

APD 403
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Project No. 33 - MS # P-047

Generalmajor Hans v. Ahlfen, General of Engineers Army Group B

Answers of Generalmajor v. Ahlfen

Question 1.

Support was not adequate,

a. Planning and organization - top level engineer agencies' requirements were never completed in respect to organization.

b. Equipment and material - bridging columns were too few in number and their transportation was inadequate, a condition which was general among the engineers. More landing-engineer units were needed. If they had been available in 1940, it might have been possible to follow-up Bunkirk immediately. Furthermore, the German Army might have been able to follow the Russian forces retreating to the Taman Peninsula after the Kertsch offensive, May, 1942, if landing units had been available. Soon afterward, another opportunity to cross to that peninsula, simultaneously with the summer offensive of 1942, was lost for the same reason.

c. Training - adequate, except that many higher ranking engineer officers lacked experience.

Question 2.

Engineer officers had opportunities for contact with civilian agencies. The U.S. practice of giving engineers practice in planning and executing large-scale constructions was not used in German Army because it would have interfered with strictly military training.

The organization of OT was not due to any weakness of the Fortress Engineer Corps, but was due to political pressure.

Cites example of difficulty in dealing with OT - the constructions of the military railway line from Mo i Rana to Narvik (See page 43). (See also final paragraph of 15).

Question 3.

American engineers not outstanding, but their vast quantities of materiel made improvisation unnecessary.