

Report 7

THE LOCATION OF EVACUATED RUHRCHEMIE
PERSONNEL AND DOCUMENTS.

Personnel of Investigating Team

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General

Documents found at Sterkrade showed that some 726 Ruhrchemie personnel were evacuated to various locations in Germany in the autumn of 1944 and early in 1945. Later, information on the location of certain key personnel and of stores of documents was obtained from Lt. Cmdr. Cameron, R.N.V.R. and from interviews with Prof. Martin and others. This information is summarised below :-

1. Dr. Biederbeck and some documents were reported to be at Haberlah Wiese, between Ringelheim and Gebhartshagen, ca. 20 miles S.W. of Braunschweig.
2. A very large collection of documents and drawings were stored in the outhouses of a small moated castle at Reelkirchen about 4 miles S.W. of Blomberg (Lippe). Dr. Rohe, legal advisor to Ruhrchemie, was stated to be living in the village of Reelkirchen.
3. Dr. Roelen, chemist in charge of Ruhrchemie's research and development laboratories and probably the most valuable member of this Company's technical staff was reported as being:
 - (a) At a farm near Salzwedel (55 miles N.N.W. of Magdeburg).
 - (b) At Werben (about 55 miles N.N.E. of Magdeburg).

4. Dr. Roelen's staff and some documents were stated to be at a sugar factory at Grosse Mahner near Salzgitte (S.W. of Braunschweig).
5. Dr. Schaub and the fuel and lubricating oil testing laboratory were reported to be :
 - (a) At Nutlar) both near Arnsberg (ca. 30
 - (b) At Willingen) miles S.E. of Hamm.)
6. Herr von Asboth, Chief Engineer of Ruhrchemie, reported to be at Laube near Schandau, S.E. of Dresden on the Czecho-Slovak border.
7. Dr. Heckel, in charge of iron-catalyst development under Roelen, said to be ill and with his family in the village of Hof, Bavaria.

The reported locations of Dr. Roelen and von Asboth were in areas which were not open to C.I.O.S. teams and a start was, therefore, made in the Braunschweig area.

Investigations in Braunschweig Area, April 25th to 27th, 1945.

The sugar factory at Grosse Mahner was visited at midday on April 26th. It appeared that Ruhrchemie personnel were no longer at the factory although some documents had been left there. These were examined and a number removed. In the village of Grosse Mahner Dr. Büchner, who claimed to be in charge of the analytical laboratory, under Roelen, was located and interrogated.

He stated that it had been intended to carry-on with the development of iron catalysts on a small-scale in the laboratory attached to the sugar factory. No material (stores and apparatus) had, however, arrived, and so this work was never started. Büchner had left Sterkrade on February 22nd to obtain billets, Dr. Noeske being left behind to supervise the packing of the material for evacuation. He believed that Dr. Gehrke had been "called-up" for the armed forces. The only other Ruhrchemie personnel in the Grosse Mahner area were juniors.

Büchner claimed that although he was responsible for analyses of iron catalysts and their synthesis products, the samples were sent in to him with

a code number and he could not tell which catalysts were the best or which products were derived from a given catalyst or under what conditions they were prepared.

He was, however, able to give the following general information. The iron catalyst was in a state of development and frequently gave undesirable oxygen-containing products. The chemical composition was of less importance than the conditions of preparation (i.e. precipitation) and reduction. He understood that the catalyst was precipitated with alkali from a solution of the nitrates of iron, calcium and copper. Catalysts precipitated with sodium carbonate gave lower-boiling products than those precipitated with caustic soda or potash. He believed that for 100 pts. Fe there were 10 pts. CaO and not more than 5 pts. copper. The catalyst contained about 50% by weight of iron and only a small proportion of kieselguhr, as this material had an adverse effect on the catalyst life. The presence of copper facilitated reduction; the proportion was not critical.

The reaction temperature was about 240°C. and the product yield, about 100 gm./Nm³ water gas, in one stage operation. The products in some cases contained as much as 60% of alcohols.

The experiments were on a scale of 1-5 litres catalyst capacity. There were 10 plants of this scale available for use.

Later in the afternoon of the 26th, Dr. Biederbeck was located in the hamlet of Haberlah Wiese and he led the way to a wooden 'barrack' built among trees on a hillside adjacent to iron-ore workings. A number of Ruhrchemie workmen were apparently living in this wooden hut and had accumulated considerable stocks of food there. In several rooms packing cases containing documents and letter files were found; there was only time on that occasion to examine the contents of one of these cases.

On the following day (April 27th) the contents of all the boxes were examined and a number of files and documents removed. On this occasion, Herr Waibel, the financial expert on the Ruhrchemie 'Vorstand' who lived in the nearby village of Gebhartshagen put in an appearance and was interrogated. He claimed persistently

to have no knowledge concerning the technical side, his field being entirely business and finance. He referred to a Dr. Spieske as being equal in importance to Roelen in the field of hydrocarbon research and production. He did not know this man's present location. He confirmed that technical documents had been evacuated to the castle at Reelkirchen but claimed that before they left Sterkrade, all laboratory, research, and secret reports had been burnt in the boiler house on the orders of the Vorstand.

On the Haberlah Wiese site an underground nitrogen plant was under construction. This was known as 'Lack 2'. The entrance tunnel in the hillside where the 'barrack' was situated was found and explored, but the excavations had apparently not proceeded beyond the construction of this tunnel.

Dr. Biederbeck, who was apparently in charge of the nitrogen plant at Sterkrade, was not interrogated.

This completed the investigations in the Braunschweig area.

Investigations in the Blomberg (Lippe) Area, April 28th to May 1st, 1945.

The village of Reelkirchen was located at noon on April 28th, and the small "Wasserschloss" found in accordance with the advance information. The "castle" was more accurately a moderate-sized country house surrounded by a massive wall and a picturesque moat. The main gateway through the encircling wall was flanked by buildings divided into a number of small rooms, which were stacked from floor to ceiling with packing cases and paper sacks containing letter files, drawings, miscellaneous papers, office equipment, etc.

It appeared that Ruhrchemie had equipped these rooms as offices, with a telephone, typewriters, office tables, etc. and when the military authorities in Blomberg first examined the place, only a relatively small number of unopened packing cases and sacks were found there. Later, however, a member of the unit stationed in the district noticed a small boy playing with some blueprints. The boy was questioned concerning the origin of these drawings and as a result a further large number of cases and sacks of documents were found in barns, farm buildings, hay ricks, etc., scattered round the Reelkirchen area. These were collected and stored in the gate-house buildings at the "Wasserschloss", the rooms locked and a guard posted until an

investigating party could arrive to examine them.

The afternoon of the 28th and the whole of 29th, 30th and the 1st of May, was spent in opening the cases and bags and examining the contents. A careful examination of the many hundreds of files and drawings thus revealed would have taken several weeks, and it was only possible to segregate those documents which appeared, from a cursory examination, to contain matter of interest to the CIOIS investigation. In this way, 6 packing cases of documents were collected for more careful examination in London.

Dr. Rohe was located in the village and told that the rooms were being sealed up and that he would be held personally responsible for any interference with them on the part of Ruhrchemie personnel.

The rooms were duly sealed and the U.S. Army Unit in Blomberg given permission to remove the guard.

This completed the investigations in the Blomberg area.

It was felt that the party would not be justified in spending further time following up the other, less well authenticated clues to the whereabouts of personnel and documents, at this stage. It seemed likely that the main mass of evacuated papers had been found at Reelkirchen and if the detailed examination of the material extracted from this location indicated that important information was still lacking, efforts could be made to follow up the remaining clues.

A German-compiled list of Ruhrchemie works and departmental managers, obtained from Lt. Cmdr. Cameron is appended to this Report.

Appendix to Report 7

Ruhrchemie A.G.

Betriebs- und Abteilungsleiter

Prof. Dr. Martin	Metz
Dir. Dr. Hagemann	Neweling
Dir. Waibel	Pabst
Dir. v. Asboth	Redemund
Bärtges	Redicker
Bibus	Rieping
Dr. Biederbeck	Dr. Roelen
Dr. Biermann	Dr. Rohe
Dr. Blank	Dr. Rottig
Briele	Dr. Schaak
Clar	Dr. Schaller
Döring	Dr. Schaub
Ernsting	Scheepers
Dr. Feisst	Scheidt
Dr. Förster	Dr. Schmatloch
Dr. Gehrke	Schmidt
Dr. Goethel	Dr. Schuff
Gottlob	Schulte
Götz	Seeger
Gubin	Sommer
Hartwig	Dr. Spanier
Heger	Spiske
Henke-Stark	Sprunken
Hesseln	Steffe
Holliger	Dr. Stodt
Kagermeier	Strauss
Kalk	Strötgen
Kleinhans	Stubner
Knöllinger	Stuhlpfarrer
Kolling	Tenter
Köppern	Traut
Dr. Krüger	Dr. Velde
Krusekopf	Velder
Kuhlmann	Volk
Lassmann	Wächter I
Lindemann	Wächter II
v.d. List	Dr. Zilly
Lüben	
Meier	
Dr. Meyer	