CONFIDENTIAL

(Not to be taken into aircraft)

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS

Psychological Warfare Branch

"PAPER BULLETS"

COMBAT PROPAGANDA

(Not to be taken into front lines)

CONFIDENTIAL

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Why leaflets at the front?

Leaflets are the cutting edge of psychological warfare. A leaflet offensive is planned as a war of attrition. It rains on enemy troops until it bogs their fighting spirit and begins to spoil their aim. A storm of leaflets, ahead of our attacks, can make bad fighting weather for enemy soldiers.

Such weather was made in the last war. July 15, 1918, at the height of the « battle for the morale of the German Army », General Ludendorff recorded :

> « *The Army was drenched with enemy propaganda publications. Their great danger to us was clearly recognized. The Supreme Command offered rewards for such as were handed over to us, but we could not prevent them from poisoning the heart of our soldiers.*

How are Leaflets dropped?

1. A free-floating single-sheet, standard 5" × 8" uncalendared, paper *falls at the rate of 5 minutes per 1000 feet.*

The most usual size is 5" × 8. The wind will obviously carry sheets of paper a considerable distance before they land. This " DRIFT " can easely be calculated by the following formula :

$$\frac{H \times W}{12} = \text{Mil of drift}$$

(H = Height in thousands. W = Miles per hour wind).

Thus, in a 10 M.P.H. wind at 18.000 feet, to drift is :

$$\frac{18 \times 10}{12} = 15 \text{ miles.}$$

For a doubled sheet, or 5" × 8" four folded aerial newspaper, the formula is :

$$\frac{H \times W}{18} = \text{Miles of drift.}$$

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Thus, in the same example, the drift is :

$$\frac{18 \times 10}{10} = 10 \text{ miles.}$$

There is almost no type of heavier aicraft that cannot be used for leaflet distribution. Few planes ar equipped with automatic leaflet releases. Most leaflets are discharged through flare-chutes, observation traps, bomb bays or even doors, The essentials are : —

1st : leaflets must be properly packed (if loose they will blow into controls, etc) and when dropped must not shred against the tail.

2nd : packages after clearing the slip stream must « mushroom » open.

Solid packages hitting the ground are no distribution.

A ten-inch diameter flare-chute easily takes 1000 sheet packages of 5" x 8" leaflets. A string, or better a rubber band, encircles each 1000 sheet package horizontally, near the bottom of the sheets. As the falling package tumbles, the leaflets « mushroom » out.

A substitute is packing the leaflets in gummed paper, which is ripped open at one end when dropped. Packages are consigned to aircraft in secure bundles, ordinarily of 10.000 leaflets per bundle.

Psychological Warfare Branch supplies : (1) translations with leaflets so that pilots may study the « paper bullets » consigned to them; (2) reports from prisoner interrogation and other intelligence, on the observed effects of leaflets.

Who else distributes leaflets ?

A. Patrols.

Though not large in quantity, this is important for two reasons. First, it is accurate. Enemy patrols do collect the leaflets and may pass them on. Second, enemy patrols, if persuaded by the leaflets, are the very units in the best position to come over to us — often with valuable information.

If our patrols ask for poster-size leaflets, or leaflets on bright-coloured or dark papers, Psychological Warfare Branch can supply them.

B. Artillery.

This is the most accurate form of front line distribution.

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Distribution by leaflet shells from field guns can hit enemy units 8 miles away. Leaflet shells from mortars, or adapted rifle-grenades, have been perfected for closer ranges.

Leaflet shells were first developed for French 75's in 1918. In North Africa the method was rediscovered through the initiative of a captain (attached to Psychological Warfare Branch A.F.H Q.) who adapted the British 25-pounder smoke shell to carry, and discharge, 800 to 1500 leaflets per shell on a target of 150 yards area at 13,000 yards range.

The shell-burst is set for 300-400 feet up, to windward of target. Shells used at night generally insure that the leaflets wil be picked up by enemy soldiers before their officers can operate counter-measures. Shells used by day are also likely to have fair effect.

The great advantage of leaflet shells is this : alert combat propaganda officers can devise leaflets from last-minute intelligence during battle, and land the leaflets directly on the enemy units to which the leaflets are addressed.

But, leaflet distribution, to be effective, must be continuous and large-scale. Only aircraft can effect this.

What objections to leaflets ?

Criticisms are customarily heard at the start of a leaflet offensive Experience is the answer.

The following criticisms are from the last War. They will be recognized as being heard today word for word. These comments are quoted from G-2 reports of 1918.

Comment : « The pilots detest these papers ; they prefer to drop pamphlets that explode ».

To explode enemy soldiers' illusions is as necessary a part of war as is blowing up their trenches or railheads. A sample of effects is contained in the following excerpt from the interrogation of a German officier :

> « I can only talk as a soldier at the front but there its (propaganda's) effects were disastrous... Even the little *Flug-blaetter*, (American leaflets), — after you read them you imagined you read the truth, that our government was lying to us. I remember one, after I read it I felt like blowing my brains out. I never let one of our men read them — but it was difficult — they were everywhere ».

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Comment : « The Boche is such a disciplined dope he turns all leaflets in, as ordered ».

Experience showed that the percentage of leaflets turned in, according to enemy figures, was 4 % of the leaflets dropped. Their soldiers turned some in, kept the rest and passed them around.

Comment : « What good is propaganda anyway ? Words never won wars ».

The answer is from the other side. When captured enemy documents reveal that their High Command *hates and fears our leaflets :* when captured orders show that their soldiers are to be searched for leaflets before going on furlough ; when enemy commanders are ordered to « assemble their units and give reasonable answers to leaflets » — the facts are then plain about combat propaganda effects.

When enemy soldiers — or enemy units — approach with their hands up — *with leaflets in one hand* — that is what leaflet warfare aims at. That is why aircraft and crews are detailed to « deliver the papers ».

What did leaflets do in the last war ?

The objective in a leaflet offensive is the morale of whole armies. The morale of an enemy army can be undermined. No single weapon does it. Leaflets are the best *proved* weapon, contributing directly to the demoralization of armies.

The morale of the German army in March 1918 was at a sufficiently high level to sustain the greatest offensive — designed as a « break-through » to end the war — of the whole period 1914-1918. It came reasonably close to success, as did the two succeeding offensives.

Six months later the morale of that army was so low that the German High Command requested an armistice.

It is generally agreed that the immediate causes of the German collapse in the autumn of 1918 were : (a) dissipation of reserves, coincident with resumption of war of movement (breaching the Hindenburg lines) : (b) disappearance of one of the two main lines of possible German retreat (the Montmedy-Mezieres railway) : (c) army morale too damaged to carry out a last « Hindenburg retreat », coincident with collapse of civilian morale.

These were decisive, added to the background of war weariness, the crumbling of the left flank extension (Austria-Balkan-Turkey), diminishing

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supplies (especially tanks), the Russian Revolution, the blockade and the hopes of a « Wilson peace ».

In factor (c) cited above, an essential element was the sustained and intensified Allied leaflet offensive. It was the « poisoned arrows of Allied leafllets » — according to the German High Command documents, which finished off all efforts to restore their armies morale enough to save the armies.

September 5, 1918, in an amazing manifesto, Marshal von Hindenburg, the weightiest German leader left, brought the leaflet battle into the open in a desperate appeal to « Army and Homeland ». Hindenburg proclaimed :—

> « The enemy conducts his campaign against our spirit by various means. He bombards our front, not only with a drumfire of artillery, but also with a drumfire of printed paper. Besides bombs which kill the body his airmen throw down leaflets which are intended to kill the soul ».
>
> « Of these enemy leaflets our field-grey men delivered up : in May, 84,000 ; in June 120,00 ; in July, 300,000. A gigantic increase !.. ».
>
> ... « The enemy hopes that many a field-grey soldier will send home the leaflet which has innocently fluttered down from the air. At home it will pass from hand to hand and be discussed at the beer-table, in families, in the sewing room, in factories, and in the street. Unsuspectingly many thousands consume the poison ».

What have leaflets done in this war ?

The morale of the Nazified armies in the fourth year of war, 1943, is by no means impregnable. The same old cracks are appearing as in 1914-1918. Widening the cracks means shortening the war.

Adolf Hitler, on the subject of propaganda, speaks with an experience which few question. He says :

> « This persistent propaganda began to have a real influence on our soldiers in 1915. The feeling against Prussia grew quite quite noticeable amongst Bavarian troops...
>
> ..In this direction the ennemy propaganda began to achieve undoubted success from 1916 onwards ».

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Lt. General von Metsch, German authority on war, says :

« 500.000 pamphlets (weighing one ton) may be more effective than an air raid with 100 tons of explosives ».

In the British campaign in Libya 1940 after a leaflet raid on Bardia 7,000 Italian troops with their general came out and surrendered.

General Wavell, C-in-C Middle East, reported to the War Office, early in 1941, as follows : « Our propaganda achieving great and growing results. Leaflets dropped by R.A.F. over Italian lines distributed by many officers to their men. High Command orders to burn leaflets disobeyed. Opinion among prisoners that leaflets over Italy would weaken Italian will to continue war ».

Captured Italian Colonel, Orlando Figante, commanding 158th Regiment, reported to General Wavell : « Your leaflets worked to destroy our resistance, especially in Bardia. The troops spread them and were demoralized. They brought the leaflets to their officers asking for explanations. We could not give any. The troops felt they had been tricked into the war ».

In 1941 — in Somaliland and Ethiopia, reports from the front stated : « A round total of 6.000 Italian and native conscripts have crossed over to the British lines as a result of pamphlets dropped from the air over the enemy positions. Round Keren, where half a million pamphlets were dropped in one week alone, desertions became so bad that Italian officers wired parts of the front line against their own troops. But still deserters, bringing their rifles with them, came over in groups and whole companies bringing our pamphlets with them ».

In 1943 — The effectiveness of the leaflet compaign in Tunisia may be judged from the following extract from « Mitteilungen fuer das Offizierskorps ». of Mar 43 shows (This is a monthly sheet produced by the German War Office and issued to every officer. It is a kind of Army training Memorandum with a very strong political flavour).

In a recent number a general review of the aims and intentions of enemy propaganda was given. It is urgently necessary that every German soldier should receive precise instruction of this subject. In recent weeks enemy propaganda has risen to a poisonous flood. A recruit who learns during his training what are the tendancies of enemy propaganda and with what means it works, will be immune against its effects when he gets to the front. It cannot therefore be sufficiently urgently impressed on all officers of Depot Units that this question is to be treated as one of burning importance.

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REPORTS BY AIR CREWS

Reports will be collected from wings and H.Q's by the Psychological Warfare Branch.

The wing or H.Q. Intelligence Officer should be given the following information:

Date	Type of leaflet or serial number of leaflet.	Area or target over which dropped

EACH DISTRIBUTION OF LEAFLETS IS PART OF A CAMPAIGN. TO CONDUCT THAT CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVELY, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE BRANCH TO KNOW WHICH LEAFLETS HAVE REACHED THEIR TARGET.

Imp. Audrino.

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