

## **THE GERMAN NATIONAL REDOUBT, 1945**

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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### **OVERVIEW**

Although it eventually proved to be a product of German delusion and faulty American intelligence, the so-called German National Redoubt nonetheless influenced Allied strategy in 1945. Preparing to drive deeper into the German homeland, Allied Forces recognized the potential for a last-ditch Alpine stand by fanatic Nazis, to which intelligence sources lent some credence. What appears controversial in hindsight is the American evaluation of this intelligence information and the resultant decisions, most notably the decision not to drive on and capture Berlin from the west, which then allowed the Red Army to take the prize.

Instead of racing to Berlin, American forces turned south in order to disrupt the feared concentration of German forces into a Bavarian Alps stronghold. However, once advance troops of the U.S. Third and Seventh Armies encountered only feeble resistance in the German Alps, it became increasingly clear that the redoubt simply did not exist. Looking back, the German commander of the Alpine front, General von Hengl, suggested (see MS#B-461, cited below, p.3) that the Allies suffered from "redoubt psychosis". Historian Stephen E. Ambrose (Supreme Commander, cited below, p. 624) ranks an early SHAEF G-2 evaluation of the redoubt as "...one of the worst intelligence reports of all time...." Even so, as General Omar N. Bradley related (Soldier's Story, p. 536): "It grew into so exaggerated a scheme that I am astonished we could have believed it as innocently as we did. But while it persisted, this legend of the Redoubt was too ominous a threat to be ignored...."

For book-length, scholarly treatment of the episode, see the following monograph:

Minott, Rodney G. The Fortress that Never Was: The Myth of Hitler's Bavarian Stronghold. NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964. 208 p. D757.9B3M5.  
Extensive bib, pp. 179-99.

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Pertinent holdings include some primary sources, including, weekly intelligence summaries of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces for 1945 (National Archives microfilm). Also see Roll #F-18 of "Documents in the General Walter B. Smith Collection, 1941-1945" for SHAEF G-2 reports, including the 11 Mar 1945 one on which Professor Ambrose commented above. See also:

Allied Forces. Supreme Headquarters. Report on Operations in Northwest Europe, 6 Jun 1944-8 May 1945. n.d. pp. 107-108. D756.3S96.

Bradley, Omar N. A Soldier's Story. NY: Holt, 1951. pp. 536-37 & 546. D756B7.

U.S. Army. 6th Army Group. HQ, G-2. Final Report, G-2 Section, World War II, 10 Jul 1945. pp. 23-25. #02-6.1945/4.  
Synopsis of intell info.

\_\_\_\_\_. Seventh Army. The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany, 1944-1945. Vol. III. Heidelberg, Germany: May 1946. Chap XXIX. #03-7.1946v3.  
See esp pp. 807-10.

## GERMAN PERSPECTIVE

German officers commented on the redoubt in a number of postwar reports prepared in the Foreign Military Studies Program of U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR Foreign Mil Study, D739F6713), and its predecessor commands. See typescript English translations of the following studies:

Eberstein, Friedrich, von. "National Redoubt (Battle Sector VII SS & Police), (1944-1945)". 5 p. #B-136.

Glasl, Anton. "Wehrkreis XVIII (Oct 44 - May 45)." 11 p. noB-211.

Hengl, Georg Ritter von. "The Alpine Redoubt." 13 p. noB-461.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Evaluation of Manuscripts Concerning National Redoubt." 6 p. noB-460.

\_\_\_\_\_. "National Redoubt." 12 p. noB-459.

Hickl, Fritz. "National Redoubt & RAD Austria." 6 p. noB-132.

Hofer, Granz. "National Redoubt." 9 p. noB-457.

\_\_\_\_\_. "National Redoubt." 34 p. noB-458.

Hoffman, Otto. "National Redoubt." 4 p. noB-140.

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Jacob, Alfred. "National Redoubt." 3 p. noB-188.  
White-on-black photostat.

Mann, Ferdinand, Ritter von. "National Redoubt." 1 p. noB-181.

Marcinkewicz, August. "National Redoubt." 20 p. noB-187.

Muhe, Ludwig. "Wehrkreis XII [i.e. VII] Police (National Redoubt)." 5 p. noB-130.

Punzert, Josef. "The National Alpine Redoubt." 14 p. noB-133.

Ringel, Julius. "National Redoubt (Comments on MS #B-211)." 5 p. noB-325.

Schoch, Hans Wolfgang. "Defenses in the Southern Tyrol, (1944-1945)." 30 p. noB-212.

## **OTHER SECONDARY SOURCES**

Ambrose, Stephen E. Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945: The Decision to Halt at the Elbe. NY: Norton, 1967. pp. 74-80. D755.7A45.  
Analysis of Eisenhower's decision.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970. pp. 623-24. E836A83.

Ellis, L. F. Victory in the West. Vol. II. London: HMSO, 1968. pp. 302-304 & 429-32. D756E39v2.  
Official Brit hist.

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Jenkins, Reuben E. "The Battle of the German National Redoubt -- Planning Phase." 2 pts Mil Rev (Dec 1946): pp. 3-8, and (Jan 1946): pp. 16-26. Per.

See also draft article of the same name in his papers, Arch.

Glenwright, Fredrick M. "Eisenhower, ULTRA and the National Redoubt." PhD dss, PA State, 1999. 255 p. D820C88G54.

MacDonald, Charles B. The Last Offensive. In USAWWII series. Wash, DC: OCMH, 1973. Chap XVIII. D769A533v5pt9.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Might Endeavor: American Armed Forces in the European Theater in World War II. NY: Oxford, 1969. pp. 493-94. D756M27.

Pogue, Forrest C. The Supreme Command. In USAWWII series. Wash, DC: OCMH, 1954. pp. 434-35, 447-56. D769A533v3pt4.

Smith, Walter B. Eisenhower's Six Great Decisions (Europe 1944-1945). NY: Longmans, Green, 1956. pp. 176-77, 185-90 & 207. D756S55.

Weigley, Russell F. Eisenhower's Lieutenants. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1981. Chap 39. D761W4.

**Note:** Switzerland's emergency defense plan entailed establishing a "National Redoubt" in the Swiss Alps, which would be too difficult and costly for an invader to clear. The Germans may have borrowed this notion. See:

Rodney, Minott. Fortress That Never Was, pp. 10-11 & 33-35. D757.9B3M5.

Urs Schwarz, Eye of the Hurricane, Chap 4, D754S9S37.