

September 1946

Report on Bruenner-Waffen - Konzern Combine

Citation:

"Report on Bruenner-Waffen - Konzern Combine", September 1946, Wilson Center Digital Archive, British Intelligence
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/209368>

Summary:

The report outlines the functions of, and individuals present at the Konzern Combine.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

BRUENNER WAFEN KONZERNThe various Fields of the Combine.

- Plant BRUENN: Carbine 98, small arms ammunition, various types of machine-guns, (old Czech types up to 1.5 cm. and German M.G.s., amongst others the British machine-gun Bren 26 and 37), machine-pistols (old Czech, Yugoslav and German types) 3 cm A.A. (see appendix - special developments), machine-tools, tools and gauges.
- Plant GURREIN: Aero-engines.
Entirely new plant, built during the war, damaged by air-attacks.
- Plant VSETIN: Armament for aircraft, MG 251. 3 cm A.A. and ammunition for small and medium arms.
- Plant PREROV: Any kind of optics, specially for tanks, guns and M.G.s, compasses, cameras (Optiflex and smallest cameras, colour-photo).
- Plant ROKITZAN: Cartridges, bicycles, typewriters.
- Plant RADIO-SLAVIA
Prague: Complete transmitters, tests in the field of high frequency and similar fields.
- Plant EXPLOSIA: High explosives of any kind.
(Sentin)
- Plant SYNTHESIA: Acids, artificial manure and other chemical products.
(Sentin)
- Plant KRICK: Electrotechnical equipment, fuses (mainly electric fuses)
(Prague-Smic hov and in two other suburbs of Prague)
- Plant BANSKA-BISTRICA (Slovakia) Carbine 98, machine-guns, rifle-ammunition.
- Plant PODERISOVA: Ore-mining, iron and steel foundry, rolling mill, plant for
(Slovakia) pipes and tubes, foundry, bridge-building, cartridges for projectiles and ammunition.
- EXPERIMENTAL PLANT
Bruenn: Development of small arms and ammunition.
- RESEARCH STATION
Pribrams: Development and research on long terms
- Plant CUGIR: Machine-guns, machine-pistols, carbines, small-arms ammunition.
(Romania)
- Plant METROL: Rolling mill for copper and brass.
(Romania)
- Plant "RESITZA": Programme is the same as in Pilsen.
(Romania)

BRUENNER-KONZERNSpecial developments and production.

1. Several rocket-guns and rocket-small arms.

They are based on a carefully worked out analysis and improvement of the so-called Stalin-Orgel. Improved was the ignition (electric) the range (up to 6.5 km) the calibre 8 cm., and most of all a better chance of hitting the target, based on special appliances of changeable ignition with each rocket. Considerably higher bursts can be brought about by way of decreasing the volume of the propellant charge with a simultaneous better effort. These kind of rocket-launching apparatus were developed and produced with 48 barrels, two and four barrels, as well as for anti-tank purposes with the Infantry.

2. Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck (equivalent to the "Bazooka").

The development was based on the analysis and improvement of the American weapons which were used for the first time in North Africa. The fuze was improved and based on this a newly developed weapon was produced.

3. Compasses.

Several new types of busses were developed as well as produced, which made "blind marching" possible.

4. Machine-Guns.

The German MG 42 was not regarded as perfect from our side because it required too much material. We have improved ZB 26. resp. 37, which we manufactured for the British Army, up to cadence of 1200 - 1400 (by adding one single part), so that the gun could fire in an ordinary sequence as well as - if the necessity arose - with the highest cadence.

5. Automatic rifles.

Various types, as well as the Russian automatic rifle come from Bruenn.

6. 3 cm. A.A.

The development of a 3 cm A.A. gun was concluded recently. It was mainly intended for U-Boats (according to my knowledge however it was never used in action). It is an excellent weapon, which proved very successful when it was tried out. Cadence 400. VO 1100. Gun carriages were made for single barrels as well as for twin-barrels. The weapon can also be used as quadruple gun.

7. High explosives.

Various developments were under way at "Explosia" in the field of propellant charges and high explosives. To some extent they were already concluded and production was started. For instance with regard to flash-eliminating powders (lichtfreie Pulver) slowly burning propellant charges for rockets, highly effective explosives, etc.

Scientists and Designers.

1. Professor Kammler (G).

He was the Head of a staff of specialists who developed highly secret weapons and war - equipment. Whereas up to a recent date each Branch of the Wehrmacht and its competent authorities had their developments carried out separately, Kammler succeeded in creating in his field a centralized command for all Branches of the Wehrmacht. His field consisted mainly of V - weapons, rocket apparatus, remote control, atomic energy, jet-propulsion and other similar subjects.

According to my information Kammler, who shifted his office to Prague during the last months of the war - committed suicide on May 9th near Prague. His first assistant and second in command was

2. Generaldirektor (General Manager) Furucker (G).

He was General Manager of the Vereinigte Industriewerke, Spandau and of the Berliner Spreewerk (production of guns and ammunition). He was in the first place the liaison between SS, Heereswaffenamt (Army Ordnance Branch) and Ruestungsministerium (Ministry for Armaments and War Production) and in the end he became the assistant of Kammler. On May 10th 1945 I met him at the American demarcation line outside Schimmelitz on the road Pribrams - Strakonitz, where a large convoy of civilian lorries and military formations stopped, in order to be taken over and directed into the Reich by American troops. We stayed there until May 12th. At that day an order was given all of a sudden to the effect that not the Americans, but approaching Russian Formations would take us over. Therefore Furucker and I tried to hand over to the Americans the very bulky material of the staff of scientists under Kammler, which Furucker had packed and carried with him in a large lorry and in order to hand the material over to the Americans, Furucker called an American officer. This officer promised to inform his Commanding Officer

according to our wish and to fetch us and the material within an hour latest. Apparently, however, he did not realize the importance of this matter, because he did not come back. Therefore Furuker handed all his material over to Russian officers. I was still with him on May 15th in the Russian Camp in Zlavornice at the southern border of Bohemia. Furuker was interrogated there several times by night by the Russians and one day he was moved together with his material. Where - I don't know - but recently I heard by chance that he is working in Moscow and that his family has joined him there.

3. Ing. Karel Staller (C)

This man is the most versatile and intelligent designer and scientist I ever met. Towards the end he became second General Manager of the Bruenner Waffen-Werke under me - worked, however, as before, mainly in the field of research and development. He himself was the designer of the famous British machine-gun (Bren ZB 26 and 37) and he carried out more or less himself all developments within the Bruenner Waffen-Konzern in the fields of optics, machine-construction, construction of arms, fuses, ammunition, rocket-projectors, etc. The last time I talked to Staller was in Prague in 1945, when I was in prison awaiting trial (Untersuchungshaft). Mid 1945 he resigned from the Bruenner Waffen-Werke (I suppose because he did not want to become a Communist). Thereafter he was only an adviser with the organisation "Metal working industry" at Prague. At that time he told me that he would like to go abroad.

4. Fritz (?) Engel (G)

This man was, if I am not mistaken - until 1942/43 Head of the experimental workshops at Helamünde, which he founded himself. Then I took him over (with the experimental workshops) and made him Chief of our research institute at Bribrams. Engel was a specialist for many years in the field of rockets and he was a member of the Central Commission for rocket-research, Berlin. For a long time he worked together with Kamler, and he knew almost everything of the secret research and development work, especially because he was the President of a special Commission which had to carry out the entire calculations in the chemical and physical fields with regard to ballistics of special weapons and apparatus. Engel and his wife lived in Bribrams. I suppose that he escaped in time across the American demarcation line into Germany and that he lives probably somewhere in the American Zone.

5. Ing. Odstracil (C)

After Staller he is, according to my opinion, the best scientist and designer of the Bruenner-Waffen-Konzern, of which he was the official Chief designer. He worked mainly in the fields of rocket projectors, automatic weapons, fuzes and ammunition.

According to my information he did not agree with the new politics of Czechoslovakia, and that is the reason why he had to resign from the Bruenner Waffen Konzern and did not get a new job. He lived in Prague.

6. Ing. Adelf Vambersky (C)

This man was General Manager of the Skoda Konzern (Combine) and in that capacity he was more or less the Chief of research and development in all fields with regard to the combine. He himself was once a designer and he has designed the latest Skoda - locomotives and the well-known heavy 42 cm howitzers of the first world war. After the revolution in May 1945 in Prague he still remained General Manager of the Skoda Konzern for a few months, but then he was arrested. In March 1946 he was condemned to one year in prison, and part of his fortune was confiscated by the Czech National Tribunal. The reason was that he together with some other leading Czechs tried in April 1945 in the American Headquarters, that Prague should be occupied by the Americans and not by the Russians. When I was released from Prague, Vambersky was still in Hospital. I do not know where he is now. He lived on an estate near Tabar (C S R).

7. Ing. Alesch (C)

Until May 1945 he was Chief of Explosia A.G. and Synthesia A.G. He is a former Austrian Officer of the Engineers in Bluman. Alesch is an excellent expert in the field of high explosives, therefore he directed our latest developments in high explosives. He too was dismissed by the new Czech Party and according to my knowledge he did not take another position. He lived in Sentin, near Pardubitz.

8. Dr. Kappel (G)

He, as a chemist was in charge of the laboratories of our plants for high-explosives in Sentin. He himself was a scientist and the inventor of the latest patents. I am sure, that he, as a German could not remain in Czechoslovakia. As far as I know, he escaped into Germany across the American demarcation line and he might live somewhere in the U.S.Zone. Before he lived in Sentin.

9. Ing. Zubaty (C).

He was in charge of our tank-plant in Pilsen with the Skoda-Konzern and he himself was leading the new developments in the field of tank technology. He is an excellent designer in the entire field as well as in all the details of a modern tank, including the engines. He too lost his job and he has no new position. He lived in Pilsen.

10. Dr. Jurczyk (G).

He was the Second Director of the gun-plants in Pilsen with the Skoda-Konzern, which includes the experimental workshops. He himself was a scientist and designer. He invented the latest heavy mortars (30.5 and 42 cm with a range up to 30 km.)

11. Ing. Novy (C)

He was the Chief of our foundries, including the attached plants and the casting houses. He was a specialist in the field of light metal. He is an excellent expert as well as technician. He lived in Pilsen. Where he lives now, I don't know.

12. Professor Dr. Maurer (G).

Before he worked with Krupp's, then he was advisor with the Skoda Konzern in all questions of metallurgy and foundries. He was in the first place a University professor (ordentlicher Professor) at the Academy for Mining in Freiberg/Saxony. As far as I know he had to resign at the instigation of the Russians. He is an excellent scientific capacity on iron and steel including the working-up process and he is also very practical-minded. Where Maurer is at present, I don't know.

13. Ing. Kautsky (C).

In the Bruenner Waffen Konzern he was the specialist for automatic weapons, and in that capacity he played an important part in the development of these apparatus. He used to live in Bruenn. What happened to him since mid-1945 I don't know.

14. Dr. Pavlicek (G).

He was the Chief of the Optiko-Techna. - the optical plants of the Bruenner Waffen Konzern in Prerov. His field was mainly research and development. He was also informed with regard to many particulars concerning his field, inside Germany, as he had to function at general conferences and discussions in these questions, created by various firms under the leadership of Zeiss.

R. lived in Brerov. Whether he is still there, and whether he is still working, I could not find out up to now.

15. Ing. Lochrl (G).

For some decades he was a specialist in the development and manufacture of ammunition with the Skoda-Works in Pilsen. Because he is a German, he had to leave Pilsen. Perhaps he is in the American Zone.

16. Ing. Stancovic (Serb)

He was General Manager of the Vistal - Konzern (H.Q. in Belgrade, main works in Valjevo). In that function he managed the entire Combine. He was a scientist and designer in the field of machine construction, in the construction of bombers and the developing of ammunition.

17. Ing. Neak (C).

He was the Chief of the aircraft-plants AVIA of the Skoda-Konzern in Letáns, near Prague. In the first place he was designer, amongst others of the old types of Czech aircraft and especially of the very successful and well-known Czech demonstration aircraft. He lived in Prague. Where he is now, I don't know.

18. Ing. Ledvinka (Austrian)

He was the chief - designer of the Ringhoffer - Tatra Werke. He himself has designed a number of the most modern cars, amongst them the well-known Tatra-cars, and he developed also the most modern and up to date cars and car engines. At the end of 1945 he was in safe custody in Hesselndorf (Czechoslovakia).

19. Fliegerstabsingenieur Z e y s s

He was in charge of the development of rocket-devices for the Luftwaffe and for the Heereswaffenamt, worked in closest collaboration with the Combines under my management and mainly together with Director Engel, of whose Commission he was a member. Where Zeyss is now, I don't know.

20. Director Ing. J e s t r a b e k.

He was the leading designer with my Bruenner Waffenswerke and he had also a special experimental works shop in Bruenn. He himself was a designer. Special fields : automatic weapons, special ammunition and mainly 3 on A.A. Jestrabek lived in Bruenn, in April he was still in Prague, and by now he should be in Germany.

21. Walter Seest.

He was designer, mainly in the field of Optics, of sound-measurings, etc. with our Optiko-Techna (Bruenner Waffenkonzern in Brerov). Seest is - according to my knowledge - still in prison in Czechoslovakia, in a Camp near Kollin.

22. Baron Hans Ringheffer.

He was one of the main experts in the field of cars and lorries as well as in coachbuilding, where he had international reputation. In Spring 1946 he was still under arrest in Camp Paj - Hagiber.

23. Dipl. Ing. Gold.

He was General Manager of the Ferdinand - Nord - Bahn (Coal-mining). He was one of the main experts in the line of coal-mining, of the utilisation of coal, coking, etc.

24. Dipl. Ing. Klima.

He was the Chief of central administration of the Skoda-Konzern, Prague. He was a specialist in the production of arms and machines of all sorts. He was also a good organizer in the line of production. According to my information he escaped to Germany.

25. Direktor Ing. Sonnwend.

He was director of the Skoda-Werke in Dubnica (Slovakia). He was a specialist in the field of production. Sonnwend lived with his family in Dubnica. In the Spring of 1945 however he escaped to Austria and he is supposed to live in Aussee.

26. Direktor Dr. Witt.

He was Chief of the Bruenner Waffen Werke in Povaska/Bistrica (Slovakia). He was a specialist in business - organisation. Witt lived with his family in Povaska/Bistrica, however, I think that he escaped in good time into Germany.

27. Direktor Ing. Cerwesluhr.

He was once with the Rheinmetall-Werke. During the last years, however, he worked with the Skoda-Werke in the capacity of specialist in the production of tanks and guns. Cerwesluhr was in Prague until the end. Where he is now, I don't know.

28. Direktor Ing. Nasko.

He was the Chief of the Skoda-Werke in Prague-Michow. He is a specialist in the field of production of machine tools and projectiles. Where he is now I don't know.

29. Direktor Ing. Destal.

He was in charge of central administration of the "Bohmisch - B"

Prague. He is a specialist in the field of production.

Where he is now, I don't know.

30. Direktor Dipl. Ing. Lindenberg.

He was the Chief of our plant for aero-engines in Prague - Letnán. He is a specialist in the production of aero-engines.

Lindenberg was under arrest until the end of March in Czechoslovakia. Then he came to Germany and lived in Tegernsee. According to my knowledge he works with the Motor-Pool of the U.S. Army in Bad Wiessee/Tegernsee.