

The Ministerial Collecting Center Near Kassel, Germany¹

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THE rain was pouring down. The hour was 0630. The day was Monday, 12 June 1945. The place was Höchst, Germany, headquarters of the US Group Control Council. A lone figure, bundled up in hooded officers' fieldcoat, with musette bag slung over shoulder, and with pistol and extra clip of ammunition fastened at the waist sloshed down the street. This was the only Archivist then on the regular Table of Organization (T/O) of US Gp CC. At the appointed rendezvous other bedraggled figures appeared. Trucks arrived. The Archivist and other officers climbed up beside drivers of 2½ ton trucks, and the little convoy started up the Autobahn from Frankfurt to Kassel. This was the Advance Party sent to open the Ministerial Collecting Center. The MCC was a unique venture in modern warfare. Its tale is worth the telling.

I. HISTORICAL ORIGINS

As part of its mission to formulate plans for the control of Germany, the US Gp CC naturally was responsible for plans to control the German ministries and central agencies of similar nature. In the early stages this planning was predicated on the assumption that these central administrative bodies would be taken over while they were still functioning in whole or in part, whether in the city of Berlin or in a temporary location. Early in December 1944 a directive of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recognized the unlikelihood of such a situation. In January 1945 new plans were developed, based on the assumption that no reasonably complete or effective administrative structure usable for our purposes of control would be found.

Plan "Goldcup," issued on 18 April 1945 had two objectives: (a) to establish contact with the Soviet Central Command; and (b) to assume initial control over German ministries. This second objective was further subdivided into "Case A," wherein ministries

¹ This paper is based upon official sources and upon the private journal which the writer kept while he was assigned as Chief Archivist, Ministerial Collecting Center.

were overrun by our armies, and "Case B," wherein a formal surrender with central governmental agencies still possessed of authority would be found.

Ten days later a memorandum on Goldcup operations listed the real facts with which our control personnel had to deal. As the Allied Forces advanced into Germany, ministerial offices made successive moves and frequently abandoned records in considerable quantities. Only rarely, however, were these records attended by important personnel. Target reports (i.e., reports concerning records and personnel), quite naturally, were often lacking in essential detail and sometimes were even contradictory. Only fragments of expected targets were found in alleged sites. Most of the targets appeared first in Thuringia (now Russian Zone), although subsequently Bavaria yielded an appreciable number. These chaotic relics of a central German government were dealt with simply and directly by Goldcup liaison officers attached to SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces) and to Army Group Hq. They dispatched reconnaissance officers forward to targets, sent back reports and recommendations through channels to US Gp CC, and assisted in getting Target Teams forward for real control of the targets. Obviously, a great deal depended upon the initiative and judgment of those individuals who found themselves on the spot.

Once targets had been uncovered and evaluated, it was imperative to assemble both documents and personnel at some central point for systematic and coordinated exploitation. Out of this need was born the Ministerial Collecting Center. As defined by SHAEF its objectives were:

(a) To assemble and safeguard ministerial records for such uses as the Allied Control Council might determine; (b) To provide a collecting center for such ministerial personnel as might be required; and (c) To provide an interrogation and information center on the ministries for the use of appropriate Allied agencies.

In implementation of these objectives it was required that facilities be provided for: (a) The reception, storing, and custody of records and archives; (b) The reception, accommodation, and suitable restriction of German personnel who were not in an arrest category; (c) The reception, accommodation, and safeguarding of German personnel who were under detention; (d) The reception and accommodation of Allied personnel from authorized agencies who came to the Ministerial Collecting Center to carry out investigations.

II. THE SITE

By the basic directive a site some 12 miles southeast of Kassel, embracing the villages of Eschenstruth, Fürstenhagen, Hessisch Lichtenau, the area of the munitions factory known as Fabrik Hessisch Lichtenau, the camps Hertzog, Esche, Föhren, Teichhof, and Camp Dentine, the settlement for factory officials, was reserved for the use of MCC and subsequently included in the MCC Enclave under command of a Brigadier General. These hitherto unknown places were found to be grouped on either side of Highway No. 7 South running out of Kassel.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

The Advance Party embraced in its members nearly all the administrative and functional elements of the staff which, at its greatest strength, numbered 48 officers and 190 enlisted men. Only representatives of the Coordinating Office and of the Divisions of US Gp CC were not included. Some of the latter had already arrived independently from the field, and some of the former arrived within the next 10 days. The SHAEF letter already cited, which was addressed to the Commanding Generals of the 12th Army Group (US) and 21st Army Group (Br), directed that the US Gp CC and the British Control Commission each nominate a Senior Officer and provide him with a staff of specialists who would jointly be responsible for certain technical functions; namely,

(a) Establishment of priorities for concentration of documents and personnel; (b) Supervision over the reorganization, classification, and cataloging of the documents by the German staff; (c) Preliminary investigation of German officials and documents to establish lists of persons and materials available; (d) Investigation of all newly reported ministerial targets; and (e) Recommendations regarding the future use of ministerial personnel and documents assembled at the MCC.

At approximately the same date, the US Gp CC directed that responsible representatives of interested Divisions go to MCC, survey the problems, plan operations, and leave a resident staff of appropriate grade to implement the decisions of these first representatives. On 4 July 1945 the US Gp CC placed staff supervision of operational activities at MCC in the Office of the Director of Intelligence (ODI). This meant that the Senior Officer reported directly to that Office, not only on the fundamental points laid

down in the SHAEF letter of 13 June, but also on the recommendations made by representatives of the interested Divisions with respect to the future use of the personnel and the materials assembled at MCC. The memorandum of 4 July 1945 further provided that the Senior Officer would organize a Clearing Committee, composed of the senior officer present from each Division, for the purpose of coordinating activities of divisional representatives at MCC. It also provided that the ODI would be responsible for supervision over cataloging documents, evacuating documents, assisting in arrangements for interrogations, assisting in locating and delivering German military personalities wanted for interrogation, and furnishing the officer and enlisted personnel to accomplish the first task. In practice, however, the Clearing Committee always included representatives of the administrative and technical staff of the Senior Officer, and the work of cataloging and evacuating documents came under the office of the Archivist rather than the Intelligence Office at MCC.

To one who does not know the military situation at the time, the series of directives which were next issued may seem superfluous. It should be remembered that SHAEF, the joint British-American headquarters, which had issued the basic directive for MCC was disbanded at an early date. The US Gp CC, which in a few months was to be renamed the Office of Military Government for Germany (OMGUS), then came directly under command of the new American highest headquarters, U. S. Forces European Theater (USFET). This last issued a teletype message, dated 12 July 1945, to the effect that the SHAEF directive for MCC would remain in force until a new USFET directive could be issued. On 17 July an impressive array of personalities representing USFET, US Gp CC, MCC, and the Seventh Army (1 Brigadier General, 9 Colonels, 2 US civilians with simulated rank of Colonels, 2 Lieut. Colonels, 2 Majors, 1 Captain — the Archivist) met at MCC to discuss the first draft of a new directive. The product of this conference was eventually issued, with only minor changes of language, on 7 September, and on that date superseded the SHAEF directive. Except for the inclusion of some details, such as the operation of a transient mess, the directive contained no new idea. It followed to the letter its statement of purpose; namely, "to provide for the continued operation of the Ministerial Collecting Center."

A crisis which might have cost the life of MCC even while directives for its perpetuation were in process of promulgation occurred during the month of August. On the 29th of that month,

the Deputy Military Governor (that is, the Commanding General of OMGUS) directed that an inquiry be made as to whether MCC was paying dividends sufficient to warrant its continuance. Replies were required of Divisions by 1200 hours on 31 August. The reply prepared by the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Branch of the Reparations, Deliveries and Restitutions Division and dispatched over the signature of the Division Director stated, in part, that:

the RD & R Division feels that it is still too early to state definitely that further research into the materials collected . . . might not produce information of value. . . . In so far as the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Branch of this Division is charged with the responsibility of advising on the overall protection and preservation of documents and records of value to the Military Government of Germany this Division is interested in ensuring that the materials collected at Kassel are properly preserved and made available for the Military Government of Germany.

What might have been added, but was not, as further evidence of the Division's interest, was the fact that Mr. S. B. Child, the Adviser on Archives, and Captain (later Major) L. K. Born, Archivist, had been called upon to advise on archival matters from the inception of MCC, and that Captain Born who had been "loaned" to MCC for one week, and had gone with the Advance Party, was still resident at MCC. On 1 September Mr. Child addressed a memorandum through channels to the Deputy Military Governor in which he said:

Due to the fact that the sheer quantity of ministerial records at MCC has thus far prevented its being properly examined or indexed because sufficient staffs for such work have not been sent to the Center to date, determination of an intelligent policy is not at present possible. Additional collections of ministerial records located by Goldcup teams in the American Zone are in process of movement to the Center at the present time and will require future analysis. . . . It is the opinion of those technically in charge of MCC, that some of the Divisions are not aware of the existence of some of the records already available for use and are formulating policy without reference to them. In other instances, surveys are being made for information already recorded at MCC.

Whatever the replies of other Divisions, the crisis passed.

On 27 September the ODI circulated to the Divisions of US Gp CC the USFET directive of 7 September, and it added the draft of an Operational Directive for MCC which had been prepared in that office. Concurrence or non-concurrence with the procedures set forth was required as of 2 October. On 2 November this Operational Directive for MCC, Fürstenhagen near Kassel,

which differed from the draft in no change of fact, was officially issued, and on that date it superseded Ministerial Control Memorandum No. 15 and No. 17, dated 17 June and 4 July 1945, respectively, under which the functional program of MCC had been going forward without a break. This was the last basic document affecting the location, nature, purpose, organization, administration, control, and functions of MCC.

The directive of 2 November reiterated certain fundamental statements carried over from the SHAEF and USFET directives mentioned above, but added, as one would expect, considerable implementing detail which in part carried on the functional statements of the earlier memoranda and in part was new. Taken as a whole, it was a succinct and straightforward document. It was no staff pronouncement which had been developed in a vacuum. Those who were in residence at MCC at the time knew the degree of local participation in its preparation.

Paragraph 10 of the directive of 2 November enumerates the duties and responsibilities of the Director: (a.) The Director of the Ministerial Collecting Center, appointed by the Deputy Military Governor, will execute the mission of the Ministerial Collecting Center as provided in this Directive pending the determination of other policies by the Deputy Military Governor; (b.) The Director will keep the Commanding General of the Ministerial Collecting Center Area fully informed at all times concerning the operations of the Center; (c.) As representative of the Deputy Military Governor, the Director will exercise command over all personnel of Office of Military Government for Germany (US) at the Center; (d.) The Director may communicate directly with the Division Directors of the Office of Military Government for Germany (US) on operations of the Center affecting the respective Divisions; (e.) The Senior Allied Officers will be responsible through the Director to the Area Commander for their nationals at the Center; and (f.) The Director of the Ministerial Collecting Center will communicate with other agencies through Office of Military Government for Germany (US).

Paragraph 11 of the same directive provides that the Director shall have a technical and administrative staff adequate for carrying out the mission. The duties of the Headquarters Command, the Administration Section, Liaison Section, Intelligence Section, and Clearing Committee are all either self-evident or have already been mentioned. The Public Safety Section, Coordinating Section, and Divisional Representatives are discussed below under Opera-

tions. The Archivist Section is, because of its special interest to readers of this periodical, mentioned separately.

We have already seen how, upon the dissolution of British-American SHAEF, command over MCC passed to USFET. Since MCC was an American installation, overall administration was American. Operations, however, were always at least bipartite, and after late summer they became tripartite. The British staff was an integral part of the Control Commission for Germany. It maintained at MCC a functional staff which generally paralleled the American; e.g., a Senior Officer, Coordinating Staff, Technical Staff (Division Representatives), Documents Officers, and Microgram Unit, and likewise the usual housekeeping, signal, transport and similar personnel. The French Staff was composed of the Senior Officer, the Technical Services (Divisional Representatives), and a small housekeeping section. The Soviet Government was invited to participate in exploitation along with the other three powers, and in October it sent a mission to report on MCC. It did not establish a resident staff or make use of the facilities available.

IV. THE ARCHIVIST SECTION

The office and functions of the Archivist received adequate recognition on the staff. In actual practice that recognition was sometimes embarrassingly full and brought with it, as will be shown subsequently, some problems that hardly came within the narrow confines of archival duties. Like the rest of the staff, the Archivist Section did not spring up, full blown, on the day of arrival. The Archivist came with the Advance Party; an officer who was to be assigned as his chief assistant for the trying period of the first three months arrived one week later. During that period a sergeant was loaned from the Motor Pool as labor supervisor and did yeoman work during the critical period just mentioned. A German typist who knew some English was procured and assigned. That was the Archivist Section.

On 1 September the long promised group of "specialists" provided through ODI arrived to fill out the T/O vacancies in various spots including those in the sub-sections of the Archivist Section. These personnel continued to be assigned to their original organization, were placed on temporary duty at MCC, and were responsible only functionally to the Archivist. This arrangement had the advantages and disadvantages which have always been inherent in such circumstances. At the peak of available personnel the Archi-

vist Section was staffed, functionally, by 7 officers, 1 sgt. clerk, 1 sgt. supervisor, and approximately 70 enlisted men of varying grades, most of whom were in the Photoreproduction Sub-Section.

The Archivist was responsible for (a) planning for and overseeing the receiving, housing, processing, preservation, reproduction, destruction, and shipment of documents; (b) coordinating the plans, and working with the other staff sections, the Allied documents officers, and the Divisional Representatives; (c) keeping appropriate records on receiving, shipment, and reproduction; (d) taking personal custody of odd lots of documents not consigned to a Division; (e) taking personal custody of documents left by Divisions which had closed operations at MCC; and (f) providing a warehouse for temporary and dead storage. The Shipping and Receiving Sub-Section (a) allocated building space for document storage and exploitation, and assisted in making buildings usable; (b) shipped and received documents, and recorded all such operations; (c) assisted the Divisions in procuring packing materials; and (d) assisted in moves within the area. The Recording Sub-Section had the delegated responsibility of (a) collating collections of documents from the ministries and agencies; (b) classifying and cataloging these document collections; (c) preparing and distributing catalog cards for documents; (d) preparing accession lists of documents; (e) in so far as practicable, cataloging, classifying, and preparing accession lists of printed books; and (f) supervising the setting up and operations of a central reference library. The Photoreproduction Sub-Section (a) provided photostat and microfilm facilities, processed and printed from films; (b) maintained a file of film copies of certain original documents shipped from MCC; and (c) kept file copies of original films shipped from MCC.

V. SERVICE FUNCTIONS

By direction of SHAEF the service functions for MCC were to be provided through the Army in whose territory it was situated. One month after the Advance Party had arrived responsibility for these functions was taken over from MCC by the 49th AAA Brigade, the organization under whose command the Archivist had arrived with his battery off Omaha Beach at 1200 hours on D-Day. After some months the 49th Brigade was relieved by the 31st Brigade, which continued the functions until MCC closed out at Fürstenhagen in January 1946. The advent of a headquarters supplied with troops adequate in number to police the enclave, guard

the factory and the other installations, take over supervision and control of utilities, supply, transportation, indigenous payrolls, complete management of camps for German ministerial personnel, a PW cage, an enclosure for German ministerial personnel in the automatic arrest category, and the continued operation of the saw-mill and coal mine was greeted with a feeling of relief by the handful of officers and men who had been coping with most of these problems under great difficulties.

However, no one who does not know at first hand the collapse of morale, efficiency, and control of our troops immediately after V-E Day can comprehend or even imagine some of the problems which faced both serviced and servicer in a condition such as that at MCC. Nevertheless the work was somehow accomplished. And the "work" meant maintaining health, sanitation, food, shelter, clothing, recreation for men, women, and children in numbers equal to a small town; in providing utilities for nearly 100 buildings in the factory alone; in furnishing transportation for routine and long hauls; in taking care of the US and, to some extent, the Allied personnel. In Berlin, of course, service functions were provided by the already established agencies of OMGUS, and the colorful phase of MCC's history came to a close.

VI. OPERATIONS

The directive of 2 November 1945 required that a Standing Operating Procedure for MCC be prepared, and in accordance with that directive such an SOP appeared on 10 December 1945. One must not assume, however, that operations at MCC went freely on ad lib from 12 June to 10 December without coordination and control. The requirement of the directive was anticipated some months in advance, and the need for a plan committed to writing was apparent to those responsible long before that. In fact, the Archivist drew up his first Notes on Receiving, Housing, Processing, and Using Documents (4 pp. typed) with drafts of needed blank forms on 18 June; by instruction of the Director he prepared his draft of Archival Procedures (8 pp. typed) with specimen blank forms on 25 July 1945, on which date it was approved; and the final form, which was to appear as Appendix E to the Standard Operating Procedure (5 pp., legal size) with the essential forms, on 18 August 1947.

The objectives of MCC remained always the same; namely, to exploit German ministerial personnel and documents for the pur-

poses of Military Government. German personnel were recommended for removal to MCC by the Divisions primarily concerned; the request was checked by the Coordination Section and, in some cases also by the Intelligence Section; the Divisional Representatives were responsible for the actual movement once complete clearance had been obtained. After the German personnel had arrived at MCC personal data were submitted at once to the Public Safety Section and to the CIC Detachment of the Brigade, so that screening in accordance with current Military Government directives could take place. The assignment, evaluation, employment, and exploitation of German personnel was a responsibility of the Division concerned, except that orders or recommendations from the Public Safety Section with respect to arrest, removal from authority, etc., took precedence over functional need. Complete data on each individual were maintained by the Coordination Section. From the detailed questionnaires — the famous Fragebogen — lists were prepared and sent to the Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects for checking against those records. The names of any persons at MCC who might be wanted under either category were sent to the Counter Intelligence Sections of both USFET and the British Headquarters. Requests for interrogation of German personnel not at or not to be brought to MCC were initiated by the Divisions concerned, cleared by the Coordinating Section, and sent out through the usual Intelligence channels by the Intelligence Section.

The procedures for bringing in documents were essentially the same as those for personnel; namely, the initiative rested with the Divisions primarily concerned; the clearance went through the Coordinating Section, and perhaps the Intelligence Section; the movement was made by the Divisions; notice of arrival with data as complete as possible was given to the Coordinating Section and the Archivist Section. Responsibility for housing, arrangement, and exploitation rested upon the Divisions concerned. Complete data on each series of documents was maintained by the Archivist Section and supplied to the Information Sub-Section of the Coordinating Section, which was the link between the outside user and the functions of MCC.

Once the German personnel had set up in usable form the records with which they were familiar, studies were prepared on the basis of information available by direction of the Director of MCC, the Divisions concerned, by request of the Allied representatives, other agencies, and sometimes on the initiative of the Germans.

Further studies were made by the Allied personnel either independently, upon the basis of several German preliminary studies, as a result of personal interrogations, or from a combination of sources. All these studies varied greatly in size, nature, and importance. The uniform report form which was developed by the Coordination Section guaranteed an orderly arrangement of (a) Background, (b) Statement of Facts, (c) Discussion, (d) Conclusion, (e) Recommendations, (f) Concurrence, and also provided a cover sheet containing a brief summary followed by this important statement: "The opinions of German employees expressed in this report do not necessarily coincide with official views."

The resources of MCC were available not only through the reports and studies which emanated therefrom, but also to visitors who came to conduct personal interrogations of personnel or to make investigation of documents at MCC for the agencies to which they were assigned. Once credentials were established and proper clearances had been obtained, no restrictions were placed upon the outside investigator beyond those required by common sense, security, and the public interest; that is, neither personnel nor documents could be removed, the latter could not be tampered with, channels had to be followed. Visitors were requested to provide MCC with copies of any reports or studies which resulted from their visit. As a further service, photostatic and microfilm copies up to several thousand frames were expeditiously provided upon request. The only exception to non-removal of original documents was made to the Office of the Chief of Counsel for War Crimes, in which case microfilm copies of documents sent on loan were retained at MCC. Requests for studies, reports, etc., and original dissemination of these papers were handled by the Coordinating Section; requests for photoreproduction were handled in the Archivist Section.

Some idea of the volume of functional work can be gained from the figures given below, but no figures can give a clue to the man hours of work that went into a specific study, nor to the time consumed in locating a specific document to be photocopied, nor to the basic preparation in organizing personnel and documents so that the results noted could be gained. As of 1 November 1945, for example, a list of some 1500 names of key ministerial personnel, either at MCC or elsewhere, had been compiled and was being kept up to date. Some 200 reports had been produced by German personnel, and a total of approximately 400 reports and studies from all sources had appeared. Approximately 600 visitors had come to

MCC since the opening date — 110 of them in the month of October alone. Largely for these visitors a very considerable, but uncounted, number of transcripts and translations had been made of separate items. A far larger number of photocopying requests had been undertaken and filled. The largest single order was for 2000 pages reproduced in two positive copies, in original size. The titles of some reports and studies will serve as an index to the diverse nature of the work which was performed at MCC: "Level of Prices in Germany"; "Use of Prisoners of War on Shoe Repair"; "Organization and Functions of Generalinspektor of German Highroad System"; "In Search of the Reichsbank"; "Distribution of Veterinary Surgeons in Germany"; "Women in Agriculture, Labor and Education"; "Report on Teacher Training Institutes"; "Drying of Grain"; "Relation of German Foreign Office to Scholarly Institutes and Organizations concerned with Foreign Policy"; "Examination of the Present Plan of Broadcasting Waves Distribution"; "Plan for a new Civil Code."

At the time to which the figures above relate, more than 1200 ministerial personnel, approximately 1250 tons of documents, and some 70 tons of films and scientific apparatus were available at MCC, as shown in the breakdown below:

<i>Ministry/Agency</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Documents (tons)</i>
Economics	264	145
Food & Agriculture	98	17
Interior	68	36
Education	54	41
Post T & T	161	43
Public Health	46	3
Justice	35	25
Manpower	15	12
OKW/Wast	441	531
Finance	7	$\frac{1}{2}$
Transport	2	14
Foreign Office	47	350
Miscellaneous	4	101

At this same time the overall figures for Allied personnel were:

	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Soldiers</i>
US	39	135
Br	37	163
Fr	11	0

VII. THE ARCHIVIST AT WORK

The arrival at MCC of the little party of hardy pioneers composed of the Senior Officer (Col), Executive Officer (Major), Archivist (Capt), Mess Officer (2nd Lt), Billeting Officer (2nd Lt), Indigenous Personnel Officer (2nd Lt), Utilities Officer (2nd Lt) was duly recorded in prosaic form: "A project to assemble required German ministerial records and personnel is being established in the Kassel area. The first echelon arrived there June 12th. . . . The project will not be in full operation before the end of June, but essential records and personnel may be shipped now if necessary to prevent their loss." Nothing in this report indicated that this handful of officers, assisted by some 15 enlisted men, who were clerks, draftsmen, and drivers, was to create a completely novel institution for which there was no parallel in modern history. There was also nothing to indicate what would actually happen under license of the last clause. Whether or not the project was in full operation before the end of June is, in light of the facts, an open question. There is no doubt, however, that some 400 tons of documents had arrived, several hundreds of German ministerial personnel had been brought in, approximately 20 officers were at work, more than 150 buildings had been thoroughly inspected, and no less than 30 buildings were in use to greater or lesser degree — all before 30 June.

Since the Archivist was responsible for housing and safeguarding the documents, the Commanding Officer decided that the Archivist was the logical person to allocate space for housing and exploiting the documents. The implementation of that order meant making a physical check of all buildings — discovered to be more than 300 — dividing the area into Division sectors (without information from the Divisions as to total expected tonnage of documents or numbers of personnel), assigning space, causing it to be cleared of trash, machinery, and explosives. After two days of utter phantasy one of our British colleagues found a map of the area in a requisitioned billet and immediately gave it to the Archivist. For nearly one month that map was the only one available at MCC, and it was fastened to the top of the Archivist's desk. (You may guess the number of his visitors!) At about the same time it became imperative to open a whole series of locked buildings, although no one had found the main keyboard of the factory. The Archivist went to the nearby village in which the former director of the factory was living under surveillance, got from the director

a passkey for which he gave a receipt, and so, for more than two weeks, was the only one who had access to any and all buildings.

During this period the Archivist allocated space only from map reconnaissance, personally checked some 10 buildings in a fan-shaped area around the main gate for emergency use, marked the Archivist's storage building, and received, without prior warning, the first lot of documents for the Ministry of Economics on 13 June, the first lot for the Ministry of Interior on 15 June, the Police Records of Danzig, which should never have come to MCC at all, and a miscellaneous lot of motor corps (NSKK) records on 17 June. During his first mad inspections the Archivist discovered two bits of documentary evidence which reflected life under an era which had just been brought to a close. Crudely painted upon the wall of one building was the motto "*multo praestat mori quam service.*" The sentiment of this line pleased the Archivist more than did his next discovery on the same day, "*merde a celui qui le lira.*" Thus ended the first week.

On 18 June, in the evening, Mr. S. B. Child arrived with First Lieutenant Scholl. The Archivist was then provided with a staff, and he could see chaos already reduced to mere confusion. During this entire week Lt. Scholl walked over the area, entered and reported upon every building he found. The Archivist learned that he had allocated from the map buildings which did not exist upon the ground, and that he had available other buildings which did not appear upon the map. A handbook of building information was compiled and was used during the entire operations. On 19 June Mr. Child and the Archivist, together with a German chemist loaned by the Utilities Officer, rode over the area, spot checked buildings, learned the essential safety features of the explosive factory in which we worked. As a result of reports from Lt. Scholl, the Utilities Officer, the chemist, ourselves, and others we discovered that we had one full train of explosives on a siding, several hundred tons of picric acid, pentolite, fixed ammunition, and TNT in the area. We posted a "No Smoking" sign at the main gate, and went on as before. On 20 June the first load of documents from the Ministry of Justice arrived in the evening, and on the next day we received the first load from the Ministry of Education. That was a memorable shipment, because its impending arrival had been reported in advance. On 22 June the Ministry of Food and Agriculture made its initial appearance. On 25 June the Archivist placed a basic order for 1000 sets of shelving (5 shelves high and 5 feet wide) with the Utilities Officer, who started up a sawmill in order

to fill the request. On the 26th the Archivist received some 45 boxes and tubs of chemicals "for an important experiment in progress" as a favor to the target team which needed a safe storage place for one week. We left the 45 boxes and tubs where they were when we departed in January. That same day also saw the unheralded arrival of some anti-semitic and anti-comintern records in a chaotic state of disorder, as well as a stray lot of 2 boxes from the Armed Forces (OKW). The week ended with the discovery by the Archivist of complete maps of water, light, and heating set-up, which he gave to the Utilities Officer.

On 27 June the first documents from the Ministry of Transport arrived and were placed at once in a building already allocated. On this same date the Archivist learned that the entire OKW/Wast (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle), which is roughly the AG Casualty Record Office of the German Army, together with its 400-odd employees would begin to arrive within two days! After a joint reconnaissance of a good, compact area suggested by the Archivist, the Commanding Officer of the OKW/Wast agreed that he could get his records and personnel into 19 buildings, and that he would ship material in such order that it could be loaded into successive buildings. The Archivist agreed that he would have the buildings free of trash and explosives but not of light machinery. The Archivist's sergeant and his crew of German laborers, now augmented to 25 in view of the crisis, dropped everything else and descended upon the specified buildings. We managed always to have cleared one building more than needed on any day. The first convoy of 108 trucks arrived on the 29th, and a parcel of 60 enlisted men, including some British, which had been borrowed hastily from some nearby outfits, began unloading in the early afternoon. Lt. Scholl was still exploring the unknown, the sergeant and his crew were madly throwing explosives outside the buildings (where they had to remain for nearly one month for lack of personnel to remove them), so the Archivist was the sole survivor of the Archivist Section to deal with the 108 trucks. Map in hand he stood at a crossroad directing trucks to buildings designated by the captain who had accompanied the convoy. The work went on into the early evening, but everything was unloaded. In a letter of 4 July to the Chief, MFA&A Branch, US Gp CC, the Archivist reported:

Starting on 29 June we received 275 truckloads of OKW casualty records and office furniture. . . . There was only a reasonable amount of confusion

caused by the simultaneous arrival of 108 trucks on the first day when we had only 60 soldiers as an unloading party. That is, the reasonable stage continued until one truck driver knocked over a fire hydrant and released water from a six inch main. The water ran downhill, sluiced into the main entrance of one of our semi-submerged depositories, and filled the moat to a depth eight inches. . . . Since the local fire engine could operate its suction hose only in nine feet of water, it seemed impractical to wait until that level was reached before we started draining. We adopted a method both simple and effective; the engineer officer waded into the mess of water and red mud and poked holes in the drains with a broom handle!

Fortunately only the bottom layer of card files, extending over the whole floor surface, was wet. The Archivist assembled a group of soldiers, had them pile the dry boxes of cards on one set of tables, the wet ones on another set so that they could drip and drain during the night, and then closed the doors. There was nothing else to do before the morning when the Germans could spread everything out on the grass in the sunshine to dry. On the morning of 30 June 10 trucks, completely unexpected, arrived with 20,000 volumes of a library which belonged to no ministry. It was placed in the Archivist's warehouse which, as yet, had no shelving. In the afternoon a mere 45 trucks arrived with more materials from OKW/Wast which were stowed away as before. Late that night two trucks containing the Central Polish Weather Bureau (complete with weatherman, wife, and daughter) arrived unheralded, and certainly not required at a Ministerial Collecting Center. Thus closed the month of June, "during which we were not fully open for business," with a mere 400 tons on hand.

July was a relatively sane month, although it opened with the continued inpouring of OKW/Wast documents and furnishings. Some of the 10 ton trailers were piled so high that they could not be driven under the overhead water and heating pipes, with the result that a safari set out through the woods bearing desks, tables, chairs, file cabinets, and, as a crowning accomplishment, a potted palm, to the designated buildings. All this took place in a drenching thunderstorm. This month also saw the arrival of the first shipments for Land Survey, Finance Division, Navy (OKM), Ministry of Post, 780 filing cabinets (70 tons) of SS records, and the departure of the first outgoing shipment, some OKW documents to the G-2 Documents Center at Frankfurt. By the end of the month 750 tons were on hand. August was a slack month for movement, but was marked by a series of internal consolidations; that is, sorting, shelving, and preparation for the next stages which in-

cuded a reconnaissance with the Commanding Officer to Marburg, where the German Foreign Office documents were being exploited by a joint British Foreign Office — US State Department team. The reconnaissance was made in connection with the projected removal of these documents to MCC, and was followed by a survey of suitable buildings at the latter place.

Early in September the details of the move were worked out, a liaison party headed by Lt. Scholl was set up at Marburg and another headed by Dr. J. T. Krumpelmann (US) and Captain (later Major) Jones (Br) was set up at MCC. On the 12th the first convoy of 20 trucks, headed and closed by a half track and with guards on each truck, arrived at MCC. By the 21st, when the movement was halted, we had received 210 loads of materials and filled six buildings to the ceilings. This material remained in storage; the exploitation continued with that portion of the documents which remained at Marburg. The 12th also marked three months of operations: 95 lots (varying in size from two boxes to 108 trucks) had been received, 12 lots had been dispatched, 800 tons of records were on hand, 65 buildings were in use for documents and personnel, 15 buildings were cleared and ready for immediate use. By the end of the month we had over 1200 tons on hand, largely as the result of the Foreign Office shipment, but the first Labor Front (DAF) records, several convoys of Army (OKH) records, and the Library of the Foreign Office had also come in. This last was placed directly under the Archivist for administration as a central reference library. This was no mean task, since the library of 70,000 volumes arrived in complete disorder and without shelves. October was a month of changes. About 25 tons were shipped out, and nearly half that amount was received. In the middle of the month both US and British officers of the Transport Division left MCC, with the result that the records of the Transport Ministry became the first ministerial records to fall under the custody of the Archivist who then exercised supervision over the personnel. Plans for movement to Berlin of records relating to the so-called "Potsdam Ministries" were worked out jointly by the Intelligence Officer and the Archivist. As it happened, the entire collection moved when the move took place in January.

November was relatively uneventful, except for the Archivist's trip to Munich in connection with the projected move to MCC of the main Nazi Party (NSDAP) personnel files which recently had been found. Active preparations were made upon the Archivist's return, and on the 25th (Sunday) the first and only shipment ar-

rived. Immediately afterwards it was decided to send the entire collection to the Berlin Document Center (now 7771 Document Center) which subsequently did receive, house, sort and exploit these records in a remarkably short time. December's confusion forecast the return to chaos in January. Without prior notice on two occasions consignments of seven freight cars each, and two truck convoys totaling 80 tons, arrived from the Third and Seventh Army Document Centers, respectively. Just at this time the Archivist was luckily joined by Capt. Bernard Fischbein, who took charge while the Archivist went to Berlin with the Deputy Director of MCC to reconnoiter the new area which MCC was to occupy before 1 February. The NSDAP and SS records left for the Berlin Document Center as a contribution to its collection of Nazi personality files in a 15 car train dispatched on 26 December so as to meet the deadline for that lot of 1 January.

On 6 January the Archivist departed for Berlin with the Deputy Director, one other officer, and 5 enlisted men — once again a member of the Advance Party. Our task was to make or complete arrangements with the Accommodation Section of OMGUS, the Engineers, the RTO, the transportation office; with the local regiment for guards, the Labor Supervision Company for PW's, etc.; to make a final inspection and report upon the condition of readiness in the area before the first train arrived on 10 January. As part of his contribution to the solution of the whole problem on the first day the Archivist inspected every room in the ten buildings (mostly four story) which were needed at once. For the sake of brevity these buildings will be called by the numbers given them on the map of the area (not shown). Building 2 was practically complete, except for furnishing; Building 4 was untouched, without windows, light, heat or plumbing; the Bunker was without doors; Buildings 32 and 31 were untouched; Building 30 was partly glazed, but without light, heat, plastering, cleaning, or plumbing; Building 1 was glazed and heated, but unroofed, and filled with plasterers, plumbers and painters. The billets and mess buildings (41, 44, 7) were in various stages of rehabilitation. All this information was reported. Since the Advance Party was not able to control priority of shipments, however, materials came for any or all buildings, ready or not, albeit the temperature was below freezing and remained so for three out of the four weeks of the move.

In exactly three weeks eight freight trains of more than 25 cars each were dispatched by Captain Fischbein from Fürstenhagen, received at all hours in Berlin, unloaded within the prescribed dead-

line of 24 hours, and the contents stored in the several appropriate buildings at the new area. This was done in spite of innumerable annoyances such as an unpredictable number of PW's on any given day; failure of guards, PW's, and transport to coordinate and arrive at the same time and place; a net working day for PW's of 5 hours because darkness set in so early; the ever existent shortage of officer and enlisted personnel; and, as a climax, the fact that 24 carloads of German Foreign Office documents, for which a high degree of security had always been prescribed, had to be stored temporarily in lockable garages opposite building 32 to which they were consigned, because that building was still in its virgin state of disrepair when the lot arrived on 1 February, the deadline for evacuating MCC from Fürstenhagen. Nerves which already were taut were not relaxed by the replacement of PW's with civilians, who for reasons of age, health and borderline nutrition were incapable of carrying boxes of documents, nor by the order given in the last week of January to speed up operations by working at night. This last order resulted in an average working day of 16 hours for the officer personnel, unloading trucks in darkness since there were no flood lights, and carrying boxes into buildings by aid of a flashlight. When the final train, a mere 14 cars, arrived with the active files from Marburg on 14 February it caused no flurry, for the area had been set in order, buildings were in good shape, and these last documents were easily received and placed in their proper building. On the next day, 15 February 1946, MCC ceased to exist as an independent installation and became part of the Berlin Document Center. Our work was finished.

VIII. DOCUMENTS ACCESSIONS

The documents personnel who arrived on 1 September found a great deal of preparatory work done by German personnel who were familiar with the documents in their care. Therefore the teams from the Recording Sub-Section of the Archivist Section were able to begin at once their examination of the records, their interrogation of personnel and, under supervision of two professional librarians, Capt. A. G. Gerould (US), who remained only until 28 September 1945, and Capt. (later Major) R. F. Vollans (Br.), to undertake the cataloging of the documents and preparation of the mimeographed lists. In addition to this basic task, they found time to prepare some 9,600 catalog cards for approximately 3,700 volumes in small libraries not already cataloged at MCC.

The first document list appeared on 6 October 1945 and covered

the collections of the Ministry of Transport. The style had been carefully worked out by the librarians in conference with the Archivist so that subsequent lists all appeared in the same format and style. A sample entry will illustrate better than a description the type of information which invariably appeared. Archivists, of course, will note especially the precision with which quantity, dates, and gaps are indicated.

Railway Equipment and Supplies

TF 347 Abteilung III (Vehicles)

Correspondence and other records — rolling stock, its procurement, use and servicing. (Actual purchasing was done by the Reichsbahn Central Office, Berlin.) Index. Arranged according to a subject scheme. Many files have been lost. 265 ring binders. 1928-1945 (with gaps).

Some idea of the quantities involved can be gathered from the table given below which was prepared from the data in the lists.

<i>List</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Ministry</i>	<i>No. of Groups</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
1	6 Oct. 45	Transport	9	1,749 binders; 3,200 maps
2	n.d.	OKW/Wast	19	20,924,600 cards 17,404 bundles 273 binders
3	31 Oct.	Interior	36	2,000 cards 571 bundles 69 folders
4	5 Nov.	Post	31	4,000 cards 4,485 folders 285 binders 168 pamphlets 31 books 23 ledgers
5	19 Nov.	Justice	98	90,000 cards 27,797 files 2,456 folders 89 ledgers 41 books 2 boxes
6	3 Dec.	Education	26	20,000 rolls film 378 bundles 5 ledgers 5 file drawers
7	22 Dec.	Food & Agric.	97	18,169 folders 1,415 ledgers 1,168 files

<i>List</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Ministry</i>	<i>No. of Groups</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
				28 cases
				20 boxes
				6 file boxes
				4 bundles
8	17 Feb. 46	Economics	64	13,503 ledgers
				556 folders
				383 boxes
				98 bundles
				64 file drawers
				30 maps; 6 map rolls
				16 file boxes
				3 sacks

The last list could only be issued after things were unpacked in Berlin. The cataloging of the Ministry of Economics was completed in January, but at a time when some of the materials had already been boxed in preparation for the move to Berlin. Accordingly, some difficulty was experienced with the statistics; e.g., the number of ledgers had to be estimated in part. But the record description was no less accurate for all the difficulties imposed.

The preparation of formal lists came to an end when MCC ceased to be a separate organization. No statement concerning the accessions could be complete, however, without reference, at least, to certain major collections which were never listed in final form. For example, in addition to the 350 tons of records from the German Foreign Office, the Political Division had ready for exploitation records from the Central Immigration Office (EWZ), 50 tons; Reich Commissioner for Germanization, 55 tons; Re-Immigration Service, 1 ton; Reichs Chancellery, 3 tons; Foreign Exchange, Enemy Property Custodian, 5 tons. The Manpower Division at one time or another had in its custody some 12 tons of records, including about 1 ton from the German Labor Front. And the Archivist always had in his custody miscellaneous items such as the Police Records of Danzig, personal papers of various individuals, the Polish Weather Bureau, etc., which were not accessioned because they did not belong at MCC, and were shipped out at the first opportunity.

L'ENVOI

For approximately one year and a half after the move to Berlin the former MCC, now called Ministerial Documents Branch of

Berlin Document Center, continued in an ever diminishing role. Early in that period documents of an operational nature were, in many instances, given to the appropriate German agencies; e.g., Reichspost, Reichsbahndirektion, etc. At a later date still others were given to the Bi-Zonal agencies. Some, which it was considered inappropriate to return to German hands at this time, were retained by the Division of OMGUS previously responsible. Still others, whose nature required that ultimate disposition be made by Military Government, were studied from August 1947 through June 1948 in considerable detail and from many angles — security, operational use, historical value, cultural value, legal ownership, etc. — by a large committee of which the former Archivist of MCC was always a member and eventually the chairman. The installation had already closed. The story is at an end.

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