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TO : Chief, Foreign Division M

DATE: 11 September 1950

FROM : Chief of Station, Karlsruhe

SUBJECT: GENERAL-- ZIPPER - Operational

SPECIFIC-- Special Connections, Personalities, No. 13,
Heinz GUDERIAN (ZIPPER Alias; BRAUSENSTEIN)

1. GUDERIAN is now living in a small, modern house which he recently purchased in Fussen, a small town picturesquely situated at the foot of the Bavarian Alps in upper Swabia. He lives there very quietly with his wife, in somewhat straightened circumstances which he is endeavoring to improve by writing. He is presently revising (toning down) a recently completed book on the war, and writing articles, largely on tank warfare, for such magazines as US News and World Report. He has collaborated with Liddel HART on his post-war books, and is visited frequently by journalists. Among his recent American visitors have been old WEYGAND of the HEARST papers, and loud-mouthed Larry RUE, of the Chicago Tribune, both of whom made a better impression on him than they ever did on me.

2. GUDERIAN's connection to ZIPPER is that of a witting but unrewarded Special Connection. There was a close relationship between him and UTILITY towards the end of the war when GUDERIAN was Chief of Staff of the OKH and UTILITY Chief of Fremde Heere Ost. In practice, this meant that UTILITY was GUDERIAN's G-2, since, from the time of ZKITZLER's incumbency, the competence of the Chief of Staff of the OKH was virtually restricted to the war on the Eastern Front. ZIPPER's contact with GUDERIAN is maintained by Herr John von FREYEND, who lives not far away in the tiny village of Oberdorf bei Immenstadt, in Upper Bavaria. Our meeting took place on 4 September and was arranged as a social call (tea), being rendered convenient by the fact that I was returning from a Labor Day week end visit to Bregenz, and Fussen just happened to lie on my return route. Mrs. GUDERIAN and my wife were present, along with Herr JOHN. Mrs. GUDERIAN makes fabulous pastry.

3. The first and most enduring impression of GUDERIAN - and the most surprising - is his extraordinary charm. He is a stocky, solidly built fellow of middle stature, rather square features, meditative blue eyes and a small, neatly trimmed white mustache. He is in his early sixties, in robust health and obviously full of beans. He talks readily, much and well, particularly about strategy and tactics, about which, of course, he probably knows as much as anybody, with the possible exception of MANNSTEIN, and about history, about which he seems to know a good deal and obviously has a great curiosity, primarily military history.

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- 2 -

4. Although he has accepted defeat less philosophically than most of his contemporaries and although his experiences in PW camps and at Nuremberg (particularly his interrogations by KEMPNER and RAPP) have left a scar which will never fully heal, he is firmly committed to the concept of German-American cooperation in the defense of Western Europe, and is willing to go more than half way in friendship with any individual American who appears to be of good will. He remembers General Taylor, of the 101st Airborne Division, to whom he surrendered, Colonel BRAD (?) and Colonel POTTER, of the Historical Division, and Father SIXTUS, who smuggled cigarettes under a Franciscan frock to him in his cell in Nuremberg, with as lively affection as he remembers KEMPNER and RAPP with bitter contempt. He is extremely outspoken, and it is easy to understand why ZIPPER considers this connection to be largely a precautionary measure. GUDERIAN's charm originates from genuine friendly impulses and can, I have no doubt, vanish quickly when this friendliness is not requited in kind. It is not a charm based on calculated tactfulness and acquired or professionally applied good manners; and ZIPPER, which is ever concerned with preventing premature, or ill-conceived, or tactless utterances by prominent German brass, congratulates itself on the fact that GUDERIAN now consults it before expressing himself in print. There were, indeed, several occasions during our conversation when I could have taken exception to his statements, had I been disposed to do so, despite the fact that they were made without rancor and offered as frank opinions in a frank discussion of world events. In speaking of the inability of the Americans to understand German militarism, for instance, he outlined German history as a series of efforts on the part of a well-disposed German people either to defend themselves or to improve their unfortunate geographical situation. In the former they have done rather well at times, he said, while in the latter they have always been inhibited by a pinch in the behind from anxious neighbors when they were on the point of success. He stated stoutly that the Polish Corridor was a geographical abortion and that an eastern border 90 miles from Berlin was intolerable in the face of militant eastern neighbors. Nor does he attempt to conceal a sense of wry amusement at the present condition of the Grand Alliance, remembering only too vividly the lectures he got from American interrogators in 1945 about the democracy of the Soviet Union. GUDERIAN is as unoriented as most Germans and more outspoken than the average German in saying so. As a General Officer he did not need to be persuaded that the war had been lost, and as a German General, with ample knowledge of military history, he did not have to be told of the consequences of defeat, although certain personal indignities doubtless came as an unpleasant surprise. But he refused to believe that the Soviet Union was a democracy, and he had his doubts about the immediate applicability of American or British or even French democracy to Germany. These doubts persist.

5. As a military man, GUDERIAN is presently occupied with trying to figure out how the pieces can be put together in such a way as to make western defense a possibility. Like most of the Generals with whom I have spoken, he absolutely rejects the concept of narrow German nationalism and regards a complete Franco-German rapprochement as the first and most essential prerequisite, without which no defense is possible, even with unlimited American backing. He believes in German participation, but only under full equality (in which view, also, he is completely in accord with the thinking of his colleagues). He thinks a reinforcement of American troops would have an enormous, beneficial psychological effect on the German people, even if, as he admits is true, an

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SECRET

- 3 -

additional division or so would not materially alter the present purely military situation. He considers that the Average German is too militarily initiated to be reassured by what he now sees of American equipment and armament in Germany, and argues, certainly correctly, that the Constabulary's armored scout cars are not calculated to impress a German who has stood face to face with a T-34. He states flatly that, as matters now stand, Germans could not, would not, and should not be expected to resist a Soviet invasion. He is deeply concerned with the extent of American commitment in Korea, which he sees as a danger to Europe, and implies that, however important prestige considerations may have been, our military involvement there was a bad idea. He even asked if Bradley and MacArthur had not opposed it on military grounds.

6. GUDERIAN referred several times to Stalin's question, when cautioned as to the attitude of the Pope, "How many divisions does he have?" As a man who knows the persuasive capacity of a good division, he respects this sort of logic. He even observed, good-humoredly, that he now lives a dual life. As a writer and journalist, he has to give a certain lip service to considerations of morale, ideological preparation, economic rehabilitation, etc., each of which is certainly important in its way and each of which must be taken into consideration in weighing public utterances. But he is also a soldier. As such he does not talk for popular consumption, and as such he thinks the divisions come first. He thinks, incidentally, that the number of divisions in the American Army, in ratio to the total number of men under arms, is shockingly low and represents an uneconomical disposition of manpower. He has a lot of respect, not only for the Russian soldier but also for Russian military leadership, and he stoutly rejects the notion that Russian staff work is bad and common opinion that Soviet strength is based solely on masses of not very mobile units. Of Soviet tactical leadership, he says that he and his staff always tried to figure out what the Russians could do that would cause them, the Germans, the most trouble, and that the Russians always did it. And he states that even the Germans considered the Soviet feat of bringing in the Siberian divisions from the east to Moscow in less than two weeks to have been little short of a miracle.

7. In conclusion, it may be pertinent to note that GUDERIAN was somewhat miffed by Juergen THORWALD's reference in "Es begann an der Weichsel," to his troubled dreams while riding in the train to his desperate interview with Hitler just before the Russians' January offensive in 1945. "I have spent many sleepless nights," he said, "but I never dream."

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