

M. S. HOCHMUTH

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May - October, November 1944 in OCS
Then Ordnance Technical Intelligence System under Toftoy
Subsequently assigned to the only field team of Ordnance Technical
Intelligence - with the First Army - formed in England.

As a 2nd Lieutenant, my assignment was following ammunition and
secret weapons. This was not considered that important because
the emphasis was on conventional weapons. But the day I got there
there was a basic preoccupation with the V-1 and The V-2 - almost
exclusively. It was winter and the big problem was the V-1
because it was being lobbed into Liege and Antwerp. I studied
every V-1 and became what's known as an expert. I salvaged scraps
and pieces and finally reconstituted the guidance system. We
were supposed to make a rapid assessment of what we were running T/d
into. This would be of primary importance to the Army command -
of tactical interest. Detailed technical analysis were to be
made by the team in Paris at Depot #644, a huge Army depot
for captured enemy material.

There had been an agreement with the British - the SHAEP Agreement
that all captured enemy material would be shipped to England
for detailed technical assessment. It was a source of real
problem. The British strongly urged all material to be sent to
England. This triggered an underlying feeling of antagonism.
Guidance equipment later became no problem because we captured
a whole carload (railroad) of systems in France and 100 were
sent to the states.

There was a prevalent opinion in the United States that we were
superior in anything technological and there wasn't a
damn thing we could learn from the Germans. The V-2s were considered
a laboratory curiosity and the V-1s no more than a mosquito -
irritant tactic and an indecisive weapon. The impression I got
from the bottom of the barrel where I was, was that at the top,
this was not of sufficient importance. It seemed that there
was no question in the mind of the brass of the US superiority
in technology.

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How, Why, When, Where the Navy got involved:

It seemed to be an obvious weapon system that they could use as there was no American counter-part. While the Air Force could see nothing but manned aircraft, which today is a type of schizophrenia with them, the Army didn't think it to be a decisive weapon. Working on V-1s, I began looking into the V-2 because Antwerp, the US Army's main port was being bombarded by V-2s. Being assigned this mission, I began gathering pieces ~~of~~ from V-2 craters where they were obvious. I always knew because of the depth of the crater and the ~~above~~ ground explosion itself.

THEN HOCHMUTH WENT TO PARIS TO WRITE REPORTS WITH WOODRUFF. 3 GERMAN DOCUMENTS * 1 GERMAN TESTIMONIAL AND 2-3 PHOTO ALBUMS - COMPLETE STORY OF PEENEMUNDE IN PICTURES INCLUDING A -1, VISITS BY GOERING AND HITLER - COPIES MADE.

~~was interviewed~~

was interviewed by the authors and recalled ^{41.3}
~~was selected by Telford and J~~

~~Samuel H. ...~~ Hochmuth recalled for the authors his participation in the Nordhausen investigations. ~~In an interview he remembered:~~

"The next major find was near Nordhausen. We knew that it was an intelligence target - and that the V-2s were being assembled there. We could never understand why the Air Force hadn't bombed ^{the entrance} because it was an ideal site - built on the base of ^a limestone mountain. One could easily bomb the entrance but the Air Force claimed that it wouldn't be effective - that the Germans could repair the tracks.

"The 104th Infantry Division captured Nordhausen. I arrived a day later. In one of the regiments which took Nordhausen, all hell had broken loose. We found two slave camps - one in which the men were in reasonable shape, and one detention camp where they were starved to death. Bodies were stacked ^{and} ~~and~~ the ones left were totally emaciated. You could hardly say they were still alive. This infuriated all of us.

"I immediately went in and asked who was in charge of the V-2s. One fellow presented himself ^{as} Director Sawatski. I don't think I was overly rude nor was I overly friendly ~~with~~, but I did my job and interrogated him. We discussed the concentration camp - it was on everyone's mind. He showed me the V-2 plant. It was in perfect shape and there were no guards. He pointed out the machinery brought from Peenemunde and also the turbo-pump motor assembly as well as the V-1 assembly ^{area.} The entrance was full of V-1 and V-2 parts, ~~and~~ especially ^{the} tanks and skins.

"It was late afternoon, and I had come a long way so I decided to make my report and make my way back. I turned Sawatski over to the Infantry Regiment there and never saw him again. When I went to interrogate him the next day, he was gone. Some said he was shipped back with the prisoners, others said he was killed.

~~Second Lt. M. S. Hochmuth continued~~

investigation of V-2 parts and personnel

"At this point, my major effort became ~~my~~ because our intelligence in the area had reported there were many strangers in the villages. There were groups of Peenemunde engineers clustered in little towns and they had their labs set up everywhere - mines, factories, farm houses, barns. Gengelbach was in jail - somehow the locals had accused him of germ warfare. At the place where they were making war-heads, in an old out of the way explosive^s factory, there wasn't a single German or American in authority. Refugees from the concentration camps, ^{including} Russians and Poles were going berserk - rape^{ing} and plunder^{ing} and the people were coming to me to stop it. All ^{these} ~~this~~ problems made it difficult for me and the driver.

"My immediate job was to inventory equipment and ^{prepare} ~~make~~ fragmentary reports. Someone else could decide what to do with ^{them} ~~it~~. At that time, I didn't know anything about von Braun and his team in the Garmisch area. Most of the people were still preoccupied with the war, more than with equipment. My only link to higher interest was L. F. Woodruff who was linked with Toftoy, Sayler and 'Froggy' ~~and~~ Reed. I was certainly not qualified - I had just picked up the rudimentary fundamentals of rocketry.

"Within a week or ten days after we had captured Nordhausen I was told by Col. Fletcher that I was in charge. (I was just a 2nd lieutenant - which gives you some idea how important they considered it - but I thought it was important.) I had already gotten a taste of the British^g. They constantly sent intelligence teams into the area - with SHAEF, ^e verifying the reports we had sent in, ~~for themselves~~, and coming down to see if the agreements were being followed on all captured equipment. There was one particular team, ^{leader} - the fellow came looking for V-1 and V-2 equipment, but we didn't tell him ziltch, which reflected the general

(~~Second Lt M S Hochmuth - continued~~)

"feeling. The agreement had been that everything would go to England but it didn't make sense, as all the ~~new equipment was~~ ^{advanced weapons were} being built and developed in the U.S. These were orders, however, and we understood that General Eisenhower had made the agreement for the sake of harmony.

"The First Army got a wire that a wing commander was coming in from SHAEF to look ~~at the things~~ ^{things over.} I was staying in quarters in Nordhausen. At two in the morning I was shaken by a British officer who asked if I was in charge. I had been told to let him see anything he wanted ~~to see~~ by Col. Fletcher (First Army Ordnance) but that he wasn't to take a thing away - it was US property until we had evacuated. Clearly this thing had become a political football already. He was extremely rude to me. I had the only bed in this house and ~~this is~~ ^{it was} the first time in my military service that I had rank pulled on me. He said, "You - get out of the bed - I'm getting in it." It really made me mad. I was livid - and I had been told that I was in charge. So I told him I'd take him on a tour and then he was to get out. He said, "Do you realize I'm a wing commander?" I said, "Yes sir, but I'm in charge I'll show you what there is and then you'll leave by order of the commanding general - First US Army." I was mad because he'd pulled me out of bed. He took a quick look around but I didn't tell him a darn thing about ~~any~~ of the other things we found in the area, and then he left.

P "The next ~~person~~ ^{German} we picked up was K. O. Fleischer, one of the top administrative types. Fleischer knew where the documents were. ~~Rees and his people began~~ ^{They knew} ~~to see that~~ the war was over and in an effort to see that all this equipment wasn't dispersed to the four winds, realized that it had to be held together. There was no question that the majority of Germans were cooperating with us. By this time, von Braun had been picked up, Hamill was working with Toftoy in Paris, and

(~~Second-Lt. M S. Hochmuth continued~~)

"Bromley, Drury and Staver were around interviewing. Fleischer said that the documents were safe, that they had been hidden by an SS company and that we ought to go get them. At that time there was already talk about the Russians coming and getting Thuring^{ig}. So we began evacuation of the parts.

"Fleischer said - 'Let's go get the ~~the~~ hidden documents.' He knew ~~exactly~~ where they were - in an iron mine in the mountains. We took a jeep and when we arrived there, who should we meet but Col. Cooke - the Britisher who had been dogging our footsteps - and his team for SHAEF. Immediately he said, "Well, what are you gentlemen doing here?" I did the talking - told him I was from headquarters of the US First Army and we were making a survey of the industry and natural resources of the area. I knew that if the British found out about the documents they would all go to England. Aside, I told Fleischer that we were determined to bring this material to the US. We began to make^{an} inventory of miscellaneous equipment, while the British were watching, telling them^{we} we would come back to pick the stuff up. Then we went back to Nordhausen, briefed Staver and ~~someone~~ called Toftoy in Paris. It was then agreed that we would ship the documents to the US. Fleischer said a ten ton truck would be required to get the documents. (I was stunned). We gave instructions through Fleischer to the foreman to open the entrance to the mine and sent the van up (This was Staver's big find - I was not there because of other stuff to gather at Nordhausen.)

~~They left at four in the morning.~~

"The US decided we'd evacuated enough parts to make 100 V-2s although it had not been decided what would be done with them. The British proposed a joint US/British effort to assemble and launch them from Europe. An Englishman would be in charge with an American deputy - exactly what we didn't want.

(~~Second Lt. M S. Hochmuth - continued~~)

"We felt like a team on this. Toftoy was fighting and the Army geared up with Hamill and Bromley. A whole motor vehicle assembly company was assigned to Nordhausen to pack up parts and ship them ^y back. I was told to pick out the parts that were needed. We had Germans do it - but we didn't trust everybody so I checked the Germans as best I could, how the hell would I know what was needed?

"One of the men we picked up and interrogated was ^RGotttrup, the number two guidance man. He was the only German I had heated words with. We started talking politics - which I had never discussed with a German before.

"The Russians at this time were not directly working in the area but were broadcasting daily and continuously from Leipzig Radio. ~~that~~ they were going to collect all Germans and equipment ^y and ~~that~~ everyone connected with Peenemunde should come over. They would be well fed, their personal safety would be guaranteed. they would be well paid, etc.

"By that time, we had another train - 50 burned out V-2s pulled from Poland. They were being sent back for rebuilding. I went over and pulled out guidance sections and motors but they were useless. The Russians inherited the whole trainload.

"We were instructed to leave enough parts for the British to be able to fire 50 V-2s. Then the French sent ^a a guy in - so they got some parts too. First the US, then the British, then the French got property, the Russians getting ^{what} ~~what~~ was left.

"There were tons of tanks and skins, but few guidance systems and a shortage of undamaged tail sections, rudder motors and carbon vane motors. There was a good quantity of turbines and steam generators. We added plenty of fiberglass insulation intentionally -, we wanted to be sure there would be enough. ~~to see Rudder~~