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Truth Declassified:

Comparative Archival Analysis and New Interpretations of *Abwehr* Espionage against the United States of America

Kenneth Theodore “Max” Klima

A Thesis in the Field of History

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

May 2024

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Abstract

In 1938 U.S. counter espionage agencies learned of *Abwehr* espionage in America. Since that discovery, historical narratives of the history of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States can be summarized within three distinct themes. First, once espionage began, it was fairly limited in scope, centered around the New York City metropolitan area, and was executed by poorly trained or untrained individuals. Second, these efforts occurred prior to the U.S. entry into the war, were continually exposed by U.S. counter espionage agencies, and as a result of that exposure, fundamentally ceased to exist near the end of 1941. Third, the espionage that did exist within the U.S. had no impact on the conduct or outcome of the Second World War. Declassified sources available since the early 2000s in American, British, and German archives, or uncovered through the Freedom of Information Act, reveal a different scope and impact to that espionage. This paper seeks to use the declassified archival information for comparative analysis of the historical narratives to determine the actual extent of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. and its relative impact on the Second World War. Comparative analysis that pits this historical misunderstanding against declassified archival primary sources only available within the last two decades reveals an *Abwehr* that was far more present and capable within the United States, and the results of its espionage activity had tangible impacts prior to and during the U.S. participation in the war.

Author's Biographical Sketch

Kenneth Theodore Klima, known as Max by his family, friends, and colleagues has spent over 27 years working in the fields of history, military science, and intelligence. For over two-and-a-half decades he served as a commissioned intelligence officer in the United States Navy, and in addition to his assigned duties, developed a fascination for the study of the history of intelligence and warfare. During his intelligence career, he conducted nine forward-deployed operations at sea and on land, in five combat theaters, on six continents, and in over eighty countries. He has worked with Allies, partners, and international institutions on multiple security challenges and issues. These experiences included training, certification, and operations as a Human Intelligence Officer supporting multiple Navy, U.S. military, and intelligence organizations. His Human Intelligence experience included operations across the globe, coordination on the tasking and execution of collection operations, resource management, personnel and control, strategic planning related to the integration of Human Intelligence within Navy and U.S. strategies, and planning sensitive human intelligence operations. Max is currently a defense consultant providing advisory services to multiple U.S. government, private sector, and external clients related to intelligence, information warfare, naval warfare, strategic planning, executive advising, and organizational reform.

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Definitions and Terms

- *Abteilung* IIIb. Department IIIb of the German General Staff responsible for conducting intelligence support to include foreign intelligence collection. Active from the late 19th Century until 1919 when the General Staff was disestablished.
- *Amt Ausland(s) Abwehr, Abwehr*. Translated as the Foreign Defense Office, but meaning the German military intelligence service. Established in 1921 as a counter espionage agency for the German military.
    - The *Abwehr* consisted of three principal *Abteilung* (branches): I (*Eins)*– foreign intelligence, II (*Zwei*) – sabotage and commando operations, and III (*Drei*) – counterespionage.
    - *Abwehr* I was further divided into sub-branches focused on different aspects of military intelligence: *Luft* – air, *Marine* – naval, *Heer* – army, and *Wirstschaft* – economic matters. Offices were organized by these designations, referred to as IL – *Eins Luft*, IM – *Eins Marine*, IH – *Eins Heer*, and I/Wi – *Wirtschaft.*
- *Abwehrstelle/Abwehrstellen, Stelle* / *Stellen. Abwehr* Intelligence station/stations. Independent intelligence centers that conducted operations within direction from *Abwehr* headquarters in Berlin. *Stellen* existed throughout Germany and were established within occupied territories during the Second World War. A *Stelle* could also be referred to simply as *Ast,* a shortened form of *Abwehrstelle.*

- *Nebenstelle* / *Nebenstellen*. Intelligence substation / substations. Extensions of a *Stelle* focused on specific types of intelligence collection or theaters of operations. *Nebenstellen* did not necessarily have officers working in all three *Abteilungen* or sub-branches. Sometimes referred to as *aussenstelle*, or outstation.

- *Vertrauensmänner* / *Mann* / *Frauen* / *Leute*, a.k.a. V-*Mann*, V-*Frau*, V-*Leute*, etc. literally translated as trusted Men / Women / Persons, etc. Espionage agents handled by *Abwehr* officers to support espionage, sabotage, and counter espionage. *Vertrauensmänner* was a general term that referred to all agents regardless of their activities. Subcategories of *V-Männer* were used to further identify specific roles.
  - A – *Agenten* / *Agentin*. An agent of the *Abwehr* responsible for the direct collection of intelligence who may run a network of subagents known as *hintermänner*. Some sources state *A-Männer* were known as *Kriegsagenten*, war agents. A review of registered *A-Männer* involved in espionage against the U.S. indicates many were recruited and operated outside of wartime conditions.
  - F – *Forscher*. Literally translated as researcher. *Forscher* agents conducted spotting, assessment, and recruiting of *V-* and *H-Leute* and engaged in direct espionage activities. *Forscher* agents were expected to recruit and operated *H-Leute* engaged in direct espionage
  - *H - Hintermänner* / *Mann* / *Frau*, aka, H-*Mann* / H-*Frau*. Literally translated as "behind" man / woman. Subagents identified, recruited, and

managed by V-*Leute*. More often than not, *Hintermänner* were neither known to nor managed by *Abwehr* officers.

- R – *Reiseagenten*. Literally translated as travel or traveling agent. Businesspersons used for access to information of intelligence value through their business or international travel. *R-Agenten* did not conduct clandestine aspects of espionage while abroad and were not involved in management or recruitment of agents.
- RR – believed to be *Rueckkehrer/Rueckwanderer* (Returnee / Returning Migrant). The office who conducted these agents was referred to as a *Rueckwandererbefragusdienst.* German or dual citizens who returned to Germany from abroad and were debriefed to determine if they had knowledge of intelligence matters.
- S - Believed to be *Spionage / Spionager / Spionagerin*, the German word for espionage or spy in the case of foreign intelligence. Some sources identify S-Männer as *Spannungsagentten*, or tension agents, that is controlled agents within counter espionage work designed to expose foreign intelligence efforts. A review of registered *S-Männer* involved in espionage against the U.S. indicates none were used as *Spannungsagenten*.
- U – believed to be *Unter* (Under). *Abwehr* agents used to relay operationally relevant information through international postal systems. An *U-Stelle* could be an individual, address, or network of postal relays.

- W/T – wireless telegraph, or wireless telegraphy. High frequency radio used to transmit telegraph signals wirelessly over great distances.

- *Geheim*. Secret. Standard nomenclature used by multiple German intelligence agencies to classify intelligence matters, identify intelligence organs, or reference the tradecraft practices and arts of intelligence.
- *Geheim Staats Polizei*, the German Secret Police Service, better known by its acronym, *Gestapo*. The Gestapo had intelligence responsibilities within Germany, the occupied territories, and extra-jurisdictionally in matters related to the party, but had no authority for military intelligence or counter espionage.
- *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA) – the Government Main Security Office, the principal security and intelligence apparatus of the National Socialist government. Absorbed the *Abwehr* and all other intelligence agencies in June 1944.
- *Nachrichtendienst*. An intelligence office or service, generally supporting the German military.
- *Sicherheitsdienst*, also known as SD. The Security Service, a branch of the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA), the intelligence agency of the NSDAP and the *Shutzstaffel* (SS). The SD conducted political espionage and counterespionage and acted on Party tasking, to include in the United States.
- *Deckname*. Codename. Standard *Abwehr* practice was to assign each agent a *deckname* to protect their activities. Several agents and most officers used multiple *decknamen* (codenames).

Notes

1. Use of German language words and phrases: to enhance the contextualization of the Abwehr activities in the U.S. this paper will use the appropriate German language military and espionage tradecraft terminology. All German language phrases in their initial use will be followed with a parenthetical English translation. Italicization within primary source material quotations will only be used of the original source uses italicization. Longer usage of German language materials from primary source documents will use the English translations within the body of the paper with the appropriate German in the citation. Within the body of the paper German language will use appropriate common umlaut conventions. Quotations from source material will be kept in their native form and use either umlauts or alternative spelling conventions.
2. Citations: Research into this topic resulted in multiple Freedom of Information Act requests for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation regarding case files, personnel files, and investigation matters related to the investigations and espionage figures detailed throughout this thesis. Most of these requests remained unanswered or had been denied by the FBI repeatedly. Those that were answered provided an overwhelming amount of information in the form of digitized files contained on multiple data compact disks. Other materials requested through the FOIA process that were denied were recovered through use of various internet archive services resulting in the downloading of the digitized files. These

digitized files contain over 20,000 pages of FBI documentation from the investigations. To provide proper citations of these files, the initial use of unique documents within the digital records will include a full citation and then identify the FOIA files that correspond to their location. Subsequent citations from the same unique document will only use the FOIA location.

3. Digital Files: A great deal of the declassified source material is either presently available digitally from multiple archives or FOIA clearing houses maintained by U.S. government agencies. In order to maximize the value of citations and to enable other researchers to access the same records used within this paper, especially given its challenging conclusions, any primary or secondary source that can be found online will include hyperlinks to that material.

Chapter I.

Introduction

On November 7, 1938, German merchant mariner Heinrich Lorenz was called to testify as a material witness for the second time before Judge John C. Knox of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. His testimony related to the trial of German espionage agents in the United States exposed and arrested earlier that year, colloquially known as the Rumrich Spy Ring. Unbeknownst to any U.S. official within the investigation or trial, Lorenz was also a long-term recruited espionage agent of the German military intelligence service, known as the *Amt Auslands Abwehr*, or more simply, the *Abwehr*.[1] His name and espionage activities are absent from the recognized history of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States prior and during the Second World War. Instead, past statements and modern attention toward these events universally claim the Rumrich investigation identified all active agents in the U.S. at the time and resulted in a systemic disruption of *Abwehr* espionage that lasted for at least two years. As such, the case of Lorenz exposes flaws in the enduring historical understanding of *Abwehr* espionage. Within the largest counter espionage case in the U.S. since the First World War and a time when the FBI was attempting to establish itself as the United States' premier intelligence and counter espionage agency, the Bureau failed to develop a clear understanding of the nature of the *Abwehr* espionage threat, identify the focus of the

[1] *Amt Auslands Abwehr* translates most directly as foreign defense office but is interpreted as foreign intelligence office or service.

operations of *Abwehr* agents, develop an understanding of the espionage methodologies or tradecraft, or accurately assess the scope and breadth of *Abwehr* agent activity.

At the time of the trial, Lorenz was the First Officer of the passenger liner SS *Europa* of the *Norddeutsche* (North German) Lloyd (NDL) shipping line that operated between Bremen, Germany, and New York City. The Rumrich investigation exposed another member of the *Europa* crew, Karl Schlüter, as a key *Abwehr* espionage agent associated with Rumrich and other agents. In previous testimony, he had revealed Schlüter had boasted of espionage activities and reportedly revealed to crewmembers of the *Europa* a photostat of a contract between the Amtorg Trading Corporation – also known as the Amerikanskaya Torgovlya, the first trade representation between the Soviet Union in the United States. Other testimony had identified Schlüter also claimed he was able to search for intelligence secrets, like protected diplomatic communications, hidden in transatlantic mail pouches being delivered via *Europa* to Europe.

Under oath, Lorenz explained to federal prosecutors there was no photostatic equipment on board the ship to enable reproduction and it was impossible for Schlüter to have had a camera on board since each man's personal locker space was minimal.[2] The implication of his testimony, validated by other NDL officials, was neither Lorenz, *Europa*, nor NDL had had an active role in Schlüter's or the Rumrich Spy Ring's espionage activities. Lorenz, of course, testified he was not involved in the espionage and only knew second-hand of Schlüter's boasts. Under further examination by the U.S.

[2] "Government Rests in Spy Trial Here: Testimony of 37 Witnesses Taken to Date – Defense Pleas Up, Tomorrow" *The New York Times*, November 8, 1938, pg. 6.

attorney, he identified the alleged espionage and supporting political activities as the actions of only a handful of the crew and not part of a broader conspiracy onboard.[3]

Unknown to the court or the FBI, in addition to Lorenz and Schlüter, there were at least six other espionage agents on *Europa,* none of whom were every exposed by U.S. counter espionage agencies, and whose identities were only revealed among declassified archival documents that became publicly available in the last two decades.[4] Lorenz had been a recruited *Vertrauensmänner* (Trusted Individual, Confidential Informant), or *V-Mann*, of the *Abwehr* since at least 1935, just a few years after the service had resumed direct espionage in the United States.[5] To his handler and among the files of the *Abwehr*, he was known and registered as *Agenten* A 2319. Starting in 1935 and lasting until the outbreak of the Second World War in Europe, Lorenz was responsible for producing at least twenty-four intelligence reports for *Nebenstelle* Bremen, which included military intelligence matters such as aircraft and warship production and U.S. defensive capabilities.[6]

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[3] "Government Rests in Spy Trial Here," pg. 6.

[4] Counter espionage is synonymous with counterintelligence: "Information gathered and activities conducted to identify, deceive, exploit, disrupt, or protect against espionage … conducted for or on behalf of foreign powers, organizations, or persons, or their agents, or international terrorist organizations or activities." *Glossary,* Computer Security Resource Center, National Institute of Standards and Technology, https://csrc.nist.gov/glossary/term/counterintelligence. While counterintelligence is the modern expression, counter espionage was the term most frequently used during the era covered within this research and will be therefore used throughout this proposal and thesis.

[5] "Glossary of German Terms," *Office of Naval Intelligence Report on German and Russian Operations, 1940 to 1945*, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP65-00756R000500060002-9.pdf.

[6] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Personalakten von Agenten der Nebenstelle Bremen L - Z, Band 1 L – P, 1937-1944," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 442, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/05f18e37-24f1-4126-a22e-1163482a95b8/. The first entry of *Bundesarchiv* files will include the full citation with following endnotes used the record number (e.g. RW 49 442) and page number. Subsequent uses of the same file will only use the record number and appropriate page number(s).

The failures to understand and uncover more significant individuals within counter espionage investigations, let alone disrupt *Abwehr* activities, are manifested within the example of Lorenz, in that one of the prosecution's key witnesses was himself a clandestine agent and his testimony was crafted to protect other operations.

Rather than ending the threat German espionage in the U.S., the entire Rumrich affair occurred while the *Abwehr* was close to finalizing its full operational capacity for espionage in the U.S. During the investigation and trial of the only four agents known to be in the U.S., other unidentified *Abwehr* agents were actively expanding multiple, highly functioning, and highly lucrative networks across the U.S. Espionage in America had been so lucrative for the *Abwehr*, by the time of the Rumrich trial, *Abwehr* headquarters in Berlin was planning to install a centrally managed espionage structure in the U.S. under the control of a single *Abwehr* officer.[7]

By 1940 everything had aligned to enable the *Abwehr* to deploy the officer chosen to run all its U.S.-based espionage. *Wehrmacht* and *Abwehr* officer Major Ulrich von der Osten, as a civilian, had lived with his family in the United States from 1930 to 1934. Around 1935, he returned to Germany and was recommissioned into the military, and from there he was selected for the espionage service on the recommendation of Dr. Maximillian Baur, a long-term German military intelligence operative and friend of the former *Kaiser* and current *Chef des Abwehr* (Chief of the *Abwehr)* Admiral Canaris.[8] Major von der Osten traveled by rail through the Soviet Union and arrived in Shanghai,

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[7] "Kurt Frederick Ludwig," Investigation Case File, FOIA 1584244, U.S. Department of Justice, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., 1942, Section 1, pg. 166. The first entry of each section related to these files will use the entire citation, the section number, and page number. Subsequent entries will be entered using Ludwig, the section, and page number.

[8] "Dr. Maximillian Baur Espionage G," Memorandum, Special Investigative Service (SIS) European Desk to Director, FBI, June 30, 1945, located in "Abwehr," Record Group 65, Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1896-2008, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

China in December 1940 to coordinate his U.S. operations with the local Abwehr station that was also involved in facilitation support for agents in America.

Von der Osten departed Germany in October 1940 by way of the Soviet Union to travel through Asia – the most operationally secure route used by the *Abwehr* to infiltrate agents into the U.S. Once in China, he assumed the undercover persona of *Señor* Julio Lopez Lido, a Spanish national, and finally left by liner for San Francisco in February 1941. His voyage on the SS *President Cleveland* was fairly direct, with just one 12-hour-stop in Honolulu, Hawaii. After arriving in San Francisco, Osten spent the next month traveling across the country and coordinating with multiple agent networks in California, Washington, Colorado, Illinois, and other locations until he arrived at his final destination of New York City in early March 1941.

U. S. counter espionage authorities were completely unaware of von der Osten's / Lido's arrival, his espionage ties, or mission to take control of U.S.-based espionage activities. Soon after arriving in New York, von der Osten made his first report to Berlin covering his travel, arrival, and espionage activities since departing from Shanghai. The British Security Service, or MI-5, which was charged with counter espionage throughout the empire, intercepted a copy of the letter sent by Osten. While seeming innocuous at first, MI-5 forensic analysts were able to expose secret writing that revealed extensive espionage by U.S.-based agents.[9] The secret writing detailed how von der Osten had made contact with *Abwehr* agents in Hawaii during the SS *Cleveland's* brief stop in

[9] *En clare*, or in the clear, is espionage tradecraft for secret communications between agents and handlers in which plane language, as opposed to secret writing, is used to convey orders, or provide details related to espionage activity. Names of agents, types of activities, and updates on espionage activity are replaced with generic terms so that the report reads as if it was just a common letter between two individuals. In the case of this intercepted letter, it consisted of two sets of espionage matters, an *en clare* update over top of secret writing, both of which contained relevant material on his espionage activities.

Honolulu. He discussed receiving a large package of intelligence materials from Hawaii-based *Abwehr* networks related to U.S. military activities, defenses, and forces based all around Oahu. The intelligence included defensive plans, aerial photography of the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor, information on Hickam and Wheeler U.S. Army airfields, and meteorological and hydrographic details for Oahu, such as water depths in Pearl Harbor. Von der Osten further reported all the information had been passed through *Abwehr* officer "Smith" in Shanghai, and that while of minimal use to Berlin, was "of interest to mostly our yellow allies," derisively meaning the militaries of Imperial Japan.[10]

"Smith" was the *deckname* (codename) of *Abwehr* officer Louis Siefken. Among his duties in Shanghai was direct liaison with the Japanese military which included sharing intelligence collected in the United States. Even though the Office of Naval Intelligence, ONI, was aware the "focal point" of Japanese intelligence efforts was "the determination of the total strength of the United States," which specifically included "the Territory of Hawaii," Japan's espionage capabilities struggled to effectively penetrate the U.S. military.[11] Therefore, Imperial Japan relied on intelligence like that passed from von der Osten through Siefken to support its intelligence estimates of the U.S. military. The exact intelligence needed to plan the December 1941 Pearl Harbor attack had been provided by the *Abwehr*. Notably, the agents responsible for this collection and all of the dissemination mechanisms remain mostly undiscovered through at least 1942. [12]

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[10] H. Montgomery Hyde, *Room 303: The Story of the British Intelligence Center in New York During World War II*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1962.
[11] "Japanese Intelligence and Propaganda in the United States During 1941," Counter Subversion Section, Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, Office of Naval Intelligence, Washington D.C., December 4, 1941, http://www.mansell.com/eo9066/1941/41-12/IA021.html.
[12] For a critique of the intelligence collected by the *Abwehr* and provided to Japan on Pearl Harbor, see Thomas K. Kimmel Jr., J.A. Williams, and Paul Glyn Williams, "The FBI's Role in the Pearl Harbor Attack," *American Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 27, Is. 1, Fall 2009, pgs. 41-48.

Whereas the case of Heinrich Lorenz exposes the lack of understanding of U.S. counter espionage agencies regarding the nature of *Abwehr* espionage, the case of von der Osten's facilitation of intelligence on Pearl Harbor highlights the critical nature of the type of intelligence being collected by the *Abwehr* through its networks of U.S. agents. The enduring recognized history of the *Abwehr* in the U.S prior to and during the Second World War, ignores this evidence, and focuses instead on promoting minor collections as representative of the totality. Each of these scenarios highlights the recognized history of *Abwehr* espionage activities in the U.S. is not accurate, and therefore the actual history of these and other similar events have never been directly investigated and in essence have remained hidden or obscured for over seventy years. Lorenz and von der Osten, along with hundreds of their espionage associates, were dismissively amalgamated into a narrative of ineptitude and ineffectuality promoted by U.S. counter espionage agencies.

Problem Statement: Flawed Examinations of the *Abwehr's* U.S.-Based Espionage

The vignettes regarding Lorenz and von der Osten are not the recognized orthodox history of the *Abwehr* and are especially not part of the traditional understanding of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States. The majority of assessments related to the *Abwehr* have been negative, and that negative review has carried over from the general into the specific recognized historical record of its activities in the U.S.[13]

[13] Many examples of negative assessments of *Abwehr* operations in the United States will be covered within the Chapter 1 Literary Review. For a general summary of these assessments, see, Joan Miller, "Spies in America: German Espionage in the United States, 1935-1945." Master's Thesis, University of Portland, October 26, 1984, https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/3579, David Kahn, *Hitler's Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II*. Lebanon, Indiana: Da Capo Press, 1978, and Lauran Paine, *German Military Intelligence in World War II: The Abwehr*. New York: Stein & Day Pub, 1984. For a wartime MI-5 and Allied assessment, see "The German Intelligence Service and the War," Counter Intelligence War Room, London, The United Kingdom, The Security Service, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-03362A002500070002-3.pdf.

This understanding is proposed to have been influenced by *post facto* analysis that attributes German political and military failure in the wars of the 20th Century to its intelligence services. Such analysis is retroactive, beginning with defeat and looking backward to identify causality and antecedents of military collapse. It is not uncommon to find simplistic generalizations among amateurs and historians proclaiming Germans are 'just bad' at intelligence. For example, one modern scholar speaking of the German military intelligence services observed, German, "intelligence and counterintelligence have been among the worst in European military history. One could argue … that in the 1930s German intelligence lagged far behind even second-rank powers like Poland."[14]

Similar assessments can be found among the historians who found their way into the British security Service during the war, and then returned to academia post-war and subsequently published accounts of their espionage work against Germany. For example, John W. Wheeler-Bennett and Hugh Trevor-Roper were among the earliest post-war critics of the *Abwehr* and its causal linkages to Germany's military defeat in the Second World War. Wheeler-Bennett observed the German military intelligence service had, "failed conspicuously as a secret intelligence service."[15] Trevor-Roper went further, claiming the *Abwehr* failed as an intelligence service, to include its direct role in Germany's defeat, due to bad leadership by Canaris.[16] Not surprisingly, these

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[14] Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich.* Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005, pgs. xiv-xv.

[15] John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1954. For a lengthy and informative critique of early and prevailing negative assessments of the Abwehr as an intelligence institution, see Renate Katharina Maria Atkins, "Why is the Abwehr Misunderstood? Explaining the Historical Controversy of German Military Intelligence, 1935-1945." Master's Thesis, Macquarie University, 2022, https://figshare.mq.edu.au/articles/thesis/Why_is_the_Abwehr_misunderstood_Explaining_the_historical_controversy_over_German_military_intelligence_1935-1945/21424656.

[16] Hugh Trevor-Roper, The Secret World: Behind the Curtain of British Intelligence in World War II and the Cold War. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2014, pg. 63.

assessments of failure echo declassified wartime British intelligence assessments known to have been written by Wheeler Bennet, Trevor Roper, and their academia *cum* counter espionage analyst brethren. One of these assessments noted:

> "CANARIS was, firstly a bad judge of men, and secondly, himself a professional intrigant rather than an organiser. In consequence of the first fault, he chose worthless officers; and in consequence of the second, he gave them practical independence."[17]

The assessments continue that, "If the achievements of the GIS [the Abwehr] are analyzed functionally, it is clear that *Abt* I (positive espionage) was consistently unsuccessful, as at least as a source of secret operational material … *Abt* I (positive intelligence) was throughout the war the most unsuccessful of Abwehr departments." The officers and agents of the *Abwehr* involved in collecting intelligence were assessed as "worthless," and "neither trained nor equipped intellectually or morally qualified to perform the service [of clandestine intelligence]."[18]

Wartime British critiques were primarily directed against agents launched against the U.K., but did also clarify its negative assessments, "the same is true of the agents in the USA."[19] Similar negative assessments pervade in contemporary U.S. literature and post war academic discourses. Among the U.S. sources, even the most "pro-*Abwehr"* accounts have been highly critical of the German service. One of these accounts noted, "the Abwehr was in fact, a plodding, utilitarian and rather mild-mannered organization whose plots and stratagems seemed-and often were-naïve and diffident."[20] Similarly, a

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[17] "The German Intelligence Service and the War," Counter Intelligence War Room, London, The United Kingdom, The Security Service, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-03362A002500070002-3.pdf, pg. 1.
[18] "The German Intelligence Service and the War," pgs. 1-4.
[19] "The German Intelligence Service and the War," pgs. 3-4.
[20] Ladislas Farago, *The Game of the Foxes: The Untold Story of German Espionage in the United States and Great Britain During World War II*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1971pg. xv.

noted academic on the history of warfare assessed that, "Germany lost the intelligence war. At every one of the strategic turning points of World War II, her intelligence failed … the record appears abysmal."[21] Another author surmised of the *Abwehr*,

> "The available information and source data reveals that German espionage operations in America were replete with mistakes, bad organization, involved poor agent selection, and ultimately fulfilled few of the expectations of the Third Reich's spymasters."[22]

Another historian noted, "In America … the intelligence function was in the hands of amateurs. Even spies who were eventually sent to America were the worst examples of Intelligence people."[23] Even a 2022 academic work noted, *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. was barely a "discernable eddy in the stream of international history."[24]

These consistent narratives on the failure of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States all commonly draw from source materials that resulted from publicly released information related to three primary reported federal investigations into espionage from 1938 to 1942. Therefore, it appears the harsh historical critiques of the *Abwehr* can be traced backward from the present day to the initial revelations of espionage in 1938 so that the narratives can be effectively traced throughout from their origins to the present. The universality of critique of the *Abwehr* is commingled with the identification in the same works of tangible espionage successes by U.S.-based agents that seem counterfactual to the primary narrative of incompetence and futility. By 1935, only two years after the reactivation of overt direct espionage by the *Abwehr*, its U.S. agents had penetrated major defense industries and military bases, stolen plans for aircraft, warships,

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[21] Kahn, pg. 523.
[22] Miller, pg. 4.
[23] Paine, pg. 14.
[24] Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Ring of Spies: How MI-5 and the FBI Brought Down the Nazis in America*. Cheltenham: The History Press, 2020, pg. 241.

and other materiel, recovered design specifications for advanced instruments such as gyroscopes and bombsights, and were conducting intelligence liaison with other future hostile powers, such as Imperial Japan, on the intelligence gained in the U.S. After the outbreak of war in Europe, *Abwehr* agents in the U.S. provided information on the shipment of war materiel to the Europe and specific convoy information to enable disruption. By this time, *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. was so critical to Berlin, that three major trans-continental dissemination and facilitation networks had been developed for support and dissemination of intelligence.

One, therefore, is left to consider the contrasting assessments related to the U.S. operations of the *Abwehr* prior to and during the Second World War. Was the organization full of naïve amateurs coordinating espionage with consecutive groups of dullards, idiots, and deviants who stole information with no war-time value? Or were *Abwehr* operations in the U.S. begun earlier, penetrated deeper into the defense industrial complex, and resulted in more impactful results within the war? For over fifty years the available information on *Abwehr* activities in the U.S. was limited to the same primary sources established during the initial investigations into major espionage cases, so any review of the *Abwehr* necessarily has always relied on the same materials.

In the U.S., based on federally mandated declassification reviews, classified files from this period were to have been automatically declassified and made available to the public no later than the late 1980s and early 1990s. This automatic declassification did not occur for many intelligence matters from the Second World War. As a result of this latency, in 1998 the U.S. Congress passed the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act (NWCDA) that, among other things, called for the establishment of an interagency

working group to, "locate, identify, inventory, recommend for declassification, and make available to the public at the National Archives and Records Administration, all classified Nazi war criminal records of the United States."[25] While the target of the Act was disclosure of war crimes, a secondary result was the mandatory declassification of classified records related to the *Abwehr* and never-before-seen information on its U.S. agents and activities. Similar efforts in the U.K. by 1999 and through the early 2000s lead to the disclosure of MI-5 materials on the *Abwehr* to include U.S. intelligence files, assessments of *Abwehr* officers, and interrogations of captured officers and agents. In Germany, materials were also released, and German documents that had been kept classified in the U.S. and U.K. were declassified and returned to its national archives in the early 1980s. German archival materials were digitized in the 2010s and have recently been made available through the Bundesarchiv. [26]

Since the NWCDA and the public release of Second World War-era declassified documents available in the British and German national archives, thousands of never-before-evaluated primary source documents on the *Abwehr* have become available. There have been few efforts to use these records to reevaluate the nature of the *Abwehr's* activities in the U.S., to include whether or not they substantiate or deviate from recognized historical narratives. One is left to consider whether or not the unexamined declassified and publicly released files would impact the collective understanding of the breadth, depth, and impact of the *Abwehr's* U.S.-focused espionage activities.

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[25] "Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act," U.S. Code, Chapter 5, Section 552, Note, October 8, 1998, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, https://www.archives.gov/about/laws/nazi-war-crimes.html.

[26] The Russia national archives are believed to contain extensive German records from this period in addition to Soviet records on the *Abwehr*. Unfortunately, at present access to these archives is prohibited for all non-Russia citizens.

When these new primary sources are compared with the contemporary accounts of the U.S. counter espionage agencies a different picture of Abwehr operations against the U.S. takes form. Rather than being minor and ineffectual, German military intelligence operations appear more complex, more effective, and more enduring than previously understood. What is more, these operations appear to have had real impact prior to and during the war in terms of American and allied lives lost and material destroyed. This thesis will therefore compare the differing records, the legacy common understanding of the *Abwehr*, and the newly available declassified source material, and from that comparison determine to what extent the new primary source material influences the understanding of the intelligence history of the Second World War.

Analysis within this paper starts with a background review of available literary information and a brief history of the *Abwehr*. The breadth of this introspection will occur through a recreation of the history of *Abwehr* espionage targeting the U.S. as informed by the new material. In doing so, it will examine the espionage through four periods to enable analysis of historic orthodox interpretations of *Abwehr* espionage through declassified source materials. The first period will examine how the *Abwehr* sustained indirect access to the U.S. through informal "legacy agents" from 1919 through 1933. The second period will cover from 1933 through the February 1938 reveal of the Rumrich Spy Ring. A third period covers from Rumrich through the entry of the U.S. into the Second World War. The final period assesses *Abwehr* espionage against the U.S. from its entry into the war in December 1941 until the conclusion of the war.

Conclusions related to this thesis will be drawn from the analysis of these periods to determine whether or not the consensus on the history of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S.

is sustained or should be addressed for expansion and alteration of the common understanding. The final analysis will also seek to identify the rationale for the *Abwehr's* U.S. operations related to the overall objectives of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris within his opposition to the Hitler regime. As a result, it will be shown the actual history of the *Abwehr* is divergent from the historic understanding, and as such, this research has the potential to fundamentally alter the recognized history of intelligence prior to and during the Second World War.

Background – Three Investigations

This research seeks to conduct new analysis on the history of the *Abwehr* in the United States. To be effective in this effort, it will challenge the previous investigative and academic materials covering this issue particularly as recorded by the counter espionage agencies authorized to protect the United States from the foreign intelligence efforts of its enemies. To avoid having to address and contextualize the major events in the commonly understood history, it relies on a baseline knowledge of understanding of key events. The following synopses cover the three major investigations that occurred between 1938 and 1941 that were the primary elements in the establishment of the recognized historical records of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States.

The Rumrich Spy Ring

In January 1938, MI-5 notified the United States of an active *Abwehr* espionage agent planning to abduct a U.S. military officer. The FBI was given the leading role in the investigation and based on other information provided by MI-5, was able to identify and then arrest Guenther Gustav Rumrich, known by the *deckname* Crown. Rumrich /

Crown under interrogation exposed Johnna "Jenni" Hoffman, a hairdresser on the German-flagged vessel S.S. *Europa*, as a subagent of Rumrich's handler, and she was subsequently arrested. Hoffman's belongings contained multiple coded letters from *Abwehr* handlers in Germany to U.S. based agents, which were exploited by the FBI and led to the additional arrests of Erich Glaser, Ignatz Griebl, and Otto Herman Voss.

The investigation further identified the *Abwehr* had been engaged in espionage in the United States since 1933 through its agent William Lonkowski who had fled the U.S. in 1935. Werner Gudenberg was suspected of involvement in espionage, but upon learning the FBI was to question him, escaped to Germany before he could be detained. Griebl also later escaped FBI custody and fled to Germany. Glaser, Hoffman, Rumrich, and Voss were indicted, tried, and found guilty. The U.S. Attorney prosecuting the case also indicted fourteen other individuals, many who were *Abwehr* officers but were never questioned or forced to stand trial in the United States.

The FBI's lead investigator in the case, Leon Turrou, left the FBI in pursuit of a career as a screenwriter. He authored multiple New York Post articles regarding the investigation, a book that was the compendium of the articles, and gained a co-screenwriter credit for a 1939 film loosely based on the investigation.

The Duquesne Spy Ring

In 1940 William Sebold, an American citizen, was preparing to return to the United States from a year abroad living in his native Germany. Prior to his departure, he informed U.S. officials in Germany he had been forced into espionage by German agents. He offered to assist the United States in its efforts to prevent the espionage.

Upon Sebold's arrival to New York he was recruited as the FBI's first counter espionage double agent. For the next year, he was handled by the FBI and used to expose multiple *Abwehr* activities and agents operating in the New York metropolitan area. In June of 1941, the FBI conducted its largest-ever counter espionage action, and arrested thirty-three espionage agents who had been exposed during the Sebold double agent operation. The most flamboyant of the arrested agents was Frederick Duquesne whose persona became the sobriquet for the entire operation. All thirty-three were indicted, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to various prison terms of up to twenty years for espionage and other violations. The arrests also exposed the *Abwehr* was engaged in providing intelligence collected on the United States to agents of Imperial Japan, one of whom, an Imperial Japanese Naval officer under commercial cover, escaped the United States before he could be detained.

Director Hoover referred to the operation as the greatest spy roundup in U.S. history. To this day the FBI continues to state of the double agent operation, "As a result of the massive investigation, the FBI—and America—entered the war with confidence that there was no major German espionage network hidden in U.S. society."[27]

The Ludwig Spy Ring

In January 1941, while in the throes of the Sebold double agent operation, MI-5 again informed the FBI of its detection of *Abwehr* agents operating in the United States. While the Bureau originally associated the case with its Sebold operation, it quickly became clear the information provided by MI-5 indicated the presence of agents

[27] "Duquesne Spy Ring," History, Famous Cases & Criminals, U.S. Department of Justice, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/duquesne-spy-ring.

completely unconnected with its active investigation. The data from MI-5 continued to flow through the spring of 1941 through disguised letters revealing operational espionage information from "Joe K" in the United States to known *Abwehr* cover addresses in Germany, Portugal, Spain, and other countries.

On March 18, 1941, Spaniard Julio Lopez Lido was killed crossing the street in Times Square. Odd circumstances around his death lead to the FBI going through his belongings and identifying matters therein pertaining to *Abwehr* espionage activity in the United States. By the summer of 1941, the FBI was able to determine Lido was actually *Abwehr* officer Ulrich von der Osten who had traveled to the U.S. to organize *Abwehr* agents across the entire country. Supporting von der Osten was Joe K who was later identified as Ohioan Kurt Frederick Ludwig. Throughout July and August 1941, Ludwig led FBI surveillance from New York to Washington state where he was finally apprehended on August 27. Ludwig and eight subagents were arrested, indicted, tried, and found guilty of espionage.

The *Abwehr* – The Antecedents of German Military Intelligence

German military intelligence first achieved its modern role within the Prussian general staff system during the wars of German unification, 1860-1871. For the German military system intelligence existed within a narrow scope focused on consolidated information on an adversarial military force delivered directly to the General Staff for operational planning and execution for an extant conflict with a rival power. Within this context, one cannot separate the theory and practice of military intelligence from the needs of a General Staff in command of forces in the field of battle. From this German perspective, intelligence was strictly focused on the determination of the size, strength,

and location of enemy forces within the conflict at hand. The German military intelligence capability of the late 19th Century was not involved in long-term military planning, strategic assessments of other powers, or determining elements of one's own or others' national will or military objectives. Intelligence also was not exploratory or hypothetical but precisely focused on the elements of battle between armies in the field. For the German General Staff, these other areas of military interests were the provinces of the senior staff and not an intelligence activity. The strict Prussian adherence to military and political separation among the members of the military, to especially include the effects of the Junker class system on military leadership structures, exacerbated the exclusive and hyper-focused nature of military intelligence within the General Staff. The Prussian military tradition also saw intelligence work, particularly espionage, rooted in deceit and therefore antithetical to its code of ethics and conduct, thus further reducing the value of intelligence as compared with other military elements and combat arms.

19th Century German military intelligence should be viewed as a construct affected by the constant vacillations of war and peace in contemporary continental Europe. Intelligence structures within the General Staff rose and fell, being active during the wars of unification, only to ebb and rip with the changes in leadership of the General Staff or the resumption of peace between the powers. While the role of an intelligence capability within the Germany military stagnated, other states and empires saw the professionalization of intelligence continue to mature and integrate with multiple facets of military activities from the tactical to the strategic, as well as be integrated into other aspects of political and national power. Imperial Germany, however, placed intelligence functions within and subservient to the General Staff's operations branch, highlighting

the German military perception of the value of intelligence solely within the execution of land battle. If the Chief of the General Staff felt intelligence was valuable, or if conflict appeared to be on the horizon, the intelligence section was resourced. When this was not the case, the intelligence section was reduced and lapsed into disuse.

By 1889 the General staff's intelligence capability was aligned within the layer of deputy chiefs of the *Oberquartiermeister* known as "O. Qu. III." From then until the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, because of this alignment, the General Staff intelligence section was referred to as IIIb, or *Sektion* (Section) IIIb. During the First World War, IIIb's role and requirements expanded so that it was renamed from *Sektion* to *Abteilung* (Department), and this title was often shortened to *Abt* IIIb.[28] While IIIb was not the *Abwehr* in an earlier form, many of its organizational aspects prefigured the future organization of its successor agency. Moreover, IIIb leadership that failed in 1918, worked either directly or behind the scenes to form the next military intelligence arm, with a keen eye toward learning from the errors of German intelligence in the First World War and making decided improvements with an eye toward the next conflict.

Whether known as IIIb, *Sektion*, or *Abteilung*, the mission of the General Staff's intelligence function remained the same throughout the early 20th Century, the collection of intelligence "of military origin," through the accumulation of, "information, supplemented by means of espionage among the enemy … [to] help in military struggles."[29] IIIb focused on obtaining intelligence related to the capabilities, technologies, organizations, and intentions of the militaries of other empires and states with whom Germany would align or fight. The only other intelligence role for IIIb was

[28] Kahn, pgs. 30-34.
[29] Walther Nikolai, *The German Secret Service*. London: Stanley Paul & Co. Ltd., 1921.

counterespionage for the military – the protection of the German military from penetration by the intelligence services of rival powers. IIIb never conducted political espionage, that is, the accumulation of secret intelligence on the political mechanisms or policies of rival states. Political matters were the province of the offices and embassies of the foreign ministry, with some minor overlap within the offices of the internationally accredited defense attaches. For the German military system, even defense attaches, who were military officers, did not fall under the authority of the military intelligence department, but reported through the Foreign Ministry.

Given the hyperfocus of the General Staff on competition with other continental powers and England, from the 1870s until the outbreak of the First World War, almost no resources were allocated by IIIb toward collection on the United States. According to the head of IIIb during the First World War, the rationale for the absence of espionage targeting the U.S. was natural, since the two states "lack[ed] the incentive of hostile sentiment" toward one another.[30] Since neither the U.S. nor Germany perceived the other as a potential foe, they would not fight one another, so from the IIIb perspective, there was no need to collect intelligence or conduct espionage against the U.S. This situation endured through the first years of the First World War, but even as the U.S. began to politically align with France and the United Kingdom, there were still no efforts by IIIb to conduct espionage in the U.S. IIIb only began developing sources and intelligence months after the announcement of the U.S. entry into the war on the side of the Allies. By the time of the armistice, it had only managed to recruit seven *Vertrauensmänner* ("Trusted men," or espionage agents), indicating it had developed very little access to the

[30] Nikolai, pg. 19.

type of military intelligence information that should have been needed during the war. While IIIb had no purview for the collection of political intelligence, its inability to provide intelligence on U.S.'s political alignments or military deployment plans can be assessed as an intelligence failure.

While IIIb had no espionage capabilities in the U.S., other elements of the German intelligence system were actively involved in non-military intelligence operations in the United States from 1914 through at least 1917. These activities included the clandestine sale of armaments, the spreading of information / disinformation related to the war, agitation of the population, and an aggressive program of sabotage targeting U.S. arms support to the Allies. The sabotage activities of 1915-1917 were coordinated by Germany's defense attaches accredited to the United States, Colonel von Papen and Captain Boy-Ed. By some accounts, the sabotage network conducted upwards of two hundred destructive acts targeting shipping in the New York area alone.[31] In the most infamous sabotage attack, the military munitions site at Black Tom Island, New Jersey was destroyed when explosives detonated approximately 2,000,000 pounds of ammunition and explosives. As a result, the American people and law enforcement agencies understood German intelligence to be associated with sabotage and subversion and not the actual traditional and conservative military intelligence activities of IIIb. These perceptions would be among the greatest cognitive influences that would inhibit proper understanding of *Abwehr* espionage in the 1930s and 1940s.

[31] For the impact of espionage and sabotage managed by von Papen and Boy-Ed on American understanding of German intelligence, see, Chad Millman, *The Detonators: The Secret Plot to Destroy America and the Epic Hunt for Justice.* New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006, pgs. 6-30.

At War's end IIIb and other German intelligence agencies were disbanded.[32] Most histories of the period claim the 1919 Paris Peace Accord, also known as the Treaty of Versailles, disbanded and prohibited military intelligence capabilities. In fact, IIIb was disbanded because it was an element of the General Staff. There were no prohibitions in the treaty against intelligence capabilities, but since a central intelligence service was always conceived as an element of the General Staff, and a General Staff was prohibited, the result was a *de facto* prohibition of central military intelligence. According to the Peace Accord, "The Great German General Staff and all similar organizations shall be dissolved and may not be reconstituted in any form."[33] With disbandment, IIIb's intelligence personnel were either demobilized or transferred into different branches among the 100,000 total personnel limited by the treaty.

To evidence the lack of prohibition against intelligence agencies, in 1921, Germany established the *Abwehr* as the follow-on agency to IIB solely to provide counter espionage capabilities and protect the military from foreign espionage. According to Walther Nikolai, the former IIIb head, such a capability was essential following the war:

> "With the disappearance of the German intelligence service all barriers were broken down which had been set up to prevent the secret service of the enemy from penetrating into the country ... thus the hostile I.S. [intelligence service] entered Germany officially." [34]

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[32] The navy, the *Kaiserliche Marine*, operated a separate intelligence service, referred to simply as the *Nachrichtendienst,* information office, or as "N," focused on naval intelligence matters, which was also disbanded at the end of the war.

[33] "Treaty of Peace with Germany (Treaty of Versailles)," Paris Peace Conference, Treaty and Protocol signed June 28, 1919, Article 160.3. Multiple past and contemporary sources incorrectly claim the Treaty had prohibited Germany for conducting espionage, there is no actual such provision. Lauran Paine in *German Military Intelligence in World War II: The Abwehr*, associates the absence of intelligence capability with the Treaty. Christopher Andrew in *The Secret World: A History of Intelligence*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018 makes a more direct association. The reality is the Treaty stipulated the precise composition of the German military which specifically did not include any intelligence forces for the *Heer* or *Marine.* This fact is differentiated to a degree from claims the Treaty prohibited our outlawed intelligence services.

[34] Nikolai, pgs. 236-237.

Nikolai also highlighted the commission overseeing German disarmament was commanded by the head of French military intelligence, so that a counter espionage capability was needed to protect the German military from the institution established to manage its disarmament. Of this state Nikolai observed:

> "The command of the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control [the body empowered in the Treaty to observe German disarmament and adherence to other elements of the Versailles Treaty] was given to General Dupont. Thus the chief of the French I.S. [intelligence service] before and during the war became the organizer of the officially recognized French intelligence service which was spread over the whole of the Reich." [35]

The new *Abwehr* would begin to address these issues and attempt to harden the remnant military from enemy, or Military Commission, penetration.

While there is no doubt the *Abwehr* following its establishment overtly conducted its counter espionage mission, there are multiple indications its establishment was done to hide the clandestine reestablishment of a military foreign intelligence service to conduct espionage against Germany's traditional and future enemies. There are extensive records of the multiple and varied means by which the interwar German militaries and paramilitary organizations conducted secret programs to develop military technology, experiment with operational and technical innovations, develop a maneuver doctrine colloquially known as *blitzkrieg*, and built capacities that would enable what was perceived as eventual rearmament. Intelligence matters to include foreign espionage have never been directly addressed within the scope of interwar clandestine rearmament and military technical developments. Yet, a review of the *Abwehr* from its establishment through the 1930s appears to indicate its counter espionage *raison d'etre* was a cover for the clandestine establishment of a full-spectrum military intelligence service.

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[35] Nikolai, pg. 239.

Overtly, when established, the *Abwehr* consisted of less than a dozen military officers, a small staff, and secretariat. Growth was minimal, and by 1934, just prior to the announcement of the government's policy of rearmament, its declared size was only 150 full-time officers supported by a smallish civilian and clerical staff. Within a year its ranks had swelled exponentially to between 1500-3000 personnel and would reach upwards of 15-30,000 during the war, depending on the elements one determines to include within its construct.[36] The meteoric and sudden growth in 1935 has been attributed by post-war historians as reflective of poor hiring practices of individuals unsuited to espionage and intelligence work. In contrast to this assessment, when one is open to the possibility of the *Abwehr* conducting hidden intelligence operations to support clandestine military development and eventual rearmament, a different set of conclusions can be reached that involve a broader scope of understanding related to the role of the *Abwehr* during the interwar period.

From this perspective, one can view Nikolai's 1921 memoir as a call-to-arms for the immediate reestablishment of an intelligence service rather than a collection of war time recollections. Within the memoir, Nikolai identifies the enduring threats to German sovereignty and outlines the role of intelligence in its defense. In this vein he claims of the necessity of an intelligence service, "Into a dark future and ahead of developments the intelligence service goes to investigate and influence … Far greater than in the past and the present will the secret power of this service be in the future."[37] Nikolai's views on

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[36] Höhne and other Canaris biographers use the larger numbers but it is unclear if their accounts include officers and staff
as well as agents. Additionally, if one includes in the calculation of the *Abwehr's* total numbers the so-called *Brandenbergers,* an element developed by *Abteilung II* who were somewhat analogous to special forces, the number of personnel would grow considerably larger.
[37] Nikolai, pg. 269.

the necessity of the immediate reestablishment of an intelligence service are amplified by the fact one of his deputies from IIIb, Frederick Gempp, was chosen to be the first *Chef des Abwehrs* (Abwehr Chief) to run the organization. Gempp had experience with counter espionage, but was known for his work conducting espionage activities to support Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff on the Eastern Front.[38]

Unlike others who could have been chosen for the *Chef*, Gempp had the ideal combination of field experience in multiple aspects of intelligence, organizational capacity, and political connections with name recognition to enable the establishment of an overt and clandestine intelligence service. Further, among the first actions taken by Gempp, was the splitting of the *Abwehr* into two sections, a West desk focused on the traditional enemy of France, and an East desk focused on the new enemy of the Soviet Union.[39] Such an organizational model was ideal for foreign espionage but poorly suited for counter espionage. Among Gempp's initial tasking for his *Abwehr* officers was the development of espionage sources with access to the Soviet Union that the intelligence service might better be able to predict the actions of this new enemy.[40]

By the mid-1920s, Gempp was reorganizing the *Abwehr* to make it more conducive to direct foreign espionage activities. After 1921 but before 1928, he organized the *Abwehr* into *Abteilungen* (departments), creating a structure that endured until the *Abwehr* was dissolved in June 1944. While the departments' foci would adapt, the primary *Abwehr* structure would continue to use three main departments. For Gempp in the mid-1920s, those three were *Abt* I, foreign intelligence, *Abt* II, codebreaking (rather

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[38] Kenneth Campbell, "Major General Friedrich Gempp German Intelligence Leader," *American Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2007, pg. 77, https://www.jstor.org/stable/44327075.
[39] Paine, pgs. 6-7.
[40] Alfred M. Beck, *Hitler's Ambivalent Attaché*. Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, pg. 24.

than sabotage), and *Abt* III, counter espionage. Therefore, by the mid-1920s, when the *Abwehr* was supposedly only conducting counter espionage, it already had established a foreign intelligence capability. According to post-war U.S. intelligence assessments, following this reorganization, the *Abwehr, "*became the central agency for the procurement of foreign intelligence," highlighting its role in active espionage.[41] Unlike modern intelligence services or those of its prospective contemporary adversaries, from this point onward, the *Abwehr* was not involved in analysis of the foreign intelligence it had procured. Analysis remained the purview of the services and other end users within the defense leadership.

The *Abwehr's* efforts to sustain a hidden foreign intelligence collection capability were accelerated when the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission "abandoned" its "supervision of German disarmament" in 1927.[42] Activities that had been previously clandestine or covert were moved more definitively into open, although, overt declarations of centralized intelligence were prohibitive due to a lack of domestic political support related to rearmament in general and espionage specifically.

From the 1870s through the end of the First World War, the Germany military had a single, centralized foreign intelligence service – IIIb. It was only IIIb that provided intelligence to the General Staff and it was only IIIb that ran the hosts of foreign espionage agents and provocateurs targeting Germany's enemies. The Anglo-German naval arms race had led to direct competition between the Royal Navy and *Kriegsmarine*,

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[41] "German and Russian Operations, 1940-1945," Espionage - Sabotage - Conspiracy - Excerpts from the Files of the German Naval Staff and from Other Captured German Documents, Department of the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Intelligence, Office of Naval Intelligence, Washington D.C., 1947, https://ncisahistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Espionage-Sabotage-Conspiracy-German-and-Russian-Operations-1940-1945-r3.pdf, pg. 15.
[42] "News in Brief," *Advocate of Peace through Justice*, Vol. 89, No. 7, July 1927, p. 442.

and accordingly, the *Kriegsmarine* developed its own intelligence capabilities that prior to 1918 were almost entirely focused on locating enemy forces at sea. These capabilities, such as high frequency direction finding, HF/DF or Huff Duff, endured post war. During the initial post-war period, the *Kriegsmarine* also began conducting its own counter espionage operations and foreign espionage through the use of recruited agents.

In 1928, while the *Abwehr* was overtly only a counter espionage agency, it absorbed the counter and foreign espionage capabilities of the *Kriegsmarine* as a step to further unify its control as the single, central espionage agency of the armed forces. *The Kriegsmarine* sustained its maritime warfare-focused capabilities, like HF/DF, within its *Beobachdungsdienst,* also known as the *B-Dienst,* but espionage, counter espionage, and sabotage capabilities were completely consolidated within the *Abwehr*. Proximal to this consolidation the *Abwehr* also became the primary intelligence service responsible for signals intelligence and established offices to monitor radio traffic for intelligence purposes. These newer efforts included its use of radio, and the development of coded transmissions decryption capabilities targeting the encrypted traffic of other states.

By the time Gempp retired in 1928 and was replaced with Guenther Schwantes, the *Abwehr* was a centralized intelligence service conducting espionage, counter espionage, and other supporting activities, while overtly attesting to being only a minor counter espionage department. In the summer of 1928, *Reichswehrminister* Groener released a plan for further *Abwehr* reorganization –surely drafted by Gempp and Schwantes was certainly selected specifically to implement his plan. Accordingly, the new plan would include the complete reveal of the *Abwehr's* capabilities:

> "the Abwehr Group of the Heersleitung [Army Directorate] will cease to be the province of the Truppenamt and departments concerned with

> counterespionage, foreign intelligence, secret intelligence and monitoring and cipher duties will cease to be that of the Marine-Kommando-Amt [Navy department responsible for general operational control]. … These departments will … be merged in the 'Abwehr Abteilung' (Abw. Abt.) [Abwehr Station] … Lieutenant Colonel Schwantes will assume command of the Abwehr-Abteilung … As the sole authority in the Reichswehr Ministry, the Abwehr-Abteilung will handle the entire organization of Secret Intelligence Service and the Monitoring and Cipher Service, as well as all military and naval counterespionage … Every other department … is forbidden to deal with matters falling into this sphere of activity."[43]

Schwantes and his successor von Bredlow were both army, or *Heer,* officers. Given the *Heer*-centric focus of IIIb and then the *Abwehr* it is interesting that it was not an Army officer who was most responsible for transitioning the hidden aspects of the *Abwehr* more into the open.

The *Abwehr* would not move its capabilities into the open until von Bredlow was relieved by *Kriegsmarine Kapitän zur Zee* (Captain of the Sea, U.S. or Royal Navy Captain equivalent) Conrad Patzig in June 1932. Patzig was an unlikely choice to lead the service which, although technically a joint organization, was historically and culturally perceived as an element of the General Staff which was inherently a body of the *Heer*. By the early 1930s, the *Kriegsmarine* and *Heer* remained at odds with one another on intelligence matters, especially within the *Abwehr*. To support the combined service approach to intelligence, one of von Bredlow's principle deputies was established as senior officer of the *Kriegsmarine*. The man who served the post in the late 1920s rankled von Bredlow, so the *Kriegsmarine* replaced him with an officer believed able to improve relations while also advancing naval perspectives.

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[43] *Reichswehr* Minister's draft directive for the formation of an Abwehr Section, March 14, 1928, Bundesarchiv, Militararchiv, Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine, Box 6, 3417/2; quoted in Höhne, pg. 158, Bracketed text in Höhne. Author was unable to recover the original document from the German Federal Archive likely due to dated cataloging used by Höhne in comparison with present-day conventions.

So it was that in 1930, Conrad Patzig assumed the roles of senior *Kriegsmarine* officer in the *Abwehr* and official fence mender. Patzig, would claim during a 1966 interview with officers of the West German intelligence service, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (Government Intelligence Office), that at the time of his appointment to the *Abwehr* he had no history or experience working in the intelligence field. In his own words he claimed during the interview, "*Ich hatte von Abwehr keine Ahnung* (I had no idea about intelligence, or alternatively, I knew nothing about the *Abwehr*)." Under von Bredlow, Patzig was the *leiter* (leader) of the foreign naval intelligence branch, *Eins Marine,* shorthand for *Abteilung I Marine* (Naval Intelligence Department), further abbreviated IM, in Berlin. Whatever problems that had existed between the *Heer* and *Kriegsmarine* within the *Abwehr* were fixed under his term in IM, and von Bredlow and Patzig found a way to represent the interests of both of their services. The relationship worked so well that when von Bredlow was promoted to a position within the Ministry of Defense he recommended Patzig as his successor.[44]

Where Gempp had planned, and Schwantes prepared, it had been Patzig who was able to further expand the *Abwehr* from its covert status into the recognized German intelligence service in its pre-wartime form. While it would be incorrect to say *Kriegsmarine* officers did not hold the same Prussian ideals of officers of the *Heer,* Patzig's ability to manage the nuances of intelligence work were decidedly more adept than the more rigid tactics of his *Heer* predecessors. As a naval officer, Patzig held none of the preconceived notions of the honor or dishonor of espionage, and instead focused

[44] "Gedachtnisprotokoll uber die Befragung des Admirals a.D. Conrad Patzig, am 18/19/1/1966," record N 975/1, Patzig, Conrad (Admiral), Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/ffb2a831-008a-4078-bb43-70c620cd2eee/.

on effective organization, forethought, and the use of intelligence to meet the *Reichswehr's* information needs. In all of these ways, his term as *Chef des Abwehrs*, can be assessed as successful.

Almost immediately after taking the helm in the summer of 1932, Patzig began expanding the service, to almost certainly include moving "clandestine" capabilities and officers into positions within the service, and expanding the *Abwehr's* direct collection of foreign military intelligence. For example, by early 1933, he had authorized aircraft to fly over Poland to collect aerial reconnaissance on military installations and forces. He also began the process of moving additional intelligence capabilities into the seven extant *Abwehrstellen* in the military districts to expand capabilities beyond counter espionage. He began the process of supporting each *Abwehrstellen* with representatives from all three *Abteilungen* and planned for the expansion of additional *Stellen* to align with similar military expansion plans for secret rearmament. Learning from the mistakes of IIIb, around early 1933, Patzig also directed the resumption of direct espionage in the United States focused on the collection of military technical information and innovations.

Shortly after he began all of these major advancements, domestic power shifted to the National Socialists and Patzig immediately ran afoul of the intelligence organs of the Party as well as other government and military functions like Hermann Goering's *Luftwaffe*. This friction included consternation over the Polish reconnaissance of which he was directed to immediately cease – Patzig secretly continued his intelligence missions but limited dissemination of the reporting so the party officials would be unaware of its continuance. Yet, over the next year, Patzig proved incapable of

sustaining a precarious balance with the Party, to specifically include elements of the *Gestapo* and *Sicherheitsdienst*.[45]

By the end of 1934 it was determined within the government and military that Patzig, regardless of his successes in reorganization and espionage expansion, had to be replaced. He did sustain sufficient credibility with the defense establishment and the *Kriegsmarine* to effectively recommend his successor and fellow naval officer Wilhelm Canaris. *Kriegsmarine* leadership did not initially favor Canaris' nomination, but eventually supported him for the post rather than lose the position of *Chef des Abwehrs* back to the *Heer*. While Patzig was the *Chef*, it also appears he expanded the number of naval officers brought into the espionage service to include placing them outside of positions within IM through the *Abwehr*. Many of these officers had served during the First World War and then went into the private sector during the interwar period. Patzig brought them back as either reserve officers or civilian employees to make use of their military and international experience. Several of Patzig's cadre of older naval officers turned intelligencers would become essential to the establishment, expansion, and exploitation of espionage in the United States after 1933.

While Patzig had been unable to manage his relationships with the National Socialists, the rise of the Party was a key element in the growth of the *Abwehr* to specifically include the rationale for its reestablishment and growth of espionage in the U.S. Among the policies of Germany's autocratic government after January 1933 was the revocation of the restrictions of the Paris Peace Accord and renewed military rearmament. In October 1933, Germany formally withdrew from the Inter-Allied

[45] George Browder, *Foundations of the Nazi Police State: The Formation of Sipo and SD.* Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky Press, 1990, pgs. 175-178.

disarmament conference and the League of Nations, and in March 1935 Hitler announced the full rearmament of Germany – although rearmament had begun no later than 1934.

Even though paramilitary elements had developed technology and new military equipment in partnership with other states, overall since the war, German military and armaments industries had lagged behind traditional adversaries. In order to catch up to Germany's rivals and enemies, the military had to obtain access to the military developments of others, and the quickest route to new technology was espionage. To achieve rearmament, National Socialism needed the *Abwehr*, and German military intelligence service was resourced and empowered to these ends, and under Patzig and then Canaris provided an immediate return to include sensitive military technologies achieved through espionage in the United States.

Literary Review – The Perpetuation of Historical Orthodoxy

Since this thesis seeks to conduct a first-ever review of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States using additional and rarely examined primary source material declassified between 1999 and 2023, it is essential to first review previous relevant academic and historic literature from 1938 to the present-day that either did not have access to or did not engage with this material. Such a review informs this analysis through identifying how a single assessment of the *Abwehr* was established in the late 1930s and became a unified and universal orthodoxy that influenced nearly all subsequent treatments and academic engagements. Analysis, bias, error, and associations established within the earliest material reviewing *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. influenced almost all subsequent works with little deviation over the last eight-five years. These narrative themes have thus far been unchallenged even with the expansion of the historical record

provided among the declassified matters now available in American, British, German, and other archives. This literary review will begin with the initial document that first addressed *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S., trace the development of historical understanding of the material through the post-war decades and into the late 20th century, and finish with a review of few historic works that have attempted to address the topic of *Abwehr* espionage through engagement with newly available source material.

Leon Turrou – The Establishment of Orthodoxy

In Late 1938, Leon Turrou published *The Nazi Spy Conspiracy in America*, covering his investigation of the Rumrich Spy Ring. From February-to-June 1938, Turrou was the lead FBI investigator into the first known case of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S.[46] He had been working on a human trafficking investigation, but with the revelation of *Abwehr* espionage, Turrou was pulled from the case and became the FBI's first counter espionage investigative agent. With what appeared to be little warning, on June 20, 1938, he wrote a letter to his superiors declaring he, "tender[ed] my resignation as a Special Agent in the Federal Bureau of Investigation …. Effective at the termination of my accrued annual leave." In the letter, Turrou identified his "health and the welfare of [his] family" as the impetus for his resignation, but advised the Bureau should not be overly concerned with his resignation in terms of the active investigation, as he had "completed my duties in the Espionage investigation, and leave a clear schedule."[47]

[46] "Memorandum for Mr. Tolson, Re: Former Agents Tom Tracy and Leon G. Turrou," July 11, 1938, located in "Leon George Turrou (1920-1986)," Personnel File, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Information Management Division, FOIA 1583327-0, as Turrou Personnel File, File 2, pg. 270, and Clyde Tolson, "Memorandum for the Director," U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., July 14, 1938, Turrou Personnel File, File 2, pg. 276.
[47] Leon G. Turrou to Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, "Personal," New York, N.Y., June 20, 1938, Turrou Personnel File, File 2, pg. 195.

A review of a declassified FBI personnel file on Turrou indicates his personnel health was not the reason for his resignation. Intra-FBI memos identify that almost immediately after receiving Turrou's letter of resignation, Director Hoover learned Turrou had completed a deal with the New York Post newspaper to write a series of twelve exclusive articles detailing the investigation. Turrou was to be paid $25,000 by the Post for his authorship– five times his annual salary with the FBI. Included in his deal was a book option for the articles and a promise to review articles by Turrou on three other cases. Director Hoover was enraged by Turrou's duplicity and the fact one of his agents would be so willing to publicly disclose confidential matters related to a case for material gain. As a result, Hoover informed the Bureau he had dismissed Turrou "with prejudice … at the close of business June 20, 1938," meaning contrary to Turrou's stated intention, he would not remain in the employ of the Bureau as his accrued vacation time expired, during which he would have been paid his FBI salary.[48]

Turrou's first of twelve articles on the investigation were ready for print by the end of June 1938, days after his resignation, indicating rather than devoting time to the investigation, Turrou had been seeking a publisher and drafting articles. The articles were to be published while the investigation was still ongoing and before any suspects were indicted. Rightly believing publication would jeopardize the investigation, indictments, and trial, the Justice Department was able to delay publication until, "after the trial of the four defendants now under arrest, and the completion of the Grand Jury investigation."[49] The articles were eventually published near the end of 1938 and then

[48] "To All Special Agents in Charge," *Bureau Bulletin No. 104*, Second Series, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, June 27, 1938, Turrou Personnel File, File 2, pg. 240.
[49] "Spy Story Withheld," *The New York Times*, June 25, 1938, pg. 4.

edited into the single volume *The Nazi Spy Conspiracy in America*. In 1939, the book was fictionalized as the Warner Brothers movie Confessions of a Nazi Spy, with Edward G. Robinson as the FBI agent loosely based on Turrou.

In any form, Turrou's work never purported to be academic or historical. According to the author, he was attempting to expose the threat of fascism to the American public in a fashion similar to what would be considered a whistleblower in modern terms. In his account, government counter espionage activities had been under-funded and not prioritized, which had left the country vulnerable to subversion and threats to the American way of life. No historical or analytical methods were used or claimed to have been used by the author, and rather than reading within historic, true crime, or investigative journalistic genres, the articles, Turrou's articles, novel, and screenwriting can be described as trope-filled film noir.

With his dime-store spy novel approach, modern readers may find Turrou's account misogynist and prejudiced. Throughout his address of the espionage investigation he had headed for four months he sexualizes the women involved and portrays the men as dullards and fanatics. The issue with Turrou's biases and prejudices is not whether or not they were considered socially acceptable at the time, but rather if they impacted the investigation and, subsequently, the recorded history of those involved with the espionage case. Going forward, in subsequent investigations, as a result of the biases purported initially by Turrou, there would be an endemic mischaracterization of the motives and attitudes of those engaged in espionage in the U.S. on behalf of the *Abwehr* that arguably limited the FBI's and other agencies abilities to understand, predict, and effectively disrupt enemy intelligence activities.

There is further critique of Turrou's approach in the labeling of *Abwehr* espionage as "Nazi." Throughout his articles, book, and movie, those engaged in espionage are executing their activities at the direction of the *Geheim Stats Polizei,* or *Gestapo,* the secret police organization of the National Socialist Party. The purpose of *Gestapo* espionage, per Turrou, was nothing short of the destruction of America through the formation of a fascist government in Washington D.C. While several of the *Abwehr* agents and officers exposed in Turrou's and subsequent investigations were either literal members of the National Socialist German Workers Party or espoused its ideals, the *Abwehr* as an entity was separate from the *Gestapo* and the party and its focus was solely on military intelligence matters.[50] Turrou's seeming inability to contextualize the delineation of German espionage authorities fundamentally altered the course of all FBI counter espionage investigations through the end of the war. The Bureau consistently considered all espionage as actions of the *Gestapo* with a focus on political subversion. This characterization and misunderstanding of structure and organization inhibited the Bureau's ability to appropriately conceptualize the intelligence service resulting in its limited ability to detect, disrupt, or prevent *Abwehr* penetration.

Even with its identified faults, since the author was the lead investigator, *The Nazi Spy Conspiracy in America* was able to establish itself as a mostly historically accurate presentation of matters within the investigation. For over seventy years, Turrou's account served as the baseline from which all understanding of *Abwehr* espionage was founded and it influenced all counter espionage investigations and histories since its

[50] Many American agents recruited by the *Abwehr* held strong sympathies for the ideologies and hatreds espoused by National Socialism, but rather than support political objectives, to the greatest degree, they pursued military intelligence.

publishing. There have been few attempts to refute Turrou's claims, to include egregious errors regarding the *Abwehr,* its officers and activities, and its associations with other elements of the German government, so that these errors and biases have been consistently repeated to the extent they often are presented as irrefutable.[51] Ironically, rather than exposing German subversive activities and espionage, the result of Turrou's expose was to taint the country's understanding of the focus of *Abwehr* espionage. Following the release of declassified materials held by the FBI and MI-5 on the events of the Turrou investigation in the early 2000s, many of these initial false baseline assessments can finally be challenged in the light of new information.

Post War Accounts – Colvin, Abshagen, and Leverkuehn

After the war, accounts of the *Abwehr* generally focused on Admiral Canaris and his perceived role in the defeat of Germany to specifically include introspections as to whether or not he had been an agent of British Intelligence. In 1951 Ian Colvin published *Chief of Intelligence* in which he considered the contemporary claims related to Canaris as a British agent. Colvin summarized the sense among many who reviewed the *Abwehr's* performance during the war and concluded the only rational means to understand its failures was that its Chief was a double agent. In what appears to have

[51] For examples of some of the more egregious errors: Turrou was never sure the name of the German espionage agency behind Griebl, Rumrich, and the others and used multiple different titles before reducing it to *Gestapo* – he spoke fluent German and conducted interrogations in that language, meaning he should have known the title of the intelligence service. He identified Busch as its leader when it was known Canaris was the Chief. For an almost word-for-word recreation of Turrou's claims within present scholarship see, Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *Ring of Spies: How MI-5 and the FBI Brought Down the Nazis in America*. Cheltenham: The History Press, 2020, or for an example of the use of Turrou to further embellish accounts of Rumrich and other aspects of *Abwehr* espionage, see, William Breuer, *Hitler's Undercover War: The Nazi Invasion of the U.S.A.,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989. For an understanding of *Abwehr*-related matters provided to the FBI, Army, and Navy beginning no later than 1938, see "Abwehr."

been a retort of sorts to Colvin's work, Karl Abshagen published *Canaris* to provide a counterpoint to the assessment of Canaris' control by British Intelligence. Within *Canaris*, Abshagen became one of the earliest proponents of the narrative of Canaris as the heart and fulcrum for the *Wehrmacht's* opposition to Hitler. For several decades, Abshagen's claims would be circulated and rejected. In the early 2000s, his MI-5 case file was declassified and released to the public, revealing he had been an *Abwehr* agent and had had repeated contact with Canaris, indicating he may have been present or directly engaged with Canaris' activities within the anti-Hitler cabal.[52]

In 1954, Paul Leverkuehn published the first post-war account of the *Abwehr* by a former *Abwehr* officer. During his time with the service, in addition to recruiting and handling agents, Leverkuehn ran espionage operations and stations in Persia, Poland, and Turkey. His book *German Military Intelligence* addresses the *Abwehr* in a manner like Abshagen's treatment of Canaris and proposes an alternative to mainstream historical understanding. For Leverkuehn, the record of the *Abwehr* was marred, and he noted:

> "[the] undertakings of the Abwehr Service have been the subject of innumerable stories in the press ... this information has often been supplemented and embellished with fictitious dialogue and other ornaments until it is hard to see where truth ends and fiction begins."[53]

He proposed his recollections were more valuable in detailing the history of the service and claimed, "Much of the Abwehr's most significant activity finds no place in the official files," as these were the "dead bones of history."[54] These words appear to have been somewhat prophetic, as within the entire scope of surviving *Abwehr* files there is an

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[52]"Abshagen, Karl Heinz," Case File KV-2-390, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10967523.
[53] Paul Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence: A First-hand Account of the Wehrmacht's Secret Service in the Second World War*. New York: Praeger, 1954, pg. 2.
[54] Leverkuehn, pg. 2.

almost total lack of files covering operational matters – that is the planning and execution of espionage missions, recruiting or training of agents, and internal documents associated with the direction of global espionage activities.

Leverkuehn's perspective is unique and his assessments uncommon among the post-war histories and memoirs addressing the *Abwehr*. There is little in his work regarding the United States, which is notable considering he was perceived within the organization as an expert on the United States.[55] The only U.S.-based *Abwehr* matters he addresses relate to the Rumrich case of 1938 and in those he is highly critical of Turrou and the FBI but discloses even less information on *Abwehr* than found in other contemporary accounts. Leverkuehn's criticism of Turrou ignored the known details of the case and instead attacked the investigation. Here he bluntly assessed, "the FBI had failed to grasp the confused situation, and did not realize that only a small proportion of the persons accused where in fact working for German military intelligence." Rather than focus on *Abwehr* agents who were reporting on military technical intelligence from locations within the defense industries, the FBI focused on pro-Nazi groups who they believed were engaged in subversion. Leverkuehn alludes to the FBI's focus on these entities enabled the *Abwehr* to continue its activities, after a brief pause, and then expand them further with "satisfactory results right up to the outbreak of the war."[56]

In the initial wave of histories of the Second World War that were produced in the decade after its cessation, Leverkuehn's stands out as the sole voice of the *Abwehr*. For the next two decades the histories of the war continued, however, few addressed the

[55] For an example of Leverkuehn's credentials as an expert on the U.S., after the war he published his *History of the United States of America*. Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1947.
[56] Leverkuehn, pgs. 95-96, 98.

Abwehr in anything more than general tropes regarding its purported inefficiency during the war. Introspections that did attempt to make inquiries into the *Abwehr* generally were unable to escape the gravitational force of the enigma of Canaris, so that he remained the most dominant focus. No new attempts to address the *Abwehr's* U.S. operations were endeavored upon as Turrou's and the FBI's typology had been established as fact and further inquiry was not required.

The 1970s – Kahn and Farago

The hiatus in works examining the history of the *Abwehr* ceased in the 1970s with a flurry of publications. Still the majority of works remained focused on Canaris. Höhne's *Canaris: Hitler's Master Spy* at over 750 pages stands-out among the pack in terms of thoroughness and veracity. As in Höhne, the Canaris-centric histories barely or only tangentially addressed *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. Of the academic and lay histories of the *Abwehr*, David Kahn's *Hitler's Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II* and Ladislas' Farago's *The Game of Foxes: The Untold Story of German Espionage in the United States and Great Britain During World War II* (referred to as *Foxes* for the rest of this work) are the standout works. Kahn's work is exceptionally researched and factually exact in its treatment of German espionage during the Second World War period. However, despite the title, the work is not solely about German Military Intelligence (capitalized), which is the *Abwehr*, but rather, German military intelligence (lower case) in the general sense of all uniformed intelligence activities of the German militaries, *Wehrmacht* and SS. This statement is not critical but observant, and Kahn does not claim a sole focus on the *Abwehr*. While less than a third of the work addresses the *Abwehr*, Kahn provides an excellent synopsis of the history of German

military intelligence to include both World Wars and the interwar period. When he does address U.S. espionage, he adheres to the orthodox history with no identified deviations but with a degree of academic precision absent in other works addressing the issue.

Ladislaw Farago's *Foxes* was the first major work to deviate, often to the extreme, from what was considered the orthodox history of German espionage in the United States. While not an academic per se, Farago was a prolific writer on intelligence matters and a former intelligence officer of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). On the opening page of *Foxes*, he laments that while desirous of writing a book on the *Abwehr*, everything that could be known or said, had been so, as the available information on the organization had been exhausted. According to Farago, "the problem of unraveling the super-secret activities of this organization, whose records presumably had been destroyed at the end of the war and were forever lost to history, seemed well-nigh insurmountable." Fortunately, supposedly while researching, he came across new primary sources:

> "Then in 1967, I stumbled over a metal footlocker, the kind American naval officers used in World War II. It held hundreds of little yellow boxes containing rolls of microfilm, and it turned out to be part of the litter of recent German history the Allies had captured in 1945.
>
> It was obvious ... that they had never been opened for inspection … The collection was raw as it must have been when originally found in Bremen by American intelligence officers.
>
> Dozens of rolls, with about a thousand frames in each, contained the papers of the Hamburg and Bremen outposts of the Abwehr ... that specialized in clandestine coverage of Britain and the United States."[57]

To write *Foxes*, Farago claimed, "[o]ver a thousand of these rolls [microfiche films] with more than a million pages of documents [were] examined and used in the preparation of

[57] Farago, pgs. xi-xii.

this book." Supposedly, he claimed the materials had "never before used in research."[58] The files he claimed to have found can now be identified as a partial record repository of administrative matters from *Nebenstelle* Bremen that were recovered by ONI personnel in 1946, classified, and documented for analysis.

With access to these files, Farago attempted to draft the most complete account ever authored of *Abwehr* espionage activity in America. Unfortunately, *Foxes* deviates greatly from its author's initial claims. Rather than writing a book solely on the *Abwehr*, Farago addresses many German intelligence agencies to include the *Sicherheitsdienst*, *Gestapo*, defense attachés, and foreign ministry. These different aspects of espionage in the U.S. are approached episodically and without forced connectivity; however, if a reader lacked historical contextualization and knowledge of German intelligence they could develop an impression that all matters addressed in the book related to the *Abwehr*.

While Farago claimed to be telling the history of the *Abwehr*, he never claimed *Foxes* was intended as an academic work that used historical methodologies to promote a thesis or historically accurate account. As such, he does not follow academic norms for attributions and citations so there is no means by which to determine the primary source material from which Farago generated his narratives. For example, in two chapters of thirty-eight pages regarding interwar espionage in the U.S. with multiple statements presented as concrete facts and quotes, there are five footnotes, none of which are citations, which expand on minute matters in the material. Farago's bibliography is extensive, but included his personal collections, interviews, and unpublished manuscripts that remain inaccessible to anyone wishing to review his research. At the time of his

[58] Farago, pg. xiv.

research, the files he supposedly found unexamined in a footlocker remained classified, raising questions regarding his access to the material and usage in publication.

Farago's *Foxes* stands out due to his purported focus on the *Abwehr* in the United States and his use of primary source material not previously accessible. Given his claims of novel use of new material, many matters presented by Farago have since matriculated into other histories including those by academic historians. Since these repetitions were taken from a work wherein there were no cited links to a primary source, they have perpetuated while holding absolutely no historical *provenance*.

The microfiche Bremen files "discovered" by Farago remain in the textual reference section of the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland. Following their 1976 declassification, hardcopies and digitized files were returned to Germany and are available in person and on line at the Bundesarchiv. The American and German collections were analyzed extensively during the course of this research and analysis and revealed many of Farago's claims regarding his source material were at best exaggeratory, and at worst, fabrications. For a more complete example of the liberties taken by Farago with a purported historical record, one can compare his statements from the opening pages of *Foxes* against the totality of the contextualized archival documents as done in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Evaluation of Source Material Veracity – *The Game of Foxes*

Farago claims in *Foxes*	Analysis of Surviving *Nebenstelle* Bremen Files
Abwehr records were lost during the war, making analysis "insurmountable."	Correct: Abwehr headquarters in Berlin was destroyed during the war and most stations destroyed their individual files. Only those of Bremen, although incomplete, survived. No other records

Farago claims in *Foxes*	Analysis of Surviving *Nebenstelle* Bremen Files
	from other stations have been identified as of the publication of this thesis.
A lost footlocker was found at the U.S. National Archives in 1967 containing thousands of rolls of never-before-seen microfilm.	False: In 1967, when Farago supposedly found the "lost" records, the Bremen files remained classified, but appropriately stored at NARA. Each had been properly documented by the U.S. military in 1945-46 and stored in secure facilities since. The files were not fully declassified until December 1976, making the manner in which Farago obtained them questionable. Their classified nature also prohibited scholarly review of his work and its claims after the publication of *Foxes*.[59] The U.S. National Archives do not store the materials in the manner claimed by Farago and have extensive guidelines for the storage of materials.[60]
The Bremen files had never been examined.	Mixed. The files were examined by U.S. military intelligence and used within multiple post-war analyses that remained classified until the early 2000s. The files had never been, at the point of Farago's use circa-1970-71, examined outside of the intelligence community due to classification. Records at the NARA indicate only minimal review since they were added to the textual records department.
The files contained intelligence information from *Abwehr* stations in Bremen and Hamburg.	Mixed and misleading. The files are solely from the Bremen office but contain some corollary documentation of agents working for Hamburg whose operations were facilitated in conjunction with Bremen. Technically, since Bremen was a sub-station of Hamburg, all the Bremen files are also associated with Hamburg,

[59] Gerold Guensberg, "The Abwehr Myth: How Efficient was German Intelligence in World War II?" *Studies in Intelligence*, Center for the Study of Intelligence, The Central Intelligence Agency, McLean, VA, Vol. 21, No. 3, Fall 1977, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp78t03194a000400010015-5, pg. 39.

[60] For the procedures used by NARA to store historic materials, see "Records Storage Standards Toolkit," *Federal Records Management*, National Archives and Record Administration, College park, MD, https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/storage-standards-toolkit.

Farago claims in *Foxes*	Analysis of Surviving *Nebenstelle* Bremen Files
	but the claim of association with Hamburg is exaggerated and appears to have been done to indicate a greater scope of materials.
Over a thousand roles and one million pages of evidence were examined.	Correct but misleading. Most of the files concern administrative rather than operational matters. Examples of non-agent records in the files include daily administrative logbooks, telephone directories, and payment books. The files that cover agent activities and reports have significant gaps. It is estimated less than 1% of the total files relate in any way to operational matters of *Abwehr* actions in the U.S. The overwhelming majority of the Bremen files related to U.S. agents are administrative not operational.

This comparison exposes how the author took liberties in his use of primary source material. While one can argue he began with a foundation of fact, such as the destruction of *Abwehr* records or the Bremen files at NARA, he appears to also have embellished upon the content of the material in order to present a compelling narrative to prospective readers. Within his selected narratives the approach was decidedly unacademic and facts related to *Abwehr* espionage were mixed with exaggerations and fabrications to the point one cannot exfiltrate the truth from the embellishments.

Farago's unreliability is problematic in two ways related to this analysis. First, while *Foxes* contains the greatest amount of information on the *Abwehr* in the U.S., given the lack of evidentiary *provenance* and a record of exaggeration and fabrication, none of the information within *Foxes* can be used unless verified in validated primary sources. Prior to the declassification of the U.K. and U.S. materials such a comparison with Farago was impossible. In the present day, Farago can be compared with provable

matters so that his claims can be verified, qualified, or rejected. Second, while unprovable and unacademic, *Foxes* is the primary source used by most examination of the *Abwehr* in the U.S. As a result, errors, exaggerations, embellishments, and fabrications in *Foxes* have been used as *prima facie* evidence and as a primary source. Therefore, secondary sources that echo, repeat, or cite Farago, but that do not provide other verifiable primary source material, also must be avoided or used with great caution. Within this paper, Farago will only be used when his statements can be verified in other material, save for one citation used only to contextualize analysis.

The Hardening of Orthodoxy

Kahn and Farago, building off Turrou, fundamentally came to represent the established record of German intelligence activities in the U.S. In relation to the commonly held beliefs of the so-called "true history" one should also consider the influence of British narratives related to wartime counterespionage work by MI-5 and on the narrative elements of U.S. counter espionage activities. Primary in its influence on the American narrative was Masterman's *The Double Cross System* which provided a stark portrayal of British intelligence's superiority over the *Abwehr* in terms of agents launched against the United Kingdom. As U.S. counter espionage agencies had aped MI-5 in terms of counter espionage capabilities and tradecraft, so too, the 1970s historians appear to have appropriated British narratives and projected them into their American account. One can observe this influence extending to the modern-day in works like Peter Duffy's, *Double Agent: The First Hero of World War II and How the FBI outwitted and Destroyed a Nazi Spy Ring.* The title reveals a structure and approach that recalls Turrou from seventy years prior. Duffy portrays double agent William Sebold, turned by the FBI

to betray the *Abwehr*, in a manner similar to the narratives of Montagu and Masterman on the activities of Double Cross or other works on MI-5 double agents like Garbo, Tricycle, or Zigzag. While one can understand the fascination with the work of MI-5, its successes were not transferable to other agencies.

In terms of the dominance of British counter espionage narratives, the only notable counter-narrative to the British other than Leverkuehn was the memoir of former *Abwehr* officer Nikolaus Ritter published in 1972 and translated and published in English in 2019. Ritter's work appears to have been written to respond directly to Masterman's *The Double Cross System* in which he revealed details of *Abwehr* agents recruited, trained, and deployed against the U.K by Ritter. Entire chapters of Ritter's memoirs are crafted to counter Masterman's claims of control and to recast the optic of the complexity of agent operations during peace and war. Specifically, Ritter claimed many agents MI-5 claimed to control had been approved to turn double by Ritter who was using them to play back false intelligence to the British. As the only such account, it is impossible to verify Ritter, and the scales are tipped against him as there are numerous accounts of MI-5 officers that line the shelves of historical libraries balanced against his one memoir.

From Turrou through the end of the 1970s, the standard history of the *Abwehr* in the U.S. then was established and consistent. A summation of this history can be found in a 1984 Master's Thesis on the issue in which Turrou, Farago, and Kahn are among the most often cited references:

> "The accomplishments of Germany's agents in America did not live up to expectations of the spymasters in the Third Reich, nor did the information ferreted out by these agents affect the final outcome of the war. The *Abwehr* enjoyed some success in its early years in America, but by and large the *Abwehr* was forced to deal with a number of abortive and

> unsuccessful missions, and caused by agents who were singularly unequipped for intelligence work."[61]

With little variation, the summary paragraph provided above can be seen as a representative account of what is commonly believed to be the factual history of the *Abwehr* in the United States. Such an understanding has been so prevalent that modern works that have access to the same declassified primary source material used within this research remain grounded within this orthodox historical understanding. In these cases, even with new information, the enduring assessment remains unchanged.

Modern Reviews and Declassified Files

Following the 1970s and 1980s, the cult of Canaris continued to generate biographies and introspections on his character and role during the war. Other authors examined specific aspects of *Abwehr* history that had never been previously addressed. Stanley E. Hilton examined South American espionage in *Hitler's Secret War in South America, 1939-1945*. His work used the same sources as those already referenced but focused only on South America and the Caribbean, which resulted in the perception of new material, but was in actuality, not new but highly focused. Notably absent from his historical work is the address of the interconnectivity between the *Abwehr* in South and North America. Additionally, his approach addressed Gestapo, SD, and *Abwehr* activities as a single entity rather than delving into the nuance of the relationships and the articulation of the missions of the many German intelligence agencies.

Lauran Paine summarized the *Abwehr's* war time history into a digestible book that symbolized a consolidation of the recognized history for non-academic readers.

[61] Miller, pg. 169.

Francis MacDonnell's *Insidious Foes* examined radicalization of the German-American populace prior to and during the Second World War. Only a portion of the work addressed the *Abwehr*, but when it did, it relied on the orthodox understanding and superimposed a conspiratorial aspect of German subversion. In doing so, MacDonnell repeats the errors of creating forced causality between the actions of the *Abwehr* and *Gestapo* that plagued the FBI and led to a false understanding of *Abwehr* espionage.[62]

All the aforementioned works relied on the same groupings of primary source materials. U.S. law requires mandatory declassification review of all classified documents based on a series of criteria. Most of classified materials from the Second World War should have been declassified no later than the early-to-mid 1990s given the war ended in 1945; however, U.S. agencies were slow in the process. Declassification of U.S. records was rapidly advanced by the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act (NWCDA) in 1998 with the first batches of declassified documents being released primarily through the NARA by 2003. While the focus of the NWCDA was documents related to war crimes, thousands of pages of documents related to the *Abwehr* were released. Similar efforts occurred in the U.K. where large quantities of MI-5 files began to be declassified and released beginning in April 2000.[63] According to the National Archives of the U.K,

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[62] Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, pg. 51. For example, MacDonnell incorrectly identifies the network of trans-Atlantic Ocean couriers on passenger lines as being under the control of the *Gestapo* when it was managed by the *Abwehr*. While some of the facts related to the *Abwehr* are incorrect, MacDonnell does a superlative job of contextualizing the paranoia among the populace generated by the Rumrich affair.
[63] "MI-5 at the National Archives," History, Security Service MI-5, https://www.mi5.gov.uk/at-the-national-archives.

while there is a category for records from the Secret Intelligence Service, MI-6, there are no declassified records from 1907-to-1945, the period relevant to this research.[64]

For two decades the availability of these records has not resulted in academic efforts to reevaluate the history of the *Abwehr*. Some work has been done – of course – in the ongoing historical niche area of Canaris study. Bassett's *Hitler's Spy Chief* published in 2013 did use some declassified sources but only to address materials found in previous works without adding any new understanding. Riebling's *Church of Spies* from 2016 probably evidenced the most complete use of newly declassified primary source material from the CIA and MI-5, but his review was narrowly focused on *Abwehr* coordination via the Vatican to counter Hitler. British author and professor Rhodri Jeffrys-Jones is the only individual to attempt to use declassified matters in the analysis of *Abwehr* activities in the U.S. His 2020 book *Ring of Spies: How MI-5 and the FBI Brought Down the Nazis in America* used declassified source materials from the FBI and MI-5 in "an attempt to restore the balance and to tell in full the story of German espionage directed against the United States."[65] *Ring of Spies,* however, does not tell the full story or restore a balance as it is focused only on the Rumrich affair in which declassified materials, primarily FBI and MI-5 files, are used to amplify the orthodox history, even though those same sources hold information contrary to the legacy history.

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[64] "Records Created or Inherited by the Secret Intelligence Service" The National Archives Catalogue, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, 1943, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C143.

[65] Jeffrys-Jones, *Ring*, pg. 9. The author of this thesis has gone through the same U.S. FOIA process with the FBI to request the files used by Jeffrys-Jones in the course of his research in order to evaluate the files and their use more fully. As of the completion of this Thesis, the FBI has not complied with the request.

To date, the only effective use of the declassified files to conduct a critical analysis of the history of the *Abwehr* was done in 2022 in Nigel West's *Nest of Vipers.* On its opening page he noted:

> "Modern historians have consistently condemned the *Abwehr* …. as incompetent and corrupt … However, even the most recent analysts have not had the benefit of newly declassified MI5, CIA and US Counter-Intelligence Corps files which shed a very different light on the structure, control and capabilities of the German intelligence machine in Europe, South America, the Mediterranean and the Middle East."[66]

Notably absent from West's review was the U.S. It is also lamentable that West validates his approach in his material, but large portions of his work consists of the reprinting of entire sections of MI-5 files rather than new historical interpretation of those files.

In the twenty-five years since the NWCDA, declassified primary source materials on the *Abwehr* have become available in the archives of Germany, the U.K., and U.S., along with the files of the CIA (including war-time materials from the Office of Strategic Services or OSS), FBI, Army G-2, and ONI. However, as of this writing there have been no concerted effort to examine these materials within a reassessment of *Abwehr* activities in the United States before and during the Second World War. Such a review will likely result in an assessment similar to that of U.S. intelligence interrogators who captured *Generalleutnant* (Lieutenant General) Lahousen, one of Canaris' key deputies, in 1945. After Lahousen freely shared information on the organization, its leader, and their role "as the principal center of opposition to the Nazi Regime," the interrogators recommended to their superiors, "our views of the GIS [German Intelligence Service, the *Abwehr*] … need serious revision."[67] After almost eighty years, through the use of

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[66] Nigel West, Hitler's *Nest of Vipers: the Rise of the Abwehr*. Barnsley: frontline Books, 2020, pg. xix.
[67] "Report by Generalmajor Lahousen on Canaris Secret Organization," German Intelligence Service, London, The United Kingdom, December 17, 1945,

declassified primary source documents in the American, British, and German archives, it is high time for that revision to occur.

https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/GERMANINTELLIGENCESERVICEWWIIVOL.02_0007.pdf

Chapter II.

Legacy Agents and Operations, 1921-1933

German espionage in the United States during the First World War was perceived through the lens of sabotage and subversion. While actual acts of sabotage directly attributable to Germany likely ended before the U.S. entry into the war, the large number of sabotage attacks attributed to German agents between 1915-1917 continued to influence the collective American psyche. A review of known espionage activities by Germans in the United States from 1914 onward can provide a relative sample for how the U.S. government, American public, and counter espionage agencies likely contextualized German espionage thereafter. Franz von Rintelen was deployed to the U.S. in April 1915 on a mission to disrupt U.S. ammunition shipments to England and France. In the short time he was in the U.S., he also endeavored to purchase ammunition from Mexico, arranged for submarine landings in the Gulf of Mexico, and planned, or created the rumor of, armed Mexican activity on the Southwest border. Anton Dilger, a dual American and German citizen, plotted to launch multiple biological attacks to infect the American population with Anthrax. Baroness Maria von Kretschmann was involved in sabotage plotting and attempts to instigate the ethnic Irish communities of the United States.[68] Kurt Jahnke was involved in a plot to raise a German-funded army of Mexicans and German reservists to invade the U.S. and stimulate Americans of African descent into revolt.[69] He may have been involved in the bombing of Black Tom Island, New

[68] "How They Captured the German Spy, Mme. Maria de Victorica, Told at Last," *Ames Daily Tribune.*, July 31, 1931.
[69] "Investigation of Mexican Affairs: Hearing before a subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations," United States Senate, Sixty-Sixth Congress, Volume 1, 1919, pages 459-461.

Jersey and was believed involved in the bombing of the Mare Island navy yard in San Francisco.[70] Horst von der Goltz was recruited by Colonel von Papen for a mission to sabotage a canal connecting Lakes Erie and Ontario.[71] Of course, the most famous "espionage" incident involved the Zimmerman Telegram, another supposed plot to insight armed Mexican action against the U.S. None of these acts were executed by IIIb as the predecessor of the *Abwehr*, but instead through agents employed by German defense attaches, military officers or military-affiliated individuals without espionage experience, habitual intriguers, and sympathetic ethnic Germans.

From the American perspective, German espionage during the First World War was not spying and stealing military secrets, but rather political subversion and sabotage, most of which had occurred while the U.S. was still, supposedly, a neutral state in the conflict. Espionage focused on creating insurrection among fringe elements, inciting insurrection on America's border, or instigating attacks that caused mass destruction and civic paranoia.

German espionage from this perspective surely did not involve the theft of sensitive military plans, secrets, or technologies, or the understanding of an adversary's military capabilities and order of battle. These areas were the realm of the battle-focused IIIb, and any alignment of the aforementioned saboteurs and insurrectionists with German military intelligence service appear to be incorrect and the result of faulty

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[70] Jahnke claimed to have been responsible, but new interpretations of the explosion at Mare Island implicate a different individual, see, Stephen C. Ruder, "Who Really Blew Up Mare Island?," *Naval History Magazine,* June 2022.

[71] "Sworn Statement by Horst von der Goltz, Alias Bridgeman Taylor," Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty, April 1916, https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-36080187, pg. 6. Some sources identify von der Goltz as an agent of IIIb. A review of his own statement indicates this would have been highly unlikely while operating in the U.S. during 1914 and before arriving in the United Kingdom in 1915. Prior to his U.S. entry through El Paso, Texas he was an officer in the Mexican army.

postscript analysis. For instance, according to the official present-day website of the U.S. Intelligence Community, it was IIIB that directed and coordinated the espionage and sabotage activities of German Ambassador to the United States Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff and military attaché Fritz von Papen in 1914-1915.[72] The same site claims *Kriegsmarine* officer Franz von Rintelen was also sent to the U.S. by "*Abteillung IIIb"* "to develop his own operations."[73] None of these men were agents of IIIb, and instead, each had been tasked with their various schemes by other elements of the German government, or, as in the case of von Papen, by himself under what he perceived as his extant authorities.

IIIb began recruiting agents in the United States sometime after April 1917. Given its intelligence emphasis on supporting the General Staff, its agents in the U.S. would have necessarily collected militarily relevant information. Unlike sabotage activities, there is sufficient evidence to indicate German military intelligence, that is the activities of IIIb and its successor the *Abwehr*, remained active to a degree in the United States immediately after the end of the First World War. Given the very small size of the *Abwehr* in its earliest days, logically, direct control of any U.S.-based agents would have not been a priority in the scope of foreign intelligence. The *Abwehr* had a very legitimate counter espionage role and in terms of foreign espionage, there were far more serious threats and countries of collection emphasis than the United States. Yet, these legacy agents from the war would have been available for occasional tasking or simply the

[72] "German Plotting and Early Strikes," *WWI/The Undeclared War*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, McLean, VA, https://www.intelligence.gov/evolution-of-espionage/world-war-1/undeclared-war/german-plotting.
[73] "The Dark Invader," *WWI/The Undeclared War*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, McLean, VA, https://www.intelligence.gov/evolution-of-espionage/world-war-1/undeclared-war/dark-invader.

provision of information that was publicly available in the U.S. but not in Germany, such as periodicals, trade publications, and academic papers.

By the early 1920s, the newly-established *Abwehr* was aware of and engaging with former military and intelligence personnel who were leaving Germany and immigrating to the United States. In a mirror opposite version of the types of debriefing services that would be established in the early 1930s for ship captains visiting foreign ports, traveling business persons, and ex-patriot returnees, by the early 1920s, the *Abwehr* was identifying key emigres with military and intelligence experience traveling to the United States in order to create and sustain a nascent relationship. This assessment is made following introspection of dozens of espionage agents and officers who were active in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s but who had immigrated in the 1920s. In order to be able to identify immigrants with the appropriate placement and access to information of intelligence value, conduct their recruitment, and establish the means for control and reporting, a preexisting relationship was needed. Further, several of these legacy agent immigrants appear to have been engaged in indirect intelligence collection of publicly available materials and been tacitly aware of the *Abwehr's* potential to eventually recruit them for direct espionage. As such, they maintained awareness of individuals who they had met in the course of their work or social circles who could be potential recruits.

Prior to the resumption of direct espionage in the United States, emigres who acted as legacy agents were able to maintain indirect communications with the *Abwehr*. Based on later intelligence requirements for *V-Männer* from the 1930s, these individuals would have collected, when able, publicly available information that would have

included major newspapers, news periodicals (e.g. *Time, Life)*, and trade publications. While many critiques of the *Abwehr's* U.S. collection downplay the value of this type of intelligence, referred to presently as OSINT or publicly available information (PAI), this type collection occurred at a time when there was not universal access to information. Foreign newspapers held valuable economic, political, and military information that was deemed of value to the *Abwehr* and other professional intelligence agencies. News periodicals included interviews with military and political leaders and detailed coverage of major issues that were not available in other formats. Trade publications were a source of technological and procedural advances, for example, that could be used by industries and academics to advance their own similar efforts. When the *Abwehr* did begin direct espionage in the U.S. in 1933, its first recruits were the former military and intelligence officers who had immigrated to the U.S. Through their recruitment, the *Abwehr* could quickly expand its espionage networks through the immediate recruitment of individuals they had spotted and assessed since they had come to America.

The Idealized Legacy Agent - Nikolaus Ritter

Nikolaus Ritter is an example of an emigree to the U.S. who almost certainly was in indirect contact with the *Abwehr* from the time of his arrival in 1924 through his later recruitment. According to his memoir, he first arrived in the United States on January 1, 1924 on the NDL liner S.S. *Bremen*, "[o]n New Year's morning 1924, I took my first look at the country where I would spend the next several years of my life."[74] *Bremen's* manifest confirms his arrival, and includes information regarding: Ritter, Nikolaus, age

[74] Nikolaus Ritter, edited and translated by Katherine R. Wallace, *Cover Name: Dr. Rantzau*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2019, pg. 28.

24, single and traveling unaccompanied, claiming to be a merchant from Verden, Germany left from Bremen, Germany on December 19th, 1924, and arrived in New York on January 1, 1924. He intended to become a citizen and provided the address of his uncle Julius Ritter at 2101 Amsterdam Avenue.[75]

In the same memoir and his interrogation reports from 1945, Ritter claimed his espionage career did not begin until January or February 1937, and prior to that he had never been engaged in any intelligence activities:

> "I sat at my desk in Hamburg looking over a pile of … my assignment was to recruit as many agents as possible to assist the *Luftwaffe* Operations staff … I had no prior knowledge of anything of that nature. All of my knowledge about aviation was based on two reconnaissance flights in an old open-cockpit Bücker double-decker (biplane). All I knew about espionage came from reading spy novels. I had never received any special intelligence training."[76]

Contrary to these statements, a review of FBI and MI-5 files declassified since 2000 reveals Ritter almost certainly sustained contact with the *Abwehr* from his 1924 arrival in the U.S. until his official recruitment *back* into German intelligence in 1933. Moreover, the same files reveal Ritter may have been associated with espionage in the U.S. since 1918 during the First World War.

According to Ritter's version of events, he joined the military when he reached 18, which would have been January 1917, and served in an infantry unit on the Western Front. Following the armistice he was reassigned to a border guard element and stationed in Berlin until demobilized in 1920. After several failed post-war commercial enterprises in Germany, he immigrated to the United States in 1924 and a few years later was

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[75] "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival," S.S. Bremen, January 1924, accessed July 2023, https://stevemorse.org/ellis/boat.html.
[76] Ritter, pg. 5.

followed by his brother Hans Ritter who joined him in multiple business ventures. Once in the U.S., Nikolaus and Hans lived and worked exclusively in the New York metropolitan area among the large German expat community. Nikolaus returned to Germany at some point after 1924, probably late 1930 or early 1931, although there are no records of his departure, and then returned to the U.S. on July 31, 1931. He again departed for Germany in 1935 in the hope, he claimed, of securing more profitable business enterprises, only to then return to the U.S. after four months, and again returned to Germany with Hans in late 1936.[77] He would make one more confirmed trip from Germany to the U.S. for two months in 1937, for espionage purposes, and may have also visited the U.S. at some point in 1940.[78] Hans returned to the U.S. after his 1936 departure and before Nikolaus' final trip in 1937-38, but there is no clear record of his movements until he again departed the United States in the summer of 1940.

None of the information provided by Ritter was exactly true. Ritter was among the first recruited *Abwehr* officers in the United States, and the FBI and MI-5 developed a dossier on his activities from 1933 through 1941. Most of their information was from agents in the U.S. and U.K. developed, trained, and controlled by Ritter, but who were captured, interrogated, and turned double agent to work against the *Abwehr*. According to an FBI report within MI-5's case files on Ritter based on this access, "during the last war … he [Ritter] was posted to Von Papen's staff in America but it is not known in what capacity … it is thought during a part or the whole of the period between 1918 and 1933

[77] "Re: NIKOLUAS FRITZ ADOLPH RITTER, Germany," located in "Nikolaus Ritter, a.k.a. Dr. Rantzau," Case File KV-2-87, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C6091995, KV-2-87_1, pg. 27.
[78] The FBI and MI-5 believed Ritter may have traveled in false persona to the U.S. to conduct contact with multiple agents at some point in 1940 but were never able to confirm this travel.

Ritter was actively engaged in espionage."[79] This report indicated FBI knowledge corroborated by British Intelligence that Ritter was an espionage in the U.S. during the First World War and was again engaged in espionage activity from his 1924 return until his formal recruitment by the *Abwehr* for direct espionage in 1933. In addition to these claims, the FBI report also revealed Ritter was in the U.S. after the war, and instead of returning to Germany for demobilization, "remained in the United States and was in the textile business."[80] This statement is in stark contrast with Ritter's version of events wherein he claimed he remained in Germany after the war, was transferred to the border guards, and provided the opportunity to "stud[y] economics in Berlin for a couple of semesters … until … discharge."[81]

There are some incongruities with the FBI report related to Ritter's possible espionage activity during the First World War. Notably, it would have been impossible for Ritter to serve on von Papen's staff. *Oberst* (Colonel) Franz von Papen was the accredited defense attaché in Washington D.C. at the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1914. He and his fellow attaché Karl Boy-Ed were identified at the center of most of the German sabotage, subterfuge, and insurrection plots of late 1914 and early 1915. They were declared *persona non grata* by the State Department in 1915 and expelled. Von Papen returned to Germany, was awarded the Iron Cross by the Kaiser, was promoted, and given command on the Western Front. Ritter would have only been fifteen or sixteen years old during von Papen's time in America. Therefore, if the FBI's intelligence on

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[79] KV-2-87_1, pg. 35
[80] "Memorandum, Re: CARL EITEL, with aliases Karl Eitel; Conrad Eberle," located in "Karl Eitel," Case File KV-2-384, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10967612, KV-2-384_4, pg. 33.
[81] Ritter, pgs. 27-28.

Ritter was correct and he served on the staff of the defense attaché; it would have been after 1917, and more likely to have been near war's end or possibly during the armistice.

Elements of Ritter's service history appear to support his assignment in the United States. He did indeed join the military in 1917 and had served until demobilized supposedly sometime in 1920.[82] He claimed to have been assigned for the entire duration of the war to the 162nd Regiment, an infantry unit, which served on the Western Front. The 162nd, also known as the 3rd Hanseatic or Lübeck Regiment, was a regiment that fought in the First World War within the IX Army Corps. Its service on the Western Front was extensive, and it remained active throughout the war, including the Battles of Pozieres and Amiens in 1918. However, the Regiment was garrisoned in Lübeck, far North and West of Ritter's home of Reydt in the suburbs of Dusseldorf making such an assignment unlikely.

Ritter also claimed to have been wounded twice while with the 162nd, but in official photos from the 1930s did not wear the *Verwundetenabzeichen*, wound badge, issued to wounded German soldiers beginning in 1918.[83] Later pictures of Ritter after he returned to the *Luftwaffe* in late 1941 include his wearing the *Verwundetenabzeichen*, which by that time was reauthorized for the Second World War. In one post-1941 picture, Ritter poses in front of an airplane, and wears the *Verwundetenabzeichen* on the lower left of his tunic. Within the black and white photo, the badge appears to be either

[82] "Ritter, Nikolaus," Personalunterlagen von Angehoerigen der Reichswehr und Wehrmacht, record PERS 6/4669, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/b89114b3-3346-489c-a806-d08b1138e60b/.
[83] The photo reviewed within the scope of this analysis is Ritter's official *Luftwaffe* administrative record photo found within his memoir and used as the cover photo for the version of the memoir printed by the University of Kentucky Press. The photo can be seen here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolaus_Ritter#/media/File:Nikolaus_Ritter.jpg.

the silver or gold award for three or more or five or more wounds, respectively.[84] Therefore, even though by 1942-45 he was wearing the *Verwundetenabzeichen* it was for being wounded more often than claimed in his 1945-46 interrogations or his 1972 memoir. The sequencing based on these images indicates Ritter was not wounded in the First World War, as evidenced from his photos from the 1930s, and then after returning to the *Luftwaffe* when cashiered from the *Abwehr* was wounded multiple times. Notably, when offering the details of his service and wounding, he never provided specific details on either account and only repeated that he had been wounded twice and only during the First World War. As with most of the other aspects of Ritter's attested espionage record, the data he provided is impossible to align with the totality of the available data related to his espionage activities.

While this premise may appear challenging to definitively prove, there are other aspects of Ritter's character and personal history that he provided to his MI-5 interrogators or claimed in his memoir that can be proven false, and when combined into an overall assessment of his background, indicate a carefully crafted false personal legend developed to obfuscate his involvement in espionage. This legend encompasses his activities while in the *Reichswehr* in 1918 through the end of his active *Abwehr* service in late 1941. Therefore, since it can be proven Ritter misrepresented multiple elements of his military background, this paper argues, he misrepresented others, to include his very specific and temporal espionage activities.

Among the largest fabrications were his claims of never having served in an aviation capacity until he transitioned from the *Heer* to the *Luftwaffe* in either 1936 or

[84] For this image see, Carl Lavo, "Nazi Spymaster's Mission to Doylestown and Bristol," *Bucks County Adventures*, https://buckscountyadventures.org/nazi-spymasters-mission-to-doylestown-and-bristol/.

1937 (his accounts vary). In his versions of his *Luftwaffe* service, when he returned to Germany in 1936, he was recommissioned as an officer in the *Heer* and later reassigned to the *Luftwaffe* even though he had no experience with aviation. In one of his accounts he was recommissioned into the *Luftwaffe* because of the availability of reserve officer commissions, but and in another account he was recommissioned into the *Luftwaffe* only for an *Abwehr* assignment, in that there was a position in IL and not one in IH. This later statement was made to Ritter's British interrogators who noted he claimed of the reassignment, "the former office was a *Heer* appointment, the later a *Luftwaffe* office, so that change also necessitated Prisoner's transfer from the Army to the Luftwaffe."[85] None of his admitted conditionalities relate to common practice in the *Reichswehr*, *Wehrmacht*, or *Abwehr* for commissioning or assignment.

His identification of recommissioning further necessarily indicates a previous commissioning indicating that at some point during his service in the First World War, Ritter was a commissioned officer and not an enlisted man. He never provided an account of his commissioning as an officer in the First World War or after, indicating it was an element of his service he was attempting to hide. Also, in terms of recommissioning, common practice during the 1930s was for reserve officers, or *E-offiziere*, to be recommissioned in the same branch in which they originally served. He did note, when recommissioned, he was given the rank of *Hauptmann* (U.S. Army Captain equivalent rank), the third officer rank in order of precedence, indicating previous seniority as a more junior officer during the First World War.

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[85] "Appendix A: Prisoner's Activities at Ast Hamburg I L (Feb 37-Jan 41)," located in "Nikolaus Ritter, a.k.a. Dr. Rantzau," Case File KV-2-88, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C6091996, pg. 65.

There is sufficient evidence to indicate Ritter had actually served in an aviation capacity during the First World War. Returning to the FBI report from 1943, it stated, "Ritter had served in the German Air Force during the last war."[86] This statement is qualified with other information provided from one of his agents in the U.S. who revealed Ritter had claimed during the first war, while assigned in the United States, he stole an aircraft from an Army installation and flew it to Mexico, presumably to hand over to German intelligence operating from there.[87] Also, his personnel file in the German Federal Archives identifies Ritter as a *Luftwaffe* officer, and he was clearly in a *Luftwaffe* uniform in his service photos. In these photos he prominently displays his two Iron Cross (Second Order) medals and the characteristic eagle-clutching-a-swastika chest badge that identified pilots. Finally, in his memoirs, possibly resulting from an age-induced error, he stated of his removal from the *Abwehr* and reassignment to the *Luftwaffe*, that at 42-years-old, he was "too old for flying," and instead assigned to air defense.[88]

Contrary to what Ritter reported of his intelligence, this information reveals he was involved in aviation and intelligence matters throughout the First World War and remained in the United States at least until the early 1920s. At some point he returned to Germany and then later decided to relocate back to the United States, possibly to take advantage of economic opportunities he identified while remaining after the First World War. With his espionage background, he was a perfect legacy agent for the hidden aspects of Gempp's *Abwehr* of the early 1920s with nascent and hidden espionage

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[86] KV-2-87_1, pg. 35.
[87] KV-2-384_4, pg. 33. The association with operations in Mexico also strengthens the probability of some element of ties between Ritter and von Papen, as von Papen had been engaged in multiple cross-border intrigues before, during and after the First World War. Nikolaus' brother Hans, also an *Abwehr* officer, had extensive espionage associations in Mexico in the 1930s and 1940s.
[88] Ritter, pg. 195.

capabilities occurring behind the thin veil offered by its counter espionage mission. In this capacity, he was not formally tasked for direct espionage, but would have sustained communications with Berlin, kept track of individuals with placement, access, and motivations to serve as future espionage *Vertrauensmänner*, and surely have been asked to occasionally send any information in easily available materials he believed would be of use to the *Abwehr*.

Aspects of Ritter's recruitment for direct espionage in 1933 and his nearly immediate recruitment of additional agents further highlights the value of legacy agents as precursors to an eventual return to large scale espionage. While Ritter claimed to interrogators in 1945-46 and again in his memoirs in 1972 that he was not involved in espionage until 1937, examination of declassified archival information can prove he was involved in espionage during and shortly after the First World War and also prove how he was re-recruited for direct espionage in 1933. Specifically, comparing four primary sources with accounts of Ritter's travels between the U.S. and Germany enables the extrapolation of his carefully hidden espionage career. Comparison of declassified FBI and U.S. Army reports found within MI-5 files on Ritter, two MI-5 interrogation reports of Ritter, and Ritter's 1972 memoir highlights that of eleven probable events related to Ritter's time as an active or legacy agent, only three can be corroborated in three or more sources, and one corroborated in two sources. Notably, the 1934 trip to Germany was confirmed in U.S. Customs and Immigration Service files, but was not mentioned in any interrogations or within Ritter's memoir. A similar trip under similar circumstances occurred the following year. Then all sources agree Ritter returned to Germany in 1936. These source materials appear to provide evidence of a 1933 recruitment followed by

short periods wherein Ritter returned to Germany presumably to coordinate activities and to undergo additional training.

Table 2. Comparison of Nikolaus Ritter's Travel Chronology, 1918-1940

Date	U.S. Army and FBI Reports 1944/45[89]	Preliminary Interrogation Report, December 1945[90]	Final Interrogation Report, 1946[91]	1972 Memoir
1918-1920 espionage activity in the U.S.	Suspected	No Information	No Information	No Information
January 1924	Arrived New York	Confirmed	No Information	Confirmed
1930 U.S.-Germany-U.S. travel	Suspected	Confirmed	No Information	No Information
1934 U.S.-Germany-U.S. Travel	Confirmed with U.S. Customs and Immigration files	No Information	No Information	No Information
1935 Return to Germany	Confirmed with U.S. Customs and Immigration files	No Information	No Information	No Information
1935 Return to U.S.	Confirmed with U.S. Customs and Immigration files	No Information	No Information	No Information
1936 Return to Germany	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed
Return to Wehrmacht	May 1937	Sep 1936	Sep 1936	No month provided, 1935
Start in *Abwehr*	May 1937	Feb 1937	Feb 1937	Jan 1937
Nov-Dec 1937 Espionage trip to US	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed	Confirmed

[89] KV-2-87_1, pgs. 27-28, and 35-36.
[90] KV-2-88, pgs. 108-110.
[91] KV-2-88, pgs. 63-64

Date	U.S. Army and FBI Reports 1944/45[89]	Preliminary Interrogation Report, December 1945[90]	Final Interrogation Report, 1946[91]	1972 Memoir
Feb-Apr, 1940 Espionage trip to US	Suspected	No Information	No Information	No Information

Other declassified information from FBI investigations in the 1940s corroborate this proposed timeline of recruitment. For example, Ritter acknowledged in his memoir he first met Frederick "Fritz" Duquesne when he moved to the U.S. Duquesne was the namesake of a 1940's counter espionage investigation and was a long-term agent controlled by Ritter. In his memoir Ritter described their initial meeting:

> "I wanted to get together with my old acquaintance, Duquesne …. I had met him in 1931 through my friend … a well-known inventor … He was a member of the University Club and had introduced me there. During Prohibition, both of us [Duquesne and Ritter] had frequently downed a prohibited little glass in the Alpha Delta Phi Club or in the University Club … he had excellent social contacts."[92]

When Duquesne was arrested for espionage in 1941, he provided a confession related to his recruitment that highlighted Ritter's early espionage activity. According to Duquesne's statement in a declassified FBI investigation file:

> "Sometime about 1933 I was living at 47 West 54th Street under the name of FREDERICK DUQUESNE. One day a man by the name of **REDACTED** who I also knew as **REDACTED** came to my home … He told me that he formerly worked at the Waldorf Hotel as a head waiter for OSCAR. He told me that he wanted to know whether the German Government owed me for my services during the World War … **REDACTED** told me … that I could rest assured I would be fully paid for my services."[93]

[92] Ritter, pg. 55.
[93] "Statement of Frederick Joubert Duquesne," New York, New York, June 29, 1941 located in, "Duquesne Spy Ring," Investigation Case File, FOIA 36268872, U.S. Department of Justice, The Federal Bureau of

Duquesne agreed to the offer, which was to engage in espionage on behalf of the *Abwehr*, and then identified, "sometime after this I received several letters addressed to me in the mails from Germany, which were signed "RITTER.""[94] While Duquesne's sequence was off and his details provided to the FBI often misleading, his statement when compared to others of Ritter on the same matter indicate the two had known each other since no later than 1931 and Ritter had been directly involved in Duquesne's recruitment and handling in 1933. This occurred in New York not Germany, but the relationship was sustained when Ritter returned to his fatherland in 1936.

This pattern highlights the role and use of legacy agents and the impact of their transition to direct espionage in 1933. Legacy agents were invaluable sources for spotting and assessing with an eye toward future agency expansion. Ritter sustained contact with Berlin for several years and developed a keen knowledge of individuals with the right placement, access and motivation for future potential recruitment. Once Patzig directed the resumption of direct espionage in the U.S., Ritter and others like him, were able to pounce on these contacts, execute recruitments, and begin producing intelligence rapidly for Germany.

Foundational Legacy Agent - Wilhelm Lonkowski

Wilhelm, or William, Lonkowski is another example of a German emigree who was almost certainly in contact with the *Abwehr* as a legacy agent. In Lonkowski's case, there is evidence he was among the initial legacy agents recruited for full -scale

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Investigation, Washington D.C., March 12, 1985, Section 1, pg. 74. Subsequent endnotes referencing these files will be stated as Duquesne, followed by the section number and page number.

[94] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 79.

espionage in 1933. Indeed, Lonkowski can be perceived as a linchpin for some of the earliest known recruitments and intelligence exploitation targeting the U.S. military given the causal relationship between early efforts at direct espionage and agent development related to future *Abwehr* successes. While arriving in the U.S. later than Ritter, his example serves to further highlight how legacy agents formed the foundation of a resurrected intelligence capability in the early 1930s. In addition to these aspects, Lonkowski's story also highlights how poor treatment of older source material has resulted in a fallacious altering of the historical record related to *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S.

Lonkowski was born in 1896 and served in the military during the First World War. His military service file identifies he was a member of the *Luftwaffe* and served as a flight staff engineer, *Fl. Stabsingenieur*, however this record almost certainly relates to the Second and not the First World War.[95] There is little information on Lonkowski's life from demobilization until his immigration to the United States in late 1927 or early 1928 – the accounts vary. Lonkowski was among the earliest *Vertrauensmänner* recruited by the *Abwehr* in the U.S. in 1933, and from that recruitment until September 1935, he was engaged in recruiting and running dozens of espionage agents in the U.S. Northeast and possibly engaged in similar activities in Canada.

Like Ritter, Lonkowski likely entered the United States with the awareness of and sustained contact with the *Abwehr* to provide occasional publicly available information

[95] In the course of this analysis it is believed the service relates to the Second World War. The complete personnel file exists only in hard copy in Freiburg, Germany and was not able to be reviewed during this analysis. Instead, the information available in the indices related to the personnel files was reviewed. "Lonkowski, Wilhelm," Personalunterlagen von Angehoerigen der Reichswehr und Wehrmacht, record Pers 6/154245, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/60a6fbd0-399a-46bb-8845-ff30dec2141d.

and to establish contacts that could be of value in future espionage once the *Abwehr* fully began direct espionage targeting the United States. Most of Lonkowski's background as a legacy agent from 1928 until 1933 and as an active *V-Mann* from 1935 until September 1935 was not discovered until the FBI's 1938 investigation into the so-called Rumrich Spy Ring. Within the press coverage of the subsequent trial, it was revealed:

> "The story of how an important member of an alleged German spy ring "talked himself out" of trouble after being caught trying to smuggle military and aviation secrets out of the country was told yesterday in Federal court ….
>
> It was related in part by customs officers who let William Lonkowski, an agent of the German military intelligence service, slip through their finders in 1935 …
>
> On Sept. 27, 1935, … Lonkowski on Pier 86, alongside the Europa, talking with one of the stewards from the ship … as Lonkowski started to leave the pie Mr. Josephs [customs official] stopped and searched him. In his pockets the guard said he found negatives of film and a batch of letters in German."[96]

Lonkowski immediately left the U.S. via Canada and returned to Germany. Highly similar information on Lonkowski was also revealed by Turrou in his *Nazi Spy Conspiracy*. Later declassified FBI records would provide a more thorough account of Lonkowski's role. This information clarifies his recruitment around 1933 and his use of former colleagues in multiple industries as recruited *V*- and *H- Männer* – all of whom he had met since his arrival in the U.S.

There is no information on why Lonkowski decided to leave Germany and little related to what he did while in the United States until his recruitment. It is known that he and his wife lived in Hempstead, New York by 1928, and that he worked for a time as a piano tuner at the Temple of Music and she worked as an occasional milliner or

[96] "Spy's Easy Escape Related at Trial," *The New York Times*, October 27, 1938, pg. 18.

seamstress.[97] In 1929, Lonkowski was hired for an entry level position at the Ireland Aircraft Corporation, a small independent aviation company focused on producing small seaplanes for private individuals or companies.[98] There are secondary sources that identify Lonkowski was promoted at some point to the personnel department where, it is claimed, he had the ability to hire and fire employees, however, the use of these statements appears to be circular, and there has never been a primary source of information that attributes to these claims. By the time of his recruitment by the *Abwehr* and near arrest in 1935, it does not appear Lonkowski was working in any full-time capacity other than espionage.

His time living around the New York metropolitan area from 1928-1933 was used in a similar manner to Ritter, in that he appears to have been consciously aware of friends, colleagues, and occasional contacts who had placement, access, and motivation, to one day become *Abwehr* espionage agents. This was exactly what happened in 1933 when Lonkowski recruited at least Otto Herman Voss and Werner Gudenberg. He also immediately engaged another early *Abwehr* recruit, Ignatz Griebl, and the two immediately collaborated to identify, recruit, and exploit dozens of individuals.

There is a tremendous amount of non-academic disinformation that has developed around Lonkowski often reported as corroborated facts that incorrectly alter the known historic record. The only primary sources on Lonkowski are press reports during the Rumrich trials, FBI statements, and Turrou's work. With this in mind, any information related to Lonkowski that cannot be found within these records, to especially include

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[97] Jeffreys-Jones, *Ring,* pg. 11.
[98] Raymond J. Batvinis, *The Origins of FBI Counterintelligence.* Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, March 2007.

statements without citation or provenance, are highly suspect. After reviewing the majority of the primary and principal secondary source materials related to the *Abwehr* in the U.S. in general and Lonkowski specifically, the responsibility for the misinformation on Lonkowski primarily resides with Farago and his account in *Foxes*. Addressing this issue here is not intended to pile on to Farago's non-academic standards, but instead, to use his false account to highlight the impact of his actions on what is believed to be historical fact.

According solely to Farago and not found in any revealed primary source material, in 1927 the *Fliegerzentrale,* an aviation-focused clandestine paramilitary organization, directed the *Abwehr Chef* Gempp to steal aviation intelligence from the U.S. military. Gempp in turn selected Lonkowski, an "aero-engineer," and deployed him to the U.S. to conduct direct espionage targeting U.S. military aviation industries. Lonkowski, with wife in tow, left Germany on the S.S. *Bremen* and debarked in Hoboken, New Jersey on March 27, 1927, using the *deckname* Wilhelm Schneider. He immediately was employed at the Ireland Aircraft Corporation where he exploited his position and identified, recruited, and deployed agents to other aircraft plants.[99]

The only available primary source material related to Lonkowski's recruitment and espionage in the United States became available in 2000 and consists of FBI reports on *Abwehr* U.S. activities contained within the MI-5 case files related to *Abwehr* officer Karl Eitel. Within this FBI report the Bureau identified Lonkowski was first involved in direct espionage activities in 1933:

> "William Lonkowski, an intelligence agent of Germany, contacted Dr. Griebl (according to Griebl's statement) in 1933 asking Griebl to assist him in making contacts in military and naval circles. Lonkowski,

[99] Farago, pgs. 18-21.

> according to Griebl, had several contacts in the United States who were obtaining information for him."[100]

There are no records that indicate or intone knowledge of Lonkowski's espionage activities prior to 1933.

There are other elements of Farago's claims that can be disproven. For instance, Lonkowski was not an aeronautical engineer, and his work at Ireland was not related to defense matters with access to U.S. military aviation. Between 1929 and 1933, a part of which was spent at Ireland Aircraft, he definitely met several individuals he would either directly recruit or identify for recruitment later, but there are no indications in primary source materials that indicate they worked at Ireland or had any direct relationships with Lonkowski. Also, it can be proven Lonkowski did not arrive on the S. S. *Berlin* at Hoboken, New Jersey on March 27, 1927, using the Schneider alias. A review of all passenger manifests for 1927 reveals the *Berlin* never landed at Hoboken and was never embarked during that year by passengers named Lonkowski. The March 1927 voyage held two Schneiders; however, they both self-identified as female.[101]

While additional false and fabricated information could be addressed, the real purpose of this review is to clarify how the spread of this false information has perpetuated in secondary sources since 1971 and fundamentally changed the historical record. Farago's fabricated account of Lonkowski is repeated, and indeed copied with even greater fabricated embellishments, in William Breuer's 1989 *Hitler's Undercover War*.[102] As recently as 2020, highlighting the enduring power of this narrative, Rhodri

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[100] KV-2-384_4, pg. 33.
[101] "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival," S.S. *Berlin*, March 1927, https://stevemorse.org/ellis/boatfs.html.
[102] William Breuer, *Hitler's Undercover War: The Nazi Invasion of the U.S.A.,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989, pgs. 7-10.

Jeffreys-Jones recounted the exact same information in *Ring of Spies* but had the professional decency to cite Farago.[103] Ray Batvinis repeats some of the same claims in *Hoover's Secret War Against Axis Spies,* even though he, above other historians, had access to FBI files that clearly reveal these claims as false.[104] All of these works incorrectly claim Lonkowski as having been sent to the U.S. in 1927 to conduct direct espionage against the U.S. aviation industry. Actual FBI files, now declassified, established the FBI learned Lonkowski only began his espionage work in 1933.

Contrary to this false history, Lonkowski was not engaged in direct espionage until 1933; however, based on his actions after his formal recruitment it appears he had been in contact with the *Abwehr* since his arrival and indirectly engaged as a legacy agent. It is important to clarify this distinction. Direct espionage involved the collection through access agents or theft of national security information, or, in the case of the *Abwehr*, military technical or operational intelligence, the management of agents for the execution of clandestine espionage activities, and multiple supporting activities such as the secret dissemination of intelligence from the U.S. to Germany. There are no primary source materials that identify these activities by Lonkowski until after 1933.

Indirect activities would have included sustaining awareness of an individual's location, the occasional provision of publicly available information, and identification of individuals who could be of use in future direct espionage. There is sufficient primary source information to indicate these were the exact activities of Lonkowski from 1928 until he was recruited as a *V-Mann* in 1933 and engaged in direct espionage.

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[103] Jeffreys-Jones, *Ring*, pgs. 11-16.
[104] Raymond J. Batvinis, *Hoover's Secret War Against Axis Spies: FBI Counterespionage During World War II*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2014.

Lonkowski and his wife were among the over 100,000 ethnic German immigrants to the United States in 1927-28.[105] They were among the tail end of the increased wave of German immigration that began in 1920 and began to ebb by 1930 – while the Weimar period remained mired in economic challenges, after the 1929 stock market collapse there was less incentive for immigration. It took a year after his arrival before he was hired into an administrative position at Ireland Aircraft and he remained there for at least a year. While in New York, but not necessarily at Ireland Aircraft, he met multiple individuals who he would later recruit as subagents or work with collaboratively as *V-Männer* for the collection of intelligence. This list included Griebl, Gudenberg, and Voss, but also multiple other agents who were never identified.

While a legacy agent, he would have reported his location and individuals with whom he had engaged and would eventually be targeted for recruitment and espionage exploitation. This scenario is validated by the fact Lonkowski can be proven as one of the initial *Abwehr* recruits in 1933, and that after that recruitment, he in turn recruited from among his prospective agents he had met over the previous years. In turn, these details reveal it was his work as a legacy agent that enabled he and Griebl to be able to immediately begin extensive reporting on the technology of the U.S. Army and Navy.

The real history of Lonkowski's espionage may not be as romantic as the false version, but arguably, is more impactful in terms of the *Abwehr's* ability to rapidly penetrate targets, establish, and then expand an espionage foundation in the U.S. He was not a "singleton" deployed to America on behalf of a paramilitary organization, but

[105] "Number of migrants from Germany documented in United States between 1820 and 1957," Statista, Society, Historical Data, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1044516/migration-from-germany-to-us-1820-1957/.

sustained occasional contact of the *Abwehr*.[106] This true story exemplifies the value of the contact of the *Abwehr* within German emigres and their cultivation as legacy agents. Direct espionage in the U.S. until 1933 was beyond the abilities of the *Abwehr* to manage, but indirect activities by motivated individuals was a valuable precursor that prepared the organization for the eventuality of future intelligence collection activities.

The Hidden Legacy Agent - Dinnes von der Osten

Dinnes von der Osten is an example of an individual who sustained a relationship with the *Abwehr* from an unidentified time in the 1920s through the end of the war. He was engaged in indirect and then direct espionage, but U.S. counter espionage agencies were never able to qualify his activities or indict him for illegal activities. During his time as a legacy agent, Dinnes established a relationship with the *Abwehr* and may have provided occasional information. More importantly he was involved in spotting and assessing potential agents and connecting with other like-minded individuals who were motivated to work for Germany. By the time the *Abwehr* began direct espionage in 1933, his identification of potential agents continued, possibly increased, and he became involved in the facilitation of espionage activities. Whereas Ritter and Lonkowski would

[106] While far too expansive of an issue to address within this analysis, the false history of Lonkowski purported in secondary sources is completely invalidated by the Bremen files and other declassified materials. For example, Breuer claims Lonkowski was tasked ("placed an urgent "order" for the specifications") by the Black *Luftwaffe* (possibly meaning the *Fliegerzentrale* as there was no such organization known as the "Black *Luftwaffe,"* to collect intelligence "of a pontoon that Seversky had developed for its experimental seaplane." The Seversky-located agent was Voss and at the time of his collection of the blueprints of the Seversky seaplane, he was not a subagent of Lonkowski. The blueprints he provided were not related to a pontoon, but the entire aircraft. Moreover, the seaplane was not in production and had been a test aircraft rejected by the Navy for service. Also according to the Bremen files, this information from Voss on the Seversky aircraft were filed in 1938, while the information in the Bremen file was almost certainly *post facto* additions, all indications are this information was collected well after 1933 and did not occur during the supposed pre-1933 period. The allegation the *Abwehr* would deploy an agent to specifically steal pontoon "technology" is without grounding in fact and appears entirely, and poorly, fabricated.

start working directly for Berlin and then be transferred to appropriate stations in Hamburg and Bremen, Dinnes von der Osten remained under the direct control of officers of the Berlin headquarters, and by the mid-1930s he was directly involved in the plans to establish a centralized *Abwehr* headquarters in the United States.

According to an FBI investigation into Dinnes for potential espionage activities in 1939, he had "illegally entered United States 1/25/15 at East Port, Idaho" from Canada.[107] Dinnes then spent several years living and working in multiple states before settling in Colorado. Rumors among his neighbors in Colorado held that Dinnes had been interned in Canada as a German prisoner of war, escaped, and fled to the U.S. Ulrich von der Osten, Dinnes' younger brother, along with Ulrich's wife and four children, joined him in Colorado in 1930, but after a year, moved out, probably first to California, then New York, then Pennsylvania, and finally returned to Germany in 1934.

From 1916 until 1939 Dinnes had remained outside of the notice of any U.S. counter espionage agencies as on the surface he did not appear to be engaged in any troubling behavior. He lived around Denver and became active in German cultural activities. His espionage was first threatened to be exposed in 1939. According to declassified FBI files from a resultant investigation, there was concern Dinnes, as an employee of the Colorado State Planning commission, had access to "information regarding the location of dams, flumes, valves, tunnels, and other data regarding the water supply of … western municipalities." The report also noted Dinnes was not

[107] "Dinnes Carl Wilhelm von der Osten," Located in Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 88.

believed to be a naturalized citizen and was likely a "member of the National Council of the German American Bund."[108]

By the summer of 1940, the FBI ceased its investigation in Dinnes. He again came to the attention of the FBI in the summer of 1941 when the FBI concluded Dinnes was associated with the *Abwehr's* activities to establish a centralized espionage headquarters in the U.S. earlier that year. Specifically, Dinnes' brother Ulrich returned to the U.S. in February 1941 to assume leadership of all *Abwehr* activities in the United States. Dinnes supported Ulrich in this capacity until his brother's accidental death on March 18, 1941.

During the course of the 1939 investigation, and then again after Ulrich's death, declassified FBI case files reveal information that highlighted activities that indicate Dinnes von der Osten was at first a legacy and then later an active espionage agent of the *Abwehr*. In these capacities, he operated secretly for decades, and once exposed, was still able to escape prosecution. While Dinnes' activities before entry to the U.S., to include his service in the First World War remain unknown, in 1939 when interrogated by the FBI, he revealed his involvement in German intelligence activities in the U.S. in 1918:

> "In May, 1918 I was arrested by the Youngstown, Ohio Police Department and taken to Cleveland, Ohio and questioned at length by an officer who I was told was of the Secret Service. I was released following the questioning and advised by this officer to leave Youngstown and go to a location where steel mills and munitions plants were not so plentiful."[109]

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[108] Gebben, E. J., Special Agent in Charge, "Re: DINNES VON DER OSTEN; Espionage," Memorandum for FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Denver, CO, June 2, 1939, located in "Re: "Kurt Frederick Ludwig," Investigation Case File, FOIA 1584244, U.S. Department of Justice, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Information Management Division, Washington D.C., 2023, Section 1, pgs. 14-16. Following entries from this source will include Ludwig, the section number, and the page number.

[109] Arthur S. Webb, "Kurt Frederick Ludwig," Denver, Colorado, October 29, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 14, pgs. 112-113.

Prior to and during the early days of the U.S. entry into the First World War, one of the primary activities of German agents in the U.S. being managed from the defense attaché's office was sabotage targeting war material production including ammunition production and storage sites. The arrest indicated Dinnes was involved in activities that were perceived by counter espionage authorities as targeting local war materiel production. FBI investigators in the 1940s believed this was indeed the case, and attempted to recover the local police and Secret Service records of the arrest. Unfortunately for the Bureau's agents, they learned that none of the records had endured.

Dinnes was again questioned by the FBI regarding the death of Ulrich in 1941. At the time of his death, Ulrich had been masquerading under a false name, and it was not until the summer of 1941 that the FBI identified the dead man as Ulrich von der Osten. Within a week, FBI agents established the connection with Dinnes and placed him under surveillance in California where he fled after learning of his brother's death.

Surveillance teams in San Francisco observed Dinnes met with Mr. and Mrs. Karl Gottlob Schaefer, both of whom were also under suspicion of espionage by the FBI's local field office. The Schaeffers were members of German social societies and had close ties to Fritz Wiedemann the German Consul General for San Francisco who was also suspected of being involved in multiple espionage plots and activities. Contact with the Schaeffers was believed to have been established through Gertrude Schult Tenderich who herself was under suspicion of espionage by the FBI's Denver office. In California, Dinnes also met with Paul Sievers, a senior official in the *Deutsche Amerikanische Berufsgemeinschaft* (DAB - German American Professional Community), another German social organization focused on fostering business connections among individuals

of German descent.[110] Dinnes spent almost two months trying to get out of the country with German and *Abwehr* assistance. When these efforts failed, he turned to representatives of Imperial Japan, but these officials were also unable to secure his passage out of the U.S. Shortly thereafter, the FBI teams lost track of Dinnes and believed he had been able to slip out of the country. Dinnes did not escape but had quietly returned to Colorado and found a new job where he spent four months in the open before being rediscovered by FBI agents from the Denver field office.

The deck was stacked against Dinnes. He had been under suspicion of espionage in 1939, had traveled cross-country with Ulrich in February and March 1941 at which time the Bureau believed he had assisted his brother in espionage activities, was present in New York when Ulrich died, attempted to leave the U.S. before he could be questioned, during his time in California displayed espionage-related tradecraft for avoiding surveillance and met with suspected German and Japanese espionage agents, facilitators, and provocateurs, and had been able to leave California without his surveillance teams being any the wiser. All of these events and skills seemed to indicate Dinnes was a highly trained and experienced agent with extensive contacts.

The investigation also revealed Dinnes role in another German social organization known as the "*Schlaraffia*," a German-language, "worldwide association of men … committed to the cultivation of art, friendship and humor."[111] To the FBI, Dinnes' *Schlaraffia* activities appeared to be cover for espionage, and his travels with Ulrich related to consolidation of multiple agent networks he had made through the social

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[110] D. C. Spencer, "JOE K., with aliases, JULIO LOPEZ LIDO, with aliases; DINNES CARL WILHELM von der OSTEN, with aliases; ET AL," File No. 65-2457, San Francisco, CA, July 8, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 3, pgs. 108-109.
[111] "Uber Schlaraffia," Verband Allschlaraffia, https://www.schlaraffia.org/ueber-schlaraffia/#was.

organization. According to Dinnes, the brothers had traveled together, but while Ulrich had been involved in unknown matters, Dinnes was engaged in *Schlaraffia*-related issues.[112] Notably, all of the locations to which they traveled were hotbeds of *Abwehr* espionage activity.

Under interrogation and within his sworn statement to the FBI Dinnes denied any association with espionage:

> "I have never received any communication from the German government; I have never been contacted by German sources inciting me to espionage activity, nor has pressure ever been applied to me in an effort to induce me to commit acts of espionage or sabotage, I … am bitterly anti-Nazi … I have never served the German Government at any time, with or without pay, except for one year of compulsory military service, … about 1907."[113]

Indeed, very little substantive evidence was found that could be used to prove his espionage, leading the Denver Field office to inform FBI headquarters at the end of October 1941, it had, "failed to establish the fact that DINNES CARL WILHELM VON DER OSTEN … [was] presently engaged in espionage activities or that he was actively assisting LUDWIG [*Abwehr* agent assisting Ulrich] in his activities."[114] Dinnes was released but remained under suspicion of espionage throughout the war.

The FBI's conclusion of a lack of evidence of espionage on the part of Dinnes von der Osten in rooted in the contextual understanding of U.S. counter espionage agencies related to the purpose and manner of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States as informed by the three major FBI investigations from 1938 to 1941. In this understanding, *Abwehr* espionage was a resurgent threat, begun only in 1933, discovered in 1938, and

[112] Ludwig, Section 3, pgs. 105-113
[113] Ludwig, Section 14, pg. 116.
[114] Ludwig, Section 14, pg. 107.

primarily located in the Northeast. From its own investigative files, the Bureau and its agents perceived agent activities as being networked together within a strict hierarchy led by a single individual receiving explicit guidance from handlers in Germany, or through local ring leaders. Dinnes did not match this model – a lone agrarian worker in the Mountain West with few contacts to the agents known to be active in New York.

In contrast with this conceptualization, when one steps out from this perspective and analyzes Dinnes' activities within a different context the potential for his espionage involvement increases. A different context would involve German military intelligence activities in the U.S. that had never been eliminated but perhaps for a short time had become dormant. With the recapitalization of IIIb as the newer *Abwehr*, former agents in the U.S. would not be active, but would have remained semi-hibernated; that is in communication with their handlers in Germany but not involved in direct espionage. Further, this other context would perceive the 1933 resumption of *Abwehr* espionage not to be a northeastern phenomenon, but something that targeted the military industrial complex in all locations across the U.S. Rather than being isolated networks, *Abwehr* operations were comprised of multiple functional agents focused on exploitation of any friendly individual with placement and access to information of intelligence value.

In the case of Dinnes von der Osten, while there is evidence of his involvement in German espionage and related activities from no later than 1918 through at least 1942, he effectually remained hidden in that, while repeatedly suspected and questioned, he was never charged with espionage. In 1918, the U.S. Secret Service had believed him involved in sabotage planning against munitions plants in Youngstown, Ohio. In 1939, he was again investigated, this time by the FBI, for his access to critical infrastructure

and his affiliation with pro-fascist organizations in the U.S. Then again in 1941 he was investigated for his ties with his brother Ulrich in terms of his assumption of command of all *Abwehr* operations in the U.S. Yet, U.S. counter espionage agencies never made their case against Dinnes. Within Ulrich von der Osten's own account, the investigations into Dinnes were at least in part responsible for delays in his deployment to the U.S. Ulrich had been set to leave for the U.S. in 1939, but delayed as, "it became known somehow that one of my relations is employed in an unpopular department."[115]

In this new context with evidence presented, Dinnes has been shown to have been involved in espionage activities on behalf of Germany no later than his entry into the U.S. around 1916. In this capacity, he was involved in efforts to threaten U.S. war materiel production in Ohio in 1918 resulting in his arrest and detention. After the war, Dinnes remained hidden in plain sight. At some point, probably as a result of his work in German cultural institutions, he established a relationship with the new *Abwehr* of the 1920s, and may have been known to the intelligence service by the time of Ulrich's living in the U.S. from 1930-1934.

Prior to the resumption of direct espionage in the U.S., Dinnes used his social connections, to include the *Schlaraffia*, to spot and assess ethnic Germans with placement and access to information of intelligence value, and assess their motivations toward future espionage work. By 1933, he was almost certainly in direct contact with the *Abwehr* as revealed by the 1939 investigation for espionage activity. When Ulrich was in the U.S. in 1939 and 1940, Dinnes again assisted in the facilitation of his espionage activities, including providing cover support for his travels. His activities at this time

[115] T. J. Donegan, "RE: DUCASE," San Francisco, CA, April 9, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 1, pgs. 166-167.

were suspicious enough to result in reports to the Denver Field Office and an opening of an investigation. Had Ulrich lived, Dinnes would have sustained a role in his younger brother's espionage apparatus. Finally, wherein the orthodox context Dinnes can be perceived as an innocent man that fell victim to the *zeitgeist* of war paranoia – twice – when considering a different contextualization, he appears to have been deeply rooted in *Abwehr* and other espionage activities in the United States for decades.

Contextualizing Legacy Agents – Impacts and Expansion

Given the context of First World War-era German espionage, the lack of sabotage attempts, bombings and efforts to incite Mexico or U.S. minority groups after 1918 indicated to the U.S. military and any government agency associated with counter espionage, that for all intents and purposes, German espionage ceased with the end of the war. The FBI, Army, and Navy, universally defunded their counter espionage capabilities within their overall reductions in force structure.[116] Counter espionage activities that were conducted focused on internal subversion among exploited minorities rather than foreign intrigues.[117] While these agencies were associating Americans of African descent within the first "Red Scare, the *Abwehr* had established its legacy agents throughout the United States, that, while not conducting direct espionage for years, would

[116] The FBI was known more simply as the Bureau of Investigation from its founding in 1908 until 1935.
[117] For examples on the use of counter espionage to target minority communities in the United States, see "Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division Relating to 'Negro Subversion,'" 1917-1941, Record Group 165, FileM1440, Records of the War Department, General and Special Staffs, The National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD, Mark Ellis, "Negro Subversion: The Investigation of Black Unrest and Radicalism by Agencies of the United States Government, 1917-1920, Volume I, Dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 1984, or "Nazi Influence Among the United States Negroes," Memorandum, Navy Department, Navy Department, Washington D.C., Undated, https://ncisahistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Nazi-Influence-Among-the-United-States-Negroes-Undated.pdf.

form the nucleus of its future espionage capabilities. From 1920 until 1933 the *Abwehr* abstained from conducting direct espionage. Legacy agents probably provided occasional publicly available information but their true value was the spotting and assessing of potential future espionage agents. In this capacity, Nikolaus Ritter spent years identifying individuals throughout the United States that would form the core of his North American espionage activities. William Lonkowski made contact with colleagues in other aviation enterprises that were engaged in the development of advanced technologies for the U.S. Army Air Corps and U.S. Navy. Lonkowski apparently also identified prospective agents with access to Navy shipyards and other sites. Dinnes von der Osten's exact espionage activities are unknown. However, from at least 1918 onward, he was involved in multiple endeavors associated with German intelligence. He was also at the center of Canaris' most ambitious plan in the United States – the establishment of a centralized espionage headquarters in America headed by his brother Ulrich. Like Lonkowski, along the way, Dinnes received fairly extensive espionage training that had enabled him to detect and then avoid FBI surveillance as well as other training that apparently hid evidence of his activities so that he was never indicted while always being suspected.

While this survey includes only three legacy agents, with the roughly 2 million Germans who immigrated to the U.S. between 1920 and 1929 along with the over 10 million Germans and German-Americans in the United States, the actual footprint of *Abwehr* legacy agents between 1920 and 1933 could realistically be expected to be much larger. Multiple other potential legacy agents were identified throughout the course of this research but were not addressed herein as doing so would have distracted from the

main investigative purpose of this research. These three examples are more of a survey of various aspects of how legacy agents arrived, were used, and then were later recruited for direct espionage. Perhaps the most telling impact, was that these individuals and others like them, were the primary driver for an explosive expansion of espionage beginning in 1933 that had impacts on the course of the Second World War.

Chapter III.

Direct Espionage - *Abwehr Gegen Amerika*, 1933 to January 1938

By the time Conrad Patzig assumed control of the Abwehr on June 6, 1932, the long-building plan for the establishment of a German intelligence service to rival those of the other imperial powers was underway. Gempp had outlined the organization in his treatise, known as the Gempp Report, and by all accounts, it had been followed by subsequent *Chefs des Abwehrs* Schwantes and von Bredlow.[118] Patzig's seemingly odd selection as von Bredlow's replacement indicated he was aware of the overall plan and determined to be the best option for its continuation by his predecessor. Once in command, Patzig energetically followed through with plans for the nearly immediate resumption of global foreign espionage capabilities. According to one commentator, it was not until Patzig's leadership as the *Chef* that the Abwehr, "could be considered a functioning secret [intelligence] service."[119]

Patzig's leadership style and the expansion of the *Abwehr* as a legitimate and capable intelligence service also resulted in the emergence of a conflict between the military intelligence service and the new intelligence authorities being established by the Party, such the *Sicherheitsdienst and Gestapo*, along with their overall leader, Reinhard Heydrich. So it was, that when the *Abwehr* received its most capable leader and was at

[118] Surviving sections of the Gempp report can be found in the German Federal Archives. The surviving sections cover his history of German espionage activities associated with IIIb and its predecessors from the 1870s until 1919. Other sections, such as those dealing with the establishment of a fully capable *Abwehr* are either not part of the public collection or have been lost.
[119] Walter Brendel, *Canaris Abwehrchef unter Hitler*. Das Historische Buch, 2022. "Sie kann erst unter Conrad Patzig als funktionsfähiger Geheimdienst angesehen werden."

the cusp of emerging as an institution with full and optimized capabilities, the service and its *Chef* immediately ran afoul of upstart competitors with the ear of the government.

Patzig had spent two and half years reorganizing the *Abwehr* as a global service. He had outlined the expansion of additional stations to include how to establish the equivalent of *Abwehrstellen* among neutral and friendly states in what would one day become the *Kriegsorganisationen*, had fully and openly resumed all elements of foreign espionage and intelligence collection, and had directed the beginning of direct espionage in the United States. He also fought Heydrich and other elements of the party – poorly. Despite his organizational advances Patzig was removed by his own minister – the fight was going so poorly, the *Abwehr* was at the cusp of being absorbed into the Party's security and intelligence establishments. His last effort as *Chef* focused on promoting his successor, Canaris, at which he was successful.

Canaris' selection kept the post with the *Kriegsmarine* – it was also designed to bring in a heavy-hitter in terms of intelligence acumen who was also a soft hand when it came to coordination.[120] The fact he had once been Heydrich's superior in the *Kriegsmarine* and it was believed they were collegial did not hurt his nomination. Patzig still warned his replacement of the dangers and internecine backstabbing that awaited him, and on Canaris' first day as *Chef* warned, "over the long-term, today will be seen as the beginning of your ending."[121] Perhaps because he knew Heydrich, and also perhaps

[120] Most Canaris biographers unanimously identify that from the mid 1930s through at least the Munich Conference of 1938 Canaris supported National Socialism even if he never joined the party. After Munich and the subsequent invasion of Czechoslovakia he was at the core of all anti-Hitler and anti-Nazi plots.
[121] Horst Mühleisen, "Das letzte Duell: Die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Heydrich und Canaris wegen der Revision der 'Zehn Gebote'," *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 58, no. 2. 1999, pgs. 397-398, https://doi.org/10.1524/mgzs.1999.58.2.395. "Auf lange Sicht gesehen wird der heutige Tag der Anfang Ihres Endes sein."

because he and the *Abwehr* had been well prepared by Patzig, he reportedly retorted, "Do not worry yourself, I am ready for those boys."[122]

It was during the transition meetings between Patzig and Canaris in December 1934 or January 1935 where the new *Chef* would have been briefed on the instigation and rapid expansion of espionage in the United States. Recruited *V-Männer* and their *H-Männer* in the U.S. were already providing details on advanced technologies used by the U.S. Army and Navy, particularly in ship and aircraft design, two areas of critical need for an *Reichswehr* on the path toward total rearmament.[123] Patzig would have emphasized how the *Abwehr's* success in the U.S., especially its penetration of allied military technical and industrial production, was an area that had caused great jealousy in the SD which it had proven wholly incapable of similar activities.[124] Later memoranda from Canaris on the efficacy and value of U.S.-based espionage indicated how he personally believed the *Abwehr's* military espionage capability in America was integral to Canaris' management of the internal conflicts among German intelligence agencies. Under his leadership, built off of Patzig's earlier actions, the *Abwehr* succeeded in the U.S. in areas the SD and *Gestapo* had failed in Europe and abroad.[125]

Canaris' success as *Chef des Abwehrs* relied on decisions made and actions taken by Patzig early in his tenure in the same role. By comparing declassified FBI analysis of

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[122] Heinz Höhne, *Canaris*. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1979, pg. 163, "Seien Sie ganz beruhigt, mit diesen Jungs werde ich schon fertig."
[123] The German military was known as the *Reichswehr* until May 20, 1935 when it was renamed *Wehrmacht* as part of a set of military reform efforts.
[124] "Gedachtnisprotokoll uber die Befragung des Admirals a.D. Conrad Patzig, am 18/19/1/1966," record N 975/1, Patzig, Conrad (Admiral), Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/ffb2a831-008a-4078-bb43-70c620cd2eee, pg. 111.
[125] "Reconnaissance in the USA-Restriction to technical and war economy exploration," Admiral Wilhelm Canaris to the Foreign Minister, Memorandum, OKW, Amt Auslands Abwehr, Chief of Defense I, record RW 5/118, April 27, 1940, German Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/9d21b115-cf1d-4799-85e7-e817192007f3.

the instigation of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States with the known record of Patzig's reforms, it becomes apparent the two events were interconnected. Which further indicates the resumption of direct espionage in the U.S. was an element of Patzig's overall plans for *Abwehr* expansion. Patzig assumed control from von Bredlow in June 1932 and by no later than early 1933, legacy espionage agents in the U.S. had been contacted, recruited, and deployed to gather military technical intelligence.

Turrou made this very claim – regarding the 1933 start of espionage – in his articles and book, but it could not be verified until the declassification of FBI reporting in the early 2000s. In 1938, according to declassified reporting, the FBI was able to discover at least two *Abwehr* agents had been operating in the New York area for the previous five years:

> "William Lonkowski, an intelligence agent of Germany, contacted Dr. Griebl (according to Griebl's statement) in 1933 asking Griebl to assist him in making contacts in military and naval circles. Lonkowski, according to Griebl, had several contacts in the United States who were obtaining information for him."[126]

Contextualized evidence from this statement indicates it resulted from the interrogations of Griebl by the FBI following his 1938 detention for involvement in the Rumrich affair.[127] Other contextualized evidence clarifies that by early 1933 Lonkowski and

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[126] KV-2-384_4, pg. 32.

[127] Within the scope of this research this paper's author conducted an exhaustive search for the original FBI interrogation reports of Griebl. No such files exist within the FBI "Abwehr" file located at the U.S. National Archives and Record Administration. A FOIA request to the FBI was answered in February 2024, to wit, "The FBI has completed its review of records subject to the Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts (FOIPA) that are responsive to your request." With the response, a single file was provided that related to an FBI investigation into three Nazi sympathizers in New York in February 1941 who were previously connected to Griebl. The file provided by the FBI did not contain any information related to Griebl's interrogation by Turrou or his work for the *Abwehr*. It is presumed from this response the FBI has since destroyed or lost all files related to the initial Griebl investigation and interrogation of 1938. FOIA requests on the other members of the incorrectly labeled "Rumrich Ring," such as those of Rumrich and Voss, remained unanswered at this time. "Griebl, Ignatz, MD," FOIA 1595163-000, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., February 22, 2024, and E. J. Connelly, "RE:

Griebl had been recruited separately and had established their own networks of agents. Further, they had each already established effective reporting back to the *Abwehr* before they were directed to meet and coordinate somewhat later in 1933.

Many of the details of the FBI summary of the start of espionage in the U.S. are confirmed among multiple MI-5 interrogation reports. Turrou also confirms them in his 1938 tell-all, stating, during the Rumrich investigation the FBI uncovered intelligence that established the resumption of direct intelligence in 1933, and that evidence proved that no direct espionage had been attempted in the U.S. from 1919 (as IIIb) until 1933.[128] The FBI's report and Turrou's statements are corroborated by the fact that among all of the declassified files and older primary source material in the American, British, and German archives, to include materials of their respective intelligence agencies, there are no recorded instances of direct espionage by the *Abwehr* in the United States before 1933. In the case of the Bremen files related to U.S. operations, the earliest files begin in late 1933 and early 1934, suggesting the initial recruited agents, such as Griebl, Lonkowski, and Ritter used multiple *H-Männer* in the reporting, and later these agents into fully recruited *V-Männer*. The only places one can find the allegations of earlier espionage are in the unsubstantiated or false claims perpetuated among secondary sources.

This chapter will examine the early evidence of the *Abwehr's* activities in the United States from its principal North American-focused stations. It will also seek to clarify the historical section through comparative analysis of multiple declassified

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WILLIAM VON OESEN, WALTER BEJEUHR, REDACTED," FOIA 1595163-000, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York, New York, February 27, 1941.

[128] Turrou, pg. 81.

archival materials related to the officers and agents involved in that espionage. Finally, it will begin to knit together the tapestry of the global system used by the *Abwehr* to support and execute espionage in the U.S. absent from earlier histories.

Erich Pheiffer – The Spy Master and Tales of Espionage in America

There are three versions of the story of Erich Pheiffer's association with *Abwehr* espionage in the United States: U.S. press accounts of his involvement in the Rumrich affair, his statements made to MI-5 interrogators while interned as a prisoner of war, and the actual history of his involvement discovered through comparative analysis of declassified archival records. In the first account, Pheiffer was outed, incorrectly, as the primary espionage leader of Rumrich and his agents. On June 21, 1938, the New York Times announced he was indicted as a co-conspirator in the espionage plots of Rumrich:

> "The band of comparatively minor intriguers found here was backed up by experienced military directors in Berlin …
>
> Foremost in this hitherto obscure background were Dr. Erich Pheiffer, chief of the German military Intelligence Service.
>
> Pheiffer also is a navy man … troubled himself only with spy missions of the greatest importance."[129]

While Pheiffer was in charge of *Nebenstelle* Bremen not the entire *Abwehr*, the article – resulting from information provided by the FBI – brought his name into the American public consciousness. He was indicted and called to testify in his own defense, but not surprisingly, failed to ever appear in court. In subsequent years, as a result of this exposure, he would sustain a quasi-boogey-man status in the American press whenever

[129] A. H. Leviero, "U.S. Jury Indicts 18 as Spies in Reich Government's Pay; Secret Service Head Named," *The New York Times*, June 21, 1938, pgs. 1, 12.

there were hints of German espionage. His exact role in Rumrich's activities was never identified or provided in subsequent press releases.

The second version of Pheiffer's involvement in U.S espionage resulted from his own words. Pheiffer eluded U.S. authorities from 1938 through the end of the war, but was imprisoned by the British and interrogated by MI-5 in 1944. When captured, he was actually in route to Sweden where he planned to turn himself over to the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Pheiffer cooperated with MI-5 and provided a detailed summary of his espionage career along with multiple specific annexes of information that were used in post-war Allied intelligence analyses of the *Abwehr*. His entire file was declassified and released in 1999, and while it contains extensive information on his U.S. operations, has rarely been examined, and never in the context of U.S.-based espionage.

Given his relative willingness to cooperate, MI-5 interrogators developed a strongly positive rapport with Pheiffer and believed him forthright in his recitation of the history of his operations and of the *Abwehr* as an organization. One of his interrogators noted of Pheiffer's espionage career, "To … PHEIFFER … belongs the … distinction of world-wide notoriety as a spy master."[130]

Within interrogation, Pheiffer provided his version of events that led to his involvement in U.S.-based espionage. In this account, Pheiffer had served as an officer in the *Kriegsmarine* during the First World War. He was demobilized and entered the business world and by the early 1930s was a union manager. In 1932 he rejoined the *Kriegsmarine* as a reservist which resulted in a string of events over the next two years

[130] "INTERIM REPORT in the case of Erich Pheiffer," in "Erich Pheiffer," Case File KV-2-267, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C10907208, KV-2-267_1, pg. 49.

that culminated in his recruitment into espionage. He claimed in 1933 while on reserve duty he was contacted by *Kapitän-Leutnant* von Hohnhorst who was stationed in Wilhelmshaven, "who enquired whether or not PHEIFFER would be interested in rejoining the Navy as a regular officer."[131] Pheiffer agreed, was sent to Berlin, was commissioned as an active duty officer, remained in Berlin for an undeclared amount of time, and then was sent back to Wilhelmshaven to set up a maritime customs service.[132] In May 1934, because of the work on the customs office, von Hohnhorst, who Pheiffer had since discovered, "surprisingly," was an intelligence officer, directed Pheiffer to transition from the customs service work toward building the, "establishment of a *Nachrichtendienst*, information service," focused on intelligence collection on Belgium and The Netherlands. Unlike von Hohnhorst, who was, "an old lieutenant of the *Abwehr/Abteilung* of the *Reichs-Wehr-Ministerium*," meaning he had been one of the officers from 1921 to 1932 who had been overtly assigned to the service, Pheiffer stated he personally had no espionage background when recruited in 1934.[133]

It was through von Hohnhorst that Pheiffer, as an underling and novice, first engaged in espionage to include the recruitment of agents. During summer 1934, based on a list of names provided to him by von Hohnhorst, Pheiffer went abroad to the lowlands to recruit his first agents. This trip included an attempt to meet fellow naval officer Udo von Bonin in Venlo, but they could not link up, he claimed, until 1936 – a minor fact included by Pheiffer that has bearing on the comparison of his legend versus

[131] KV-2-267_1, pg. 51.
[132] Custom's services are rarely the purview of a nation's navy and in Germany then as now, customs was not a responsibility of the *Kriegsmarine*. The dissonance of an officer being returned to active duty and then given the responsibility of establishing a customs service does not appear to have been addressed by Pheiffer's interrogators.
[133] KV-2-267_1, pg. 54.

historic reality. After initial travels under the direction and tutelage of von Hohnhorst to the Benelux, Pheiffer was provided his first contact that would lead to his involvement in espionage in the United States:

> "Shortly after his return … PHEIFFER was introduced by VON HOHNHORST to a certain Karl SCHLUETER, a steward in charge of the rifle range on the NDL liner "Europa", a fanatical Nazi and Ortsgruppenleiter on the ship. SCHLUETER had, apparently, approached VON HOHNHORST with an offer to supply American newspapers, periodicals and any nature of report that might be required. VON HOHNHORST suggested that PHEIFFER and SCHUETER might care, "as beginners both", to exchange ideas.
>
> PHEIFER referred the matter to Berlin [for approval] and received an encouraging reply."[134]

According to Pheiffer, Schlüter eventually, "began to establish useful contacts in New York and spoke in glowing terms of a certain Dr. Ignatz Theodor Griebl, who, … was raring to do something practical for the New Germany."[135] The implication in the interrogation as provided by Pheiffer was it was Schlüter, not Pheiffer, who had instigated recruitment and intelligence exploitation of Griebl. Meanwhile, not wanting to rely solely on Schlüter, another colleague put Pheiffer in contact with Karl Eitel, a wine steward on the SS *Bremen*, who agreed to become the second of two couriers working for Pheiffer with access to the United States. As 1934 went into 1935, because of his couriers, Pheiffer was unexpectedly drawn further into Abwehr *espionage* in the U.S.:

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[134] KV-2-267_1, pg. 55. All caps text in the original. Von Hohnhorst was the senior officer assigned to an *Abwehr* substation in Wilhelmshaven, Germany. *Ortsgruppenleiter* (local leader / organizer) was a function of the party establishment from 1930 to 1945 that organized NSDAP actions related to elections or other representation of party activities. Used here, it indicates Schlüter was a senior party representative on *Europa* and involved in organizing activities and meetings for party affiliates among the crew. However, this title may have been used by the interrogators and not offered by Pheiffer. The only other primary source who uses this title when referencing Schlüter was Turrou, indicating the British interrogators may have been using Turrou's claims from print to supplement their interrogation report. Most sources, including Pheiffer, identify Schlüter 's affiliation and affectation toward the NSDAP.

[135] KV-2-267_1, pg. 55.

> "The word that PHEIFFER had a courier working to and from America had spread in Berlin … Oberst BUSCH, the Eins Luft chief, telephoned and wrote PHEIFFER asking that he make arrangements … for couriers to bring back material to be delivered in New York … by a certain Wilhelm LONKOWSKI … strict orders were issued by BUSCH that all packages which LONKOWSKI might send by these means must not be opened and examined in Wilhelmshaven, but must be forwarded and received to Berlin."[136]

Pheiffer expounded to his interrogators Lonkowski was not one of his agents but was strictly controlled through Berlin. Schlüter and Eitel were only couriers, who would receive intelligence from Lonkowski, provide it to Pheiffer upon their return to Germany, and he would then forward it directly to Berlin without opening or examination. Occasionally materials, which he generally referred to as questionnaires, would come from Berlin for delivery to Lonkowski and, through him, other agents.

This situation endured, supposedly, for about three years, with Schlüter and Eitel serving as couriers for other *Abwehrstellen* agents. In 1936 Eitel had to leave *Bremen*, but a replacement was found, and two couriers continued their operations. When the Rumrich affair broke, Pheiffer claimed to his interrogators, of his espionage activity in the U.S. that, "the American debacle had left Pheiffer without an agent in America. The Nest [*Nebenstelle*] was reduced to making a fresh start with new couriers buying magazines and newspapers in New York."[137] Throughout his interrogation report, Pheiffer only identified and commented upon agents in the U.S. who had been exposed within the Rumrich affair. His interrogators do not appear to have probed for additional details on other agents to include those who were exposed by other detainees being held at the same time as Pheiffer.

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[136] KV-2-267_1, pg. 55.
[137] KV-2-267_2, pg. 13.

His interrogators acknowledged even with the extensive time and attention paid to Pheiffer, they were unable to adequately capture the scope and impact of his eleven year (or longer) intelligence career with the *Abwehr*. His interrogation report drafters and handlers noted of the hundreds of pages of details and annexes:

> "For all practical purposes, and within the limits imposed by the time factor, exhaustion of PHEIFFER's encyclopedic knowledge of the Abwehr and its personalities defies the very attempt. The Report which follows must, therefore, be taken to represent only the principal features of a very full career and details of some of the characters involved."[138]

These same officers noted Pheiffer had "emphatically" denied "he had made any attempt to establish contact with Allied services with a view to 'crossing over.'"[139] However, they also found the circumstances in which he was picked following his internment in Turkey and subsequent flight for Sweden suspicious. Other interrogation reports claimed Pheiffer had sounded out the American OSS as had occurred with his predecessor in Istanbul, Leverkuehn.[140] Ultimately, it appears during Pheiffer's wartime interrogations in 1945, he was aware of Germany's pending loss, and his revelation of so much of the *Abwehr's* inner working and a guarded approach to his own biography can be assessed as attempts at currying favor with the victors and possibly attempting to aligning himself with an Allied intelligence service as a future agent. From this perspective, his protecting key details of his central role in *Abwehr* espionage establishment in the U.S. and Europe can be further understood as a means of ensuring post-war survival.

With this context in mind and to summarize Pheiffer's version of events, Pheiffer, without doing anything on his own account, was accidentally recruited by the *Abwehr* in

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[138] KV-2-267_1, pg. 49.
[139] KV-2-267_1, pg. 49.
[140] See Eitel's interrogation report in KV-2-384.

the summer of 1934 to assist with establishing agents in the lowlands. Through other individuals, he was connected with two stewards who traveled to the U.S. on German-flagged liners who became couriers. Of their own accord, the couriers developed contacts with other individuals working for other *Abwehr* officers and stations. Over time, the couriers independently developed their own agents who they in turn managed without oversight from Pheiffer. When his couriers were exposed in 1938, for a time he lost all access to the U.S. and had to restart entirely.

A third version of Pheiffer's espionage history in the United States is exposed through examination and analysis of multiple declassified primary source materials that became available between 1999 and 2014. Information in these materials reveal that Pheiffer was recruited to the *Abwehr* no later than 1932 and was among the primary architects involved in planning and executing an aggressive espionage strategy for targeting the United States. He was not an accidental espionage officer, but among the *Abwehr's* most capable and pervasive espionage directors.

FBI intelligence reports provided to MI-5 in 1943 identified Pheiffer was directly tied to the espionage activities of Griebl and Lonkowski no later than their recruitment in 1933, indicating he was active and engaged in the earliest identifiable *Abwehr* espionage. As a result of Turrou's interrogations of Griebl within the Rumrich investigation, the FBI was able to determine, "Lonkowski claimed to be working for Erich Pheiffer with headquarters at Hamburg and also … Lieutenant Colonel Busch and Herman Menzel, as well as Udo Von Bonin." The same report also noted, "Griebl was a representative of the German Intelligence Service … while in Germany was introduced to Colonel Busch, Von Bonin and Menzel." These two connected statements identify Pheiffer along with Busch,

Menzel, and von Bonin, all being involved no later than 1933 as the senior leadership responsible for U.S.-based espionage.[141]

Declassified MI-5 case files corroborated these interconnected officers' activities and provided additional details that walk-back the timeline for their combined planning of U.S.-based espionage. Among these files was the interrogation report of Karl Eitel, a former courier who worked under Pheiffer from 1934 to 1936 and then again from 1939 until 1944. Within Eitel's report, he too identified Griebl, and not just Lonkowski, was recruited and controlled directly by Pheiffer, no later than 1933.

Eitel also revealed Pheiffer's recruitment to the *Abwehr* had occurred earlier than Pheiffer had revealed to his own interrogators. Accordingly, Eitel reported he had, "learned something of the history of the renascent German Secret Service under *Oberst* BUSCH and Herman MENZEL. PHEIFFER was one of its first members."[142] The contextualization of this statement indicated Pheiffer was one of the former *Kriegsmarine* officers recruited by Patzig. While it is likely Patzig sought to bring in others with naval experience to the *Abwehr* while serving as the IM chief, Eitel's comments related to the "renascent" *Abwehr* better aligned with his early efforts to maximize the *Abwehr's* direct espionage and overall expansion. This context places Pheiffer then in Berlin working alongside Menzel, von Bonin, and Busch no later than the summer of 1932.

Other statements by Eitel among other MI-5 records place Pheiffer among the rest of the Berlin IM group, noting, "the head of his [von Bonin's] group was MENZEL."[143]

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[141] KV-2-384_4, pg. 32.
[142] KV-2-384_2, pg. 1.
[143] "Udo Wilhelm Borgislav von Bonin," British Military Mission, Civilian Detention Centre, Alsgades Skole, Denmark, August 31, 1945, located in "Udo Wilhelm von BONIN," Case File KV-2-1973, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11249255, pg. 37.

Since Pheiffer was known to have been one of the "first members" with Menzel and von Bonin, he too was clearly working in Berlin based on the already attested temporal association among the three. Pheiffer's early claims about not meeting von Bonin until 1936, expose his intent to mislead his interrogators in order to limit their ability to expose his early responsibilities within the service. Eitel's claims are validated considering his decade-long relationship with Pheiffer as a mentor and protégé.

Pheiffer may have told some truth in claiming to have returned as a reserve officer in 1932, but rather than spend time in the navy, these records indicate he was immediately brought into the *Abwehr*. This fact indicates his return to service was specifically to join the *Abwehr*, and that he was part of the effort by Patzig to prepare for the expansion of the service. If Pheiffer was brought into the *Abwehr* specifically as part of Patzig's expansion plans, it further reasons, he was also directed to develop the service's plans for espionage in the U.S. to include the recruitment of agents like Griebl and Lonkowski and the establishment of a courier network to facilitate agent operations.

Other contextualized evidence provided by Pheiffer within his interrogation report supports this assessment. In speaking of the structure of the *Abwehr*, Pheiffer provided a history of the organization, identifying in the early 1930s there were only seven *Abwehrstellen*, each aligned to a naval/military district. The duties of these overt stations were, "confined mainly to Section III work, i.e. counter-espionage and counter-sabotage; intelligence work [that is the collection of foreign intelligence] … practically did not exist." He continued on the pre-expansion *Abwehrstellen*, stating *Abwehr* officers were assigned to, "divisional commands and the General Staff officers of the Naval Stations …

they worked usually with one or two assistants … who were subordinates to them."[144] All of these events occurred prior to his self-attested recruitment into the *Abwehr*. Pheiffer doubled-down on his foreknowledge of the *Abwehr* prior to his claimed involvement and provided additional information on the expansion and reorganization directed by Patzig. Within an annex to his interrogation report, he laid out how Patzig's plans included additional resources for all *stellen* to include all three *Abteilungen* in each, the establishment of additional *stellen* in military districts not current covered, the establishment of *Aussenstellen* (out stations) or *Nebenstellen*, and of course the full resumption of direct espionage. According to Pheiffer, once, "the expansion of the organization began. This building up … was just the beginning."[145] The implication of his statements was that the expansion of the *Abwehr* had been planned well before and was not a one-time affair, but a steady expansion of capabilities and locations over time – of which he appears to have had extensive personal knowledge.

Other evidence uncovered in other declassified primary sources further highlights Pheiffer's presence in Berlin during the planning of the *Abwehr's* expansion to include the targeting of the U.S. through direct espionage. It was noted earlier Griebl had stated Pheiffer was Lonkowski's control in 1933 and operated from Hamburg. This statement contains an error, or possibly misdirection, on the part of Griebl, as in 1933, there was no established *Abwehr* presence in Hamburg. According to Patzig's plan, the development of *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg would not begin until 1935 along with five other sites. The

[144] "Appendix II: Early History and Development of the Abwehr," KV-2-267_3, pg. 18.
[145] KV-2-267_3, pg. 18.

stellen expansion was only realized under Canaris.[146] These details were corroborated by Herbert Wichmann who led IM Hamburg beginning in 1937 and then served as the *Abwehrstelle's leiter* from 1940 to the end of the war. According to Wichmann, he had first traveled to Hamburg in November or December 1935 to observe the "organization of an *Abwehrstelle*," with the implication being his trip coincided with the initial activation of the station. When he took over IM Hamburg in 1937, he identified his predecessors in the office as *Korvetten Kapitän* [Lieutenant Commander equivalent] Joachim Burghardt and *Major* Hilmar Dierks. The latter, Dierks, was transferred to Hamburg around 1935 to establish the station and would run IL and IM until 1937.[147]

Under interrogation Pheiffer had been adamant Lonkowski was an agent of Berlin, implicating Busch of IL, and not under Pheiffer's control. In his interrogation report, he stated, "Lonkowski was, in his own right, an agent of Berlin. He had argued from time to time, but with no great conviction, that it was his duty to report directly to Oberst Busch, of I/Luft."[148] Pheiffer clarified his lack of involvement with Lonkowski:

> "Oberst BUSCH, the Eins Luft chief, telephoned and wrote PHEIFFER asking that he make arrangements … for couriers to bring back material to be delivered in New York … by a certain Wilhelm LONKOWSKI … strict orders were issued by BUSCH that all packages which LONKOWSKI might send by these means must not be opened and examined in Wilhelmshaven, but must be forwarded and received to Berlin."[149]

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[146] KV-2-267_3, pg. 19. The seven original *Abwehrstellen* were I – Koenigsberg, II – Stettin, III-Berlin, IV – Dresden, V – Stuttgart, VI – Muenster, and VII – Muenchen. The Six additional stations added were VIII – Breslau, IX – Kassel, X – Hamburg, XI – Hanover, XII – Wiesbaden, and XIII – Nuernberg.
[147] "Internal Memorandum," From Lieut. Manning to Lieut. Col. Stimson," located in "Herbert Christian Oscar Otto Wichmann," Case File KV-2-103, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C6092011, KV-2-103_2, pg. 14.
[148] KV-2-267_1, pg. 62.
[149] KV-2-267_1, pg. 55.

The declassified Bremen archival files identify that from at least 1935 until 1937 Lonkowski was a registered agent working directly under the control of Pheiffer.[150]

The combination of FBI and German sources referenced indicates Lonkowski was not an agent of *Oberst* Busch of IL Berlin, but had been recruited from legacy into active status by Pheiffer in 1933, and from thence onward through 1937, remained an agent controlled and handled by Pheiffer. In this light, Pheiffer's statements regarding Lonkowski's early control from Berlin were true to a degree. The difference was that it was Pheiffer not Busch who was the control. As it has been shown, multiple sources identified Pheiffer as having recruited Lonkowski in 1933 and as having sustained control. Therefore, since it also is known Pheiffer did not establish his own station until 1934, it appears he had initially managed Lonkowski and his other agents while still in Berlin. The Bremen files then indicate the transfer of Lonkowski along with Pheiffer while he established himself in Wilhelmshaven and then moved his *Nebenstelle* to Bremen. Given Busch's senior role in IL and Lonkowski's prolific reporting on U.S. military aviation, intelligence reporting from Lonkowski was surely provided to Busch, but handling and control remained with Pheiffer.

This analysis of the true roots of Pheiffer's espionage serves to reveal not only his ties with espionage in America, but also, that from the earliest days of the *Abwehr's* expansion into full-scale foreign espionage under Patzig, the United States was among his primary targets. Further, Pheiffer was not the accidental espionage officer he claimed to be, but in terms of his running of agents in the United States, he was one of the principle planners associated with the reestablishment of espionage there targeting

[150] RW 49 442, pgs. 101, 103.

military technical intelligence. It will also be shown in subsequent sections that Pheiffer not only recruited and ran agents, but developed extensive facilitation mechanisms to control their activities and recover intelligence materials collected in America.

Nikolaus Ritter – The American in a *Luftwaffe* Uniform

There are at least two versions of Nikolaus Ritter's history of espionage activities targeting the United States: the version he told to his British interrogators and found in his memoirs, and the one revealed through comparative analysis of multiple declassified archival materials. It has already been identified Ritter was a legacy agent and his direct espionage in the U.S. began probably in 1933 and surely no later than 1934. The further examination of the differences and discrepancies in his accounts then serves to further highlight the nature of his early activities in the U.S. in the building toward future espionage operations.

Ritter was captured by Canadian forces in 1945 and turned over to British authorities due to his launching dozens of agents against the U.K. from 1937 through 1941. His U.K.-focused espionage was the primary focus of his British interrogators, but they found much to want from Ritter and his lack of specific information. Early on they came to believe he was neither lying nor hiding information, but due to his own hands-off leadership style, actually knew very few operational details of agents under his control. According to their findings:

> "It is clear from talking to him that Ritter is not attempting to withhold the truth, nor do I think that his memory is especially bad. On the contrary, what he does remember, he remembers clearly, and … in considerable

> detail. It is also clear … his handling of the cases under his control was … extremely slack."[151]

This assessment is somewhat odd given MI-5 operated multiple double agents controlled by Ritter and had firsthand information on how engaged he was in their handling. His case file is full of operational details provided by double agents and there are several thousand pages of documents covering just those double agent operations. Many of Ritter's agents doubled by MI-5 were alive and available during the period of his interrogation and could have been used to leverage additional details from Ritter, but this approach does not appear to have occurred, or is absent from the MI-5 records.

During two years of interrogation, Ritter sustained a consistent account of his U.S. espionage activities beginning no earlier than 1937 due to prohibitions on direct espionage in the U.S. While the 1937 espionage start date has already been shown fallacious, Ritter continued to build off this misdirection throughout his interrogations. He reported to his interrogators that when he was, like Pheiffer, unwittingly assigned to the *Abwehr* he was provided two, ironically, already developed agents in the U.S. named "Pop" and Werner Gudenberg. Ritter could do nothing with these agents, he claimed, because of "the veto on espionage activities against the USA in force at this time largely invalidated his acquisition of the two agents in that country."[152] His interrogators did not appear to have challenged the prohibition in light of the existence of two extant agents in the U.S. at a time Ritter claimed such activities were prohibited. Moreover, by the time of Ritter's interrogation, MI-5 possessed a classified FBI counter espionage reporting that highlighted at least a half dozen other agents under Ritter's control prior to 1937.

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[151] "J.M.A. Gwyer to Major Vesey, RITTER (PF 62876)," KV-2-88, pg. 33.
[152] "Ritter (PF 62876),"located in KV-2-88, pg. 65.

Other declassified archival data reviewed up to this point have shown unequivocally that in 1937 there were no *Abwehr* prohibitions on espionage in the U.S. and that there had been none since 1933. To further emphasize this fact, no later than 1935, Canaris' director of *Abteilung* I, foreign espionage, *Oberst* Hans Piekenbrock, had posted a "map at *Abwehr* headquarters" that identified prioritized and prohibited countries for targeting. According a Canaris biographer, Piekenbrock's map identified:

> "countries of "primary" and "secondary" interest and countries where all secret intelligence was banned. Of primary interests to Abwehr I were France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Britain, Russia and Spain. Secondary interest centered on Belgium, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Romania and the U.S.A. Prohibited countries were Austria, Italy, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Japan and Bulgaria."[153]

Just as in the case with Ritter's 1933 return to espionage and nearly immediate recruitment of Duquesne, his statement of involvement in the espionage activities of Werner Gudenberg and "Pop" can be established as having occurred no later than 1935 rather than late 1937. In Pheiffer's interrogation report he identified the linkages between Lonkowski and the development, recruitment, and exploitation of Werner Gudenberg. According to Pheiffer, "shortly afterwards [Lonkowski's activities in 1934-35], a new name, that of Werner GUDENBERG, began to take the place of LONKOWSKI's as a source quoted by Griebl."[154] Since it has been established Pheiffer was obfuscating the actual history of his involvement in U.S.-based espionage, from his

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[153] Höhne, pgs. 205-206.

[154] KV-2-267_1, pg. 62. Secondary sources have proposed Lonkowski and Gudenberg's espionage relationship was established as early as 1928 at the Ireland Aircraft Company; however, this attestation cannot be affirmed in any primary source material. Pheiffer's recounting of events appears to align with contextual temporal evidence to indicate Gudenberg rose in importance after Lonkowski fled the U.S. Given Pheiffer's obfuscation, however, of other aspects of the timeline of activities, it is almost certain Gudenberg was involved in espionage, possibly as a Hintermann of Lonkowski or Griebl ("a source quoted by") as early as 1933 and definitely before Lonkowski's evacuation in September 1935.

statement it can be deduced that Lonkowski was responsible for spotting, assessing, recruiting, and initially exploiting intelligence from Gudenberg.

Pheiffer's statement indicates Gudenberg initially was an *H-Mann* of Lonkowski and Griebl. Later according to other archival information Gudenberg was recruited as a *V-Mann* and registered as agent 3502. Other files identify the agent registration serials numbers 3500-3599 were assigned to Hamburg. Therefore, Gudenberg was the second agent recruited within this series by Hamburg, indicating this occurred shortly after the initial establishment of Hamburg in 1935. Since Gudenberg reported on aviation matters, it follows he was initially assigned to Hilmar Dierks who established Hamburg's IL and IM branches. Therefore, it follows, Gudenberg reported first as a *H-Mann* in 1933, was recruited by Dierks in 1935 for IL, and then was transferred to Ritter upon his assignment to Hamburg after his return to Germany in 1936. In Ritter's memoir, while not providing specific details, he states it was Dierks from whom he received his agents.

There are far fewer details related to the espionage background of Heinrich "Fritz" Sohn, *deckname* Pop. His espionage related activities can be traced at least to the mid-1930s, and while he may have conducted direct espionage activities, his more prominent utility to Hamburg was in spotting, assessing, and developing potential agents. It was Sohn who began the initial operation to recruit Herman Lang who was responsible for the *Abwehr's* theft of the Norden bombsight. Sohn worked with Lang in a different capacity, so it is likely he participated in the Norden operation and also conducted espionage of his own. He left the U.S. around 1939 to return to Germany and there are indications he may have been among the early *Abwehr* recruits in 1933-34, and if this is the case, it is possible Ritter was his recruiter.

Ritter makes an additional sequencing error in his memoirs that serves to further highlight his earlier-than-claimed involvement in *Abwehr* espionage in the United States. When speaking of his November-December 1937 espionage trip to the U.S., one of the few elements of his travel between the U.S. and Germany confirmed in all sources, he stated he was supported onboard the S.S. *Bremen* by *Abwehr* courier "Karl Keitel." Ritter was obviously referring to Karl Eitel, Pheiffer's courier; however, by November 1937 Eitel was no longer on the *Bremen* and was actually not working in any capacity for the *Abwehr*. Eitel left the ship in mid-to-late 1936 due to a disagreement with the chief steward. Pheiffer attempted to get him work on another NDL vessel, but Eitel decided to return to the hotelier business where he had been previously employed.[155]

Therefore, while getting the name slightly wrong and attributing it to the wrong voyage, Ritter's statement indicated his knowledge of Eitel's role from 1934-1936 on the *Bremen*. Ritter then knew of Eitel, and recalled he had provided him operational support during the voyage. This would have been impossible in 1937; so it appears Ritter amalgamated two separate voyages to the United States for espionage purposes, a later one in 1937 that is confirmed in multiple resources, and one of the earlier voyages between 1934 and 1936 covered by Table 2. These are the only transits by Ritter that coincide with Eitel's time on *Bremen*. Oddly, and probably a random happenstance of history, Eitel had been on the same liner that returned Ritter to the U.S. in 1924. At that time Eitel was a new employee of NDL and was moving to New York to work as a ticketing agent. There is no information in any source materials, other than this

[155] KV-2-267_1, pg. 63.

coincidence, that would lead one to assess they met and established a collegial relationship during that voyage.

The revisiting and expanding on Ritter's hidden *Abwehr* career further highlights the extent of near immediate espionage in the U.S. Pheiffer was involved in the planning of the expansion and almost immediately recruited and operated Lonkowski, Griebl, and countless other agents. While separate from Pheiffer, Ritter appears to have been one of the earliest *Abwehr* agents involved in similar efforts. While a legacy agent he had assessed Duquesne and undoubtedly was involved in his recruitment in 1933. No later than 1934, possibly after his travel to Germany, Ritter assumed all handler responsibilities for Duquesne. It also appears that shortly before Lonkowski departed the U.S., Gudenberg was transitioned in terms of control to Hamburg where he was provisioned to Ritter. There are fewer operationally relevant details about Sohn, but Ritter's association between he and Gudenberg suggests proximal handling. By the time Ritter traveled to the U.S. in November 1937, he had multiple highly effective agents conducting operations in multiple cities in the United States exploiting military technical intelligence. Most of these agents had been reporting to Ritter for at least a year, with others like Duquesne, being involved well before then.

Ziel Amerika: The Targets of *Abwehr* Espionage

From the earliest days of Patzig's espionage expansion, Pheiffer's planning, establishing, and operating couriers and agents, and Ritter's transition from legacy to active agent and then officer, the focus of the *Abwehr's* espionage activities from 1933 through the exposure of Rumrich was clear – at least to the *Abwehr*. Turrou claimed in the closing pages of his book that he never understood why, "Nazi Germany wanted spies

here," in the United States. While Turrou had identified a nexus of *Abwehr* activity focused on defense industries, he had also fixated on pro-fascist organizations uninvolved with military espionage. He was unable to exfiltrate from the details of his investigation the focus and purpose of the espionage, preferring to assess he, "got the impression-strengthened again and again as I questioned others in the case-that it is an ingrained feeling among Nazis that America is a potential enemy-or victim." He summed up the purpose of his book as a warning of the subversive danger of Nazism quoting one of those he questioned stating of the regime, "They're madmen." As the FBI's hand-picked first-ever counter espionage special agent, his failure to identify the purpose behind *Abwehr* espionage may be the single greatest shaping element of all subsequent U.S. counter espionage investigations.[156]

In contrast to Turrou's investigative failures, *Abwehr* records and declassified interrogation reports of *Abwehr* officers clearly identified the purpose and scope of its operations and agents in the United States. Pheiffer in discussing his establishment of agents stated, he was "not himself interested in any political news," meaning pro-German and pro-fascist information sought by the *Gestapo* and *SD*, but only, "military intelligence insofar as it concerned new types of weapons." On his collection requirements passed to his agents, he stated he had provided the following guidance:

> "The only subjects of … interest, so far as American sources were concerned, were technical matters connected with the Navy and Air Force … Germany was vitally interested in obtaining all manner of technical information which would allow her to catch up with new developments, since she had been compelled by disarmament and control to lag behind other nations in technical progress."[157]

[156] Turrou, Pgs. 275-276.
[157] KV-2-267_1, pg. 55.

His instructions to his agents can be confirmed within Eitel's interrogation report. For example, when discussing one if his initial debriefings with Pheiffer following an attempt to collect military intelligence in New York, Eitel stated:

> "He [Pheiffer] proceeded to tell EITEL that the reports which he could supply about … New York and the topical magazines which he brought from America were of considerable value … Eitel must learn to distinguish points of special interest to an intelligence service from the commonplace sights and impressions … When Eitel pointed out that on this last visit to New York he had seen no naval vessels in the harbour, PHEIFFER told him he must establish some contact in New York with an individual either servicing in the U.S. Navy or having some indirect connection with it."[158]

A declassified Allied intelligence report further corroborated the focus of Pheiffer and his agents, identifying as an espionage director, he had worked with, "Germans resident in New York who had volunteered their services and were asked to obtain details of military and air force, as well as naval, developments in the U.S.A."[159]

Ritter's agents were similarly charged with a focus on the U.S. military, with one directed to collect intelligence on, "all matters of military interest, especially those concerning air forces and aircraft industry."[160] Another agent located in Pennsylvania was directed to, "supply data about aircraft orders and production figures," while another in St. Louis was tasked, "to obtain information reported exchange agreements between the British and American air forces and aircraft industries."[161] While working for Ritter, Duquesne had been directed to, "report all info possible about the American aircraft industry," and later, "the task was amplified to cover all war industries and sections of the

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[158] KV-2-384_1, pg. 48.
[159] "Aussenstelle Bremen, Liquidation Report No. 206 A," Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Counter Intelligence War Room, London, U.K., Not Dated, pgs. 1-2.
[160] KV-2-88, pg. 81.
[161] KV-2-88, pg. 82.

American armed forces."[162] The FBI noted a similar focus of Ritter's espionage in the United States and assessed in a classified report from 1944 his, "business was the collection of information of interest to the German Air Forces with regard to … the United States."[163] In a review of all of Ritter's intelligence tasking to known agents, there are no indications any were ever tasked with the collection of political information, pro-Nazi or pro-fascist materials, or the conducting of acts of subversion or sabotage.

According to a 1944 classified British intelligence report, the entire structure of the *Abwehr* was related to the collection of military intelligence. According to the report, *Abteilung* I, "deal[t] with active espionage," and was further divided into four sections dealing with various aspects of military intelligence collection:

> "Abteilung I is further sub-divided into a series of sections, each of which is responsible for obtaining a particular type of information. Eins Heer [IH] collects information about foreign armies; Eins Marine [IM] about foreign navies and mercantile shipping; Eins Luft [IL], non-technical information about foreign air forces, such as the strength and dispositions of squadrons or the position of flying fields. Eins Technik Luftwaffe [I T/Lw], technical information from the aircraft industry about new types of aircraft or engines, special equipment and so on; Eins Wirtschaft[IWi], … production of war materials."[164]

While some of the report's details were not completely correct, for instance I T/Lw, *Eins Luft Technik*, was not separate from IL but a subsection, it enumerated the focus of *Abt* I espionage was clearly on military matters.

Internal *Abwehr* documents also highlight the singular focus of espionage by U.S.-based agents as being military intelligence matters. Within a memorandum from Canaris to the Foreign Ministry, he stated, in the United States, the "priority is

[162] KV-2-88, pg. 83.
[163] KV-2-87_1, pg. 35.
[164] "German Intelligence Agencies," pg. 3.

intelligence collection on military technical and war economy matters" (*Vordringlich ist jedoch die Erkungung unter technichen und kriegswirtschaftlichen gesichtspunkten)*. Canaris provided additional details on the aspects of collection on the U.S. military:

- "inventions and basic constructions of all kinds for all parts of the military, especially aircraft types, engines, warship construction *(Auf die gestellung von erfindungen und neukonstruktionen aller art für alle wehrmachtsteile, besonders flugzeugtypen, motoren, kriegsschiffkonstruktionen*)."
- *"*Observation of the conversion of the US armaments industry and the delivery possibilities and volume of weapons, ammunition, and equipment of all kinds to Europe *(Auf die beobachtung der umstellung der USA Rüstungsindustrie und die lieferungsmöglichkeiten und Umfang an Waffen, Munition und gerät aller art nach Europa*)."
- "Observation of the reorganization under the structure of the Air Force *(Auf beobachtung der Neuaufstelleungen unter der Gliederung der Luftwaffe*)."

Elsewhere within the memorandum Canaris repeated the military focus of *Abwehr* agents in the U.S.[165]

From 1933 through at least 1938 the driver for the collection of military technical information through direct espionage in the United States was support to German rearmament. Pheiffer explained during his interrogation how he provided details on the purposes of collection to his agents, "I told them that as regards to rearmament, it was for us to see that Germany caught up as quickly as possible with the progress in the

[165] RW 5 118, In this statement, *kriegswirtschaftlichen*, is translated as "war economy matters" and is understood to mean military industries to include those industries' production of military materiel, units, and other capabilities. In this sense *kriegswirtschaftlichen* can be seen as fairly equivalent to the U.S. term military-industrial base.

development of arms in the past 14 years by making use of the experience of others."[166] Ritter also explained the ties between his espionage work controlling U.S. agents and rearmament, claiming, "Germany is trying to build itself up to be free and strong again." Related to the theft of a specific technological secret, he expounded on the relationship between his espionage and rearmament, "such an instrument devours millions [of Marks] and is very costly in time … 'If you can bring this kind of instrument to Germany, it will save millions, and many research hours.'"[167]

The First *Maritime Nachrichtendienst* and Erich Pheiffer

By his own identification, Pheiffer was recruited for *Abwehr* service specifically to establish a *maritime nachrichtendienst,* that is a maritime intelligence or information office. While he claimed he was selected for this task in 1934, this analysis has revealed he was almost certainly selected in 1932 and was involved in the establishment of this office no later than 1933 from its original location in Berlin. According to a declassified post war Allied summary of Pheiffer's *maritime nachrichtendienst* establishment:

> "He was occupied with the task of forming … an "information" system, to bring dividends from all parts of the world in the shape of reports on foreign shipping and Naval matters. To this end PHEIFFER had established the following sources of information: suitable informants recruited from the many regular business travelers registered at the Bremen Aussenhandlesstelle [sic], who supplied material regarding foreign defenses, and naval and shipping construction, collected in the normal course if their travels … Merchant Navy Captains and officers … Stewards on vessels lying between Germany and New York [who] … acted as couriers ... Germans resident in New York who had volunteered their services, and who were asked to obtain details of military and air force, as well as naval, developments in the U.S.A."[168]

[166] KV-2-267_1, pg. 69.
[167] Ritter, pg. 54.
[168] "Aussenstelle Bremen, Liquidation Report No. 206 A," pgs. 1-2.

Commentators and historians have often stated of Pheiffer's *maritime nachrichtendienst* that it was a naval intelligence station and often misattributed Pheiffer as being the head of *Abwehr* naval branch or in charge of all K*riegsmarine* intelligence activities. While he was among the senior officers brought in by Patzig to support the efforts to expand the *Abwehr* globally, his *nachrichtendienst* efforts had highly specified outcomes, including:

- A debriefing service for German mariners with access to foreign ports,
- A debriefing service for traveling businessmen who traveled abroad,
- Agents on merchant ships and in ports for direct espionage and recruitment,
- Couriers on passenger liners with access to Canada, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, to sustain contact between handlers and agents,
- A debriefing service for German repatriates, a *Rueckwandererbefragusdienst,* to identify individuals with access to intelligence or other valuable information, and,
- *U-Stellen* expansion to support agent operations abroad.

While the *nachrichtendienst* exploited and supported espionage throughout Europe, and arguably was established primarily to these ends, *Pheiffer's* new station was essential to the establishment and expansion of espionage in the United States.

No later than early 1934, Pheiffer initially established his *nachrichtendienst* at Wilhelmshaven by expanding an *Abteilung* III headquarters managed by von Hohnhorst. By the late spring or early summer of 1934, almost certainly resulting from the instigation of his work to debrief business travelers and merchant ship captains, Pheiffer embarked on the creation of a maritime facilitation network to enhance his ability to manage his agents and effectively receive their reporting. While he had been focused on ship captains' access to information, he determined he could recruit additional

Vertrauensmänner from among the crews to gather intelligence, coordinate with agents, and act as his intermediaries to manage his existing agents and receive their intelligence.

According to Pheiffer his first recruit was Karl Schlüter, "a steward in charge of the rifle range on the NDL liner 'Europa.'" Schlüter was initially employed by Pheiffer to collect, "American newspapers, periodicals and any nature of report that might be required," rather than direct espionage or recruitment of subagents.[169] Schlüter's personnel record survives in the Bremen files and identify he was recruited by Pheiffer in May 1934 as *Forscher* Agent F 2315. *Forscher* translates literally to researcher, and indicates these specific agents' roles in collection, and also spotting, assessing, and recruiting new *V*- and *H-Männer*. Schlüter's status as a *Forscher* agent confirms his role as a courier, collector, and talent scout for new agents. Absent from other accounts, but found within the Bremen files, is that concurrent to the recruitment of Schlüter, Pheiffer recruited fellow *Europa* steward Karl Schulze as *Forscher* agent F 2316. The records identified Schlüter and Schulze worked in tandem from *Europa* with Pheiffer's New York agents; an aspect of courier operations never previously revealed.[170] Within the Bremen records Schlüter was described as "hard working" and "reliable," and noted for effective coordination with agents and *Hinterleute* in the U.S.[171] Schulze is also referred to as being "reliable," "absolutely secretive," and "skillful," and noted for having an

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[169] KV-2-267_1, pg. 55.

[170] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Agenten-Index nach Namen R – Z," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 530, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/6e2385b0-5689-41ea-afd6-aab5b1c18421/, pg. 111. "Sehr eifrig, zuverlässig, hält verbindung aufrecht zu V-leute in USA." (Very hardworking, reliable, keeps in touch with informants in USA).

[171] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Personalakten von Agenten der Nebenstelle Bremen L - Z, Band 2 R – S, 1936-1944," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 443, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/f4ec576c-06be-43c9-b78e-fb0037ccec20/, pg. 479.

unidentified *Hintermann* at Bell Laboratories.[172] While Schlüter was exposed within the 1938 Rumrich investigation, Schulze was never identified as an *Abwehr* agent, and continued his activities from *Europa* throughout the 1930s.

The only other courier Pheiffer claimed to have recruited within the scope of his interrogation report was Karl Eitel, a steward on *Europa's* sister ship S.S. *Bremen*, who was brought into the *Abwehr* after Schlüter in 1934. Pheiffer claimed to have recruited Eitel on the recommendation of a colleague during the summer of 1934. When captured in 1944 and debriefed by U.S. and British authorities, Eitel at first stated his *Abwehr* career began in 1939. In subsequent interrogations, he admitted he was approached, "in the early spring of 1934" with an offer to obtain "newspapers, magazines, and technical papers from the United States as soon as possible after publication."[173] Bremen's files do reveal some additional details of his recruitment not previously covered. Eitel's *personalbogen* (personnel file) was not preserved in Bremen's files, but other records confirm his recruitment in early 1934 as *Forscher* agent F 2307.[174] This information with the earlier-sequenced agent designation number contradicts Pheiffer's timeline of events and indicates Eitel was recruited before Schlüter or Schulze and may have been among Pheiffer's first recruited agents within the *nachrichtendienst* following its establishment.

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[172] RW 49 443, pg. 487. "Eifrig, zuverlässig, absolut verschwiegen. Hält verbindung zu Hintermann in USA bei Bell Laboratories Inc. Hat bereits wertvolles Material geliefert. Arbeitet geschickt." (Eager, reliable, absolutely secretive. Maintains contact with Hintermann in USA at Bell Laboratories Inc. Has already provided valuable material. Works skillfully.)

[173] KV-2-384_1, pg. 42. For an example of Eitel's false claims of recruitment, see, "Subject: Carl EITEL @ Konrad EBERLE @ Carlos Ethel," 24 July 1944, located in KV-2-382_1, pg. 57.

[174] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Agenten-Index nach Agentennummern 186-2552," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 531, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/ab7d342a-0485-42c8-b211-43b752dbb414/, pg. 267.

According to Pheiffer's interrogation file, he claimed from May 1934 until Spring 1938, he operated only two courier agents, Schlüter and Eitel with Eitel being replaced by another courier, Jaenichen, from 1936-to-1938. An in-depth review of the surviving Bremen files exposes his networks on *Bremen*, *Europa*, and several other vessels were far more expansive than those he admitted to under interrogation or that were ever exposed prior to or during the Second World War. Schlüter and Schulze were not the only *Abwehr* agents employed on *Europa*. In August of 1934, Otto Lindner, a paymaster for the vessel, was recruited as *Reiseagenten* R 2203.[175] As a *Reiseagenten*, or traveling agent, Lindner was expected to passively collect information of intelligence value he observed during his travels abroad. It is likely his position as a paymaster enabled access to areas and facilities other agents onboard were denied. Ritter also identifies Lindner within his interrogation files as an *Abwehr* courier associated with U.S.-based espionage.

Still more agents were based from within the *Europa* crew. "H." Eints the Chief Engineer was also recruited as *Forscher* agent F 2318 in 1934. From his surviving files, he operated separately from Schlüter, Schulze, and Lindner probably due to access permitted by his duties. According to the reports submitted, Eints was not engaged in recruiting or courier duties, but focused on naval intelligence matters and commercial shipping information.[176] Since Eints, Schlüter, and Schulze were all recruited as *V-Männer*, they had the authority to recruit additional H- *Männer*. Schlüter had at least one *H-Frau* on *Europa*, Johanna "Jenni" Hoffman, who collaborated on his activities in the

[175] RW 49 531, pg. 193.
[176] RW 49 531, pg. 285.

U.S., Germany, and Czechoslovakia.[177] He certainly had other *H-Männer,* or even *V-Männer,* who he controlled in addition to Hoffman, possibly including Guenther and Gustave Rumrich, but there is no information in any source materials to firmly establish any additional connections. If Schlüter had multiple subagents, it serves to reason, other agents on *Europa, Bremen,* and other liners did as well.

The situation on *Europa* of multiple concurrent agents was repeated on *Bremen.* In addition to Eitel, Heinz Lorenz who was discussed in the opening vignette was recruited in 1935 as *Forscher a*gent F 2319.[178] Lorenz produced almost three dozen reports between 1935 and 1938, which does not necessarily mean he ceased espionage activities in 1938, but only that there were no surviving reports after 1938. Like his counterpart on *Europa,* Eints, a review of Lorenz's reporting indicates he had a different collection focus than other *Forscher* agents on *Bremen.* His *Forscher* status also indicates Lorenz probably was also managing multiple *H- Männer* – all of whom were never identified.[179] Julius Hundt, another engineer on *Bremen,* also reported as *Forscher* agent F 2333 from 1936 until 1937, but there is no information to determine if he and Lorenz worked together or were even aware of one another's activities.[180]

Hans Tschirra was recruited from the *Bremen's* crew in July 1935 as *Forscher* agent F 2320. He appears to have been specifically recruited due to his role as a ship's photographer so that he could capture images of harbors, fortifications, and civilian and

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[177] "Guenther Gustav Marie Rumrich / Gustave Rumrich," Case File KV-2-3421, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11602806.
[178] RW 49 531, pg. 287.
[179] RW 49 442. pgs. 107-117.
[180] RW 49 531, pg. 297.

military vessels encountered during *Bremen's* travels and ports.[181] In the declassified FBI files from the so-called Duquesne "Ring," it was revealed during the 1930s Tschirra worked with Max Blank, another crewman on *Bremen*. Blank sustained his espionage activities as a courier on *Bremen* and then other vessels through at least his arrest in 1941.[182] Herbert Jaenichen was identified in the Bremen files as having been recruited in 1937 as *Forscher* agent F 2341 to replace F 2307, who was Eitel.[183] This information was corroborated within Pheiffer's interrogation report. The Bremen files reveal another agent, F 2336 Kurt Fritz, was actually Eitel's initial replacement, but was not suited for the work and replaced.[184]

In addition to agents on *Bremen* and *Europa,* Pheiffer was known to have recruited an additional *Forscher* agent, F 2308, immediately after Eitel. However, while the Bremen files refer to the agent's number and their reporting having been focused on aircraft manufacturing in the U.S., their identity and vessel were not specified.[185] Ernst Schmidt was identified in multiple MI-5 files as being a courier based on the S.S. *Hamburg* of the Hamburg America Line – *Bremen* and *Europa* belonged to NDL.[186] Those files identified his activities in a later context involving operations between Portugal and the U.S., and there are no records within the Bremen files that can

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[181] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Personalakten von Agenten der Nebenstelle Bremen L - Z, Band 3 T – Z, 1937-1944," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 444, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/31b62c04-93a2-4f78-bc97-cb4d2261f7f3/, pgs. 41-52.
[182] Duquesne, Section 4, pg. 6.
[183] RW 49 531, pg. 311.
[184] RW 49 531, pg. 301
[185] RW 49 531, pg. 269.
[186] "Madeira Radio Company," Case File KV-2-2416, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11287882.

corroborate earlier activity. His example serves to highlight the broad nature of Pheiffer's *nachrichtendienst* agents.

A courier named Schmidt was identified within FBI reporting related to 1933-38 *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S.; however, direct association is complicated by the fact Schlüter was known to use the *deckname* Schmidt with some of his *H- Männer*. It is impossible within current information to determine if the Schmidt referred to within those reports is Ernst Schmidt in the role of an additional courier or Schlüter. Ritter also revealed in his memoirs his contact with two couriers with the *decknamen* Oskar and Fred; one of whom was assigned to S.S. *Reliance* of Hamburg America. No other records related to Oskar and Fred or the role of *Reliance* in supporting *Abwehr* operations have been recovered. Notably, like with statements regarding "Karl Keitel," Ritter's recollection of his travels on *Reliance* and support by couriers is flawed as the vessel was being upgraded in drydock during the period Ritter claimed to have been aboard.[187]

While some agents on these vessels were aware of one another, or like Schlüter and Schulze worked in tandem, most couriers and agents worked independently and were not even aware of the activities of their crewmates. One exception is Lorenz who appears to have had a deeper relationship with Pheiffer and was aware of at least the activities of Schlüter and other couriers on *Europa*. This fact is highlighted by his use by Pheiffer to play back disinformation against the FBI regarding the couriers' activities associated with the Rumrich investigation of 1938.

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[187] Thursten Totzke, "Reliance," *LostLiners.de – Die Grosse Zeit der Oceanliner*, http://lostliners.de/schiffe/r/reliance/geschichte/index.htm. Totzke reports *Reliance* began a maintenance period for modernization and conversion of cabins and propulsion which would not be completed until November 1937. It is likely Ritter's discussion of his contact with the couriers on *Reliance* dates from one of his earlier trips of the 1930s, and not his November-December 1937 journey.

Agents on different vessels never had contact with one another due to the inherent nature of the passenger liner service. Ships' schedules were staggered as such that there were near-daily arrivals and departures from home and serviced ports so that it was rare that any two courier-ladened liners were present in the U.S. at the same time. If they were, the overlap was minimal. This status was confirmed by Eitel who identified he never overlapped with Schlüter in New York and had only met him on one occasion in Germany in a non-operational environment.[188]

The rotation of liners enabled Pheiffer to have a never-ending cycle of couriers through whom he could execute control of his, and other officers' agents spread across the U.S. His and other interrogation reports identify couriers and agents were routinely provided with one another's contact information that consisted of a pre-arranged meeting location and time and confirmation signals to confirm identities. Often neither the courier nor the agent would be aware of their opposite's true identity and each were provided unique *decknamen* to be used solely within a contact. Only after agent and courier had sustained multiple engagements, were observed using appropriate security tradecraft, and were evaluated would real names or other information be shared.

The presence of multiple agents on multiple vessels highlights a larger capability than previously believed the case in terms of Pheiffer's *maritime nachrichtendienst* in its U.S. operations. Eitel, Jaenichen, and Schlüter were outed in the Rumrich investigation, yet the Bremen files and other declassified archival materials exposed at least two dozen probable couriers on NDL and Hamburg America liners. Moreover, a 1937 brochure that advertised the transatlantic services of NDL and Hamburg America Lines (referred to

[188] KV-2-384_1, pg. 21.

collectively as HAPAG-Lloyd) identified they operated nine passenger liners between New York and Bremen: *Bremen*, *Europa*, *Columbus*, *New York*, *Hamburg*, *Hansa*, *Deutschland*, *St. Louis*, and *Berlin*.[189] Based on the numbers of agents on *Bremen* and *Europa*, these other vessels would have had similar numbers onboard operating in the U.S. This situation would mean four dozen couriers, not two, worked from NDL and Hamburg America passenger liners. Moreover, it is likely couriers and other agents operated on other vessels that operated between Germany and other ports in the Western Hemisphere, such as Canada and South America, or other U.S. ports with service to Germany, like Baltimore, Maryland and Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia.

While the courier system was developed by Pheiffer, its operations were not exclusive to his *nachrichtendienst*, so that it supported all *Abwehrstellen* and Berlin. Pheiffer attested to as much in his interrogation and identified how his courier system supported other *Abwehrstellen* and the Berlin headquarters. This situation further expands the probable amount of intelligence being gathered in the U.S. and passed through this system.

The couriers were never intended to replace contact through international mail services, known as *U-Stellen* operations. Couriers enabled centralized access in ports, and in the espionage-rich area around New York City, this aided repeated direct contact with multiple *V- Männer*. However, communications between the *Abwehr* and agents outside the port concentration areas relied on mail services. In the case of the New York-based agents, Lonkowski and Griebl for example would receive mail via the couriers that

[189] "Ships in the Transatlantic Service – HAPAG-NDL – 1937," Gjenvick-Gjonvik Archives, Ocean Travel, Vintage Brochures, https://www.ggarchives.com/OceanTravel/Brochures/HAPAG-NDL-1937-ShipsInTheTransatlanticService.html. *Reliance* was part of this service but not operating in 1937.

were already addressed to other *U-Stellen* throughout the country for receipt by other agents. Those agents would reverse the process for routing information back for consolidation and forwarding to Germany through post or courier.

In order to strengthen the mail networks, the *Abwehr* established specific *U-Stellen* networks consisting of multiple known as *U-Männer*. Within *U-Stellen* networks, agents would send intelligence or coordinate with their handlers by sending or receiving mail through designated addresses overseas and false addresses under control in their operational area. The letters themselves could be written in code, use secret writing techniques, or use *en clare* messages that consisted of pre-arranged narrative messages related to operational matters passed in the clear that could be understood by handlers.[190] *U-Stellen* addresses were intended to exist outside of adversary counter espionage capabilities and censors in order to provide two-way clandestine communications.

Abwehr tradecraft required post be copied multiple times and sent through multiple *U-Stellen* to ensure receipt and provide operational security. Hidden serial numbers in the message or under the stamp informed a handler of the message sequence, whether or not there were duplicates, and the *U-Stellen* used. In this way, the *Abwehr* could identify compromised or secure routes. An individual agent could be given one or multiple *U-Stellen* or *U-Männer* addresses, all of which were recorded in their personnel files. *U-Stellen*-related plans could be altered to meet changing needs or accesses, with new addresses provided and older or compromised ones closed. As an example, an U.S.-based agent was identified sending the same message through eight *U-stellen*, two in

[190] "Kurt Frederick Ludwig," Case File KV-2-2630, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11377570.

Portugal, one in China, four in Japan (which would then have been routed to China), and one through an unidentified location that used an *Abwehr* code that appeared to have received post and then relayed the message using W/T. *U-Stellen* were often supported by semi- or unwitting *U-Männer* who received mail and then passed it along with minimal or no information on the contents or espionage nexus. Several of these individuals were friends or relatives of recruited agents who were unaware of their colleague's or relation's espionage. More adept agents frequently varied their use of multiple *U-Stellen* as a tradecraft measure to enhance operational security and limit detection.

Pheiffer's *maritime nachrichtendienst* recruited new *U-Männer* in the U.S. to manage the intricate system of mail exchange between agents and handlers. New *U-Stellen* were established to manage the increase in operational traffic from U.S.-based operations, with some *U-Männer* serving as consolidators of reporting who then would coordinate with the couriers. Among the early recruited *U- Männer* in the U.S., was Henry Thoelken of Cleburne, Texas. Thoelken was registered as *U-Mann* U 2402 in 1934, and since the 2400 series (2400-2499) was assigned to Bremen, Thoelken was the second or third *U-Mann* established by Pheiffer.[191] Thoelken's *personalbogen* in the Bremen files identified he was at least active from May 1935 until 1939. His espionage activities were never detected, but while operational for at least four years, there were no records by which to connect him with agents, handlers, or reporting.[192]

U-Stellen were required overseas as a means to sustain operational security for communications. While Germany was not at war until September 1939, tradecraft and

[191] RW49 531, pg. 371.
[192] RW 49 444, pgs. 17-24.

security required *U-Stellen* to limit the attributable mail between Germany and target countries. Beginning in 1934 and increasing in 1935, Pheiffer expanded his control of *U-Stellen* in Europe by prioritizing *U- Männer* located in neutral states. In those years over a dozen *U- Männer* were recruited just in the Netherlands. Other European *U-Stellen* existed or were known to have been established in Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden. Pheiffer's *nachrichtendienst* was not the only office of the *Abwehr* establishing *U- Männer* globally, so that the lists of registered *U-Stellen* within the Bremen files can hardly been seen as close to a complete record.

Transition to Bremen

Pheiffer planned his *maritime nachrichtendienst* while he was initially assigned to *Abwehr* duties in Berlin. It is unclear when he either decided or was directed to physically move his *maritime nachrichtendienst* efforts from Berlin to a new location. Contextual clues found within his interrogation report, and other information revealed by colleagues like Eitel and Wichmann, indicate the move from Berlin to Wilhelmshaven occurred around the same time Griebl and Lonkowski began producing intelligence.

Given Pheiffer's extensive reporting of his work with von Hohnhorst, the *Abteilung* III *leiter* in Wilhelmshaven working with the *Kriegsmarine,* it appears likely this extant station was a driving factor in the relocation of Pheiffer from Berlin for his *maritime nachrichtendienst* work. Hamburg was not yet a *stellen* in being and there were few other available options in secure locations that could handle the expansion planned by Pheiffer. Thus, rather than start from scratch, Pheiffer placed his headquarters within an existing and functioning *Abwehr* office, albeit one completely uninvolved in foreign espionage. Given the matters regarding Pheiffer's early role in the *Abwehr* and the

reliance of Patzig and others on his abilities, there is no reason to believe he was in anyway subordinated to von Hohnhorst, and the two were merely collocated and performing separate duties in service to the same intelligence organization.

According to Pheiffer, by early 1935 Wilhelmshaven had proven unsuited for *Abteilung* I work which necessarily relied on access to the civilian ports and seamen of northern Germany. Within his interrogation he stated in March or April 1935, the new *Chef des Abwehrs* Captain Canaris conducted a field visit to Wilhelmshaven to observe the sub-station. Canaris had assumed the role from Patzig on January 1, 1935; meaning he conducted a review of Wilhelmshaven only a few months after taking command. His recollection of the visit indicated Canaris was pleased with the *nachrichtendienst*, but personally directed it be moved to enable foreign espionage:

> "He [Canaris] expressed his satisfaction with the work of the station, and commended especially Pheiffer, but suggested that Wilhelmshaven, a closed naval area, was hardly suited to the development of active intelligence work. He ordered that a plan for the establishment of an out-station at Bremen be worked out and submitted to him."[193]

Canaris further ordered the move to Bremen completed by October that year.

It has already been identified Pheiffer misrepresented his espionage activities to his interrogators to minimize his connection with events and avoid exposing agents and activities unknown to the Allies. Pheiffer had also been indicted by the U.S. Attorney in 1938 for espionage activities and could still have faced prosecution in the U.S. Following this trend, in discussing the Canaris visit, he attempted to align himself underneath von Hohnhorst as a further means to reduce his direct responsibility for espionage particularly in the U.S. Supposedly von Hohnhorst was at the time Pheiffer's

[193] KV-2-267_1, pg. 59.

superior and rejected Canaris's direction to move the sub-station out of *Wilhelmshaven.* The result was the severing of ties between Pheiffer and von Hohnhorst and Pheiffer's being placed solely in charge of the *nachrichtendienst*. In Pheiffer's version, "Canaris was adamant … and coldly told VON HOHNHORST that since he was not in agreement with the plan, it would be entrusted to PHEIFFER."[194] This ruse before his interrogators appears to have been affected to portray the purely circumstantial means by which Pheiffer was catapulted from a novitiate deputy of von Hohnhorst to the *leiter* of *Nebenstelle* Bremen in keeping with his efforts to minimize his role in active espionage.

Analysis of various declassified intelligence documents exposes the move from Wilhelmshaven to Bremen was probably not Canaris' idea and was probably not determined on the spot in Wilhelmshaven during the Spring of 1935. In Eitel's interrogation report he identifies that by the time of his recruitment in 1934 Pheiffer was already operating out of a suite of offices in Bremerhaven, the port area of Bremen, and had other facilities in Bremen proper and a headquarters in Wilhelmshaven. Pheiffer's use of multiple sites, per Eitel, was intended specifically to expand the *Nebenstelle's* access to shipping, international business travelers, and the civilian maritime workforce. Ironically, his Bremerhaven office was located on the third floor of a building primarily occupied by an American shipping company.[195]

The transition and consolidation of offices to Bremen then does not appear to have been the result of sudden inspiration but the culmination of two years of planning b. Wilhelmshaven's use by Pheiffer was never meant to be permanent. Canaris in the Spring 1935 review was not only inspecting the site but also reviewing the work by

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[194] KV-2-267_1, pg. 59.
[195] KV-2-384_1, pgs. 44-48, and KV-2-384_2, pgs. 1-25.

Pheiffer to establish his maritime espionage capability. Since Pheiffer already had offices in Bremen and Bremerhaven, Canaris would have been reviewing the overall plan related to the transition of the primary location of Pheiffer's *maritime nachrichtendienst* from Wilhelmshaven to Bremen – which may have included the new *Chef's* provisional approval as a courtesy. This scenario is confirmed in official records related to Canaris' early 1935 travel that included visits to *Abwehr* sites in Wilhelmshaven and Bremen, indicating Canaris inspected multiple facilities built-up by Pheiffer.[196]

It is probable at this point Pheiffer presented Canaris with an overview of his work targeting the United States. Given the early point in Canaris' tenure, this may have been the first occasion wherein he was briefed with fidelity on the ongoing benefits from espionage targeting U.S. military technical intelligence. If this was the case, Pheiffer would have covered the recruitment of key *Vertrauensmänner* in multiple locations, the methodology of control and exploitation, and the access to valuable intelligence. Pheiffer would have highlighted his work with couriers and agents on the German-flagged liners with access to North and South America and covered the intelligence his activities had produced for Germany. This encounter therefore would have shaped Canaris' early perceptions of the beneficial role of espionage in the United States toward Germany's rearmament and the relatively low-cost operations with resultant high rewards. This analysis is supported by multiple occasions wherein in the face of challenges to the *Abwehr's* U.S. operations, from that meeting onward, Canaris was an ardent defender and enabler of Pheiffer and the overall direction of espionage targeting the United States. Further, in multiple instances, when the *Abwehr*, its operations, its officers, or agents

[196] Bundesarchiv Militararchiv, file RW 5 197, referenced in Höhne, pg. 182.

were identified for some error or exposure, Canaris consistently referenced the effectiveness of the low-cost, high-impact operations in the United States as validation of the *Abwehr's* operational approach to espionage.

The Other *Nachrichtendienst*: The *Abwehr* in China and America

Wilhelmshaven and then Bremen were established to provide specific maritime intelligence capabilities to the *Abwehr*, to include facilitation of its U.S. operations, but they were not the only espionage stations designed to execute these activities. By the early 1930s, in addition to its European and North American espionage, the *Abwehr* was simultaneously constructing its intelligence foundations in China as part of an overall plan to use military intelligence to prepare the German military for conflict. Much like its European and North American capabilities, the *Abwehr* was limited in its Asian footprint after the First World War. Once reestablished, especially in China, these activities became gradually entwined with its U.S.-based espionage activities.

Very little information on the *Abwehr's* espionage activities in China, to especially include their interconnectivity with U.S.-based espionage, has been previously exposed. The majority of primary source material related to these activities resulted from investigations conducted by the OSS counter espionage department, known as X-2, in 1945-46 after the surrender of Imperial Japan. These materials were only declassified and approved for public release through the Central Intelligence Agency between 2001 and 2014. Even with this material, much of the early history of the *Abwehr* in China from around 1928 until 1940 remains clouded and fragmentary, so that anyone seeking to understand this period of espionage, must begin with information from a later date, and work retroactively backward to reconstruct earlier activities.

In 1930 the German Navy High Command (*Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine* – OKM) and the *Abwehr* re-established an *Etappendienst* (Supply Office), a global clandestine maritime supply network used during the First World War to supply naval forces from neutral territories. *Etappen* agents in ports around the world made contact with local maritime officials, stockpiled resources, and established supporting networks that would be needed during war. In wartime, *Etappen* agents were charged to:

> "1) support German cruisers in foreign waters at the outbreak of war … 2) support of the direction of economic warfare and of the cruisers prevented by the war from returning home, … 3) construction of a reporting service (= *Meldedienst*) which would ensure the supply of a) all information of importance to the disposal of Germany's Forces; b) information on merchant shipping to advise in the destruction of the enemy's shipping traffic and the surveillance of neutral shipping."[197]

Etappen agents were intelligence collectors who also participated in clandestine logistics.

Selected *Etappen* agents, "were mainly reliable German business men and shipping agents," who through the course of their business duties were, "established in ports all over the world." Additionally, *Etappen* agents were selected from Germans who were, "well established … respected by the authorities of the country," and had "sound knowledge of the political conditions of the country." Agents were designated as *Berichterstatter* agents – (BE) or Verscorgungsmann (Berichterstatter) Vm(BE) – agents, intelligence reporting agents or secret supply agents. China-based *Etappen* agents met these criteria and worked within the German maritime industries and shipping lines operating from China's ports and lived among German communities in the same areas.[198]

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[197] "Etappenorganisation der Kriegsmarine," German Intelligence Service, Counter Intelligence War Room, London, The United Kingdom, The Security Service, July 30, 1946, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/GERMANINTELLIGENCESERVICEWWIIVOL.3_0014.pdf, pgs. 3-4.

[198] "Etappenorganisation der Kriegsmarine," pgs. 4-6.

By the mid-1930s there were at least five *Abwehr Etappen* agents operating in Shanghai and additional agents in Canton, Chefoo, Hong Kong, Nanking, and Tientsin.[199] Most of its agents worked for German-owned shipping lines who had been operating from China since the days of the Qing dynasty.[200] These companies, Hamburg-America, NDL, and Melchers &Co., provided trans-Pacific service to the U.S., and from this access contact between the *Abwehr* in China and America occurred. With the *Etappendienst* as its foundation, the *Abwehr* placed agents within the shipping lines and then established couriers between China and the U.S. These activities soon became the focus of the *Abwehr's* operational activities in China.

By the mid-to-late 1930s, the *Abwehr* had re-classified its Shanghai station as a second *maritime nachrichtendienst*.[201] As with Bremen, the Pacific capability in Shanghai also exploited maritime communities, industries, and personnel for intelligence, expanded *U-Stellen* operations, and had couriers in direct contact with U.S. *Abwehr* agents. Both stations also shared personnel, thus indicating the likelihood of shared practices for supporting U.S. espionage. Agents Hermann von Richter, Hans Tschirra, and Erich Hermann were all recruited and controlled by Bremen officers and later transferred to Shanghai. Hermann, while active in Shanghai through 1945, remained under the control of Johannes Bischoff in Bremen. All three were involved in the management of Bremen-run *V-Männer* in Central and South America involved in the relay of intelligence gathered by other *V-Männer* in the U.S.[202]

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[199] "Etappenorganisation der Kriegsmarine," pgs. 18-35.
[200] Han Qing, "Western Steamship Companies and Chinese Seaborne Trade During the Late Qing Dynasty, 1840-1911," *International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. 27, Is. 3, August 4, 2015.
[201] Leverkuehn, pg. 193.
[202] "Herman Heinrich Rullhusen," Case File KV-2-3006, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C11511087.KV-2-2466, and "George Nicolaus," Case

While the maritime facilitation networks were being established from China, the *Abwehr* also expanded its use of China-based *U-Stellen*. Unlike Europe, Shanghai consolidated reporting from throughout Asia for centralized delivery. Communications through China were so effective at avoiding censors and ensuring delivery to Germany their use was routine for U.S. agents.[203] There were no identified instances of U.S. based agents' post interception when routed through China, and as such, Shanghai became one of the most commonly used *U-Stellen*. Until 1941, the most popular *U-Stellen* was C.S. Wang, Travel Service, Szechuan Road, Shanghai. An FBI investigation operated from the U.S. consulate in Shanghai discovered no such business or address existed, and was unable to determine where the mail designated for C. S. Wang arrived or how it was collected and processed.[204]

Throughout the mid-to-late 1930s, none of the *Abwehr's* activities in China supporting U.S.-based espionage were discovered by U.S. agencies. At the same time, while the FBI discovered elements of espionage in the Northeast, there was far less awareness of *Abwehr* activities in the U.S. West. While there were dozens if not hundreds of individuals suspected of or under investigation for espionage on behalf of Germany, the fidelity of understanding of *Abwehr* agents beyond Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis never developed. Perhaps for this reason, as war approached, and the *Abwehr*

File KV-2-2662, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11377536.

[203] "Witness Classification: Frederick Joubert Duquesne," located in Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 22 and "A Brief Narrative of Developments," located in Duquesne, Section 6, pg. 11.

[204] "William Gottlieb Sebold, Also known as Harry Sawyer," located in, Duquesne, Section 6, pg. 139. The practice of using entirely fictitious addresses in many areas in neutral countries strongly indicates *Abwehr* control of, or emplaced agents within, local mail delivery services. This situation appears to have occurred in China and was definitely commonplace in other areas of high *U-Post* activity such as Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Before the war, in states that had distinct postal services and active counter espionage services, real people at real addresses had to be used.

continued to expand its activities in the U.S., the primacy of Shanghai and other capabilities in China to support these activities, continued to increase.

Major Espionage Operations – 1935-1937

By October 1, 1935, *Nebenstelle* Bremen was fully operational and its immediate superior organization, *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg, was starting to engage in operations in the U.S. The *Abwehr* expansion that began under Patzig in 1932 had been further realized by Canaris. Recruited agents in the U.S. were emplaced within the defense industries and near military concentration areas throughout North America and were reporting through the facilitation networks that had grown under Pheiffer's management. By no later than mid-1935, Pheiffer alone was managing agents throughout the New York metropolitan area, Montreal, Canada, Newport News, VA, San Diego, CA, and Seattle, WA. There is also evidence of *V- Männer* activity in Bath, Maine; Chicago, Illinois; the Hawaiian Islands Territory, Los Angeles and San Francisco, California; Norfolk, Virginia; the Panama Canal Zone, multiple sites in Pennsylvania, and Vancouver, British Columbia. For agents outside of the greater New York area there is only fragmentary evidence due to a lack of counter espionage activity on the part of the United States against agent activities in these areas.

There is a limited sample of primary source information from which one can glean a full understanding of the extent and impact of the *Abwehr's* U.S.-based espionage from 1933 until the end of 1937. The sources that do exist illuminate the activities of Bremen and Hamburg that were exposed during the Rumrich investigation in 1938. There is almost no information on agents run by Bremen, Hamburg, or other *Abwehrstellen* in the other areas of the U.S. Berlin headquarters also ran its agents in the

U.S. external to the operations of any *Stellen* but occasionally used the capabilities of the *Stellen* in support of these operations.

A review of the activities of identified agents from this period provides context to the scope of *Abwehr* operations and their eventual impacts on the preparations and execution of war in Europe. Such a scope and context is necessary as within the orthodox understanding of the history of the *Abwehr* in the U.S. there exists *post facto* criticism of the service and its agents in terms of the intelligence collected during this period and its value related to the execution of the war. Much has been made over the decades regarding *Abwehr* agents collection of newspaper clippings, *Life* and *Time* magazines, or documents available through the Government Printing Office.[205]

This criticism continues the trend within the narratives of *Abwehr* failures being causal in German military defeat. Agents in the U.S. sent newspaper clippings but failed to warn the OKW about Operations Husky or Overlord. This perception results from a combination of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* and *post facto* logical fallacies that anchor on Germany's 1945 defeat and reach backwards to create inflection points for that loss from unrealistic and non-causal elements. These critiques further choose to ignore whether or not espionage agents were collecting on their directed requirements, or whether or not their intelligence was deemed of value by the military – unlike modern, western intelligence agencies, the *Abwehr* did not analyze or evaluate collected material, but provided it to other military elements for these activities.

[205] For an example of such critique, see Guensberg, pgs. 30-32, or Hans Trefousse, "The Failure of German Intelligence in the United States, 1933-1945," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 42, No. 1, June 1955, pgs. 84-100.

Counterfactual criticisms have resulted in the downplaying of all intelligence collected by the *Abwehr* and fed assessments related to its supposed poor performance as an intelligence service. However, a review of its espionage in the U.S. outside of this narrative exposes its aggressive and expansive penetration of U.S. defense industries and military services in a short time with little opposition from counter espionage agencies of the military and government. Such a review only has access to the revealed espionage gains of Bremen and Hamburg. These stations did indeed have primacy for espionage in the U.S., but there also is fragmentary information other *Stellen*, such as Kiel and Cologne, also operated espionage agents in the U.S. Therefore the account of Bremen and Hamburg can only be viewed as a partial record.

From the initial days of recruitment of agents in the U.S., the *Abwehr* attempted to secure classified details related to the production of warships and submarines and technology from the U.S. Navy. Pheiffer stated to his interrogators that during his time running the *Nebenstelle*, he was especially interested in blueprints of naval vessels and repeatedly tasked agents with the collection of partial or entire blueprints of ships, submarines, and aircraft. Bremen agents did steal entire blueprints as directed and were also able to acquire highly specialized schematics related to the construction of specific naval and aviation equipment for which the *Kriegsmarine* and *Luftwaffe* had no similar capability. Agents were continually tasked to collect specific intelligence on aircraft carriers capabilities, such as:

> "constructional [sic] details of the US aircraft carriers "Yorktown" and "Enterprise," and especially the flight deck and arrester [sic] gear … the Kriegsmarine was anxious to learn something about such vessels, for they had no experience of them."[206]

[206] KV-2-267_1, pg. 69.

This effort remained a standing collection requirement through at least February 1938. Pheiffer admitted he had received some intelligence on the plans for the aircraft carriers via Eitel, probably from an unidentified *H-Mann*.

Complete sets of U.S. Navy blueprints for ships – other than *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* – were copied or stolen from U.S. Navy shipyards. The actual individuals who obtained the information were never identified, indicating they may have been *H-Männer,* but all of the information flowed back to Germany through Pheiffer's couriers. Bremen received complete blueprints of USS *Benham* (DD-397), USS *Ellet* (DD-398), and USS *Lang* (DD-399) which were being built at the Federal Shipbuilding and Drydock Company of Kearney, New Jersey from 1936-to-1939. The blueprints of the USS *Erie,* a patrol craft, were stolen, indicating, based on construction location, there was an agent located in the Brooklyn Naval Yard. This yard built almost a hundred of the Navy's advanced light and heavy cruisers from 1936 through 1944 – as well as similar ships for multiple allied navies. The theft of blueprints at Navy shipyards where there were other types of military vessels being built indicates the potential other blueprints and associated schematics were also stolen and provided to the *Abwehr*.

Bremen also had an agent at Newport News, Virginia working at that naval shipyard. Newport News was among the world's largest shipyards and was where the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* were built. Griebl revealed to Turrou the agent in Newport News was named Maurice or Mauritz but did not appear to have been aware of any other identifiable information as no further details are found in any of the FBI's files related to the agent. It is unclear whether or not Maurice / Mauritz was the agent's name or *deckname*. Construction of the carriers began in 1934 and lasted until 1936 for *Yorktown*

and 1937 for *Enterprise*, meaning Maurice / Mauritz had consistent access to details of their construction for three years. The FBI began its investigation into Maurice, which they conveniently titled "Maurice," in 1938, and it remained active until the end of the war without success. Germany laid the keel for its first aircraft carrier in 1936, and while the superstructures of the *Graf Zeppelin* and the U.S. carriers are markedly different, the vessels share some general features.[207] The nexus of *Abwehr* collection focused on the aircraft carriers being built in Newport News and future deployments of agents to the same area in the later 1930s and 1940s increases the veracity of the existence of Maurice.

There were collection requirements of the *Kriegsmarine* outside of blueprints. Agents were tasked, "on particular points of immediate interest to the German Navy," meaning Pheiffer and his officers would receive specific collection requirements from the services and tasked them for collection to agents believed able to gain access. These points included, but were not limited to, positioning of anti-aircraft weapons on cruisers, the use of, "boom defenses and boom-laying vessels," and other developments perceived as innovations in warship construction, such as main gun battery arrangements.[208]

New and advanced construction and metallurgical practices were stolen and adapted by the German military industries. One source of this information was an *H-Mann* working under Griebl. In a handwritten note on Griebl's *personalbogen* this individual was identified as, "Hintermann: gen. Danebrog, *Chefkonstrukteur, jetzt*: Bath

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[207] The *Graf Zeppelin* was commissioned and launched but never completed. Construction was halted when materials, especially steel, were required for other war production after September 1939. At least four carriers of the class were planned and they were intended to use similar equipment and procedures to aircraft carriers operated by the United Kingdom and United States. The lack of the completion of *Graf Zeppelin* complicates efforts to determine the relationship between the stolen plans of the U.S. carriers and the design of the German vessel.

[208] KV-2-267_2, pgs. 3-4. Anti-aircraft arrangements relate to how air defense batteries were positioned on a vessel to maximize defensive capabilities against attacking aircraft. Pheiffer identified there were translation difficulties with the word "boom," so agents were tasked to photograph "boom defenses."

(Maine) Navy Yard," (Subagent named Danebrog, Chief Construction engineer currently located: Bath, Maine). While Griebl had dozens of *H-Männer*, it is interesting, and suspicious, only Danebrog was identified within the Bremen files recovered by U.S. military intelligence in 1945.[209] In 1938, Danebrog was believed to be Christen Danielsen, a naval engineer employed at the Navy Yard in Bath, Maine. He was interviewed by the FBI, and *a*ccording to Turrou, Griebl had pitched Danielsen, but he rejected recruitment. Turrou noted, "Griebl is such a liar that Danielsen's version is probably the truth."[210] Danielsen testified in November 1938 at the Rumrich trial that he had been contacted by Griebl with an offer to work in a German shipyard. As there were no witnesses to dispute his claims, he was used as a witness against the defendants and not investigated for espionage.

Contrarily, Pheiffer claimed to be aware Danielsen was working for Griebl and providing intelligence on construction techniques used in the shipyard:

> "GRIEBL had advised PHEIFFER that he had found a very useful man, a shipping engineer who could provide many details of American warship construction. He enquired whether PHEIFFER could arrange for this man to spend a month in Germany … and whether PHEIFFER could finance the journey."[211]

Danielsen never made the trip; probably because it was after Rumrich was exposed and Danielsen questioned by the FBI. Griebl's reports that remained in the Bremen files included several dealing with ship construction, indicating Danielsen was Danebrog, an *H-Mann* since 1935. He was certainly dropped as an agent after his testimony.

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[209] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Berichte Nebenstelle Bremen betr. Dr. Paul Kuhner, Band 2 Personalakten F – K, 1941-1943," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 441, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/7ff911bd-1783-4c70-8ee2-a23e55fc9dae/, pgs. 165-167.
[210] Turrou, pg. 142.
[211] KV-2-267_2, pg. 6.

The known record of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. during this period extends beyond the Navy into the aviation industry. Lonkowski does appear to have been one of the motors behind the expansion of collection of aviation intelligence beginning in 1933. At some point, Lonkowski's reporting included maritime and aviation matters, so his reporting was directed to the most appropriate individuals in either IL or IM. When *Nebenstelle* Bremen was established, he was transferred entirely under its control, but appears from reviewing agents and records within the Bremen files to have divided several of *Hintermänner* between Bremen and Hamburg, possibly with IL-related agents for Hamburg and IM-related agents for Bremen. Since Bremen was a sub-station of Hamburg, this separation may be purely academic.

One of Lonkowski's early *H- Männer*, Otto Hermann Voss, was deemed of such value due to his access to aviation intelligence, he was recruited as a *V-Mann* in his own right. Voss began as *Ungennant III*, Unnamed Agent Number Three, indicating he had especially precious access to intelligence that could not risk his exposure even internally to the *Abwehr*.[212] He was later registered as *Forscher* agent F 2340, but there was no *personalbogen* remaining in the Bremen records that would contain information related to his recruitment, time as a *V-Mann*, or other aspects of his *Abwehr* service. If the *Forscher* designation holds true to form, Voss was not only providing his own intelligence, but was working with multiple *H- Männer* he recruited.

The Bremen files suspiciously identify his service with the *Abwehr* as having only begun in 1937 and recorded only two reports provided by Voss pertaining to the design of two aircraft produced by Seversky Aviation where he was employed. The picture

[212] RW 49 431, pg. 309.

related to Voss and his activities is further muddled when reviewing the associated declassified MI-5 interrogation records in terms of his access and production. In Pheiffer's account, Lonkowski was the mechanism by which Voss was recruited. Eitel recounted different relationships and claimed, in 1935, Griebl boarded the *Bremen* with Voss and introduced him to Eitel to establish a direct relationship between Voss and Eitel and remove Griebl as a middle-man. Eitel noted following their meeting and an initial provision of intelligence, "PHEIFFER at once prepared a questionnaire for VOSS, who was to contact EITEL on the ship's next call at New York." After the first meeting, Voss and Eitel regularly met, and with each subsequent meeting, Pheiffer drafted another questionnaire related to aviation intelligence for Voss to investigate.[213] Regardless of the validity of either account, they agree Voss was an agent no later than 1935, indicating the Bremen record was intentionally altered.

Voss's *Ungennant* status and incomplete, but oddly specific, records within the Bremen files raise further questions as to his background in espionage. The specific data available on Voss in the Bremen files directly corresponds with information publicly revealed during the course of the Rumrich-related trials. In late October 1938, a copy of Voss's signed confession was read into the record during the espionage trial. Within the confession, Voss identified he had been working for the *Abwehr* under the direction of Pheiffer and had provided details on military aviation.[214] Voss also stated he provided information, but not blueprints, on two Seversky aircraft, the BT-8 and NF-1. The BT-8 was an obsolete training aircraft, and the NF-1, sometimes referred to as the P-35, was

[213] KV-2-384_2, pg. 7. While not addressed in any source material, it is highly possible the reason for engaging Voss in direct contact with Eitel was the flight of Lonkowski out of the U.S. in 1935.
[214] "Voss 'Confession' Read at Spy Trial: Statement Asserts he Provided Data from Aircraft Plant for German Official," *The New York Times*, November 1, 1938, pg. 19.

rejected by the U.S. Navy as not being suitable for aircraft carrier operations.[215] These are the exact two reports identified in the Bremen file on Voss.

While Lonkowski and Voss both had access to aviation intelligence matters they remained under the control of Bremen, which is odd as Bremen had no IL or IH officers and prioritized IM and later IWi intelligence. The same was not the case with other individuals developed by Bremen *V-Männer* who themselves had access to aviation intelligence. By most accounts, Werner Gudenberg was developed by Lonkowski at the same time as Voss. Eitel and Pheiffer's interrogation records connect the three together in different series of events and contacts. For Pheiffer, it was Lonkowski who identified Gudenberg as a potential source, whereas for Eitel, Gudenberg was connected via Voss. Some historians, amateur and professional, have gone as far as claiming Gudenberg and Voss were *H-Männer* for Lonkowski from 1928-1933 and Lonkowski placed them at their respective aircraft factories for espionage purposes. These, like many statements on Lonkowski, originate from a single false secondary source.

Regardless of who first spotted and subsequently recruited Gudenberg, Ritter revealed within his interrogation, Gudenberg was initially an agent of Major Hilmar Dierks who was among the first officers transferred to the Hamburg *Abwehrstelle.* Ritter's information indicates Dierks assumed control of Gudenberg while still working in Berlin, and then upon Dierks' transfer to stand-up the IL and IM desks at *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg, Gudenberg transitioned with his control officer. This sequence of events indicates Gudenberg was developed and then handled separately from Griebl, Lonkowski, and Voss, and ultimately became an agent of his own accord. The varied

[215] James K. Libbey, *Alexander P. de Seversky and the Quest for Air Power,* Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2013, pg. 143.

accounts of Pheiffer and Eitel then relate solely to the work of courier connections with *V-Männer* and do not indicate any senior-subordinate relationships among these four agents. Sohn, Pop, appears to have had a similar path to recruitment and espionage.

The scope of *Abwehr* activity targeting the U.S. during this period also extended outside of the United States. Griebl provided the FBI limited information that indicated Pheiffer's and the *Abwehr's* espionage activities in the United States were linked to similar efforts in Canada, specifically identifying the presence of agents in Vancouver and Montreal. As a result of the Rumrich investigation, the FBI coordinated with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to provide information on at least one agent in Canada. In 1939, Emil Zaech was interned in Canada as an enemy combatant and held until the end of the war as a result of suspected espionage. After his arrest he provided information to Canadian authorities that corroborated some of the information relayed by Griebl a year earlier.[216] It is almost certain the corroborated information related to his recruitment and operation by *Nebenstelle* Bremen. Zaech's *personalbogen* can be found within the Bremen files and identify he was recruited in April 1935 by Eitel as *Forscher* agent F 2337. Zaech operated between New York City and Montreal, his record identifies an address in each, indicating his ability to cross the border and sustain a presence in was among the reasons for recruitment. His records also contain a handwritten note that he operated at least one *H-mann*, M. E. Lach, in New York.[217]

There has been speculation Zaech assisted the flights of Lonkowski in 1935 and Gudenberg in 1938. While this is possible, there is nothing in his *Abwehr* records to

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[216] Michelle McBride, "From Indifference to Internment: An Examination of RCMP Responses to Nazism and Fascism in Canada from 1934 to 1941," Master's Thesis, Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland, May 1997, pg. 166.
[217] RW 49 444, pgs. 377-386.

indicate involvement even though he was active in the area at the time of their departures. It is more likely the *Abwehr* had other agents in Montreal connected with the shipping industries and passenger liners and these individuals provided the assistance. A review of report titles filed by Zaech does not provide insight into his espionage activities as they are for all intents and purposes unreadable. However, as an aircraft mechanic, he was likely associated in aviation intelligence collection. Zaech's existence provided validation toward Griebl's statements of agents in Canada, and if the *Abwehr* was established in Montreal, it is probable it also had agents in Vancouver. If Zaech was based from Canada but working and sustaining at least one *H-mann* in the United States, the potential for Vancouver-based agents working with *Abwehr* agents in the U.S. northwest, like Seattle, appears likely.

While *Abwehr* agents during this period did provide reporting from newspapers, periodicals, and trade publications, they also provided extensive information on military intelligence matters. The following list covers what are known and confirmed results of U.S.-based agents working for Bremen and Hamburg from 1933 to February 1938:

- Advanced aircraft propeller designs,
- Norden Company, multiple stolen designs and proprietary information,
- Sperry Company, multiple stolen designs and proprietary information,
- Water-cooled aircraft engine designs,
- Advanced aluminum manufacturing techniques for warships,
- Anti-corrosion methods for warships,
- Multiple elements of blueprints for the *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* aircraft carriers,
- Details and designs of the arresting (landing) gear for U.S. aircraft carriers,

- Aluminum manufacturing techniques for aircraft,
- Designs for aircraft landing gear to include use with aircraft carriers,
- At least one complete set of blueprints of a Curtis aircraft, possibly a seaplane,
- Complete blueprints for at least two U.S. Navy developmental aircraft,
- Seversky Aircraft Company, blueprints of two Seversky aircraft,
- Blueprints for USS *Benham* (DD-397), USS *Ellet* (DD-398), and USS *Lang* (DD-399), including assessments of design faults and seaworthiness issues,
- Blueprints of the USS *Erie* (PG-50) built at the Brooklyn Naval Yard,
- Specifications for a decryption device built for the Navy,
- Panama Canal Zone defensive plans, shared with Japan,
- U.S. Navy warship construction manuals and documentation,
- Attempted recruitment of a disgruntled naval officer on USS *Saratoga*,
- Technical specifications for new military radios,
- Development and technical specifications for ASDIC / SONAR, and
- Development and specifications of RADAR and associated technologies.

This list comprises what is known to have been collected by agents solely from the exposure of the *Abwehr* within the Rumrich investigation. Therefore, there is an almost certain likelihood the real extent of espionage at this time was far greater and included more penetration of the military and defense industrial base than exposed in 1938.

The Start of the Rumrich Affair – And the Not-So-Collapse of the *Abwehr* in America

The state of pre-war U.S. counter espionage inefficiency is highlighted by an event at the New York harbor docks at Pier 86 on the evening of September 25 or 27,

1935.[218] That night, William Lonkowski approached S.S. *Europa* to meet with courier Karl Schlüter. Unlike previous meetings, he was stopped by a customs officer who required Lonkowski surrender the violin case he carried. When the officer opened the case there was no violin but military materials –varying accounts in secondary sources claim the papers were aircraft blueprints, secret codes, or other matters, however, none of these claims can be completely confirmed. Unsure of how to handle the situation, the officer detained Lonkowski and called the regional Army G-2 officer. That officer was unable to come to the pier but instructed the customs officer to arrange for Lonkowski to come to his office the following day. Lonkowski promised to return and was released.

Lonkowski did not make the appointment. According to Lonkowski's landlord, Senta de Wanger, on the night he had been detained by the customs official, Lonkowski returned home, packed quickly, asked de Wanger for a loan in exchange for his car, and then left immediately never to be seen at the home again.[219] Turrou would latter learn from his interrogations of Griebl, that Lonkowski departed New York immediately with Griebl's assistance and fled to Montreal where he was assisted by other *Abwehr* agents, boarded a German-flagged liner, and left for Germany.[220]

There are no recorded efforts after Lonkowski's detention by any of the associated government agencies – the Army, U.S. Customs, or ONI. The FBI, which was known at the time more simply as the Bureau of Information, was not informed of the event, which serves to highlight its contemporary lack of counter espionage authorities or

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[218] Most sources identify Pier 86 as the location of Lonkowski's short detention; however, Ellis Zacharias, who had been the ONI DIO in New York during the Lonkowski episode recalled years later in his memoir that Lonkowski had been stopped on Pier 84. Some secondary sources that use Zacharias repeat his error in regard to the location of Lonkowski's detainment by U.S. Customs. See, Ellis Zacharias, *Secret Missions: The Story of an Intelligence Officer*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946.
[219] "Spies Easy Escape Related at Trial," pg. 18.
[220] Turrou, pgs. 156-158.

capabilities. According to Elias Zacharias who was ONI's New York-based DIO during the Lonkowski affair, upon learning of the event three days after the fact, he traveled to the pier and engaged with a G-2 representative and customs official. He identified the materials from the case as related to Navy aircraft and stated, "to me this is a pure case of espionage."[221] Supposedly, Zacharias engaged the director of ONI to have him write a letter of complaint to the Army G-2 at Governor's Island. If this indeed occurred, there was no other attributable action taken by the Army, ONI or other entities in response to Lonkowski's exposure, flight, or the fact he had been involved in espionage.[222]

The follow-up on the violin incident at Pier 86 was so poor that Lonkowski was not identified or linked to the *Abwehr* until 1938 when exposed by Griebl. His exposure, and the road to the exposure of the very existence of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S., began with an MI-5 counter espionage investigation in Dundee, Scotland in 1936. There are various versions of the story of how MI-5 uncovered one of the first *U-Stellen* in the U.K. According to one version, the Security Service received a tip-off from a local mailman who noticed a large amount of foreign correspondence to an address in Dundee. Scottish press accounts credited a local constable who eyed other suspicious activity and notified the authorities through which the information eventually came to MI-5. While these records differ on the path to exposure, all agree the long route to the revelation of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. began with a hairdresser named Mrs. Jesse Jordan.

Intelligence records from the case against Jordan were declassified in the 1970s and available in hardcopy in the United Kingdom's National Archives. They have since

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[221] Zacharias, pgs. 150-155.
[222] Thomas A. Repetto, *Battleground New York City: Countering Spies, Saboteurs, and Terrorists Since 1861*, Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., pgs. 118-120.

been digitized and consist of five files, of which KV-2-3534 is the most valuable in terms of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. Labeled "Main File," it includes classified testimony from MI-5 officers related to the investigation that exposed Jordan and her ties to *Abwehr* agents in America. The official account clarified MI-5 became aware of Jordan's *Abwehr* role as a result of the U.K.'s own espionage against Germany, either through direct espionage or a double agent, that revealed a mechanism for *Abwehr* communication with its international agents. According to the investigating MI-5 officer Hinchley-Cooke:

> "At the beginning of 1936 I received information through a reliable source which, in the interests of the State, I am unable to disclose, that the address "SANDERS, Post Box 629, HAMBURG" was being used as a cover address by the Head Agency of the Secret Service of a foreign power for communications from agents operating in the United Kingdom.
>
> I applied for a warrant authorizing the interception and examination of all Correspondence … This warrant was duly granted."[223]

This "source" revealed *Abwehr* agents in multiple locations were transmitting their intelligence via the Sanders address which was an *Abwehr U-Stelle.* As a result of the warrant, MI-5 began intercepting the correspondence between agents and handlers and used that information to identify other *U-Stellen* and agents. A year later, MI-5 intercepted mail addressed, "Dear Mrs. Jordan" that originated from the Sanders address, which resulted in the direct identification of Jessie Jordan.[224] Working with local authorities, MI-5 placed her under surveillance and received government approval for warrants for the seizure of mail to Jordan's home and workplace.[225]

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[223] William Edward Hinchley Cooke, "Precognition of Witnesses against Jessie Wallace of Jordan," Dundee, Scotland, March 22, 1938, located in "Jordan, Mrs. Jessie," Case File KV-2-3534, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11692098, KV-2-3534_1, pg., 6.
[224] KV-2-3534_1, pg. 9.
[225] Counter espionage tradecraft for seized mail by MI-5 and later the FBI, to include coordinated efforts between the two after 1939, obtained suspect mail, attempted to open it without exposing the disruption,

Through surveillance and the use of a local-police-managed informant within Jordan's business, MI-5 determined Jordan was involved in the collection of minor matters related to military intelligence, but her primary duty was serving as an intermediate *U-Frau* for the collation of intelligence reporting from throughout the U.K. In this capacity, she received mail from agents, consolidated their traffic, and forwarded it to multiple other *U-Stellen* addresses including Sanders in Hamburg. The practice reversed wherein she would receive communications for agents at her home or salon and then distribute them to multiple international addresses.

On December 1, 1937, almost two years after the initial identification of the Sanders address, MI-5's mail warrants netted a letter typed in German to Jordan postmarked from Warwick Street Station, New York. From the internal letter, it was determined the letter was bound for Sanders and not Jordan:

> "Dear Mr. S.
>
> In continuation of my short note … to-day I have taken cognizance of all your notes and instructions. I have nothing in my possession which could lead to the conclusion that I am in any sort of contact with you or Germany. The copies which were enciphered some time ago have now been destroyed. The addresses I have memorized. I am obeying your last instruction regarding the English address …
>
> HESTERY told me that he might feel inclined to obtain … air photos."[226]

From the letter it was determined "Sanders" was an agent in New York involved with at least one agent or subagent collecting intelligence on the U.S. military. While somewhat benign, MI-5 chose to not disclose the information to the United States.

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read and copied the matters, resealed, and allowed the mail to be delivered in order not to betray its inspection to the receiving agencies. If mail was deemed critical or damaged it would be kept.

[226] KV-2-3534_1, pgs. 21-22.

On January 19, 1938, the same individual from the December letter sent another note to Sanders through Jordan exposing grander efforts to collect military intelligence. This second letter included a plot to, "get us the Enterprise and Yorktown plans without much expense."[227] Unlike the previous letter, this one was signed with the U.S. agent's *deckname*, Crown. Other plots were discussed in the letter indicating Crown was active in multiple endeavors. As with the first letter, MI-5 did not share this one with the U.S.

As 1937 transitioned into 1938, MI-5 had discovered clear evidence of direct *Abwehr* espionage in the United States. For the agency, this discovery was ancillary to its own work identifying similar activities in the U.K. and therefore not a priority. But as the notes from Crown to Sanders and back continued to flow over the coming weeks, MI-5 was exposed to a more complex espionage system and finally acceded to sharing information on the plots of Crown. As a result, in January 1938, the United States through its embassy in London received its first intelligence identifying the presence of German espionage in the U.S. For the United States, and especially its counter espionage agencies, the revelation from MI-5 indicated German espionage had returned for the first time since 1919. These agencies would come to learn throughout early 1938 that the *Abwehr* had been operating undiscovered since no later than 1933.

[227] KV-2-3534_1, pgs. 31-32.

Chapter IV. Expansion and Consolidation:

The Abwehr in America, 1938 to December 1941

The present-day FBI attributes its launch into the world of counter espionage occurring as the result of its, "acting on a tip by British intelligence."[228] Indeed, former FBI Special Agent, professional historian, and author Ray Batvinis traces all of the modern-day FBI's counter espionage capabilities to that first tip from MI-5.[229] Absent from the FBI's account (but not necessarily Batvinis' version) is at the time of the tip, the FBI had no knowledge of any *Abwehr* espionage activity in the U.S. Moreover, rather than acting on a tip, in reality the Bureau was forced to respond to the total revelation of espionage that would not have occurred without MI-5.

After two years of intercepting Jordan's and Sanders' mail drops, MI-5 came across intelligence of such a nature it determined it must be shared with the United States. In January 1938, after intercepting the plot to steal the aircraft carrier plans, MI-5 intercepted another letter postmarked prior to the carrier plot that identified a more serious plot by Crown. This note laid-out Crown's plans to abduct a U.S. Army Colonel and force him to provide U.S. territorial defense plans. To disguise the *Abwehr's* and Germany's involvement, Crown planned to, "leave clues that would point to communistic perpetrators."[230] He stated if he received permission from his handlers in Hamburg, he would execute the plot, "in the Hotel McAlpin in New York on Monday, January 31st or

[228] "Rumrich Nazi Spy Case," The U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/rumrich-nazi-spy-case.
[229] Batvinis, *Origins*, Chapter 1.
[230] Letter to Mrs. Jessie Jordan from Crown, January 17, 1938, located in KV-2-3534_1, pgs. 36-37.

Tuesday, Feb. 1st."[231] This time, given the threat to a U.S. officer, information on the letter was provided to the U.S. Embassy in London, then the State Department, and onward to the FBI. The FBI, which lacked a single counter espionage agent and only had negligible counter espionage authorities, began to investigate and pulled Leon Turrou off a human trafficking case to focus on Crown.

In the meantime, Crown remained at large and was involved in other espionage plots, which ultimately led to his capture. When the FBI learned of Crown's activities, he was only known by his *deckname;* both the FBI and MI-5 lacked other details that could be used to identify his actual identity. A break in their attempts to further identify Crown came in February, when MI-5 was able to identify through other letters Crown had communicated to the *Abwehr* regarding the recruiting of his brother, Gustav Rumrich, in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Since Crown was located in New York, and Rumrich was not a common name, the FBI was able to determine Gustav Rumrich's father Alphonse had once been an official of the Austria-Hungary Consulate General in Chicago.[232] Alphonse, the FBI learned, had two sons, Gustav in Prague and Guenther in New York, and with this information, confirmed Guenther Rumrich was Crown.

This aspect of the identification of Crown as Guenther Rumrich is only revealed within declassified FBI files. In most histories and the FBI's official version, it was investigative tradecraft on the part of the FBI that resulted in the identification of Crown as Guenther Rumrich. Turrou's account in *Nazi Spy Conspiracy* repeats this orthodox dogma of the investigation, to wit, after several weeks, he had failed to identify Crown.[233]

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[231] KV-2-384_1, pg. 36.
[232] "Germany: Cover Addresses in Dublin & Dundee for German Espionage," Report from The Federal Bureau of Investigation to MI-5, located in KV-2-3421, pg. 18.
[233] Turrou, pgs. 17-30.

Then Turrou learned of another plot, to steal passport "blanks," that enabled him to set up a sting operation where he nabbed Crown who was then identified as Rumrich. While the passport plot was provided to the FBI by MI-5, by the time of the FBI sting, the Bureau already knew Crown was Rumrich and the sting was established as the rationale for observing him conduct an act of espionage to be used in his arrest, indictment, and trial.

Following Rumrich's arrest, the rest of the pieces of the affair quickly fell into place. During interrogation by the FBI, Rumrich quickly confessed and provided details, most of which were immediately released to the press in 1938, of his recruitment by the *Abwehr*. His confession outed his friend and *H-Mann* Eric Glaser, an enlisted man in the U.S. Army stationed at Mitchell Field, New York, who was providing Rumrich intelligence and probably was the "HESTERY" from Crown's letter. He also exposed his contact with *Abwehr* courier Karl Schlüter to include Schlüter's complicity in the McAlpin and other plots. When the FBI moved to arrest Schlüter when the *Europa* arrived a few days after Rumrich's arrest, the courier was not on board, so they arrested his subagent, Jenni Hoffman. A search of Hoffman's quarters, that may have not been legal, resulted in the location of multiple post communications between handlers and agents in the U.S. These letters lead to the identification of Gudenberg, Voss, and Griebl.

The Failures of the Rumrich Investigation

A critical analysis of Turrou's investigation into Guenther Rumrich can be challenged not to become fixated on the myriad mistakes by Turrou and the FBI. However, over the past seven decades, within what is known as the orthodox history of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S., these glaring errors are often touted as victories. Turrou's flawed, prejudiced, and incorrect account has attained a status of veracity that is

practically unassailable. Any attempt to properly assess the true scope and impact of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. must therefore necessarily address these failings – not to simply critique Turrou but to reconstruct a fact-based analysis exclusive of his errors.

While the affair became known eponymously as the Rumrich Spy Ring, the actual Rumrich was a minor figure in *Abwehr* espionage. Griebl on the other hand was the major victory in the case and it was from him Turrou learned of Lonkowski and the scope of *Abwehr* espionage in New York over the previous five years. Had Griebl not escaped, at some point, he would have become a hostile witness and as a result been elevated to the main focus of the investigation and the whole affair may have been known instead as the Griebl Spy Ring. There are no records of Rumrich within the Bremen files or even a minor reference to him. Pheiffer clarified for his interrogators that Rumrich was an agent of Hamburg but never identified his recruiter or handler. Yet, it is clear from Rumrich's communications Pheiffer was involved, something Pheiffer fervently denied, which is logical given the contact between Rumrich and Schlüter and Pheiffer's role in U.S.-based espionage. Specifically, some of Rumrich's correspondence was to or originated from N. Spielman, a known *deckname* of Pheiffer.

While Rumrich, and perhaps Schlüter, plotted fantastical operations such as the McAlpin ruse, according to tasking from "Sanders" his main task was developing individuals with access to technical matters related to military aviation production of the type desired by IL Hamburg. Within the investigation, the agents of note that were identified and fled or arrested, those of greatest significance – Griebl, Gudenberg, and Voss, all were involved in organization or direct collection of IL-related work.

There are differing accounts as to what really was the Rumrich Spy Ring. For Turrou it was a vast, interconnected, and centrally orchestrated effort managed by the *Gestapo* and directed by Hitler. Pheiffer's account in his interrogation stated the affair involved the active imagination of Rumrich and a host of agencies:

> "To CANARIS, who was, however, willing to listen, PHEIFFER explained that the whole trouble in America had arisen because to Abwehr stations working independently had employed a common courier (SCHLUETER). The latter, who had also got himself mixed up with a variety of independent and Party individuals and organizations, had known too much and too many people and had acted most indiscreetly: he [Rumrich] had also got himself thoroughly confused with the facts, whether in innocence or by design; had communicated some of this confusion to his contacts – of whom GRIEBL had again added apocryphal embellishments under interrogation; and the result had been the blowing of useful agents, a chaotic spy story for the Americans, and trouble for PHEIFFER."[234]

Many agencies, but not Pheiffer, were reportedly involved, including, "*Ast* [*Abwehrstelle*] Hamburg, the *Arbeitsfront*, the SD [*Sicherheitsdienst*], the *Auslandsorganisation*, and the Union of Reich Aircraft Industry." He would have surely added to Canaris, Pheiffer had determined, "GRIEBL and his friends were not talking too much, but talking largely in riddles, for it was apparent they were off-loading responsibility."[235]

Pheiffer's interrogation did not happen until late 1944, six years after the Rumrich arrests in 1938. Griebl had escaped the FBI and made his way back to Germany where for a time he continued to report intelligence within Bremen, indicating he was extensively debriefed by Pheiffer and others. In 1938 alone he provided twenty-eight intelligence reports. Since he was arrested in February and escaped in March, and compared with his reporting record to Bremen, the majority of those files would have

[234] KV-2-267_2, pg. 8.
[235] KV-2-267_2, pg. 8.

been produced after his arrival in Germany. He continued to be debriefed and provided four reports in 1939 and another four in 1940, indicating the *Abwehr* followed-up on matters related to his FBI detention.[236] By the time Pheiffer was interrogated he had complete knowledge of what was and was not revealed to the FBI by Griebl.

While Turrou embellished details of the interrogation of Griebl including that the agent feared for his life at the hands of the *Gestapo*, it appears Griebl was well received, extensively debriefed, and rewarded. In 1946, U.S. Army occupying forces conducted an evaluation of Griebl's residence in Vienna to determine the extent of damage related to a request for its reoccupation by the doctor. Griebl was given an apartment row house and was the administrator for rental income of all the properties within the establishment. The Army identified rumors Griebl received the home as a reward, and that the property had been seized by the state from its former Jewish occupants.[237]

The combination of these factors reveals that rather than being a key witness for the FBI as purported by Turrou, Griebl was an astute agent and human manipulator that spread fanciful tales of intrigue that kept the FBI moving in various false directions during their interrogation in order to protect actual agents and espionage. While stringing the FBI along with fragmentary and unactionable details about meetings in Berlin and Bremen, vague locations of agents without indications of their identity or activities, and forcing connections with American Nazi-friendly organizations, Griebl protected the complex of *Abwehr* espionage active throughout the U.S.

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[236] RW 49 441, pg. 161. These numbers are taken from the destruction records of reports provided by Griebl to Bremen. No actual records of the reports from Griebl at any time from 1933 until 1940, the period where he was an active agent for the *Abwehr* survive in the Bremen files. All of Griebl's records that were on file in Bremen are identified having been destroyed on May 20, 1944.

[237] "Ignatz Theodor Griebl," Records Group 260, Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II, File V1.1529/XIX, the National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, MD.

The impact of this continual false connectivity through Griebl's misinformation can be observed in Turrou's public writing and multiple declassified FBI files related to the investigation. In these sources, Turrou, was led from low-level *Abwehr* agents toward multiple pro-fascist American organizations, German expatriates with Nazi-sympathies, and witch hunts for underground *Gestapo* agents, who in retrospect appear to have been creations of Griebl's imagination. Pheiffer's statements to MI-5 on the many organizations involved with Rumrich are then remnants of Griebl's misinformation targeting Turrou's false cognitive perceptions of *Gestapo* subterfuge.

The collusion of misinformation was enabled by the loose security practices used by the FBI. Griebl was kept under a house arrest without a security detail, so that he was allowed to operate freely on a verbatim promise to Turrou that he would not leave New York. This opportunity enabled him to coordinate with the *Abwehr* and arrange for his departure, which was as simple as driving to a pier and boarding the *Bremen* which immediately departed for Germany. By the time the FBI discovered his flight the following day, from Moog not agents, *Bremen* was in international waters.[238]

Griebl's was not the only escape. While his flight was enabled by egregious misjudgment by Turrou, the other escapes had other FBI errors as their impetus. On February 27, 1938, details of the arrests of Erich Glaser, Johanna Hoffman, and Rumrich were reported in press.[239] At this point, the Bureau had not completely exploited the

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[238] For the original account of Griebl's detention and escape, see Turrou. Notably, the account is embellished and attempted to distract responsibility away from Turrou for the escape. It is also the original primary source of these events, and is the source material used by the majority of secondary sources. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones repeats Turrou's account in *Ring*, pg. 158, and another of his works, *The FBI: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007. Farago and Breuer also appear to have used Turrou as a primary source, although their accounts are heavily embellished with dramatized material that appears to have been entirely based on imaginary contextualization created by these authors.
[239] "Leader Confesses," *The New York Times*, February 37, 1938, pgs. 1, 30.

letters seized from Hoffman or effectively interrogated Griebl, and was only starting to build a picture of Gudenberg – probably through Hoffman's letters. He was not under surveillance and able to flee using an unidentified facilitation network of *Abwehr* agents in Pennsylvania, New York, and Montreal. Turrou learned of his flight days later. Not only did Gudenberg have access to military intelligence at the Curtis Aircraft Corporation, was also involved in a plot to gain access to the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The lack of his detention, the misinformation provided by Griebl, and the absence of Gudenberg in the Bremen records other than his identification as Hamburg agent 3502, prevent a full evaluation of the extent of his espionage.[240]

Schlüter was identified, but according to Pheiffer, on leave from *Europa* at the time of the arrest. He of course never returned to the United States.

Voss was probably under surveillance by the FBI, also probably as a result of Hoffman's letters, and made no move to escape after the press release, since he probably believed himself unconnected to those arrested. He was not arrested until March 12, 1938.[241] Details of Voss' espionage were reported in press related to his work on Army chase planes, but it is unclear if this information came from Voss or another source. The only information in Voss' Bremen file were the reports on this specific information.

While Griebl's and Gudenberg's escapes were publicly acknowledged they were escapes by suspected *Abwehr* agents. The FBI investigation had connected Fritz Rossberg to Griebl and Rumrich. Before the Bureau could ascertain details on Rossberg

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[240] Leon G. Turrou, "Re: Guenther Gustav Rumrich, with aliases, et al., Espionage," Memorandum for Special Agent in Charge R. E. Vetterli, New York, June 10, 1938, located in "Leon George Turrou (1920-1986)," Personnel File, FOIA 1583327-0, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Information Management Division, Washington D.C., 2023, Section 2, pg. 160.
[241] "Mechanic on New Army Planes Held as Spy, Trapped by Counter-Espionage in Plant," *The New York Times*, Saturday March 12, 1938, pg. 1.

or place him under surveillance he too escaped to Germany on the S.S. *St. Louis* of Hamburg-America. Theodor Schuetz was connected via Griebl as a courier on the S.S. *New York* of Hamburg America, but the press releases of the arrests enabled the *Abwehr* to send a warning by W/T directing his escape by debarking in Havana, Cuba and making his way back to Europe via other German vessels. In total, sloppy counter espionage tradecraft that sought to publicize the FBI rather than conduct a thorough investigation resulted in the loss of at multiple agents and probably sent others "to ground" for a short period to avoid complication by FBI investigative efforts. Had Turrou been shrewd and less focused on a writing career, Rumrich's exposure could have devastated the *Abwehr*.

The story's premature printing likely also caused problems for MI-5. Press included sensitive intelligence from the Rumrich plots, such as the McAlpin affair, that had only been communicated to the *Abwehr* via *U-Stellen. E*xposure of sensitive intelligence methodologies is generally considered not a best practice for counter intelligence. Through the press the *Abwehr* was not only alerted to the exposure of Rumrich but the entire "Sanders" network. Based on testimony by Hinchley-Cooke, it does not appear the FBI had informed MI-5 of its intent to release the information:

> "According to press reports which were published in various Sunday papers on the 27th of February, 1938, two men and one woman, all Germans or of German origin, had been arrested in the United States … There is no doubt in my mind that these arrests were the outcome of information which had been sent by my department to the United States Military Authorities."[242]

As such, MI-5 was unable to protect its exploitation and the entire Jordan operation was placed at risk while still active and exposing multiple agents in the U.K. and elsewhere.

[242] KV-2-3534_1. pg. 51.

In addition to the escapees, the FBI also encountered multiple individuals during the case initially believed involved in espionage but who were later not considered agents. Declassified archival information has since revealed almost all of these cases involved recruited *Abwehr* agents. This list includes Lorenz, the first officer of *Europa* who was a witness at the grand jury and trial, but also an agent working for Pheiffer.[243]

Of the women investigated, only Hoffman, who only confessed to a minor role, was indicted. Katherine Moog Busch who supported Griebl's espionage including a trip to meet *Abwehr* leaders in Germany in 1937 was never indicted.[244] According to Turrou she was not directly involved. A letter confiscated from Hoffman's *Europa* cabin was addressed to Moog Busch that involved espionage and directed coordination with agent Elanor Boehme. Boehme was in contact with Hoffman for development and future recruitment. Both Moog and Boehme were questioned and released.[245] Moog testified for the prosecution but on the stand became a hostile witness and was dismissed.[246] When Turrou's book was published, she sent Pheiffer a copy, indicating she continued her contact with the *Abwehr*. Senta de Wanger, who knew Lonkowski, Griebl, Voss, and others, was questioned and released. She owned and operated a liquor store close to Mitchel Field where Glaser worked and was known to have military men from the base to parties, which in itself would not be conspiratorial if not similar to plots confessed by

[243] RW 49 442, pgs. 111-117.
[244] For Pheiffer's account of Griebl and Moog Busch's trip to Germany, see KV-2-267_1 and KV-2-267_2. For Turrou's account, see Turrou. For an account of Moog Busch's testimony of her 1937 trip, see, "Court Rebukes Spy Case Witness for Failing to Recall Talks Abroad," *The New York Times*, October 29, 1938, pg. 3.
[245] See, Turrou.
[246] "Court Rebukes Spy Case Witness for Failing to Recall Talks Abroad," pg. 3.

Griebl related Moog Busch.[247] Eitel revealed in 1944 de Wanger was also the romantic interest of Lonkowski, increasing the probability she was involved in espionage.[248]

The Bureau also investigated Alfred Bayer who was believed to have been connected with Lonkowski. While there was "considerable evidence" of Bayer's association to Lonkowski and involvement in espionage the FBI was unable to locate him for further questioning.[249] William Eberfield was also investigated and found by the FBI to have been "involved in espionage activities." However, while not directly identified, it was determined Eberfield's espionage "had no apparent connection" with the others associated with Rumrich.[250] To date, research has not been able to identify the files related to Eberfield held by the FBI or determine whether or not he was arrested.

In review, the FBI in terms of the so-called Rumrich Spy Ring, led by Turrou's investigation, completely failed to identify the scope and impact of *Abwehr* espionage throughout the U.S. It was led astray by Griebl who had spun intrigues and plots involving multiple organizations that had no bearing on *Abwehr* espionage. While Voss was nabbed, other major espionage agents fled or remained hidden. The FBI failure was so profound it literally had identifiable espionage agents under surveillance and being interrogated, but released them because of Turrou's inability to make a case against. Some of these agents, like Lorenz and Mood Busch, were actually requested to testify on behalf of the prosecution in the Rumrich trials. Perhaps what is even more important in terms of the Rumrich-associated failures, is that rather than learn from these mistakes,

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[247] "Two Women Held as Spy Witnesses," *The New York Times*, Wednesday June 5, 1938, pg. 5, and "Spy's Easy Escape Related at Trial," pg. 18.
[248] KV-2-384_2, pg. 6.
[249] "Leon George Turrou (1920-1986)," Turrou Personnel File, Section 2, pg. 158.
[250] Turrou Personnel File, Section 2, pg. 161.

U.S. counter espionage agencies, the foremost of which was the FBI, repeated the same investigative errors and biases in future investigations . From these mistakes, the foundation of the historical record of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. was formed and built upon false premises. The lead agent's focus on self-promotion over effective investigative practices cannot be overlooked as a major element in this failure.

Nikolaus Ritter Runs Amok

By the time Rumrich was exposed Nikolaus Ritter had established and was running multiple small networks and independent agents throughout the United States, from New York to North Carolina and from the Atlantic Seaboard to the Mississippi River. He began recruiting his agents while in the United States in 1933 and between his multiple travels between the U.S. and Germany from 1934 through 1936. Following those recruitments, Ritter used his foundation of assets to increasingly expand his stable of agents so that by late 1937, he was managing agents who were reporting on the most sensitive data collected for the *Abwehr*.

Ritter's agents avoided being connected to Rumrich due to Gudenberg's escape. Regardless of Ritter's misrepresentations of his espionage career, there is no doubt by February 1938 Gudenberg was an agent being directly controlled and handled by Ritter. Another agent who escaped exposure within the Rumrich investigation was "Pop" Sohn, Ritter's first access agent in the Norden company. Through Sohn, Ritter recruited Hermann Lang, a lithographer at Norden who managed the blueprints for the top secret Norden bombsight developed for the Army Air Corps. Lang, Ritter, and Sohn collaborated on a plot whereby Lang copied one blueprint sheet at a time, which was all he could manage due to security and the need to perfectly copy each diagram, and

provide that sheet to a courier for delivery to Germany. According to Ritter's memoir, "on Tuesday, the *Reliance* was put into New York with our steward *Oskar* on board. I would give him … *the drawing* so that he could take it to Germany."[251] After the meeting Lang provided about one sheet per week to a courier until 80% of the design had been delivered. The remaining 20% was developed by German engineers. According to MI-5's case file on Ritter, the *Abwehr* brought Lang and his wife to Germany in mid-1938 as part of his reward, and during that time, displayed a complete Norden device already being installed in *Luftwaffe* aircraft.

The impact of the theft cannot be overstated. Ritter noted of its importance:

> "The device was quickly built for assembly line production and was already in use by German troops while Americans were still in the experimental stage. When war broke out [in 1939], it was used with great success by the German bombers. It was an irony of fate that one of the greatest secret devices of the United States was in the possession of the enemy even before the Allies had their own."[252]

For his efforts Ritter was granted at least one audience with Hitler and was awarded one-of-two of his Iron Cross (Second Class) medals for the operation.[253] Echoing statements made by Ritter, Canaris in a 1940 memorandum, noted the value of the Norden technological theft, claiming, "as a result of technical reports our own military development costs were lessened (bomb targeting device)."[254]

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[251] Ritter, pg. 55. Emphasis added by this author to highlight the initial offering was a single copied blueprint sheet.
[252] Ritter, pg. 82.
[253] MI-5 discovered a photo of a warship commissioning ceremony from 1938 in Hamburg wherein Hitler is accompanied by multiple individuals including a man they believed to be Nikolaus Ritter in an SS uniform. MI-5 officers showed the photo to Ritter's agents who were imprisoned or turned double, with a majority confirming the man as Ritter. See, "Nikolaus Ritter, a.k.a. Dr. Rantzau," Case File KV-2-87, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C6091995, section 2, pgs. 30-44.
[254] RW 5 118, "Auf Grund mancher technischen Berichte hohe eigene Entwicklungskosten gespart (Bombenzielgerät)."

The entire theft of the bombsight blueprints almost certainly occurred prior to the discovery of Rumrich. Yet, the same methodologies of courier activities that were exposed in the Rumrich investigation were used to move Lang's blueprints, but were not further investigated after Rumrich. This lack of follow-up enabled the espionage activities of Ritter's and others' agents to continue to flow out of the U.S. on German passenger liners. The courier system developed by Pheiffer remained the critical element in the *Abwehr* system of espionage 1938, even though it was arguably the most vulnerable and easy to identify aspect of *Abwehr* activities. Any identification of an *Abwehr* courier would have provided the opportunity to identify multiple active agents who relied on the courier system to disseminate their intelligence.

In St. Louis, Ritter recruited an ethnic German newspaper reporter referred to by the *deckname* Soika, who had access to various subagents in cities throughout the U.S. and Europe and also worked as an *U-Männer*.[255] In Chicago, he ran Ladislas Trebusch, *deckname* Lazi, as a *forscher* agent indicating multiple other agents in the area were recruited to work for Ritter through Lazi. Neither Lazi's nor his *Hintermänner* were ever identified, and of the known Chicago-based agents discovered over the years none were ever identified as Lazi or connected to Ritter or agents of Ritter. In Doylestown, Pennsylvania, Ritter ran an unidentified agent in an aircraft factory producing seaplanes for the U.S. Navy. An agent Ritter only referred to as *Mr. Black* operated from Asheville, North Carolina, although there are no details on the scope of his espionage. The geographic location does not reveal any espionage targets, but given Ritter's focus on aviation, it can be presumed *Mr. Black* had access to military aviation or industries.

[255] KV-2-88, pg. 82.

Most of Ritter's identified agents were clustered around the New York metropolitan area. At least a dozen were identified between 1940 and 1941, all of whom had been active since before the Rumrich investigation. In another counter to the orthodox history of the *Abwehr* that attests to poor operational security, none of these agents were exposed during the 1938 counter espionage efforts. As a result of apparently successful operational security, these agents were able to continue to steal sensitive military technology that was adapted for use by Germany during the war that would begin in the coming year. Had any of the connections with the couriers or other agents with Ritter's networks been made, the direction of the *Abwehr* in the U.S. might have changed, and perhaps the increase in adversary counter espionage capabilities might have stopped current espionage and dissuaded the *Abwehr* from future spying. Ongoing activities might have been disrupted, and critical technologies, like the Norden sight, might not have been exploited and used by Germany during the war.

Meanwhile in China

With *Etappen* agents, control of multiple shipping networks, a courier system, *U-Stellen*, and agents in at least ten locations throughout the country, decentralization of *Abwehr* operations in China was no longer effective. In 1937, the *Abwehr* re-established Shanghai as one of its first two *kriegsorganisation* (war office) or KO, the other was established in Madrid. KOs consolidated espionage activities from within friendly, non-occupied, and neutral countries, and facilitated collection and dissemination of intelligence. The simultaneous establishment of Atlantic and Pacific KOs, both of which were involved in the *Abwehr's* U.S. operations, appears related to the expansion of its U.S.-based espionage activities. By May 1942, there would be ten KOs, but Shanghai,

with subordinate offices throughout China, was the only such organization in the Indo-Pacific and Germany's largest intelligence station east of Istanbul and west of Lisbon.[256]

Once KO Shanghai was established, centralization enabled greater efficiency in the execution of tasks supporting espionage in the U.S. Operations continued from other locations, such as Canton, Hong Kong, and Tientsin, but unlike before, from 1937 through the end of the war, they were centrally managed from Shanghai. There is little information on the first three years of the KO's operations. A post-war OSS analysis incorrectly identified KO Shanghai was established and received its first commanding officer in late 1940.[257] The establishment of a KOs without a leadership structure would be antithetical to German military practice and counterfactual in terms of the actual establishment of a centralized intelligence office. According to Paul Leverkuehn who ran KO Istanbul until his defection to the Allies in 1944 (just prior to his arrest by the SS), a former naval officer from the First World War who had never been to Asia was assigned as KO Shanghai's initial commanding officer.[258] This unidentified leader assumed his role just prior to or concurrent with the KO's establishment and well before the arrival of the individual identified by the OSS in 1940. Leverkuehn's description of this unidentified leader echoes the profile of Bremen's commanding officer, Erich Pfeiffer, increasing the probability of synchronic collaboration and interconnectivity between

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[256] Kahn, pgs. 243-8. The ten KOs were: Lisbon, Portugal, Madrid, Spain, Geneva, Switzerland, Stockholm, Sweden, Helsinki, Finland, Sophia, Bulgaria, Casablanca, Spanish Morocco, Zagreb, Yugoslavia, Shanghai, China, and Istanbul, Turkey.

[257] "German Intelligence Agencies in China During World War II," Office of Strategic Services, China Theater, X-2 Branch, March 1, 1946, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/GERMANINTELLIGENCEACTIVITIES_0001.pdf, pg. 7.

[258] Leverkuehn, pg. 193. Leverkuehn's knowledge of KO Shanghai resulted from his positions in the Abwehr including the leadership of KO Istanbul. Many of the sources available to the OSS were not present in China in the 1930s and early 1940s and therefore lacked direct knowledge of earlier events. The OSS sources were wartime prisoners being interrogated by the OSS in relation to their war crimes trials, and were likely not entirely forthcoming.

Bremen and Shanghai related to the exploitation of espionage in the U.S. If this was the case, Pfeiffer would have been a leader *in absentia* and worked through Bremen's agents in China, some of whom had been in place since 1930 as *Etappen* agents. Alternatively, instead of remote control from Bremen, another officer may have been placed in Shanghai, but if this was the case, their name was lost.

The first known (to the Allies) commanding officer of KO Shanghai arrived in 1940. Louis Theodor Siefken was an army officer during the First World War where he may have been involved in intelligence. With the *Abwehr*, his career began no later than 1936 as an *Etappen* agent in Mombasa, Kenya under the *deckname* Theodor Pahl.[259] There he was known as an effective operative, and he remained in Kenya until at least 1938. At some point, he was recalled to Germany, assigned to IM, and given duties associated with the repatriation of Germans from abroad, especially Africa. These duties eventually relocated him to Genoa, Italy, one of the ports of entry supporting the Reich's re-immigration policies. The *Abwehr* almost immediately began to exploit returning Germans – a high-percentage of whom were returning from the U.S. – to determine whether or not they had any information of intelligence value. Those that did have intelligence were designated as "*RR*"-*Männer* to mark their status as a returnee being used as an informant. Louis Siefken would have been engaged in evaluating the returnees and identifying any potential *RR-Männer*, recruiting them into the *Abwehr*, conducting debriefings, and serving as a handler while they remained in Genoa.

Working in Genoa placed Siefken in direct contact with *Abwehr* activities to exploit other U.S.-based intelligence operations. One of his co-workers was Eitel who

[259] "Etappenorganisation der Kriegsmarine," pg. 41.

returned to the *Abwehr* in 1939. Eitel went with Pfeiffer into the *Abwehr kommandos* of *Abt* II, and afterward was sent to Genoa to support the *Abwehr's* courier operations to the U.S. – Italy was not yet aligned with the Axis and passenger ships still had access to U.S. ports. Siefken and Eitel worked with *Abwehr* agent Hans Grimm who established Genoa-based courier networks for Pheiffer. Siefken left Genoa for KO Shanghai, Grimm would leave for KO Lisbon to maintain *Abwehr* connections with the U.S. In Genoa, Siefken would have received a master class from Eitel and Grimm on maritime facilitation networks and their importance for managing espionage in the U.S.

Once selected for the China leadership role, Siefken was ordered to Berlin to collaborate with the senior officers of *Abwehr* Headquarters IM branch.[260] This placed him in IM Berlin at the same time as Ulrich von der Osten while he was in the midst of planning his assumption of the duties as the *Abwehr's* senior espionage leader for the entire U.S.[261] While at IM Berlin, von der Osten and Siefken would have discussed the overall importance of the espionage in the U.S. for a Germany at war in Europe. These meetings would have included the myriad tradecraft means for coordinating operations from China and Siefken's specific role in ensuring the viability of connecting networks. They also would have discussed von der Osten's plans to arrive in China, operate for a short period from Shanghai, and then travel to the U.S. While in Berlin, Siefken would have also met and received instructions on his role in China directly from Canaris.

Siefken arrived in China in August 1940 using a different *deckname* and was deceptively assigned as a consular officer. The cover position gave him access to the

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[260] "German Intelligence Agencies in China During World War II," pg. 13.
[261] Gustav William Kaercher interview by agents of the FBI, New York, June 29, 1941, located in Duquesne, Section 2, pg. 111.

consular office that was the physical location of the KO from which the *Abwehr* had been administering its networks in China since 1937. Even as late as 1940, Shanghai remained a hub of espionage in which the intelligence agencies of all the major belligerents had daily contact with one another through official and overt diplomatic posts and webs of clandestine intrigue. As with the present day, any espionage officers present within the country would necessarily have to go to great lengths to protect their identity. According to Leverkuehn, "for the establishment of an intelligence network, the heterogeneous, four-zone city of Shanghai was the ideal centre … even during the war years every flag … found their way to Shanghai."[262]

Since Shanghai's establishment as a KO, its *Abwehr* operations supporting activities in the United States primarily consisted of maritime facilitation networks and *U-Stellen.* With Siefken in place and having received guidance from the highest levels of the *Abwehr*, the *Abwehr's* Asia *maritime nachrichtendienst* expanded its capabilities and increased coordination mechanisms between Berlin and the United States in three areas: 1) the expansion of all maritime facilitation networks to include increased *U-Stellen* traffic, 2) the establishment of a larger W/T capability to connect networks in Asia, Europe, South America, and the U.S., and 3) increased intelligence coordination with Imperial Japan's militaries to include intelligence collected on U.S. military capabilities.

Siefken's arrival occurred at a critical moment when the *Abwehr* needed to reorganize its abilities to disseminate the intelligence collected in the U.S. As the threat of war in Europe had increased so had the pressure on German shipping lines in terms of access to American ports. After September 1939, no German-flagged merchant ships

[262] Leverkuehn, pg. 191.

were allowed in U.S. ports. The Genoa-based courier systems adapted, and ran non-ethnic German agents on the liners of ships flagged by other countries, to include the U.S. However, by the time Siefken arrived in Shanghai, U.S. counter espionage agencies, to especially include ONI, were putting pressure on passenger liners from Europe docking on the East Coast. Increased scrutiny put added pressure on these couriers. Similar pressure and surveillance were not common on the West Coast. Up to that point, the major counter espionage discoveries by the FBI, Army G-2, and ONI had occurred in the Northeast, possibly creating an investigative and analytical geographic bias that overlooked the West. China-based networks provided the most direct and secure means of facilitation for the physical movement of intelligence and the deployment of agents to and from the United States.

By 1940, the infiltration route from China was the primary means for deploying agents to the U.S. For example, in 1939 and again in June 1940, Canaris personally directed *Abwehr* officer Heinrich Stiege, *deckname* Treppe, to travel from China to South America and the U.S. west coast. Stiege traveled under commercial cover to conduct espionage activities that included relaying highly specialized instructions to multiple agent networks.[263] While in California, Stiege coordinated with agents working from platforms in Los Angeles and San Francisco, although the agents, their networks, and the importance of Stiege's unique mission were never identified. Following his 1940 trip, he returned to Germany via China to debrief Canaris on his mission.

[263] "Julius Paul Heinrich Stiege," Case File KV-2-2466, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11341859.

Ulrich von der Osten's 1941 trip, and presumably his previous trips to the U.S. in 1938, 39, and possibly 40, were also examples of maritime network movements facilitated from China. His initial operations also coordinated the dissemination of intelligence on U.S defensive preparations for Hawaii through China. Agents leaving or fleeing from the U.S. also used the China route. Through 1938, *Abwehr* agents in the Northeast had used the aforementioned Bremen maritime networks to escape prosecution by the FBI and ONI. Lonkowski in 1935, and Gundenberg and Griebl in 1938 escaped through Montreal and New York with the assistance of Bremen couriers. Like the infiltration routes, the Northeast exfiltration routes were also closed following the outbreak of war in Europe, and again, so here too, China route took primacy. By 1940, agents, such as Nikolaus Ritter's brother Hans, escaped the U.S. via China.

War on the Horizon – New Missions

As 1938 closed out and 1939 opened with the drums of war in Europe increasing their fervor of warnings on the horizons, the *Abwehr* had achieved its mission of exploiting U.S. military technical intelligence to support Germany's rearmament efforts. While the service would continue to collect vital intelligence on military technologies, the increasing amount of U.S. military industrial support to Germany's European antagonists required adaptation to its intelligence collection. By mid-1939 the *Abwehr* increasingly tasked agents to collect intelligence on the movement of military equipment by sea. Before the war, this information was used to understand the relative orders of battle of military equipment Germany would have to face in the event of conflict.

Once the war began, intelligence collected at the oceanfront piers of the United States was fed directly to elements of the *Kriegsmarine*, including U-boat wolfpacks,

who attempted to interdict the shipments. From September to December 1939 in the Atlantic, German U-boats sank approximately 114 merchant vessels totaling 421,156 tons light displacement – the weight of the vessel without crew, cargo, fuel, or other essential stores.[264] Based on *Abwehr* tasking of current agents and the specific new training for agents deployed to the U.S., by late 1939, its U.S.-based espionage was essential to providing warning intelligence of pending ship movements to support combat interdiction within the opening exchanges of what would become the Battle of the Atlantic.

The timeliness of intelligence on shipping and convoys required agents deployed to the U.S. be able to operate W/T sets to report information directly to Germany so that intelligence could be actioned and shipments disrupted. New recruits for service in the United States began to be assessed on their abilities to operate radio and were trained accordingly. One such recruit was American citizen Walter Lohrey. He was born in San Francisco to a German immigrant father and Italian mother. Having lived in the U.S. and Germany, in 1936 he joined the U.S. Army, but was encouraged by his superiors to leave the service because his pro-fascist politics had become a source of disruption in Lohrey's unit and made him the focus of reprisal by other troops. Lohrey originally offered his service to Germany while still on active duty and stationed in Hawaii in early 1939. His Bremen files do not list the *Abwehr* agents or officers in Hawaii to whom he offered his services, but only that he was not recruited while in Hawaii.[265] After he was discharged,

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[264] For the total number of Allied merchant vessels lost to German U-Boats during this time frame see, Nathan Miller, *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II.* New York: Scribner, 1995, and for the shipping light displacement tonnage, see John Costello and Terry Hughes, *The Battle of the* Atlantic. London: Collins, 1977, pg. 307. Miller and Costello each use different methodology but roughly agree to the total number of vessels lost (221 or 222), the number lost to submarines (114), and the tonnage total, which is simply additive of the total vessels lost light displacement tonnage.

[265] RW 49 442, pg. 97, "Es wurde ihm die Frage vorgelegt, ob er bereit sei, sofort nach USA zurückzukehren und sich nach einem der Haupthäfen an der Ostüste, z.B. New York, Boston oder Norfolk zu begeben und von dort aus unter noch zu vereinbarender Tarnung laugend Nachrichten zu geben."

he and several like-minded friends left the U.S. for Germany to offer their services. In November 1939, he was recruited by Bremen, trained in secret writing and W/T, and deployed back to the U.S. to collect shipping intelligence.[266] His *personalbogen* in the Bremen files included his tasking to collect maritime intelligence and convoy data:

> "The question was put to him as to whether he was prepared to immediately return to the USA and go to one of the main ports on the east coast, e.g. New York, Boston or Norfolk, and from there give messages under cover to be agreed upon."[267]

Lohrey arrived in the U.S. in the Spring of 1940 and established an espionage base of operations. According to information contained in the declassified FBI file on Johannes Bischoff, Lohrey, "began the installation of short-wave radio equipment in a dilapidated beach house which overlooked the Delaware River and the Philadelphia Navy Yard. His instructions were to report by radio the movement of shipping on the Delaware River."[268] U.S. Authorities were never sure whether or not Lohrey was able to report from his perch; as, purely by coincidence, police entered the property in association with a burglary and disrupted his operation. Lohrey was detained but released, and would not be captured by the FBI until 1944. There are no records between the incident in 1940 and his 1944 arrest to indicate whether or not he continued to engage in espionage. The accidental disruption occurred soon after Lohrey established his base and there is no evidence to indicate whether or not he reported on shipping. Following the disruption, Lohrey lived in Puerto Rico where he was ultimately arrested, but there are no U.S. or *Abwehr* files that indicate whether or not he was active in espionage while there.

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[266] RW 49 531, pg. 67.
[267] RW 49 442, pg. 97, "Es wurde ihm die Frage vorgelegt, ob er bereit sei, sofort nach USA zurückzukehren und sich nach einem der Haupthäfen an der Ostüste, z.B. New York, Boston oder Norfolk zu begeben und von dort aus unter noch zu vereinbarender Tarnung laugend Nachrichten zu geben."
[268] "JOHANNES BISCHOFF, with alias ESPIONAGE – G," W. M. Felt to MR. LADD, May 18, 1945, located in "Abwehr."

Waldemar Othmer was also recruited in 1939 and trained in W/T operations for deployment to the U.S. to report intelligence on maritime shipping and associated matters. There are no personnel records directly attributed to Othmer found within the Bremen files, but U.S. intelligence officers who collated the files in 1946, were able to use Pheiffer's case file to confirm Othmer as *Agenten* A 2018 in the files. During a portion of his time in the U.S., from May 28, 1940 until April 1, 1941, he provided at least 262 intelligence reports to Bremen almost entirely on maritime intelligence matters.[269] According to information from the FBI, Othmer claimed while able to operate his W/T he was never able to successfully make contact with Germany, and instead sent all of his reporting through international mail, none of which was ever intercepted. FBI analysis of his W/T set recovered in 1944 exposed the transceiver had a manufacturer's defect that affected his ability to receive a signal. In early 1941, Othmer left Norfolk, Virginia where he had been operating since arrival and moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. He was arrested there in July 1944, and claimed after the U.S. entered the war, he ceased espionage work for the *Abwehr*. There is no information in any of the currently available source material to indicate whether or not Othmer remained involved in espionage after December 1941, but notably while there are FBI files related to Othmer from Knoxville, Norfolk, and Washington D.C., Othmer was tried, convicted, and sentenced in Norfolk.[270]

Simon Ködel was also recruited in 1939 to exploit maritime intelligence and shipping. Ködel was based in New York and was a prolific reporter of intelligence until

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[269] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Agenten-Index nach Namen H – P," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 529, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/ed38402d-2a98-4be3-ac0c-77a29e374825/, pg. 367.

[270] The author of this research has requested access to the FBI's Othmer case files three times through the FOIA process. The first two requests were denied and the third was still being processed for review at the time of writing this paper.

his arrest in October 1944. There is no evidence Ködel had contact with W/T operators, and instead his intelligence was directed through multiple international mail drops and maritime couriers, none of which were ever intercepted by Allied counter espionage. Among his espionage activities that included sending over 600 intelligence reports over five years was nearly constant observation of shipping around New York harbor.

To improve his collection, Ködel recruited his niece Marie Ködel as an accomplice. She focused on engaging in conversations and occasional relationships with Navy and merchant sailors as a means to extract intelligence. The Ködels were only exposed and subsequently arrested when one of Marie's occasional sailor boyfriends reported her interest in national defense matters. Given the timelines necessitated for effective exploitation of maritime intelligence related to ship movements and the lack of connectivity to W/T, there are sufficient gaps in information related to how intelligence collected by the Ködels was used. Timeliness issues and the collection of open source materials have often been used critically when assessing the impact of their espionage in terms of the conduct and outcome of the war.[271] Yet often absent from these critiques is the amount of effort spent by the Ködels collecting intelligence on ship movements and cargoes, its positive receipt by Bremen, and the prolific nature of their reporting.

While Bremen was training and deploying Lohrey and Othmer, and probably other unidentified agents, *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg was also training and deploying its own W/T capable-agents to relay maritime shipping and other intelligence directly to

[271] For criticism of the collection of open source matters see Guensberg who specifically addresses the open source material reporting by the Ködels, "Critical Analysis of German Operational Intelligence, Parts I and II," *German Operational Intelligence*. Military Intelligence Division, U.S. Army, War Department, Washington D.C., 1946, which provides multiple effective summations of *Abwehr* failures, or Batvinis, *Origins*, in which he connects early FBI press releases within the Rumrich investigation and reporting from Eitel on the collection of "magazines and newspapers." Farago details collection of open source materials as part of overall *Abwehr* tasking of agents in the United States.

Germany. These agents were deployed throughout port cities in the U.S., Canada, and South America, as a large portion of American war materiel was being shipped across the South Atlantic. By 1939, a W/T operator in the U.S. or South America could conceivably reach the main *Abwehr radio* station outside of Hamburg.

High frequency radio communications remained susceptible to various types of atmospheric interference; so to maximize the abilities of *Abwehr* officers and agents to communicate either directly to Germany or within an espionage web of W/T stations and users, the *Abwehr* expanded its W/T capabilities across Central and South America within what came to be referred to after the war by the Allies as the "Bolivar" network. According to a declassified report from the U.S. National Security Agency, Bolivar stations were operated from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Paraguay.[272] When other W/T operators became active in the area, they could also connect to the network, which necessarily expanded its coverage also to at least Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico. With multiple stations cross-connected to one another, the *Abwehr* could manage operational security and also ensure, regardless of atmospheric conditions, reporting entered into the network could eventually be received in Germany. Bolivar stations would remain active in reporting intelligence collected in the United States through late 1942 and into early 1943. By then the FBI's Special Intelligence Service (SIS), supported by ONI and the U.S. Coast Guard, working under direction from President Roosevelt for the operation of expanded intelligence authorities in the Western Hemisphere, was able to expose *Abwehr* espionage in multiple states in Central and

[272] David P. Mowry, *Cryptologic Aspects of German Intelligence Activities in South America During World War II*. Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, Washington D.C., 2011, https://www.nsa.gov/portals/75/documents/about/cryptologic-heritage/historical-figures-publications/publications/wwii/cryptologic_aspects_of_gi.pdf, pgs. 13-15.

South America. The SIS worked with host nation police forces and intelligence agencies to engage the respective governments to have the Abwehr agents interned, arrested, turned over to the U.S., or deported to Germany. Argentina's *Abwehr* W/T operators would be the last operating when the country finally declared war against the Axis in the Spring of 1945.

Enter Tramp

As German troops crossed into Poland in September 1939, *Abwehr* agents in the United States continued to exploit intelligence vital to Germany's militaries. While the Army, Navy, and FBI surely learned valuable lessons from the Rumrich affair, from February 1938 through early 1940, there was no evidence they adapted their approach to counter espionage. While the government increased funding for military and federal law enforcement, which slowly resulted in the recruitment and training of additional counter espionage agents, from Rumrich to February 1940, there was not a single espionage investigation related to an *Abwehr* agent by Federal authorities. This situation changed in 1940, when, resulting from no action of its own, the FBI learned of an *Abwehr* agent coming to America willing to work against Germany.

In February 1940, the FBI was contacted by the State Department regarding the return to the U.S. from Germany of American citizen, William Sebold. He, as Wilhelm, had immigrated to the U.S. in 1924, became a citizen in 1936, and returned to Germany in February 1939 to visit family. Upon arrival in Hamburg, Sebold later claimed to have been threatened and forced by the *Gestapo* and *Abwehr* to return to America as an espionage agent. Known to his *Abwehr* handlers by the d*eckname* Tramp, he was sent back to the U.S. under the false identity of Harry Sawyer, to connect with agents in the

U.S., report on their collection via W/T, and develop his own espionage network. Prior to boarding a ship to return to America, he alerted American officials and begged for help. In New York, he was met by officers of the State Department and agents of the FBI. After a few days of interviews, or perhaps interrogations, Sebold was offered the opportunity to become the FBI's first-ever counter espionage double agent. He accepted – the alternative would have been immediate imprisonment. For over a year, Sebold worked on behalf of the FBI to expose espionage agents across the country. As a result of double agent work, by June 1941, thirty-three German agents had been arrested, and all were eventually indicted, tried, and convicted of espionage.

The thirty three agents were labeled by the FBI as the "Duquesne Nazi Spy Ring," or just "Duquesne Ring" for short, because, according to the Bureau's official statements, all thirty-three comprised a single unified network of all of the *Abwehr's* agents in the U.S. which was centrally run by Frederick Joubert "Fritz" Duquesne. To date, the Sebold-enabled arrests of the Duquesne Ring represent the largest ever counter espionage operation executed by the FBI in terms of arrests. Director Hoover claimed, "the elimination of this organization which had extended ramifications, placed a decisive check in German espionage operations, from which it has found it difficult to recover"[273] In the present day, the FBI continues to laud its successes with the Sebold operation and subsequent arrests, remarking of its own record, "How's this for being a step ahead of the enemy? Before America ever fired a shot in World War II, we had rolled up a massive ring of Nazi spies operating on U.S. soil—33 in all." Echoing Hoover's statements from seven decades previous, the present-day Bureau also claims, "as a result of the massive

[273] Samuel A. Tower, "FBI's Hidden Struggle Against Spies Continues," *The New York Times*, February 11, 1945, pg. 69.

investigation, the FBI—and America—entered the war with confidence that there was no major German espionage network hidden in U.S. society."[274]

The arrest and conviction of almost three dozen enemy agents just prior to the U.S. entry into the Second World War was indeed laudable. However, critical analysis of the orthodox history of the Duquesne Ring against the declassified FBI files of the investigation and other declassified archival records exposes a different account. These files have never previously been comparatively used to examine the Duquesne Ring, and when reviewed, expose three critical areas that offer the potential to change the historical understanding of William Sebold, the arrested agents, and the *Abwehr's* capabilities in the U.S. First, the files reveal that rather than being the equivalent of a whistleblower or motivated patriot, William/Wilhelm Sebold was an unreliable narrator whose motivations and veracity appear never to have been assessed or evaluated by his FBI handlers. Second, network analysis of the thirty-three arrested agents exposes that rather than being a single network of all espionage agents in the U.S., the group comprised multiple small networks and independent agents handled and controlled from multiple *Abwehrstellen*. While significant, the thirty-three agents were not all *Abwehr* agents in the U.S., and at least 170 additional agents can be identified as being concurrently active. Further, Duquesne had almost no contact with the agents associated with the group, and rather than being a ringleader, operated as an independent – and untrustworthy – singleton. Finally, there are indications achieved through comparative analysis empowered by declassified FBI and MI-5 case files that raise the possibility the *Abwehr* was aware of the Sebold double agent operation – contrary to FBI statements and the orthodox history

[274] "Duquesne Spy Ring."

of events – and managed its engagements with Sebold accordingly. These files indicate the *Abwehr* played-back bad intelligence via the doubled agent and limited the exposure of its more serious operations and agents.

The Unreliable Double Agent

John Le Carré's *They Spy Who Came in From the Cold* epitomizes the perils of double agent operations. His main character, Alec Leamas, poses as a disgraced MI-5 agent to bait the East German *Stasi* (*Stadtssicherheit* – State Security Ministry, the East German intelligence and counter espionage agency) to recruit him as a double agent against the British and NATO. Within the intrigue of the Cold War-era espionage, the telling of Leamas' story exposes the complicated nature of the double agent – doubles are never wholly part of one side playing the other, but instead in constant vacillation between competing loyalties. With war on the horizon, the FBI ran its first espionage double agent, Wilhelm Sebold, in an attempt to execute its most-aggressive counter espionage case. For decades the Bureau has touted the Sebold operation as a paragon of counter espionage success; however, declassified intelligence reports and the FBI's own case files of the operation achieved through the U.S. FOIA process indicate the historical narrative of successes was not as complete as the agency purported.

In the case of *Abwehr* agents launched against the United Kingdom and turned double by MI-5, Masterman's *The Double Cross* system revealed the necessity of constant care of the double to ensure they remained controlled by the friendly side, management of all contact with the enemy, and avoidance of any indication or suspicion on the part of the enemy their agent has been turned. According to Masterman on the running of doubles:

> "A case officer should be assigned to each double-cross case. It is essential that every agent should be run and controlled from day to day by an officer who knows every detail of his case … an agent who has decided to turn round [work as a double agent for MI-5 against the *Abwehr*] in order to save his neck may well, after some months, feel that his conduct has been despicable, and that he would rather suffer death than continue to collaborate. He must be carefully studied and watched so that he does not go bad on us unexpectedly."[275]

For control or handling officers, running agents was a full time job, so therefore, running a double agent is even a greater challenge since the agent in this case is almost certainly working against one's own and their own motivations. Throughout a double operation the adversary intelligence service remains active and involved in plying for the loyalties of the double, and more often than not, the double never is wholly for or against either control, but constantly moving between the two in terms of flexible loyalty and control.

Nikolaus Ritter was one of the *Abwehr* officers who directly vied with Masterman for control of double agents. Ironically, Ritter and Masterman appear to have agreed on the challenges of running and managing agents to include doubles. When discussing the generalities of double agent operations, Ritter noted, "it was and is the task of every intelligence service to approach enemy agents and harness them for their own purpose … and then the dispatching organization may be tricked." Ritter also responded directly to Masterman's claims in *The Double Cross System* related to agents of Ritter's turned double by MI-5. Of one of these claims, Ritter countered Masterman, noting, "The British assertion that *Johnny* [the *deckname* for an *Abwehr* agent doubled by MI-5] was working for the Security Service [MI-5] was correct, but what the British did *not* know

[275] J. C. Masterman, *The Double Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, pgs. 21, 23.

was that this happened with my full consent and my total support … *Johnny* often asked me for bogus material so he could consolidate his position with the British."[276]

While Ritter's claim could be perceived as *post facto* apologetics for the *Abwehr* in general and his agent operations against the U.K. specifically, a review of the MI-5 files on Ritter uncovered MI-5 held similar concerns related to *Johnny* who they knew as SNOW. According to Masterman in a 1940 memorandum, he and other officers were concerned over the trustworthiness of Johnny/SNOW and his fellow double CELERY:

> "it was agreed that the only safe course was to assume that the Doctor (RANTZAU) [Ritter's *deckname* known to his U.K.-based agents] knew about our control of agents and that he probably knew as much about it as SNOW or CELERY. On this assumption SNOW can be of little if any further use to us … We shall be able to observe SNOW's reactions, which may help us to decide how far he has involved himself on the other side."

Future operations with SNOW from that point onward were not to manipulate the *Abwehr*, as doing so was no longer viable, but to "watch the Doctor's reactions," and determine the extent of *Abwehr* control and knowledge of MI-5's operation.[277]

Ritter and Masterman were both aware each knew of the other's operations related to *Johnny* / SNOW, and both determined to continue to play the game in the hope of finding some means to use the agent against their enemy. According to Ritter, these challenges were par for the course related to double agent operations. In his assessments,

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[276] Ritter, pgs. 211-212. Emphasis in the original.

[277] J. C. Masterman, "Conference 10th April, 1941," located in "Nikolaus Ritter, a.k.a. Dr. Rantzau," Case File KV-2-86, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/C6091994, KV-2-86_1, pg. 12. This episode is all the more fascinating since in *The Double Cross System*, Masterman stated the foundation of the entire Double Cross program – MI-5s focused effort to play doubles back against the *Abwehr* – was founded off SNOW. He notes of the early days before the formalization of Double Cross, "the Directors of Intelligence recognized the importance of double agents. Of these the earliest and the most important was SNOW … From him much was learned of the importance about the Abwehr and its methods … and [MI-5] built around him the foundation of a double-cross system. He was in fact the *fons et origo* of all our activities for the next five years." Masterman, pg. 36. Later on in the book, Masterman did state SNOW became untrustworthy and was unusable as a double, but also from Masterman's perspective had remained exclusively under MI-5 control.

Johnny / SNOW was mostly betraying the British because he had informed Ritter of his double status but had not informed MI-5 he remained to a degree under Ritter's control. Not ignoring his own failures to manage doubles, Ritter noted of another agent who had proved untrustworthy, that he had "betrayed both the British and us [the *Abwehr*]," which could indicate an objective approach to the assessments of his agent operations.[278] The challenges of double agent operations highlighted by master spy and master spy catcher do highlight the multiplicity of challenges related to effective double operations.

There is no information in any primary sources to indicate that the FBI employed an MI-5 or *Abwehr* level of scrutiny when they ran William Sebold as a double agent from 1940 to the middle of 1941. Instead, Sebold's entire story of extortion by the *Gestapo* and *Abwehr* and his desire to help the FBI as an altruistic and patriotic duty was taken by the FBI at face value. Throughout the double agent operation, according to the FBI's own files on the case, Sebold was never exposed to the tight control and scrutiny identified by Masterman as essential to effective double agent operations.

William Sebold was born Gottlieb Adolf Wilhelm Sebold in Mülheim, Germany in 1899. During the First World War he served as a military engineer, but he provided few other details of his service history. In 1922 he immigrated to the United States, becoming a citizen in 1936. Most histories describe Sebold as an aircraft mechanic, however he rarely was employed in this capacity.[279] From 1922 until 1939, Sebold held a

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[278] Ritter, pg. 213.

[279] Details of Sebold's claimed aviation background can be found in most press articles covering the trials of late 1941 through early 1942. Farago makes much of his background in aviation to highlight it as being his primary skill, as discussed earlier with regard to Farago's questionable and unsourced approach to narrative, these statements also appear fabricated with no grounding in primary source materials. Duffy discusses the specific occasions of his embellished industry employment, see pgs. 85, 103, and 113. For a very recent address of Sebold's supposed aviation mechanic capabilities, see Sam Lebovic, "Nazi Spies in America!," *Humanities: The National Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities*, Winter 2024, Vol. 45, No. 1, https://www.neh.gov/article/nazi-spies-america. This most recent article claims,

series of general laborer jobs throughout the United States and South America, rarely staying in one location for more than a few months. On one and no more than two occasions he briefly worked for aviation companies as a general laborer.[280]

In 1922 he signed aboard a ship traveling from Hamburg to Galveston, Texas. Rather than remain with his chartered work in Texas, which had paid for his voyage, he jumped ship and ran toward other opportunities. He immediately left Galveston for Houston where he sought to find odd jobs to make enough money to squeak by. Leaving Houston he made for Brenham, Texas. Finding no employment panacea among the German-American populations of central Texas, he again stowed away illegally on another ship and made his way back to Germany. In 1924, having failed to find quality employment, or at least to stick with employment, he secured work in South America. Again, a prospective employer paid for his transit in return for future labor, and again, Sebold jumped ship before he fulfilled his commitment. Years of odd jobs and constant movement in South America continued. By 1929 he had made his way to San Francisco, California – entering the U.S. legally for the first time. From California he went to Alaska chasing quick work in the gold mining industry. After Alaska he made his way again through California, to include around six months in San Diego, then to the Midwest, and finally in New York. The only pattern to his life from the early 1920s until 1939 was one of constant movement between locations and jobs in which he never seemed to commit himself to any single pursuit.[281]

"Sebold had quit his job as a mechanic at the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, but the position was still listed on his immigration card, which drew the attention of the Gestapo." These statements will be shown to be completely incorrect and the result of false narratives purported by Sebold to the FBI since 1940.

[280] For details on Sebold's background, see Duffy, pgs. 59-63.

[281] Duffy, pgs. 59-65. Several of the primary sources obtained by Duffy from the FBI and used to develop his background on Sebold were requested through the U.S. FOIA process by this paper's author to support this research. At the time of writing, those requests had not yet been answered. Most of Duffy's account of

According to Sebold's version of events provided to the FBI and State Department in February 1940, in 1939 he decided to return to Germany to visit relatives with the intent to soon return to the United States. His passenger liner docked in Hamburg in February 1940 and upon debarking, he claimed, he had been seized and threatened by the *Gestapo* – as confirmed by the FBI. Sebold was told he would be forced to work for the secret police, or else, and he would be later contacted on the details. To prevent his escape from Germany, since he still traveled on an American passport, the *Gestapo* supposedly seized his citizenship papers. A few months later he was visited by agents of the *Abwehr*, to include Dr. Rantzau (Ritter), Dr. Gassner, and Henry Sorau. Over several months, Sorau, who comically used the *deckname Onkel* (Uncle) Hugo Sebold, trained William Sebold in secret writing, W/T operations, espionage tradecraft, and prepared him for deployment to the U.S. as an *Abwehr* agent.[282]

At some point after he was accosted on the docks of Hamburg and before his training, Sebold claimed to have gone to an American consulate to expose the *Gestapo* threats and request help. A clerk at the consulate agreed Sebold was in a tough position but said there was nothing he could do to assist. According to Sebold, he was turned away, and left abandoned to the rapine of the German espionage services.[283]

Once his training was completed, Sebold traveled to Cologne to the American consulate to replace his stolen passport. While there he exposed his mission for the

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Sebold's constant movements are confirmed within "WILLIAM GOTTLIEB SEBOLD, Also known as Harry Sawyer," Statement of Records and Testimony, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., 1942, located within Duquesne, Section 6, pgs. 125-139.

[282] Sebold's version of events can be found in multiple secondary sources and accounts of the event. See, Batvinis *Origins* and *Hoover's Secret War,* or the FBI's web article, "Duquesne Spy Ring." Similar summaries of Sebold's version of events can be found in Farago, Miller, and Breuer. These accounts are corroborated within Duquesne, Section 6, pgs., 125-139.

[283] Elements of this summary can be found within "Defense Rebuked in Nazi Spy Trial," *The New York Times,* September 11, 1941, pg. 24.

Abwehr and asked for assistance. Consular officers told him to travel to the U.S. and expect to be met by State Department officials on arrival. He and his wife arrived and were met by the State Department and FBI. He was debriefed over several days and provided with the offer to become the Bureau's first double agent.[284]

Despite multiple inconsistencies in Sebold's version of events told to the U.S. government , there has never been an academic attempt to evaluate Sebold's background or the veracity of his claims of manipulation by the *Gestapo* and *Abwehr* and his willingness to work with the FBI. The recognized version of events identifies Sebold as a victim of Nazism and a hero for his role as a double agent.[285] Newly available declassified reports that include the FBI case files related to the investigations resulting from the Sebold operation released within a FOIA request in 2023 and multiple declassified MI-5 files related to *Abwehr* officers who ran Sebold and other agents exposed within the double operation raise questions about Sebold's truthfulness, evidence of intimidation to conduct espionage, and motivations for working with the FBI. A comprehensive review of these materials indicates Sebold either exaggerated, embellished, or falsified many aspects of his engagement with the *Gestapo* and *Abwehr*.

Specific differences emerge related to multiple issues, including the purpose for Sebold's 1939 return to Germany, the sequence of events related to his intimidation by the *Gestapo* and recruitment by the *Abwehr,* the nature of his work with the *Abwehr,* and his conduct during the double agent operation and engagement with other agents.

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[284] In addition to all of the secondary accounts previously cited, Sebold's version of events as told to the FBI can be confirmed in "WILLIAM GOTTLIEB SEBOLD, Also known as Harry Sawyer," located within Duquesne, Section 6, pgs. 125-139.

[285] Duffy equates Sebold to a modern day whistleblower. According to a *Time* magazine article from 1941, Sebold was "an ordinary German who had merely wanted to be an engineer in his own home town" and had been caught up in Gestapo plots, see, "War & Peace: The World of William Sebold," *Time,* Monday September 22, 1941, https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,795475-1,00.html.

Beginning with his return to Germany, according to multiple individuals who directly engaged with Sebold, he did not return to his homeland to visit family but permanently. According to Nikolaus Ritter, Sebold returned in 1939 with the intent of "settling in Germany."[286] A permanent return may only seem illogical in retrospect, as in February of 1939, Sebold would have been unaware war in Europe was only seven months away. For him, with a two-decade history of constant challenges finding employment, he could have been enticed to return, along with thousands of other ethnic-German laborers, by elements of Germany's "Four Year" economic plan. Provisions of the plan offered economic incentives to expatriate Germans to return, renew German citizenship, disavow foreign citizenship, receive favorable job placement, and take part in the building of the thousand-year-Reich. Therefore, if Sebold had returned to "settle" in his homeland, work was guaranteed, a situation that had escaped him since at least 1922.[287]

Sebold's actions in Germany support this potential motivation. After arriving, he returned to his hometown of Mülheim and was hired into a full time position at the Siemens-Schuckert works. He remained in that position throughout the summer until December 7, 1939, by which time he was fully employed in his *Abwehr* training and no longer needed employment because the *Abwehr* was providing for all expenses.[288]

Participation in the Four Year Plan also provides an alternative possibility as to why Sebold required a new passport in 1940. Participation would have required disavowing his American citizenship and destruction of his passport. Rather than the *Gestapo* stealing his passport to prevent escape, it is possible Sebold voluntarily turned it

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[286] KV-2-88, pg. 81.
[287] For extensive details on the Four Year Plan, see R. J. Overy, *War and Economy in the Third Reich,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
[288] Duquesne, Section 6, pg. 126.

over to German authorities when renewing his German citizenship. Such an account gains veracity when one considers had his passport being taken by the *Gestapo*, when readied for deployment, the Gestapo could have simply returned the passport to him, based on the conditionalities he presented within his story to the FBI. The fact Sebold had to get a new passport before returning to the U.S. suggests neither he, the *Gestapo*, nor the *Abwehr* had maintained control of it while he remained a year in Germany.[289]

In addition to different accounts for the reasons for Sebold's return to Germany, multiple sources contain conflicting information regarding the sequencing of events related to his accosting by the *Gestapo* and his eventual contact with officers of *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg, his training, and eventual deployment to the U.S. The timeline of Sebold's immediate interrogation by the *Gestapo* and forced recruitment as told to the FBI also is placed in doubt by multiple facts uncovered within the declassified reports. While various secondary sources and histories have often provided different accounts of these events, what appears clear from Sebold's account, was his immediate accosting by the *Gestapo* upon arrival and their immediate compulsion into *espionage* upon threat of violence and imprisonment.

According to the FBI's current website article on the case, "in February 1939, Sebold made a return trip to Germany to visit his mother. *Upon his arrival in Hamburg,*

[289] For Sebold's official account of the loss or seizure of his passport, see Duquesne, Section 6, pg. 130. Within this section, Sebold's actual tale to the FBI of the purloined passport was far less sinister than what he would later reveal in testimony within the trials of the arrested agents which has subsequently become part of the orthodoxy. To wit, Sebold returned to his lodging following one of his debriefings and his passport that had supposedly been in his coat pocket was gone. He reasoned to the FBI, the only way to explain it was missing was that the agents with whom he had been engaged previously that day had taken the passport. According to the FBI, "He prepared to go to the City Hall at Mulheim the next day to fill out some forms in connection with work insurance or a work permit which would require that he exhibit his American passport for identification purposes. He made sure when he hung up his coat in his hotel room that night that the passport was in his coat pocket … When he felt in his coat pocket he noticed that his passport and other identification papers were Missing."

Sebold was approached by a member of the Gestapo."[290] Peter Duffy who wrote on Sebold's double activities, quoted Sebold discussing his arrival and his immediate accosting:

> "Well, when I arrived at Hamburg, there was a passport police, and I had to present my American passport, and as I showed my American passport there were two civilians, two men in civilian clothes, that took me in a nearby room and questioned me about my activities in the United States."[291]

Unfortunately, Duffy's source is the personal diary of special agents who oversaw Sebold, and therefore is not available for supplementary analysis. Declassified matters from the FBI casefile do echo the events quoted by Duffy. In a summary of Sebold's statement on his arrival in Hamburg by ship on February 11, 1939, the FBI files state:

> "Upon arrival at Hamburg, he was interviewed, and before leaving the dock, he was called to one side and interviewed by a plainclothes officer concerning his airplane factory experience, and other information concerning his activities while in the United States. He gave them his mother's address … Nothing unusual transpired from this time until about June 1, 1939."[292]

Press reports of the trial of the arrested agents include Sebold's accounts when put on the testimony to testify for the prosecution. His statements echo those found in the FBI file and reported by other chroniclers of the episode. The U.S. Attorney leading the prosecution informed the jury that Sebold was an "informer" who should be considered a "counter espionage agent." Under questioning, Sebold revealed he returned to Germany in 1939, and <u>before</u> disembarking was "met by two men," who "inquired … about his employment in an American aircraft factory." He later was engaged by "Dr. Gassner …

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[290] "Duquesne Spy Ring," Emphasis added by this paper's author.
[291] Peter Duffy, *Double Agent: The First Hero of World War II and How the FBI Outwitted and Destroyed a Nazi Spy Ring*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014, pg. 103.
[292] Duquesne, section 6, pg. 126.

an agent of the Gestapo," who, "invited his cooperation in an American spy ring and warned that the "pressure of the State" would be brought upon him unless he complied." Sebold continued with other descriptions of Gassner's, the supposed *Gestapo* agent, threats described as "particularly lurid." Gassner supposedly *warned* Sebold he would be "taken care of," and to add gravity to the threat, "described the 'funeral clothes'" he would wear when "laid out" by the *Gestapo.*[293]

Contrary to all of these statements, FBI files related to the Sebold double agent operation do not include any material related to anything unusual, to include intimidation by the *Gestapo,* as having occurred from February 11, 1939 through July 12, 1939. However, these files do identify by July 12, 1939, Sebold was in contact with *Gestapo* agents located in Mülheim, and contextual evidence indicates initial contact with the *Gestapo* occurred between June 1 and July 12. It was on July 12 that Sebold received his first outreach from the *Abwehr:*

> "He [Sebold] received a letter from a DR. GASSNER to come to the Duisburger Hof [a hotel] the following Sunday. In the letter Dr. Gassner stated that he had been referred to him, SEBOLD, by a friend, and he [Sebold] immediately took the letter to the Gestapo in Mulheim and asked them what he should do about such communication. He was advised by the Gestapo to meet the man and they would cover him in order to find out who Dr. Gassner was."[294]

Within the FBI case file, the first instance of contact with the *Gestapo* was not at the pier in February, but during the summer of 1939. Moreover, the nature of the contact appeared non-hostile or threatening.

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[293] "U.S. Bomb Sight Sold to Germany, Spy Jury is Told," *The New York Times,* September 9, 1941, pgs. 1,14.
[294] Duquesne, Section 6, pg. 126.

The files continue, and after following *Gestapo* advice, Sebold attempted to meet Gassner at the appointed place and time, but Gassner did not show. Sebold returned to the *Gestapo* who advised him, "not to take any further action until he heard again from Dr. Gassner," indicating his relationship with the *Gestapo* remained non-hostile. A subsequent letter from Gassner arrived around July 22, 1939, in which, according solely to Sebold, Gassner requested he join "*Unsere Gesellschaft*" (our society) or, "he, Gassner, would bring State pressure to bear on him."[295] In this version of events, from Sebold's official sworn statement to the FBI found only within its declassified case files made available through the FOIA process, it was Gassner, an *Abwehr* officer of *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg, who threatened Sebold, not the *Gestapo*.

Adding more layers of analysis to the already convoluted and contradictory information found in FBI public statements and declassified records, are other documents that highlight additional and different information on the nature of Sebold's purported contact with the *Gestapo* and *Abwehr*. Declassified MI-5 case files on *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg officers Nikolaus Ritter, Hugo Sandel – a.k.a. Henry Sorau or *Onkel* Hugo – and Georg Sessler, all of whom were involved in training, deploying, and handling Sebold, provide another sequence of events related to Sebold's supposed harassment by / work with the *Gestapo* and recruitment by the *Abwehr*. According to Ritter, Sebold "was first sounded out as a prospective agent by I T/Lw (*Eins Technik Luftwaffe)* Ast Muenster in summer 39."[296] *Abwehrstelle* Münster was approximately 300 km from Sebold's arrival port, but only 90 km away from Mülheim, Germany, and was therefore the closest *Abwehrstelle* to his home. The association of I T/Lw – a subset of IL aviation

[295] Duquesne, Section 6, pg. 127.
[296] KV-2-88, pg. 81. I T/Lw was a sub-office of IL focused on technical aspects of aviation.

intelligence focused on the collection of novel and advanced technology related to aircraft and aircraft material production – indicates *Ast* Münster's interest in Sebold related to his claims of aviation experience. According to Duffy, during Sebold's questioning in Hamburg he had stated he had been employed by Consolidated Aircraft Corporation , which indeed was one of the stopping points on Sebold's never-ending search for work and other work.[297] While disingenuous, as his time with Consolidated was brief and in the past, if he had provided the "plainclothes" debriefers in Hamburg an embellished account of his aviation experience, this circumstance would explain the interest of I T/Lw and the dispatching of *Abwehr* agents from Münster.

Debriefs of the sort described by Sebold were common for German citizens arriving in ports and all the more so for repatriates for the Four Year Plan. According to Herman Bensmann who ran such a program for Pheiffer in Bremen, a *Rueckwandererbefragusdienst* (Returnee Debriefing Office), such debriefings were:

> "a valuable hunting ground for potential agents in addition to providing a more useful source of strat [strategic] information ... Questions asked were concerned with what individuals had seen … what job they had had abroad, what conditions had been like, etc., locations of factories, troop concentrations, aerodromes. This information was passed … for collation."[298]

Returnees were debriefed to determine whether or not they had been exposed to matters that could be of intelligence value to Germany. Those who were deemed to have been so exposed would be further debriefed, and if found to be of sufficient value, could be recruited as *RR-Männer*. The *Gestapo* was also known to debrief foreign citizens and German repatriates. However, rather than debrief for intelligence potential, the *Gestapo*

[297] Duffy, pg. 103.
[298] "Appendix L: Rückwandererbefragungsdienst," KV-2-1328_1, pg. 78.

focused on individuals attempting to circumvent Germany's controls on foreign currency, criminal involvement or intentions, or political threats. *Gestapo* agents did not debrief repatriated Germans to determine access to technical aviation matters.

Therefore, having reviewed the contradictory information in the recognized history and multiple primary sources, it now appears that upon arrival in Hamburg and after passing through customs. Sebold was interviewed by *Abwehr* agents as standard procedure for repatriates and returnees. During that questioning by plainclothes *Abwehr* officers, Sebold revealed, and probably embellished, his history in aviation, probably with the intention of seeking favorable employment within similar German industries. The interviewing officers filed their reports and it was determined Sebold had enough promise to direct an interview by officers of I T/Lw. Since Sebold provided his interviewers with his address, "147 Duisburger Street, Mulheim-Ruhr," officers of *Abwehrstelle* Münster 1 T/Lw followed-up from the local office.

The period not covered in the FBI files from June until July 12th appears to be the time then when Sebold was approached and developed by the officers from *Abwehrstelle* Münster not the *Gestapo.* The absence of proper identification of *Abwehrstelle* Münster then is revealed as an error by the FBI who appears to have amalgamated all German intelligence services within the rubric of the more familiar, and dastardly, *Gestapo.* Supporting this conclusion, are the facts that throughout the entirety of the declassified Duquesne / Sebold case files, the *Abwehr* is consistently and incorrectly referred to by multiple FBI agents and special agents as *Gestapo.* This error is so common that a simplified word search of the FBI's case files reveals almost one hundred instances of the word *Gestapo* and not a single usage of *Abwehr*. The commonality leads one to the

inevitable conclusion that FBI agents working the case, or at least responsible for writing its reports, were unaware of the differentiations between the various German intelligence agencies or why those differences were even important. With this error exposed, it is now determinable that throughout Sebold's year in Germany, from February 1939 through February 1940, there was not a single actual instance of contact between him and the *Gestapo.*

Other statements by Ritter corroborate the series of events in June and July 1939 related to the asset transfer between *Abwehrstellen.* In his memoir, Ritter stated, "I went to Muenster to take a personal look at this fellow … he looked quite ordinary, was of average intelligence, and obviously came from modest means. He worked in America as a mechanic." Concurrent to Sebold's development by Münster, Ritter had been "scouting around for anyone who could be trained as an agent with a secret transmitter. This was communicated to all intelligence stations." Absent from this account, Ritter's purpose for his search was to locate English speakers who could be trained in W/T to deploy to the United Kingdom within Operation Lena – the deployment of agents to support Germany's pending invasion of England. In his search, Ritter, "received a note from a comrade in Muenster saying he had someone who was a citizen of the United States who was willing to take a secret transmitter."[299]

It was that summer Münster contacted Ritter and identified Sebold's capability in relation to Ritter's need of agents. Over several months, Sebold was trained by Ritter and other officers known to be involved in Lena including George Sessler. Sessler had been recruited for Lena but was chosen by Ritter to work instead as a subordinate case officer.

[299] Ritter, pgs. 105-106.

He had worked for the *Abwehr* as a courier while a steward on multiple trans-oceanic liners of the Hamburg America between 1934 and 1939. With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, he lost his access to the U.S., but, given his *Abwehr* history, was recruited, first for Lena, and then to train, deploy, and handle agents in the U.S.[300]

Like Sessler, Sebold could pass as an American in Europe; or at least might not have been recognized as German. His claimed background in aviation and various industrial labor positions may have indicated to the officers of Muenster and Ritter he had a general aptitude for secret writing, coded cyphers, and W/T. By August 1939 war was imminent, and according to records kept by the FBI on Sebold, he would not have been disposed to being a war-time agent. Throughout his handling and the decades thereafter, his FBI handlers described his hypochondriac disposition and noted constant complaints of illnesses and maladies as a means to avoid labor or excuse for the loss of labor opportunities. Similarly, during the double agent operation, he complained to his FBI handlers of intense anxiety. Occasionally these complaints were perceived by the agents handling Sebold as elements of cowardice. With these attested behavioral and personality attributes, had Ritter discussed options as a Lena agent with Sebold, he would almost certainly have avoided such an assignment. Even if Sebold had accepted becoming a Lena agent, by August or September 1940, Lena was completely called off following a series of delays, and there would have been no reason to train him for deployment to the U.K. but ample reason to return him to the U.S.

[300] For details on Sessler's *Abwehr* background as a courier to the U.S., Lena recruit, and Ritter subordinate, see "George Sessler," Case File KV-2-528, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11016530.

In the summary of Sebold's official statement to the FBI, following several letters, a failed attempt to meet, and the issuance of multiple threats, by mail, "Gassner" and he finally met on or about August 1, 1939:

> "Dr. Gassner called at his, SEBOLD's, home, and he took him, Gassner, to a nearby restaurant, where they talked. They had a discussion about airplanes, the LOCKHEED and CONSOLIDATED AIRCRAFT factories, bomb sights, and so forth. He told Dr. Gassner that he had no use for spies … however, Gassner continued in the threatening attitude … and he [Sebold] felt that for his own sake he had better put off Gassner as long as he could."[301]

It was after this meeting with Gassner that Sebold claimed to have traveled to the U.S. consulate to seek help from American authorities only to be rebuffed. The date was September 1, 1939, the start of the German invasion of Poland and the Second World War in Europe. He claimed to have shown the consular officers the threatening letters, but "they did not make copies of these letters nor take possession of them. He, SEBOLD, subsequently … destroyed them."[302] This aspect of Sebold's claim was never investigated and apparently never doubted. No records of the visit were kept by the consulate, as according to Sebold, the clerks refused to make a note of his visit or copy his letters from Gassner.

Further information within MI-5's case file on Ritter provides evidence that further sheds doubt on Sebold's claim he was threatened by mail or face-to-face by Gassner or any other *Abwehr* agent.[303] Specifically, while a prisoner of war in 1946

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[301] Duquesne, Section 6, pgs. 128-129.
[302] Duquesne, Section 6, pg. 129.
[303] While the chronologies of events in multiple sources indicate Gassner could have been Ritter, in other files, Sebold never refers to Ritter as Gassner, raising the possibility Gassner was a name fabricated by Sebold or Gassner was another Hamburg officer whose true identity is not able to be reconstructed. All other *Abwehr* officers have distinct associations between their true names and *deckname* used with Sebold. For instance, Sandel was Sorau or *Onkel* Hugo, Ritter was Renken. In Ritter's accounts the three officers involved with Sebold were Ritter, Sandel, and Sessler, none of whom was associated with the *deckname* Gassner.

Ritter was unaware of any threats made toward Sebold at any time from 1939 through 1941 while he was the control officer. Within Camp 020 where Ritter was held, as with many prisoner of war camps, it was standard practice to record conversations between prisoners through hidden microphones. Through such an arrangement MI-5 recorded a conversation between Ritter and Major Boeckel of *Abwehr* Headquarters Berlin. According to a synopsis of that conversation:

> "At CSDIC … Prisoner [Ritter] had learned from Maj BOECKEL that SEEBOLD [sic] had apparently been subjected to some pressure by the BERLIN Stapo before being put at the disposal of Ast MUENSTER or the Stapo had written to SEEBOLD [sic] a series of black mailing letters."

Boeckel stated he had learned of the threats from *Oberst* Busch of IL, "after SEEBOLD [sic] and his "ring" had been uncovered in the USA in summer 41." Ritter was surprised by the revelation, as, "the fact was never mentioned to Prisoner [Ritter] by SEEBOLD [sic] himself, who showed no reluctance to work for Abw."[304]

At first look, Boeckel's information could seem to confirm Sebold's claims to the FBI. However, when Boeckel's comments to Ritter are contextualized within this new understanding of events, rather than confirming harassment, he further exposes their fallacy. Most important within Boeckel's statement was that Busch had learned of the threats after the agents were arrested and exposed. Busch informed Boeckel of the details of harassment presented within the public trial wherein Sebold was as witness and provided his tale of fabricated harassment. Ritter's ignorance indicates none of the *Abwehr* officers had known of any such harassment occurring during the lifecycle of the Sebold operation – which specifically includes the officer with overall responsibility for Sebold from the time of his transfer from Münster to the revelation of his double agent

[304] KV-2-88, pg. 81.

status. By the time of the trials, Ritter had been sacked from the *Abwehr* for a mission that went awry in North Africa and reassigned to the *Luftwaffe* to command air defenses on the Eastern Front. From there, he was unlikely to have received, or wanted to have received, news on the trials of his former agents. *Abwehr* headquarters where Boeckel and Busch worked would have received the foreign press accounts of the trials, and therefore have had access to Sebold's testimony during which he exposed the supposed threats.

Indeed the issue of threats made by the *Gestapo* or Gassner were a key point within the trials when Sebold was called to the stand for cross examination by defense counsels. The attorney for Herman Lang, George W. Herz, questioned Sebold on his decision to agree to espionage related to the threats from the *Gestapo* / Gassner:

> ""I wasn't scared to become a spy," he declared. "I was an American citizen and I wouldn't give in to force."
>
> "But you agreed to become a spy," pestered Mr. Herz.
>
> "They had me in a corner."
>
> "What do you mean, did they punch you or use violence?"
>
> "They don't do those things – they do it in a nice way, you know …"
>
> After he had told again of the threats that the "pressure of the State" would be used unless he agreed to join the spy ring. Mr. Herz asked: "So then you agreed to become a spy?""[305]

Defense Counsel Charles A. Oberwager who represented seven of the accused also engaged Sebold during cross examination on the issue of the threats. In his case Oberwager, appeared to have a command of the German language not held by Herz, and directly questioned Sebold related to the phrase, "pressure of the State." During their

[305] "Defense Rebuked in Nazi Spy Trial," *The New York Times,* September 11, 1941, pg. 24.

exchange, Sebold revealed the German word used in the letters from Gassner was *unterstuezung*, which he translated as pressure. In contradiction to this definition, Oberwager contended it [*unterstuezung*] meant "assistance."[306] Oberwager continued, asking, ""Does 'assistance' mean 'pressure," to which Sebold responded, "In the present state of Germany it does.""[307] A review of contemporary and modern translations of *unterstuezung* indicates the most common translations into English agree with Oberwager – support, hold up, bear the weight of, sponsor, vouch for, etc.[308] When one deconjugates the compound word into constituent parts, *unter*, meaning under, and *steutz*, meaning support, one is still unable to translate the word combined or through its parts into "pressure" or a threat, to include a veiled threat of the type intimated by Sebold. *Ung* is similar to the English "ing" suffix which indicates the creation of a noun as a gerund from a verb, so that *unter steuz ung* becomes "support" provided as a noun as a thing that is being provided. *Unterstuezung*, "support," from the state, was a common element of payment promised by the *Abwehr* to its agents – just as in most foreign intelligence agencies involved in recruiting assets for espionage throughout modern history.

Had Sebold actually been engaged by the *Gestapo* or SD the offer of the "assistance of the state" could potentially have been perceived as a threat. Both agencies were known to use violence, intimidation, and coercion as tradecraft. In the *Abwehr*, Canaris had forbidden the use of violence or assassination within espionage, and rarely used sabotage outside of support to direct battle integrated with other elements of military operations – as attested to in multiple biographies and corroborated by his deputy Arnim

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[306] "Defense Rebuked in Nazi Spy Trial," *The New York Times*, September 11, 1941, pg. 24.
[307] "Defense Rebuked in Nazi Spy Trial," *The New York Times*, September 11, 1941, pg. 24.
[308] See, "English Translation of Unterstützung," *Collins* German-to-English Dictionary, https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/german-english/unterstutzung.

Lahousen in declassified intelligence reporting from 1946.[309] Ritter appears to have conducted himself within the *Chef's* espionage code of ethics. In his memoir, he discussed compelling agents through threats of the type claimed by Sebold:

> "Another category consists of people who have been blackmailed. Generally, we [the *Abwehr*] do not go for blackmail. This form of agent recruiting is primarily a privilege of the Communists. Such agents are frequently unreliable."[310]

In Ritter's account to MI-5, Sebold was already being controlled by Münster, but agreed to the "transfer" to Ritter and deployment back to the U.S. Ritter noted of Sebold following their initial meetings, he "agreed to return to the USA to work for Abw: he would explain to the Americans that he had found conditions in GERMANY "unbearable" … a verbal agreement was reached between them as to terms of employment."[311] According to the available files on *Abwehr* officers associated with training and handling Sebold, there was no hesitancy on his part to return to the U.S. and engage in espionage. According to Sandel / Sorau / *Onkel* Hugo, throughout William Sebold's training he was housed in up-scale hotels and provided generously with money for expenses. When he was prepared to deploy back to the United States, "he had been provided with a large sum of money in dollars," some accounts claim $1000, over $21,000 in 2024 equivalency, and throughout his mission, "was to receive his pay regularly via courier."[312] According to FBI files of the case, Sebold was routinely paid by the *Abwehr* between $300 and $600 every month or so, or upwards of $6500 to $13,000 per month in 2024 equivalency. All of his German payments were supposedly

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[309] See "Report by Generalmajor Lahousen on Canaris Secret Organization."
[310] Ritter, pgs. 20-21.
[311] KV-2-88, pg. 81.
[312] KV-2-88, pg. 81.

seized, and in lieu of *Abwehr* money, Sebold was provided an equivalent monthly stipend by the FBI for the rest of his life. Sebold was also tasked by Sandel to occasionally serve as a paymaster or facilitator of payments for other agents. In his initial trip he was provided several hundred dollars for two payments, and over the next year was directed to facilitate multiple payments to different agents, with several complaining to handlers by means outside of Sebold's control they had not received the full amounts promised.

Having established Sebold's account of manipulation under threat by the *Gestapo / Abwehr* was fabricated, his *bona fides* as a double agent are also called into question. Once Sebold had become a double agent, all of his communications with Germany through *U-Stellen* and W/T were conducted by FBI agents pretending to be Sebold. All collected intelligence was reviewed, sanitized, and forwarded along, whereas all messages from Hamburg were received, analyzed, and cataloged. His assignments from Hamburg increasingly directed him to contact other agents to provide control instructions or intelligence tasking, or even to establish a means for them to report their information via Sebold. These efforts were encouraged and supported by the FBI, and over the course of the year-long operation, Sebold established contact with twenty-two of the thirty-three agents arrested as a result of the operation.

As the double agent operation developed, several of the agents with whom Sebold established a relationship became suspicious and discontinued contact, with several professing their belief Sebold was an agent of the U.S. government. Fritz Duquesne was among the first three agents contacted by Sebold after his arrival in the U.S. in February 1940. After establishing initial contact, they embarked on a fairly routine schedule, contacting one another face-to-face, through mail, and via telegram typically multiple

times per week. Matters changed in November 1940, and Sebold reported to the FBI and *Abwehr* that Duquesne had become unresponsive to requests for in-person meetings. Only two face-to-face meetings occurred in November, on the second and twenty-second, both involving payments to Duquesne.[313] After November 21, Duquesne again became unresponsive to Sebold's requests to meet. On December 8, Sebold, via the FBI, radioed Germany about the situation claiming, "I have not heard from Dunn [Duquesne] since last payment, etc." A brief meeting occurred a few days later on December 11, but during this meeting, Duquesne refused to discuss espionage tasking.

Duquesne's pattern of avoidance of Sebold continued through January 1941. However, Duquesne remained in contact with Hamburg through means not controlled by the FBI or known to Sebold. In a *en clare* message sent to his handlers and intercepted by MI-5, Duquesne identified it was Sebold avoiding face-to-face meetings:

> "Dear Uncle:
>
> Well at last I can again write and tell you the direct and the good and bad business. First of all I must tell you that Uncle Harry [Sebold] seems to have faded out of the picture. I have not seen him for weeks. I suppose you know why. However, I have a lot to kick about concerning him. I might as well."[314]

After the January meeting, contact between Sebold and Duquesne ceased, save for a brief exchange on May 12, 1941 when a payment for Duquesne was facilitated by Sebold.[315] Duquesne was arrested the following month. There are multiple indications from within the FBI files that the *Abwehr* had become unhappy with several of Duquesne's lazier attempts to generate intelligence from what were innocuous matters. However, the

[313] Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 49-51.
[314] Duquesne Section 1, pg. 99.
[315] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 64.

cessation of contact activity and the professed concerns of Duquesne for Sebold indicate the agent was concerned with Sebold's authenticity.

Similar concerns related to Sebold's hostile control were present with other agents. Else Weustenfeld had a unique role within the *Abwehr*'s activities in the United States as she was a long-term cohabitant of *Abwehr* officer Hans Ritter who worked directly for Berlin and was brother to Nikolaus Ritter. Weustenfeld was aware of Sebold through Hans, but when contacted by Sebold in the summer of 1940, refused to meet. Weustenfeld did become friendly with Lilly Stein, another of Hamburg's agents in the U.S. and one who did have contact with Sebold. According to Stein, Weustenfeld always counseled her to avoid Sebold, "ELSE [Weustenfeld] refused to have anything to do with him [Sebold] as she wanted to keep clear."[316] In August 1940, Weustenfeld told Stein, things were "hot" meaning there were active counter espionage actions on going, and "there would be some arrests made." Stein of course told this to Sebold who relayed the information to the FBI.[317] Stein too would eventually drop contact with Sebold, although the records are too imprecise to identify the reason, although it likely resulted from her demands for more money rather than suspicions of Sebold.

On April 5, 1941, *Abwehr* courier Leo Waalen informed Sebold another courier, Alfred Brokhoff, "was afraid to come to SEBOLD's office with him, WAALEN."[318] On May 26, 1941, Heinrich Stade refused to meet with Sebold to receive a message from Germany related to his espionage tasking. Sebold attempted to coordinate the meeting via another agent, Richard Eichenlaub, who informed Sebold, "Stade disliked his

[316] "Witness Classification: Elsa Weustenfeld," located in Duquesne, Section 4, pg. 102.
[317] "Lilly Barbara Carola Stein with Aliases," located in Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 328.
[318] "George Gottlob Schuh, alias Georg Schuh," located in Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 148.

[Sebold's] office, and believed he had a microphone hidden in the desk drawer as he [Sebold] was always looking in the drawer when he spoke."[319]

After Stade's refusal to meet and prior to the mass of arrests by the FBI in June 1941, distrust of Sebold spread to other agents. In early June, Sebold solicited Paul Bante to provide dynamite for sabotage operations. On June 10, Sebold went to collect the dynamite, but none of the individuals associated with the transfer would make contact with him. According to the FBI summary of the event:

> "SEBOLD received the package of dynamite from the bar-tender at the Little Casino [Restaurant owned by Eichenlaub], which BANTE left with him. EICHENLAUB was standing near the bar at the time and BANTE was sitting at the bar. EICHENLAUB subsequently asked SEBOLD what was in the package. SEBOLD told him some machinery parts. EICHENLAB then wanted to know what he was going to use it for. EICHENLAUB also asked SEBOLD if REDACTED and STADE had given him anything lately."[320]

The FBI case files indicate this episode was an FBI scheme to entrap the agents as saboteurs which in turn resulted in Sebold's request to Bante to acquire explosives. Prior to his request in late May or early June 1941, there was no evidence of any discussion or intimation of sabotage by any of the individuals exposed by Sebold to include all of his engagements with the various groups. Bante, Eichenlaub, and Stade had all been witting to Sebold's request that Bante obtain the dynamite, so their refusal to be connected directly with the transfer and Eichenlaub's queries indicated their concern toward being connected with Sebold. Their hesitancy emphasized the out-of-place nature of Sebold's request within the scope of their contacts and raises the probability the FBI entrapment scheme had backfired and compounded the already present concerns they held that

[319] "Richard Eichenlaub, alias Dick," located in Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 149.
[320] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 151. REDACTED indicates words that were blacked out within the FOIA release of the original case files.

Sebold was under government control. This assessment is supported by the fact that following the trial, Bante, the procurer of the dynamite, and Eichenlaub each were sentenced only to eighteen months imprisonment and fined $1000. Stade was sentenced to fifteen months and fined $1000 dollars. Duquesne on the other had was sentenced to serve eighteen years.[321]

By June 14, other agents were refusing to meet at Sebold's office. When Eichenlaub refused to meet further, Sebold went to his restaurant to confront him:

> "and found EICHENLAUB at the bar, "all up in the air." He would not speak to SEBOLD immediately. SEBOLD asked him if he had seen STADE and REDACTED. He said not since Friday, that they were preparing to leave New York possibly that evening or the next morning, that the cause of this was his, SEBOLD's last interview with REDACTED and that both men don't know who they can trust. He said the whole bunch including BANTE are scared."[322]

Sebold's details of the engagement with Eichenlaub revealed he, Bante, and Stade were planning to leave New York as soon as possible related to their lack of trust of Sebold. All were arrested before they could leave the city.

Over a quarter of the agents, at least six of twenty-two, with whom Sebold had direct contact between February 1940 and June 1941 had come to distrust him and had avoided contact or prepared to leave the city to avoid arrest. At least one agent had identified that Sebold had an audio recording device in his office. Those engaged by Sebold to procure dynamite appear to have suspected him of foul play in the matter and avoided directly associating with the transfer of the material.

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[321] "Frederick Duquesne Interesting Case Right Up," U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, March 12, 1985, https://vault.fbi.gov/DuquesneSpyRing/DuquesneSpyRingPart1of1/view.
[322] Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 151-152.

In summation, this review of declassified records related to Sebold's role as a double agent identified multiple suspicious elements of his background and execution of his espionage activities on behalf of the FBI. Sebold's account of forced espionage through intimidation was revealed as entirely fabricated, raising the potential he held the clear intention of espionage and not becoming a double. His claims were never questioned or investigated by his American handlers, and they believed his self-attested forthrightness and his tales of coercion. The same problems that were exposed in the investigation of Sebold's claims manifested throughout the double operation. The faith placed in his veracity resulted in loose control of his activities. This naïve approach to double agent operations does not distract from the excellent work done by these FBI agents that resulted in the arrest of thirty-three spies. However, the falsehoods promoted by Sebold have been perpetuated as historical fact to the extent they are almost unassailable. Had the FBI agents handling Sebold been more aware of his, and most doubles' conflicting motivations, perhaps it would have been possible to run a more effective operation that could have revealed even more agents active in the U.S. Perhaps, a skeptic like Masterman, or Ritter, would have suspected Sebold of fleecing payments, engaging in inappropriate relationships with agents, or seeking personal gain over mission, in addition to having the potential to play both sides.[323]

[323] In the case of unprofessional relationships, there are indications within the FBI case file Sebold either engaged in or was suspected of paying Lilly Stein for sex. In their first meeting Stein admitted she worked as a prostitute in Austria and New York, and throughout their contact, Sebold provided her with payments outside of what he was directed by the *Abwehr* and the FBI. This allegation is purely circumstantial and there is no direct evidence within the FBI case file of payment for sex by Sebold with Stein.

Network Analysis – The Duquesne Ring

Having established there is sufficient evidence to indicate William Sebold was not as he and the FBI claimed, within the scope of this analysis, it becomes appropriate to question other foundationally established aspects of the case. Specifically, analysis of the same declassified FBI files contradicts two of the primary "facts" presented by the Bureau, one, that its arrests related to one single, unified ring, or network, responsible for all "Nazi" espionage in the United States, and two, this ring was directed by Frederick Duquesne. By July 1, 1941, the FBI was releasing information to the press that claimed the arrests were of one group led by Duquesne, "In the group that pleaded not guilty were Frederick Joubert Duquesne, said by the government to be the leader."[324] From that point onward, Duquesne has been universally identified as the leader of the group, and this mischaracterization of his role persists to the modern day. According to the FBI's website, Duquesne was "a veteran spy who served as the group's leader." The site further emphasizes these claims, saying the arrests were of "33 members of the Nazi spy ring headed by Duquesne."[325]

A review of the available FBI investigative files along with declassified British and German archival documents exposes, contrary to FBI statements and the recognized orthodox history of these events, Duquesne held no leadership role among those arrested in June 1941. FBI information on the thirty-three arrested agents identified within its investigation was used to develop a matrix to identify direct contact and relationships :

Table 3 Cross-Contacts Between Agents of the "Duquesne Ring"

Agent	Total Contacts

[324] "Seven of Spy Ring Plead Guilty Here; Three More Seized," *The New York Times,* July 1, 1941, pg. 1.
[325] "Duquesne Spy Ring."

Sebold	23
Bante	9
Blank	4
Brokhoff	8
Clausing	11
Dold	7
Duquesne	6
Ebeling	7
Eichenlaub	9
Eilers	1
Agent	Total Contacts
Fehse	16
Heine	2
Jahnke	5
Kaercher	3
Klein	4
Kleiss	6
Lang	2
Lewis	1
Menzenen	3
Reuper	10
Roeder	2
Scholz	5
Schuh	7
Siegler	12
Stabler	2
Stade	5
Stein	5
Stigler	14
Struck	7
Waalen	14
Walischewski	2
Weustenfeld	2
Wheeler-Hill	5
Zenzinger	2[326]

[326] These numbers were compiled by creating a reference chart of all thirty-three arrested agents and their contacts with one another as described within the Duquesne case files and the summary of those files located at "Frederick Duquesne Interesting Case Write Up," U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., March 12, 1985, https://vault.fbi.gov/DuquesneSpyRing/. All confirmed contacts were annotated within the reference chart and supported with evidence of association as presented by the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI. Table 3 provides only two columns of this reference chart, the names of the individuals, and their total cumulative contacts with other agents associated within the operation.

As shown in the matrix totals, Duquesne had almost no contact with any of the arrested agents which would have made the purported leadership role impossible. Analysis of the FBI files revealed Duquesne had direct contact with Sebold, of course, Franz Siegler, a courier, and Else Weustenfeld. Duquesne knew of the espionage activities of Everett Roeder; however, a direct connection was not exposed during the investigation and there was no evidence Roeder knew of Duquesne. Finally, while Lilly Stein knew of Duquesne, through the *deckname* Jim, neither she nor Duquesne were permitted by their handlers to have direct contact. Rather than being the leader of the group, Duquesne had no contact or even knowledge of twenty-eight of the arrested agents.

Since the FBI was controlling all communications between Sebold and Germany, all communications related to Duquesne were included within its files. In those communications there were no instances wherein Duquesne was directed to contact any agents and no directions from his control on how he was to lead any espionage group.[327] Further, in Duquesne's sworn testimony he identified his knowledge of other *Abwehr* agents and officers, including details related to his recruitment by Ritter, but did not identify any contact with any of the agents arrested in 1941. He does not have appeared to be questioned on the existence of any relationships with the other arrested agents indicating the investigating FBI agents were aware at the time of his arrest he had no such contact. The only exceptions to his lack of contact were two brief meetings between he and Weustenfeld, both of which were corroborated in her statements to the FBI.[328] In over sixty pages of presented evidence, there are no indications or evidence collected and

[327] Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 20-72.
[328] Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 73-82.

provided that indicate an assumed or real role on the part of Duquesne as a leader among the thirty-three arrested agents or any sub-group of those agents.

Instead, the evidence found within the declassified FBI case files indicates Duquesne operated independently from contact with other agents, other than Sebold and occasional couriers. When executing tasking for Duquesne through Sebold, Ritter always directly solitary missions. For example, in radio communications from November 21, 1940, Duquesne was directed to and assess potential agents:

> "First. For Dunn [Duquesne]. Try to hire the following people said to be OK. Baroness RENEE BUCOVITCH, divorced REDACTED now married to Italian of Yugoslavian birth, care of REDACTED. Be careful about REDACTED Baron VON ESSENHARST, former German air officer, and FRED KREUTZENSTEIN, German-Brazilian, known sportsman. Latter two in New York telephone book. Expect early report."[329]

In another example of communications from Duquesne's handlers to Sebold, coordination for payments specifically prohibited cross-contact between agents:

> "Money situation is not clear. Mexico friend [Hans Ritter] should have paid you three hundred, Dunn [Duquesne] three hundred, Lilly [Stein] three hundred. Did you and Dunn receive money. Don't ask Lilly."[330]

In over one hundred messages from Germany related to Duquesne, there was not a single instance of reporting that connected him with any other agents in the U.S.

In contrast to claims of leadership, Duquesne distrusted other agents and attempted to receive all credit and remuneration for his work. His independence included hiding collection from Sebold, and in his statement to the FBI, Duquesne identified:

> "I furnished various Photostats to SEBOLD on various occasions in New York City, pertaining to heavy industry in the United States and also I mailed some of this same material myself to the address in Portugal

[329] Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 51-52.
[330] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 55.

> without telling SEBOLD of it, due to the fact that when the information looked particularly good, I desired to get the credit for it myself."[331]

Duquesne was paid for intelligence production rather than receiving a regular stipend. On November 6, 1940, he requested funds to make a trip to Wilmington, Delaware to photograph fuel storage areas of the port.[332] Just four days later the operation and the funds were approved by Hamburg via W/T, "Three hundred for Wilmington OK." Duquesne disappeared, supposedly to head to Delaware, but his reports of the matters were delayed, along with future payments.[333]

His pursuit of individual credit was rooted in greed and led to his attempts to pass innocuous matters as legitimate fruits of espionage. On November 12, 1940, Duquesne reported via Sebold 150 Brewster aircraft were being built for The Netherlands. The following week he was admonished by his handlers for this report, "Tell Dunn not to give newspaper reports. Reports about the one five naught Brewster planes for Dutch appeared in newspaper of tenth November."[334] When Duquesne produced intelligence of value he was appropriately compensated. Another message stated of Duquesne's collection activities, "Dunn [Duquesne] should give you accurate details."[335]

Some of his distrust was legitimate. On at least one occasion, money meant for Duquesne was kept by another agent. According to Else Weustenfeld, she had met Duquesne on two occasions, one to deliver a payment of $300 on behalf of Lilly Stein and a second time when Duquesne contacted her at her place of work. According to Duquesne, Weustenfeld's demeanor made it clear to him she did not want further

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[331] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 80.
[332] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 48.
[333] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 48. It was after this operation that Sebold began to report Duquesne's unwillingness to meet.
[334] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 51.
[335] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 55.

contact.[336] At a later point, Weustenfeld was requested by Duquesne's handlers, without the involvement of Sebold, to coordinate a second payment for Duquesne but she never went through with the transfer and kept the funds for herself.[337]

In addition to Duquesne's lack of a leadership role, while he was a prolific reporter of intelligence matters and responsive to direct tasking from Hamburg, he also was more concerned with advancing his personal "brand" as a spy master to Sebold than conducting espionage. Often the elder agent would regale the W/T operator with tales of his espionage and sabotage exploits against the British over the previous four decades. Frequently their meetings offered peremptory exchanges of intelligence and orders only to quickly transfer into story time with Duquesne discussing, and aggrandizing, his past or providing his thoughts on effective tradecraft. Self-promotion was nothing new for Duquesne, he had spent a lifetime exaggerating and fabricating details of his exploits for personal and financial gain. Most infamously, he had claimed to be the man responsible for the death of Lord Kitchener through the sinking of HMS *Hampshire* in 1916. Supposedly he had disguised himself as a Russian noble and snuck aboard *Hampshire.* Once there, and having confirmed Kitchener was onboard, he signaled to a nearby U-Boat, left in a life raft, and was picked up by the U-boat after *Hampshire* was sunk. No one survived to provide an alternative account of the ship's sinking.[338]

With Sebold, Duquesne's proclivity for self-aggrandizement took prominence in their engagements and evidenced itself through ridiculous statements regarding his past espionage *curriculum vitae* and many of his fantastical reports in postscript are a

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[336] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 81.
[337] "Elsa Weustenfeld," located in Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 117.
[338] Clement Wood, *The Man Who Killed Kitchener: The Life of Fritz Joubert Duquesne*. New York: William Faro, 1932.

challenge to be taken seriously. For example, during his first face-to-face meeting with Sebold, Duquesne stated during the First World War he was personally responsible for the destruction of 22 British ships with timebombs. When asking about Sebold's personal cipher issued by the *Abwehr*, Duquesne claimed he recognized the cipher because he was its inventor.[339] Sebold's codes, referred to by the *Abwehr* as Erica and PON had been developed by the *Abwehr* for use in the early-to-mid 1930s with no indication of involvement by Duquesne. Duquesne later claimed all *U-Stellen* mail sent to the United States from Germany was routed through San Francisco where it was rewritten by "Hitler's personal friend" and then distributed.[340] On multiple occasions, Duquesne sent barely coded messages to Sebold stating either Duquesne or Sebold were under surveillance by Federal agents.[341] At the time of the supposed surveillance, FBI agents actually were not following Duquesne or Sebold – a cursory review of the FBI case files indicates none of Duquesne's warnings ever aligned with actual surveillance. At another meeting, he directed Sebold to report to the *Abwehr* U.S. intelligence reports were being "smuggled" out of Europe by engraving them on spoons, pots, pans, and other items.[342] For a last example, during multiple engagements, Duquesne would discuss his sabotage capabilities, always using fanciful examples, such as rolling phosphorus into chewing gum and randomly throwing the gum into a ship's storeroom to start a fire.

While dozens of other examples from the investigation or his book could be used to further illustrate his exaggeratory and self-promoting personality, the point in describing Duquesne's bearing is not to further belittle the agent. Rather, his

[339] Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 27-28.
[340] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 29.
[341] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 44.
[342] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 48.

peccadilloes toward self-advertising highlight his unsuitability for leadership among the *Abwehr's* U.S.-based activities. Despite his ability to produce actual intelligence, Duquesne was just as apt to spend his time building his personal legend than engaging in espionage or make an attempt at any leadership of any group. Instead, the evidence presented within the declassified case files clearly showed Duquesne did not serve as the group's leader and had no contact with a majority of the agents arrested in June 1941. He eschewed contact with any agents except those through which he received his orders or payment. His orders received from Germany emphasized he was a singleton, and there was no evidence of his conducting any espionage activity with other agents.

Apart from providing clear evidence Duquesne was not the leader of the agents, continued analysis of the files further exposes those arrested were not part of a single, unified group as claimed by the FBI then and now, but rather they comprised multiple small networks, independent actors, loosely connected agents without direct contact with one another, and remnant *Gestapo* actors loosely connected to *Abwehr* agents through social settings. Returning to the matrix displaying cross-agent connections within the Duquesne investigation (Table 3), of the seven agents who had contact with ten or more other agents, five of those agents were cross-connected with one another, meaning the majority of their connectivity was with one another rather than a larger group.

Among agents with more than ten associations, two distinct groups emerge and intersect with one another. The first group of Bante, Eichenlaub, and Stade who can be classified as agents of the *Gestapo* – meaning the actual *Gestapo* and not an FBI error in labeling. Such a designation is significant since throughout the investigative files, the FBI consistently attributes all *Abwehr* activities to the *Gestapo.* In the cases of Bante,

Eichenlaub, and Stade, there is information that firmly indicates they did indeed work for the real *Gestapo.* For Eichenlaub, he told investigators after his arrest that he had been recruited by the *Gestapo* to identify Germans and foreigners sailing from New York to Germany who might not declare their cash holdings in foreign currency. As part of Germany's economic recovery, all foreign currency was prohibited from use in Germany and had to be converted into Reichsmarks immediately upon entry. No Reichsmarks were allowed to leave the country and cash had to be converted to *Reisemarks* for travelers abroad. Failure to properly disclose foreign currency totals was criminal and under the purview of the *Gestapo,* not the *Abwehr.* In addition to foreign currency matters, the *Gestapo* attempted to identify German immigrants to the United States who had brought wealth and goods outside of Germany without converting it into *Reisemarks* or declaring it for tax purposes. To assist in his duties, Eichenlaub recruited Bante and Stade.[343] According to Bante:

> "RICHARD EICHENLAUB … told him about HEINZ STADE, and said that he was working with STADE … to find out how refugees succeeded in getting money and valuables out of Germany. BANTE adds that through EICHENLAUB, he met STADE."[344]

Complicating analytical matters, Eichenlaub's group of *Gestapo* agents had direct contact with the second group of cross-connected agents, a gang of Bremen-recruited couriers that frequented Eichenlaub's restaurant, the Little Casino. This second group included five agents with ten or more associations, Clausing, Fehse, Siegler, Stigler, and Waalen. Fehse, Siegler, and Stigler were the more senior of the group and held contact with five other commonly-connected couriers responsible for espionage facilitation

[343] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 149.
[344] Duquesne, Section 3, pgs. 272, 283.

between the United States and Europe via Lisbon, Portugal or South America. The common connective tissue of the group was Paul Fehse who was identified by several of the other agents and couriers as the leader of the "maritime division" in the United States, indicating he was an agent of *Nebenstelle* Bremen's m*aritime nachrichtendienst*.[345] His association with Bremen and Hamburg was corroborated in the Bremen files through an entry that identifies Fehse as *Agenten* A 3549.[346]

No details relatable to the other couriers were listed within the Bremen files, indicating they were either under the control of Fehse, or were receiving instructions through other agents or other *Abwehrstellen*. Within the investigative file on Fehse, was information stipulating the FBI had learned he worked directly with an agent who went by the *deckname* Gerhoff operating from Genoa. The name Gerhoff has been associated with Hans Grimm, the maritime espionage expert recruited and developed by Pheiffer, which provides further evidence the exposed couriers were most likely all under the tactical control of Bremen.[347] As a functional leader for the *Abwehr's* U.S.-side courier agents, Fehse had a direct role in the recruitment and deployment of Siegler and Stigler and was responsible for "assigning" all of the couriers exposed during the Sebold operation; meaning he coordinated the vessels on which they sought employment in order to provide access to intelligence or to connect with other *Abwehr* activities.

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[345] "Paul Otto Alwin Fehse, with aliases P. F. Brokhoff, Fink," located in Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 195.
[346] RW 49 528, pg. 263. The 3500 series was allocated to *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg, indicating Fehse was recruited by Hamburg, but because of his courier duties was run from *Nebenstelle* Bremen.
[347] In the Duquesne files related to Fehse he provided a convoluted picture of his *Abwehr* chain of command. He informed Sebold, and through him the FBI, that he worked for Gerhoff, a Kriegsmarine Admiral who ran a "division" of the secret service [the Abwehr]. It is possible the mischaracterization of Gerhoff was done purposefully or related to a misunderstanding of either Sebold or the FBI transcribers. What appears to be the case is Fehse was a long time *V-Mann* of the *Abwehr* who in addition to his courier duties, had received additional espionage training and was placed in a leadership position over many of the other couriers operating from the U.S. Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 200-201.

Fehse's leadership role explains why so many couriers were exposed during the investigation – 33% of the arrests – when previously, like during the times of Eitel and Schlüter, they had operated with a high degree of operational security. The courier system established by Pheiffer enabled distant control of U.S. agents from 1933 onward. By 1940, courier activities were becoming less useful as a result of the continued closing of access to the U.S. from Europe and the increasing need for rapid dissemination of intelligence on Europe-bound convoys. Fehse had ascertained the system was becoming insufficient to relay maritime intelligence. In July 1940, Paul Fehse learned from Stigler of a new *Abwehr* agent in the New York area operating a W/T in direct contact with Hamburg. Stigler had first made contact with Sebold, the W/T operator in question, probably through Eichenlaub during one of their encounters in the Little Casino.

On June 25, 1940, Stigler mentioned to Sebold he worked for the "ringleader" of the "Division in the United States … a man named Paul Fehse." It is absent from the record whether it was Fehse, Sebold, or Stigler who first suggested Fehse and Sebold meet – the available *Abwehr* communications sent to Sebold are absent of any orders from Hamburg to make contact. However, a review of the entire FBI investigation file leads to the presumption the FBI directed Sebold to make the connection in order to entrap other espionage agents, especially since Stigler had identified Fehse as a "ring leader." Their first meeting occurred on July 1, 1940 which ultimately enabled the FBI to arrest the ten couriers and Menzenen, a steward who worked on the Pan Am transatlantic clipper service to Lisbon who also worked as a courier.[348]

[348] Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 194-198.

The first meeting between Sebold and Fehse included an exchange of *bona fides* so that each might know the other as a legitimate agent. Sebold told of his recruitment. Fehse did the same and also shared he was known by the *deckname* Fink so that Sebold might check out his background with his own handlers. Fehse also quickly revealed his interest in meeting with Sebold – access to W/T communications with Germany.[349] Sebold and his W/T offered Fehse and the couriers the solution to the problem of lack of timeliness in reporting maritime intelligence. Rather than send perishable intelligence information on convoys through mail or within the courier networks, the couriers could use their access to the ports, to develop intelligence and provide it via Sebold for instant transmission to Germany. As the de facto leader of the courier network in the northeast, over the coming months Fehse and his couriers provided additional maritime intelligence reporting to Sebold for direct transmit to Germany. Five of the couriers directly engaged with Sebold, meeting with him at his New York office where they were recorded on audio and video passing maritime intelligence, they or their contacts had collected to Sebold. Five others were connected to through the central five couriers, mostly through the exposure of Fehse.

However, the investigation and the exploitation of the ten maritime and one air courier failed to identify any agents in the U.S. for which their courier services were being employed. Duquesne and Edmund Heine, a Detroit-based *Abwehr* agent, did have contact with the couriers, however, their exposure did not result from a connection with the couriers, with Heine's exposure coming through his use of Lilly Stein as an *U-Fraulein*. Lang, Reuper, and Roeder all previously had contact with Germany via

[349] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 198.

couriers, but those mechanisms were also not identified within the scope of the investigation, and there was no information available in older or newly available primary sources to indicate whether or not any of these agents had contact with the *Abwehr* in Germany through the specific couriers identified within the Sebold affair. Additionally, the investigation failed to identify who the couriers were responsive to within the *Abwehr,* so that as a result of the investigation, arrest, and interrogations, the FBI learned nothing of the structure of the *Abwehr,* its other agents in the U.S, or the methodologies used by couriers within the U.S.

Moving to the others arrested in June 1941, Lang's role in the theft of the Norden bombsight has been discussed, and it appears that since the German version of the bombsight was completed no later than the summer of 1938, afterward he continued to engage in additional espionage on behalf of the *Abwehr*.[350] Lang's only direct contact within the investigation was Sebold, and while there was some work done to use Lang's expertise to produce additional intelligence, the primary purpose of this directed contact was to arrange for Lang's relocation to Germany. On one occasion Lang received direction from his handlers outside of contact with Sebold, and FBI knowledge, wherein he was used to validate whether or not Sebold had broken off contact with Lilly Stein as had been directed by Hamburg. Within this tasking there was no indication Lang had awareness of Stein's identity or her role in *Abwehr* espionage and contact with Sebold, but rather had been told to request of Sebold whether or not he had contact with the

[350] Lang and his wife traveled to and from Germany from June to September 1938 to view the completed German version of the Norden bombsight. "Herman Lang, with aliases," located in Duquesne, Section 2, pg. 181.

"Jewess." From the context of the exchange provided by Sebold to the FBI, it does not appear Lang even knew the name of Stein.[351]

Carl Reuper was also operating independently from other agents. The only contact he had with other agents associated with the investigation was through Sebold, although he had been directed on several occasions to send intelligence via Fehse's couriers, but in these situations, the contact was solely functional for the passing of intelligence rather than sustained operational relationships.

Initial contact messages from Sebold to Reuper identified Reuper was probably an agent of *Nebenstelle* Bremen. Sebold was provided a note to hand Reuper to establish his *bona fides,* stating, "Kar Reupert … *Gruss von* REDACTED *aus Bremen"* (Greetings from REDACTED from Bremen).[352] If this was indeed the case, given the close association of Reuper with officers and agents of Hamburg, he may have been co-run by Bremen and Hamburg. For his part Reuper claimed not to need any assistance from Sebold and from then on continued to conduct all of his communications through China. Sebold sustained contact in the coming months, wherein Reuper communicated through him to his handlers almost entirely related to his demands for additional payments rather than espionage tasking or the reporting of intelligence.[353]

It was through Reuper that the FBI was able to identify the espionage activities of Alex Wheeler-Hill who never had contact with Sebold. The focus on that aspect of espionage revealed Reuper had traveled to Germany in 1939 to receive espionage training. While there, he met Wheeler-Hill who had been an *Abwehr* agent for several

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[351] "Witness Classification: Herman Lang," located in Duquesne, Section 2, pg. 179.
[352] "Carl Reuper, w.a.s. Karl Reuper, Kar Reuper, Karl Reupert, Huebner," located in Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 7. W.a.s. or simply, "was" in this context was shorthand for "with aliases."
[353] Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 8.

years including previously undiscovered operations in the United Kingdom. When Reuper was deployed to the U.S. Wheeler-Hill was sent as his personal W/T support agent. It was then through Wheeler-Hill the FBI identified Jahnke, Kaercher, Klein, and Scholz. All of these agents were solely involved in the W/T operations that supported Reuper's espionage. None had contact with Sebold or the others arrested within the scope of the investigation, and there is insufficient information to determine whether or not they had contact with other agents who remained unidentified – although two W/T operators should have been able to support multiple agents reporting to Germany. It also does not appear from the investigation file, that the FBI attempted to identify or exploit the W/T communications between Wheeler-Hill and Jahnke with Germany or other *Abwehr* W/T stations in the Western Hemisphere; raising questions of FBI exploitation.

Everett Roeder was probably also one of Ritter's agents. He worked at the Sperry Gyroscope Company and appeared to have stolen several Sperry technologies including at least its gyroscope technology, specific gyroscopes used to support the Norden sight, and Sperry's own advanced bombsight designs. Duquesne knew of him but there is no evidence they ever met or that Roeder knew of Duquesne. Stigler did support Roeder as a courier and the two knew each other's identities. Roeder had no contact with any other agents arrested in 1941. He was placed in contact with Sebold by Hamburg to facilitate contact between the agent and handler as it appears Roeder had refused to provide intelligence unless he was paid tens-of-thousands of dollars he believed he was owed. Contact between Roeder and Sebold focused on fixing this situation.

Other individuals arrested as a result of the investigation also had sparse connections with other arrested agents or Sebold. Evelynn Clayton Lewis was the long-

term cohabitant of Duquesne and, while knowledgeable of his activities, she does not appear herself to have been involved in espionage. Edmund Heine was operating independently from Detroit collecting intelligence on defense materiel production. He was only exposed to the FBI through his *U-Stellen* operations that included sending reporting via Stein for transmission to Germany. Some of Heine's reporting had been transmitted through Fehse's couriers, but neither he nor they knew of one another. An FBI mail hold on Stein's post netted these communications, thus exposing Heine. In turn, Heinrich Eilers was only exposed through mail connections with.

As a result of this analysis, one is left with the conclusion that contrary to the official statements of the FBI from 1941 to the present day, the June 1941 arrests of thirty-three agents did not constitute a single, unified network led by Duquesne. Rather, the FBI double agent operation revealed four independent operations being facilitated by Hamburg (Duquesne, Lang, Reuper, and Roeder), multiple couriers facilitated by Bremen's agents in Genoa and Lisbon coordinated in the U.S. by Fehse, a small element of a *Gestapo* activities, and several independent agents exposed by happenstance or good fortune. What is unclear regarding the difference between the official FBI statements on the operation and what has been revealed within the investigation's files is why, despite the prevalence of the available evidence, the Bureau claimed the arrests involved a single network led by Duquesne. This research has not revealed an answer to this question and there is no information recovered within primary source materials that reveals the cause or even that there existed, previously or in the present, an awareness by the FBI of the errors in its public pronouncements. What appears most likely based on context provided by external histories regarding the FBI, is that in the efforts by Hoover to promote the

FBI as the primary intelligence service of the United States, establishing a positive narrative of FBI competence in counter espionage overtook actual performance. The Bureau sought to sell itself as overwhelmingly capable to the American voting public, and in so doing, created a false narrative that distorted the historical record and resulted in the burying of the very real positive aspects of its work within the Sebold operation. Overtime, the exaggerated narrative became so common as to achieve a level of unassailable fact within the Bureau and among history texts.[354]

Additionally two other aspects of FBI misinformation were revealed through this analysis, one, that the Bureau in fact believed its assessment, and two, the Bureau was aware of the true status of the agents, but presented the facts otherwise in order to provide a consumable message to the American public. Unfortunately, the preponderance of evidence available indicates the first cause is probably more likely, at least among the FBI rank and file, than the second. For instance, one can consider the constant use of *Gestapo* as shorthand for German espionage agencies which reveals a lack of precision of understanding of the adversary. Additionally, there appears to have been no concerted effort to develop understanding of agent recruitment or handling by the *Abwehr*. The only exception to this condition were attempts by Sebold, almost certainly prodded by his Bureau handlers, to ascertain whether or not the identified agents were involved with sabotage.[355] As a result of this lack of investigative pursuits, the FBI discovered little to no valuable information on the structure of the *Abwehr*, the focus of its espionage agents

[354] For the attempts by Hoover to establish the FBI as the nation's premier intelligence service, see Tim Weiner, *Enemies: A History of the FBI.* New York: Random House, 2012.
[355] For examples, see "Statement of Paul Otto Alwin Fehse," located in Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 253, and "Franz Joseph Stigler, with aliases "Aufzug," Franz Stigler, Frank Stigler," located in Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 370.

in terms of collection in the United States, its methods of spotting, assessing, and recruiting agents, or the its other country-wide espionage operations. Information on these areas would have empowered the FBI to understand and then prevent *Abwehr* methodologies for future agent recruitment.

Turrou initially utilized criminal terminology when referring to espionage, so that "ring" was adopted into parlance for counter espionage. Thus, Rumrich was part of a "ring," meaning an interconnected system of networks involved in espionage. One can therefore ascertain that the foundational belief was espionage was affected by rings, or networks, providing various functions within the same overall purpose. This taxonomy and typology appears to have been forcibly applied within the Duquesne investigation, resulting in the use of "Duquesne Ring" and the identification of a "ring" leader in Duquesne, even though these concepts were inappropriate. The same issues repeated later in 1941 with the revelation of the "Ludwig Ring" as addressed later in the chapter.

One is therefore left with the assessment that while the practical tradecraft matters of investigation by the FBI as the foremost U.S. counter espionage agency had improved in the two years since Rumrich, its understanding of the *Abwehr* had progressed little, ultimately leaving the country open to continued intelligence exploitation by the enemy on the horizon. The conditions that produced this assessment would endure through the end of the Second World War, so that while good field work resulted in the identification of espionage agents, the Bureau was never able to understand the various espionage agencies at play, identify their targets and methodologies, or develop a systematic approach to the hardening of military intelligence to prevent exploitation.

A New Assessment – The Duquesne Ring as a Scapegoat

In *Game of Foxes*, Ladislaw Farago proposed that the Sebold affair was known to the *Abwehr*. According to memorandum, "OKW A Aus/Abw (ZR1) B. No. 899-41, Top Secret," Canaris detailed the *Abwehr's* knowledge of FBI control of Sebold to the OKW:

> "Shortly after the commencement of his [Sebold] activities in the United States … the suspicion arose that the intelligence he was submitting could not be trusted implicitly … The Abwehr's suspicion of his material, that soon extended to the person of Seebold [sic], was aggravated when the agent attempted to obtain from us the code used by another clandestine transmitter (MAX) for which he was supposed to act merely as a relay station … Seebold then distorted the cipher in which certain instructions were radioed to MAX through him. This, too, was quickly discovered, resulting in the deepening of our distrust of Sebold … the Abwehr categorically refused to attach Seebold other agents working in the United States, in order to avoid possible jeopardy to the agents and their contacts.
>
> From this point on, communications to Seebold included deliberately misleading information, to deceive the adversary about the status of our operations or to create confusion in his mind about our true objectives."[356]

As with many of Farago's accounts, he failed to provide a citation of the supposed memorandum, and reviews during the research for this paper of the U.S. and German archives failed to produce such a document. However, he raised the idea of *Abwehr* awareness and included truthful details regarding the structure of the *Abwehr*.

While not confirming Farago, but supposing for a moment the *Abwehr* was witting to the double agent operation, it logically follows there would be evidence of actions taken by the *Abwehr* along the lines of those laid out, supposedly, by Canaris, to include Sebold's isolation from agents, attempts by the *Abwehr* to determine the extent of Sebold's compromise, an increasing level of mistrust between Sebold and his contacts,

[356] Farago, pgs. 538-540. MAX was the callsign associated with the *Abwehr* station that operated out of the German embassy in Mexico City under the direction of Major Georg Nicholas. While no such memorandum can be located in the German archives, Farago did conduct extensive interviews with Nicholas Ritter who would have known of a double agent operation. The FBI ran three other double agent operations during the war, and at least two of those agents were suspected by the *Abwehr* of being doubles.

and proof of agent operations in the Northeast were isolated from Sebold. A review of the FBI investigation files associated with Sebold and the larger repository of evidence found in the FBI's subsequent Ludwig espionage investigation in late 1941 identifies contextual evidence of all these conditions.

In September 1941, the FBI arrested 18-year-old Lucy Boehmler for her associations with *Abwehr* agent Kurt Frederick Ludwig who had been operating as a senior espionage officer in the United States since 1940 (to be covered in the next section). Within her statement during interrogation, Boehmler recounted how Ludwig provided her background on the Sebold-associated arrests:

> "After the newspaper story came out about the arrest of a large number of spies in New York City, Mr. LUDWIG and I discussed the newspaper article and he told me that the people who were arrested didn't amount to much and were not important."[357]

Ludwig at the time was working for the *Abwehr's* Berlin headquarters under the direction of Admiral Canaris through an intermediary.[358] He was in contact with senior officers in Berlin overseeing U.S.-based espionage and neither he nor any of his primary agents had contact with or were exposed by Sebold.

While Ludwig operated in the same area and had occasional contact with some of the couriers and W/T operators picked-up by the FBI within the Sebold operation, he avoided surveillance activities and any linkages to the case. Ludwig was with Scholz and Kaercher when they were arrested in June 1941, but the FBI would not learn he was also associated with espionage activity until August 7, 1941, when, through information provided by MI-5, Ludwig's larger espionage connections were exposed. In a secret

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[357] Statement of Lucy Boehmler, New York, August 26, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 10, pg. 221.
[358] Ludwig was directly involved in the establishment of Ulrich von der Osten's control of all U.S. networks. Von der Osten has been identified as reporting directly to Canaris.

writing message sent to Berlin and intercepted and exploited by British censors, Ludwig had identified, "as he [Ludwig], BRUNO [SCHOLZ] and his friend [KAERCHER], went into a house four F.B.I. men followed and arrested BRUNO and his friend." According to the FBI agents who made the arrest, "SCHOLZ and KAERCHER were seen to have conversed with a third man who was not placed under arrest."[359] The fact Ludwig, the most senior and prolific *Abwehr* officer in the United States at the time, was present at the point of arrest and in the company of two individuals under FBI surveillance highlights the effective operational security put in place by Ludwig over his and his agents' operations.

In February 1941, when Paul Fehse was attempting to find someone who had the ability to radio his intelligence to Germany, Eichenlaub told him he had heard rumors of an agent located in the Trenton, New Jersey area who operated a W/T out of the back of his car.[360] The agent in question was Ludwig, but the fact neither Eichenlaub with his ties to the *Gestapo* nor Fehse who was the senior Bremen courier agent were aware of Ludwig or his operations except in the most general terms again highlights the degree of separation enforced by the *Abwehr* between the agents associated with Sebold and its senior operatives.

Further emphasizing the separation between agents and operations is the fact Ludwig was also aware of Wheeler-Hill's W/T support to Reuper. Boehmler also revealed Ludwig's personal knowledge of Wheeler-Hill stating, "Mr. LUDWIG also said he believed that the man WHEELER-HILL … talked too much. Mr. LUDWIG said that

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[359] T. J. Donegan, "RE: Fred Ludwig, With aliases, et al. Espionage – G (Bureau File 65-33780)," Memorandum, New York, New York, August 7, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 4, pg. 28.
[360] "Hartwig Richard Kleiss, with aliases: Herman Hartwig Kleiss, Hardt, Hard, Jimmy Hard, Richard Hermann, H. Herman," located in Duquesne, Section 2, pg. 143.

he knew WHEELER-HILL."[361] Other descriptions of Wheeler-Hill found within the Ludwig case file reveal Ludwig had described Wheeler-Hill as "stupid, cowardly and lazy – without experience." Since Ludwig's espionage career with the *Abwehr* began no later than 1936 and Wheeler-Hill had been an *Abwehr* agent since at least 1938, it appears at some point their paths had crossed sufficiently for Ludwig to develop a negative opinion of the agent. Boehmler also revealed Ludwig believed it had been Wheeler-Hill's errors that resulted in the exposure, indicating he had been given no information on Sebold and was unaware of that operation. His ignorance therefore is additional evidence on the *Abwehr's* separation of operations and agents as an active and effective operational security measure.[362]

In December 1943, Marilyn Smith testified before the U.S. District Court for Newark, N.J. that she had been an espionage agent working for Ludwig and had also known Wheeler-Hill at the same time through the *deckname* Jimmy. Smith testimony is additional evidence of the separation of espionage agents as an element of operational security. Wheeler-Hill was exposed in June 1941, Ludwig in August 1941, but Smith was not connected to either for over a year. Even though Ludwig, Wheeler-Hill, and Smith all knew of each other, none of their espionage was revealed by or connected to the espionage of the other individuals during the Duquesne investigation.

Hermann Lang was arguably the most significant agent developed by the *Abwehr* during all of its U.S.-based operations based on his role in the theft of the Norden bombsight and the use of that technology by the *Luftwaffe*. His contact with Sebold would appear to indicate the *Abwehr* did indeed place its important agents in contact with

[361] Ludwig, Section 10, pg. 221.
[362] Ludwig. Section 4, pg. 28.

Sebold, thus serving as evidence against the service's awareness of Sebold's having turned double. However, analysis of the investigation files indicates the only real purpose in establishing contact between Lang and Sebold was to facilitate Lang's immediate return to Germany. This fact had been part of the original scope of work established between Lang and Ritter in the mid-1930s when the theft of the Norden plans began, that in return for his service, Lang would return to Germany and receive a home and well-paying job somewhere in industry. Sebold's contact was to facilitate this move.

Lang unfortunately did not trust Sebold, and it took four months to build sufficient rapport for Sebold to be able to engage on his behalf with his handlers. On June 20, 1940, Sebold sent a message to Lang's handlers on his movement to Germany:

> "LANG desires as soon as possible to hear from FRITZ SOHN and BEIER. Then he would like to have the best means of leaving by way of Mexico. His wife is sickly and cannot stand a long journey. Generally he feels fairly secure. Await answer."[363]

The following week Hamburg responded, "The man who brings the money over will be in Mexico in August and will help LANG with his journey. More details follow."[364] The man from Mexico was Hans Ritter who had been operating across the border to facilitate the development of agent payments and would have been able to coordinate directly with brother Nikolaus Ritter who was handling Lang and Sebold.

Lang never crossed to Mexico and ultimately ended contact with Sebold in March 1941. During their last recorded meeting on March 7, Lang continued to engage with Sebold and even provided him intelligence information,

> "He also advised SEBOLD that the Norden Company engineers are taking instruments apart-which have come off of German dive bombers and are

[363] Duquesne, Section 2, pg. 185.
[364] Duquesne, Section 2, pg. 186.

> experimenting with them. He furnished this information to SEBOLD for transmittal to Germany."[365]

There are no other meetings or details of Lang's espionage or Sebold's communications from or with Germany after this meeting. Throughout their year of coordination, Lang was continually encouraged by Hamburg to return to Germany. A pathway was secured with the assistance of Hans Ritter, who Lang personally knew, through the networks in Mexico but Lang consistently created excuses for not leaving. The most common excuse related to his wife's health, but one should also consider the war in Europe was underway which was a disincentive. It is also possible the FBI had Sebold manipulate information to Lang to prevent him from leaving so he could be arrested. On June 29, 1941, Lang was taken into custody by the FBI, refused to cooperate, and never admitted to espionage. From the *Abwehr's* perspective, Lang was not supposed to be in the U.S., and should have been in Germany a year earlier. Had he left in the summer of 1940 through the pathway established by Hans Ritter through Mexico he would never have been arrested.

Paul Fehse was also encouraged to leave the United States and delays in that departure resulted in his arrest. By September-October 1940, he was having difficulties establishing effective intelligence collection in the United States since his German heritage had caused him to lose employment on the U.S.-operated passenger liners that were the basis for his access and operational freedom. Unlike many couriers, Fehse had received advanced espionage training from multiple *Abwehr* schools; so he requested to return to Germany to work in other aspects of the service. At the end of October 1940, Fehse's request was approved and he was directed to return as soon as he was able.

[365] Duquesne, Section 2, pg. 193.

Fehse never did return to Germany, almost certainly as a result of obfuscation by Sebold directed by the FBI. Following the approval of his relocation, Fehse attempted to have Sebold coordinate an advance from the *Abwehr* to pay for his transit – an act that routinely occurred between control and agent. According to the FBI summary of a meeting regarding Fehse's travel:

> "FEHSE said that he had expected that Germany would send him some passage money but SEBOLD told him that he could not expect any help from anybody in this business; that he is a spy and spies are on their own, and cannot expect sympathy from anyone."[366]

Within the files there is no evidence Sebold ever conveyed Fehse's need for funding to the *Abwehr* for their determination. After the October discussion on Fehse's need of funds, the FBI files indicate Fehse increased reporting on maritime intelligence on vessels transporting war materiel to Europe. By January 1941, Fehse had foregone returning to Germany because of the financial challenges and was attempting to expand his maritime intelligence reporting to increase the money he was receiving from the *Abwehr*. According to the summary of meeting on January 20 recorded by the FBI:

> "FEHSE came to SEBOLD's office and repeated information concerning his spy activities in Norway, England and Germany before coming to the United States for the Marine Division. He stated that his wife [in Germany] was paid by GERHOFF for his activities here [the U.S.].
>
> He stated that, GERHOFF promised him $125 per month but has not paid him; that he, if he had more money, could spend more time in espionage work. He asked SEBOLD to make an indirect request for money."[367]

As with the request for travel funds, there are no indications Sebold relayed the financial matter to the *Abwehr*. Fehse's espionage in the U.S. appears to have increased in proportion to the lack of his ability to leave for Germany and his desire to provide

[366] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 232.
[367] Duquesne, Section 1, pg. 238.

sufficient reporting to receive the pay promised. Fehse went from being an out-of-work courier into an active maritime intelligence collector in response to the FBI's and Sebold's manipulation of his contact with his handlers. Had they not manipulated circumstances, Bremen's most capable courier and the man the U.S.-based agents considered the real leader of all maritime intelligence collection would have returned to Germany in the autumn of 1940 were he would have no longer been an espionage threat to the United States. One of his deputies, Siegler and Stigler, would have likely been his replacement, neither of whom had had espionage training on par with Fehse.

Like Lang, Fehse was another senior agent accidentally exposed to Sebold. Neither Bremen nor Hamburg had directed Fehse to make contact with Sebold, even though he was operating proximally to the W/T operator for approximately 8 months before initial contact. Similarly, Sebold never received instructions from Hamburg to make contact with Fehse, but became connected to him through his efforts to ensnare additional agents. Fehse established contact to expand his own intelligence reporting capabilities but immediately after doing so used Sebold to communicate his desire to continue his *Abwehr* work in Germany. He was immediately told to leave but appears this means was interfered with by the FBI to continue to expose him within its investigation resulting in his arrest. While the money situation was an obvious detractor, other couriers and agents had been able to leave the U.S. in similar circumstances, all of which should have been known and available to Fehse, thus indicating other obfuscation by the FBI likely occurred but is absent from their files.

In addition to senior agents who were told to leave the U.S. but remained, there are other agents who were identified during the investigation who refused contact with

Sebold. The most significant is Else Weustenfeld given her contact with senior *Abwehr* officers through her romantic relationship with Hans Ritter. During the height of Sebold's activity, Hans Ritter was in Mexico establishing financial mechanisms to support Ludwig and Ulrich von der Osten's U.S.-wide operations. When Hans Ritter returned to the U.S. around September 1940, he immediately left for Germany via China. Sebold became aware of Weustenfeld through Lilly Stein but was never directed by the *Abwehr* to make contact with her or Hans Ritter while he was in Mexico or the U.S. In the summer of 1940, at the direction of the FBI in its attempts to identify other espionage agents, Sebold requested Stein coordinate contact between him and Weustenfeld. Weustenfeld refused via Stein, never having met Sebold.

For reasons not disclosed with the investigative file, the FBI installed a wiretap on Stein's phone and placed a recording device in her apartment. Through these devices the Bureau collected multiple warnings by Weustenfeld to Stein regarding Sebold and encouragement to avoid contact with him. In a summary of a June 22, 1940 meeting between Stein and Sebold, the FBI recorded, "informant [Sebold] again saw LILLY STEIN and during the conversation with her she stated that ELSE [Weustenfeld] refused to have anything to do with him."[368] In a recorded conversation from August 1940, Weustenfeld again urged Stein to stay away from Sebold, and warned, "that it is very "hot" with the concurrent warning of near term arrests. Stein in turn informed Sebold, adding that another agent, whose name was redacted in the file, was "also being followed around very closely." Two days later, Sebold was warned by the *Abwehr, "FRIEND*

[368] Duquesne, Section 4, pg. 102.

REPORTS YOU ARE UNDER SURVEILLANCE. CAUTION. YOU MUST STAY OFF THE AIR FOR TWO WEEKS."[369]

The context of all of the messages indicates Weustenfeld's knowledge of *Abwehr* awareness of FBI surveillance around Sebold outside of what Sebold himself was receiving from his own handlers. Her comments to Stein when coupled with the warning from Hamburg indicates the *Abwehr* without Sebold's knowledge was observing his movements and conducting counter surveillance. While Weustenfeld may have not been a registered agent of the *Abwehr*, she appears to have been highly connected, most likely through Hans Ritter. Yet throughout the year-long double agent operation, she was isolated from and had high suspicions of Sebold. She also appears to have had knowledge of surveillance of Sebold prior to the revelation from Sebold's own handler. While her distrust of Sebold could have resulted from intuition, a more likely cause is information provided to her from Hans. Ultimately, her exposure came not necessarily from her own actions, but poor security on the part of Stein who appeared to talk to anyone about anything so long as it played to her own advantages.

In addition to Weustenfeld, Sebold never had direct contact with another twelve of the thirty-three arrested agents. Of the others with whom he did have contact, it is notable that toward the end of the operation, several were suspicious of Sebold, broke contact, or refused to meet. First among these was Brokhoff who refused to meet at Sebold's office under the correct belief of a clandestine wiretap. Bante, Eichenlaub, and Stade were highly suspicious of Sebold, ceased contact, and were preparing to leave New York immediately prior to their arrest. Lang abruptly ceased contact. Even Duquesne

[369] Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 327. Capitalization in the original.

ended contact with Sebold. Sebold broke contact with Stein, was redirected to re-establish contact by his control, and then had again dropped all contact. All had created a relationship with Sebold seeking to maximize their self-interests, but over time grew to distrust him and even suspect he was working for the U.S. government. While not universal among the agents, the prevalence of mistrust and broken confidence indicates Sebold had sufficient challenges in sustaining his credibility within the scope of his double agent operations. In some cases, like Duquesne, Lang, and Weustenfeld, the agents had the ability to communicate with their handlers outside of Sebold, thus raising the possibility the alteration or lack of communications through Sebold were exposed through these means. Also, there was more than one case of agents identifying they were not paid as promised or paid a lesser amount than agreed, and at times, it had been Sebold who was the chosen facilitator. While some of these complaints, like those of Roeder and Stein were probably illegitimate, others provided sufficient evidence to lead one to presume Sebold had skimmed money. There is no evidence the FBI was aware, which is not surprising since many of Sebold's engagements were in uncontrolled situations, meaning there was no on-scene FBI presence.

Roeder was another independent operator who was unconnected with other agents exposed by Sebold. He too appears to have been placed in contact with Sebold solely to resolve issues related to his provision of intelligence and receipt of payment. During one instance of payment, he received $500 dollars from Sebold, but claimed he had been promised $2000, – the equivalent of $42,000 in 2023 value – for a single intelligence report.[370] By the end of 1940 into early 1941, Roeder had provided no real intelligence

[370] "RE: Everett Minster Roeder, with aliases: Carr, "Ed" Roeder, Everett Roeder," located in Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 56.

and continued his requests for large payments. The final straw for the *Abwehr* in regard to his control may have occurred on February 9, 1941, when Roeder informed Sebold he was working on a new secret project for Sperry, his employer, but would no longer engage in espionage. His son had joined the U.S. Army and might be deployed to Europe and Roeder refused to provide intelligence to the military his son might have to fight.[371] Sebold and Roeder did not meet or communicate again. By the time of his arrest, Roeder was for all intents and purposes no longer an agent of the *Abwehr*. An argument can be made, he was exposed to Sebold in a similar manner as Reuper to work through pay issues, but had become too volatile to manage. Rather than sustain his valuable contributions, Roeder forced himself into a position of expendability with the service, which in turn could rely on his secrecy given the grave matters in which he had been involved and his desire to avoid severe punishment. Further, given Roeder's independent operations, he had little exposure to other *Abwehr* activities in the U.S.

Wheeler-Hill, Jahnke, and their associates were never connected to Sebold or agents outside of their small network. Only Reuper's exposure in turn exposed them. Based on Ludwig's comments regarding Wheeler-Hill, the W/T operator's carelessness may have made him an expendable casualty of the double agent operation. Paul Fehse was not expendable, and indeed the *Abwehr* had attempted to evacuate him from the States. The same cannot be said for his brood of couriers, all of whom were struggling with their relevance within the *Abwehr* since maritime courier operations had less import with a hot war in Europe. None seemed to effectively transition from courier to maritime intelligence espionage agents, with several of them fighting over the ability to claim

[371] Duquesne, Section 3, pg. 87.

reports generated by a single observer with access to data on convoy arrivals and departures from New York. Given the redundancy of couriers operated by the *Abwehr*, the loss of ten couriers was a relatively small percentage – especially given only Fehse, Sigler, and Stigler had any notion of the scope of overall operations.

Even the operations namesake, Frederick Duquesne, can be assessed as inconsequential and expendable. While on the one hand, Duquesne was prolific in reporting and responsive to tasking; on the other hand, he was more concerned with personal aggrandizement and fleecing the *Abwehr* of funding than actual espionage. Many of his effective intelligence activities were circumscribed by his often comical attempts to produce additional fabricated intelligence: he purchased a gas mask cylinder from a public vendor and passed it off as new technology, sent rubber tubing purchased from a bicycle shop claiming it was a new Army tourniquet, and submitted hand-drawn pictures of supposed advanced technologies. More often than not, in his engagements with Sebold, he fabricated tales of surveillance, exaggerated his past and present operations, and attempted to teach Sebold useless tradecraft.[372] While the FBI claimed he was the leader of all German espionage in the U.S., he had almost no contact with other agents, and those who knew of him, avoided contact. Ultimately, his arrest had no impact on *Abwehr* espionage activities in the United States other than being a distraction of FBI and other agencies' capabilities away from more valuable agents.

It also appears the *Abwehr* delayed the deployment of Ulrich von der Osten to assume control of all U.S.-based activities because of the *in situ* Sebold double agent

[372] For examples see, Duquesne, Section 1, pgs. 27-34, 40-48, 54, 71.

operation. Correspondence from von der Osten in 1941 indicated he had been set to come to the U.S. in the summer of 1940, but was delayed:

> "The writer was supposed to become a citizen [in 1939] but was unsuccessful and the matter was postponed another year. In July [1940] the application was indefinitely deferred and about "ten days ago" it was deferred thirty days to after the beginning of April [1941]."[373]

The reference to citizenship relates to his assumption of control of espionage in the U.S. While not directly associated with Sebold's operation, the delay in 1940, could relate to *Abwehr* knowledge of the double agent operation and a decision to avoid exposure. Von der Osten would eventually leave Germany in October 1940 and arrive in San Francisco in February 1941. None of his activities while in the U.S. intersected with the agents that had been associated with Sebold.

While there is no direct evidence found within primary source materials that would definitively confirm *Abwehr* awareness of the FBI's Sebold double agent operation, there is substantial contextualized information that can be assessed to support such a hypothesis. Of the senior agents exposed during the operation, Lang and Fehse had been directed by their respective *Abwehr* handlers to evacuate the U.S., and Roeder and Reuper had arguably become greater liabilities than intelligence producers. Wheeler-Hill and Duquesne appear to have created more challenges for the *Abwehr* than benefits from their operations and their resultant arrests had no detrimental impacts on the ability of the *Abwehr* to continue espionage activities. At least six of thirty-three arrested agents either never trusted Sebold or grew to believe he was working for the U.S. government. Of these six, at least three were in the process of fleeing New York, presumably to avoid

[373] Laboratory Work Sheet, Lab# 46330, File # 65-33780-8, Specimens Submitted for Examination, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, April 17, 1941 located in Ludwig, Section 1, pg. 122.

counter espionage authorities, when arrested. The final piece of evidence, and perhaps the most damning, was during the entire year long double agent operation, Kurt Ludwig was operating the largest *Abwehr* conglomeration of agents in the Western Hemisphere while preparing for the arrival of von der Osten who was to centrally manage all U.S.-based espionage –none of these plans were detected, revealed, disrupted, or altered (except for von der Osten's arrival) as a result of the so-called Duquesne Spy Ring.

One final note that lends credence to the assessment of *Abwehr* knowledge of the Sebold double agent operation is the *Abwehr* officer most responsible for Sebold, Nikolaus Ritter, suffered no administrative or punitive action as the result of the revelation of Sebold's treachery toward the *Abwehr*. Many professional and amateur histories of the events surrounding Sebold incorrectly identify Ritter's being fired from the *Abwehr* and returned to service in the *Luftwaffe* as a result of the Sebold operation. In fact, there is no primary source evidence Ritter was even admonished by his *Abwehr* superiors. He would be relieved later in the year as the result of a failed operation in North Africa, that from the *Abwehr* perspective, was far more embarrassing and riskier as an intelligence affair than Sebold's work as an FBI double agent.[374]

Repeated Failure and the Rise of Ludwig

The biggest indication the disruption of the Duquesne ring had little to no real impact on *Abwehr* espionage in the United States is exposed by the fact that during the 16-month operation, the *Abwehr* was in the midst of planning its largest-ever operation on U.S. soil, which went completed undetected by the FBI and other counter espionage

[374] Ritter, pgs. 182-191.

authorities. At the direction of Canaris, in late 1940, Ulrich von der Osten left Germany for the United States to consolidate all *Abwehr* agents and operations under his control and supervision. Rather than entering the Second World War with no *Abwehr* agents operating in the United States, as claimed perpetually by the FBI, the actions planned by von der Osten and his subordinate Kurt Ludwig revealed that after three years of counter espionage operations, U.S. authorities still had failed to understand the focus and depth of its intelligence activities in the United States.

The analysis presented thus far has identified how U.S. counter espionage agencies misunderstood, miscategorized, and mis-assessed the scope, nature, and impact of *Abwehr* espionage operations in the United States from the early 1930s onward. While there appears to have been generally positive professional development within the scope of counter espionage capabilities, analysis of the investigation into the so-called Ludwig "Ring" reveals that many of the same failings exposed in the Rumrich and Duquesne investigations endured after the conclusion of those investigations, subsequent criminal indictments, and ultimate espionage trials. While not conducting a full accounting of the entire investigation, this analysis will highlight key failings in counter espionage analysis related to the disruption and arrest of Ludwig. This analysis will focus on new interpretations of the history of the Ludwig espionage ring by evaluating three specific areas. First, using declassified FBI investigation case files this analysis will qualify the actual scope of the network in contrast with what was previously believed valid. Second, the relative importance of the deployment of Ulrich von der Osten to the U.S. in 1940 to oversee and direct all espionage will be evaluated in relation to the *Abwehr's* missions. This approach will include a contextualization of the relative value of the *Abwehr's* U.S.

operations on the eve of the U.S. entry into the Second World War. Third, this chapter will include an analysis of the financial activity and interconnectedness between *Abwehr* operations in North, Central, and South America that were critical enablers to U.S.-based espionage consolidation by von der Osten and Ludwig.

The Real Ludwig Network

According to Hoover, *Abwehr* espionage never recovered from the Sebold-enabled arrests. Yet within two months of those arrests, the FBI and U.S. Department of Justice revealed a new and entirely separate group of espionage agents had been active during the Sebold operation. The fact that a completely separate group of agents were active and undiscovered during the investigation that supposedly eliminated all German espionage before the U.S. entry into the war has never been addressed by the FBI or other elements of the U.S. government. Had the Bureau been able to conduct an analysis of its institutional challenges that resulted in the inability to detect the activities of the Ludwig operation during the Sebold operation, it could have altered its approach to counter espionage investigations and potentially developed greater disruption and prevention capabilities. However, rather than this occurring, this analysis will expose that many of the same processing errors and conceptualizations that plagued the previous two major espionage investigations endured within the Ludwig investigation.

In the case of the second espionage network exposed to the American people in the summer of 1941, press releases appear to have attempted to delineate between the Duquesne and Ludwig rings as a means to explain away the issue of a new discovery concurrent with the government claiming the espionage threat had been defeated. In the case of the new network, unlike Duquesne, it was run by American Kurt Frederick

Ludwig, who had, "organized a small but productive ring of military spies for the Nazis."[375] The statement appears uniquely different and specific when compared to the statements found in press regarding the Duquesne arrests a few months earlier. For instance, on June 30, 1941, the New York Times stated of the Duquesne ring arrests, "The arrest of twenty-six men and three women … on charges of conspiracy to undermine national defense by acting as spies was announced … last night."[376] The nine arrested agents associated with Ludwig were described as having been, "cooperating with the German government to violate espionage laws" and of, "having acted as agents for a foreign government without registering."[377] Unlike the Duquesne ring's members who were described as amateurish, the Ludwig ring was noted to have conducted espionage during "trips to airports, Army and Navy installations and power facilities along the East Coast down to Key West, Fla.," and with the collection of "identities, cargoes, origins and likely sailing plans of ships."[378]

Unlike Duquesne, from information provided to the press by the FBI, the Ludwig network was made to sound like the more professional organization, and was linked directly to senior elements of the National Socialist party. Intelligence conducted by this group was revealed to have been sent directly to, "Heinrich Himmler, chief of Adolf Hitler's secret police."[379] From the early press on Ludwig, it appears clear his group was far more trained, effective, and senior to the group claimed to have been run by Duquesne revealed in June 1941.

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[375] "Held as Spy Organizer," *The New York Times,* September 16, 1941, pg. 24.
[376] "29 Seized as Spies in Swift Round-Up; Most are Germans."
[377] "33 Indicted Here as a Spy Network Operated by Reich," *New York Times,* July 16, 1941, pg. 1.
[378] "Sinking of Ships Linked to Spy Ring," *The New York Times,* February 5, 1942, pg. 23.
[379] "Sinking of Ships Linked to Spy Ring."

As with the previous investigations into Rumrich and Duquesne, statements made by the FBI, Department of Justice, and U.S. Attorneys' offices and provided to the press continued to make similarly incorrect, false, and arguably purposefully misleading statements regarding the size, scope, and impact of the exposed espionage. At the time of the arrests and within modern-day organizational histories, the official take by the U.S. government was the network consisted only of Ludwig and eight other individuals. Three additional agents associated with Ludwig would be arrested by1943, and a final agent in 1946. These agents were simultaneously described as dangerous and subversive, but also said to have done little to actually threaten the security of the U.S.

To reexamine the espionage activities of Kurt Ludwig, the author of this analysis requested the entire Ludwig case file from the FBI through the U.S. FOIA process. The file includes nineteen now-declassified sections of approximately 5300 pages covering multiple aspects of the investigation which have never previously been used in research related to Ludwig, von der Osten, or *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S.[380] In addition to these new primary source documents, over a dozen declassified MI-5 case files related to Ludwig and other *Abwehr* officers associated with his activities were reviewed and cross-referenced with the FBI case files. As a result of this examination, it has been exposed that most of the information provided over the last seventy-plus years regarding Ludwig and his espionage activities was either incorrect or misleading. Rather than being another small and unimpactful espionage network, Ludwig represented the culmination of almost ten years of *Abwehr* planning to establish and operate a massive espionage infrastructure within the U.S. to support Germany's military aims.

[380] "Kurt Frederick Ludwig," Investigation Case File, 1942, FOIA 1584244, U.S. Department of Justice, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Information Management Division, Washington D.C., 2023.

Unlike the official statements provided to the press or information found in almost every professional or amateur history produced covering the *Abwehr* in the U.S. on Ludwig's operations, the FBI files reveal the massive scope of the *Abwehr's* operation and the FBI's and other government agencies challenges to uncover the hundreds of agents located across the country. Areas wherein the actual history of the Ludwig investigation was revealed within this research include false statements regarding the reporting of intelligence, the size and scope of Ludwig's agent operation across the U.S., the amount and quality of intelligence collected and disseminated to Germany, the amount of details available regarding the FBI's discovery and subsequent hunt of Ludwig, and the ties between Ludwig and Ulrich von der Osten.

To begin this examination by addressing the issue of the reporting of intelligence collected, there is absolutely no evidence Ludwig or any agents with whom he had contact were in direct, or even indirect, contact with Himmler, or that anyone associated with the FBI or MI-5 ever uncovered any information to suggest such a relationship. Himmler as a matter of the confirmed historical record had no involvement with *Abwehr* espionage, except perhaps to receive reporting provided by Canaris or other senior officers, but surely not to include receiving direct reporting from field agents. Such a statement evokes Duquesne's nonsensical claim the previous year that all messages to U.S. agents were routed through Hitler's assistant in San Francisco. Such a narrative of misinformation provides clarity regarding the continued misplaced focus by U.S. counter espionage agencies toward the organs of the National Socialist party in lieu of developing an understanding of the various elements of German intelligence and their respective operative foci.

By late 1941, at a minimum, information on scope of duties for the *Abwehr, Gestapo, Sicherheitsdienst* and other elements of German military and party espionage should have been known to the American agencies through their contact with the British intelligence services. There is ample source material in the FBI's declassified *Abwehr* files at the U.S. national archive, within MI-5 files in the U.K. national archive, and within the CIA's declassified archives that identify that from no later than 1938 onward, Army G-2, FBI, and ONI were involved in a steady exchange of information on the *Abwehr, Gestapo,* and other German intelligence agencies with the British. Yet, from Turrou's 1938 tell-all, public statements, and classified files, there is significant evidence that the Army G-2, FBI and ONI consistently identify the *Gestapo* as the single source of German espionage in the U.S. The false claim Ludwig's group directed their reports to Himmler, who at the time was the *Reichsführer der Schutztaffel* (Imperial Leader of the Protection Squad, the the SS), provides evidence of the continued misappropriation of responsibility for espionage among the U.S. agencies charged with understanding the difference between the SS, *Gestapo,* and *Abwehr*! While it can be argued alignment with the *Gestapo* could have been used as shorthand to make the notion of espionage easier for public consumption, the false implications of the Himmler relationship would take such a rationale to the extreme, and in retrospect, appears highly deceitful on the part of a government agency as there is no evidence of such a relationship within the investigative files. The statement in this case was a lie intended to manipulate the public.

Contrary to any reporting or support to party entities, as an agent under the control of the Berlin *Abwehr* headquarters any reporting developed by Ludwig and his subagents was necessarily destined for the *OKW* and the military services, the

Kriegsmarine, Luftwaffe, and *Wehrmacht.* High quality reports, of which he sent many, were distributed to key offices in the OKW or the service intelligence components where they were evaluated and incorporated into military assessments and plans. If the OKW or services had follow-on questions, source-directed requirements, or further requests for information, those would go back to the *Abwehr* for distillation to the field agents through handlers.[381] Examples of this process exist within the remnant Bremen files wherein the *Nebenstelle* compiled short summary reports based on agent reporting for delivery to the appropriate *Abteilung (H, L, M,* or *Wi)* in Berlin for further dissemination to the OKW and services. No *Abwehr* agent communicated their intelligence directly to Heinrich Himmler or any senior officers of the SS, *Gestapo,* or any other party organs, to especially include Kurt Ludwig or his associates. A review of the known reporting developed by Ludwig and his identified subagents highlighted an almost purely military focused collection platform, which would have been of minimal value to fascist politically-oriented agencies or a *Waffen-SS* engaged in military warfare and genocide in Europe and Eurasia, and with no footprint other than political provocateurs and fascist intelligence agents in the Western Hemisphere.

More importantly in terms of assessing the scope of espionage than the false appropriation of the direction of intelligence reporting, were the FBI's incorrect claims of the scope of agents associated with Ludwig. Of the arrests, seven agents were located in the New York area – just as the preponderance of agents within the Rumrich and

[381] According to the U.S. Army Field Manual 2-22.3. Human Intelligence Collector Operations, a source-directed requirement, or SDR, "is a specific request or tasking for a collector to question a source on a particular collection requirement. This request involves analysis that results in the conclusion that a specific source possibly has the placement and access to answer." "Human Intelligence Collector Operations," U.S. Army Field Manual 2-22.3., United States Army, Washington D.C., September 2006.

Duquesne investigations – and one arrested in Miami, Florida. In contrast with the official investigative records, a review of agents operating in coordination with Ludwig indicates he coordinated espionage with individuals located at least in Carmel and other locations in California; Chicago, Illinois; Denver and other locations in Colorado, Detroit, Michigan; Idaho, Massachusetts, Key West, Miami, and other locations in Florida; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Montana, Ohio, Reading and other locations in Pennsylvania, San Antonio and probably other locations in Texas; and Seattle, Washington. Outside the United States, Ludwig operated with agents and facilitators located in at least Buenos Aires, Argentina, Australia, Havana, Cuba; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Wake Island, U.S. Pacific Territories. All of the U.S. sites were near U.S military facilities or industries that supported the military, and most of the foreign sites were involved to some extent with U.S. military activities or operations, to include intelligence collection and the deployment of war materiel to Europe and Asia. In total, a review of U.S. and British declassified investigative and intelligence files on Ludwig, reveal at least 160 individuals involved in espionage in the U.S. who were revealed within Ludwig's correspondence with his handlers in Germany.[382]

[382] While too extensive to list within this analysis, Ludwig's surviving correspondence within the American and British archives was reviewed, and from that all references to agent operations were screened to identify the use of real names or *decknamen* related to agents, their locations, and activities. Similar information was developed from the FBI's declassified Ludwig case file. Of the over one hundred and fifty individuals identified, approximately forty percent can be identified by true name, *deckname*, and location. About twenty five percent can only be identified by one category, with the remaining thirty five percent being identifiable by two categories. The list includes five agents arrested who were associated with the Duquesne ring (Jahnke, Kaercher, Reuper, Scholz, and Wheeler-Hill) and all eight of the agents arrested who were cataloged by the FBI as being part of the Ludwig ring. It is almost certain this list is incomplete and does not represent the full agent footprint in the U.S. as most of Ludwig's activities and contracts were unidentified. Also, many of these identities resulted from exploitation of Ludwig's post communications to the *Abwehr*, and those were incomplete, as not all post was intercepted. Ludwig also communicated perishable matters via W/T and none of those transmissions were intercepted.

The information that would ultimately result in Ludwig's and von der Osten's exposure, like many of the other events identified within this analysis, resulted from initial sharing of information collected by MI-5 beginning in January 1941. When first informed of new espionage activities in 1940, the FBI originally classified the case as part of the Sebold operation, which it referred to as the DUCASE, short for Duquesne Case. However, it became obvious to investigators quickly that rather than having additional agents within the scope of their DUCASE, the new MI-5 data revealed a completely separate, larger, more professional, and more complex espionage capability than anything exposed by or connected to Sebold.

It was in January 1941 that the British censorship station in Bermuda began to intercept letters in route to Europe, mostly Portugal and Spain, that had the telltale signs of espionage communications. All of the mail was directed to new *U-Stellen*, always contained *en clare* messages, occasionally included secret writing or the traces of such, and were signed "Joe K." Unlike the Rumrich case from 1938, MI-5 almost immediately shared Joe K information with the FBI, indicating both agencies had begun to perceive the mutual benefits of collaboration. Sharing of Joe K correspondence was limited at first, with MI-5 notifying the FBI of the letters and providing some details, but not sharing the full contents or copies. On January 7, 1941, FBI Assistant Director E. J. Connelly wrote a memorandum to Hoover suggesting he contact MI-5 to request a copy of a recent Joe K letter for handwriting analysis, so, "the typing thereon be compared with all typing specimens previously forwarded to the Bureau in this matter [the Duquesne investigation] for a possible identification." Connelly's inquiry identified that

at this early stage in what would become the Ludwig investigation, from the Bureau's perspective, Joe K was likely one of the agents already exposed by Sebold.[383]

Joe K letters continued to be intercepted and shared between the agencies through early 1941, and Bureau agents came to realize Joe K was not one of the agents revealed by Sebold but represented a new actor. Therefore, in the summer of 1941 while claiming in press statements to have eradicated German espionage, the FBI was aware of another, probably larger, network simultaneously operating of which it had little information.[384] In a series of letter communications intercepted through February 1941, Joe K provided operational details that forced a constant re-contextualization by the FBI of its assessments regarding his operations, methodologies, and collection. In his *en clare* and secret writing reports, Joe K discussed an unidentified alternative method of communication in which he had sent hundreds of reports to Germany, reported to his control that his security and communications tradecraft had ensured all of his reporting was being received in Germany (meaning not a single report had not eventually been received), and that he had developed a systematic approach to delivery of intelligence reporting based on source and type of reporting that had proven highly effective.

According to his reporting system, by the end of 1940, he was sending intelligence reporting from no fewer than eight U.S. states through at least three different mechanisms. Each transmission was cataloged with a two or -three letter code that identified the collection mechanism and the intended recipient of the specific reporting.

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[383] E. J. Connelly, "RE: DUCASE," New York, New York, January 7, 1941 located in Ludwig, Section 1, pg. 8.

[384] For an example of FBI claims of the destruction of *Abwehr* espionage within the Duquesne ring, see Samuel A. Tower, "FBI's Hidden Struggle Against Spies Continues," *The New York Times*, February 11, 1945, pg. 69.

In just December of 1940, as reported in a January letter, he had sent reports 251 to 272 via airmail and sea routes (probably couriers). The variation of codes used indicated several of the serialized messages were sent through different routes to different end users and therefore may have contained differentiated reporting with the different users having different collection requirements being addressed by Ludwig and his agents. As indicated by this information, in 1940 Joe K had produced no fewer than 272 intelligence reports, but in all likelihood based on the December sample, the number of individual reports was far higher, as a single report could contain intelligence from multiple different collection operations intended for several end users.

Table 4 Ludwig Network Reporting December 1940

State	City	Delivery Mechanism	Report Serial	Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Code 4
FL	Miami	express	251	501			
MD	Baltimore	Express	253	47			
IL	Chicago	Express	255	501			
CN	Bridgeport	Freight	256	842	967		
MD	Baltimore	Freight	257	2/853	853		
MD	Baltimore	Freight	258	320			
MD	Baltimore	Freight	259	617	617	141	
MD	Baltimore	Freight	261	271	948		
MD	Baltimore	Parcel Post	263	Personal			
CN	New Haven	Express	264	502			
CA	Los Angeles	Express	266	48			
LA	New Orleans	Express	267	503			
MD	Baltimore	Freight	268	139	487	105	379
RI	Providence	Express	269	175/47	48		
CN	Bridgeport	Freight	271	191	192		
Fl	Tampa	Express	272	139	140	2/852	

Information intercepted within the Joe K letters revealed, in comparison with the agents arrested within the Sebold affair, Joe K was at a minimum far more prolific and was producing more intelligence than the combination of all agents identified in the other investigation.[385]

Throughout early 1941, coordination between the FBI and MI-5 continued to expose additional details on Joe K that were hoped to assist in his eventual identification. British analysis indicated he was probably born and had lived in the U.S. but had also spent significant time in Germany and could write and speak effectively in German as well as American English. Joe K's letters revealed he had been in the states during 1937-to-1938, and then lived in England, presumably also for espionage, from 1938-to-1939. While in England he was not identified by MI-5 even while other *Abwehr* agents had been detected, indicating none of the agents exposed or doubled by MI-5 at that time or later had knowledge of Ludwig or his espionage activities during his year in the U.K..

Before the war began in September 1939, Ludwig left England, returned to Germany, and then redeployed to the U.S. by early 1940. Ludwig identified in a letter to his handler, which may have been slightly exaggerated, that from 1937 until the summer of 1941 he had been continuously engaged in espionage outside of Germany on behalf of the *Abwehr* and had only been able to spend three weeks with his family over those four years. Unlike Sebold or those he exposed, Joe K's letters identified he was a highly trained officer of the *Abwehr* with extensive experience conducting undetected espionage operations in continental Europe, the United Kingdom, and United States.[386] Arguably,

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[385] R. G. Grantham, Joe K and Konrad Letters, New York, May 6, 1941, located in Ludwig, section 2, pgs. 111, 113, 116-117.
[386] Ludwig, Section 2, pgs. 116-117.

based on displayed tradecraft and prolific reporting, no *Abwehr* agent launched against the U.S. or U.K. had been better trained or more capable than Ludwig, save for perhaps Ulrich von der Osten who was later revealed as Joe K's superior.

Throughout the spring of 1941, MI-5 continued to receive a sampling of the intercepted letters sent by Joe K which in turn continued to expose an ever-increasing footprint of additional espionage agents and operations inside the United States.[387] Most of the agents and their activities were initially minimally exposed through *en clare* operational messages sent by Ludwig, as Joe K, through *U-Stellen* to his team of handlers in Berlin. This type of clandestine messaging transmitted operationally relevant details disguised as innocuous statements on individuals already known to the *Abwehr*. For example, a letter intercepted by the censor station in Bermuda dated July 21, 1941, contained the following sample of *en clare* reports:

> "Loni has now a new house in New Jersey, I visited her there once, and I wrote to her too – but she does not seem to [sic] able and willing to help me in my various problems. From her sister and Charles I did not hear for a long time – but I'll write them real soon. For the time being it is of no use to write them – but Phillip would be glad to receive again a letter from you.
>
> Joe still seems to be alive – but I don't think he will be able to live more than a few months.
>
> I guess you still remember Erica – she really is a bad female, and you were right (as usual) when you said I should not get mixed up with ladies of such a bad reputation. But a few young men who kept company with her – fell ill, and are in hospital now – is that not terrible.

[387] Since Ludwig serialized all of his letters it was clear not all of his post was being intercepted through Bermuda. The inability to intercept all may can be attributed to British Censorship procedures and Ludwig's tradecraft. Once a sender or receiver name or address was identified, all mail from or to that address would be pulled and examined. Censors learned to identify the physical signs of espionage-related post or be able to identify known names and addresses, and could pull and examine these materials as well. In the case of Joe K letters, Ludwig alternated his *U-Stellen* in a matter that indicated his awareness of censorship procedures. His use of Asia *U-Stellen* that were not subjected to the same rigors as trans-Atlantic post should be seen as another mechanism intended to circumvent censors.

> As I heard my old friend Henry arrived already six weeks ago … Henry might tell also about Helen, one of his many girl friends. You know she is married, now, and her husband is away – but she can't take it."[388]

Each *en clare* letter of Ludwig's contained dozens of these operationally relevant statements that were understood by his handlers to reference specific agents, activities, and conditions.

In the sampled letter quoted in part above, there are at least four dozen statements related to different operational matters. From the example, Loni was Ludwig's aunt who had moved from New York and was no longer supporting him and who refused to engage in any matters related to his espionage. Along with her husband, David, the couple had been witting of Ludwig's activities and had served as an *U-Stelle* for his operational mail. The identification of her move and her unwillingness to help was a message to a handler to cease attempting to contact Ludwig at that address and to identify Loni was no longer operationally viable as a communications conduit. Joe who was still alive was Ludwig, known to his handlers by the *deckname* Joe K. His remarks can be read as a not-so-subtle dig at the lack of support he was receiving from the *Abwehr* following the Sebold affair and his identification he believed he could operate for a few more months before he would have to leave the U.S. Erica was not a loose woman but the *deckname* for a code used between the *Abwehr* and agents. Ludwig's message informed his handlers there were problems with many of the agents using the code. Several agents who had used the codes, likely a reference to Wheeler-Hill and associates, were in prison, a.k.a. the hospital, as a result of the Sebold arrests. This message can be interpreted as Ludwig

[388] Joe M. Santos to Mrs. Isabel Machado Santos, Letter, July 20, 1941, serial 89/45, located in KV-2-2630_1, pgs. 22-24. The original messages were written in German and some of the odd syntax and poor English grammar results from attempts at verbatim rather than contextualized translation.

responding to being directed to communicate in code, but refusing out of concern the code was compromised and a factor in the recent arrests.[389] Finally, the reference to Henry appears to reference Walter Meyer, the husband of Helen, also mentioned in the letter. Henry was one of several agents working with Ludwig who had returned to Germany to fight in the war. Helen was one of Ludwig's agents, and the reference to her being but one of Henry's women appears to indicate Henry ran multiple *Hinterleute* known to, and probably used by, Ludwig.[390]

The majority of Ludwig's intercepted letters were pure *en clare* posts sent to reveal operational matters. Fewer letters included secret writing hidden beneath the *en clare* details that contained intelligence reporting regarding U.S. military equipment production and locations of military facilities and personnel – especially the new facilities being built as the U.S prepared for war. Ludwig serialized each letter so his handlers could sequence them upon their arrival and track and sequence his reporting – the procedure was common for *Abwehr* senior agents and officers, but Ludwig apparently had found a means of distribution that all but ensured receipt as through the summer of 1941 100% of his reports were ultimately received in Berlin. The previously quoted letter was the 89th sent in 1941, of which not all preceding 88 were intercepted by British censors. Since censorship rules were imposed for all mail going to and from Europe, including overseas British possessions that were the backbone of international postal conventions, each letter was copied and sent through multiple routes to ensure receipt.

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[389] There is no evidence the FBI used the Erica or PON codes to identify any of the agents involved in the Duquesne or Ludwig investigations. Ludwig preferred a simple substitution and subtraction cipher for his W/T communications with Berlin.

[390] For MI-5s interpretation of the operational matters contained in this *en clare* message, see Record No. BERMIL 41945, Letter of July 20th, No. 89/45, Imperial Censorship Bermuda, located in KV-2-2630_2. pgs. 43-45.

All the Ludwig-related postal communications intercepted were done so through the British censorship station in Bermuda and through mail holds placed retroactively by the FBI on known locations used by Ludwig for correspondence in the U.S. Mail holds would be used once the investigation identified addresses being used by Ludwig to receive or send material, meaning the process was retroactive and preemptive and could only be established after the identification of use. As such, the Bureau had no capability to retroactively determine the amount of mail sent from Ludwig from specific addresses.[391] While these two procedures resulted in the accumulation of large portions of Ludwig's communications with Germany, it was far short of the total amount sent revealed in his serialization. Since British censors and MI-5 intelligence analysts were able to identify the serialization used on Ludwig's correspondence they were aware their activities were not acquiring all the traffic between Ludwig and Germany. Ludwig's intercepted Joe K mail also revealed that he was communicating and disseminating intelligence through multiple other unidentified means that remained undetected.

The FBI and MI-5 also learned through intercepted post that Joe K was operating multiple unidentified and unlocated W/T stations in the U.S. northeast from shortly after his arrival through the late summer of 1941. Therefore, while the FBI was operating its own *Abwehr* site associated with the Sebold double agent operation, and through that site was attempting to detect other *Abwehr* W/T sites, Ludwig was operating multiple radio

[391] According to the FBI files on the Ludwig investigation, none of the mail holds on Ludwig's mail drops were executed with approved warrants but were facilitated between FBI agents and local postmasters, postal delivery officers, or other individuals. Doing so was a violation of the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Bill of Rights, and a violation of the U.S. Constitution related to unlawful search and seizure. More than one postal official rejected FBI demands for mail holds without warrants. Often when warrants were received, the process was done retroactively, so that when operational traffic was found through a mail hold, the Bureau would obtain a warrant *post facto*, indicating agents were aware they were violating the Constitution. Had attorneys had access to this information, it could have been used within the trials and complicated the prosecution and verdicts.

locations that went completely undetected. The mystery stations operated by Ludwig became all the more challenging during the Spring of 1941 when Jahnke's and Wheeler-Hill's radios were discovered and exploited. When the Joe K letters had revealed the mysterious presence of other W/Ts, FBI investigators initially believed those radios to be the ones operated by Jahnke and Wheeler-Hill, but with the surveillance on their activities and subsequent arrests in June, this was revealed not to be the case. Therefore, at one point in late 1940 to early 1941, the *Abwehr* knew of five sets of W/Ts in communication with Germany and its Western Hemisphere communications networks, and only Sebold's was under direct control, meaning the FBI was unaware of the scope and purpose of the transmissions related to espionage activity.

For Ludwig, the lack of the ability of the FBI to detect his W/T, which would have been attempted through high frequency direction finding, also known as HFDF or Huff Duff, and through the Sebold related radio site, can surely be assessed as a result of his superior experience and training compared with other *Abwehr* agents. One of his W/Ts was built into the trunk of his car, and he appears to have operated it from multiple remote and austere locations likely to avoid detection by any Huff Duff/HFDF efforts.[392] Several "pop-up" transmissions detected throughout New York, New Jersey, and Maryland in 1940 and 1941 by multiple U.S. intelligence agencies may have actually been Ludwig's mobile station; however, there is insufficient available information to directly link Ludwig with these signals. Detection of short-duration W/T almost always

[392] The FBI, ONI, and US Coast Guard intelligence personnel did effectively use similar techniques to expose *Abwehr* and *Sicherheitsdienst* W/T operators in multiple South American countries from 1942 to 1944 indicating U.S. counter espionage agencies were aware of this capability. There are no records in the primary source material that indicate whether or not direction finding tactics were used in the U.S. in any of the counter espionage investigations covered within this analysis.

relied on repeated operations from the same site. The use of the vehicle-based radio allowed Ludwig to quickly set up his W/T in multiple remote locations which would have made his geolocation almost impossible with contemporary technology. Whereas most W/T operators were novices in radio communication, they were generally given one frequency with which to communicate. By 1940 Ludwig had been an agent for at least five years and may have had sufficient training to communicate on multiple frequencies, which would have also greatly reduced the ability to intercept his communications. To maximize his connectivity with Germany, he also operated a fixed W/T from a rented home in Yorkville, New York. This station lacked the mobility of his automobile unit, indicating Ludwig varied the days, times, and frequencies used from this site. Other counter detection tradecraft may also have been used, and as a result, this site was never detected while operated and was not exposed until after Ludwig's August 1941 arrest.[393]

Through the spring and summer of 1941, while the final steps were taken in the Duquesne arrests, Joe K's true identity remained a mystery. Two elements ultimately resulted in the confirmation of Joe K as Kurt Frederick Ludwig, the increasing connectivity of Joe K with the accidental death of Spaniard Julio Lopez Lido in Times Square on March 18, and details of his identity revealed through focused analysis of his *en clare* letters by British intelligence analysts. The first point, the death of Lido and its connection to Joe K as the element that exposed Ludwig, is the most commonly addressed factor in secondary source materials covering the case. Returning again to Joan Miller's 1984 Master's Thesis on *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S., she provides a cogent summary of what for decades the orthodox understanding of these events:

[393] "Re: Lucy Boehmler," located in Ludwig, Section 10, pg. 261.

> "Despite the clues contributed by the British and the "exhaustive efforts" of the FBI, the Bureau was unable to confirm the true identity of "Joe K." However, their search was aided when a man named Julio Lopez Lido was run down and killed by a taxi in Times Square on March 18, 1941. Lido's companion was seen taking the dead man's briefcase following the accident, and apparently tried to gain possession of Lido's luggage from his hotel after learning of Lido's death. Investigation after the accident--including a close examination of Lido's luggage-revealed that Julio Lido was actually Ulrich von der Osten of the German military intelligence service."[394]

Once Lido was identified as von der Osten, supposedly the case was soon made that Joe K was actually Kurt Frederick Ludwig.

The context of Lido's death as presented in the historical record is fairly accurate, in that he was sequentially struck by two cars while crossing Times Square, received significant injuries, and died the following day. From there, much of the reported information recorded in secondary sources deviates from matters now available in primary source materials declassified over the last two decades. To begin to identify the incorrect information surrounding these events, there is no information in the FBI files related to Joe K, Ludwig, Lido, or von der Osten identifying the presence of another man with Lido at the time of the accident or an attempt by that individual to retrieve a briefcase. Calls presumably from Ludwig to the hotel in the days after Lido's death, according to interviews with the proprietors, were made to identify the death and inform the manager the Spanish Consulate in New York would contact the hotel to arrange for Lido's belongings. There were no reported efforts by Ludwig to get access to the hotel or Lido's belongings. Contrary to Miller's summary, Lido's body was quietly buried in New York by the Spanish Consulate during a funeral attended by Ludwig and a dozen agents and colleagues, with no interest by the FBI or other parties. The Consulate failed

[394] Miller, pg. 75.

to recover Lido's belongings, for unidentified reasons, and they remained secured at his hotel until late April when finally obtained by the FBI.

It was not then until April 1941, around five weeks after the accident, when the FBI came to understand, as a result of the inspection of belongings, that Lido was an espionage officer. Yet at this point in the investigation, nothing had been recovered that identified Lido as von der Osten or Joe K as Ludwig. Among Lido's belongings were multiple "Konrad" letters that appeared to be also linked to espionage, including a letter from Konrad referencing sending intelligence on Pearl Harbor to *Abwehr* officers in China for provision to the Imperial Japanese. MI-5 had been receiving intercepted communications, post and W/T, that referenced an agent or officer with the *deckname* Konrad, so it appeared as a result of the FBI's search, that Lido, Joe K, and Konrad were all involved in a larger espionage scheme in the U.S. Other recovered belongings included a hotel stub for "D" von der Osten from January 1938. Dinnes von der Osten of Denver, Colorado was the subject of an espionage investigation with the Denver field office, but no connection was made between him and Lido at that time.[395]

The first sign of a Lido and Joe K connection came from a Joe K letter intercepted in late May 1941, dated March 20, that included *en clare* reporting of Lido's accident:

> "This week something terrible happened. Phil who you know too – had a fatal accident. One evening he wanted to Cross Broadway. He stopped at the middle of the street, as he could not go on further, on account of the heavy traffic.
>
> I was with him all evening – but did not try to cross the street with him as I thought it took risky. The moment he turned around, he was first hit by a taxi – thrown to the ground, and then hit again by a passenger car which knocked him unconscious by injuring his head very badly.

[395] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 100.

> … As his condition was … very critical … I notified "his" consulate (through an old friend) which acted at once but it was impossible to save his life – the injuries were too serious."[396]

The FBI and MI-5 concluded from this letter Joe K and Lido had known each other, and it was likely Joe K had been present with Lido at the accident. Also, Lido was now associated with the *deckname* Phil, which aligned with other *en clare* messages sent by Joe K and resulted in the further solidifying of Lido as an espionage agent. Still at this point, May 1941, there was no evidence to firmly identify either by true name. Other intercepted letters and transmissions indicated the death of an agent named Conrad or Konrad, and for a time, the FBI and MI-5 were under the perception Lido and one other agent had been killed, although they had yet to identify another dead body.

By mid-May 1941, six weeks before the majority of the arrests within the Sebold operation, the FBI had sufficient information related to Lido and the Joe K communications to assess their espionage activities were separate from the so-called DUCASE. A memorandum from Hoover clarified the FBI's position on the separation so various investigating field offices would be aligned with the headquarters:

> "The investigation with reference to Joe K., Lido, and their associates is not part of the Ducase investigation. Accordingly, the title of the report of reference is being changed on the Bureau [UNCLEAR] of Agent Allen's report to read "JOE K., JULIO LOPEZ LIDO, with Aliases, et al: ESPIONAGE-G.""[397]

Therefore in the coming weeks when the Bureau announced the Duquesne arrests, and claimed to have ended all German espionage activity in the United States, it was acutely aware there was another, more significant, German espionage network.

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[396] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 130.
[397] "RE: JOE K., JULIO LOPEZ LIDO, with Aliases, et al: ESPIONAGE (G)," John Edgar Hoover, Director, to Mr. R. L. Shivers, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 10, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 1, pg. 281. The wording following "Bureau" is unreadable within the files provided by the FBI.

It was the second element of the investigation, rigorous analysis by British intelligence analysis, coordinated with the FBI, that resulted in the final identification of Joe K as Ludwig, and through that analysis, Lido as Ulrich von der Osten. British analysts combed through the Joe K letters and developed a matrix of *en clare* reporting matters that included names, roles, activities, and locations. Within these materials, the Joe K letters often referred to Loney/Loni and David, sometimes labeled Aunt and Uncle, who had operated a store that had served as an *U-Stelle.* Among Lido's effects, FBI agents recovered an address for David Harris in the Bronx, New York. Further analysis, propelled by transatlantic coordination, identified David Harris and his wife Loni had once owned a small store at that address but they had recently sold the property and moved elsewhere. This information was shared and the organizations further dug into the old Joe K letters and backgrounds of David and Loni Harris. As a result, the Bureau understood, "from the … information concerning DAVID HARRIS and his wife, LONI HARRIS, it is evident aht [sic] they are the uncle and aunt of JOE K."[398]

Another lead from Lido's effects pointed the FBI to another address in the Bronx wherein one of the tenants living there was determined to be "Fred Ludwig."[399] Observation of Fred Ludwig identified he operated the same make and model of the vehicle identified in Joe K correspondence and that he was related to David and Loni Harris, being their nephew. According to an FBI memo on the analytical conclusion:

> "Mr. Donegan advised … Joe K. has been identified as Fred Ludwig … and a Bureau agent has been placed … in the room house.
>
> Correspondence of Joe K. reflected that he had obtained a new automobile. Ludwig has a new automobile. Correspondence of Joe K. also reflected that he had an uncle and aunt who have a store.

[398] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 143.
[399] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 146.

> Surveillance of Ludwig reflects these circumstances prevail with reference to him … further handwriting of Ludwig has been identified with that of Joe K."[400]

With this piece of the puzzle confirmed in place, the FBI and MI-5 were able to trace their analysis backward through the six-month history of the Joe K letters and reconstruct multiple details with the knowledge of the true identities of three individuals (Ludwig and David and Loni Harris). With that information, it was not long later the two agencies were able to finally determine through use of the Joe K letters that Julio Lopez Lido, Conrad, Konrad, Connie, and Phil, were all false identities or *decknamen* for Ulrich von der Osten.[401]

The positive identification was a major step in the new investigation, yet, outside of the *en clare* messages partially intercepted by MI-5, neither agency had a complete understanding of the scope of Joe K's operations, the total numbers and true identities of his agents, or why he was connected with Lido / von der Osten, of whom there was also very limited understanding of his specific espionage role in the U.S. Rather than an immediate arrest, like had occurred with Rumrich, Ludwig was placed under surveillance and his activities and movements tracked by the FBI.

Through the interception of operational communication between Ludwig and other *Abwehr* agents, the Bureau soon learned, via MI-5, Ludwig would leave New York in mid-June 1941 to conduct operational activity in the Southern U.S. The FBI intended to track his operational travel to determine the scope of his activities:

> "It has been determined that Ludwig will make a trip through the southern part of the United States within the next few days, which will be

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[400] John B. Little, Memorandum for Mr. P. E. Foxworth, "Re: Joe K.: Julio Lopez Lido, was; Et al Espionage (G)," Washington D.C., May 28, 1941 located in Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 172.
[401] M. D. Crocker, "Joe K., w.a.s.; Julio Lopez Lido, w.a.s.; Dinnes Carl Wilhelm von der Osten, w.a.s.; et al.," Albany, NY, June 29, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 3, pg. 2.

> appropriately covered with a view to determining the extent of his activities and the identity of his contracts throughout that part of the country."[402]

Even with warning, the FBI was unable to maintain surveillance on Ludwig during his mission. After leaving New York, he remained unlocated until June 27 when agents surveilling his boarding house noted he had returned to his residence.[403] At this point the Bureau was not aware of the extent of Ludwig's training and may not have been as adept in its approach to surveillance tradecraft as warranted. Details in the case file are unclear, and Ludwig either left his home undetected or detected FBI vehicles shortly after leaving the city and ditched surveillance when New York agents broke contact prior to it being established by agents from the Pittsburgh Field Office.[404] Not knowing his route or destinations, surveillance was never reestablished. The only knowledge of his collection operation was revealed in intercepted Joe K letters, which included reports of espionage operations in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia:

> "Camp Stewart, near HINESVILLE, Georgia – enormous place – drove through – seems to be training centre for Coast Artillery Regiments … now as Antiaircraft units … we saw there 207, 209, 212 and 104 Coast Artillery Regiments.
>
> Camp Davis, near Holly Ridge, North Carolina … enormous place – entirely new – still under construction … apparently barracks for 30,000 to 50,000 men.
>
> Camp Pendleton, South Virginia Beach, Virginia – were not allowed to enter.

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[402] Author redacted, "RE: Joe K.," June 18, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 267. The identities of the sender and receiver were redacted; however, the substance of the matter is coordination on the identification of Joe K. as Kurt Frederick Ludwig, which, along with other contextual clues, makes it almost certain the memorandum was sent from the FBI to MI-5.

[403] Teletype message to Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover, "Kurt Ludwig, Alias Joe K, Espionage G," New York, New York, June 27, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 281.

[404] J. E. Thornton, "Fred Ludwig alias Joe K et al," Pittsburgh, PA, June 23, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 3, pg. 47. Agents assigned to surveillance in their reports to their superiors appear to have attempted to mitigate blowback from their poor surveillance tradecraft that resulted in Ludwig's loss of coverage. If this is the case, much of what the agents reported of the surveillance is circumspect.

> Fort Bragg, West of Fayetteville, North Carolina ... about 34,000 men were there."[405]

Other intelligence from the operation was delivered to Germany in a manner not intercepted by MI-5, but was hinted at in other letters. While the FBI had learned more about the scope of Ludwig's activities, it had failed to learn Ludwig's methods of movement from state-to-state or identify any other agents or accomplices.

The trip to the South and Ludwig's return coincided with the arrests of the thirty-three agents exposed within the Sebold operation. This exposure necessarily included the June 26 arrest of Scholz and Kaercher at which Ludwig was present. There are no indications from the available source material that indicate any effort on the part of the FBI to "not" arrest Ludwig to protect its other investigation.[406] Instead, FBI agents at that arrest were unwitting to Ludwig's identity and espionage activities, and their arrests focused only on the individuals from the Sebold affair. FBI files on Ludwig clearly state it learned of Ludwig's return from his trip to the South of June 27, the day after the Scholz and Kaercher arrests, when Ludwig was seen at his home. As covered when detailing the arrests, the arresting agents reported an unidentified man was with Scholz and Kaercher at the time of their arrest, but he was neither stopped nor questioned.

For Ludwig, being present at the arrests and then learning of the scope of the counter espionage investigation in the papers must have heightened his anxiety regarding similar activities targeting his own operations – especially after the death of von der Osten. The fact he had probably detected and evaded surveillance during his most recent

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[405] J. Edgar Hoover, "RE: Julio Lopez Lido, was; Fred Ludwig alias Joe K., et al; Espionage – G," Washington D.C., July 8, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 3, pgs. 33-34.

[406] On this matter, Farago claimed Ludwig was detained, released, and observed by the FBI under the suspicion of possible involvement. He further claimed, following the arrests, Ludwig ceased all espionage activity and then fled in August. All of these statements are revealed false by FBI and MI-5 files related to Ludwig presented within the scope of this paper.

espionage foray would have heightened his concern regarding his own operational security. Being present at an arrest but not being arrested would also have added confusion regarding his exposure. Ludwig had been sent to the U.S. to pave the way for von der Osten, and at first that mission was extended consecutively by von der Osten's delays, and then it was wholly disrupted by his death. From the time of von der Osten's death to the arrests of the Duquesne Ring, March to June 1941, Ludwig had conducted his nation-wide espionage management role, during which the *Abwehr* did not appear to have determined how it would proceed post von der Osten's demise, thus leaving Ludwig to manage everything during what was supposed to be the end of his operation.

Ludwig's *en clare* reports and secret writing indicated his resolve to get out of the United States as soon as possible and a continuing worry delays would result in his arrest. Would von der Osten be replaced, would Ludwig become the new *de facto* central leader of all espionage, or would the service return to its previous operational methodology of control of agents through overseas communications using cut-outs? Ludwig asked for clarity on the *Abwehr's* intentions, but received no indication from his handlers as identified in the portion of intercepted operational communications of any decision by the service related to Ludwig or its future course in the United States. It was clear to Ludwig he could not stay in New York, but the *Abwehr* remained noncommittal on his request to leave the U.S. for Germany. According to his handlers, he was to remain in the U.S. and continue his mission for the time being. In a letter directed to Ludwig through multiple *U-Stellen* he was ordered to, "Please stay there [the U.S.] yourself. We have not forgotten your wish to return home soon, but for the moment your task is too

important."[407] Berlin had not stipulated where he must operate from to perform his "task," only that he remained running espionage until a determination was made. Therefore, it appears he resolved to leave New York and travel West to simultaneously manage his agents, conduct onsite intelligence, and be prepared to flee once permitted. He had been able to avoid FBI surveillance in June, perhaps, if he could do it successfully again, he could stay outside of their investigative reach until allowed to leave. Traveling westward almost certainly indicated, once permitted to leave, he intended to exit the U.S. from the west coast and probably book passage to China to be evacuated back to Germany via KO Shanghai.

Unfortunately for Kurt Ludwig, by early August the Bureau was not only aware of his plan to travel West, but also knew the route he was to take and his schedule for arrival and departure at key points. Through an intercepted Joe K letter, Ludwig revealed his plans to leave from a location in Pennsylvania, travel to New Jersey, back to New York, onward to his birthplace of Fremont, Ohio, where he would arrive on August 4th, and then his travel to and remain in Chicago from August 7 to 12.[408] While he did not execute this exact plan, the general course alerted the Bureau so that it could stage its resources along the most likely routes between the known cities. Rather than follow the most likely routes – the ones the FBI was most prepared for – Ludwig took a circuitous route and avoided detection. He was in Fremont, Ohio as planned on August 4, but the Bureau never detected his arrival, location, activities, or departure. On August 8, a Joe K letter was posted from Suffern, New York, indicating he was using his agents as part of

[407] T. J. Donegan, "Re; Fred Ludwig, with aliases, Et Al Espionage – G (Bureau File 65-33780)," New York, New York, July 24, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 4, pg. 9.
[408] E. J. Connelly, "RE: Fred Ludwig, with aliases, et al; Espionage – G," Cleveland, Ohio, August 1, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 3, pgs. 239-247.

his surveillance deception or was employing highly complicated road travel as a means to avoid detection.[409]

Ludwig's luck in avoiding surveillance ran out in Chicago when he was identified coordinating with agent Rudolph Diblik. During this phase of FBI surveillance, Ludwig had failed to identify the FBI agents following him and he proceeded with his operational activity. He remained with Diblik for several days during which agents were able to gain access to his car and record all of his belongings. According to the FBI field report:

> "photographs were made of the entire contents of Ludwig's luggage … Seven hundred and forty photographs were taken, all of which were successfully developed. The material reflects information concerning Ludwig's itinerary to the Coast, his diary, various names and addresses, some in Portugal and South America, and numerous notes on national defense matters in this country.
>
> Ludwig also has a short-wave Hallicrafter radio receiver [sic] in the back of his car and carries ear phones to be used in connection therewith in his grip."[410]

Armed with a more intricate itinerary, complete with alternate routes, the FBI tracked Ludwig even when evasion was employed and his trail momentarily lost. Such events occurred over the weeks, but unlike previous times, the FBI recovered and reestablished surveillance. The routes also provided insight into Ludwig's counter-detection plans, as it appeared he was concerned some of his communications may have been compromised, and had devised multiple false routes – such as the mail sent from Suffern – as ruses to complicate surveillance.[411]

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[409] Harry Kimball, Memorandum for Mr. P. E. Foxworth, "RE: Fred Ludwig, et al; Espionage (G)," Washington D.C., August 9, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 4, pg. 58.
[410] J. B. Little, Memorandum for Mr. Foxworth, "RE: Fred Ludwig alias Joe K.; et al; Espionage – G," located in Ludwig, Section 4, pgs. 66-67. The Hallicrafter was a transceiver capable of sending and receiving signals and not a receiver which would have been unable to send signals.
[411] Letter to Mr. Manuel Alonso, translation, June 26, 1941, Serial 86, located in Ludwig, Section 4, pg. 85.

Even though highly-trained and very-effective as a field agent, Ludwig could not overcome the impact of the FBI having access to all of his tradecraft and plans. Knowing Ludwig's next moves, the FBI was prepared when Ludwig left Chicago and backtracked through Indiana and Ohio. Since Hoover had become personally involved in internal queries related to the loss of surveillance during the June mission to the South, all Field Offices were intensely focused on not repeating the same errors and receiving the same level of highest-most scrutiny of their successes and failures. Agent reports on the surveillance were highly detailed and provided finite discussions of the facts in play when Ludwig was able to effectively avoid their tails. A description of the surveillance reveals the extent of Ludwig's tradecraft to avoid or lose counter espionage surveillance, and the strenuous efforts executed by the Bureau to maintain their trail. For example:

> "Agents of the Cleveland Field Division had been on the surveillance of the subject at the time he left Fremont, Ohio, on the morning of August 5th and it had been thought that he would go to South Bend, Indiana, thence to Chicago, but instead he apparently had headed south and eluded the agents at Springfield, Ohio, …
>
> the Cincinnati agents were endeavoring to pick up the surveillance in the vicinity of Springfield and Dayton, but suggested that Road 40 going east of Dayton be watched for the subject. Before agents of the Indianapolis Field Division could be sent out another telephone call was received from the Cleveland Field Division that the subject had been located near Dayton, Ohio."[412]

In this example, dozens of agents from three Field Offices, or Divisions, frenetically lost and regained contact of a foreign espionage officer who was aware surveillance was being attempted and could be re-established at any time. Once the FBI had the contents of his car, all of these normally effective counter surveillance practices

[412] D. C. Spencer, "Joe K., with aliases; Julio Lopez Lido, with aliases; Dinnes Carl Wilhelm von der Osten, with aliases, et al," New York, New York, July 8, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 3, pg. 112.

were for naught, and after Chicago there was no real chance for Ludwig to ever again be in the clear. Unaware of the penetration of his operational planning, he continued this journey, repeatedly losing and then regaining Bureau surveillance.

While the post-Chicago surveillance evidence vast improvement in the FBI's capabilities to track Ludwig, his training did enable breaks in their coverage that allowed him to continue to collect and report on intelligence matters, to possibly include the use of his onboard W/T. In one of his last messages to the *Abwehr* transmitted via his assistant Lucy Boehmler he detailed his plan of action. Boehmler was not with Ludwig when he sent the note, and he was not observed placing any mail. FBI practice during the tail was when Ludwig was observed sending letters, agents would contact the local US Post Office officials or regional postmaster and request all of the post be turned over to the Bureau. While this process was prohibitive in terms of getting proper legal permission to seize Ludwig's mail, the FBI files indicate most US Postal employees complied with its requests. There was the issue, however, of identifying what it was that Ludwig had sent or received as he repeatedly used unknown *U-Stellen* that would have complicated mail seizure which relied on known names and addresses. There is also the possibility Ludwig used some known names and addresses when he knew he was under surveillance to bait the FBI agents and protect other post from interception. In the letter sent by Boehmler, he appeared to be informing his handlers, regardless of their direction, he would complete some final assignments and then to escape the U.S. for Germany, and therefore he wrote:

> "According to my plan of travel, I will evidently be in Kansas City, Missouri on the 15th and Cheyenne, Wyoming on the 18th, and in Seattle on the 26th. From there I go to California where I wish to remain about a

> week. I must be in the East again before the end of September. It is to be hoped that I can then travel home."[413]

Ludwig's actual plan of Chicago followed practically the same course identified in his letter, and he would have arrived in Seattle on August 27 had he not been arrested.

There is no clear evidence within the Ludwig file to identify why the FBI had determined to finally execute his arrest. Most histories identify he was fleeing across the U.S., trailed by the FBI, in order to escape to Germany, but this summary does not align with information in the case file. It is clear from those files which necessarily include some of his communications with Germany, that Ludwig was aware of surveillance from late June until the day of his arrest, and during that time, was able to successfully and, most often without FBI awareness, conduct espionage against specific military intelligence collection requirements, coordinate the activities of his agents, conduct open and clandestine communications with his control, and move mostly-freely across the U.S.

Things began to unravel for him after Wyoming as the FBI increasingly turned up the pressure on its surveillance, but for all practical purposes, there was little difference in its approach to Ludwig on the 25th of August than the 26th of June. Yet, if the purpose of trailing Ludwig was to expose espionage agents in the United States, the FBI had failed. Outside of Diblik in Chicago, the FBI had not observed a single operational act related to espionage or identify any other agents with whom Ludwig was in contact, despite learning those exact activities had occurred through the British interception of Ludwig's operational traffic.[414] Under the nose of FBI surveillance, Ludwig had continued to

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[413] A. H. Johnson, "RE: Fred Ludwig with aliases, et al Espionage – G," Chicago, IL, August 13, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 4, pg. 158.
[414] Diblik was questioned but never indicted or tried for espionage despite his involvement with Ludwig and clear evidence of his role in *Abwehr* espionage.

communicate with his handlers and send intelligence, meet with unidentified agents, and execute direct collection of intelligence. The continued inability to identify other agents coupled with Ludwig's sustained ability to operate then may very well have been the deciding factors that ultimately resulted in the arrest.

Following his arrest, Ludwig never cooperated with the FBI. During interrogation and within his sworn statement, Ludwig refused to provide any details related to the FBI's allegations of espionage. He admitted to working for Germany in terms of the collection of technical magazines and newspaper clippings but stopped short of admitting espionage. Like other captured agents, he claimed to have been forced into the acts out of fear of reprisal, and that he was only in the U.S. because his wife was being held hostage to force his compliance.[415] Like other *Abwehr* agents who had made similar claims, like Sebold, other information strongly contradicts the possibility of coercion to spy. In Ludwig's case, there were nine months of evidence of his active engagement in espionage of his own free will on behalf of Germany. Several of his Joe K letters were addressed to his wife, Helmi, in which he discussed their relationship and his free association with the *Abwehr*.

From his arrest through his trial and conviction, Ludwig continued to profess his innocence and as such provided the FBI no additional information on his or other espionage agents it did not already have. This unsurprising refusal to cooperate specifically included not providing any further information on the proposed role of Ulrich von der Osten as the *Abwehr's* central director of espionage for North America. Of the at least 170 agents with whom Ludwig operated, around 150 were never identified by U.S.

[415] Statement by Kurt Frederick Ludwig, Spokane Washington, August 31, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 7, pgs. 126-145.

counter espionage agencies, and there is no available information to determine whether or not they remained actively involved in espionage after Ludwig was removed from the board, went dormant as agents, or became the focus of subsequent counter espionage actions.

In March 1942, Ludwig was sentenced to 20 years in prison, which was surprising as the pre-war maximum penalty was 30 years, but after December 7, 1941, the maximum penalty was death. When he was finally released from prison, he left the U.S. for West Germany and disappeared into obscurity.

Ulrich von der Osten – *Oberster Führer des Abwehr* in *Amerika*

The legacy histories of the espionage activities managed by Kurt Ludwig generally have focused on his relationship with the mysterious Julio Lido Lopez, discovered later to be Ulrich von der Osten, as a side note to Ludwig's "ring." For Raymond Batvinis, a historian and former FBI officer, in terms of the Ludwig network, the relevance of Lido / von der Osten related to how the reporting of his accidental death on March 18, 1941, supported the identification of Ludwig's espionage ring:

> "Spain's complicity in German espionage was confirmed when Lido was identified as Ulrich von der Osten, a German army major. The BSC [British Security Co-Ordination] then determined that he had served as a senior Abwehr official in Madrid, and his burial arrangements had been handled through the Spanish consulate in New York City. FBI investigation of the financial arrangements for Lido's burial led to the identification of Joe K: he was an American citizen named Kurt Frederick Ludwig."[416]

[416] Batvinis, *Origins*, pg. 199. British Security Coordination was a covert element of MI-6 established in the United States in 1940 to counter German propaganda and diplomatic efforts in the United States.

While Batvinis' overview of the case references FBI and British material, his version of the events excludes extensive primary source material related to the interconnected nature of von der Osten's mission to the United States and the centrality within this mission of Ludwig. The relationship between von der Osten and Ludwig is addressed similarly in all reviewed secondary sources, and it is noted within this paper's analysis that this approach has thus far failed to identify the strategic importance of von der Osten's mission, the continued *Abwehr* expansion in America, as well as the trajectory of German espionage prior to the U.S. entry into the Second World War.

Von der Osten was not a single operative deployed for a short term operation like Stiege, a remote handler like Ritter, or a trifling or insignificant agent like Rumrich or Sebold. Rather, by no later than 1940 and possibly as early as 1939, Ulrich von der Osten was selected by Admiral Canaris to become the single, central commander for all U.S.-based *Abwehr* espionage. Supporting him in this assignment was the entire *Abwehr* organization from the *Chef* to the most junior officer, networks of espionage officers from Canada to Argentina, to include the Caribbean and associated territories, and hundreds upon hundreds of agents in place and providing intelligence. Kurt Ludwig, his principle lieutenant, had been sent to the U.S. early in 1940 to begin organizing for von der Osten's arrival and assumption of control, so that his activities can in no way be separated from von der Osten or his mission.

Like many *Abwehr* officers and agents already identified, von der Osten had a history in the United States. Immigration records identify Ulrich von der Osten first entered the United States at New York on February 26, 1911, in route to Mexico. On August 11, 1929, he again entered the United States and declared he was traveling to

Keenesburg, Colorado to live with his brother Dinnes von der Osten. In April 1930, Ulrich was joined by his wife Fey and their four children in Colorado where they lived with Dinnes.[417] The von der Ostens entered the U.S. claiming to seek permanent residence and eventually become citizens; although there is no evidence to indicate whether or not they ever completed citizenship requirements.[418] After a year in Colorado, Ulrich moved his family to an unidentified location in Pennsylvania, possibly traveling briefly first to California. The family stayed in Pennsylvania until 1934 when they returned to Germany – although there are no immigration or transit records of their departure.[419] There is no evidence within any source material that would indicate Ulrich von der Osten was engaged in espionage activity during his 1911 transit through the U.S. to Mexico or during the five years he lived in Colorado and Pennsylvania.

Ulrich did serve in the First World War in an unidentified capacity and after his 1934 return to Germany was re-commissioned into the military. By 1936 he held the rank of *Hauptman* (Captain) and had been assigned to the *Abwehr*. There is no evidence Ulrich was involved in espionage or intelligence prior to 1936. Dinnes von der Osten, as identified early in this analysis, did have a history of involvement in espionage related matters in the U.S. This background included his detention by the U.S. Secret Service in 1918 and his probable cover work in the *Schlaraffia.* If Dinnes had sustained contact with German military intelligence offices or individuals after the First World War, it is possible he was engaged in some espionage related activities during the time Ulrich lived

[417] R. G. Grantham, "Report of Special Agent R. G. Grantham," New York, NY, July 25, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 3, pg. 154.
[418] Ludwig, Section 3, pgs. 160-161.
[419] Statement of Dinnes von der Osten, Denver, CO, Ludwig, Section 14, pgs. 112-113.

with him from 1929 to 1931. Had this been the case, given Ulrich's intelligence, he would have almost certainly been at least witting of his brother's activities.

While Ulrich von der Osten's intelligence career may have started late in his life – he was forty-three years old when he returned to Germany in 1934 – he rapidly rose to positions of prominence within the *Abwehr*. Based on the known timeline of his activities, he likely was recommissioned into the *Wehrmacht* very shortly or even immediately after returning to Germany, and perhaps his resumption of military service was among the factors that ushered his return. Since, like many of the other officers identified in this analysis, he was of a more senior age and had traveled globally, he fit the mold for *Abwehr* duty in excess to standard military service in the *Reichswehr*. In von der Osten's case, he was personally recommended by German industrialist Maximillian Baur to Canaris for the intelligence service. Baur, according to declassified FBI intelligence reports, was a personnel confidant of Canaris who had been involved in German espionage since the 19th Century.[420] Von der Osten was immediately accepted into the *Abwehr* on aptitude, experience, and Baur's recommendation. Given Ulrich on der Osten returned to Germany in late 1934 and Canaris assumed the title of *Chef des Abwehrs* in January 1935, Baur's recommendation and its subsequent acceptance could indicate Ulrich was part of an initial staff expansion under the leader.

Not only was Ulrich brought immediately into the Abwehr, based on his latter activities, he began almost immediately working directly for Canaris. By 1936, von der Osten was dispatched to the Spanish Civil War as Canaris' personal representative, observer, and espionage agent indicating his role included direct collection of intelligence

[420] "Dr. Maximillian Baur Espionage G." located in "Abwehr."

and the running of *hintermänner*.[421] It was likely this duty that has resulted in many secondary sources incorrectly claiming von der Osten had been assigned to or associated with KO Madrid, the *Abwehr* station in "non-aligned" Spain. KO Madrid was not established until 1940, at which time von der Osten was assigned to the Berlin HQ, working with IM, and planning his U.S. operation. Rather than working from the KO, it appears von der Osten served in Spain as a liaison between Falangists and the *Abwehr*. Given Canaris had a personal relationship with Franco and many of his underlings, it is possible von der Osten was also placed at their disposal as a personal liaison. This possibility is even more important in terms of von der Osten's probable role as Canaris himself had been established by Hitler as the lead coordinator with Franco for all matters, thus increasing the prominence of von der Osten as his personal representative.

By no later than January 1938, Canaris was considering a new role for von der Osten. Now carrying the rank of *Major*, von der Osten had left Spain and returned to Berlin to work in the headquarters where he was engaged with the officers of IM Berlin, among others. From Berlin, there is evidence von der Osten traveled to and operated in the U.S. from late 1937 until early 1938.

The evidence of his espionage associated activities during this trip includes a hotel registration ticket from the Hotel McAlpin, New York City, that was recovered among von der Osten's trunks full of belongings by the FBI. The registration card identified the occupant as "D" von der Osten, indicating Ulrich had been traveling under his brother's name. Dinnes' whereabouts at the time were established in the corollary

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[421] "Ino Ezratty Rolland, Sworn Statement," Berlin, Germany, May 5, 1947, located in "Baron Ino M. O. Rolland," Case File KV-2-693, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11050006, KV-2-693_1, pg. 37.

1939 investigation into his suspected espionage activity – the two incidents were not known to have been related at the time. The Colorado address used by "D" von der Osten to register at the McAlpin was Dinnes' from when he and Ulrich had lived together in 1930, and not his present address of 1938, further indicating it was Ulrich who had stayed at the hotel.[422] Coincidentally, Ulrich's stay at the hotel as "D" overlapped the period during which Guenther Rumrich and Karl Schlüter had plotted to force a U.S. Army Colonel to surrender defensive plans for the East Coast in the same hotel. While there is no primary source material that indicates von der Osten's stay at the McAlpin was related to the plot, the combined confluence of the plot and his stay is at a minimum intriguing and possibly suspicious. Yet, while probably not involved in the McAlpin plot, von der Osten could have been involved in espionage activity during his 1938 time in the States, although there is no evidence to indicate what that activity might have been. Other than the McAlpin information, there are no other primary source materials that identify Ulrich's espionage mission in early 1938.

Given his intended later role in the U.S. and his extremely close professional ties with Canaris, it appears highly probable, this mission was related to the overall plan for the establishment of centralized *Abwehr* command in the U.S. While the FBI had immigration records for Ulrich von der Osten for his 1929 arrival, the arrival of his wife Fey and children in 1930, there were neither entry nor exit records for his arrival before or departure after his stay in New York in January 1938. Given he entered the U.S. under the false identity of Lido in 1941, he would have therefore also certainly been traveling undercover in 1938. He may have traveled as Lido at that time, as elements of the Lido

[422] Ludwig, Section 2. Pg. 100.

persona were surely developed while in Spain just as Canaris had evolved his lifelong alias of Chilean Reed Rosas during his 1917 internment in Conception, Chile.

1938 was the same year von der Osten recruited Erich Theodor Lau as a *V-Mann* to facilitate agent operations between South America and the United States.[423] This recruitment would have been after von der Osten's return from the U.S. indicating the results of that operation had informed him of the necessity to recruit and handle an agent specifically for financial facilitation matters – Lau's specialty.

It was also 1938 when Kurt Ludwig may have come to the attention of von der Osten. On February 21, the U.S. Embassy in Vienna notified the State Department that American citizen Kurt Frederick Ludwig had been arrested in Lofer, Austria on suspicion of espionage. Apparently neither the State Department nor the Embassy acted on the information as the event went unnoticed from 1938 until August 1941 when government agencies were notified of another Ludwig arrest.[424] Based on the notice from the Embassy, it is presumed his cover for action included use of his American citizenship and passport to gain access to intelligence matters. The arrest may have prevented the *Abwehr* from using Ludwig elsewhere in Europe, but his advanced training will have still had value in other theaters. Therefore, as with Lau and others, he may have been spotted by or provided to von der Osten as a possible *Vertrauensmänner* for the U.S. operation.

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[423] Interrogation report of Theodore Erdman Erich Lau, New York, New York, undated, located in "Theodore Erdman Erich Lau," Case File KV-2-3017, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11511033, KV-2-3017_1, pg. 26.

[424] A. M. Thurston, Memorandum for Mr. Foxworth, "Re: Kurt Frederick Ludwig Espionage – G," Washington D.C., September 4, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 8, pg. 68. Notably, this arrest was just weeks before the *Anschluss*, the peaceful re-annexation of Austria into Germany, which raises the possibility of Ludwig's possible involvement in gathering intelligence to support German expansion and unification.

Since von der Osten's operational travel occurred prior to the revelation of the Rumrich activity in February 1938, his presence at that time suggests the *Abwehr* was considering executing centralized management of agents in the U.S. prior to the exposure of Rumrich, et al. The fact his recruitments occurred after Rumrich could indicate these plans continued and possibly expanded because of the exposure of the low-level agents in the subsequent months of 1938. Along with the exposure that occurred within the Rumrich investigation – resultant from a poorly trained, lower-level, and insignificant agent with delusions of self-importance – there were other events within the scope of the *Abwehr's* U.S. footprint that may have indicated the need for on-site leadership to Canaris and others in Berlin. For instance, Pheiffer identified part of the responsibility for the exposure of himself and other senior officers of the service within the Rumrich investigation resulted in part due to lack of central management of the espionage activities. His MI-5 interrogation included his version of a one-on-one conversation with Canaris on the fault of the exposure:

> "To CANARIS … PHEIFFER explained that the whole trouble in America had arisen because two Abwehr stations working independently had employed a common courier (SCHLUETER) … who had also got himself mixed up with a variety of independent and Party individuals and organizations, had known too much and too many people and had acted most indiscreetly ... and the result had been the blowing of useful agents, a chaotic spy story for the Americans, and trouble for Pheiffer."[425]

In a separate incident later in 1940, two men falsely claiming to be *Abwehr* agents, entered the German embassy in Washington D.C. to request money to support their supposed sabotage operations directed by *Abwehrstelle* Berlin.[426] Neither of the

[425] KV-2-267_2, pgs. 8-9. The useful agents in this case as identified throughout this analysis were almost certainly Gudenberg and Voss and not Glaser, Hoffman, and Rumrich.
[426] Miller, pg. 64.

men were actual agents of the *Abwehr*, but appear to have at least known of its activities in the U.S. sufficiently to think they could fake their way through the procedures of the German embassy.[427] This event highlighted the, at times, juvenile structure of the *Abwehr's* U.S.-based activities and resulted in a memorandum from Canaris to the Foreign Minister qualifying the *Abwehr's* scope and impact of U.S. operations.

These incidents retroactively highlight a context that may have influenced Canaris' decision to create a centralized management authority within the U.S. and emplace one of his most trusted officers as its leader. In addition to such incidents, the prime motivation for centralized control would have been operational – whereas in Germany and several occupied states there were established *Abwehrstellen* and by 1940 ten KOs in neutral states, there were no stations or offices anywhere in the Western Hemisphere from which to direct and coordinate espionage, to include among the most Axis-friendly states. Such a condition would have hampered control of U.S. operations, and not just related to dealing with the occasional screw up or over-eager agent, but in identifying new sources of intelligence, balancing resources, and centrally managing funding. The closest resemblance to an espionage station in the hemisphere could arguably have been the offices of the defense attachés in Mexico City and Buenos Aires that were operated and staffed by the *Abwehr* and directly involved and interconnected with U.S.-based espionage. However, these capabilities were relatively small and too minimally-resourced to serve as a KO or *stellen*, and are best viewed as secondary

[427] "Telegram: For the State Secretary Personally," The Charge d'Affaires in the United States to the Foreign Ministry, *Documents on German Force Policy: 1918-1945*¸ The Department of State, Washington D.C., 1954, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x004185454&seq=811&q1=hausberger, pg. 701.

outposts.[428] Within the U.S., due to myriad reasons, the establishment of a KO or smaller espionage footprint in the embassy to manage all espionage was untenable.

The trips by von der Osten to the States in 1938 and early 1939 before his full deployment can be perceived as tours and evaluations wherein surveyed the landscape of espionage, met with and reviewed agents and their activities, and developed his concept of operations for central management of espionage. If indeed his first attempt at "citizenship" intended for late 1939 referenced earlier is assessed as efforts toward the assumption of the leadership position, this fact would highlight the imperative of Canaris and his *Abwehr* to establish an operational control in the U.S. prior to the outbreak of war in Europe. Such a scenario directly aligns the activities of U.S.-based espionage with management of a European war – the tumult of approaching war may have itself been the catalyst in the 1939 delay. Of his early visits, Ulrich von der Osten also commented on being "discharged from service as a non-citizen," indicating he had been operating under an assumed identity, and this mechanism at the time had proved insufficient to support long-term espionage management.[429] Early activities by von der Osten to establish better cover identities, such as his ties to Juan March and connectivity with the Spanish Consulate in New York, later in 1941 strongly suggest he was adapting his operation as a result of these earlier setbacks.

A final factor in the delay related to the investigation by the FBI into his brother Dinnes von der Osten that was opened in June 1939 for suspicion of espionage

[428] Some commentators and authors have referred to the smaller espionage footprints in the Western Hemisphere as *Kriegsorganisationen,* the *Abwehr* did not. These stations included *Abwehr* officers as espionage leaders but they were not directly in charge of all espionage within their assigned countries.
[429] Ludwig, Section 1, pgs. 166-67.

activity.[430] Within a letter found among von der Osten's belongings, he had stated of his 1939 delay and return to Germany, "it became known somehow that one of my relations is employed in an unpopular department."[431] This statement, when compared with other FBI case files on Dinnes and the overall Ludwig investigation, indicates Dinnes was part of the *Abwehr's* operational schema in 1939, and the sudden attention toward Dinnes had become a disruptive factor in the plot to deploy Ulrich. Notably, Dinnes was not connected to espionage by the FBI as a result of that investigation. Yet the investigation into Dinnes almost certainly informed later *Abwehr* operations, as Dinnes directly supported von der Osten as Lido, and those activities were also not connected to one another until months after the March 1941 accident. Even after a second espionage investigation into Dinnes in 1941, he still was not arrested and charged.

By late 1940, either all of the obstacles to von der Osten's deployment to the U.S had been overcome or addressed by other means. If the Sebold double agent operation had been known to the *Abwehr* and related to the delays in the summer of 1940, the service's senior leaders by October 1940 felt they could deploy von der Osten and avoid his ensnarement in the FBI's operation. If this were the case, Ludwig's ability to manage the operational security of his agents and operations wholly separate from exposure to Sebold and the FBI would have been a factor in the final decision to send Ulrich. In the Autumn of 1940, von der Osten left Germany and took a common route overland by train through the Soviet Union and from there onward to Shanghai, China were he connected with Siefken.

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[430] J. Edgar Hoover, "Re: Dinnes von der Osten; Espionage," Washington D.C., June 17, 1939, located in Ludwig, Section 1, pg. 14.
[431] Ludwig, Section 1, pgs. 167.

A postmortem investigation by U.S. agents in China revealed von der Osten had arrived in Shanghai in true name but soon assumed the Lido identity. While there, he lived at the Broadway Mansions hotel apartments in the Bund from November 8, 1940 until February tenth, 1940 when he departed for the U.S.[432] While in Shanghai in November, von der Osten left China and traveled to Japan, to engage with *Abwehr* officers assigned at the Tokyo embassy and also met with representatives from the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy to discuss intelligence collaboration. Given KO Shanghai was the primary conduit whereby valuable intelligence collected in the U.S. was provided to Japan's militaries (discussed in Chapter V), one of the KO's officers would have accompanied von der Osten, and they would have directly engaged on the matter of intelligence liaison regarding the U.S. Among von der Osten's belongings recovered in New York in 1941 were receipts that identified he had stayed at the Hotel New Grand in Yokohama, Japan from November 29 until December 1, 1940. Yokohama held the primary naval warship construction yards and was a fleet headquarters for the Imperial Japanese Navy, suggesting an element of his travel may have been focused on sharing naval or maritime intelligence. On December 2, 1940, he embarked the S.S. *Taiyo Maru* from Tokyo and returned to Shanghai.[433]

Returning to China from Japan, von der Osten as Lido requested and received a U.S. transit visa from the American consulate in Shanghai. According to his request, Lido was a Spanish citizen employed by the Juan March company of Barcelona, and he was leaving China having concluded business and returning to Spain through the U.S.[434]

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[432] E. J. Connelly, "Re: DUCASE," San Francisco, CA, June 5, 1941, located in Ludwig, Section 2, pgs. 203-204.
[433] Ludwig, Section 1, pg. 161.
[434] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 204.

Not coincidentally, Juan March was an arms dealer and banker who was one of the richest men in Spain and an intelligence contact of Canaris since the First World War. The use of the Lido personna tied to March indicates Canaris had coordinated German espionage and possible military operations within the Spanish Civil War with March via von der Osten. March, once known as the richest man in Spain, was another personal friend and confidant of Canaris from the First World War. Given subsequent support provided to the *Abwehr* by the Spanish consulate in New York after von der Osten's accidental death, the Lido persona appears to have been significantly developed and was known to senior Spanish officials in the U.S. and Spain who were prepared to provide backstops and cover support.[435] This level of coordination and reciprocal support highlights von der Osten's senior role during the Spanish Civil War in coordinating and directing combined operations between Germany and Spain.

Concluding his coordination visit in China, on February 10, 1940, von der Osten as Lido boarded the S.S. *President Cleveland* of the American Presidents Lines, or APL, bound for the United States. The *President Cleveland* had a brief stopover in Hawaii of twelve hours before returning to its course bound for California. Among von der Osten's recovered personal items was a receipt from Young's Laundry, 108 South King, Honolulu, Hawaii that indicated Lido may have disembarked.[436] According to now-declassified Army G-2 intelligence provided to the FBI, while ashore, von der Osten / Lido met with *Abwehr* espionage agents who provided him intelligence on military

[435] "Backstop: The arrangement made by documentary or oral means to support a cover story so that inquiries about it will elicit responses indicating the story is true." T*erms and Definitions of Interest for DoD Counterintelligence Professionals*, Defense Intelligence Agency, Office of Counterintelligence, Washington, D.C., May 2011, https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/ci/CI_Glossary.pdf
[436] Ludwig, Section 1, pg. 161.

activity around the Hawaiian islands. This intelligence was revealed in a letter posted on February 26 from the *President Cleveland* and sent to the *Abwehr* through a known *U-Stellen* in Shanghai:

> "Strong concentration of troops … Said to be 40,000 Army and as many Navy. Lately arrived: 1500 technicians, more expected. Many for Army barracks and fortification MoKapu (see map). Harbor SoW MoKapu is being readied as seaplane base …
>
> All Milit. Establishments prohibited for civilians, 57 officers of F.B/I. are … in Honolulu alone. Questioning [intelligence collection] can't be done too openly.
>
> Navy: Said to be station in Pearl Harbor & rest of islands 150 units of all kinds. Seen in harbor about 50 vessels at least; 5 armored ships; big (battleships?), Saratoga and other small aircraft carriers, the last one outside of harbor, other big one besides Saratoga said to be there. Seen several units of destroyers (each 4 of them tied to others … Seen dest. [destroyer] No. 372, 373, 374, 375."[437]

The Army did not provide the intelligence or the letter to the FBI until August 25, 1941; however, the Bureau had earlier received similar information through its work with MI-5 to include the aforementioned intelligence on Pearl Harbor being sent to Germany and Japan through China. It appears the February 1941 letter intercepted by the Army and the March 1941 letter intercepted by MI-5, were von der Osten's report on the same intelligence being sent through multiple different routes as per *Abwehr* operational security tradecraft. In addition to these two intercepts, it is almost certain von der Osten would have sent the same information through other additional channels to ensure its receipt and forward hard copy photos and annotated maps.

[437] "Re: C. W. Smith, Esquire Espionage – G," R. L. Shivers, Special Agent in Charge, Honolulu, Hawaii to Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., August 25, 1941, located in Ludwig Section 15, pg. 54. The quotation from the letter is an abbreviated form of the full letter and provided to represent the type and scope of intelligence that was recovered by the Army.

On February 27, von der Osten / Lido landed and cleared immigration in San Francisco. Over the next three weeks he shuttled between multiple locations as he consolidated his leadership of U.S. based agents and probably conducted surveillance detection to determine whether or not U.S. authorities were aware of his arrival. It appears he may have spent at least a few days in California, then arrived by train in Denver where he and Dinnes engaged with local agents and facilitators and may have engaged in direct collection. After Colorado, Ulrich and Dinnes left together by train for Chicago to contact other agents and then arrived in New York between March 3 and 6.

The FBI files covering the investigation of Ulrich von der Osten revealed that after arriving in the U.S. and until his accidental death, von der Osten employed a host of counter detection and other tradecraft. Techniques included the use of multiple *deckname*, simultaneously registering in different hotels under different names, purchasing travel tickets that were never used, and sending luggage to destinations under different names. By February 29th, while possibly in California, Ulrich was receiving telegrams at the Lincoln Hotel in New York, probably under a different name, regarding operational matters – these were held until he arrived to receive them. He also drafted multiple letters on letterhead from key locations and hotels and then dated the letters for times when he was not actually located in that area. These letters were sent from other locations at different times and using different names and code phrases; thus, if any counter espionage service intercepted the letters it would have challenges connecting the correspondence to one officer or develop an accurate timeline of his movement. For example, he used letterhead from the Burlington Denver Zephyr, the train on which he traveled from Denver to Chicago, for a letter postmarked March 7, 1941, by which time

he was already in New York. Similarly, his hotel bill at the Hotel Olin, Denver, Colorado was stamped March 13, 1941, also a date by which he was already in New York. He also arranged to purchase train tickets and hotel rooms through American Express that did not support his actual travel. Finally, he had forwarded luggage from San Francisco to New York set to arrive on March 1, made arrangements at the Lincoln Hotel, and simultaneously held rooms at the Taft and Wellington Hotels.

Initial contact between Ulrich von der Osten and Ludwig occurred sometime between March 3 and March 14, 1941. In a letter dated March 3, von der Osten forwarded information to Germany and requested his control, "send telegram of congratulations to JOE," indicating the letter was meant as a signal to Ludwig of Osten's arrival and intent to meet, while also identifying a meeting had not yet occurred.[438] In a March 14 letter, Ludwig identified to his control that he had met von der Osten during the previous week, stating, "last week I met finally Connie [von der Osten] again."[439] An exact date of their meeting was not identified. By March 15, eyewitnesses identified von der Osten as Lido had checked into the Taft, indicating he had stayed at another location after his arrival in New York, although no records of von der Osten or Lido were recovered at other New York Hotels during that time frame, suggesting his use of another *deckname* and supporting credentials. The Taft was where he was staying at the time of the accident and where all of his known belongings were recovered.

After connecting, Ludwig and von der Osten immediately got to work coordinating on the consolidation of the *Abwehr's* U.S.-based espionage agents beginning with those controlled by Ludwig. In letters from von der Osten to Berlin, possibly to

[438] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 137.
[439] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 126.

include Canaris, he identified his intent to be operational by April 1941. During the short time Ludwig and von der Osten collaborated in New York, there remains little evidence of what they actually did. Among the eight agents arrested, none had met von der Osten, and only Lucy Boehmler, Ludwig's assistant, even knew of him – although it appears Ludwig used multiple aliases to refer to von der Osten, so that even Boehmler's awareness was limited. Therefore, the week or more spent collaborating likely focused on solidifying von der Osten's false personas, seeking bases for coordinating activities, and reviewing ongoing operations. Among the few activities known to have occurred was von der Osten as Lido had received his driver's license permit and was scheduled to take a driving test a few days after his accident. Establishing credentials was certainly an effort to provide further bulwarks to his Lido persona and begin the process of developing one or more other personas to enable his long-term viability as an espionage officer in the country.

His plans were for naught after he was struck in the traffic accident late in the evening of March 18. Most histories and accounts of the incident claim von der Osten / Lido was arguing with another man, stepped out into oncoming traffic, and was struck. His companion in response grabbed a briefcase held by von der Osten and then disappeared. According to these accounts, it was the second man's strange actions that resulted in the initial tip that led to Ludwig. Within the official declassified FBI file on the Ludwig case, there is no evidence such a series of events occurred or led to the identification of Ludwig – as already covered. According to the official records, Ludwig remained with von der Osten and saw to his delivery to a specific hospital. Ludwig visited the hospital multiple times and was with von der Osten at the time of his death on

March 19, 1941. After his death, Ludwig made arrangements with the Spanish consulate to arrange for the disposition of remains and internment. When a funeral was held, it was attended by Ludwig and at least two of his *Hinterfrauen,* Lucy Boehmler and Helen Meyer. At no time from the accident until von der Osten's internment did Ludwig attempt to hide his association with Lido or make any attempt to conceal his actions.

In the days after the funeral, Ludwig sent a secret writing message to Berlin outlining the accident and his subsequent actions:

> "Date of the Accident: Tuesday about 20.45 o'clock (March 18 19 20.45)
>
> The passengers car had the number 5U 57-35 (5U 57-35).
>
> The hospital where he was taken to and where he died is Saint Vincents (Saint Vincent) hospital.
>
> The Consulate mentioned is the Spanish.
>
> Phil dies on Wednesday 16.30 o'clock (March 19, 1941 – 16.30 o'clock).
>
> To (indecipherable) I cabled Wednesday morning an 'L.C.' (LC) AUTOMOBILE STRUCK JULIO TUESDAY BADLY HURT SAINT VINCENTS HOSPITAL INFORM RELATIVES.
>
> During Tuesday I sent to F.B. an L.C. AUTOMOBILE (indecipherable – appears to be 'struck Phil') CONDITION VERY CRITICAL SAINT VINCENTS HOSPITAL CABLE INSTRUCTIONS and I also cabled PHIL VERSTARD MITWOCH 16.30 UHR BITTE BENACHRICHTIGEN VERWANDTE CABELT SOFORT ENICELHEFTEN(Corrupt-probably Einzelheiten) FUR BEERDIGUNG (Translation: Phil dies Wednesday 16.30 hours. Please inform family, cable details at once for funeral.) To Bill I cabled RECEIVED LETTER MARCH 12 PAPERs WERE RETURNED MARCH 8 STOP AUTOMOBILES STRUCK CONNIE CONDITION VERY CRITICAL SPANISH CONSULATE NOTIFIED JOE STILL WORKING …
>
> Phil's things are still at the Hotel Taft."[440]

[440] Ludwig, Section 2, pg. 131. Parenthetical comments in the original.

There are no reports in the FBI files of a man attempting to take a briefcase or flee or attempt to gain the Lido's belongings from the Taft. In fact, FBI agents engaging with the Hotel management in April learned a friend of Lido's had notified them of his death and requested they hold all of his baggage and belongings until contacted by the Spanish Consulate. It is here where the Consulate failed to support the *Abwehr* operation. Had it sent its representatives to the Taft in the first weeks after the accident, all of the intelligence that ultimately exposed von der Osten, supported the identification of Ludwig, led to the revelation of the Pearl Harbor intelligence, and exposed the plans for von der Osten's leadership would not have been recovered.

Von der Osten's arrival in the U.S. was more important than the simple replacement of Kurt Ludwig as the primary organizer and director for hundreds of agents. He represented the accumulation of over eight years of work begun in 1933 with the activation of legacy agents as full-time espionage professionals. From 1933 until von der Osten's death, the *Abwehr* had steadily increased its penetration of the U.S. military and defense industries. It had avoided the pitfalls of political intrigues and party dynamics to sustain these primary efforts of espionage operations. Its networks were prolific if not entirely effective in terms of valuable collection. In this state, the *Abwehr* can be seen as having the same collection challenges as every single professional intelligence agency of the modern age. Like MI-6, the CIA, or the General Directorate for Security, it needed many agents to have good agents. Management of such a large mélange of activity required hands-on control and that was supposed to have come from von der Osten.

The exact plans for von der Osten's consolidation of all *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. were never discovered. Surely such a feat would have required more than a single,

even if highly capable, officer, and one is stretched to imagine within the context of what was to come at the end of 1941, how von der Osten or anyone else could have accomplished such a heady task. Yet, that was exactly his task, and given his fairly proximal position to Canaris, it does not appear exaggeratory to presume he would have received adequate support achieve his objectives in the U.S., which would have in turn, lead to even deeper penetration of U.S. industries and the military at the point of its entry into the war. Instead of entering the war on the heels of the disruptions caused by the Duquesne and Ludwig arrests, the *Abwehr* would have been on better and more effective ground. In terms of preventing what could have been, the United States' most effective counter espionage action prior to the war may well have been an automobile accident.

The Costs of Espionage

The Declassified MI-5 case files related to *Abwehr* officers, most of whom were not identified until after the war, provide insight into the foundation of espionage support that was slowly emplaced from the 1930s onward to enable von der Osten's eventual consolidation of all U.S.-based espionage. Shortly after the transition from legacy to direct espionage operations in the U.S., the *Abwehr*, by the direction of Canaris, started to establish hidden private sector commercial mechanisms to support the myriad financial requirements of a large espionage capability in the U.S. and Western Hemisphere. While complaints about payments or schemes to receive more money have been rife thus far in this analysis, surviving *Abwehr* records, especially those of *Nebenstelle* Bremen related to its Europe-focused agents, indicate to a great degree, agents were paid exactly what was agreed to in terms for their activities.

Sebold and Stein, for example, received their monthly remittances, albeit with occasional delays. Duquesne worked on a play-to-pay basis by which he received payment only when he provided quality intelligence. Complaints from Duquesne and Stein over payments generally related to Stein's living beyond her means and Duquesne's constant schemes and trickeries to bilk the service. Others like Reuper and Roeder who claimed to have been owed money may have been attempting to pass trifling matters as intelligence, and such requests were rebuffed by their handlers. Most histories agree the *Abwehr* was not spendthrift with its operations and instead parsimonious in matters of funding. *Abwehr* agent tradecraft typically involved agents engaging in their own commercial enterprises to provide both a cover for espionage and to generate revenue for which they were to maintain their own quality of life.

Nicolaus Bensmann and Johannes Bischoff of *Nebenstelle* Bremen, while *Abwehr E-offiziere,* remained involved, respectfully, in the oil and cotton businesses where they had become wealthy. For the *Abwehr* there was no ethical conflict of interests for men such as these to use their business connections to generate intelligence or their intelligence activities to generate business from which they financially benefited. Such a policy was anathematic to British intelligence at the time who found financial gain in the scope of national duty unethical for an intelligence service. Indeed, most modern Western and Western-aligned intelligence agencies would agree with their British antecedents of the 1930s and 1940s.

Espionage has more financial requirements than agent payments and it was these other requirements for which the large-scale development of clandestine cover businesses were established. In the Western Hemisphere, as elsewhere globally, *Abwehr* policy was

to establish a covered entity within the guise of a functioning commercial enterprise. Established businesses would necessarily be required to function and operate in a successful manner in order to be able effectively conduct their clandestine facilitation purposes. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, money would be channeled within legitimate revenue streams to support espionage.

By the early-to-mid 1930s, Johannes Bischoff, working with his cousin Ludwig, in Texas used their cotton export / import businesses to establish financing mechanisms for the funding of U.S.-based *Abwehr* espionage. Johannes was of course one of Pheiffer's primary agent handlers and operational planners at *Nebenstelle* Bremen. During his time there, he remained engaged in running his international business interests. The scheme developed by the Bischoffs involved the transfer of funds, probably from the *Abwehr*, to purchase large amounts of Cotton from Ludwig's cover business for shipment to Germany at the request of Johannes' cover businesses. Much legitimate cotton was exchanged and profits generated – Germany had a huge textile industry but produced almost no cotton of its own accord – and within those large profits money for espionage was hidden. The cotton-trade-to-fund-espionage scheme was active no later than 1936. That year, the Bischoff's worked with Willi Otto Behr, *deckname* Baum, a Canaris confidant associated with covered private sector business activities to support *Abwehr* espionage. Together Bischoff and Baum established a fund of $100-125,000, $2.2 to $2.7 million in 2023 equivalency, to support U.S.-based espionage operations.[441] Given the transfer was not detected for several years, it is probable additional funds were exchanged through this mechanism in subsequent years.

[441] KV-2-693_1, pg. 37.

In 1939-40, Ludwig Bischoff came to the attention of the FBI related to his receipt of $30,000, $665,000 in 2023 equivalency, from Johannes, which can be seen to indicate the transfer of cotton commodities remained linked to U.S.-based *Abwehr* espionage.. At the time, the FBI believed elements of that $30,000 had been funneled to an *Abwehr* agent, Herman Rullhusen, in Bogota, Colombia. The FBI was unable to prove a direct connection between Johannes, Ludwig, and Rullhusen, and was thus unable to prove the $30,000 was related to espionage and not legitimate business. While Ludwig Bischoff would remain on their radar throughout the war, he was often questioned but never charged with espionage. Declassified MI-5 case files related to its investigation into Rullhusen exposed Ludwig Bischoff's direct role in facilitating financial payments and other operational support for Rullhusen and other probable South America-based agents. Unfortunately, the scope of MI-5s Rullhusen data was never directed toward Johannes Bischoff's U.S. based agents.[442] Rullhusen was arrested by Colombian authorities, assisted by the FBI's SIS, and interned and interrogated in the U.S., where he apparently provided insufficient information on either of the Bischoff brothers. Here, the FBI's inability to expose the links of the Bischoff's enterprises with espionage are not so much a critique of the bureau, but recognition of the adept nature of *Abwehr* clandestine finances that were protected from forensic accounting.

In another example of *Abwehr* financial practices, Willi Otto Behr was involved in another cotton import / export scheme to fund espionage. Prior to the war, Behr had traveled with other *Abwehr* operatives to Argentina where he used a 100,000 *Reichsmarks* loan from the *Abwehr*, $890,000 in 2023 equivalency, to establish *el*

[442] KV-2-3006_2, pgs. 1, 10, 38.

Compania Argentina de Exportación, or CARDIMAX.[443] CARDIMAX overtly was involved in cotton export from Argentina to Germany but also served as a clandestine facilitation mechanism for *Abwehr* operations. CARDIMAX was connected with Ludwig Bischoff's activities in Texas, and it had been Behr and Ludwig Bischoff who were involved in the 1936 transfer of funds, and also a later remittance of $50,000 via CARDIMAX to *Abwehr* headquarters in Berlin. While there are few details on this transaction, the covered business operations being conducted between Germany, South America, and the U.S. were so profitable, the *Abwehr* was able to fund other operations from the largesse.

The largest figure in *Abwehr* clandestine espionage financing for all of the Western Hemisphere was Baron Ino Ezratty von Rolland, known eponymously within the *Abwehr* simply as Ino or "the" Baron. According to British intelligence records, Ino had been associated with German intelligence since at least 1916 when he was an agent of IIIb operating throughout Europe. By 1917, the British were able to identify Ino was associated with and working for a young *Leutnant* Wilhelm Canaris, a *Kriegsmarine* officer working undercover in Spain to coordinate maritime intelligence and clandestine resupply of ships and submarines in the Mediterranean.[444] Canaris and Ino sustained their relationship for decades, with Ino being a somewhat friend, somewhat colleague, and somewhat *V-Mann*. From no later than Canaris' assumption of the role of *Chef des Abwehrs* in January 1935, Ino was intricately involved in German espionage and was tasked and controlled directly by Canaris. Ino was able to operate almost entirely without

[443] KV-2-693_1, pgs. 36-37. In 1936, $1.00 = 2.4820RM, so that 100,000RM = $40,300, and $40,300 in 1936 is equivalent to $890,000 in 2023.
[444] KV-2-693_1, pgs. 2-3.

the notice of major intelligence agencies, who ,while they suspected him of intrigues, never aligned resources to identify the nature of those intrigues.

Ino would not be detained and interrogated for his espionage activities until 1947. In his debrief by MI-5, he recalled his long-term personal and professional relationships with Canaris:

> "Following our acquaintance in Spain during the first World War, I cemented my relations with Canaris and eventually became his personal friend … Canaris aided me in my commercial and financial transactions abroad – such as obtaining foreign exchange – and he in person received my situation reports on the countries in which I traveled."[445]

As revealed by Ino to the British, it was he who had assisted Behr on the direction of Canaris with the establishment of CARDIMAX, to include its overt and clandestine aspects. CARDIMAX, he further revealed, was modeled after a larger enterprise Ino established in Germany and Argentina in 1935 known as *Transmare*. The exterior purpose of *Transmare* was import / export but its true purpose was espionage facilitation and financial support for agents in the U.S. and Western Hemisphere. According to Ino, Canaris ordered him to establish such an organization and arranged the initial funds for its founding. Ino recalled, he received, "capital of 100,000 RM … lent by the Abwehr, with the condition it be repaid from the profits resulting from commercial transactions abroad." To the outside world, Transmare appeared a legitimate and profitable firm. Most of its German employees were unaware of "the Abwehr connection" or that "Canaris took advantage of that business as a cover." Knowledge of *Abwehr* involvement in private sector commercial enterprises, according to Ino, was "maintained

[445] KV-2-693_1, pgs. 31-32.

only at the highest level, through Canaris, … and a few other high-ranking Abwehr officials."[446]

By the time Ulrich von der Osten had been chosen by Canaris to run his U.S.-based espionage operations, Bischoff & Co, CARDIMAX, Transmare, and probably other covered business enterprises, had been functioning for several years, were generating profits, and were effectively serving as mechanisms for clandestine financial and operational support of espionage in North, Central, and South America. Ino also knew von der Osten and was involved in planning his activities to consolidate U.S. espionage. To facilitate von der Osten's coordination with the covered private sector activities, Ino introduced him to Theodor Lau, a German businessman working for Ino in Buenos Aires who had multiple legitimate business interests in the U.S. Lau, *deckname* Bill, was recruited by von der Osten to coordinate between U.S. operations and Ino's South America-based activities in 1938 after von der Osten's return for an operation in the U.S. Ino detailed the interconnectivity between Lau, von der Osten and himself:

> "Theodor Erdman Erich Lau came to Buenos Aires, as I recall, at the end of 1939 or early 1940. He came as a confidential agent of the Abwehr agent von Osten, who was earlier in the United States, where Lau was to join him later. I was instructed by telegram from Berlin that Lau … was to obey only the orders of von Osten; … but I was told to pay him a certain sum of money … to enable him to travel to the United States. Later I acted as an intermediary for Lau's correspondence with Berlin."[447]

Ino also recalled facilitating payments to agent "Joe" in the U.S., a reference to Ludwig, further highlighting connections between Ino's networks and von der Osten's agents.

By the time von der Osten was in place in New York City in March, 1941, his U.S. operations were capable of being funded through an extensive network of front

[446] KV-2-693_1, pgs. 31- 33.
[447] KV-2-693_1, pgs. 36-37.

companies operating in the U.S. and South America. The establishment of front companies was underway on the direction of Canaris at least by 1935 and von der Osten appears to have been made aware of them no later than 1938 when he recruited Lau specifically to connect with Ino's businesses. In Lau's 1946 FBI interrogation he, reluctantly, admitted he was recruited by von der Osten as Bill in 1938. The following year, Lau was deployed by von der Osten to the United States, "to do some work on his [von der Osten] behalf outside of Germany."[448] Under interrogation, Lau attempted to limit his role in espionage, but did clarify he worked directly for von der Osten, was in contact with Ino, who he knew as Juan, to facilitate money and reporting, and was involved in U.S.-based espionage through contact with Kurt Ludwig."[449]

[448] KV-2-3017_1. pg. 26.
[449] KV-2-3017_1, pgs. 26-28, 41.

Chapter V.

War Time Operations and the Enduring Threat of the *Abwehr*

The *Abwehr* was hit with the significant disruptions resulting from forty one combined arrests within the Duquesne and Ludwig espionage rings. While many of those arrested within the two rings were arguably expendable, there were tangible counter espionage benefits for the United States that resulted from the operations. For instance, going into the war, the government and counter espionage agencies had tangible evidence of foreign espionage to drive public awareness of the dangers of America's enemies. The arrests fed energy into initiatives such as "loose lips sink ships" to energize the American public in the early days of the U.S. entry into the Second World War.

Within the country, while there is no evidence within any primary source materials, any *Abwehr* agent in the U.S. would have been concerned they too might be under surveillance. Active and undiscovered agents who knew, knew of, or operated with those exposed by Sebold or Ludwig would have been among the most hesitant to resume espionage. Ludwig's arrest removed the most active and capable *Abwehr* asset in the U.S. from the gameboard – not only did the service lose his collection capabilities and experience, but the dozens upon dozens of agents that relied on Ludwig for their orders, dissemination means, and payments were left devoid of the infrastructure he had provided. What is more, the death of von der Osten who was the literal embodiment of six years of planning by Canaris' *Abwehr*, was a blow from which the organization never would completely recover, in that it would neither plan for nor deploy an officer to take the place meant for von der Osten overseeing all U.S.-based espionage.

Even with the disruptions and setbacks experienced in late 1941, there was even more value to intelligence collection in the U.S. on the morning of December 8, 1941 than just before. While there were surely agents who had a change of heart following the mutual declarations of war by Germany and the United States, as some of them would claim when arrested, for the most part, individuals working in the U.S. for the *Abwehr*, recovered from the shocks of late 1941 and sustained intelligence collection. More than ever, with America in the war, the *Abwehr* needed access to intelligence about the U.S. military's capabilities to measure the potential flow of men and materiel to fight in Europe. By 1941, the anti-Hitler forces within the *Wehrmacht* had renewed their plotting to remove the *Fuehrer*, with Canaris and his deputies Hans Oster, Arnim Lahousen, and others chief among the conspirators. To maintain their objectives of removing Hitler and the Nazis from power, defeating Communism, and sustaining the German state, they required accurate and detailed information on U.S. forces flowing to Europe. In the last war, *Oberst* Nikolai who had led the German military intelligence agency IIIb had failed to anticipate this intelligence need and the surge of American forces in 1918 was a tide Germany could neither anticipate nor overcome. Canaris apparently had learned from the errors of his predecessors and sought a keen understanding of the U.S. military to sustain his knife's edge management of the external war against communism and the internal war against fascism.

Wartime *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. can be observed to have adapted in three areas to sustain and grow its intelligence collection in and on the United States. First, its Europe-based platforms altered their approaches to gain access to the U.S. through the private sector and through third-party individuals often located in neutral countries. To

support these efforts, key *Abwehrstellen* continued to identify agents and officers suitable for deployment to the U.S., and indeed, such agents were launched almost as soon as the war had begun right up to the end of the *Abwehr* in June 1944. Second, there was a continuation of U.S.-based agents and networks that sustained reporting on military technical information, but adapted to provide even more intelligence on military material production and maritime intelligence. In some cases, agents who had prior access to military technical intelligence were redeployed to increase their access to war materiel production. Third, international facilitation routes adapted to wartime conditions to sustain multiple critical accesses to agents to facilitate control and dissemination of intelligence, so that the China-to-U.S. route became essential to the execution and sustainment of *Abwehr* activities and was the primary means to infiltrate or exfiltrate agents and officers and the primary means for physical dissemination of collected intelligence.

Espionage through the Private Sector and Neutral States

In the 1930s several future *Abwehr* officers had been engaged by the intelligence service to establish covert businesses and funding mechanisms to support global espionage. Some of these efforts have already been covered in regard to how they were used to financially support espionage and facilitation in the United States. One aspect that has not yet been addressed is how overt and covert business relationships were used to develop sources of intelligence that were exploited by key individuals within the *Abwehr*. Two of the most active officers involved in commercial exploitation for intelligence purposes were Johannes Bischoff and Nikolaus Bensmann of *Nebenstelle* Bremen. While their commercial contacts were originally used in the 1930s and up to

December 1941 to facilitate covert financing, after the U.S. entry into the war, they were immediately adapted and repurposed to provide intelligence.

Johannes Bischoff was a cotton merchant based in Bremen well before he was recruited for espionage by Erich Pheiffer. Within Pheiffer's interrogation report he claims to have casually recruited Bischoff in 1938; however, the Bremen files reveal Bischoff formally entered *Abwehr* service as *Spionager* agent S 2115 in January 1938, over a year earlier.[450] A review of his activities further indicates he was likely in the employ of, or at least supporting, the *Abwehr* no later than 1935. That year, Bischoff was involved in creating a scheme from within his U.K.-based firm Alexander Eccels & Co., that purchased cotton from his U.S.- and South America-businesses and sold the cotton to his Germany-based company above the market price in *Reichsmarks*, while arranging with other German companies to purchase their goods in *Reichsmarks* at a discounted price. Thus he benefited from his ability to manipulate currency enabled by his multiple companies outside of Germany. Notably, in all of the locations from which he bought or transported cotton, to especially include the U.K. and U.S., there was a high demand for intelligence, and *post facto* analysis of intelligence reporting associated with Bischoff indicates in the mid-1930s he was exploiting these contacts for that intelligence.[451] Covert financing and intelligence exploitation increased in 1936 when Johannes and his cousin Ludwig established Bischoff Co. to support U.S.-based *Abwehr* espionage.

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[450] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Berichte Nebenstelle Bremen betr. Dr. Paul Kuhner, Band 2 Personalakten A – E, 1941-1943," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 440, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/f4d1d111-0939-4092-802b-fb7a91249fae/, pgs. 367-371.
[451] "Re: JOHANNES WLIHELM BISHOFF, ESPIONAGE -G," Frederick Ayer, Jr., Special Agent, to Director, FBI, Paris, France, May 22, 1945, pgs. 4-7, located in "Abwehr."

Bischoff became one of the *Abwehr's* most prolific producers of economic intelligence gained through his global network of business contacts. While the Bremen files on Bischoff are incomplete, they show a sample of his productivity from June to December 1941 in which he produced 182 intelligence reports; which would equate to roughly three reports produced per day during that period. At this time, Bischoff was not involved in direct espionage but received all of his reporting through dozens of *H-Männer* in North, Central, and South America who had been established on the edges of his commercial enterprises. While some of his *H-Männer* were witting, even to the extent of being themselves recruited as *V-Männer*, most appear to have been unwitting toward how information they provided Bischoff was being used for intelligence purposes in support of the German government and military. Of the sample of reporting from 1941, the majority originated from individuals in New York and Washington D.C.[452]

If one extrapolates wartime reporting from the sample just prior to the war, Bischoff's contacts would have been exploited several hundred times during the course of the war. Indeed, there is evidence this is exactly what happened, and most of his pre-war contacts continued to be exploited throughout the war. Among the declassified FBI files related to Bischoff, during 1943 and 1944, there was steady reporting from his *H-Männer* from multiple locations, almost all of which related to economic and military materiel or war economy matters.[453] Bischoff's use of his commercial enterprises to

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[452] RW 49 531, pg. 141.

[453] See "Abwehr," Record Group 65, Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1896-2008, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park, MD, "Johannes Bischoff," Case File KV-2-2749, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11439560, and "Johannes Bischoff," Case File KV-2-2750, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11439561. The MI-5 files on Bischoff include substantial documentation provided from the FBI to the Security Service that cannot be found among the FBI's files within NARA.

generate intelligence was well received by the *Abwehr*, and he was commissioned to review the practice and make recommendations for post-war utilization. He proposed to Canaris, that after the war, the *Abwehr* should place agents throughout international businesses "on the lines of the British Intelligence service" and expand the intelligence service's use of covert involvement in establishing and managing commercial enterprises for the purpose of espionage. His plan would use "business men as agents throughout the world; they would be financed out of Abwehr funds for purposes of establishment of legitimate business, but thereafter would be expected to supply reports." Late in the war, Bischoff briefed the plan to Eitel, stated it had been approved by Canaris, and even, probably surprisingly, had the "support of S.D. officials."[454]

Nikolaus Bensmann was an espionage agent of the same ilk as Bischoff but where Bischoff had been involved in the cotton trade, Bensmann was an oil and petroleum processing executive based from Bremen. At some point in his career, Bensmann had come into legal procession of multiple petroleum processing technologies essential to the production of several byproducts, which in turn established him as a key holder of intellectual property across the entire industry.[455] His prewar engagement in the energy and resource industries included extensive commercial contacts in Austria, France, Romania, the United Kingdom, and United States, to name a few of the more important locations. According to Pheiffer when speaking of Bensmann's commercial enterprises, "BENSMANN was running a firm in Bremen which had the European monopoly for a

[454] "Johannes Bischoff," Case File KV-2-2749, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, accessed August 2022, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11439560, pgs. 40-41.
[455] Here the source information is unclear, but it appears Bensmann did not develop the processes covered by the patents.

catalysator employed in certain oil refining processes … he worked in close touch with the Texas Oil Co. and the German firm Ruhrchemie." Bischoff when interrogated by MI-5 revealed Bensmann's industrial reach in addition to Texaco and *Ruhrchemie* included, "the Floridian Company of Warren, Pennsylvania, the Filtrol Corporation of Los Angeles, California, the Gray Processing corporation of New York, …. the Malpulgas [sic] Clay Company, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," and another company based in Savannah, Georgia.[456]

Pheiffer also identified Bensmann as being brought into the *Abwehr* supposedly to act as a subject matter expert on the oil and petroleum sectors of economic intelligence, and claimed initially he only provided, "Technical information about refining plants and oil storage tanks in foreign countries."[457] None of Bensmann's administrative information remains in the Bremen files, at least in any medium whereby it could be directly identified with him, making validation of his or other's statements regarding his recruitment challenging to substantiate. By no later than early 1938, Bensmann was providing his expertise to *Nebenstelle* Bremen, so that when he was called up for compulsory military service on August 25, 1939 he was directly assigned to the *Nebenstelle* as a civilian rendering government service within the *Abwehr*. Once assigned officially to Bremen, rather than serving as one of *Pheiffer's* unregistered *H-Männer,* Bensmann was used by the *Abwehr* for his commercial contacts in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, for intelligence purposes. Soon after his formal absorption into Bremen, Pheiffer established a sub-office for Bensmann and a handful of subordinates and administrative staff called "Referrat Be," that is Referrat Bensmann, a

[456] KV-2-2749, pg. 36.
[457] KV-2-267_2, pgs. 9-10.

sub-office within the *Nebenstelle* solely established for reporting intelligence provided by Bensmann's international contacts.

Bensmann immediately expanded his Referrat Be after the fall of France when his prewar business contacts were placed in positions of authority within the petroleum industries of Vichy. By the time of the U.S. entry into the war, his France-based contacts were in place and able to sustain his intelligence collection capabilities with other Bensmann contacts in the United States. At least two of Bensmann's business / espionage agents that were used to cultivate intelligence from the U.S. were identified in declassified Allied intelligence files related to Bensmann's espionage. One contact named Albert Legrand was the "managing director of the TEXACO-controlled Raffinerie de la GIRONDE," in France.[458] The Gironde Department is within the Bordeaux region and was part of Vichy, and because it was technically not occupied by Germany, Texaco – and surely other business entities – were able to continue their business associations. Legrand was based in occupied Paris slightly blurring the separation between Texaco and fascist Germany. The other identified contact was Rene Levitte, Bensmann's lead executive representing his petroleum businesses from Paris. Levitte added to Legrand's external contacts to especially include those in the U.S. who either wittingly or unwittingly were vital sources of intelligence from January 1942 onward during the war. In a post-war assessment by MI-5, now declassified, British intelligence determined through Legrand, Levitte, and other businessmen / agents, Bensmann was able to sustain intelligence "contact with America throughout virtually the whole war."[459]

[458] KV-2-1328_1, pg. 50.
[459] KV-2-1328_1, pg. 67.

By the end of the war, while the *Nebenstelle* was technically run by a military officer as *leiter,* for all intents and purposes it was Bensmann and Bischoff who were the real engines of intelligence generation. This fact highlights the increase in the dependency of the *Abwehr* on the unique work they were able to execute within their commercial enterprises in order to produce intelligence on the United States that remained of value to the *OKW* and military services of Germany.

The *Abwehr* was able to adapt other agent operations to the realities of the U.S. entry into the war through indirect approaches at intelligence collection. Waldemar Freiherr von Oppenheim was an international banker from a famous and deep-rooted noble Junker family. While wealthy and politically connected, the von Oppenheims had been identified by the government within the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 as *mischlinge,* second class, that is having at least one Jewish grandparent, which restricted their access to services and rights under National Socialism.[460] Waldemar either approached or was sounded-out by the *Abwehr* in summer of 1941 for service as an espionage agent. As a *mischlinge,* he was unable to serve in the government or military, but as an international banker, he still traveled extensively throughout Europe, especially the neutral states of Sweden and Switzerland where his work brought him into direct contact with citizens of the Allied governments. While the *Abwehr* was full of ardent Nazi supporters, under Canaris, Germans and other Europeans of Jewish ethnicity, to include *mischlinge,* were often used in an espionage capacity. The rationale for their use was no one would consider antisemitic Germany capable of using Jewish individuals for

[460] *Mischlinge* was the turn of phrase used among Nazi Germany to describe individuals of supposed mixed Aryan and Jewish ethnicity.

espionage. In return for their *Abwehr* service, they and their families received protection from other aspects of the regime.[461]

According to von Oppenheim's biographers, he initially demanded to be commissioned into the military as a prerequisite to *Abwehr* service; however, neither Hamburg nor Bremen could overcome rules regarding *mischlinge* military service. By October 1941, he had surrendered this pursuit, and was recruited by Bremen as *Agenten* A 2048 and was known by the *deckname* Baron, not to be confused with Ino von Rolland.[462] Von Oppenheim's access to intelligence matters occurred indirectly through his contacts with other bankers and politicians in neutral states. His *personalbogen* speaks to this issue, assessing von Oppenheim as having, "extensive international experience and extensive international relationships."[463]

A review of his reporting indicates he focused on intelligence collection targeting American and British interests, with one historian claiming, "between the Autumns of 1941 and 1942 [von Oppenheim] was one of the most important informers on the American armaments industry."[464] Von Oppenheim also had access to diplomatic information, and according to a Canaris biographer, collected intelligence on the Roosevelt-Churchill Acadia conference of December 22, 1941 to January 14, 1942, where the Europe-first strategy was agreed to by the leaders.[465] While the Acadia intelligence is not referenced in his Bremen file, those documents due identify thirty-five

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[461] Lionel Grossman, *The Passion of Max von Oppenheim: Archaeology and Intrigue in the Middle East from Wilhelm II to Hitler,* Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015, https://books.openedition.org/obp/1685, pg. 184, citing information located in Unternehmen Sieben: Eine Rettungsaktion für vom Holocaust Bedrohte aus dem Amt Ausland/Abwehr im Oberkommando der Wehrmacht. Frankfurt a. M: Anton Haim, 1993, pp. 173-77.
[462] RW 49 442, pgs. 277-283.
[463] RW 49 442, pg. 285, "grossen auslanderfahrungen und weitreichended auslandsbeziehungen."
[464] Michael Mueller, *Canaris*. New Port: The U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2007, p. 214.
[465] Winfried Meyer, *Unternehmen Sieben.* pgs. 249-50.

intelligence reports were produced by von Oppenheim from late 1941 until early 1942, twenty-seven of which related to intelligence on the United States, with the most common topic being military production figures.[466]

While Bremen's records of von Oppenheim's service end after mid-1942, there is evidence he continued to perform his espionage duties throughout the war. Following Count von Stauffenberg's failed attempt to assassinate Hitler, von Oppenheim was among those arrested, held, and interrogated. Unlike Canaris and several others, von Oppenheim survived and was eventually released by German military and police authorities.[467]

Adaption to War: Giovanni and Madeira

The *Abwehr* lost its mechanisms of trans-Atlantic espionage facilitation when the U.S. entered the war in December 1941. Its South America and China networks remained fully operational, and in the Atlantic, there was a concerted effort to regroup and reestablish new facilitation networks. This situation was not new for the *Abwehr* as it had to recoup its losses and reinvest in new capabilities on multiple occasions since 1938. It lost access to the U.S. from Germany in 1939, from Italy in June 1940, and even lost multiple experienced couriers in June 1941 with the Duquesne arrests. Each challenge was overcome, resulting in invaluable experience for many of its officers, to especially include those at *Nebenstelle* Bremen involved in the courier and facilitation networks. By early 1942, these officers were already overcoming the loss of access yet again and

[466] RW 49 442, pgs. 273-275.
[467] Grossman, pg. 195.

were establishing new facilitation means to sustain contact with agents in the U.S. and Western Hemisphere.

The core group in charge of the new trans-Atlantic networks were Bensmann and Bischoff. While they were involved in the planning and conduct of espionage, they called upon Hans Grimm who had led the effort to reestablish connections with the United States from Italy from September 1939 through June 1940 to establish a new base for operations. Grimm, who went by the *deckname* Giovanni Grimmo, relocated to Lisbon, Portugal within the *Abwehr's* KO and began establishing couriers on merchant ships and passenger liners operating between Lisbon and the United States, as well as other destinations. Unlike the previous establishments of courier networks, most of those installed by Grimm operating from Lisbon were never identified and the network remained functional through the end of the war.

Grimm also operated at least two networks designed for further espionage activities to include facilitation and the launching of agents into the U.S., the so-called Giovanni Net and Madeira Group. A review of the Bremen files strongly indicates Grimm, while in Lisbon, was registered as *Forscher* agent F 2376.[468] This association was made by U.S. intelligence officials during the 1946 review of the Bremen files who had analyzed what was known regarding Grimm's activities cataloged against intelligence reporting and agent payments recovered in the files. However, the Giovanni

[468] RW 49 531, pg. 367. Reporting recovered by U.S. intelligence agencies and found within "Abwehr," Record Group 65, Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1896-2008, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park, MD, identifies F 2376 was located in Lisbon and coordinating reporting concurrent to Grimm's operations from that location. Similar associations are made within "Hans Friederich Grimm," Case File KV-2-2454, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/ C11341847.

Net was referred to within the *Abwehr* as a *meldekopf*, or reporting station, indicating the F 2376 registration number may have been representative of a series of reporting channels that flowed through Grimm in Lisbon, but with the original source of the intelligence being located elsewhere.

Several of the reports recovered by the U.S. that reference F 2376 include information, based on context, that appears to have come from Bensmann's or Bischoff's commercial sector contacts. As a *meldekopf* there were also other agent numbers that were used for information flowing through Lisbon and were therefore also believed to be connected to Grimm, the registration numbers include *Forscher* agents F 2361 and F 2362. Implicit in the surviving records of 2361, 2362, and 2376, is the prolific use of *H-Männer* in multiple U.S. locations, or others abroad reporting matters related to intelligence on the United States, to specifically include commercial and military ship movements. The variety of these three registration numbers in terms of unidentified *H-Manner*, reporting locations, and intelligence subject matter, strongly indicates the *meldekopf* established by Grimm in Lisbon worked as a consolidation point or clearing house of multiple agents in the U.S. or reporting on U.S.-related intelligence matters.

Grimm had been a business protégé of Bischoff before either had been recruited in the *Abwehr*, and throughout Grimm's espionage service, he, like Bischoff and Bensmann, continued his business pursuits. Under interrogation, Grimm told the Allies:

> "he was never a full-time agent but only a V-man who, through clever manipulation of his connections with people like Bischoff, was able to remain on the "gravy train" to the very end … his primary interest in his connection with the Abwehr was the fact that such connection enabled him to establish and maintain business relations with foreign firms."[469]

[469] Richard H. Weber, "Subject: Grimm, Hans, alias Grasshoff, Harold," U.S. Army, Counter Intelligence Corps, Bremen, Germany, October 26, 1946, located in "Hans Friederich Grimm," Case File KV-2-2454,

While disingenuous related to his espionage activities, Grimm's statements reveal his role in using international commercial sector contacts to facilitate intelligence collection on the United States through the Giovanni Net. In Lisbon, he along with several of his agents established a private export company, *Commercio Ibarro Ultramarina, Ltd.* (CIBUL) as a cover organization to support their espionage.[470] Like other commercial entities used by the *Abwehr*, CIBUL provided a clandestine funding mechanism and a platform for exploitation of business contacts for intelligence.

As with Bensmann and Bischoff, or with organizations like CARDIMAX and *Transmare,* Grimm and his CIBUL enterprise were essential elements within the *Abwehr's* approach to foreign espionage. Rather than contextualizing the process of using non-official commercial cover, or NOCC in modern terms, contemporary assessments by the Allies conflate these enterprises with the corruption they observed by military and party officials in the occupied territories.[471] In the case of Grimm, he did personally profit from CIBUL, and it was the commercial aspects of his espionage that resulted in his running afoul of Lisboan authorities and eventual deportation.[472]

Grimm was also part of another organization referred to by MI-5 and the FBI as the Madeira group, or the Madeira Radio Company. This second group was also based

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Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, 2022, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/browse/r/h/ C11341847, pgs. 9-10.

[470] KV-2-2749, pg. 24.

[471] Non-official cover or non-official commercial cover is a cover mechanism for espionage activities wherein the agent or officer is placed in a position outside of government affiliation. In the case of non-official commercial cover, that position is within a private sector business entity that provides the agent or officer with the placement and access necessary to conduct clandestine intelligence collection. For additional background, see John Marks, "How to Spot a Spook," *Washington Monthly*, Nov. 1974, pgs. 5-11, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78-04722A000300030018-3.pdf, or "Introduction to How Spies Operate," The Security Service," London, The United Kingdom, https://www.mi5.gov.uk/how-spies-operate.

[472] KV-2-2452, pgs. 10-11.

from Lisbon with agents throughout lusophone states, and its appellation resulted from those agents use of W/T. Declassified FBI and MI-5 files related to the Giovanni Net and the Madeira Group indicate, from an *Abwehr* perspective, they were probably one-in-the-same with the differentiation resulting from Allied assessments of different aspects of parallel counter espionage activities. Within this perspective, the Giovanni Net related to the maritime intelligence exploitation network operated by Grimm and the Madeira organization related to the connectivity, particularly through W/T, between Portugal and Brazil. Madeira stations in West Africa, the Madeira Islands, and the Azores may also have been involved in high-frequency direction finding to locate naval vessels for military action. The W/T operations also connected Grimm with U.S. and South America-based agents, and there is the likelihood in addition to intelligence transmitted through Grimm's new couriers, his W/T operators received the majority of intelligence reporting via radio from the U.S. and Western Hemisphere.

Grimm's couriers and other mechanisms began to immediately support multiple agent networks in the U.S. Former Genoa-based courier, Hans Kassner, known by the *deckname* Joe Rist to many of the U.S.-based agents arrested during 1941, moved to Lisbon to assist with the management of several of these operations.[473] Grimm also launched his own agents to the United States to develop more access to maritime intelligence sources. By mid-1942, British censors began to intercept letters from agents in the U.S. communicating with handlers in Germany via *U-Stellen* operated by Grimm. Exploitation of these letters indicated the use of *en clare* messages for operational matters

[473] "Joe Rist" became known to the FBI during the Sebold double agent operation, but the Bureau was never able to effectively identify him or learn his true name meaning he was never corroborated as Kassner and that the FBI believed Rist and Kassner were two different agents.

related to unidentified U.S. agents, but when tested for secret writing the results were negative, indicating intelligence was being transmitted through other means.[474] British intelligence was able to determine, Grimm's agents in Lisbon had recruited a crewman of the S.S. *Niassa,* a passenger liner that operated between Portugal and the U.S. to act as courier with one of its agents in the U.S. – possibly as part of the hidden mechanism for intelligence dissemination. This information was passed to the FBI who flipped the courier and exposed his contact in Newark, New Jersey, *Abwehr* agent Juan da Silva Purvis.[475] From October 1942 until October 1943, Purvis was under investigation by the FBI for espionage. He was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury in Trenton, New Jersey on October 5, 1943, arrested, and found guilty on all counts by November 1943.

According to information provided by Hoover to the press, intelligence routed by Purvis and his subagents included:

> "information on warship construction, damage at Pearl Harbor, losses in sea action, convoy information, information on American bases in Central and South America and on the Africa coast, including mine fields … American plans for landing in Africa and activities affecting the Azores, Cape Verde and the Canary Islands; all possible information on the Panama Canal; general information on war production; figures on shipments to England, Russia and Australia; specific data on embarkation of troops; information on merchant marine traffic … Also intelligence on name, date, hour and location of the sinking of ships; report on convoys bound for Lisbon, the names of warships protecting convoys; data on the type of groups and kind of equipment transported; recruitment of radio operators."[476]

The information revealed by the FBI was extensive given only Purvis was arrested. A review of declassified *Abwehr* reporting intercepted by or provided to the FBI indicates

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[474] KV-2-2416_1, pgs. 39-61.
[475] "Madeira Radio Company," Case File KV-2-2417, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11287883, pg. 31.
[476] "Nazis Sought Much Data," *New York Times*, September 16, 1943, pg. 15.

Purvis' reporting may have been classified under the agent registration number F 2361, which aligned him with Grimm's *meldekopf* , which indicates reporting from other agents was consolidated by Purvis for distribution to Grimm. None of the other subagents reporting to Grimm via Purvis were ever identified. Moreover, no other agents deployed by Grimm to the U.S. were ever identified, even though there were indications of other possible agents, and reporting continued through the summer of 1944.

Grimm remained active from Lisbon until late 1943 when he was arrested by Portuguese law enforcement. Bischoff was able to negotiate his release under the condition he leave the country and not return. Grimm joined the *Abwehr* in Germany in an unidentified capacity and there are no records of his espionage activities from then until the end of the war. Responsibility for the W/T and maritime intelligence capabilities transferred to another, unidentified, *Abwehr* officer and were sustained until the closure of KO Lisbon in 1944. No other agents linked to Grimm were later identified. Based on records associated with the multiple registered agent numbers of Grimm's *Meldekopf*, the Lisbon operation's access to the United States endured through the end of the war.[477] While the quantity of evidence of sustained reporting does not enable an evaluation of how the platform adapted after Grimm's removal, reporting was sustained, and Allied intelligence was not able to identify the new leaders or their adapted security measures.

Sustaining Espionage Deployments

[477] See reporting samples located in, "Abwehr."

In hindsight it seems remarkable, given all of the challenges of global warfare, that after the U.S. entry into the war in late 1941, the *Abwehr* continued to deploy new espionage agents to the United States right up to the organization's dissolution and amalgamation into the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Government Main Security Office) or more simply, the RSHA, in June 1944. There are ample secondary sources to include histories of the *Abwehr* that attest to the fact no agents were sent to the U.S. for espionage purposes after the dual disruptions of the Duquesne and Ludwig networks.[478] Of the agents that can be identified having been deployed to the U.S. during this period, most can be associated with *Nebenstelle* Bremen and the activities of Bensmann and Bischoff.

There is an element of research bias that focuses attention on the agents deployed by Bremen; since it had first been exposed in 1938 as having the majority of responsibility for the *Abwehr's* U.S. based espionage, the priority of U.S. counter espionage was directed toward the *Nebenstelle.* As a result, over six years of counter espionage investigations produced a majority of reporting on the activities of Bremen and its officers. When those officers were captured, they were naturally interrogated on the matters revealed during the investigations, and subsequent reporting focused on those same matters, with minimal attention being directed toward exposing the U.S.-based activities of other *Abwehrstellen.* As a result, one could be led to the false assessment only Bremen was involved in deploying agents to the U.S. from 1942-to-1944, when in

[478] Canaris and other senior *Abwehr* leaders were implicated in the failed attempt to assassinate Hitler in the so-called 20 July or Valkyrie plot. The RSHA had existed since 1939. Following the failed assassination, it absorbed the *Abwehr* and became for all intents and purposes the single intelligence and security agency for Germany until its surrender. For a contemporary assessment of the absorption of the *Abwehr* into the RSHA during the summer of 1944, see "German Intelligence Service in the War," pgs. 9-11. In November 1944, the RSHA attempted to land two agents in Maine, William Colepaugh and Erich Gimpel. The mission was designed, planned, and developed solely by officers of the RSHA. Since the operation and the agents had no *Abwehr* ties, neither it nor they were included in this research. Both were immediately caught after being landed by submarine.

fact, other *Abwehrstellen* likely deployed agents or sustained agent operations already underway in the U.S. at the same period of time, but with less precursory attention.

During interrogation, Bischoff stated he had only been involved in the deployment of three agents to the Western Hemisphere from 1939 until 1944, Frank Jordan to Brazil, Herman Rullhusen to Colombia, and "Mulack" to Canada via New York.[479] The truth was, of course, different and he was rather extensively involved in the deployment of dozens of agents. There is very little information on those sent to the U.S., except Mulach, but through the interrogation of Rullhusen who had been deployed to Colombia, there was extensive information on his agents set throughout South America. A small survey of those agents includes Alfred Langbein to Canada, Willi Appel to Costa Rica, Kurt Bieler to Colombia, Hans Holl to Brazil, Jorge Klein to Argentina, Gottfried Mueller to the United States and Mexico, Herman Richter first to Mexico and then to Shanghai, Werner Ritsscheith to Honduras, Jacques Stadler to Ecuador, Henry Tewes to Mexico, and Herbert Winterstein to Brazil. Bischoff was likely also involved with the deployment of Heinz Luening to Cuba to collect information on the U.S. military presence on the island.

While all of these agents collected intelligence on local matters, their primary role was to report on U.S. military activity in their countries, all elements of maritime intelligence, and the movement of U.S. military equipment and personal bound for Europe through South America. For instance, in the case of Richter, he had attended training in Bremen with Alfred Langbein, Waldemar Othmer, and Herman Rullhusen.

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[479] "Johannes Wilhelm Bischoff," Memorandum From Frederick Ayer, Jr., Special Agent, Federal Bureau for Investigation for Director FBI, Attention SIS European Desk, Paris France, 22 May 1945, located in "Abwehr."

Later, Richter and Rullhusen were able to communicate via W/T with one another from Bogota and Shanghai respectively, for the passing of intelligence collected by U.S. based agents first passed to Rullhusen. Othmer and Langbein were to be similarly involved with one another and other agents for the relay of intelligence. Regardless of the country of deployment, agents trained and deployed by Bensmann and Bischoff, were done so specifically to provide indirect collection on U.S.-related intelligence matters (e.g. U.S. troop deployments to those countries, U.S. reliance on raw materials, or U.S. military materiel shipped to the warfront via those states) or to support agents in the U.S.[480]

Bischoff and Bensmann continued to execute espionage with their U.S.-based agents and sent additional agents over the next three years. By late 1941, both were involved in sending additional agents to south eastern Virginia to collect intelligence on naval and other maritime matters. Pheiffer's agent Maurice in Newport News had never been identified and from 1940 to 1942 Waldemar Othmer was providing direct intelligence on military matters all around the Hampton Roads area. The confluence of naval shipbuilding to specifically include the world's largest fleet aircraft carriers that could only be built at Newport News, and the massive footprint of military personnel and materiel leaving from the docks – in the First World War, Newport News, VA was the largest embarkation port for American expeditionary forces – necessitated increased intelligence collection. The Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Newport News naval yards were also being used to repair British naval vessels damaged in combat.

In late 1941 or early 1942, Bischoff deployed an agent known only as Hartmann to Newport News to support intelligence collection on the U.S. Navy. By 1942,

[480] "Report on Johannes Bischoff @Kirchernfuerst," located in KV-2-2750_3, pg. 9.

Hartmann was in place and reporting intelligence, mostly on ship repair work being done in the Norfolk area. By 1945, the FBI had reassessed its assessment on Hartmann and believed rather than having been an additional agent, Hartmann was a *deckname* for Waldemar Othmer. However, a review of various reporting related to Hartmann and Othmer discounts this likelihood. The FBI's assessment ignores Othmer's activities in Norfolk and Virginia Beach no later than June 1940 and reports from multiple agents in interrogation who personally knew Hartman and of his deployment no earlier than late 1941. The FBI assessment also ignores the transportation realities of the Hampton Roads area in the early 1940s where a lack of infrastructure combined with the geography of the Chesapeake Bay was prohibitive of easy travel between the so-called southside and Middle Peninsula. While the Bremen files lack reporting from either agent during the period in question, by early 1942, Othmer left the Norfolk area and relocated to Tennessee, meaning he lost his access to the naval intelligence matters. The FBI directed the question of Hartmann and Othmer to both Bensmann and Bischoff, both of whom stated their ignorance of the agents to include any information on their identities or knowledge of their operations; Bischoff passed responsibility to Bensmann, and Bensmann denied knowledge of either agent.[481]

In addition to Hartmann, Bremen also deployed Antonio Breuer to the same area of Virginia to increase the *Abwehr's* collection capabilities against the Navy. Breuer had trained in Bremen with Alfred Langbein and then was deployed to the U.S. According to Langbein, Breuer was landed by submarine off of Philadelphia and then made his way to Virginia. As with Hartmann, Breuer previously had lived in the U.S. and was believed

[481] "Johannes Bischoff, Background Information," located in KV-2-1328_2, pgs. 57-58.

able to blend in with the populace. Breuer was trained in W/T operations and may have been sent to collect intelligence with Hartmann and Othmer and also to be able to provide a method to relay the collected intelligence; although, if this were the case, no corresponding W/T signals were ever intercepted. Othmer had been trained in W/T, but due to a problem with his radio equipment, could hear *Abwehr* transmissions, but was never able to effectively send. Breuer may have been deployed to Virginia specifically to overcome this failure in communications capabilities.

There is other evidence indicating after 1942 yet another agent may have been sent by Bremen on a similar mission to Breuer, Hartmann, and Othmer. According to correspondence between the U.S. Embassy in London and MI-5 from 1948, Hermann Schaunisland, had been deployed with a "group" of agents "landed in the U.S. … to obtain plans of U.S. Navy Ships, particularly submarines." While only consisting of a single, fragmentary report, the details align with similar information on the deployments, timings, and missions of Hartmann and Breuer, and could indicate a larger effort to collect naval intelligence. Schaunisland did not remain in the U.S. but used the South America facilitation routes to return to Germany.[482]

Several more agents were launched against the U.S. during 1943 and 1944, but unfortunately there is only fragmentary information on each making evaluation and analysis of their activities complicated. Further complicating such analysis is a standard tactic of *Abwehr* officers during interrogation wherein they appeared to have fidelity in understanding what Allied counter espionage officers knew about their specific missions

[482] J. Chenhalls, Memorandum, to Chief Liaison Section, American Embassy, London, United Kingdom, October 19, 1948, located in "Walter Steffens," Case File KV-2-1964, Records of the Security Service, The Security Service, Subject Files, The National Archives, London, The United Kingdom, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11249246, KV-2-1964_1, pg. 28.

and agents. This may have been accomplished, as seen within Ritter's and Sandel's, and possibly Eitel's, interrogation reports, by being initially resistant to all interrogation as to learn the elements of interest to the Allies. In subsequent interrogations, *Abwehr* officers would be more compliant and then specifically address the issues presented in the earlier interrogation but only provide fragmentary information. A general tradecraft technique employed under these circumstances was to claim awareness but to deflect by stating another officer was in charge of the specifics, and generally speaking, the officer identified by the detainee was either not under Allied control or had died during the war.

By early 1944, there was limited utility in the deployment of additional espionage agents to the U.S. Multiple agents who remained active in the U.S. were still viable and reporting through multiple mechanisms back to Germany; however, with the pace of the war in Europe moving toward an almost definite conclusion, there was little practical value achievable additional deployments. Therefore, any deployments occurring from after around mid-1943 onward were of only minimal intelligence value.

Emil Robert Genue was an American recruited and trained for redeployment to the United States in 1942. According to Bischoff, he failed to gain entry to the U.S. and was repatriated somehow to France were he was heavily involved in gray or black market smuggling.[483] Supposedly the *Abwehr* attempted to employ him in espionage duties, to possibly include a return to the U.S. as a W/T operator, but was unable to as late as 1944. There is very little information related to Genue from which to make a quality determination of his espionage career and capabilities, and his primary significance within the scope of this analysis relates more to the intent of the *Abwehr* than his aptitude

[483] "Appendix II – A G.I.S Agents," located in KV-2-2750_3, pg. 37.

for espionage. Around the same time, an agent identified only as Muecke, *Agenten* A 3778, was sent to the U.S.[484] There is little known of this agent other than their identification by Wichmann, who identified Muecke's mission was to collect intelligence on the "air industry and shipyards."[485]

As late as May 1944, the FBI learned of an additional agent being prepared for probable deployment to the U.S. It was believed this individual might have been Erich Maier, the brother of a known *Abwehr* agent, Werner Maier. The investigation into the Maiers failed to develop any information of note from a counter espionage perspective, but the FBI believed either Bensmann or Bischoff had been responsible for the operation. Both claimed no knowledge of the individuals or their operations.[486] It also learned of Karl Horst Wacker, a Bremen agent interned in the U.S. who revealed he knew of two agents, Weymann and Grueuk, who were deployed by either Bensmann or Bischoff sometime after the U.S. entry into the war.[487] Both *Abwehr* officers in interrogation denied having any knowledge of either possible agent or Wacker.

Later in 1944 Hamburg deployed an agent Wichmann identified by the *deckname* Lutine. While Hamburg believed Lutine continued to report intelligence matters up to the end of the war, in reality, he was among the last batch of double agents operated by the FBI and MI-5. His full name was Hellmudt Siegfried Goldschmidt, a Dutchman of Jewish ethnicity recruited by the Abwehr in 1941 during the occupation of the

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[484] "Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen - Agenten-Index nach Agentennummern 2564 – 84834," Nachgeordnete Dienstellen und Einheiten des Amres Ausland/Abwehr, Abwehrnebenstelle Bremen, record RW 49 532, Federal Archives, Federal Republic of Germany, https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/7f923d97-4636-42f0-9c1a-06e546e1019a/, pg. 297.
[485] "Supplement to Report on Herbert Wichmann," July 8, 1945, located in KV-2-103_2, pg. 26.
[486] KV-2-2750_1, pgs. 25-37.
[487] KV-2-2750_2, pg. 22.

Netherlands, possibly for *Abt* III work.[488] MI-5 took control of him in 1942 as double agent PEASANT, and by October 1943, was offering him to the FBI. Goldschmidt was not apparently a model double agent and there were concerns among the FBI regarding his history of "unreliability and record of indiscretions" while under British control.[489] It was determined Lutine was too unreliable to move to the U.S., so the FBI in coordination with MI-5 faked his relocation and establishment in America. While the FBI claimed its Goldschmidt operation was part of its deception support to D-Day, a review of its file on the operation indicates after a year of Goldschmidt's supposed reporting from the U.S., the *Abwehr* was concerned over the possibility of his compromise and did not believe his reporting as credible. Wichmann indicated as much, claiming of Lutine, his "results were poor and there were some trouble over his transmissions."[490] The FBI and MI-5 did integrate his reporting within the broad plan for disinformation associated with D-Day, but, according to Wichmann and the FBI, the *Abwehr* believed him compromised, which would have reduced the impact of anything passed.

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[488] In the mid 1930s, Goldschmidt had been a member of the Dutch fascist party indicating he may have had pro-Nazi sympathies and been willing to work with the new authorities. Additionally, Goldschmidt's account of his training and recruitment were provided by him to British authorities. Given his noted unreliable nature as identified by American and British intelligence officers, it should probably be assumed he at a minimum embellished positive aspects and demurred negative ones related to his recruitment, training, and operations on behalf of the *Abwehr*. In the MI-5 declassified case file regarding Goldschmidt / Peasant, MI-5 records indicate he was recruited in 1942. The declassified FBI case file with a far more extensive history of Goldschmidt indicates *Abwehr* related personalities began contact with him in 1941 and engaged him in espionage activities. Located in "Hellmuth Siegfried Goldschmidt Espionage-G," U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., FOIA/PA #1369971-0, 2017, https://archive.org/details/HelmuthSiegfriedGoldschmidt/, Part 1, pgs. 9-11.

[489] Arthur M. Thurston, Legal Attaché to Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Federal Bureau of Investigation, "RE: HELMUTH SIEGFRIED GOLDSCHMIDT, a.k.a. PEASANT; ESPIONAGE-G," American Embassy, London, England, October 23, 1943, located in Goldschmidt, Part 1, pgs. 18-22.

[490] J. Paine to Major Luke, November 8, 1945, located in KV-2-103_2, pg. 20. According to the FBI case files on Goldschmidt, a great deal of the passage material used in the operation related to the war in the Pacific which was outside of the scope of his intelligence tasking. The repeated use of this material placed "Goldschmidt" at odds with his handlers and resulted in several *Abwehr* efforts to measure whether or not he was under hostile control.

The United States: Espionage Continues

A review of information readily available since 1938 as well as materials declassified over the last two decades reveals that for over eight years, until 1946, *Abwehr* agents were consistently identified and arrested by the FBI and other counter espionage agencies inside the U.S. Of the agents identified and arrested after 1942, there was consistently evidence that identified the majority of individuals had been active since at least since 1940, with some agents having been involved in espionage since before the revelation of the Rumrich ring. Combining this state with known agents in the U.S. who were never discovered and those who are known or presumed to have been deployed from Germany and other states, the resulting total further emphasizes that the extent of *Abwehr* espionage activity in the U.S., at least in terms of number of agents, was far greater than previously believed within the conventional historical understanding.

Several *Abwehr* agents were identified in the course of the Duquesne and Ludwig investigations for which the FBI was never able to effectively make a case and were not prosecuted. Hans Kassner, also known as John Kassner, Kastner, and Joe Rist, was connected as a courier to multiple agents exposed during the Duquesne ring. He may have started with Pheiffer in the mid-1930s, and was definitely involved with Grimm in Genoa and Lisbon. Information related to his operations indicates he routinely was able to operate in the U.S. during long periods of time and likely had multiple false personas with effective backstopping that would have allowed his transit, entry, and departure. Kassner, as a result of evidence found in multiple American and British declassified sources, had operated as a courier on multiple occasions providing facilitation services in the U.S. Karl Elwert was another *Abwehr* courier who the FBI was never able to

completely identify or investigate. In 1944, the FBI specifically requested MI-5 interrogate Eitel regarding the activities of Kassner and Elwert, but the information he provided gave few details of their operations and agents in the U.S.[491]

The Sebold double agent operation revealed the activities of an Alfred Bayer or Mayer who was associated with *Abwehr* espionage activities in the late 1930s. The FBI was able to determine he had returned to Germany, probably in 1939, but failed to develop information on any of his activities or agents in the U.S. There was also W. Davis, another agent identified on the fringes of the Sebold operation. No details of his operations and agents were developed, but the Bureau uncovered information indicating Davis was an agent of the *OKM*, the Naval Command, indicating he was probably working for *Nebenstelle* Bremen's *maritime nachrichtendienst*.

After the Ludwig arrests in August and September 1941, the FBI would never again identify a large group of agents in the U.S.; however, from 1942 until the end of 1944, there were consistent arrests of individual agents and small groups of agents every few months. In February 1942, Bernard Julius Otto Kuehn, was arrested in Honolulu. Kuehn had been suspected of espionage on behalf of the *Abwehr* since at least February 1939.[492] According to information shared between the FBI and ONI, Kuehn and his wife "lavishly entertain[ed] Army and Navy Officers" at their home and in town around Oahu.[493] Ironically, ONI intelligence officers had previously attempted to recruit Kuehn to report on "information regarding un-American activities in Honolulu." He refused on

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[491] KV-2-384_4, pgs. 22, 32.
[492] J. Edgar Hoover, Letter to redacted recipient, Washington D.C., February 11, 1939, located in "Bernard Julius Otto Kuehn – Espionage-G," Case File 65-1574, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., https://vault.fbi.gov/bernard-julius-otto-kuehn/bernard-julius-otto-kuehn/view, Kuehn, Section 1, pg. 6.
[493] "Memorandum for Mr. E. A. Tamm," Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., May 1, 1939, located in Kuehn, Section 1, pg. 12.

account he "had other relatives … living in Germany," and "could not afford to let it be known that he was working against that country."[494] He continued to be investigated for pro-Germany activities up to the Pearl Harbor attack, and was arrested weeks later for association with officers of the Japanese consulate. According to his FBI case file, it was believed he had signaled the attacking waves of aircraft on December 7th, 1941; however, a modern reconstruction of this assessment is suspicious in terms of veracity. Following the arrest of Kuehn and his wife, the FBI and ONI were unable to uncover subagents associated with his espionage activities or how he passed intelligence to his control.

In August 1942, the FBI arrested Dr. Wolfgang Ebell, a cross-border espionage facilitator connecting the *Abwehr's* U.S. and Mexico-based espionage activities. Ebell moved from Mexico to El Paso in 1931 and became almost immediately involved in the more autocratic and nationalist-leaning elements of German-American society. He was likely among the first *V-Männer* recruited in the U.S. in 1933, and over the years came to be used to facilitate cross-border activities to include *U-Stelle* operations, payments, and agent transfers. [495] Ebell may have had contact with *Major* Georg Nicolaus, the *Abwehr* senior officer and defense attaché who oversaw operations in Mexico to include ties with activity in the United States.[496] Ebell was arrested due to association with *Deutsche-Amerikanische Bund* members and Anastase Vonsiatsky, a White Russian fascist activist.[497] Ebell's *Abwehr*-related activities were not revealed until after his arrest.

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[494] "Friedel Barta Kuehn with aliases; Bernard Julius Otto Kuehn with aliases, Espionage (G)," January 7, 1942, located in Kuehn, Section 1, pg. 224.
[495] Wolfgang Ebell, Investigation Case File, FOIA 1584367, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Information Management Division, 2023.
[496] For information on Nicolaus' role running the *Abwehr* operations in Mexico City, see KV-2-2662.
[497] "Vonsiatsky Espionage," *History, Famous Cases & Criminals*, U.S. Department of Justice, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington D.C., https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/vonsiatsky-espionage.

That same month, Heinz Luening, *deckname* Bunny, was arrested, tried, and executed in Havana, Cuba as the result of a combined counter espionage investigation headed by the FBI's Secret Intelligence Service and the Cuban national police. While outside of the United States, Cuba was a U.S. territory, and Luening's mission was partly focused on the U.S. military activities around Cuba, and he reported multiple times on such matters via Grimm's organization in Lisbon. Hoover publicly revealed it was believed Luening may have been involved in radio communications with German submarines attacking U.S. shipping in the Caribbean and western Atlantic; however, those claims have never been supported with sufficient evidence.[498]

In the summer of 1943, three individuals in Staten Island, New York were arrested for conducting espionage on behalf of the *Abwehr*. Ernest Frederick Lemnitz, Erwin de Spretter, and Carl Guenther Boshan Orgell were all involved in collecting intelligence on ship movements from New York harbor and passing that intelligence to representatives of Germany. Orgell can be confirmed as a *V-mann* of *Nebenstelle* Bremen who was registered as *V-Mann* RR 2601.[499] Lemnitz was believed to have been the principal of the three, with the others working as subagents.[500] Orgell's Bremen file however indicates his involvement with the *Abwehr* began in 1935 and was focused on "aircraft production in the U.S.A."[501] According to information found in Bensmann's

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[498] Thomas D. Schoovener, *Hitler's Man in Havana: Heinz Luening and Nazi Espionage in Latin America*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008. Schoovener's work, like many others investigating *Abwehr* activities in Latin America, fails to adequately connect Luening's mission to U.S. espionage. Luening's mission to Cuba was not to spy on Cuba but U.S. military presence in Cuba – this observation is absent Schoovener's work. His execution, executed rapidly, should be seen as a mistake as it prohibited any additional interrogation that could have revealed Luening's ties to Grimm in Portugal and connection with unidentified agents in the United States.
[499] RW 49 529, pg. 383.
[500] "Spy Here Admits He Sent Nazis Data on Arms and Ships," *The New York Times*, June 29, 1943, pgs. 1, 5.
[501] RW 49 529, pg. 383.

MI-5 file, Lemnitz was a long-term agent operated by the same control officer as Luening. There is sufficient evidence to indicate Orgell, and probably the others, had been conducting maritime intelligence collection since at least 1939. Details of their associations with other *Abwehr* agents from 1939 until their arrest were never uncovered.

A few months after the Staten Island arrests, in early August 1943, Robert Lanas Vallecilla, a translator at the Office for the Coordination of Interamerican Affairs, was arrested on suspicion of espionage for the *Abwehr*. According to the FBI, Vallecilla's activities were exposed by "confidential information," which meant MI-5 intelligence collected through mail censors and provided to the FBI through official liaison. When charged, Vallecilla admitted to sending three reports to Germany via Lisbon, all of which occurred prior to the U.S. entry into the war in December 1941. The FBI had kept Vallecilla under surveillance for over a year, but failed to uncover sufficient information on subagents, his contacts with the *Abwehr*, or additional information other than what was revealed on his espionage activity in U.S. newspapers. A review of other available information indicates it is possible Vallecilla was associated with Grimm's Giovanni and Madeira groups based on the methodology of his reporting.

Before the end of August and then into September 1943, multiple arrests of *Abwehr* agents occurred in Detroit, Michigan. According to the FBI this new network of agents was headed by Canadian socialite Grace Buchanan-Dineen, who, unlike Vallecilla, had engaged in espionage activities after the U.S. entry into the Second World War. According to a Department of Justice press release of the arrests, "activities of the group since America's entry into the war centered about Grace Buchanan-Dineen … who, though a native of Canada, had been carefully trained by Germany in espionage

work." Other arrested agents included Bertrand Stuart Hoffman, Dr. William Fred Thomas, Theresa Behrens, Carl John Wilhelm Leonhardt, Emma Elise Leonhardt, Joseph Abt, and "Countess" Marianna von Moltke. Contrary to information within the press release, most of the agents identified as subagents of Buchanan-Dineen were active in Detroit prior to her arrival. For instance, Behrens was supporting pro-German activity and suspected of espionage as early as 1940 and Dr. Thomas was connected with individuals arrested earlier with Ebell. When Buchanan-Dineen arrived she was integrated into espionage already underway, focused on war material production and using her socialite background as a means to contact the upper crust of society to exploit them for further intelligence. When deployed from Germany, she was given a list of over two hundred affluent and friendly Americans across the country who the *Abwehr* believed would be of assistance to her mission.

Further information uncovered on Buchanan-Dineen revealed she was almost certainly also discovered by MI-5 rather than through active FBI counter espionage activities. In November 1941, MI-5 provided information to the FBI that an agent who went by the *deckname* Mrs. Smith was operating in Detroit. By March 1942, the Bureau was able to identify Mrs. Smith as Buchanan-Dineen, arrested her, and then attempted to run her as a double agent from March 1942 until August 1943. The other six individuals arrested in August and September were probably exposed during the period she was handled as a double agent. Even with the arrests, the FBI was unable to connect Buchanan-Dineen with agents outside the small group with whom she had contact, develop an understanding of her *Abwehr* control, or effectively play back intelligence against the *Abwehr*. Since she was only two months into her mission when arrested, it is

possible she had had insufficient time as an active agent to provide much benefit to the FBI as a double agent. It also appears Buchanan-Dineen was not a cooperating double agent as she was still tried, convicted, and sentenced to twelve years in federal prison - although she was released early on parole in 1948 and deported to Canada. Other doubles operated by the FBI avoided prosecution and have been labeled heroes.

News regarding the arrest of da Silva Purvis, a *V-Mann* reporting on behalf of Grimm in Lisbon, was also revealed to the public in August 1943. In the span of just over two months, over a dozen agents operating in at least four states were arrested and by December 1943, there were five more arrests, including Frederich Schroeder, U.S. Army private Hans Philip Koenig, Karl Krantz, Paul Grohs, and Eric P. W. Wedemeyer. According to information provided to the press all five were connected to individuals arrested within the Duquesne and Ludwig investigations. Wedemeyer, for instance, had worked with Reuper and Wheeler-Hill as early as 1940, but had not been identified.

1944 opened with more arrests of *Abwehr* agents in the United States. In January, Wilhelm Albrecht von Pressentin Gennant von Rautter was arrested in New York for espionage. According to the press, von Rautter, "between June 1, 1942, and May 1, 1943, …. conspired … to violate the espionage statute …. that information he gathered … was to be used to the injury of the United States." According to the interrogation report of Dr. Frederich Praetorius, who ran I/Wi and then all of *Abt* I for *Abwehrstelle* Hamburg, von Rautter was recruited by the *Abwehr* as early as 1939 to collect economic and war materials production intelligence. Unlike many agents, from the time of his deployment to the United States through his arrest, von Rautter had been able to travel between the U.S. and Germany, probably through a third, neutral state.

In July of 1944, Waldemar Othmer was arrested in Knoxville, Tennessee on suspicion of espionage. Othmer had been deployed by Bremen in 1940 to the United States where he conducted extensive intelligence collection on the U.S. Navy in the areas of modern-day Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and Newport News. Othmer left southeastern Virginia in 1942 for Knoxville, and it is unclear whether or not the move was directed by his control.[502] After his arrest in 1944, he admitted to espionage up to December 7, 1941, but claimed to have ceased all contact with the *Abwehr* and all espionage activities after Pearl Harbor. His Bremen files lack a *personalbogen* that could have provided insight into whether or not he continued his espionage activity in Knoxville. Othmer may have had multiple *H- Männer* in multiple locations, but if he had, they were not identified in his remnant Bremen files and were never discovered by U.S authorities.

Simon Ködel and his daughter Marie Ködel were arrested in October of 1944 in New York for espionage. According to Ködel's Bremen files, he had been an active agent since November 1939, and multiple declassified reports from *Abwehr* officers indicated he was recruited directly by Pheiffer. Ködel was registered as *Agenten* A 2011 and used the *deckname* Nathan Hale, possibly revealing his self-perception of the role of his espionage. From November 1939 until his arrest in late 1944 he submitted over 600 intelligence reports. A portion of these reports related to the news, periodicals, and trade publications that were standard collection requirements; however, other espionage

[502] Othmer was tried and convicted in Norfolk, Virginia, indicating the best case of his espionage activity was found during investigation into his activities while in Virginia. There were fewer military intelligence collection targets in the Knoxville area that arguably would have superseded those in Norfolk. Secondary sources have speculated on Othmer's move, but, unfortunately, there is so little information on his post-Virginia activities, a true assessment is challenging. FBI investigative files on Othmer from the Norfolk and Knoxville Field Offices and FBI headquarters have been requested through the FOIA process and have been rejected on account of third party information protection – meaning someone or multiple individuals targeted in the investigation remain living and could be identified if the files were released.

included maritime intelligence particularly related to convoy and military movements. In addition to Simon's reporting, Marie cultivated relationships with U.S. Navy and merchant sailors to gain intelligence. It was Marie's engagement with these men that led to their exposure late in the war.

Frank Hirt was an enlisted man in the U.S. Army Air Corps stationed throughout the Midwest and western United States during the Second World War. In December 1944, he was arrested in San Francisco for being an espionage agent since at least 1942. Hirt collected intelligence on the aircraft and military organizations at the airbases where he worked and may have sought assignments specifically to gain access to intelligence on different aircraft. Several of the airfields where he worked and spied were staging bases for aircraft being sent to the European Allies so his reports would have been valuable in determining the capabilities of the aircraft and the military order of battle of Germany's enemies. All of his intelligence reporting was sent through *U-Stellen* in South America controlled by the *Abwehr*. Currently there is no information on which *Abwehrstellen* had recruited and handled him throughout the duration of his espionage activities. Notably though, this type of information is lacking from most counter espionage agency files related to their investigations and interrogations of known espionage agents.

In 1945 with the end of the war on the horizon, Frederick Bauer, a U.S. Army non-commissioned officer who arrived in the U.S. in 1940 was detained and then interned for suspicion of espionage. Bauer had spent five years in the U.S. Army and was stationed in multiple locations in Indiana and Kentucky to include Fort Knox. While he completely integrated into American life, to include marrying a woman from Indiana and starting a family, there were other inconsistencies around Bauer that indicated a

possible role in *Abwehr* espionage. As early as late 1940 or early 1941, he was known to keep a large and expensive photographic equipment in his car. Counter espionage agencies never proved Bauer's complicity in espionage, but notably, when the war ended, he and his family were released from internment and deported to West Germany. Immediately following the war, German military files were found that had extensive details of a militarily-significant information regarding the areas where Bauer lived and the bases on which he worked.[503]

The last arrest of an *Abwehr* agent who had operated against the U.S. came in October 1946 when the FBI arrested Theodore Erdmann Erich Lau for his role supporting Kurt Ludwig and Ulrich von der Osten. Declassified Abwehr files reveal Lau was recruited to the *Abwehr* by von der Osten to manage the financial support networks that were essential to the plans to establish a single controlling office for all *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. Lau had been sent to Argentina in 1940 where he worked with Ino to use cover businesses to support Ludwig's agents in the U.S. During their operation, Lau traveled to the U.S. multiple times until von der Osten's death, but then continued to facilitate agent payments and operations through at least 1944. Lau also appears to have been involved with other agents in the U.S. and South America that remained unidentified through the end of the war.

China – Strange Bedfellows in the Intelligence Fight – German, Italian and Japanese Collaboration against the United States

[503] Eric Pilgrim, "History's Mysteries: Did a World War II German Spy Serve at Fort Knox?," *United States Army*, March 19, 2018, https://www.army.mil/article/201897/.

By 1942, Louis Siefken had fallen out with everyone as the *leiter* of KO Shanghai and was replaced by Lothar Eisentraeger. The new *leiter* was not the ideal man for the job; however, he was in China at the right time and had the backing of the Japanese, German Foreign Ministry, and SS leadership. For these organizations, it was time for Siefken to go, and no matter who was chosen as his replacement, they would not be Louis Siefken. Under Eisentraeger's leadership the KO expanded its abilities to support operations in the U.S. while also targeting U.S. military operations in the Indo-Pacific.

Lieutenant Colonel Lothar Eisentraeger, *deckname* Ludwig Ehrhardt, was sent to China in 1941 by the *Abwehr* for a dual track mission, first, the negotiation of a trade agreement with the ministries of Chiang Kai-Shek in Chungking for the shipment of tungsten to Germany, and second, collecting economic intelligence for *Abwehr* headquarters in Berlin. He departed Berlin in June 1941 and traveled by train through the Soviet Union bound for China.[504] Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the USSR, began almost concurrently with his departure from the Soviet Union and he escaped detention and probable execution by Germany's new communist enemies by a few days. In China, he went by the *deckname* Ludwig Ehrhardt to protect his true identity. Given his use of a false persona, the almost non-existent details of his trade mission, and the lack of utility in the collection of economic intelligence from contact with Nationalist China, it seems probable the trade mission was a cover for other espionage activities related to engagement with the Nationalists and possibly intelligence

[504] In "German Intelligence Activities in China," the OSS incorrectly identifies Eisentraeger's arrival in China in 1942, while other reporting from OSS investigations into Eisentraeger's organization in Canton and the interrogations of members of the SS firmly identify his arrival in 1941 concurrent to the invasion of the USSR.

collection against Japan.[505] Eisentraeger's bifurcated mission also came with two chains of command. Supposedly his trade mission was on behalf of the defense ministry and within his intelligence role he reported to *Abwehr* Berlin. The KO had no authority over Eisentraeger in either of his roles but was aware of his operation and had been directed by Berlin to provide support. All Eisentraeger's dispatches for Berlin passed through the KO for transmittal through diplomatic pouch or over W/T without any oversight by its personnel. Any encipherment for written or radio messages were based on Eisentraeger's personal code which was not shared with the KO.[506]

From Eisentraeger's arrival in 1941 there was friction between his operational independence and the day-to-day functions of the KO. This friction was responsible for disruptions in the KO's ability to collect and disseminate maritime intelligence, to include direct access to the U.S. The power dynamics of two senior Abwehr officers conducting operations was reducing the KO's ability to support the intelligence activities that were part of its reason for being. During interrogation by the OSS, Eisentraeger discussed how Siefken's ability to deliver on the intelligence mission had become disrupted. When combined with the other strained relationships, the failures resulted in Abwehr headquarters directing Eisentraeger "to liquidate the SIEFKEN ORGANIZATION and incorporate whatever part of the organization would be useful for his purpose into a large information service covering the fields of both branches of the *ABWEHR*."[507] According to Eisentraeger, one of the main factors in the replacement of

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[505] Under interrogation in 1946, Eisentraeger's secretary admitted for the first few months in China, he did very little, and mostly remained in their hotel.
[506] "Abwehr Espionage Activities in China, Ehrhardt Bureau," Office of Strategic Services, China Theater, X-2 Branch, November 2, 1945, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/519cd81e993294098d5166f9, pgs. 4-5.
[507] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pg. 25. In the intelligence parlance of the time, liquidate did not carry the intonation of execution.

Siefken was the latter's focus on naval intelligence, that is the *nachrichtendienst* duties supporting operations in the U.S. The focus on "both branches of the *ABWEHR*" relates to the desired expansion from maritime facilitation duties toward the intelligence collection on U.S. wartime operations.

Eisentraeger is somewhat of an untrustworthy narrator given the conditions of his interrogation. However, analyzing his statements against other available source material indicates the heart of the friction between Siefken and the *Abwehr* was his failure to adapt the KO in response to the U.S. entry into the war and ongoing military operations. The U.S. Navy had recently fought the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Battles of Coral Sea in May 1942, the Battle of Midway in June, and was preparing to engage in a months-long campaign for control of Guadalcanal – all areas the *Abwehr* in China was positioned to collect against. Had Siefken's *nachrichtendienst* efforts prevented him from effectively being poised to collect intelligence on major battles such as these, it would have indeed warranted his replacement. Eisentraeger's actions in the months following his assumption of command provide validation of this assessment. Almost immediately upon assuming command, he established or expanded collection capabilities to improve the KO's ability to collect military operational intelligence on U.S. forces. The KO's maritime facilitation operations were retained but relegated to a less important status.

Siefken still did not go away. Following Eisentraeger's action to remove him and reprioritize the KO, Siefken with a handful of other officers simply packed up and relocated to Peking where they continued conducting espionage. Since 1940, he had cultivated a relationship with the Italian naval attaché's in Peking and would occasionally use their W/T to contact Berlin. So, after Eisentraeger had delivered the message of his

replacement, Siefken abandoned most of his KO duties and redeployed with a small staff to continue *maritime nachrichtendienst* operations from the Italian attaché station. Given his history of direct engagement in support to U.S. espionage through his maritime networks and given official statements by Eisentraeger regarding Siefken's naval bias, it seems almost certain the Peking activities were related to the sustainment of communications support for U.S.-based *Abwehr* espionage. Eventually Eisentraeger was able to use pressure from the Japanese and the German Foreign Ministry delegation in Tokyo to close down Siefken's Peking operations.

Soon under Eisentraeger, KO Shanghai had a far more capable W/T network and could maintain contact with agents in the U.S. either directly or via BOLIVAR. Agents in the U.S. without W/T access could still get information to the network through overland facilitation agents along the U.S.-Mexico border.[508] From Mexico, the intelligence could be transmitted through BOLIVAR or *U-Stellen.* While W/T and mail relay systems had become increasingly complex and often experienced delays, they remained viable methodologies for the transmission of operational orders or intelligence. Beginning in 1943, the FBI's SIS working with South American governments began shutting down *Abwehr* bases in these respective countries. Eisentraeger's W/T operations sustained contact with these operators, and the elimination of one station did not impact overall operations given the redundancy of stations. Therefore China was able to maintain contact with North and South America through multiple means right up to the last stages of the war in the Pacific.

[508] Clint Richmond, *Fetch the Devil: The Sierra Diablo Murders and Nazi Espionage in America*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2014.

A review of the organizational diagrams prior to and after Eisentraeger's assumption of command highlights how he reorganized the KO from peacetime support operations toward wartime electronic and signals intelligence. First, the Peking footprint that involved Italian W/T operations was re-purposed to be more effective and better integrate German and Italian efforts. Under Siefken, at its height, it held four persons; Eisentraeger heavily invested in the combined intelligence collection operation and bulked-up the office to twenty-six.[509] While the primary impetus for the Peking expansion was collecting intelligence on the Soviet Union, the increased capabilities also enabled collection on the U.S. through its support to Russia.[510] W/T intercepts from Peking provided intelligence of "great interest to Berlin, such as … American supplies to Vladivostok, giving valuable details about airplanes having been sent to Manchuria, types of planes, etc., also details of imports from Alaska to Manchuria."[511] Most of that war material would eventually be delivered to the Eastern Front, so the interception and transmission to Berlin of intelligence related to the time of delivery and the material involved was used to assess the relative strength of the Red Army.

Eisentraeger also reorganized Shanghai to expand collection on U.S. military activities. Shanghai remained the central hub of coordination and direction for the entire *Abwehr* footprint in China. Sub-stations like Peking collected intelligence and relayed it via Shanghai for transmission to Germany or Japan. Like Peking, additional Italian W/T operators were added to the W/T group at the headquarters and tasked to locate and identify all U.S. military activity in the region. The *Abwehr* in Shanghai also gained

[509] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pgs. 30-32.
[510] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pg. 36.
[511] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pg. 36.

additional access through a Greek national, Kyriakulis, to sensitive W/T-derived intelligence from "mysterious sources on impossible wave lengths" on U.S. and allied military activities.[512] The Greek joined the Shanghai team as a W/T operator to access this unidentified source and his intelligence was integrated with other collection.[513] The OSS believed Kyriakulis a fraud, but did not have access to any intelligence he provided or its methodology for collection. Regardless of veracity, Kyriakulis' reports were shared with Imperial Japan and acted upon so that, whether valid or fabricated, they impacted military activity. His reports also went to the OKW to evaluate the pacific situation.

Lastly, Eisentraeger expanded the *Abwehr* presence in Canton to include the establishment of W/T operators to exploit U.S. and allied military activity enabled by the station's southern location. Their explicit mission included, "collection of particulars of the USA Air traffic from the United States via India to China," and "military surveys of the situation and the fighting conditions in the sector 'South.'" The geographic location in Canton enabled collection of U.S. and Allied military operations throughout the Indo-Pacific area that could not be accomplished with the same regularity from other sites in China. These intercepts related directly to military operations and would have increased understanding of U.S. command relationships (through radio traffic pattern analysis) and naval, air, and land orders of battle. For example, German agents in Canton were able to develop a detailed picture of the American Army Air Corps order of battle in the theater:

> "the 14th Airforce at various times had 500, 529, 600 etc. planes of all types in China, and … the numbers and locations of the various types … particulars of the Rocket planes and especially … B-24 Radar bombers and in the methods by which U.S. planes cooperated with submarines in destroying Japanese shipping off the China Coast."

[512] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pg. 33.
[513] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pg. 33.

The value of Canton's W/T interception efforts is emphasized by German and Imperial Japanese intelligence officers and W/T operators working side-by-side against U.S. military forces. This relationship was a rare, possibly the only, instance of standing bilateral intelligence cooperation between Germany and Japan.[514]

The OSS incorrectly believed in its 1946 assessment of German intelligence operations in China that W/T operations in Canton, Peking and Shanghai did not start until 1944 when approved by Japan. This faulty premise resulted from an incomplete understanding of the history of *Abwehr* intelligence activities throughout China, a lack of contextual understanding of W/T operations in China, and the relationship between the KO and Japan. The OSS had no knowledge of the history of the *Abwehr* in China or its extensive ties with the U.S., as investigating officers only had access to individuals present in China after the war. The majority of these individuals began their time with the *Abwehr* during Eisentraeger's leadership and lacked information on early espionage. By the time of the OSS arrival, all KO records had been destroyed so there was no file history of activity and nothing against which to cross check the interrogations.

Other recovered declassified files clearly indicate W/T operations within China were initially developed prior to the arrival of Siefken. As covered, these operations were expanded by Eisentraeger to include the integration of Axis intelligence personnel of Italy and Japan. From the Imperial Japanese perspective, the Peking station was under the "leadership and control" of Colonel Hikada, the chief information officer of the North West Army, Shanghai was "under [the] control" of Colonel Mori, director of the intelligence section of the Shanghai bureau of the Japanese military office, and in Canton,

[514] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pgs. 38-40.

leadership was the responsibility of Colonel Okada, the director of strategic services of the Southern Area.[515] From the German perspective, Eisentraeger ran Shanghai, Erich Heise Canton, and Siegfried Fuellkrug Peking. From the modern analytical perspective, both sets of views were true, in that by 1944 the stations were being operated by both within a growing program of combined intelligence activities, thus resulting in the confused assessment by the OSS. While this colocation of intelligence operations occurred late in the war, it remains notable as there were no German forces of significance engaged in combat operations against the Allied militaries in China or the broader Asia theater. While the collected intelligence on the U.S. and Allied military operations was surely still sent to Germany, it had very little actual value for its military by 1944. The same intelligence was critical for Japan. Thus, a unique situation had developed in China so that German intelligence officers not only worked alongside their Japanese counterparts, but their primary intelligence mission had also mutated into direct support to Imperial Japan.

Post-Surrender – the *Abwehr* Fight Against America Continues … from China

The Abwehr ceased to exist in April 1944. Admiral Canaris and other senior Abwehr officers had been implicated in the attempted assassination of Hitler by Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg. Canaris and others were executed. His Abwehr was to be wholly absorbed into the RSHA as the single-intelligence and security service for all of Germany. According to an Allied wartime assessment of the absorption, "Since the compilation of "The German Intelligence Services" the absorption of the Abwehr by the

[515] "German Intelligence Activities in China," pg. 34.

RSHA has gone several stages further … such changes … are of importance to suggest their general effects upon the operations, plans and efficiency of the German Intelligence Service [the RSHA]."[516] As a result of the absorption of *Abwehr* activities by the RSHA, in Shanghai, local *Gestapo* Chief Franz Huber, as an RSHA senior leader in the region, attempted to take control of the entire KO platform but had failed.[517] Eisentraeger, survived Huber's "coup," attempt and continued his operations as if the *Abwehr* remained independent from the RSHA. The KO *leiter*, his subordinates, the headquarters, and all China-based substations continued to conduct business as if the *Abwehr* remained solvent until the Japanese surrender in late 1945. Globally, Eisentraeger's KO was the only *Abwehr* entity to resist absorption and reconstitution within the RSHA. Based on the evidence of the KO's activities, Eisentraeger's success in collection of U.S. military operations and the open sharing relationship with Imperial Japan were likely the key elements in sustaining his independence.

Eisentraeger's resistance to assimilation extended beyond the RSHA. In May 1945, following the unconditional German surrender, Eisentraeger and his organization took the unprecedented steps of continuing to supply Imperial Japan with intelligence on the U.S. military and preparing a "stay behind" network for organized resistance. The terms of Germany's surrender required the immediate cessation of all military activities, which included intelligence and coordination with Imperial Japan in China. Instead of surrender, Eisentraeger disbanded some elements of the KO but issued secret orders to others to continue to collect intelligence on the U.S. military. Further, the "Ehrhardt

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[516] "Revision Notes No.1 on The German Intelligence Services," *Skorzeny, Otto*, December 6, 1944, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/SKORZENYOTTOVOL01_0021.pdf.
[517] "Franz Huber: Activities as Head of Gestapo Shanghai," Office of Strategic Services, China Theater, X-2 Branch, October 18, 1945, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/HUBERFRANZPAUL_0008.pdf.

Bureau" planned for active resistance among the German communities in China in the event of U.S. military occupation. Eisentraeger tagged himself to lead the resistance.

When Japan did surrender, U.S. military authorities occupied parts of China but there was no resistance by the KO or German nationals. U.S. forces soon became aware of the *Abwehr's* presence in China and learned the extent of its operations since 1940, thereby prompting the OSS investigation that uncovered Eisentraeger's intelligence sharing and resistance activities. As a result of an OSS investigation, twenty-seven members of the KO and German community were arrested, interrogated, and tried for violation of the ceasefire. The investigation found:

> "absolute proof … of the complete collaboration of certain Germans with the Japanese in their prosecution of the war against China and the United States after the formal surrender of Germany. The German agency immediately concerned with these hostile acts … is known as the ABWEHR, also as the KRIEGSORGANISATION, also as BUREAU EHRHARDT."[518]

As a result of the evidence against the KO members, all were similarly charged, that:

> "between the 8th of May and 15th of August, 1945, individually and as officials, nationals, citizens, agents or employees of Germany, while residing in China at a time when the United States of America was at war with Japan did, in China, in a theater of military operations, Knowingly, willfully and unlawfully, violate the unconditional German surrender by engaging in and continuing military activities against the United States and its allies to wit by furnishing, ordering, authorizing, permitting and failing to stop the furnishing of aid, assistance, information, advice, intelligence, propaganda and material to the Japanese armed forces and agencies, thereby … assisting Japan in waging war against the United States of America."[519]

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[518] "Abwehr Espionage Activities in China, Ehrhardt Bureau," Office of Strategic Services, China Theater, X-2 Branch, November 2, 1945, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/519cd81e993294098d5166f9.
[519] "The Trial of Lothar Eisentrager and Others," Case No. 84, Before a United States Military Commission, Shanghai, China, 3rd October, 1946 – 14th January, 1947, pg. 8, International Criminal Court, Legal Tools Database, https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/a43d5a/pdf/.

Eisentraeger was singled out for leading the effort to provide intelligence on U.S. military operations to Japan and for "ordering, authorizing and permitting his agents" to conduct intelligence operations and planning for resistance.[520] In his own testimony, he stated he was aware he and his affiliates were to be constrained by Germany's surrender, but had agreed to "continue the work for the Japanese," and that "the arrangements for the operations were made with the Japanese Chief of Staff at Tokio [sic] and the Japanese Supreme Command at Nanking." According to a Japanese military staff officer, Japan's militaries had "discussed the desirability of having Ehrhardt's [Eisentraeger] continued co-operation," and for the Imperial Japanese militaries there was general agreement to continue the combined intelligence operations and associations on May 20, 1945.[521]

Twenty-one of twenty-seven of the accused were found guilty of violation of the ceasefire by a U.S. military tribunal and sentenced from 5-to-30 years in a military prison. Eisentraeger was the exception and received a life sentence in lieu of the death penalty.[522] Four years later, his sentence was overturned, and he was freed by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case of Johnson v. Eisentrager, 339 U.S. 763 (1950). The Court found U.S. courts, including military tribunals, had no jurisdiction of non-U.S. citizens who at no time had been within American sovereign territory and under the purview of U.S. national law.

[520] "The Trial of Lothar Eisentrager and Others," pg. 8.
[521] "The Trial of Lothar Eisentrager and Others," pgs. 12-13.
[522] "The Trial of Lothar Eisentrager and Others," pg. 14.

Chapter VI.

Conclusions: Orthodoxy or Reformation

The orthodox narratives of the history of *Abwehr* espionage in the United States have three distinct themes. First, once espionage began, it was fairly limited in scope, centered around the New York City metropolitan area, and was executed by poorly trained or untrained individuals. Second, these efforts occurred prior to the U.S. entry into the war, were continually exposed by U.S. counter espionage agencies, and as a result of that exposure, fundamentally ceased to exist near the end of 1941. Third, the espionage that did exist within the U.S. and targeted its military had no impact on the conduct or outcome of the war.

These themes originated with former FBI investigator Leon Turrou's attempts at self-aggrandizement in 1938 and were undoubtedly aided by similar narratives found in the post war histories written by mostly British academics who had served in the various branches of military intelligence during the war. These early sources established the narrative of relative *Abwehr* failure that was appropriated by U.S. counter espionage agencies to showcase their spy-hunting skills.

This paper's goal was to use newly declassified American, British, and German archival records to test the accuracy of the orthodox historical narratives. Beginning with the first claim related to the scope or espionage and quality of U.S.-based agents, it appears the previously held beliefs resulted from an incomplete understanding of the totality of *Abwehr* operations. Espionage was not limited to New York, and appears to have been conducted across the entire continent in any area with defense industries or major military installations. The *Abwehr* focused on recruiting industry-skilled ethnic-

Germans from large Germanic population centers near these concentration areas, most of whom were never identified. Declassified archival evidence has also been shown that espionage in the U.S. was of such value that it was supported by agents in Canada, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and as far away from China. Moreover, not only were these international footprints cooperating with U.S.-based agents, they represented an entire system of networks designed to support the collection and dissemination of intelligence and various elements of agent support.

In terms of agent quality, historical examinations have universally demeaned agents arrested in the U.S. for espionage. Within the Rumrich and Duquesne arrests there were indeed examples of lesser capable agents, and it was these agents who were often made the face of the *Abwehr* provided to the U.S. press. In Rumrich's case, he was so poorly trained for his operations by "Sanders" and Schlüter one could claim he had hardly been trained at all. The same can be said of Hoffman or Glaser of the so-called Rumrich Ring, with only Voss being able to be considered a valuable agent among the four captured and tried then or within our present understanding of the *Abwehr*. All of the others including the most capable and prolific agents identified within the investigation fled or were released by Turrou for what appear with hindsight and the benefit of declassified archival documents nonsensical reasons. Most agents associated with the *Abwehr* during the period of the Rumrich investigation remained unidentified.

In the case of the so-called Duquesne Ring, this analysis has already covered extensive materials that indicated the majority of the arrested agents were expendable and that their arrests did little to disrupt the unconnected *Abwehr* agents and operations not discovered by the FBI's double agent operation. If one wished to build a picture of the

Abwehr in the U.S. based solely on figures like Rumrich, Duquesne, or Lilly Stein, that indeed would present the organization as ineffective and amateurish. However, these agents do not constitute an appropriate sample of espionage capability across the scope and breadth of *Abwehr* agents in the United States. Rather, from 1921 through 1933, the *Abwehr* sustained contact with a host of legacy agents who kept track of like-minded individuals who worked in defense industries or had access to the military. In 1932 through 1933, when Patzig executed his major reorganization that brought all *Abwehr* capabilities into a more overt standing, he authorized the resumption of direct espionage in the U.S. From the initial recruitments in early 1933 through at least 1944, the intelligence service sustained its ability to recruit individuals throughout the United States willing to engage in espionage to collect vital intelligence for Germany. Many of these individuals received extensive training, either in Germany and the occupied territories, or from agents who had been so trained. As a result, rather than the four arrested within Rumrich, thirty-three in Duquesne, and nine in Ludwig, this analysis has identified over two hundred agents by either true name or *deckname* that operated in the U.S between 1933 and 1944.

The second claim relates directly to assertion that all *Abwehr* espionage was exposed by the counter espionage cases of 1938, June 1941, and August 1941, described by Hoover as a "blow" from which the *Abwehr* never recovered. His comments are sustained through today while the FBI's current historical account of The Duquesne / Sebold operation:

> "How's this for being a step ahead of the enemy? Before America ever fired a shot in World War II, we had rolled up a massive ring of Nazi spies operating on U.S. soil—33 in all … "as a result of the massive investigation, the FBI—and America—entered the war with confidence

> that there was no major German espionage network hidden in U.S. society."[523]

The narrative power of these statements are too strong not to spend time revisiting their intent. Notably, they reflect the period immediately after the Duquesne arrests at a time when the Bureau, as attested in memoranda from and addressed to the Director J. Edgar Hoover, was completely aware of a larger, unidentified, and more capable series of agents active across the United States conducting more dangerous espionage than the majority of those exposed by Sebold. Comparative analysis revealed the FBI was completely aware it indeed had not rid America of *Abwehr* espionage. Further, the FBI was at no point ahead of the enemy, and in fact, and from 1938 onward, its major counter espionage breaks came from luck (Sebold), MI-5, and automobile accidents. Not only was it unable to stimulate its own major investigations, through the end of the war, the Bureau – along with the Army and Navy – consistently reactively responded to tips from Allies and otherwise coincidental exposures of espionage. While the Army, Navy, and FBI surely took active counter espionage actions, none of these appeared to have resulted in any exposure, investigation, or prosecution of actual *Abwehr* agents. These actions did occasionally net pro-Nazi provocateurs and sympathizers, but these individuals were not the ones penetrating military technical secrets or reporting accurate details on maritime shipping bound for Europe across the Atlantic. As a result, counter espionage investigations failed to limit the threat of *Abwehr* espionage. As shown, neither the FBI, nor the counter espionage branches of Army and Navy intelligence, ever understood the nature of the enemy, its missions in the U.S., or the methodologies of their activities.

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[523] "Duquesne Spy Ring."

Finally, these efforts did not eliminate the threat of espionage prior to the war, and following the Ludwig arrests, dozens of agents remained at large in the U.S. The slow trickle of arrests that came from 1942 through 1946 were full of cases of agents who had been active in the U.S. since at least 1939, save for a few upstarts. Agents like Ködel were active from 1939 until 1944, and others were not discovered until after the war. Through the very dissolution of the *Abwehr* in June 1944, its *Stellen* continued to plan for the deployment of additional espionage agents, most of whom were ultimately deployed. The majority of those agents, with a few exceptions like Lutine / Goldschmidt, were never discovered. Meanwhile, in addition the large agent footprint in the U.S., additional local recruits, and additional deployed agents, the *Abwehr* sustained espionage through a host of indirect mechanisms that exploited the commercial sector through officers like Bensmann and Bischoff, and made contact with Americans with access to critical defense information in neutral states as occurred with von Oppenheim.

In sum, the three major counter espionage cases resulted in the revelation of only a small portion of the *Abwehr's* espionage capability in the United States between 1933 and 1944. The majority of the arrests involved insignificant or expendable agents and *Hinterleute*, and the major agents and officers who were exposed, escaped, provided no information of value for follow-on counter espionage activities, or, as in the case of von der Osten, were killed.

The third theme within the orthodox historical narrative claims that espionage in the U.S. had no impact on the Second World War in Europe and the Atlantic from September 1939 through May 1945. Many cases disprove this claim. The theft of the Norden bombsight is one major example.. A German version of a completed bombsight

was displayed to Hermann Lang in Berlin before the war, during the summer of 1938, as attested to in multiple source documents including Ritter's claims. German bombers were then armed with a version of the sight no later than the Blitz of 1940. Even press related to Lang's arrest and trial identified his involvement in the technological theft, while leaving out details regarding the capabilities of the sight or the totality of Lang's thievery. While perhaps the German version may not have been as precise as the original Norden design, there is no doubt that it was an improvement over wholly German bombsight designs. Therefore, during the Blitz and countless other battles on the Western and Eastern front, people were killed, industry was damaged, and infrastructure was destroyed as a result of the *Abwehr's* activities in the U.S.

In addition to the Norden bombsight, other espionage feats highlight the impacts of *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. Extensive advanced aircraft avionics were also among the laundry list of technologies acquired by *Abwehr* agents throughout American defense industries. Fritz "Pop" Sohn and Everett Roeder both worked at Sperry and were responsible for multiple technological thefts including other gyroscopes and bombsights. While each stole critical technological designs, it was also likely they acquired technological documentation related to the engineering, optics, and mathematics behind those designs. Similar activity occurred within the naval industries, with multiple agents operating throughout almost every naval shipyard. Entire blueprints are known to have been stolen. In the case of aircraft carrier design, of which the U.S. Navy was the most advanced builder among the nations capable of producing the behemoths, the *Abwehr* had complete design schematics for critical systems. Had *Graf Zeppelin* been commissioned, her aircraft elevators and aircraft recovery systems would have almost certainly been

based on the newest U.S. designs from its fleet carriers. There are multiple other examples of technology acquired by *Abwehr* agents in the U.S. being used against the Allied militaries throughout the five years of continental warfare. While direct causality can be challenged, it is naïve to claim these fruits of espionage had no impact on the war.

Outside of military technical intelligence, from 1938 through 1944, *Abwehr* agents in the U.S. were directly involved in the collection of data related to military and war-related maritime shipments. In the initial days of this activity, the intent appears to have been the collection of intelligence to inform military decision making. Germany was preparing for an aggressive war of expansion and its enemies were arming themselves and stockpiling goods through shipments from America. This quickly changed to war activities and intelligence on ship movements collected by *Abwehr* agents and disseminated to Germany for relay to its naval forces. Within what would come to be called the Battle of the Atlantic, 221 Allied ships were sunk in 1939, 1059 in 1940, and 1299 in 1941, for a total of 2579 ships, almost all of which were sunk before the U.S. entered into the war.[524] If even a small portion of these sinkings can be attributed to *Abwehr* espionage, then that association is a clear and tangible impact on the war. While there is minimal direct evidence that can be tracked from collection by an *Abwehr* agent, to dissemination to their control, with relay to a naval unit, and which ultimately resulted in a sinking, there is indeed evidence this occurred and that such a process was the intent of at least dozens of agents operating from major U.S. ports, some of whom have been directly addressed in this analysis. After December 11, 1941 and through June 1942, 2.5 million tons of shipping leaving U.S. ports would be sunk, with most of the attacks

[524] Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Jennie Barnes Pope, *Sea Lanes in Wartime - The American Experience 1775-1945*. New Haven: Archon Books, 1968, http://www.usmm.org/battleatlantic.html.

occurring within 200 nautical miles of the coast. Again, attribution to *Abwehr* agents of even a small portion of this amount of attacks should be seen as significant in terms of the conduct of the war.

The direct linkages between the *Abwehr's* China KO and its U.S. operations further provides evidence of tangible war-time impacts. Initially, the KO and *maritime nachrichtendienst* capabilities in Shanghai were a direct conduit to support U.S. espionage and disseminate collection back to Germany. This capability came to include direct military liaison with the militaries of Imperial Japan through which intelligence collected in the United States on the American military was provided to Germany's ally. No later than early 1941 this included intelligence on the U.S. force dispositions and defenses at Pearl Harbor, and while there is not direct causality that those plans were used to plan Japan's surprise attack, it seems illogical to conclude the intelligence provided via von der Osten was dismissed and of no value by Imperial Japan. Further, it is entirely improbable Imperial Japan would have completely disregarded the exact intelligence it needed with which to plan the Pearl Harbor attack.

The relationship in intelligence sharing begun by Siefken endured after his replacement by Eisentraeger. The second *leiter* of KO Shanghai was able to use the goodwill created through exchange to build up the only combined German-Italian-Japanese intelligence collection capability that existed during the war. The entire purpose of their combined intelligence stations was to monitor and collect intelligence on U.S. military activity that was then provided to the Imperial Japanese militaries for use in combat operations. Eisentrager even planned to lead German and Japanese combined armed resistance in China against potential U.S. occupation forces.

Even with these attributable results of *Abwehr* espionage, the expenditure of its resources to target the U.S. and create the global support mechanisms for control and exploitation remains counterfactual to the more pressing military intelligence needs of the multi-front war in Europe. Therefore, it appears there were other drivers beyond materiel and resource expenditures for the *Abwehr* and Canaris that further heightened the positive valuation of U.S.-based espionage. Quality modern scholarship has identified *Abwehr* senior leaders actively sought the defeat or removal of the Nazi regime in control of Germany by many means to include direct assassination from at least 1938 through the summer of 1944. Canaris has been identified as the "spiritual founder of the Resistance Movement" against Hitler and Nazism.[525] His senior *Abwehr* deputies, such as Arnim Lahousen and Hans Oster, too were at the center of the so-called resistance. According to an Allied report from 1946 based-on the debriefings of Lahousen:

> "the Abwehr was not weak and ineffective … because of corruption, defeatism, personal politics and superannuation, but … even before the war, it was the principal center of opposition to the Nazi Regime, with the aim of sabotaging German victory. On this basis, our views … of the Abwehr need serious revision.[526]

The centrality of the *Abwehr* leaders', and especially Canaris, opposition to Hitler and Nazism provides the context for the hidden impetus behind the continued expenditure of intelligence capacity to target the United States.

The drivers of *Abwehr* espionage in America did indeed begin with a focus on the theft of military technical intelligence and later expanded to also include intelligence on

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[525]Canaris' immediate *Abwehr* successor *Oberst* Hansen quoted in Michael Mueller, *Nazi Spymaster: The Life and Death of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012, pg. 59.
[526] "Report by Generalmajor Lahousen on Canaris Secret Organization," German Intelligence Service, London, The United Kingdom, December 17, 1945, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/GERMANINTELLIGENCESERVICEWWIIVOL.02_0007.pdf.

military material production and shipment of weapons to the European allies. While the collection requirements targeting military technical intelligence endured, by the end of 1938, as the potential for war in Europe appeared almost certain, agent activities were refocused on the production and shipment to Europe of military war materiel. This espionage almost certainly was done as an operational matter related to being able to estimate the available forces of Germany's future enemies, commonly referred to as order of battle analysis and estimates. By September 1939, tracking of the shipments of material transformed into using the same information to support the targeting and destruction of those shipments.

The purpose for *Abwehr* espionage in the U.S. transitions into its final mode with the U.S. entry in the European war in December 1941. Military technical intelligence collection continued, and maritime shipping intelligence was sustained and adapted to also focus to a greater degree on U.S.-flagged shipping and all shipping leaving the U.S. East Coast. This steady progression and expansion of targeting intelligence collection suggests Canaris had learned from Nikolai's mistake as the head of IIIb during the First World War, and he appears to have realized the only way to balance his objectives in Europe was through a precise understanding of the expansion and capabilities of the U.S. military. An overwhelming numerical U.S. expeditionary force could reset the balance of military operations in Europe in 1942, and arguably 1943, that would risk his objectives removing the Hitlerite cabal from power, sustaining Germany, and suppressing her traditional enemies. While a U.S. and Allied victory would indeed remove Hitler and the Nazis, such a situation would occur in a manner outside the levers of control of those in Germany opposed to Hitler. This potential situation surely would have conjured images

in the mind of Canaris and his like-minded cohorts in the *Wehrmacht* of an amplified version of the Versailles peace from which Germany as a nation – only seventy-one years in existence as a complete political entity in 1941 – would never recover. In such circumstances, one can appreciate why von Oppenheim's reporting on the Acadia conference where in the U.S. and U.K. plotted out the strategic course of American involvement in the European war was deemed by the *OKW* and services to be among the most significant reports collected by the *Abwehr* in 1942.

Espionage in America then was intertwined with Canaris' efforts to remove Hitler and his acolytes, preserve Germany, and defeat Communism. This is apparent from a detailed analysis of the extensive declassified archival materials that, until now, have not adequately informed historical understanding of the *Abwehr*'s operations. Informed by the drivers of German defeat in 1918, and in fear of a repeat of Versailles, espionage in the United States was more valuable than any commensurate activities in Europe in terms of Canaris' war termination goals.

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