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The development of the Standarte Kurt Eggers into an instrument for psychological warfare within the German Armed Forces reached a very decisive phase in 1944. After this regiment had attained considerable results at the eastern battle front, it was then charged with more problems for the western and southern battle fronts, which it had to fulfill by means of its own technical and personnel reserves. At the beginning of the year 1944 it had attained acknowledged authority with regard to similar set-ups of the German Army and the political offices of the Ministry of Propaganda and the Foreign Office. Later on, this authority was also demonstrated in the organizational set-up.

The further development of the war caused a great cut in technical assets in the civilian sector, such as communications and civilian transmission stations. The political doctrine had obviously reached a stage of utter stagnation, as handled by the party authorities. All this made it imperative for the Regiment to become as independent as possible with regard to its means, its political tendencies, and above all, its personnel reserves.

Up till that time OKW/WPR had been formally responsible to the German High Command for everything pertaining to psychological warfare and Army propaganda. But the situation called for a compromise, in order to cope with realities. It became more and more important that the Standarte Kurt Eggers set itself apart, according to its actual importance and growth, and become also independent from an organizational point of view. Although the Commanding Officer of the Standarte retained his complete personal independence even though the OKW still had a certain right of supervision, the Deputy Commanding Officer of the Standarte Kurt Eggers was assigned as Chief of V Division OKW/WPR. This group was charged mainly with problems of psychological warfare. As of Fall 1944 the Standarte Kurt Eggers also had at its disposal with the exception of a few formal limitations, practically all experts of the OKW/WPR-V and all technical aids for the accomplishment of its work. From now on, a large number of assignments in charge of psychological warfare within the armies and army-groups were filled by officers and personnel of the Standarte. This

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development is of great importance in Monti's case as of winter 44/45. Many details otherwise inexplicable, become comprehensible if one is acquainted with these underlying basic facts.

The ever growing scope of responsibility of the Standarte Kurt Eggers could naturally not be coped with by the usual means that were normally at the disposal of a regiment. The outward organisational form of a regiment, as a military unit, was merely a disciplinary and military aid for the whole special set-up. Superior military authorities were accustomed to give their help as far as possible in all such cases as called for special funds technical equipment or very special personnel matters that were quite out of the normal, and this aid would be given as adequately and quickly as possible.

An important fact that explains the efficiency and the results later attained by the Standarte, is that it developed out of a unit that was set up mainly and only for war-reporting ends of the Waffen-SS in the beginning of 1940. After the Waffen-SS had collected a large number of volunteers of all European countries in its divisions and armies it had thus created a fund of intellectual experts of foreign nationality, officers and enlisted men, in this its reporter units. All in all, approx 20 nations were represented amongst the personnel of this unit. And from this reservoir of experts, the Standarte was later able to draw its non-German experts that were so important for psychological warfare. Compared to the Foreign-Office, that had to fall back on paid employees of foreign nations for their expert work, the Standarte got much better results by assigning officers and enlisted men of foreign nationality, who were imbued with the same rights and duties as the German members of the unit. No other military or political authority could command the services of such a number of volunteers of foreign nationality, wearing German uniform, and voluntarily submitting to German military discipline. In such a case all difficulties, as would be incurred with civilians, were automatically done away with. At the same time this method, which covered both military and political matters, facilitated the practical solution of all assigned jobs. Psychological warfare has to depend on the personal initiative, ability, and fund of knowledge

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of the individual members. The mutual platform of a common uniform, of a common ideology and comradeship created a situation in which the working methods automatically corrected themselves in the course of progress on the grounds of voluntary and valuable cooperation amongst the officers and the men themselves.

Monti's case, as it appears to the outside observer, was not exceptional for the Standarte, and therefore attracted no special attention. According to my recollection there were representatives of about 15 European nations amongst the officers of the Standarte toward the end of 1944.

Naturally quite a number of conditions had to be adhered to, to induct a former officer of an enemy or neutral nation into the regiment. Conditions which had always been fulfilled in the large number of similar cases. The basic condition was a common and inbred proffering of the pan-European idea on a basis of voluntary equivalency seen thru German eyes and from German point of view. Later on a decisive anti-Bolshevist tendency was expected, still allowing of individual opinion on political details. In any and every case a new member of the Standarte was expected to accept without questioning, the possibility that he might be requested to fight against Bolshevism, even to the length of using a weapon in actual combat. In all cases, former officers of foreign armies were assigned, at least, with their last rank. I cannot recollect any exception to this rule. Inductment into the Officers Corps of the Standarte automatically meant becoming an officer in the Waffen-SS, and thus a member of the German Wehrmacht; the Waffen-SS being unconditionally subject in war time in military matters to the German High Command. The individual, thus submitted willingly and voluntarily, to all duties and laws pertaining to a German officer. Thus inducted, the individual was at the same time installed in all rights of a German officer and was in a position if he so wanted, to become a German citizen. Foreign officers of this type, who were members of my Regiment, were never assigned to aid in undermining the morale of the armies of their (former) countries. They served mainly to correct and if possible guide the German attempts to approach their own nations by all technical and psychological means. Most especially they served

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to make intelligible to their own people Germany's war against Bolshevism and to interpret the German and European point of view. They were also of great importance in countering all enemy attempts with regard to psychological warfare. They were expected to draw upon their funds of knowledge to evaluate the situation of their peoples and military forces, in order to judge and sift the methods which would appeal to the enemy and his countrymen. Their ability was estimated when tested as speakers, commentators, journalists or even when set in command over a special unit before their final assignment.

Monti could in no way be unaware of these facts that are only touched on in the above. Although he spoke not a word of German, and was not in a position to follow a conversation in German, his continuous contact with Capt. Duvaire and Lt Freeman allowed him to benefit from their great experience and large fund of information, which enabled them in turn to answer his questions. Besides that, he was often enough in the Officer's Mess of the Standarte, and had the possibility to meet officers of foreign nations and English-speaking German officers, so that he was well able to inform himself on the duties and activities of the Regiment at all fronts.

The above outlined details and special conditions of the Standarte show that there was the possibility of a continuous threat of espionage from within the own ranks, on account of the structure of the unit. This potential danger was particularly threatening because the Regimental Headquarters at Berlin were the recipient of current situation-reports from all battle fronts, and material of the most confidential nature. A spy would have found relatively easy access to codes, decoding systems, decoding systems, documents and maps, that would have been of the utmost importance to the enemy. With the exception of the normal security measures, no special measures were ever taken at the Standarte. It would have been inconsistent with the standards of the unit to especially supervise an officer of the Standarte who had been installed not only with all duties but also with all rights of a German officer. These British, French, Italian, Scandinavian and Swiss officers did not so much as wear distinguishing insignia if they did not happen to be assigned temporarily to some

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special unit.

For these reasons alone, it will be understood that it was at any and all times quite impossible that any representative of a foreign nation joined the Standarte under the slightest pressure. Inductment and enrollment took place only by the specific outspoken request of the individual in question. All pertinent supervising (security) authorities would have already okayed the recommendation and even <sup>then</sup> the Regiment would have to be absolutely of the opinion that the applicant's personality would assuredly vouch for his reliability and suitability. Such suppositions indisputably fulfilled, treatment of the man would, later on, in no way differ from that of a regular German officer. The backing of the Regiment guaranteed that no one outside of the regiment, no military, political or police authority, dare doubt the personal integrity of the individual in his capacity of regular officer, NCO or enlisted man of the Waffen-SS.

This procedure was always painstakingly followed, and up till the end of the war, I have never experienced that one of the voluntary officers of foreign origin of the Standarte worked as a spy for any country at war with Germany. I cannot even recollect that such a suspicion was ever voiced.

I myself never saw Monti as far as I can remember. I was informed about the situation, and his person verbally thru my deputy Kriegbaum. But I am in a position, in the course of long conversations with former members of my regiment who are important witnesses in this case, and from my knowledge of the situation, and other persons involved, to have an adequate conception of the case "Monti", so that to the best of my knowledge, I come to the following conclusions:

Kriegbaum visited me in hospital probably towards the end of December 1944, possibly during the first days of January 1945 to report on current occurrences within the Standarte. During the period of my illness he was vested with full authority as a Commanding Officer of the Regiment, thus being in a position to decide on all assignments within the Standarte in Germany and in foreign countries. On this occasion, while we were talking about personal difficulties, Kriegbaum mentioned that an American officer had just been offered the Regiment for co-operation.

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As far as such offers did not pertain to volunteers who were already serving in the Waffen-SS, they usually came from the liaison offices of the Foreign Office. Therefore I had no reason to check on the details of this offer. At that time no names were mentioned, and it is even probable that the name as yet did not mean a thing to Kriegbaum.

I remember asking Kriegbaum about the personal and political aspects and arguments of this American who wanted to work for us. For only a satisfactory answer would have assured me that he would be useful in a military sense and that only under such circumstances would he be able to be assimilated by the commissioned personnel of my Regiment. I remember that Kriegbaum outlined the following picture: That this American had deliberately landed his plane behind the German lines, and that after landing there the American had given the following reason for his behaviour: That his father had suffered a severe financial collapse during the New Deal and that he had no reason whatsoever to love Roosevelt's system. Besides that, he had the intention of aiding Germany in its fight against Bolshevism. During my conversation with Kriegbaum I stressed the fact that such an argument appeared very insufficient, and that from all my own experience I did not think it advisable to accept and induct an officer of foreign nationality into my Regiment only on the strength of such arguments.

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Kriegbaum, who knew my point of view from many similar cases, and who has always always proved a most loyal officer and subaltern to me, countered that the Regiment would in all probability be in dire need of American experts at Headquarters, and even more so at such units that were working near the American front lines. He touched on radio work, the editing and correcting of pamphlets and newspapers, and stressed the necessity of having a competent person who might have had quite recent contact with the psychological situation amongst the American Armed Forces. Besides that, Kriegbaum was of the opinion that it would be very suitable to have an American officer in the uniform of the Regiment who would have the necessary authority to supervise such American helpers as were already working for them.

I requested that Kriegbaum look into this matter. Should he be of the opinion that better arguments presented themselves, he would be completely at liberty to induct and employ this American pilot according to the best of his judgement.

This whole question, which under the above described circumstances was not at all out of the usual, because it was only one of many such occurrences, did not carry much weight, that Kriegbaum would have had to contact me again on the subject. After leaving the hospital, I was charged with extremely important matters in view of the very difficult political and military situation. The most important of which was at that time the situation at the eastern battle front and the question of Wlassow's Russian army.

I was in hospital till the end of February 1945 after which I was ordered to take a recuperative furlough in Italy. After returning at the end of March I left Berlin on 13 or 14 April 1945, complying to special orders and transfe

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ferring my Headquarters by means of a special train to the southern battle area. All this explains why I did not occupy myself again with Monti, although he was repeatedly in my regimental area in Berlin. I think it quite possible that I might have met him there, but he would have been a stranger amongst other strangers to me.

According to my insight into the situation at that time, I think that Monti's contact with my Regiment can be broken down into the following phases:

Monti probably met Buchholz first through channels of the German Foreign Office and the Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft (State Radio Corporation). Buchholz was not only Chief of the Radio Group at the Standarte, but also at the same time, charged with the responsibility for all Radio questions at OKW/WFV V, by orders of Ringhaus, who was actually in charge of that section too, and who had deputised Buchholz to handle all matters of that touched on psychological warfare within the sphere of that Radio set-up. Buchholz was well informed on the general situation development, and knew how important it was for the Standarte to handle, as early as possible, all such matters as would of a necessity sooner or later fall into the scope of the Standarte's duties. From all these converging issues, Buchholz had reason to hope for Monti's inducement into the Regiment. He probably not only looked upon Monti as future radio speaker and commentator, but most certainly also as an officer.

According to the excellent results the Standarte had achieved with officers of foreign nationality, Buchholz certainly expected Monti to become an effective superior officer to the already present American experts who were working on one or the other special projects of the Standarte. It can be further assumed that Capt DuVaire, who was also a member of the Standarte, and who was working with Monti and Buchholz most certainly used his influence

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DuVaire was in a position to know from his own experience how much both sides would profit from a clear cut decision on Monti's becoming a regular member of the Standarte.

The opening move in the later chain of events must have been made by Buchholz toward the end of 1944 or the beginning of 1945 when he merely informed Kriegbaum of Monti's existence, and touched on the possibility of using Monti at the Standarte. Therefore when Kriegbaum first informed me on the subject during his visit to the hospital it was necessarily in a very vague manner. He merely spoke of an American pilot who <sup>had</sup> flown over voluntarily.

After Buchholz and DuVaire had both decided that Monti had a certain ability for Radio work, Buchholz began to urge Kriegbaum to accept Monti into the Regiment, possibly touching on personal needs as a first argument. Thereupon Kriegbaum charged Wicklmayr with the responsibility for Monti's welfare, such as questions of food and quarters, etc. It was not even without a certain amount of logic that Wicklmayr was charged with this matter because, although he was the military censor, he had already handled such matters with good results. The conclusive inducement came with the further development of events at Berlin. The importance of the Standarte was growing steadily, and became very evident in February and March 1945, which development culminated in April with the Commanding Officer of the Regiment being assigned as Chief of the Propaganda Troops of the German Wehrmacht; thus, if only retrospectively, underlining outwardly the actual evolution that had taken place. This situation gave Buchholz the necessary arguments to convince Kriegbaum that a man like Monti should not only be protected by the Standarte, but should actually be inducted into the Regiment. All this naturally subject to the condition that it was Monti's own desire. Monti's continuous

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contact with DuFaire ruled out the possibility of any misconceptions.

I am sure that toward the end of March Kriegbaum must have contacted the Chief of the Personnel Office of the Waffen-SS, both verbally and in writing, and requested Monti's inductment into the Standarte. Kriegbaum, in his capacity as Liaison Officer to the SS High Command, would have found it easy to contact the proper authorities without loss of time for such an inductment, and, to obtain, at least, the verbal consent quickly. Kriegbaum had already had experience in similar cases, and was in a position to obtain quick decisions as he was frequently at Sa row, the emergency location of the authorities in question. It was taken for granted that the written consent would take longer to procure. Kriegbaum, in his capacity as Deputy Commanding Officer was exceptionally correct, nevertheless he did not need to have the slightest compunction in accepting the responsibility for doing away with red tape, and issuing Monti a proper soldbuch, even though the consent of the High Command had, as yet, not arrived in writing, but had been promised. I am sure that Kriegbaum not only knew that he had the power as Deputy Commanding Officer to cut such orders, I am sure that he felt the moral and objective obligation to do so. Only after having completed all preliminary steps, was Kriegbaum in a position to comply with Monti's repeated requests as to the issue of an uniform and clothing.

Regulations stipulating that payments could only be made after all inductment formalities had been complied with, did not pertain to the Standarte. The Regiment had a special fund from which it could make advance payments in any special case.

At that time the enforced checks on the population and the continuous search for deserters in Berlin made it imperative that Monti be furnished with a proper

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soldbuch for his personal safety, even though the written consent of the SS High Command had as yet not arrived. Had not such a consent been already given verbally, Kriegbaum would never have issued a soldbuch nor would he have been in a position to have officially requested the permission for the SS Clothing Store to officially issue Monti any items of uniform. Without the official authority of such an uniform request, for instance, it would not have been possible to procure an officer's belt for Monti, as was actually purchased for him. Such belts, to which particular significance was attached in the Waffen-SS, were never to be had without proper authority in any stores.

It is quite possible that Kriegbaum advised Monti not to wear the uniform until the <sup>order</sup> verification of the verbal consent should have arrived. In the middle of April Kriegbaum received orders from me to the effect that he was to fall specified decisions as to the further assignment of all personnel of the Standarte that were still in Berlin. Therefore, when issuing a travel order for Monti's leaving Berlin, he was forced to either specifically order, or to allow, Monti to don the uniform of the Regiment. This was the only way to ensure that, in combination with a proper soldbuch, Monti was able to carry out said order.

Although at that that time regulations were extremely severe, with regard to cutting travel orders for an exit out of Berlin, this would have in no way hampered Kriegbaum, because he had at his disposal a number of preassigned travel orders with my signature. I was, under all circumstances, entitled to cut and sign such orders.

I have no doubt, that when Monti rejoined the American Forces near Milan, Italy, toward the end of April 1945, he was on orders, either to proceed to "Unternehmen Suedstern" or its dependent transmission station

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"Victoria", both in Northern Italy and both <sup>an officer of the</sup> under the command of the Standarte Kurt Eggers. This must appear to be correct from a logical point of view, because, in the middle of April 1945, Suedstern, as the situation seen from Berlin led to believe, was the only unit left, that could be in need of, and use, American personnel. Besides that, this unit had to expect, according to then anticipated developments, to be called upon for special tasks, which would urgently necessitate the help of American experts.

Lastly, the period from the middle of April 1945, that is date of Monti's departure from Berlin, till toward the end of April 1945 corresponds to the amount of time then actually necessary to cover that distance under the prevailing circumstances.

I am of the definite opinion that Monti was completely taken by surprise when he crossed the Brenner Pass and stood face to face with a situation so absolutely different from what he had learned to expect at Berlin. This situation must have induced him to try and save his neck by deserting <sup>again</sup> a second time. The chaos of those days certainly gave him every opportunity to do so.

Had he actually had the intention to fight the Bolsheviks with a weapon in his hand, he could not have found a better opportunity than with the Standarte Kurt Eggers. Shortly before Monti left Berlin a front line unit had been set up, consisting of men from all sections including foreign personnel, that was then sent to the Oder River battle front and was thrown into the final struggle against the Russians.

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