

[S.S. 735.]

BIBLIOTECA DO EXERCITO

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Ia/54240

TRANSLATIONS OF CAPTURED  
GERMAN DOCUMENTS.

Livro N.º

Pag.

G.H.Q.,

2-2-18

C.G.S. of the Field Army.  
Ic. Nr. 6326. Secret op.

Reports are constantly reaching me that officers on leave give voice to utterances which are calculated to awaken feelings of doubt as to the preparedness of the army for battle. For instance, I am informed that one officer spread the story broadcast in Berlin that an offensive in the West was out of the question, owing to shortage of horses and oats.

The duty of reticence in regard to matters connected with the service applies not merely to the mentioning of units, movements, etc., but even to general questions bearing on the war.

The spreading of such reports usually has its origin in the desire to appear important, a feeling bound up with personal vanity. The authors forget that, in giving way to an unmanly weakness, they are sacrificing the important interests of their country, and causing injury to the conduct of the war which in some circumstances is immeasurably great. Such conduct cannot be censured strongly enough.

I ask all superior officers, especially regimental commanders, to exercise an influence over officers and men in this connection.

(Sgd.) LUDENDORFF.

217th Res. Inf. Regt.  
B.W. 41/18. Personal.

17-2-18.

Reference C.G.S. of the Field Army, 2-2-18. Ic. 6326. Secret op.

The purport of the above-mentioned order, which must only pass through the hands of officers, is to be conveyed to the troops in convenient form by means of instruction framed to meet the end in view.

The harm caused by the inexcusable desire to be the purveyor of news is often very great.

Officers returning from leave or special duty must avoid spreading unfavourable rumours of any kind; it is a remarkable fact that they seldom bring with them any news of an encouraging nature. If incorrect statements are made, it is better to "colour with a rosy hue" than to "paint things black."

Not long ago, an officer, an official, and several N.C.O.s and men spread a rumour—without testing its accuracy—which was calculated to do grave injury to the good name of the men of our regiment. I can only condemn this conduct in the strongest terms; officers and officials, in particular, should avoid such actions.

(Sgd.) JAROTSKY.

C.G.S. of the Field Army.  
Ia. No. 7027. Secret op.G.H.Q.,  
12-3-18.

It has come to my knowledge, through a letter addressed to the Royal Prussian Ministry War, that men on leave have spoken publicly of a revolution which is to break out after war. A soldier, said to come from the industrial region of Rhenish Westphalia, declared in train that, in his home district, men going on leave were taking weapons with them for the aforesaid object, and that it was easy to take home German or captured revolvers, as well as stick hand grenades, separated in two parts. I desire that arrangements be made for the kit and clothing of men going on leave to be searched, as test cases, when occasion offers, before their departure; it will be possible to carry this out in baths and delousing stations. Offences detected are to be severely punished. Above all, I wish to impress on all superior officers, who happen to overhear such objectionable talk, or hear of it through others, that they must deal with it at once without any hesitation. The Home Authorities and the Director of Military Railways have been requested to take corresponding measures.

(Sgd.) LUDENDORFF.

41st Infantry Division.  
II.a.37594. Personal.Div. H.Q.,  
6-6-18.

*The use of weapons to compel obedience in cases of extreme necessity and urgent danger.*

It is shown, by various cases brought before courts-martial, that instances are on the increase, in which subordinates emphatically refuse to accompany their units into the line, whereupon the superior officer neglects to enforce obedience, and fails to compel the cowards to go into the front line, even though it may be necessary to use force and even resort to arms.

I call attention to the great danger that is caused, if other soldiers see and learn that superior officers cannot assert their authority and that the offender gains his end.

It is not merely the right, but the duty of superiors, to insist on obedience, and to enforce it, if necessary, by use of their weapons, even to the length of shooting a man. Extreme necessity and urgent danger, which the law demands as a preliminary condition in such cases, always exist in the face of the enemy.

Commanders of companies, etc., must issue instructions in this connection to their subordinates, especially the N.C.O.s. I shall take severe measures against any officer who fails to show sufficient energy in enforcing the execution of his orders, and I expect commanding officers to give me effective support in a matter so important for the maintenance of discipline.

(Sgd.) GRÄSER.

GENERAL STAFF (INTELLIGENCE),  
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS.

20th August, 1918.

Issued down to Battalions.