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PAPERS OF GEN. HANS VON SEECKT, 1866-1936

Introduction

The 33 file boxes of materials reproduced in this microcopy consist of letters and other papers of General Hans von Seeckt, prominent German military strategist of World War I. The folders containing these documents are stamped "Heeresarchiv Potsdam," which institution was formerly the custodian of the collection. Originally the Heeresarchiv (Army Archives) was a part of the Reichsarchiv (German National Archives); but in 1936 it was separated from the Reichsarchiv, and all military records that were then in the legal custody of the Reichsarchiv were transferred to that of the Heeresarchiv. As a result of military operations in World War II the documents reproduced in this microcopy came into the possession of United States armed forces. In 1947 the War Department transferred custody of them to the National Archives of the United States where they constitute part of a body of records designated as Record Group 242, World War II Collection of Seized Enemy Records.

Generaloberst Hans von Seeckt (1866-1936) was Chief of Staff of the army group of Fieldmarshal von Mackensen in World War I. In that capacity he had a leading part in planning the Central Powers' breakthrough of the Russian front in 1915 and the conquest of Serbia in the latter part of that year. At various times he served on military missions to Turkey and China. After World War I, as military head of the Reichswehr, he was considered the organizer and "father" of the army of the German Republic. This collection of von Seeckt's private and official papers consists, in general, of correspondence, reports, diaries, manuscripts of articles, newspaper clippings, maps, and some genealogical materials. Topics range from von Seeckt's ancestral background, through his educational and army career, his travels abroad, his part in World War I, and his service as head of the Reichswehr to his membership on the joint Anglo-German-French Mixed Committee on war graves and his death in 1936.

The materials, with one exception, are microcopied in accordance with the original sequence of stücke (items) established before they came into the possession of United States authorities. On Roll 25, in order to facilitate search, Stücke 260a and 260b, comprising two small registry volumes, are reproduced at the beginning of the roll instead of, in normal sequence, at the end. Stücke 11, 12, 262, 268, 272, 273, and 275-277, are not known to exist.

The following materials, because of duplication, irrelevance, or previous publication, were not reproduced in this microcopy:

- Stück 113 – Published English and French texts of the Treaty of Versailles.
- Stück 261a – Typescript copies of the biography of von Seeckt by Rabenau.
- Stück 263a – Corrections for typescript copies of von Seeckt's biography.
- Stücke 264-I, 264-II, 265-267 – Proof sheets of von Seeckt's biography.
- Stück 269 – Fragmentary maps of the Eastern Front, 1915-16.
- Stück 270a – Typescript copies of von Seeckt's biography.
- Stück 270b – Unbound printed copy of von Seeckt's biography.
- Stücke 271a and 278 – Duplicate copies of typescript of von Seeckt's biography.
- Stück 293a – Typescript of biographical lecture on von Seeckt, ca. 1938.

Miscellaneous newspapers, clippings, and magazines, 1914-36, of which those relevant to von Seeckt are largely duplicates of those reproduced on Rolls 1-4, 22, and 25, were also not included in this microcopy.

Two file boxes of typed copies of von Seeckt's letters to his wife, 1914-36 (which were transcribed by the German biographer, probably about 1938), are reproduced on Rolls 27 and 28, in order to facilitate the reading of the manuscript originals.

In addition to the von Seeckt papers, there are in the National Archives of the United States some 170 file boxes of other materials formerly in the Heeresarchiv Potsdam. These include the papers of German military leaders such as Fieldmarshals von Boyen (1771-1848), von Gneisenau (1760-1831), von Moltke (1800-91), von Roon (1803-79), and von Schlieffen (1833-1913); and Generals von Winterfeldt (1707-57), Braunschweig-Bevern (1715-81), Groener (1867-1939), and others. There is also an exhibit of documents that appears to have been prepared by the National Socialists for propaganda purposes, which opens with a passport signed by the Great Elector of Brandenburg and closes with leaflets dropped from balloons by Americans during World War I calling upon German soldiers to surrender. This exhibit has been reproduced as National Archives File Microcopy 129, An Exhibit of German Military documents from the Heeresarchiv Potsdam.

The table of contents, showing the distribution of the stücke on the rolls, with a brief topical description of each roll, is reproduced on each of the 28 rolls of this microcopy.

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2	Stücke 18-22: Von Seeckt's 60 th birthday anniversary mail, 1926; newspaper clippings on his resignation as head of the Reichswehr, 1926; his 50 th army service anniversary mail, 1935; and correspondence and publications relating to the Anglo-German-French Mixed Committee on war graves, 1936.
3	Stücke 23-29: Condolence letters, telegrams, and newspaper clippings pertaining to the death and funeral of von Seeckt, 1936; and some manuscripts of memoirs of him, 1937.
4	Stücke 30-38: Newspaper clippings of the death and funeral of von Seeckt, 1936; a typed bibliography of military campaigns and other events relating to von Seeckt, 1939; genealogical documents relating to the von Seeckt family, including certificates, diplomas, and commissions, 1803-51; and family correspondence, 1866-1910.
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- 14 Stücke 68-71: Letters to von Seeckt from his mother, 1918-19; letters from Auguste von Seeckt to Maria von Behr-Schmolder, 1914-17; letters to von Seeckt, 1914-18; and letters relating to his book, *Gedanken eines Soldaten*, 1928-29.
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- 16 Stücke 76-79: Letters to von Seeckt from various official and private persons, relating to miscellaneous topics, 1929-31.
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- 18 Stücke 86-87: Letters to von Seeckt from army colleagues and others, including Generals von Boetticher, von Falkenhayn, Conrad von Hoetzendorf, Count Apponyi, and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, 1915-36.
- 19 Stücke 88-89: Letters to von Seeckt from army colleagues and others, including Fieldmarshals von Hindenburg, and von Mackensen; Generals von Kemitz, von Lochow, von Massow, von Nagy, and Schekoff; Admirals Hintze and Scheer; Emil Ludwig; and Count Reventlow, 1915-36.
- 20 Stücke 90-110: Letters to von Seeckt from army colleagues and others, including Generals von Waldersee and von Wrisberg, and Princes Louis and Otto Windischgraetz, and his wartime correspondence with General von Winterfeldt, 1915-27; battle reports and documents relating to Vailly, France, 1914, and to Gorlice-Tarnow, 1915; lists of the headquarters staff of the 11th (Mackensen's) Army, 1915, and of German army commands and staff, 1918; various memoranda on the Serbian Army, 1915, on General von Falkenhayn, ca. 1915, on the ex-Kaiser, 1919, on "The Last Voyage of the German Fleet," ca. 1919, on "The Secret of Crewe House," 1920, and on Italy's entry into World War I, 1923; Reichsarchiv memoranda, 1920-28; correspondence and memoranda of the German Peace Delegation at Versailles, 1919; and some speeches and miscellaneous papers, 1915-17.
- 21 Stücke 111-112, 114-136: Memoranda relating to the Versailles Conference, the Spa Conference, the extradition of war criminals, and the reorganization of the Reichswehr; correspondence and memoranda between von Seeckt and Groener, and von Seeckt and Berg; miscellaneous military reports; and von Seeckt's Reichswehr Ministry engagement book; 1919-26.
- 22 Stücke 137-165: Pamphlets and letters relating to German war objectives, 1915-16; miscellaneous memoranda relating to military affairs, political matters, and the Reichswehr Ministry, 1918-26; memoranda and correspondence relating to the Kapp Putsch, 1920; pamphlets on German economy and foreign policy, 1920; von Seeckt's memorandum on Baltic affairs, 1920; typescripts of political articles by Freidrich von Boetticher, and on geopolitics by Oscar von Niedermayer, 1920-23; and von Seeckt's political campaign memoranda and news clippings relating to his Reichstag candidacy, 1930.
- 23 Stücke 166-192: Letters and memoranda to von Seeckt from Archduke Carl and Prince Ludwig von Windischgraetz, 1916; reports to von Seeckt on the Austro-Hungarian Army, 1916; von Seeckt's memorandum on the Austro-Hungarian Internal situation, 1917; memorandum on war purchases in Hungary; von Seeckt's memorandum to Groener on the Hungarian political situation, 1919; von Seeckt's correspondence with Count Bethlen and others, 1921-23; correspondence, memoranda, and briefs relating to the war amnesty question, 1928-30; memoranda from the Vienna archives to General Rabenau, chief of the Heeresarchive, relating to von Seeckt's World War

- I army order, 1938.
- 24 Stücke 193-202, 202a-202f, 203-215: Von Seeckt-Ludendorff memoranda, 1917; congratulatory telegrams to von Seeckt on his appointment as chief of staff in Turkey, 1917; correspondence, memoranda, and reports on Turkish military matters and railways, 1917-18; letters and memoranda from Enver Pasha to von Seeckt, 1918 and 1920-21; memoranda on Middle Eastern policy, Turkey, the Mesopotamian region, and the Turkish military collapse, 1917-18; typescripts of Russian revolutionary propaganda on the Eastern Front, 1917; von Seeckt's diary, 1917-18; manuscript by von Seeckt entitled "Deutschland und Russland," 1920; memoranda and news clippings relating to the von Seeckt-Tchitcherin meeting, 1926; von Seeckt's correspondence relating to his trip to China and his final report to Chiang Kai-shek, 1932-34.
- 25 Stücke 216-259, 260a, 260b: Von Seeckt's memoranda on military and other matters, 1916-26, including one entitled "Amerika," ca. 1917; manuscripts and clippings of newspaper articles by von Seeckt, 1928-35; correspondence relating to the German People's Party, 1929-31; collected poems, n.d.; World War I battle maps relevant to von Seeckt's operations; various illustrations and photographs of him; register of von Seeckt's writings and correspondence, 1927-36; and a special list of his writings, 1920-31.
- 26 Stücke 274-I, 274-II, 279-293: Clippings of reviews of Rabenau's biography of von Seeckt; typescripts of von Seeckt's military service in Turkey, Königsberg, and the Reichswehr, 1917-23; and correspondence relating to corrections to the von Seeckt biography and to incidents in his life, 1938-40.
- 27 Typed copies of von Seeckt's letters to his wife, 1914-17.
- 28 Typed copies of von Seeckt's letters to his wife, 1917-36.