

30 Nov 51
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My Experiences.

The Background.

I have worked together with the German Military Intelligence Service, simultaneously in very good contact with the Finnish Military Intelligence Service, from June 1941 up to July 1944, and later from October 1944 up to May 1945 with the Germans alone.

I have ^{taught} taught tens of Estonian and hundreds of Russian volunteers. A small part of these Russians were sent to work by these units where they were taught by me, the major part being given over to different other units of the same Service.

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I have participated in sending out of:

- 5 Estonian teams from Finland to Estonia in July 1941
- 2 " " " " " to Russia in 1942
- 5 Russian " " " " or Pleskau to Russia in 1942 - 1944
- 1 Latvian team from Germany to Latvia in December 1944
- 1 Estonian " " " " Estonia " " "
- 5 Estonian teams " " " " " April 1945.

All these teams were equipped with wireless senders and receivers. The wireless traffic could be established with 6 Estonian and 2 Russian teams only. All mentioned 6 Estonian teams reported by wireless soon after the launch, as was scheduled. They worked for long periods and gave good information. Both Russian teams sent their first signals weeks after the launch. The messages of one of these teams were suspicious from the very beginning. Those of the second team got suspicious after a week's break in its work. Both were counted as being under control of the Russian counter-espionage.

Besides the abovementioned teams I took over the leading of wireless communication to the following single residents or residential teams left by different German units in Estonia:

- 5 units in June/July 1941. Three of them worked, one was detected and liquidated by the NKVD, the fate of the last unit remained unknown;
- 10 units in October 1944
- 15 units in October/November 1944 (listening only).

From these 25 last-mentioned units not a single signal was received.

Technical reasons of failure.

From the 5 Estonian teams sent out in 1941 one's wireless set was damaged when descending on parachute. The team came back.

The Estonian team launched in Dec 1944, by the Navy, did not report. It is possible that the package of the batteries was not quite waterproof and the batteries got spoiled when brought on land in small boats.

The Latvian team, tutted by an other unit, was not ready for independent work on a wireless set. This was reported by me but the launch, nevertheless, was ordered in good hope that the men will manage somehow (there was just an urgent need for a Latvian team to be sent out). The team came back and reported unable to manipulate the wireless. The first operator was killed when returning through the front line.

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I am not a qualified radio-operator and instructor myself. I have learned the subject as an officer of Signals and I know the work to an extent enabling me to organize that work and to check the instructors' work duly. I have, of course, ~~taught~~ taught the agents in wireless too, and even held traffic myself. After some refreshing of my knowledge and skill I could do that now too, but, of course, not with so good results as a qualified professional operator can do it.

During the war time I had usually no time myself for direct teaching Morse or for traffic. I had to organize the teaching and the traffic, to check these both works, to teach ciphers, to elaborate exercise-ciphers for the volunteers and the real working ciphers for the agents going abroad. I had sometimes to cipher and to decipher myself the messages exchanged between the agents and the unit, because the German personnel entitled to that work could often not manage it because of ignorance of Estonian or Russian language in which the messages were written.

* Besides that amount of work I had to even the little or big misunderstandings occurring between the not too selected and qualified members of the German staff and the not too humble aspiring agents, whose trustworthy and fatherly "old-men" and mental backbone I had to be, too.

For teaching Morse and wireless traffic I had in my disposal up to 8 qualified professional Estonian instructor-operators whom I could trust fully. To help them there were professional Russian wireless operators who did not need special teaching themselves and were used to teach Morse to their mates.

The traffic with the agents on work I tried to organize with my own Estonian operators only, helped sometimes by some especially chosen German operators. The traffic with the different German stations was carried out by the German operators only.

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on page 2.

I think that these last-mentioned 25 groups did not intend to work at all; supposingly they agreed with the German proposal to work as agents-residents because they saw therein a possibility to receive some good weapons and some food, needed for their anti-communist Estonian, but not pro-German resistance. They did not believe into the help of the retreating Germans. They did not believe that any German operator will listen to their signals. They did not know that later Estonian operators were organized by me to listen to their expected work, prepared to work even after the German collapse. I can not blame these men, the Germans had lost their credit in Estonia during 1942 - 1944 fully. Psychology and technics are of equal value when dealing with intelligence work against the communist regiment, and policy plays a great role on the psychological side of that balance.

The 5 Estonian teams launched in April 1944 were not heard. This may have depended on the very bad conditions of work on the leading station which was often on move because of the chaotic retreat of the Germans in those days. Despite this chaos these teams were constantly listened by Estonian operators on two reception stations but without any results.

The technical preparedness of the 25 units (10 + 15) left in Estonia in fall of 1944 was unknown to me, it is possible that this was not especially good because the withdrawal of the Germans from Estonia came to unexpectedly even to the German Intelligence Service and the agents-residents had to be settled in a great hurry. Our detachment received partly inadequate base of work of these units and the absolute failure of that enterprise may be explained partly by that reason.

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Recruitment of Agents.

The Estonian volunteers of 1941 were recruited in Finland amongst young people who fled before the communists from Estonia to Finland in winter 1940/1941. They were enterprising and politicaly reliable people, who mostly knew each other.

The two Estonian teams (14 men) sent from Finland to Russia were recruited in Estonia amongst people proved during the fights of reliberation of Estonia in 1941 (coming from Finland), amongst people whose close relatives were murdered or deported by the communists, or whom the Estonian staff of our detachment knew personally for longer time.

All these teams, exopt one, performed very good work. The single team which failed and reported damage of its wireless set when coming back to our detachment after Estonia was released from communists in fall 1941, was under a faint suspicion of some sympathy with the communists (the leader was a half-Russian and of very low standard of living), but nothing could be proved. That man understood to get in special favor of one of the German officer and left the detachment together with this officer.

In 1944/1945 I recruited my Estonian volunteers myself amongst people who had managed to escape from Estonia to Germany, had thus shown their anti-communist attitude, but -

- a) did not want to join the "waffen SS" units whereto the Estonian and the Latvian soldiers and officers were ordered to go after arrival in Germany, or-
- b) surrendered to German orders and were incorporated into the "20th Estonian Waffen SS Division". The German Navy in Baltic Sea, being in need of information from the Baltic States, effected an order according to which I could select 20 volunteers amongst the Estonian soldiers of that Division. I did so with help of the Estonian officers of these units. I had to do this in a great hurry, having got 24 hours only for it from the angry German SS general who commanded the Division.

That choice was not without errors. We had to eliminate later some people who had understood to hide their physical unfitnes or who proved to be unfitting because of some other reason (too light-minded, too quarrelsome, hidden drunkard). I was happy I had not chosen communists. One of the boys whom I took with some confused feelings because his father was a Russian (he was the single man spoke Russian and such men were needed), we had to send later

away because of lack of confidence - he felt Russian and tried to "understand" the communist Russians.

The Russian volunteers were recruited amongst POW's in different POW Camps in Estonia. The selection was made by former officers of Red Army. These officers were sent to our detachment by from a central depot of the "Leitstelle Ost" of the "Abwehr I". These officers were also former POWs, selected and checked by the central depot and they were recommended to our unit as reliable. As to my understanding they were honest and good, and could be relied upon in 1941 and 1942. But they did not stand the moral pressure of 1943 - 1944 coming from bad anti-Russian and anti-Ukrainian nazi-policy and from the constant German retreat.

The selection of volunteers in POW camps was done on base of physical and mental fitness of the people. There was no possibility for a political check because every POW, seeing a possibility to change the miserable life of a POW against a better one, was ready to swear on his anti-communist attitude.

Before starting the real tuition the selected POWs were held for 4 to 6 weeks in a special screening camp where the hidden communists had to be detected, as well as the other unfitting or sick people had to be screened out.

The security precautions in our camps, as far as these concerned the reliability of the volunteers, lied mostly on the shoulders of these Russian officers and partly on the Estonian officers who administered the camps. Often there was one single German soldier in camp, who had to appear if some alien German charge happened to come to the camp. These security precautions were inadequate and caused later many difficulties. The technical installation for listening to the talks of the volunteers was indented too late and received after very long time, so that it did not come to larger use practically. One of reasons of such a lassitude was the great trust the German officers had to their Russian recommended officers. This too great trust and lack of sharper control may have been one of the reasons why the results of our work with the Russians were fully negative.

Aims of Work.

In the very beginning, in February - May 1941, I worked to some extent for the "Abwehr II" (national-political and subversive activity - had nothing to do with nazi-German policy). I looked for Estonian volunteers in "Umsiedlerlagern" in Germany who would like to go back to Estonia for contacting the former Estonian Army units in case of a German-Russian conflict. From June 1941 on I worked with the "Abwehr I" or "Frontaufklärung", whose aim was gathering information only.

The first Estonian teams sent from Finland to Estonia had as an additional aim to contact the Estonians who hide themselves in forests and to play a liaison role between them and our detachment, "K.O.F." which tried to supply the Estonian patriots with weapons and ammunition.

The two Estonian teams sent to Russia had besides the official aim of gathering military information their own Estonian aim to contact the Estonians deported by the Russians from Estonia to Ural. This lastmentioned aim could not be realised - the distance was too great.

The Estonians sent out in 1944/1945 had besides the normal aims of collecting military information special purely Estonian secret aims for further work against the communists after soonly awaited German collapse.

Tuition.

The Russian volunteers were all old commissioned or non-commissioned officers or ranks of the Red Army. They knew Russian organization and weapons, and they were militarily well prepared. Thus their tuition consisted mainly of wireless, ciphers and composition of messages, teaching of these subjects being my main field of work, general knowledge about the agents' work and behavior, and - one of the most important task - the rebuilding of the political mind of the volunteers. This work was done by the recommended Russian officers under a very essential leading help of a speaker of Russian program of the Finnish broadcasting system, an old Russian tearist captain. His was the famous attractive and fascinating call in Finnish radio: "slushajte, slushajte, govorit Finljändija".

Some attention, of course, was given to the sports and to the refreshing of knowledge in topography and orientation too. This was done by the Russian instructors.

Information and orientation over the way of launching was generally very scarce: in one to three hours the people was shown a parachute, how this will be fastened, how one has to behave when using it - and this was about all. They never had a flight or a jump before. This information was given by German aviators or specially designed members of the flying crew. As far as known from the Estonian volunteers who reported by wireless or who came back to the detachment, there were no special injuries when descending on parachutes despite the insufficient or too short instruction. The men landed in foreseen places. But one landed on the roof of a haus and this had just to be that of the local party-representative, as our man learned later. But he had good luck, the haus was empty during that night.

In periods when German Navy officers had the lead in one or another camp, much time was lost and waisted for rowing exercises, the skill of mens' rowing ability being practically not used. That concern the Russian volunteers. With Estonians no time was waisted for special rowing exercises because they mostly knew that already and did this in free time as voluntary sports, where this was possible.

There was no need in political rebuilding of mind when teaching the Estonians. Instead of that Russian language had to be given a great amount of time. In summer 1941, nevertheless, there was no time for teaching Russian. That was not so essential in 1941 because their lack of knowledge of Russian was not striking in Estonia in 1941: only few Estonians knew Russian at that time.

Tuition of Estonian, was done by Estonians and by the Finns, - in 1944/1945 by Estonians and by German aviators. Estonian and Finnish, or Estonian and German languages were used in course of tuition.

Tuition of Russians was done by Russian, Estonian and German officers in Russian language. The aforementioned Russian speaker of Finnish radio, and I wore Finnish uniform and the Russian volunteers and staff of instructors took me for a Finnish officer. The speaker was introduced to them as a Russian emigree in Finnish services.

The legends were build up and the documents were elaborated either in Finland by the Finnish Intelligence Service, or by a special section, "G - Staffel" of the "Frontaufklärungsleitstelle Ost". The corresponding special section of the Finnish was generally counted to be better than the German G-Staffel, because it had more different patterns and besides of its Russian workers also well qualified Finnish specialists, whereas the Germans had mostly to rely upon their Russian specialists (former POWs) only.

The duration of tuition was very different, depending from the time just available.

In 1941 we had some few weeks only and the people were sent out as soon as they were able for sure work on wireless sets.

The education of the two Estonian teams sent to Russia lasted over a year and comprised a long stay on the Finnish front. The technical preparation of that special enterprise took so long time. But this waiting came for good for these people: they got good experiences in long-distance wireless traffic and in hard winter life in forest in the front line.

The tuition of Russian volunteers was started in a very large scale and with great speed, with the aim to be ready for launching in some 3 months. But these 3 and many more months passed and there were still no possibilities for launching them. Therefore the volunteers had to repeat the same course for many times. They were even sent to the front area (near Leningrad). If the Estonians got good experiences on the Finnish front, then the Russians on the German front, against the Russians, got only bad experiences and got spoiled in their feelings by seeing how the Germans housed in Russia and lived with the Russian women, and by the communist propaganda made by the loudspeakers. It was intended that our volunteers make anti-communist propaganda, and they did, too, but the communists' one was more effective. In any case - many of the Russian volunteers were lost to Germans for anti-communist work by too long stay and waiting after the real and intensive tuition was finished. Half-idle stay and bad news about the hostile policy of the Germans against the "freed" Russians and Ukrainians, and bad news about the continuous German retreat were most probably the reason why the Russian volunteers, who were really good in the beginning of the tuition, went shaky later, and why many of them, finding themselves after the launch between or in the neighborhood of their "rodnjie russkie ljudi", forget their secret anti-communist mission, threw away their special equipment, mixed with the population, tried to forget and to hide the story and the time of their being in German P.O.W. and special camps, or why they went and reported themselves to the corresponding communist authorities. I think that this is one of the main reasons why we had only two working traffic lines to the Russian groups and why these had to be suspected to be communist-led.

There was few time available for the tuition of Estonians in Germany in 1944/1945. Besides, the tuition was interrupted by frequent moves of our unit in course of the general retreat of the German Army. From the other side, the final collapse of the German front was ~~to be awaited and~~ threatening and therefore all was done to have the people sent out as soon as possible. So saw I the situation. The German Navy, too, was very much interested in most speedy start of my people because they still hoped to fight the communists and they were in urgent need for information from the Baltic area, their own-prepared residents having failed completely. Therefore I, being in lead of the tuition, drew the fullest speed and attention to teaching of wireless and double

ciphers, - a general system for German use, and a special clandestine one, separate for every group and even separate ciphers for some single members of these groups, for pure Estonian "past war" use. The recognition of the Russian weapons and the knowledge of the Russian military organization was taught a little, especially from the naval point of view. A special political schooling was not needed because I myself and all my Estonian men were sure that Estonian fight against communists will not cease with the German collapse, that the alliance between communist Russia and the Western Powers can be of a short duration only, forced upon them by the world-threatening German Nazism. I hoped on my old references of peace time. I was sure I will be understood by the Western competent workers, if I only could contact these. My men believed me. They were sure that I will and shall do my work if they will do theirs. Only because of this great mutual trust between my men and me, we all being carried by the wish to help our Estonian people, it was possible to bring the people in short time and bad conditions of life to a high standard of skill in wireless and to bring up the courage to step into a German flying boat in end of April 1944 for being launched between the communists in Estonia, between the communists who were officially allies of these Western Powers upon whose help all our work was build up.

Some special points.

Motives of Work. Absolute Trust. Payment.

The life and work of an anti-communist agent in Russia or some where else in the U.S.S.R is not comparable with agents' life and work anywhere in the free world. The difference in personal risk is so immense. Therefore good work in USSR may be expected only from really idealistic and well determined anti-communists, and under condition that they will be convinced of the efficiency of the enterprise, and that this their work and sacrifice will really come to the benefit of the national cause.

It is an emotional play of highest grade to bring the people to such conviction. The main actors of that play, the aspiring agents, must be convinced that their sacrifice will not be in vain, that the men or women remaining behind will do all humanly and technically possible for receiving the news the agents will send, and for helping the agents when this will be needed, that the organization as such is really in position and willing to go in its share of work and sacrifice even so far as he, the agent, is going.

Such a solid contact between the agents and the leading staff, and such a conviction of the agents may be obtained only if fullest mutual trust is reigning between the agents and their teachers and "old man" who will have to fight for the agents' fate against the often bureaucratic machinery of the home organization on after agents' departure for work. There will be no help of a "shaw" on the side of the old-man; the agents are so sensible before their departure that they would detect such an actor easily. And in such case the agent's faith, which he needs for successful working, is usually broken, even if he tries not to show that. Therefore the staff, too, must be fully convinced of the solidity of the enterprise, so they may talk to the agents out of own conviction and not of a textbook. I have seen Russian volunteers who did not believe the good promises given to them by the German "Einsatz-"officers. Some of these Russians came to me and

alleviated their hearts by telling me over their doubts, because they had won some trust to me during the long hours of last friendly and top-secret talks about the final ciphers and base of their wireless traffic which I had with them. I had hard work in repairing the failure of these German officers who had promised too much knowing themselves that those promises could not be held. After an unhappy attempt to launch some Estonians from a submarine the agents told me very categorically that they will never go with the same "Einsatz"-officer, because this is a "false man", dishonest, although the "dishonesty" of that officer was in this particular case of really minor importance.

Even an idealist can not live without money. His work can not be weighed with money, but his lost time must be remunerated, for his skins must be cared, and also for his own life if he will have the great luck to come back alive. The more generously the organization does that, the more grateful will be the agent-idealist, the better he will work, because he will be free from worrying about his closest people, be these old parents, own wife and children or other people depending from him.

The promises must be held very accurately. The idealists are often shy in money matters. He will not ask you if you will have forgotten to hold a promise, but he suffers under this oblivion, he does not know whether this really was an occasional oblivion or it was an empty and meaningless promise only. I was far in North-Finland, in Rovaniemi, with two Russian teams for the last instructions before their launch. I got in very good terms with the people but I saw that something was boring them: the formerly good wireless experiences of the men were lost, they could not contact our leading station in Tallinn and claimed that their receiver is not in order or Tallinn is not working. I had to do the traffic myself and to let them listen to it, so they could see that their receiver was in order and Tallinn was coming in, too. At first I thought that the boys wanted to puzzle me because I had taken no wireless instructor with me and they could think that I will not be able to contact the leading station, to do the traffic. And I must state that I was not sure I could, because I had never time for systematical practising in it. A little later one of these men came to me and opened his and his mates worry to me: they had been promised a good pay for the time they stood in full readiness for a special enterprise on the front some half-a-year ago. The launch was not carried out but the men got the promise repeated that they will be paid for the time they stood in readiness. Now, half-a-year later one part of these men stood before their second scheduled launch. They had not failed, they were ready to be launched, but the fact that the promises they were given in connection with the first intended launch, were not held, the money was not paid to them, had bored them all the time and he now had decided to ask me why it was so, will it be so with all the promises which were made this time too? I did not know anything of the related former promises and I had only a very occasional and slight idea of this enterprise because wireless was not foreseen in that case. But knowing the routine work of the unit I believed the talk I heard. I tried to explain the happening as an occasional oblivion. I was happy to have in my private purse enough money so I could pay immediately to him and to his mates what they claimed. I did that in Finnmarks which had better name in the ears of my Russians. I counted a favorable rate of exchange (the pay was promised in Reichsmarks), and I think I have helped these men to regain their faith. The other day they had no trouble with the traffic any longer. Before the launch, on the eve, the men came to me and

gave the same Finnmarks back to me asking me to keep that money for them until the war will be once over and Russia free, so they could use that their foreign currency. It was not a "shaw", it was pure feelings of these men staying before a grave step in their life. Returned from Rovaniemi, after the men were launched, I reported the case and overgave the mens' money for being paid into a bank. The case was checked: the men were right, it has been an omission of an "Einsatz-" officer that the men were not paid in due time. I got my personal money repaid. I am sorry I did not take the names of these men for the future happenings...

I could bring many cases where I had to clear the misunderstandings between my Estonian men and the German staff personnel of the unit during 1944/1945. These were all small happenings, of no great meaning, but they were efficient enough to split the contact and the simple human trust (there could be no talk of a political one) between the Estonian agents and the German staff personnel. There did not remain for me but the argument that we, Estonians, simply need the shabby help of those Germans who eat half the meat and who drank the good French liquor foreseen for the Estonian agents. Let the Germans eat that ham and drink the liquor, but let us behave ourselves so that the same Germans will help us, will help you over to Estonia and will give me the possibility to care for the other part of the work which remained to be done in Germany. My men understood and agreed with me, we had no more misunderstandings with the Germans, although the rations smelt more and more before they reached my men.

Therefore: minute fairness and accuracy must be safeguarded in dealing with good aspiring agents and the staff which has to guarantee the real contact to the agents.

Security Precautions.

The basic principle that an agent must know as few as ever possible of the home organization which has sent him out, (so he could not betray anything and anybody when he, having bad luck, gets into the hands of the enemy,) was known to the Germans. But the more security precautions one takes, the more work and expenses one has. The Germans were poor, and sometimes, perhaps, a little comfortable too. So we had sometimes over hundred men Russian volunteers in one training camp. Ciphers of the same type were used by all the agents launched over the entire German Eastern front. It would have been enough of one good communist agent in one of such a big camp to have reported to Moscow all the intentions of the German Intelligence. I was too much bothered with my own Estonian fight against the Nazi-German politics, and policy at that period and therefore I could not follow all the happenings on this field, and therefore I do not know to tell exact facts in details, but many Russians were eliminated from our camps after they had followed the full course of an agent, because they were then found to be communists. One of them had done his work so good that he was held long time in quality of an instructor. Later he was over-given to an other unit which sent him over to Russia. He was back soon, reporting loss of his both comrades and his equipment. His story was believed. He went on working as a very good instructor until he was reported by an agent, staying before launch, whom that "instructor" wanted to instruct how the agent had to report to the NKVD in the best way.

What to my work, I drew the attention of the Chief-Wireless-officer of the Service on the East front on the dangerousness of using the same method of ciphers by so many agents. I had some misunderstandings therefore and I was not just beloved in his office, because my proposals had asked much more work from his staff. So long I worked with K.O.F, which was more or less independent and I therefore had only to coordinate my work with his, I used my own ciphers. Later, working with other detachments, I was in technical subordination from the Chief-Wireless-officer. But even then I managed some alterations in traffic and ciphers which I felt for needed for the security of the work for which I was responsible.

The poorness of the Germans, and sometimes the "let go" mood *brusk* to such occasions where two or more groups of agents, till then quite unknown to each other, were brought to one and the same airfield and put into one and the same airplane for being launched in one flight. That many teams of one detachment were launched during one flight, was quite usual and "normal". So if one group was snapped by the enemy then all the other groups, launched during the same flight, were betrayed automatically.

As our detachment could not launch all the many agents which were taught, and the other detachments lacked of own-instructed men, so we had to overgive our best men to these other detachments, placed far away in other areas. It even happened that these overgiven men could not be launched by the new detachment too, and remained for longer periods together with the Russians of these detachments. So there practically existed Russians who know exactly over many instruction centers and camps in a very large area. This was also the case with the "instructor" mentioned before.

The intelligence work is costly. But is somebody entitled to spare thousands of marks or dollars, if by doing so he may bring in danger a work worth millions in money and years in time?

Therefore: the smaller a group of aspiring agents, the better it is. The best solution were that one agent or the two or three agents who have to go on work together, would sit and learn under leading of one good many-sided instructor only, and would be visited from time to time by a few other instructors who will teach him or them the very exclusive subjects, or check the results of the achieved work. The agent may know many instructors, but he may not know about any other agents. If different groups must be launched during one flight, then precautions must be taken that this fact will not be known by these groups.

Wireless Traffic with the Agents.

If an agent has to use the wireless and must be taught to it from the very beginning, then the instructor in wireless will have the most work with him. From that instructor depends whether the agent will be able to do a good work or he will remain a blank. In my practice the best result were obtained in cases where the instructor and the aspiring agent get into relations of best friends, and when the agent knew that when he will go to work then his best friend will see that none of his signals will have to be repeated without a special need, that he may rely on his good friend and efficient radio-operator. And it was really fascinating to see with which ardor the old operators sat behind the receivers and tried to get in the very feeble signals of their friends- agents amongst the loud noise of hundreds of other stations. The old Estonian operators had much better results in traffic with the Estonian agents whom they had taught themselves, whose "hand" they knew so well, than the

German operators. It was a great satisfaction for the instructor to hear good work of his pupil and to be able to deliver him from his message, and it was a great relief for the agent to hear his old teacher answering him, who will not ask for repetitions because of his own incapacity or inattention, who knows that every repeated signal will help the enemy to find the agent's position. It was a rule of mine to let the agents work during the tuition period with two or three old good operators who participated on his tuition and who had to work with him later when he went to real work. This was another point of quarrel between me and the chief-wireless officer who wanted all lines from the agents collected in one of his central leading stations where the operators, often young German soldiers, were frequently changed, who did not know the agents and had no personal contact to them. I could prove in many occasions that my Estonian operators, doing listening only, had the messages of the agents received in full, whereas the leading station with its many very good receivers and German operators had received some fragments of the message only and asked for repetitions. I will not say that the German operators were bad workers, but they simply lacked the personal and national interest which doubled the strain of the Estonian operators.

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The results were very bad when the agents were sent for launching to some other units and they had to communicate with quite unknown before station, whose sound he had never heard before in his headphones. Even the distance between the agent and his leading station makes much difficulty for a fresh agent. Having had good results in working with his leading station on a short distance, he feels lost if he does not hear the same loud sound when working on a far distance. This probably was also one of the reasons why my Russian friends could not find Tallinn the first time when working out of Rovaniemi. Therefore I tried to organize some school-traffic of my agents with different far situated stations, and even to give them occasion to work with his own leading station approximately on the same distance which he will have to cover later. Therefore I made the long way to Rovaniemi, too. Very good experiences made these two groups, who were sent to Russia, during their stay on the Finnish front, from where they had some traffic with their leading station on the approximately real distance.

As the transmitters of the agents are usually weak, so there were often trouble with reception of their messages: the atmospheric disturbances or other noises cut parts of messages out and the agent had to repeat his work. To avoid such happenings I used 2 or 3 listening stations in different areas with different atmospheric disturbances and local noises. In some cases the main station with the biggest transmitter, where the agent listened, could not hear the agent's work at all, but this work was received by one or by both listening stations. Then the listening station overtook the leading, directing the big transmitter in a specially arranged way, so the agent could have the answers from his usual loud leading station. It was a tiresome work and it was forbidden by the chief wireless officer to do so for his German operators. But I saw the great help of such work to the agents and I knew the good discipline and care with which this work was done by my reliable operators. Such cooperation of many home stations will be absolutely needed if the contact between the agent and the leading station may not be revealed to the vigil enemy. In this case the agent gives his messages blindly, not knowing whether some of the listening stations is really

receiving his signals. He does this all in a way as if he, being a Russian station, were in contact with an other Russian station. The receipt will be given to him later, during a fixed time, again in a specially fixed form, without disclosing the fact that the receipt was given to our men, for his message. To enable the leading station to such quick work it must be guaranteed that the messages of the agent will be received by different listening stations who will report their results to the main station in a conventional way.

Transportation of the Agents to the Working Areas.

All but two of the groups mentioned in this writing were sent out on special airplanes piloted by specially trained German aviators. In 1941 that job was done mostly by Hauptman Gartenfels and his 2 or 3 lieutenants. This gentleman pilot did his work with elan coupled with due precaution. Sometimes one of the officers of our unit accompanied the agents on their launching flight, but that was not specially needed because Gartenfels and his lieutenants were themselves acknowledged intelligence officers. Later different other younger and less known and less experienced aviators were used. To be sure that the agents had no misunderstandings with the flying crew because of not knowing the language of the agents, and to be sure that the launching went smoothly, the "Einsatz"-officer generally accompanied the agents on the launching flight, until this was forbidden. It was told that in one occasion the agents, whose double play was not detected, had taken the Einsatz-officer with them, even without a parachute!

After one launching of our Russian agents it happened that the agent reported his position some 150 miles away from the area where he had to be launched. Checking the agent's report with the pilot who flew that night, the pilot remained on his previous statement, that he had launched the group on the right spot, whereas the agent reported repeatedly the same position and that he had not moved after the launching. The case could not be cleared. The accident lost its poignancy when later the messages of that group grew suspicious in their composition and content.

In an other case the aviator reported having been under Russian anti-aircraft fire when returning from launching. From the three groups launched during that flight not a single signal was heard. Therefore later a suspicion arose whether these launches were done with due precaution. One of these groups was especially good and all officers thought that that group would certainly work. I-

I personally got some suspicion in contact with the 5 Estonian groups launched in April 1944. The mood of the German pilots who had to fly them out was sullen, murmured over the senselessness of that order - to fly these men out in a time when the total collapse could happen every day and the front line was quite near to the aviation-base already. They found or had many technical reasons for postponing the flight. I, of course, could not tell anything of my special Estonian aims, but I tried to convince them in the need to continue the fight against the communists in any case, which was also the leit-motive of the German Navy Command. My men, at last, were flown out on 20th and 23rd April, in two flights. They were well equipped, aware of the dangerousness of the enterprise but determined to do the job. Their old best friends, the experienced Estonian operators listened to their signals all the time as was agreed with the agents, but did not hear anything. It would be possible that the agents could not hear our transmitter because of its bad installation on short stays between constant moves, but

our receivers worked still in best order and good conditions, they must have heard the signals of the agents, had these given any. I spoke the aviator who brought out the two first teams and he gave me a clear report. I could not speak personally the aviator who flew out the last 3 groups, but I spoke his commander who had his report. I remarked some difference, between the plan of the flight as was agreed upon and the report of execution of it: the order of launching was changed and one group was launched some 20 miles aside of the foreseen place. I asked for a direct talk with the pilot but this again was told to be impossible because of some special reason. The difference was explained to me by some atmospheric conditions which did not allow to follow the plan minutely. I had no special ground for suspicions then, as only a very short time had passed after the launching and the men simply could not yet have the opportunity for reporting. I got my suspicions later, being in British captivity, when I learned from my operators that they had listened up to the middle of May without hearing anything. (I went over the front line on 4th May and reported to the British myself and my stations, still on work. It took some time until my men, who continued listening as I had ordered, were taken by the British and sent to an internment camp, where I met them some months later.)

On hand of these happenings I find that the fullest trust must reign not only between the agents and their old-men, but also between all different sections of Service or of the special units working for this Service. If this is not guaranteed or when the help of an alien unit is used, then a representative of the Service must be at present, especially when the agents will be launched. It would be to the accompanying intelligence officer to decide whether a group may be launched on an other point if this will be impossible on the planned place, but not to the occasional pilot who may not have studied the conditions of safe landing of the agents on different places.

Drinking.

The German intelligence officers had the habit to give the agents a farewell party with much liquor, usually one day before the start. The agents, being under very great nervous tension, got drunk easily and were therefore often sick on the eve of the launch when they had to be just in especially vigil mood, for being able to understand and to remember the many important instructions which could not be given to them earlier because of necessary security precautions. I have nothing against some drinking myself and I find it even necessary to have some drinks together with the agents, but this can not be done so late.

There is an other question, whether to give the agents some liquor when they will be taken on board. If it is really the first flight the man will undertake, then, perhaps, he could have a little for having calmed down but as a rule I would not do that, because they must have all their wit together and every muscle under control when leaving the airplane.

Many agents, Estonians and Russians, who usually did not abstain from a drink, refused to drink during these parties and found these to be a senseless nuisance. That is the way I feel too: in these last days and hours of instructing both parties, the instructors and the agents need all their attention and wit, and therefore - no drinking then.

Stubbornness is needed.

of our staff mem-
bers

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tuation

In my quality as wireless officer of our unit I had to follow the tragedy where 14 of our best men were lost in Russia because of lack of stubbornness, as was found later by many officers. These men had not liquidated the Russian woman who had seen them in forest. She reported the men and after a long chase they were all liquidated. The men reported their trouble in due time and there were good possibilities to rescue them by aeroplanes. The officer charged with the care for that special group reported the situation to his chief and asked for rescue action. But as the higher chiefs have often no time to deepen and to think themselves into the position of the real workers, and as the reporting officer was not stubborn enough in his request, so the chief did not believe the seriousness of the situation - there are always too many subordinates pretending to come with the very important and much urgent report. In any case - no adequate immediate action was taken. Later the necessity of quick help was understood on all levels and an hydroaeroplane was sent out for rescue action. But it was too late then. The Russians, who had followed the movements of our men, had foreseen the possible rescue operation and had time to take their precautions. The fate wanted that the covering fighters, who started from an other aerodrome, were half-an-hour late because of some weather conditions. The gallant and helpful pilot of the hydroplane, knowing the need of urgency of his rescue action, did not dare to wait for the cover and flew alone. The hydroplane had watered on a sea, took the first half of the men on board and was then destroyed by the fire of an ambush batterie. The other half of the men saw all the tragedy but could not help. They reported all that by wireless, finishing on the following day by their last message: "we are encircled - good luck to you!". Had the officers in question been stubborn enough in demanding the immediate rescue action, the means for it would have been found in due time and the great loss of 14 best men and of the hydroplane together with its crew could have been avoided.

That disaster gave me the courage to confront repeatedly my technical chief, the chief-wireless-officer when he wanted me to use different procedures which I found to be too dangerous for the security of our agents and of our work and which had not given any other profit but a small winn of time. I myself and my Estonian operators were always ready to work more if there was some more safety for our friends, the agents.

The majority of my chiefs understood themselves, the need of stubbornness, they had often to use the same tactics, and therefore I made good experiences with my grounded obstinacy. I think that the fact that I am still living, that I was not murdered by the communists in Estonia in 1940 and not court-martialed by the Germans in the period of 1943 - 1944, I have to thank just to my, sometimes bold, stubbornness and to that same stubbornness of my chiefs of that period.

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