare appeared to be totally transformed. With guided missiles and nuclear weapons in the arsenal, it was difficult to draw tactical lessons from the World War II experience. Not surprisingly, the U.S. Air Force was not as enthusiastic about its German history program as the Army was with its own because there seemed to be few convenient “lessons” to be gleaned from investigating the Luftwaffe’s experience.

Tactical lessons and concepts were more readily transferrable from the German army to its American counterpart. American Army officers preparing to fight the Red Army identified with the German descriptions of the Eastern Front because they too would be “badly outnumbered and on the defensive” in the event of war. In describing how U.S. Army officers eagerly responded to the emerging German army reports, Kevin Soutor writes: “the Americans would fight the same enemy as the Germans had, one that retained the same field commanders and used the same tactics; and conventional technology had changed little since World War II’s end.”²⁰⁰ The weapons soldiers used in the 1950s were by and large slight improvements over those of World War II. For example, the Red Army’s main battle tanks during and after World War II were remarkably similar. The earlier T-34 had a road speed of 31 mph and an 85 mm main gun. The T-54 was introduced in 1947 and served as the Warsaw Pact’s standard tank until it began to be replaced in 1960. It was more heavily armored than the T-34, carried a 100 mm gun, and had the same top speed as its predecessor.²⁰¹ Of course, speed and gun caliber are far from the only measures of effectiveness for a tank (importantly, focus

²⁰⁰ Soutor, 671-2.

²⁰¹ David Miller, *Tanks of the World: From World War I to the Present Day* (Osceola, WI: MBI Publishing, 2001): 238, 252-253.

shifted to improving ammunition, armor, and fire-control systems), but compared to the dramatic advances in aerospace technology of the era, these were incremental, not transformational, improvements.²⁰²

If the U.S. Air Force was obsessed with fielding the most technologically advanced weapons systems, it was not without good reason. During World War II American engineers and officers had been disturbed to find that their German counterparts were far ahead in many areas of research and development. German rocket and jet engine research and high-speed wind tunnel testing were particularly advanced, while the Allies had superiority in other technologies like large piston engines and turbo-superchargers. Germany produced the world's first ballistic missile, cruise missile, and operational jet fighter during the war. These weapons did not translate into victory for the Axis Powers, but their earlier production in larger numbers would have caused significant problems for the Allies. In recognition of this threat and the especially close relationship between aircraft technology and combat capability, the Western Allies established extensive technical air intelligence programs during the war. Until 1944 the British Royal Air Force had the lead, but after American troops landed on the European continent, the U.S. Army Air Force began to assert itself. On April 22, 1945, General Henry "Hap"

²⁰² That is not to say that there were not important advances in U.S. Army equipment or methods during the 1950s. Ultimately the most important was the helicopter, which changed how that service waged war. Still, Army weapons development did not proceed as rapidly as air force during the decade. Interestingly, the U.S. Army fully accepted helicopters in large numbers and created airmobile units only after they were combined with turboshaft powerplants. This form of gas turbine engine was first built by a French firm in 1948 and integrated into an existing helicopter design by an American in 1951. Early prototypes of the famous Bell UH-1 "Huey" flew in late 1956.

Arnold approved the consolidation of all American air intelligence efforts in Europe under Operation LUSTY, a derivation of the term Luftwaffe Secret Technology.²⁰³

While the parallel Operation PAPERCLIP focused on acquiring German rocket technology and expertise, LUSTY brought Luftwaffe equipment, aircraft, and documents to the United States. The number of German scientists working in the United States through Operation PAPERCLIP never exceeded 500, but historian and retired Air Force intelligence officer Charles Christensen estimates that the total number of German scientists and engineers who became contributors to the American aerospace industry numbered in the thousands. He concludes that the exploitation of German science and engineering saved the U.S. government at least \$1 billion, and it cut the development times of weapons ranging from jet aircraft to guided missiles by several years. Particularly crucial to the development of postwar American airpower was German high-speed wind tunnel technology. Christensen observes that these facilities were the “foundation for developing the aerodynamic structures capable of operating above the speed of sound” before the advent of computer simulation, and in 1945 the Germans were at least five years ahead in this area.²⁰⁴ These postwar intelligence efforts spurred the creation of larger and more dedicated aerospace research and development facilities in the United States, which immediately paid dividends in the form of the Boeing B-47. The Air Force’s first operational jet bomber, the B-47’s swept wings, pylon-mounted axial flow turbojet engines, and even its ribbon drag-and-brake parachutes were all German innovations. Between 1947 and 1956, more than 2,000 were delivered to the Air Force,

²⁰³ Charles Christensen, *A History of the Development of Technical Intelligence in the Air Force, 1917-1947, Operation LUSTY* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 60-61.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 192-194.

and the novel design paved the way for the B-52 and the 707 commercial airliner, as well as its many military and civilian derivatives.²⁰⁵ Developments such as these focused militaries', and especially the U.S. Air Force's, attention on achieving technological superiority.

The Era of Air Force Dominance and Doctrinal Stagnation

Like the rapid pace of technological change during the early Cold War, the Air Force's dominance within the American defense establishment did not incentivize reflection. Stephen McFarland characterizes the ascendance of the newly independent Air Force in the early Cold War as the "birth of a new defense paradigm," one in which the Air Force replaced the Navy as America's first line of defense. This shift stemmed from the Air Force's effective monopoly on nuclear weapons and the development of long range bombers like the B-36. Although the Navy first deployed nuclear weapons aboard an aircraft carrier in 1950, McFarland explains that because of the shorter range of Navy aircraft, the carriers would have been forced to operate in the confined and dangerous waters of the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas. Therefore, land based Air Force bombers

²⁰⁵ Wolfgang W.E. Samuel, *American Raiders: The Race to Capture the Luftwaffe's Secrets* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2004): 153, 434; Bishop, 262.

were the best means of attacking targets deep inside the Soviet Union until ICBMs appeared in the late 1950s.²⁰⁶

The disparity between the strength of the American and Soviet armies coupled with domestic political pressures in the United States made assigning priority to the strategic air force the only attractive option. According to a report generated by the War Department in fall 1946, even after partial demobilization, the Soviet Union maintained 208 divisions and 15,500 combat aircraft, of which approximately half sat opposite Western forces in Europe. Soviet satellite states had another 100 divisions and 3,300 combat aircraft. The report also correctly predicted that the Soviets would acquire nuclear weapons by 1949. The United States planned to draw down to only one or two divisions and twelve air groups in Germany in 1947.²⁰⁷ With World War II won, the United States had little appetite for maintaining a large, expensive standing army or for a strategy that would pit it against the land power of the Soviet Union. The only realistic course of action in the event of a Soviet offensive in Western Europe was to retreat on the ground while striking at the sources of Soviet power with Air Force nuclear bombers.

While strategic nuclear attack became the centerpiece of American war plans beginning in the immediate postwar years, with the Western European recovery and the establishment of NATO, it became less acceptable to plan on abandoning continental Europe at the outset of hostilities. The United States and its European allies increased the sizes of their conventional forces after witnessing Communist aggression in Korea. In

²⁰⁶ Stephen McFarland, "The Air Force in the Cold War, 1945-60: Birth of a New Defense Paradigm" *Airpower Journal*, Fall 1996, accessed online at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj96/fall96/mcfarld.html> on 8 May 2009

²⁰⁷ Harry R. Borowski, *A Hollow Threat: Strategic Air Power and Containment Before Korea* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1982), 95-6.

1951 the U.S. Air Force planned to increase the size of its forces in Europe six-fold by 1954 to 185,000 personnel. Soon, however, the service scaled back its goals and eventually only increased its commitment to 136,000.²⁰⁸ This was still a substantial increase, but the downward revision of American conventional force levels reflected broader trends in American defense policy. The premise of President Eisenhower's Massive Retaliation strategy, articulated in 1954, was that the United States would use nuclear weapons as a first resort, weapons that the Air Force was best situated to employ. Allied nations were expected to bear the burden of fielding conventional forces to defend their own territory. West German rearmament was the embodiment of this principle.

The emphasis that the United States placed on the strategic nuclear deterrent meant that the Air Force received a growing portion of the defense budget during the 1950s. Until the start of the Korean War in 1950, the armed forces had had to compete for dwindling funds, leading to discord. The onset of war in Korea soothed interservice rivalries to a large extent as the defense budget quadrupled between fiscal years 1949 and 1951, from \$11 billion to \$47.8 billion. The budget continued to fluctuate through the 1950s but never again came close to the lows of the late 1940s, ending at \$41.4 billion in 1960. More important for the present discussion, the proportion of spending that went to the Air Force gradually increased during the 1950s. In fiscal year 1951, the most desperate phase of the Korean War, the Army received 41 percent, the Navy 26 percent, and the Air Force 33 percent. The next fiscal year, with the front in Korea stabilized, the Air Force received 44 percent, with the remainder split evenly. At mid-decade, the Air Force received 40 percent, and in FY 1960 it received 47 percent of the budgeted funds

²⁰⁸ Corum, "Establishing a New Luftwaffe," 92.

for defense. McFarland observes that the rising defense budgets that supported America's post-Korea buildup allowed all the services to achieve at least some of their force level increases and procurement goals, but it is clear that the Air Force came out on top.²⁰⁹

Mirroring the broader trends in the military, within the Air Force the Strategic Air Command was dominant in terms of funding and representation in the Air Force leadership. Established in March 1946, a year and a half before the Air Force became independent, SAC was responsible for the nation's growing fleet of land-based strategic bombers and, for a time, all of its nuclear weapons. The U.S. Air Force's devotion to strategic bombing was nothing new. During the interwar years, proponents of an independent air force had latched onto strategic bombardment of the sources of enemy power partly because it was a unique mission that the other services could not perform. The launch of Sputnik in 1957 demonstrated America's vulnerability and further strengthened SAC. With its units constantly on alert, SAC's operating cost were six times higher than those of TAC in 1958 and nine times higher in 1961. SAC dominance peaked in 1961 when General Curtiss LeMay left his post as head of SAC to become the Air Force Chief of Staff; by the end of the year all major operational commanders and the vast majority of Air Staff members were bomber generals.²¹⁰

In the meantime Tactical Air Command struggled to survive during the 1950s even though it bore the brunt of actual combat in Korea while SAC postured to deter a wider war with the Soviets. From December 1948 to November 1950, TAC and Air Defense Command had actually been made subordinate to Continental Air Command,

²⁰⁹ Warren A. Trest, "View from the Gallery: Laying to Rest the Admirals' Revolt of 1949," *Air Power History* 42 (Spring 1995): 21. Cited in McFarland.

²¹⁰ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 86-89.

while SAC remained separate.²¹¹ Thomas Finletter, who was Secretary of the Air Force for almost the entire war, later summed up the service's opinion on the conflict. While acknowledging that the Korean War had made possible the expansion of the military, he lamented that it "had the unfortunate effect of emphasizing the importance of the weapons and tactics of the past."²¹² It was clear to the leaders of TAC, just as it was to the Army and Navy at the time, that the only way to ensure institutional survival was to acquire nuclear weapons. In July 1951 the Air Force directed the modification of tactical aircraft to carry nuclear weapons that would, with the help of SAC bombers, attempt to retard a Soviet offensive.²¹³ TAC went a step further on July 8, 1955 when it created the Composite Air Strike Force, which historian Caroline Ziemke calls a "miniature SAC." Equipped with fighters, fighter-bombers, light bombers, and reconnaissance aircraft, the CASF concentrated TAC's nuclear weapons-capable aircraft, providing the Air Force with "massive retaliatory capability on the regional rather than the global level."²¹⁴ The CASF proved useful as a rapid reaction force, deploying to crises in Lebanon and Taiwan in 1958, but its existence nevertheless illustrated the nuclear focus of the Air Force.²¹⁵

With the attention of even those airmen tasked with the employment of tactical airpower fixated on nuclear weapons, Air Force doctrine stagnated in the 1950s. While the Army developed its own organic aviation, the Air Force stubbornly clung to its nuclear deterrent role. On February 17, 1958 a study group led by Colonel Taylor Drysdale of the Air Research and Development Command concluded that the Air Force

²¹¹ Futrell, vol. 1: 307, 313.

²¹² Futrell, vol. 1, 304.

²¹³ Futrell, vol. 1, 310-311.

²¹⁴ Ziemke, "*In the Shadow of the Giant*," 302.

²¹⁵ Futrell, vol. 1: 450, 610-615.

was neglecting the theory of war and focusing too much on technology.²¹⁶ The following year the Air Staff attempted to remedy this by assigning additional doctrine writing and research duties to the Research Studies Institute (RSI) at Air University, but in typical fashion it did not assign additional personnel or funding to RSI so that it could execute this new mission. The Air Force did not release doctrine that was substantially new until 1964.

Delays Contribute to Loss of Air Force Interest

At the time the Karlsruhe Project started, *Generaloberst* Franz Halder's panel of six former German General Staff officers was critiquing the U.S. Army's current version of operational doctrine, FM 100-5, a year-long process that they completed in April 1953.²¹⁷ By November 1953, the year-old Karlsruhe Project was already over budget and behind schedule, which prompted USAREUR Historical Division chief Colonel Nye to appeal to Air Force Historical Division chief Dr. Simpson for more funds. In his letter Nye touted the current and potential benefits of the project, giving Simpson arguments with which the latter could defend the project if need be. Nye proclaimed the value of the Luftwaffe

²¹⁶ Futrell, vol. 2, 161.

²¹⁷ Soutor, 676-678.

veterans as an intelligence source, a historical question-and-answer service for Air University agencies, and doctrinal critics.²¹⁸

In fact, Colonel Hammer, the Karlsruhe Project officer, had already suggested all these attributes to Deputy Air University Commander Major General John Barker on the eve of the latter's retirement three months earlier. The Air Force's response to Hammer's suggestions varied greatly. Hammer's proposal that "our [German] generals evaluate, or prepare a new version of, AF Manual 1-2 and such AU doctrinal manuals as those on Theater Air and Air Defense Operations" was never enacted.²¹⁹ This was despite initial support from Simpson, who indicated that he wanted studies on AF Manual 1-2 and a summary report on "Lessons in Aerial Warfare Revealed in the German Air Force Studies."²²⁰ However, both Hammer and Simpson qualified their remarks by classifying such tasks as ancillary to historical work. Hammer would have had to wait until the majority of monographs reached maturity to write "Lessons." In the early stages of the project, it is likely that everyone thought there would be time and support for such tasks later. Whereas the Army had not only requested German review of its operational doctrine but also revised FM 100-5 as a result, the Air Force, reluctant to review its doctrine to begin with, never followed suit. The Karlsruhe Project made a start towards doctrinal review, but there was no sense of urgency. Without outside pressure the Historical Division remained focused on the strictly historical work that was its primary responsibility.

²¹⁸ Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-62).

²¹⁹ Hammer to Barker, 31 August 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-62).

²²⁰ Regarding "Lessons" Simpson remarked "Hammer should – and will – do this job." Minutes from Discussion with Simpson at USAFE, no date give (likely late 1953), K113.161-5 (1952-53).

Similarly, Nye and Hammer initially believed that the Karlsruhe team could answer Luftwaffe history questions for the U.S. Air Force. However, as the project fell behind schedule, Hammer was less eager to answer questions that would be addressed in the monographs. Concerned primarily with meeting monograph deadlines, he attempted to lower expectations of the project's ability to provide this service, writing in November 1954 to an AU official that "you will understand, of course, that the answers will be somewhat off-the-cuff unless we already have related material prepared." Hammer cited the already heavy commitments of the contributors and their reluctance to give answers "short of a full-scale, time consuming research effort" as reasons why the Karlsruhe team was not ideally suited for this role. Still, he said they would accept "important questions that require immediate answers."²²¹ The German contributors only performed this service three times.²²²

The operational Air Force was much more interested in the Luftwaffe veterans' photographs of the Soviet Union. During the project's first year, German contributors donated (and sometimes literally dug up) hundreds of privately owned photographs and revealed a 40,000-page hidden official Luftwaffe document collection. "We have found many Germans are willing to contribute data to a historical effort which they would refuse for various reasons if they knew it were to be used solely for intelligence purposes," Nye wrote. At the personal direction of the chief of the intelligence division of Headquarters U.S. Air Forces Europe, his personnel began screening all incoming

²²¹ Hammer to Emme, 4 November 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-62).

²²² The project provided Air Materiel Command a brief on the relationship between politics and logistics in the Luftwaffe at the request of its commander, General Edwin Rawlings: Hammer/Kennedy to Angell, 4 May 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-57). Hammer declined having the contributors write a paper on the Battle of Britain and provided brief answers to a query on four-engine bombers in the Luftwaffe: Hammer to Angell, 27 February 1957, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-57).

materials, “especially photographs of operational conditions and aerial mosaics of cities and installations behind the Iron Curtain.”²²³ The Historical Division circulated some German photos within the Air War College.²²⁴ It is unclear how long this continued or whether reconnaissance and targeting personnel ever worked directly with contributors.

The flow of photographs piqued the interest of officials at Headquarters USAFE, which provided administrative support for the project because Hammer was technically assigned there. In the project’s first year, Hammer told the Historical Division’s chief that he had “heard hints that [USAFE] would like to take us over,” a move that Hammer had discouraged at USAFE based on the Army’s greater experience and historical infrastructure. Hammer’s “more basic, though unvoiced, grounds” were the “roadblocks” that a USAFE takeover would erect between the project and the Air Force Historical Division.²²⁵ When the Historical Division began its lengthy search for a Karlsruhe Project editor in 1955, Hammer vehemently opposed assigning the individual to USAFE, writing “a good part of my time is devoted to severing or resisting ties which USAFE would place on our Project by virtue of my being assigned to it.”²²⁶ Jaded by numerous USAFE administrative foul-ups and intensely loyal to Air University (this was his second consecutive assignment there), Hammer’s primary concern was that Air University retain control of the project since it was ultimately responsible for finishing and distributing the monographs. In the process, he may have worsened the project’s financial situation. Beginning in late 1953, Hammer avoided approaching USAFE with the project’s frequent financial problems “even though [USAFE] quite possibly might have some unused

²²³ Nye to Simpson, 20 November 1953.

²²⁴ Simpson to Hammer, 26 March 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1/2 (1952-62).

²²⁵ Hammer to Simpson, 24 November 1953, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1/2 (1952-62).

²²⁶ Hammer to Angell, 25 January 1955, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-57).

[Deutsche Marks] lying around at the end of the fiscal year.” Hammer wrote in summary that “Comptroller and controller are pronounced too much alike for my comfort.”²²⁷

In contrast to this territorial dispute between USAFE and Air University, the Army’s European theater command, USAREUR, administered its German history program, reflecting a more intimate relationship between those writing Army studies and the intended audience. While USAFE showed strong interest in the Karlsruhe Project as an intelligence source, this lasted only as long as the authors provided Eastern Front photographs. After 1953, the Air Force neglected its project. Whereas Colonel Momyer, the head of the Air Evaluation Staff, had been keenly interested in the monographs, his successor showed “manifest ignorance of our project” in spring 1954, according to the Assistant Chief of the Historical Division.²²⁸ In a way, the project achieved relative independence, as Hammer wanted, but at the cost of further distancing itself from the operational Air Force.

Outside interest in the Karlsruhe Project never returned, partly because its years of greatest activity coincided with the decline of research activities across Air University. According to Air Force historian Frank Futrell, General Muir S. Fairchild, the founder of Air University, envisioned that it would not only disseminate knowledge throughout the service but also “develop knowledge through research.” Unfortunately, “after an early incandescence in the early 1950s, the flame of research began to flicker at Air University by 1956,” when the Air War College no longer required its students to research “problems of Air Force and defense interest.” Targeted manpower and force reductions

²²⁷ Hammer to Simpson, 24 November 1953.

²²⁸ Angell to Hammer regarding Col. N. T. Perkins, 9 April 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-57).

the following year “left no doubt that the training mission of Air University had a higher priority than research.”²²⁹

The Karlsruhe Project’s View of Its Own Role

The process by which the Air Force Historical Division prioritized studies reveals that the organization aimed to please both the Air Force and the historical community with its Luftwaffe monographs, which differed from the policy-focused Army and Navy programs. In the early 1960s the Historical Division realistically downgraded its expectations, hoping that it could complete fifteen studies, which it selected based on “a) interest to the Air Force, b) quality of the German manuscript and subject matter, [and] c) and historical importance and significance for reference purposes.”²³⁰ The first criterion clearly applied to the six Soviet studies, while the other two encompassed Professor Suchenwirth’s works, not surprising given his background as a historian and the gravity of the subjects he addressed. The last three published studies were *The GAF General Staff*, *Airlift Operations*, and *Operations in Support of the Army*, which are each relatively broad, scholarly, and were easy to edit.²³¹

²²⁹ Futrell, vol. 2, 160-161.

²³⁰ Information sheet re: conference in Dr. Simpson’s office, 8 October 1963, and Suggested studies for publication as USAF Historical Studies, 11 October 1965, AFHRA, K113.161-2 (1953-71).

²³¹ For a review essay of selected monographs, see Appendix D.

Many other monographs for which the Historical Division had high hopes fell by the wayside over time. A good example was Kammhuber's studies on nighttime air defense, which initially generated great interest at Air University. Enthusiasm diminished when the staff discovered that the general did not make a good historian. Insulated from outside pressure to pursue particular topics but led by government service historians, the project's natural tendency was to drift towards the best works in the traditional historical sense and those that would prove most useful for historians. As late as January 1969, the goal was still to complete fifteen monographs, but when Simpson became incapacitated, Maurer took over and ended the Karlsruhe Project.²³² Studies of the Mediterranean and Western theaters would have been the last three monographs published if work had continued into the 1970s.²³³

The project staff and Hammer in particular were more concerned with how historians would receive the monographs than they were about their immediate usefulness to the Air Force. If the staff was not keenly aware of the dangers of employing high-ranking veterans of the Third Reich, the highly unfavorable press that greeted Albert Kesselring's memoir, *A Soldier to the End*, caught their attention. Published in 1953, the memoir was a shameless apologia in the opinion of most. One German reviewer explained the author's true meaning in the title: "soldier" meant a professional who was just following orders, while "to the end" was an attack on those who "gave up the ghost" before the field marshal accepted defeat. In reference to the atrocities that took place in Italy under Kesselring's command, another reviewer dubbed the book *Executioner until*

²³² List of GAF Monographs, 20 January 1969, AFHRA, K113.161-2 (1953-71); Fletcher, questionnaire.

²³³ Dr. Simpson had already authored a study on Allied operations in the Mediterranean theater, and the unpublished monographs on Western air operations have yielded important insights on the Combined Bomber Offensive.

the End.²³⁴ The book's reception was not as cold in the United States, but it strengthened the Historical Division's conviction to produce monographs that were as heavily documented and apolitical as possible. Hammer's supervisors sent him copies of the negative reviews and surmised that the usually savvy officer "appreciates the danger."²³⁵ Hammer, to whom Kesselring gave an autographed copy of his memoir, agreed with the reviewers.²³⁶

The last thing that the Historical Division wanted was for the Karlsruhe monographs to become a venue for uncontrolled venting on the part of the German authors. Hammer had a prescient understanding of the role the monographs would one day play in the historiography of the war. They would not be definitive histories but instead would fill the void of literature on the air war from the German perspective, which henceforth had been satisfied primarily by memoirs like Adolf Galland's *The First and the Last*. He correctly believed that reconstructing the past would be "a manifestly impossible task so long as only the evidence and testimony of the Allies have been heard." Hammer did not minimize the many faults that would be apparent to the "critical historian" but believed the monographs would be valuable in spite of them because the final drafts would "present much usable testimony and evidence of one party to the world conflict whose story it is the business of professional historians to tell fully and accurately." It was his responsibility to ensure that the authors cited their sources, just as it would be the job of future Air Force and civilian historians to "weigh our product, rule

²³⁴ Kerstin von Lingen, trans. Alexandra Klemm, *Kesselring's Last Battle: War Crimes Trials and Cold War Politics, 1945-1960* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 280-282.

²³⁵ Angell to Hammer, 5 February 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-4 (1954-57).

²³⁶ Hammer to Simpson, 23 February 1954, AFHRA K113.161-3 v. 1/2 (1952-62).

out the irrelevant, inadmissible and invalid, and use that which remains in rendering you final judgments.”²³⁷

A potential obstacle to presenting sound histories was the Historical Division’s commitment to staying true to the original meaning of the author. This approach was risky given the tendency of some German veterans to spout off racially-based explanations of Russian combat effectiveness.²³⁸ It was more likely that the authors might misunderstand events, which a Luftwaffe expert might be able to catch. Unfortunately, as Hammer explained, none of the project’s American staff members were “qualified students of the Luftwaffe, and if we were we would not have the right...to edit changes arbitrarily into the author’s content or intent.” To minimize major factual errors, Hammer hoped that the historians at Maxwell would be able to review preliminary drafts of the monographs and suggest revisions so that the monographs would still reflect the feelings of the German authors. Delays in composition and a shortage of translators frustrated plans for early editing.

It is hard to imagine a member of the Army’s program being overly concerned with historians’ opinion of, for example, its study D-285 on *The 35th Infantry Division Between Moscow and Gzhatsk, 1941*. In fact, until 1954 the Army classified its studies, preventing their use by academia; it declassified them only when the service acquired its first tactical nuclear weapons, which caused the historical program to dwindle in importance.²³⁹ Oddly enough, for all Hammer’s concern about contributing to the historical record, the Air Force also classified its monographs at first. The Air Force

²³⁷ Hammer to Simpson, 23 February 1954, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1/2 (1952-62).

²³⁸ This seems to have been less a problem for the Air Force program than it was for the Army’s but occurred nevertheless. See discussion of Klaus Uebe’s monograph in Appendix D.

²³⁹ Soutor, 683.

initially released them as part of its Numbered Historical Studies series, which began during World War II and included studies such as “The Glider Pilot Training Program, 1941-1943.” Written at the behest of the Commanding General, Army Air Forces, these numbered studies were intended to be for staff and operational use and presented a “first narrative” for use in the larger official histories of the Army Air Forces. The Air Force later declassified these works for use by private researchers. Harry Fletcher, the Karlsruhe Project editor for its last six years, expected the German monographs to follow a similar course, but in 1968 the Historical Division suddenly contracted with Arno Press, a division of the New York Times, to publish its completed studies for public dissemination, reflecting the monographs’ lack of any connection to current doctrine and planning.

There was no response to the Karlsruhe monographs in Air Force professional journals as there had been in the Army, where articles heralded the arrival of one German report after another. Timing undoubtedly played a role. Most Army reports emerged less than a decade after the end of World War II, while the Air Force did not publish its studies until two decades after the events in question. Still, the lack of response to even the studies on the Soviet Union is noteworthy. On the other hand, since the early 1980s the monographs and the Luftwaffe document collection have seen considerable use by noted airpower historians Horst Boog, James Corum, Von Hardesty, Edward Homze,

Richard Muller, Williamson Murray, and Richard Overy.²⁴⁰ Uniformed officers have also made extensive use of both the published and unpublished monographs in research papers, a task facilitated by the location of the Air Force Historical Research Agency (successor of the Historical Division) next-door to the service's staff schools at Maxwell AFB.

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Army History

The muted Air Force response to its German monographs had some indirect benefits. In contrast to the Air Force, which in the early Cold War seemingly believed it had little to learn from the Luftwaffe or anyone else for that matter, the U.S. Army developed an acute inferiority complex towards the German army that went beyond a healthy respect for German operational and tactical prowess. The German Report Series contributed heavily to this phenomenon, with its one-sided accounts of German operational virtuosity. The scores of reports, translated into English and disseminated across the Army, reinforced the image of the German army (and, not incidentally, its

²⁴⁰ See Horst Boog, "Higher Command and Leadership in the German Luftwaffe, 1935-1945" in *Air Power and Warfare: The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium, USAF Academy, 18-20 October 1978* (Office of Air Force History: Washington, 1979); James Corum, *The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Von Hardesty, *Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-1945* (Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, 1982); Edward Homze, *Arming the Luftwaffe: The Reich Air Ministry and German Aircraft Industry, 1919-1939* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1976); Richard Muller, *The Luftwaffe Over Germany*; Williamson Murray, *Strategy for Defeat: The Luftwaffe, 1933-1945* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1983); Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995).

generals) as the best in the world, only brought down by the sheer weight of forces arrayed against it. The U.S. Army was hungry for any information on the Red Army, but because few Westerners could vouch for the German accounts of pivotal Eastern Front land battles, the service generally accepted these accounts wholesale. American fascination with German martial skill was neither baseless nor entirely new, for Army reformers began emulating the Prussian military system soon after its victory over France in 1871; however, following World War II, American officers, German veterans, and historians created an obsession.²⁴¹

The post-World War II publication of dozens of memoirs by famous German generals and several influential histories that emphasized German skill and American ineptitude produced a fundamental underestimation of the American army in World War II that scholars have only recently remedied. Dennis Showalter summarized well the pattern of most memoirs, with their “tendency to devote several hundred pages to the glory days of Operation Barbarossa, then plug in a chapter deploring Hitler’s interference with one’s military genius, and finally skip lightly over the three years that brought the Russians from the Volga to the Elbe.”²⁴² This description applies to a certain extent to the Army monographs as well. One of the largest and best known pamphlets, *Small Unit Actions during the German Campaign in Russia*, combines analyses of fifty engagements. Of these, only seventeen address actions that took place later than January 1943; only eight cover actions in 1944, three of them in the first half of the year; and only

²⁴¹ Robert M. Cassidy, “Prophets or Praetorians? The Uptonian Paradox and the Powell Corollary,” *Parameters* (Fall 2003), available online at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/Parameters/03autumn/cassidy.pdf>, last accessed 14 August 2009.

²⁴² “Fighting the Russians: An Ultimate Test?” in *Air University Review* (Nov.-Dec. 1983), available online at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/cadre/aspi/airchronicles/aureview/1983/Nov-Dec/showalter.html>, last accessed 9 August 2009.

two cover 1945.²⁴³ Considered as a whole, the mass of literature by Wehrmacht veterans encouraged Western scholars and soldiers alike to sympathize with the German army and emphasized the years of German victory, a dangerous distortion for anyone attempting to learn from the German experience.

What some have simply called a love affair with all things German, historian and Army Major General Daniel Bolger has derisively dubbed “Wehrmacht Penis Envy.”²⁴⁴ Whatever the name, the influence of German arms on the U.S. Army became abundantly clear during the 1980s.²⁴⁵ Articles on German methods featured prominently in professional Army journals, and with the promulgation of maneuver warfare theory, terms like *Schwerpunkt* and *Auftragstaktik* became part of the vernacular. The former Wehrmacht generals nursed this infatuation, whether consciously or unconsciously, as they sought to influence NATO defense plans. In an American-sponsored war game in May 1980, retired *General der Panzertruppe* Hermann Balck and his former chief of staff F. W. von Mellenthin easily turned the tables on an overwhelmingly superior mock Warsaw Pact aggressor and launched a counterattack towards East Germany.²⁴⁶ Actual German operational skill notwithstanding, it was not until the mid-1980s that historians began to seriously question the mystique of the German army.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ No. 20-269 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1953).

²⁴⁴ Then-Major Daniel Bolger, “Maneuver Warfare Reconsidered” in *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology*, ed. Richard Hooker, Jr. (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1993), 27.

²⁴⁵ For one of the earliest refutations of the image of the vaunted German army, see John Sloan Brown, “Colonel Trevor N. Depuy and the Mythos of Wehrmacht Superiority: A Reconsideration,” *Military Affairs* 50: 1 (1986).

²⁴⁶ Showalter, “A Dubious Heritage: The Military Legacy of The Russo-German War,” *Air University Review*, (March-April 1985). Showalter writes that “the old Wehrmacht hands made it look easy.”

²⁴⁷ For a summary of the works that alternately reinforced and questioned German army combat effectiveness and American weakness, see Peter Mansoor, “The GI Offensive in Europe: A talk given to NYMAS on April 25, 2006,” available online at <http://libraryautomation.com/nymas/gioffensiveineurope.html>.

The Army's German history program was both a reflection and cause of this trend, and even though it represents only one factor behind the glorification of the German army and the diminution of the American army, it was an essential one. While German memoirs and postwar histories showed that the German army was exceptionally skilled at the operational art, the Army's history program, through Halder's criticism of American doctrine and the numerous journal articles citing German methods, demonstrated to the service itself that the German generals were the gracious teachers and the Americans their willing students.

Two elements of the Wehrmacht narrative made emulating the German army palatable for American officers. Seizing the unprecedented opportunity to shape the memory of the war through a history program sponsored by the former enemy, Franz Halder established for his comrades the standard narrative, which blamed defeat on Hitler's frequent meddling and separated the Wehrmacht from the SS.²⁴⁸ Hitler – dead and universally despised – made the perfect scapegoat. Hitler was not the military expert he fancied himself to be, but one could argue that the Red Army would have reached Berlin even sooner if the military had had free reign.²⁴⁹ The second part of the Halder

²⁴⁸ Bernd Wegner, "Erschriebene Siege: Franz Halder, die 'Historical Division' und die Rekonstruktion des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Geiste des deutschen Generalstabes" in *Politischer Wandel, organisierte Gewalt und nationale Sicherheit*, ed Ernst Willi Hansen (Munich, 1995); cited in Lingen, 150.

²⁴⁹ As Geoffrey Megargee has demonstrated, the German High Command was far from the efficient, professional, apolitical entity that its members later fashioned it to be; instead, the military was intimately involved in every disastrous strategic and operational mistake of the war. Given the Wehrmacht's perpetual disdain for staff functions like intelligence, personnel, and logistics (which could hardly be attributed to the *Führer*), the aggressive maneuvers advocated by the Mansteins and Guderians often would have caused the panzers to run out of gas sooner and in more precarious positions than they did. Bold, bloody, but ultimately futile operations like CITADEL or the odyssey of *Kampfgruppe Peiper* during the Battle of the Bulge became increasingly likely as the Allies matched and then surpassed the Wehrmacht, a trend which itself was the result of Germany's shocking, imperfect early victories. Will and initiative, so central to the ethos of German arms, were inadequate substitutes for sound planning and organization. Regarding the generals' postwar attempts to claim innocence for defeat and pin all blame on Hitler, Megargee writes, "At

narrative attempted to distance the German military from genocide. Naturally, the German generals had led their apolitical army in honorable combat, while unbeknownst to them the SS had committed criminal acts. Subsequent research, pioneered by the Bundeswehr's official historical section, has given the lie to both these tenets of the generals' version of history, but not before they colored postwar historiography and made the German army a far easier institution for American officers to idolize.²⁵⁰

The Luftwaffe monographs are largely free of such distortions. Hitler, Göring, and the top leadership of the Luftwaffe receive much blame in Suchenwirth's *Historical Turning Points in the GAF War Effort*, but adequate evidence supports the author's claims. Poor operational leadership, an inadequate training system, and Allied superiority are more often cited as the root causes of defeat. One of the key conclusions of the series was that the Luftwaffe's failure to mount a strategic air campaign against Soviet industry in late 1941 was one of the greatest lost opportunities of the war, an omission for which uniformed officers clearly bore responsibility. Like the Army studies, there is little discussion of atrocities. This is partly attributable to the fact that the Luftwaffe had a less direct role in mass killings than the army or SS, unless one counts its indiscriminate city bombings. The U.S. Air Force did not request detailed treatment of such a controversial topic, not surprising given its own history.

best, they deceived themselves. At worst, they cynically tried to deceive everyone else." *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 233.

²⁵⁰ For a brief summary of the destruction of the myth of the apolitical German army, beginning with the 1979 publication of the first of the West German *Militär-geschichtliche Forschungsamt's* World War II series, see Donald Detwiler, "New Light on the Darkest Chapter of German Military History: A Review of Wolfram Wette's *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*" *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities and Social Sciences* (February 2007), accessible online at <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=12899>, last accessed 15 August 2009.

Luftwaffe generals probably addressed their greatest defeats more honestly at least in part because American officers had intimate knowledge of most pivotal battles and could therefore ask more pointed questions. In addition, Allied airpower had made the Luftwaffe a nonfactor for the last year of the war, which would have made American superiority hard to dispute. By contrast, when forced to discuss defeat, German army officers could reference the mysterious and immense Eastern Front of which the Americans had little knowledge and amaze their audience with tales of their own brilliance in fighting the ‘Bolshevik hordes.’ To the German population it was clear for a considerably longer period of time that the Luftwaffe was not faring well as British and American bombers, undeterred by high losses, routinely pounded their industry and cities. The qualitative difference between receiving censored news of faraway battles and witnessing the bombardment of Germany for two years may have also played a role in the Luftwaffe veterans’ more forthright accounts.

The Air Force’s neglect of its German monographs also freed the service from the “selective thinking” that marked the Army program, if only because the Air Force did not seriously reflect on the Luftwaffe example at all. Basing U.S. Army doctrine on the Wehrmacht’s was problematic and dangerous on multiple levels. According to Kevin Soutor, the Army failed to emphasize German techniques like splitting enemy infantry from armor while on the defensive. The Army also neglected German defensive tactics like zone defense and delaying in successive prepared positions and instead focused exclusively on mobile defense with armored formations that the service could not afford. Soutor argues that this one-track approach could have “stereotyped” American defenses

in the event of war and spelled disaster on the battlefield.²⁵¹ A second major issue was the conspicuous differences between the American army of 1953 and the German army of 1943. The U.S. Army faced a somewhat similar Soviet foe, terrain, and equipment, but NATO forces were at a much greater numerical disadvantage than the Wehrmacht was during most of World War II.²⁵² Moreover, among the roots of the German army's strength on the Eastern Front over the long term were Nazi indoctrination and a brutal disciplinary system, as historian Omer Bartov has argued. Would inexperienced West German or American draftees have fought as well in the crucial first hours of World War III as the hardened, zealous men of the Wehrmacht (which had, of course, lost)? The West Germans of military age during the 1950s were the products of a society that was effectively demilitarized, and they would have been called upon to fight other Germans. At the same time, American war plans involved the questionable proposition of maintaining a small force in Europe and reinforcing it at the first sign of trouble.

Vietnam Parallels: "Lessons" Lost?

While there were many flaws in the U.S. Army's utilization of its German studies and its idolization of their authors, at least the service cannot be accused of ignoring the past, which was the case with the Air Force during the early Cold War. The technology of

²⁵¹ Soutor, 680-681.

²⁵² In 1953 the Soviets had at least ten times the number of divisions in or immediately deployable to Europe as the United States had permanently stationed there. See Soutor, 681.

aerial warfare had changed so rapidly in the early postwar years and the service's focus on nuclear war was so strong that the Air Force writ large, by neglecting the studies authored by formidable former adversaries, essentially dismissed past air war as irrelevant. The only historical examples cited by the Air Force were the strategic bombing campaigns against Germany and Japan, and then only to assert their decisiveness and the primacy of airpower. There were, however, trends and dangers illustrated in the Luftwaffe's experience that could have benefitted the Air Force in its next war in Vietnam.

The notion that no defense could withstand a determined air attack was central to airpower theory during the Interwar years, and in spite of the extremely high losses the Luftwaffe inflicted on American and British bombers during World War II, this idea persisted in the Cold War. On a certain level this proposition is true, for it has been rare for attacking forces to turn back even in the face of stiff opposition. The invention of nuclear weapons complicated matters, making it even more critical to present an airtight defense. In fact, the American Air Defense Command became a backwater partly because planners recognized that no defense could assure complete protection, making offensive forces the only credible deterrent. The logic that an air force could easily endure losses while dealing terrible destruction on the enemy applied less to a protracted air campaign like the one that occurred over North Vietnam. Attrition rates that would have been acceptable during a brief nuclear exchange were less tolerable over the course of a decade. The Air Force's nuclear focus led it to dismiss the toll that the combination of surface-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft artillery, and MiGs might take. A fundamental overestimation of the offensive power of air attack, an underestimation of defensive

capabilities, and a repeating of high attrition rates was the result. To make matters worse, political considerations frequently limited military options, barring attacks on targets such as airfields (which also occurred during the Korean War) that would have disrupted North Vietnamese counter-air operations.

In addition, the offensive culture of the Air Force obscured the need to protect airfields and rear areas, a necessity which was highlighted in the monograph *Airpower and Russian Partisan Warfare*. During the Vietnam War, approximately 30% more USAF aircraft were lost on the ground than were shot down by North Vietnamese aircraft.²⁵³ *General der Flieger* Karl Drum also describes the Luftwaffe's frustrating inability to satisfactorily impede enemy partisans' infiltration of German lines. Although the monograph specifically addresses infiltration by air, it underscores the difficulties inherent in interdicting the movement of unconventional enemy forces, as the U.S. Air Force discovered on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, even with more advanced technology.

The Luftwaffe's experience also demonstrated airpower's impotence when the sources of enemy strength are effectively immune to attack. The Luftwaffe was never able to threaten the United States or the far reaches of the British Empire, and it squandered within the first year of the Soviet-German war any chance it had to damage the Soviet Union's relocated industry. By the time the Luftwaffe decided to mount a concerted strategic air campaign in late 1943, vital targets had fallen out of range, and relative German weakness and Soviet strength almost certainly would have rendered such

²⁵³ Alan Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle's Nest: A History of Ground Attacks on Air Bases* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1995).

action inconsequential in any event.²⁵⁴ In a similar fashion, while the U.S. Air Force may have been physically capable of touching any spot on the globe in 1968, its operations in Southeast Asia were hamstrung by political restrictions. That year Paul Deichmann told Albert Simpson that he feared this lesson of the Luftwaffe's experience was holding true in spite of technological change.²⁵⁵ Infrequently allowed to attack militarily significant targets within North Vietnam and forbidden from striking the enemy's sources of supply in China and the Soviet Union for fear of sparking a general war, Air Force leaders protested Washington's micromanagement and blamed defeat on such restrictions. Given the Korean example, Air Force leaders should not have been surprised when the technical limitations of the 1940s gave way to political limitations during the Cold War. Moreover, they failed to question whether the unconventional nature of the conflict, the total goals of the enemy, and the relatively preindustrial state of the North Vietnamese economy made air attack a suitable instrument of military and political power. Instead, they continued to adhere to the dogma of strategic attack against the enemy's industrial web before, during, and after the Vietnam War.

While the Luftwaffe placed priority on cooperation with ground forces and the Army Air Forces developed effective liaison procedures for this mission during World War II, after the war the Air Force allowed its capability to atrophy. On the Eastern Front in particular, circumstances had forced the Luftwaffe to remain heavily involved in supporting army operations as a substitute for ground combat power. Being wedded so closely to its sister service was anathema to the U.S. Air Force, which had long touted

²⁵⁴ Suchenwirth, *Historical Turning Points in the German Air Force War Effort* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 88-89. See also Richard Muller, "The German Air Force and the Campaign Against the Soviet Union, 1941-1945" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1990).

²⁵⁵ Deichmann to Simpson, 11 January 1968, AFHRA, K113.161-3 vol. 2.

strategic bombing as its primary mission partly to secure its independence. The Air Force's devotion to strategic attack against the sources of enemy power from the 1920s through (arguably) today likely contributed to the lack of attention it paid to the Luftwaffe's history. From the American perspective its enemy had been a tactical air force that merely supported the German army. This was certainly true on the Eastern Front as early as fall 1941, which meant there was little the U.S. Air Force could learn directly from the Germans about Soviet reactions to strategic bombing. Importantly, the Air Force chose not to pay attention to just how crucial the Luftwaffe's support of ground forces really was on the Eastern Front, where it helped slow Soviet advances into 1944. This reflected the service's historic aversion to ground support as opposed to strategic bombing. When the U.S. Air Force has not been able to escape providing ground support, it has favored interdiction over close air support, partly because the former involves less subordination to ground forces. Moreover, the close integration of air and ground units necessary to safely execute close support missions, the increased danger to aircraft from enemy fire, a sincere belief that interdiction was more effective, and most of all the focus on nuclear war frustrated the development of an Air Force capability to adequately support the Army. Unfortunately, in both Korea and Vietnam, the Air Force had to "reinvent the wheel" in close support procedures and training. Procurement policies frustrated adaptation because the highly sophisticated aircraft developed for nuclear attack were frequently ill-suited for the ground support.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶B. Franklin Cooling, ed. *Case Studies in the Development of Close Air Support* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History): 398-399, 411-412.

Unlike the RAF and USAAF, the Luftwaffe was organized into *Luftflotten*, agile organizations that included aircraft of all types and were usually paired with an army group, which facilitated joint operations. Until the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Air Force was divided into Tactical and Strategic commands, which essentially segregated fighters and bombers. During the Vietnam War, the theater commander had to pry bombers away from SAC for use in the field. Of course, SAC was reluctant to allow this partly because it might weaken the nuclear deterrent. Still, this was a poor arrangement that led to SAC crews not being ready for conventional bombing missions over North Vietnam. Recently, the Air Force began to mirror the Luftwaffe example with its self-sustaining Air Expeditionary Force model. Nevertheless, the Luftwaffe's organization had weaknesses. For example, it likely hampered efforts to form a bombing force designed exclusively to wage strategic air war against the Soviet Union and engendered too strong a focus on ground support operations, to the detriment of the air arm's independence.²⁵⁷

Tragically, the above parallels were not simply a matter of neglecting German history but of neglecting American history as well. The Army Air Force's own experience in World War II revealed the terrible losses a determined defender could inflict.²⁵⁸ In addition, the overrunning of U.S. Army Air Force bases in China had been a frequent concern. More recently, the Korean War highlighted many of these same themes, in particular the need for better air-ground cooperation, the difficulty of interdicting enemy lines of communication during periods of low-intensity combat, and

²⁵⁷ Joel Hayward, "The Luftwaffe's Agility: An Assessment of Relevant Concepts and Practices: A Paper presented at the Biennial Hendon Air Power Conference," London, 20 July 2006, available online at <http://www.airpowerstudies.co.uk/Hendon-Air-Power-Conference.pdf>.

the inevitable restrictions imposed on targeting during limited war. The Air Force largely ignored this body of knowledge. As a whole the U.S. military in Vietnam mirrored a final disturbing hallmark of the Wehrmacht by marrying operational, tactical, and technological brilliance with strategic incompetence.

Jumping to the Wrong Conclusion

It could be said that selecting “lessons lost” with the benefit of hindsight is an elementary, even unfair, exercise. Indeed, there is danger in inferring that the U.S. Air Force would have acted differently had it only studied the Luftwaffe’s defeat more closely. Such a belief would establish a false dichotomy between choosing to learn history’s “lessons” versus repeating its mistakes. History can show what is possible and reveal trends, but attempts to divine its so-called lessons carry an enormous potential for folly. To state the obvious, incorporating past experience, especially that of the enemy years after the events in question, into doctrine, force structure, training, war plans, and actual operations is no simple task. The rapid pace of technological change and an array of institutional factors made this task especially challenging for the newly independent U.S. Air Force. Still, attitudes within the service expose an organization that was inclined to dismiss any evidence that contradicted its vision of airpower.

The Air Force’s oft-cited ahistoricism and anti-intellectualism contributed to failures in Vietnam by fostering an intellectual climate in which few questioned service

priorities, even when past experience on the part of both the service itself and other military organizations should have called its assumptions into question. The Karlsruhe monographs were not alone in detailing events that could have informed and improved the Air Force's preparedness to meet national policy objectives. The Korean War was even more recent and was similarly dismissed out-of-hand by nuclear warfare-minded officers as irrelevant. Within months of the outbreak of the war, several Air Force leaders, including the Vice Chief of Staff and the local commander in Korea, convened evaluation groups to investigate the use of airpower in combat there. Frank Futrell, in his monumental history of Air Force *Ideas, Concepts, and Doctrine*, concluded that "One of the major values of these evaluations was the identification of the special circumstances prevailing in the limited war that would doubtless not be typical of general hostilities."²⁵⁹ The Secretary of the Air Force during the Korean War, Thomas Finletter, lamented soon after leaving office that, although the war thankfully prompted the expansion of the American defense budget, it "had the unfortunate effect of emphasizing the importance of the weapons and tactics of the past."²⁶⁰ Historian and former Air Force officer Mark Clodfelter has observed that "although they conceded the possibility of [another] limited war, air planners made few preparations for it."²⁶¹ Air Force doctrine Manual 1-8, which remained unrevised from 1954 to 1965, affirmed that "The best preparation for limited war is proper preparation for general war."²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Futrell, vol. 1, 305.

²⁶⁰ Thomas Finletter, *Power and Policy: US Foreign Policy and Military Power in the Hydrogen Age* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1954); quoted in Futrell, vol. 1, 304.

²⁶¹ Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

²⁶² USAF Manual 1-8, "Strategic Air Operations," dated 1 May 1954; quoted in Clodfelter: 27, 30, 31.

One of the Karlsruhe Project's few interactions with outside Air Force agencies shows that the service was potentially prepared to use German monographs to bolster its dismissal of the Korean experience. In response to the Historical Division's call for research topics in October 1952, Colonel Momyer, then head of the Air Evaluation Staff and later the senior Air Force commander in Vietnam from 1966 to 1968, laid out multiple topics in a six-page, single spaced memo. The first specific area that he addressed was the Spanish Civil War:

It seems to me that to really analyze German experience in World War II, one must have some understanding of the [Germans'] experience in the Spanish war for I suspect that this Spanish war suggested certain tenets that were animated and put into effect in the campaigns of 1939-40. As another illustration of the utilization of the German experience, I further suspect, although this is not confirmed, that some of the experiences of the Spanish civil war were utilized out of context of the situation, and consequently their approach to a generalized war were not valid. As you can see, such inferences have a particular appropriateness to the present circumstances in Korea in which we are apt to conclude certain operational doctrine from a limited conflict and establish those precepts as valid to the conduct of a generalized war.²⁶³

Momyer's instincts were right on one level. The Luftwaffe indeed took some of the lessons of Spain too far. Most famously, the success of the dive bomber (which he later mentions specifically) confirmed the Germans' affinity for this weapon system, although their failure to build a viable long-range heavy bomber stemmed more from other factors, specifically the failure to develop a suitable engine for such a bomber. Nevertheless, it is indicative of the prevailing attitude in the Air Force that senior officers at the Air University were prepared to use its German studies to reinforce existing falsehoods, namely the service's overriding emphasis on general war at the expense of preparing for limited war. Given this predisposition and the aforementioned pitfalls of the

²⁶³ Momyer to Angell, 3 October 1952.

Army's German Report Series, perhaps it is well that the Air Force as an institution did not make greater use of the Karlsruhe monographs.

CONCLUSION

The story of the Karlsruhe Project troubles and confirms widely-held views of the U.S. Air Force during the early Cold War. It was an excellent example of interservice cooperation during the 1950s, a period better known for discord. It was born out of the generosity of the Army, which initially requested only \$250 per study, a “token payment” in the words of the project editor, Kennedy. However, good will alone could not sustain the effort or keep it on schedule. Both services’ historical offices had unrealistically high expectations for the project at the outset, despite the earlier failure of the Von Rohden Project. Like its predecessor, the Karlsruhe Project suffered from the dearth of documentary material on the Luftwaffe, and the age and health of German contributors became increasingly serious issues. Slowly, the small yet superb team led by Deichmann and Hammer met these and other challenges, but early delays meant that most studies were never edited.

The very existence of the German Air Force Monograph Project complicates the traditional image of the U.S. Air Force as an ahistorical service, concerned merely with advanced technology and ensuring its own independence. In fact, officials at the Air University were keenly interested in the project, especially its Soviet studies, when it began in 1952, but this was when they expected a cheap, quick return on their investment. As the project fell farther behind schedule and the Army requested more money, Air Force interest diminished. Almost on cue, an “unforeseen by-product” emerged that

caught the attention of Air Force leaders and guaranteed the survival of the project. The interchange of ideas between West German and American air force officers made possible by the historical program directly influenced West German interservice debates during the rearmament period, with the project providing the U.S. Air Force a conduit for transmitting doctrine and educational books to the Bundesluftwaffe, which was based on the American model.

The bonds cemented between West German and American air officers were soon tested, not in war but in peace. In the early 1960s the Bundesluftwaffe purchased license-built, multi-role versions of the Lockheed F-104 Starfighter. A combination of inexperienced pilots and poor maintenance in the newly formed air force proved fatal, and by the time the Bundesluftwaffe grounded the fleet in 1966, 110 pilots had died. Fortunately, the leadership of the Bundesluftwaffe had more than a decade of experience working closely with their American partners, which helped the alliance weather the storm of the so-called Starfighter Crisis. The fact that the F-104 was an American design and many of its pilots had trained at American bases made the episode even more controversial and underscores the Bundesluftwaffe's nearly total reliance on the U.S. Air Force and the importance of relational rearmament through the Karlsruhe Project.

Despite the positive impact the Karlsruhe Project had on the West German-American alliance, the Air Force squandered the opportunity to benefit from the experience of the Luftwaffe generals. Whereas the Army project's "lessons learned" approach and the Navy's emphasis on intelligence-gathering rendered their studies useless in all but a few circumstances (i.e. conventional war against the Soviet Union in Europe), the broader scope of the Air Force monographs made them applicable in a wider

array of situations, including the Vietnam War. Had the service paid attention, there was much in the Luftwaffe monographs that could have informed future Air Force operations around the world. Despite the technological advances that had changed the face of air warfare, much of its nature remained – and still remains – unaltered. This was particularly true regarding airpower’s inherent limitations, which the Luftwaffe’s defeat highlighted more clearly than did the Allies’ victory. But the German Air Force monographs offered no convenient, tactical “lessons” that required only translation before they could be transcribed into American field manuals. Moreover, the Luftwaffe’s wartime focus on supporting the German army, however effective at times, limited the appeal of such studies to the U.S. Air Force, an institution perennially concerned with maintaining its own independence and therefore loath to seriously consider any role other than strategic bombardment.

The Karlsruhe monographs and their authors received little attention in the Air Force when compared with their Army counterparts. As a result, the Karlsruhe Project achieved relative autonomy within the Air University at the cost of receiving only a meager budget and a skeleton staff. Time and again, the Air Force gave the project enough support to survive but nothing more. In early 1956 Colonel Hammer participated in the annual ritual of justifying further funding for the Karlsruhe Project. “[The] entire cost of the Project, January 1953 to July 1957, will be little more than it costs the Air Force to buy one third of one single-seat fighter aircraft (F-100),” he wrote to Dr. Simpson. The cost of one additional year, which Hammer incorrectly thought would be enough to finish the last drafts, would be less than that “being spent to train three raw recruits (two of whom will return to civilian life as soon as possible) to enter a job in the

Air Force.” Both men knew that, as Hammer put it, “such types of justification are neither relevant nor necessary,” and thanks to more persuasive arguments the project survived another thirteen years.²⁶⁴ Several years behind schedule in 1958, Kennedy noted that the Air Force was “going to have to be willing to spend some money” if it wanted to exploit the studies and document collection.²⁶⁵

The Air Force initiated the project on the premise that it would be a bargain, and that is what it was, although many officials might not have thought so in the late 1960s. The Army originally estimated that the project would require \$40,000 and last three or four years, but it exhausted these funds within months. In fact, project costs eventually totaled approximately \$520,000, a drastic expansion given the initial expectation of a cheap and quick payoff but a relatively modest expenditure when spread over seventeen years.²⁶⁶ This represented about one-twelfth the cost of a B-52D, of which SAC had over 600 in the early 1960s. For a comparatively low cost, the Karlsruhe Project provided Western airmen and historians the first detailed glimpses of the Red Air Force in combat on a scale comparable to the hypothetical World War III and brought to the United States huge quantities of Luftwaffe documents. While strong accounts of the Soviet-German ground war emerged during the 1960s, Hermann Plocher’s monographs remained the best survey of that air war for the entirety of the Cold War. Fortunately for the Air Force, the monographs did not contribute to an inferiority complex akin to the Army’s, but the Karlsruhe monographs should have called into question the service’s myopic focus on

²⁶⁴ Hammer to Simpson, 29 February 1956, AFHRA, K113.161-3 v. 1 (1952-62).

²⁶⁵ Kennedy to Angell, 19 March 1958, AFHRA, K113.161-3 vol. 1.

²⁶⁶ This includes the salaries of Colonel Hammer and the editor. Adjusted for inflation, the Karlsruhe Project cost the Air Force approximately \$4 million between 1952 and 1969. Historic wage information courtesy of <http://www.afforums.com/ppost/showgallery.php/cat/648>.

strategic nuclear bombing. Had the Air University fully funded the project, more studies could have been edited, but more inconvenient questions also may have arisen that would have threatened the existing order in the Air Force.

This thesis has juxtaposed two different approaches to official military history-writing: “lessons learned”, as epitomized by the Army’s program, and what might be called history for its own sake, towards which the Air Force program often tended. Ironically, it was a third “school” that was the proximate cause of the Karlsruhe Project’s termination in 1969. When its champion Simpson was no longer able to work because of his illness, Dr. Maurer assumed his duties. Concerned primarily with vital, laborious unit lineage and honors work, Maurer ended the long-running project so that he could reassign its one employee to his pet project. The departure of Simpson was especially poor timing for the Karlsruhe Project, because that year the Hoopes Committee recommended and the Air Force Chief of Staff directed the reorganization of the service’s history program. These actions aimed to create a long-term program in the Office of Air Force History in Washington that emphasized the publication of analytical historical books, monographs, and studies.²⁶⁷ Ironically, the demise of the Karlsruhe Project coincided with the reform of the service’s historical program along similar lines, with an emphasis on scholarly research.

The American military’s German history programs illustrate the tension between historical scholarship and military policy. Disenchanted with its planned role as a garrison force that would retreat under the Air Force’s nuclear umbrella and then have the

²⁶⁷ Robin Higham, *Official Military Historical Offices and Sources: Volume II - The Western Hemisphere and Pacific Rim* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000).

unenviable task of “liberating” what was left of European civilization, the Army began advocating expensive armored forces on the basis of its German Report Series. The Navy, also concerned with present war plans and searching for its role, quickly dropped any semblance of traditional historical research and requested studies on the efficacy of blockading the Baltic Sea and landing Marines in the Warsaw Pact’s rear in the event of war. The Air Force’s dominance during the early Cold War obviated any such policy use for its German monographs, even when straightforward examples presented themselves, such as the Luftwaffe’s failure to launch a strategic campaign against Soviet industry, which former Luftwaffe generals considered one of the greatest blunders of the war and the U.S. Air Force could have seized as (an arguably invalid) justification for its continued focus on strategic bombing. While the Karlsruhe Project responded to the present needs of the Air Force by prioritizing Soviet topics, supporting policy was of secondary concern. In the case of the American postwar military history programs, sound scholarship was both the luxury of the dominant service and the product of its neglect.

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K113.161-3 v. 2 (1963-1969), part of Karlsruhe collection (correspondence)
K113.161-4 (1954-57), correspondence of Col. Wendell Hammer
K113.161-5 (1952-53), Karlsruhe Project papers, correspondence of Dr. Simpson
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APPENDIX A:
PUBLISHED KARLSRUHE MONOGRAPHS (12), IN ORDER OF COMPLETION

Title	Author	Terminal rank	Series Code	Date published	Number of pages (incl. appendices)
The GAF General Staff	Andreas Nielsen	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	173	1959 (June)	200 (265)
Historical Turning Points in the GAF War Effort	Richard Suchenwirth	n/a, Ph.D.	189	1959 (June)	126 (143)
Russian Air Force in the Eyes of German Commanders	Walter Swabedissen	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	175	1960 (June)	390 (434)
GAF Airlift Operations	Fritz Morzik	<i>Generalmajor</i>	167	1961 (June)	389 (416)
Airpower and Russian Partisan Warfare	Karl Drum	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	177	1962 (Mar.)	44 (63)
GAF Operations in Support of the Army	Paul Deichmann	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	163	1962 (June)	172 (210)
Russian Reactions to German Airpower	Klaus Uebe	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	176	1964 (July)	104 (146)
The GAF vs. Russia, 1941	Hermann Plocher	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	153	1965 (July)	253 (335)
The GAF vs. Russia, 1942	Hermann Plocher	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	154	1966 (June)	356 (470)
The GAF vs. Russia, 1943	Hermann Plocher	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	155	1967 (June)	281 (368)
Development of the GAF	Richard Suchenwirth	n/a, Ph.D.	160	1968 (June)	195 (259)
Command and Leadership in the GAF	Richard Suchenwirth	n/a, Ph.D.	174	1969 (July)	291 (351)

Table 2. Published Karlsruhe Monographs

APPENDIX B:

UNPUBLISHED MONOGRAPHS (30), IN ORDER OF USAF SERIES NUMBERING

Title	Author	Terminal rank	Series Code	Year when work stopped*	Number of pages*
The GAF in the Spanish Civil War	Karl Drum	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	150	1957	366
The GAF in the Polish Campaign of 1939	Wilhelm Speidel	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	151	1956	508
The GAF in France and the Low Countries, 1939-1940	Wilhelm Speidel	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	152	1958	1580
Operation SEA LION and the Role of the Luftwaffe in the Planned Invasion of England	Karl Klee	Captain (Kriegsmarine)	157	1955	385
The GAF vs. the Allies in the West, The Air War in the West	Josef Schmid Walter Grabmann	<i>Generalleutnant Generalmajor</i>	158	1954	217
The GAF vs. the Allies in the West, The German Air Defense	Josef Schmid	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	159	1954	1084
The German Air Service versus the Allies in the Mediterranean	Helmuth Felmy	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	161	1955	1270
The Battle of Crete	Werner Pissin	Major	162	1956	289
GAF Air Defense Operations	Walter Grabmann	<i>Generalmajor</i>	164	1956	1249
Air-Sea Rescue Service of the Luftwaffe in World War II	Carl Hess	Lt. Col.	168	1955	361

Table 3. Unpublished Karlsruhe Monographs

Continued

Table 3 Continued

Technical Training Within the German Luftwaffe	Werner Kreipe Rudolf Koester Karl Gundelach	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i> Colonel Captain Dr.	169	1955	746
Procurement in the GAF	Walter Hertel	<i>Generalingenieur</i>	170	1955	722
Collection and Evaluation of Intelligence for the GAF High Command	Andreas Nielsen	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	171	1955	225
Medical and Health Services in the GAF	Schroeder Rose	<i>Generaloberst Dr.</i> Dr.	172	1955	180
Problems of Fighting a Three-Front Air War	Walter Schwabedissen	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	178	1956	181
Problems in the Conduct of a Day and Night Defensive Air War	Josef Kammlhuber	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	179	1953	469
Problems of Long-Range All-Weather Intruder Aircraft	Josef Kammlhuber	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	180	1954	129
Fighter-Bomber Operations in Situations of Air Inferiority	Josef Kammlhuber	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	182	1956	361
Anglo-American Techniques of Strategic Warfare in the Air	Andreas Nielsen Walter Grabmann	<i>Generalleutnant</i> <i>Generalmajor</i>	183	1957	406
Impact of Allied Air Attacks on German Divisions and Other Army Forces in Zones of Combat	Wolfgang Pickert	<i>Gen. der</i> <i>Flakartillerie</i>	184	1958	137

Continued

Table 3 Continued

The Effect of the Allied Air Attacks on the Ground Echelon of the Luftwaffe in Western Europe in 1944	Karl Gundelach	Captain	185	1956	131
The System of Target Selection Applied by the GAF in World War II	Paul Deichmann	<i>Gen. der Flieger</i>	186	1956	666
Luftwaffe Methods in the Selection of Offensive Weapons	Paul Deichmann E. A. Marquard	<i>Gen. der Flieger Generalingenieur</i>	187	1954	280
The German Passive Air Services	K. G. Jacob	Col.	188	1957	765
The Organization of the GAF High Command and Higher Echelon Headquarters Within the GAF	Bruno Maass	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	190	1955	245
The Radio Intercept Service of the GAF	Kurt Gottschilling	Col., Air Signal Corps	191	1955	610
The Planning and Development of Bombs for the GAF, 1925-1945	Helmut Heitman	civilian	192	1955	490
The Development of German Aircraft Armament to 1945	Mix	Colonel (Engineers)	193	1957	107
The Development of German Antiaircraft Weapons and Equipment of All Types up to 1945	von Renz	<i>Gen. der Flakartillerie</i>	194	1958	460
Technical Training in the GAF (German language only)	Johannes Riedmann	<i>Stabsing</i>	195	1956	69

APPENDIX C:
ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1. Photograph of Plocher, Deichmann, and Hammer

The heart of the Karlsruhe Project: (left) Major General Hermann Plocher, then-Deputy Chief of Staff of the Bundesluftwaffe and former Assistant Project Control Officer. Plocher authored three monographs that remain the standard narrative operational histories of the Luftwaffe's air war against the Soviet Union. *General der Flieger* (ret.) Paul Deichmann (center) served as Control Officer until the close of the Karlsruhe office, encouraged other Luftwaffe veterans to participate, and personally wrote several monographs. USAF Project Officer Colonel Wendell Hammer was instrumental in improving relations among American, West German, and British military and historical establishments and was awarded the Legion of Merit.

Illustration 2. Photograph of Kammhuber and Simpson

Lieutenant General Josef Kammhuber (left) receiving a specially bound monograph from Dr. Albert Simpson as “a token of friendship between the USAF and the GAF and as a symbol of the several years of cooperative historical activity.”²⁶⁸ Kammhuber was instrumental in establishing Germany’s air defense network during World War II and authored three unpublished Karlsruhe monographs on related subjects. He left the Karlsruhe Project early to become the first *Inspekteur der Bundesluftwaffe*, or Chief of Staff of the West German Air Force. In this post he lobbied unsuccessfully to establish within his new service officer education, non-technical research, and historical programs along the lines of the U.S. Air Force. The longtime Chief of the Air Force Historical Division and architect of the Karlsruhe Project, Simpson was its champion through the mid-1960s, but his worsening health spelled the end of the project in 1969.

²⁶⁸ Report of Temporary Duty of Simpson and Angell, AFHRA, K113.161-1 (1945-62).

Illustration 3. Photograph of Kammhuber, Thatcher, and Simpson

Lieutenant General Kammhuber (left) and Major General Herbert Thatcher, then-Vice Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and later chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group in Germany. Dr. Simpson is seated at the far right.

All photos were taken at a formal dinner held in Karlsruhe, West Germany, on June 10, 1957. The ceremony marked the conclusion of four years of Air University sponsorship of the GAF Monograph Project and the completion of the major portion of the studies, although work continued in Karlsruhe on a more limited scale for another year. Nearly all the surviving German key contributors were present, as were members of the Air Attaché's office and the U.S. Army Europe Historical Division. In commemoration of four years of German-American cooperation, each German contributor received a personal letter from the commander of Air University.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ Photos courtesy of AFHRA, K113.161-8.

APPENDIX D:
ESSAY ON SELECTED MONOGRAPHS

Published Monographs

Of the authors assembled for the Monograph Project, Richard Suchenwirth was the sole professional historian. Every other author ended the war as a general officer, with the majority filling midlevel staff, rather than command, positions. The more theoretical character of Suchenwirth's study, *Historical Turning Points in the GAF War Effort*, reflects his academic training. He saw great value in studying the Luftwaffe's demise, equating it to testing a material to failure to determine its properties. While victory might have obscured some shortcomings of Allied air forces, the total collapse of the German air arm laid bare its strength and weaknesses. Suchenwirth systematically covers the command structure of the Nazi government, the conflicting personalities at the Luftwaffe's highest levels, shortcomings in its prewar organization and planning, and critical battles and wartime decisions. He considers the German faith in dive bombing, the failure to develop a heavy bomber, and the lack of a sustained strategic air assault on the Soviet Union central to the war's outcome. Suchenwirth's is a solid study that has stood the test of time remarkably well. Although subsequent histories have improved our understanding of the Luftwaffe's collapse, Suchenwirth highlights almost every factor that later historians have investigated in greater depth. Differences between this study and later ones are primarily matters of emphasis and additional evidence. Suchenwirth's conclusion is largely the same as Williamson Murray's in *Strategy for Defeat*, although the latter is able to provide much more corroborating statistics – factors far in the past,

like misplaced production priorities and an inadequate training establishment, were the seeds that bore the fruit of the German Air Force's defeat.

Andreas Nielsen's study, *The GAF General Staff*, provides a useful perspective on that organization in its formative years. Originally an Army officer, as a captain the author joined the staff when it first formed in 1936. For the historian interested in the power structures of the German military establishment, particularly the Luftwaffe, this study provides a primer on the typical career path of a General Staff officer and the divisions of power between different offices, staffs, and party officials. Nielsen discusses the leadership abilities and personalities of each Luftwaffe General Staff Chief and explains their key decisions and working relationships with Milch, Göring, and Hitler. He attempts to address why the service has been termed the "National Socialist Luftwaffe," but the few general observations Nielsen makes about Jeschonnek's longtime faith in Hitler and the animosity between Göring and Himmler are unsatisfying. In a more enlightening section of the study, Nielsen lays out the frustrating experience of his General Staff colleagues, who attempted to provide accurate intelligence to higher authorities but were often rebuffed; here, the value of employing ex-German Air Force officers as authors shows through because of the firsthand nature of the reporting. In a conclusion that echoes that of most senior Wehrmacht officers, Nielsen rails against Hitler and Göring's interference in military affairs, maintaining that a unified and independent Armed Forces General Staff is the only viable approach to planning and prosecuting a prolonged modern war. While some blame falls on Jeschonnek, Nielsen finds that it is Hitler and Göring who are primarily at fault because they changed the

General Staffs of each service into mere instruments for the execution of orders, far different from the powerful planning body that the Great General Staff had once been.

Klaus Uebe's *Russian Reactions to German Airpower in World War II* is the most intriguing of the studies reviewed here because of its outstanding level of detail and the USAF Historical Division's evident belief that the study was especially timely and important for American officers in the 1960s. This study is primarily a list of the Soviet countermeasures taken to disguise their assets or deceive German aerial reconnaissance. It is certainly not an exhaustive catalogue of Soviet camouflage and deception efforts, but the examples of Soviet ingenuity are extensive nonetheless. From painting the Kremlin to look like a row of houses to constructing dummy tanks out of dirt, Soviet tactics ran the gamut. Soviet troops made use of decoy German air-ground liaison signals when possible, constructed fake houses that could telescope closed to conceal aircraft and armor, and constructed bridges of ice and twigs before rivers were frozen completely solid. Uebe also discusses how Soviet fighter tactics and ground support procedures began to mirror those of the Germans after mid-1942. While he conveys the frustration and respect for Soviet deception measures surely felt by German personnel, he is also contemptuous of the average Soviet pilot, who he describes as jittery and blindly obedient. His attempts to draw conclusions about the centralized, inflexible Soviet command structure rely more on stereotypes than actual evidence. Uebe shows that the Russian hatred for Germans was a key factor in steeling Soviet resistance, but he blames this hatred chiefly on Soviet propaganda and ignores Nazi atrocities. Uebe's study illustrates the crude but effective Soviet countermeasures, but it also hints at the disdain

with which certain German commanders viewed the fighting ability of their victorious adversary.

Hermann Plocher's sprawling three-volume study covers the first three years of the Soviet-German air war. The author intended, and the Historical Division initially requested, to extend the studies through 1945, but Plocher was recalled to become the Bundesluftwaffe's Deputy Chief of Staff in 1957 before he could complete his work. Because the Karlsruhe Project was by that time far behind schedule, the Historical Division settled for an epilogue that addressed the last two years of the war. The other Soviet monographs partially fill the gap. As incomplete as they are, for decades Plocher's monographs remained the only satisfactory survey of air operations in that theater, an astounding state of affairs when one considers the size and duration of the air effort there. While restricted access to Russian sources surely contributed to this lack of scholarship, the limited character of the German and Soviet air forces, which, for better or worse, primarily supported the ground forces, may have also had an effect. Plocher traces army operations to provide perspective, with the two later studies following events on the ground in the greater detail. The Luftwaffe had a freer hand in the first months of the war and ranged across the Soviet Union, decimating the Red Air Force. By October 1941, the worsening fortunes of the German army brought its sister service into a ground support role as the army slogged on. At this point, Plocher argues, Germany failed to take advantage of its best chance of success. It should have halted its ground offensive against Moscow, which was sapping Luftwaffe strength, brought in the two remaining bomber wings stationed in France, and launched a strategic air campaign against the sources of Russian power. As the war wore on, the Luftwaffe increasingly became a firefighting

force, forced to come to the aid of one beleaguered, under-strength division after another. Tied to the army and spread thin from the Arctic to the Black Sea, the Luftwaffe became a tactical air force.

Plocher only partially addresses the question of whether the Luftwaffe truly had the means to mount an effective strategic bombing campaign against Soviet factories relocated to the east by arguing that the Luftwaffe should have been accorded priority in funding and resources in the 1930s. What is unclear to this day is whether a redistribution of German resources would have staved off or hastened German defeat. After all, the army often urgently needed the help of tactical air support just to hold the line. How long would it have taken for German bombing of industrial and transportation center to have a decisive effect on Soviet frontline strength? Germany probably could not have redistributed its resources to support a strategic bombing campaign while maintaining adequate air defenses and ground support forces, especially given the technical limitations of its bombers and the resilience of industrialized economies. Still, as operational-level studies, these volumes are successful and highly detailed; he explores every section of the front in each volume, including the crucial German anti-shipping campaign in the Arctic, and naturally emphasizes the places where airpower had the greatest effect. Plocher bases his account of the ground war on the memoirs of commanders like Manstein, and as a result he tends to blame Hitler for most every mistake on the ground. Overall, Plocher's studies are dated but remain useful resources for those seeking an account of the operational air war from the German perspective. Even many recent studies of the Soviet-German War largely overlook air operations, so Plocher's work will continue to retain its value for some time to come.

Unpublished Monographs

Karlsruhe Project Officer *General der Flieger* Paul Deichmann and *Generalingenieur* E. A. Marquard's "Luftwaffe Methods in the Selection of Offensive Weapons" is essentially a technical report on German aircraft armament. The first volume, "The Offensive Weapons of the Luftwaffe and Their Methods of Employment," comprises roughly one-third of the monograph but is the more accessible. Deichmann reused much of the material on ground-attack armament in his published monograph, *GAF Operations in Support of the Army*, which is a mix of technical discussions and selected operational histories that is more useful than the monograph being reviewed here because the Air Force Historical Division fully edited it. Deichmann describes prewar and wartime operational problems, like the need for weapons that could disperse the tightly-packed American bomber boxes, which prompted the Luftwaffe to rearm its aircraft, in this case with mortars, rockets, and even tow cables. Importantly, he frames weapons procurement as a technological, political, supply, and timing challenge. Putting the right bomb on target required having a responsive weapons development team (if the bomb type was not already in inventory) and getting munitions to the right unit at the right time. Deichmann blames Germany's political leaders for not informing its military "with which country or coalition of countries potential military conflicts might occur," which forestalled the development of appropriate weapons systems. Marquard, a former "Luftwaffe Ministry branch chief in charge of developing bombs and release items," was

well-suited to author the second volume, “The Selection of Bombs and Fuses for Air Attacks.” This 175-page compilation of various Luftwaffe manuals and tables is heavy on statistics and light on analysis. Overall, this monograph may be useful to researchers of military technology. Unfortunately, the one of the most interesting elements of this monograph – Deichmann’s discussion of the effects of national policy on weapons development during the 1930s – is all too brief and one sided, for it neglects the effect that emerging air weapons had on European interwar diplomacy. As an epilogue, Deichmann included a brief list of “lessons learned” at the end of his volume from which current weapons procurement bureaucrats could benefit.

Roughly one quarter of the Karlsruhe monographs are operational histories covering the air war in various theaters. Tasked with studying the German air defenses pitted against the Western Allies, *Generalleutnant* Josef Schmid and *Generalmajor* Walter Grabmann compiled approximately 2,500 pages of research that comprise studies 158, 159, and 164. Schmid’s “The Air War in the West,” which is divided into five volumes spread across two monographs, is a day-by-day chronicle of German air operations complete with enemy attack routes, times, and estimated losses. Owing to holes in the documentary record, the account picks up in September 1943 and is uneven in the amount of information provided. The author focuses heavily on the units he commanded during the period, but thankfully Schmid held key positions throughout the last years of the war. During the pivotal months of the battle for air supremacy in spring 1944, he commanded I Fighter Command, and he later commanded all air units supporting the western German army as what remained of the Luftwaffe redeployed to meet the Western Allies then on the continent. The fifth volume describes the command

structure of the Reich's air defenses from early 1943 through the demise of the Luftwaffe, and as before Schmid presents only raw data. Schmid's aforementioned long illness and death in 1956 dealt the project a heavy blow, and Grabmann, the former commander of Fighter Division 3 who had already taken an increasing role in the preparation of the former's monographs, continued reconstructing the "German Air Defense," with greater success. Grabmann's work complements and is based on Schmid's, providing welcome observations on engagements that Schmid simply listed. Grabmann presents the history of German air defense theory and organization during the interwar years and takes the story to the German surrender, presenting less detail during the period already covered by his predecessor. In the final two chapters he describes the wartime evolution of air defense methods and the implications for the future. What Grabmann's monograph sometimes lacks in uniformity of coverage it makes up for by providing proper context and straightforward analysis in addition to detail. As such, the account, as well as other Karlsruhe monographs, was a prime source for historians Richard Muller and Donald Caldwell in the writing of *The Luftwaffe Over Germany: Defense of the Reich*, now the standard work on the subject (Schmid and Suchenwirth's works figures less prominently).

A brief discussion of Colonel K. G. Jacob's "The German Passive Air Services" will yield more insights about the Karlsruhe unpublished monographs than it does about the Third Reich's system of civil air defense. At some 760 pages, Jacob's is one of the longest monographs written for the project and is therefore one of the most detailed. Jacob chronicles civil defense in Germany from World War I through the capitulation in 1945, focusing primarily on its organization and the difficulties it encountered. He

concludes that “With inadequate means the system was called upon to fulfill impossible missions,” which somehow seems like an understatement. Regrettably, there is little reflection on the relationship between the totalitarian character of the Nazi state and the efficacy of particular civil defense measures imposed. Still, it is an excellent resource for the specialist because of its nearly comprehensive treatment of the subject and meticulous citations, which usually refer to German language accounts or documents in the Karlsruhe collection. As such, it is especially useful for researchers in the United States not proficient in German. Even though it would not have required heavy editing to make the work at least navigable, it is little wonder that the Air Force Historical Division chose to publish other studies. It does not deal with the Soviet Union, contains little high-level analysis (a la Suchenwirth’s studies), and primarily concerns civil rather than military affairs. It is logical that the U.S. Air Force, interested in the effects of its persistent and costly air attacks, requested the study but is no surprise that it proved uninteresting to military professionals in the nuclear era.