

Rommel, Hitler's Favourite General

and our democratic culture of remembrance

Lecture given by Professor Dr. Wolfram Wette,

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to the existing Rommel monument, organized by the City of Heidenheim

Introduction: Opinions on Rommel are divided*

*"Opinions on Rommel are divided. Whether his name as barracks patron of the Bundeswehr (the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany) is kept or is dropped, will show how serious the Bundeswehr really is about correcting its traditions. Rommel is the test case."*¹

This statement was made by the writer and journalist, Ralph Giordano (1923-2014) 20 years ago with a view to the military – not to civil society, in which there might be a different perception.² Two decades later, the debate on tradition in the Bundeswehr continues.³ There are still barracks and streets named after Rommel as well as monuments to Rommel, including the one in Heidenheim, which dates from 1961.⁴

Giordano, who was a Holocaust survivor himself, always tried to convey a basic insight to his public, which is often overlooked or suppressed. According to this idea, the fundamental crime of Germany was not the murder of European Jews but rather the "war of weapons":

*"The military attack on Europe, the world, and humanity – the war: that was the fundamental crime of National Socialism."*⁵ It cost around 70 million human lives, including the lives of the European Jews. The German politician Norbert Blüm recognized the connection between the war and the murder of the Jews. He stated simply: *"Concentration camps lasted only so long as the front was held."*⁶

According to Giordano, Rommel, the icon of the *Wehrmacht* (the armed forces of Nazi Germany), cannot be taken out of this context.⁷ For this reason, Rommel, as a general of the *Wehrmacht*, should not be used as an example for tradition in the *Bundeswehr*, the German armed forces today. He cannot be a role model for soldiers today, because he served a criminal regime.

In the following, I shall focus on three phases in the reception of Rommel, the war hero. The first phase is during the war, the second during the post-war era, and the third phase began around 1990, when the legend of the "clean" *Wehrmacht* was dispelled.

Phase One: The Beginning of the "Rommel Myth" during the war in North Africa 1941-1943

The Rommel myth came into being during the war in North Africa from 1941 to 1943. What was the *Wehrmacht* doing in North Africa? It was leading an imperialistic war, which violated international law. In 1941 it was actually not on Hitler's war agenda to send German troops – which were soon called the "Afrika-Korps" – to North Africa, as the *Wehrmacht* commanders

were planning the attack on the Soviet Union at that time. The German command opened a secondary theatre of war⁸ in North Africa to support the Axis partner Italy, under Mussolini, in the war they were fighting against the British in the interest of colonial possessions. The Germans had a strategy beyond Egypt towards the Suez Canal, to Palestine, to the oilfields in the Near East, and even as far as Afghanistan and India.

Under the command of the daring general Rommel and his tanks, the German and Italian forces won stunning victories in 1942. But these victories were short-lived. In May 1943 the German and Italian forces had to capitulate.

Rommel's victories provided the material, with which the Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels fashioned the commander of the *Afrika-Korps* into a great German war hero, a fearless and daring swashbuckler, an extraordinarily courageous soldier, who led his troops onward, a cunning strategist; to sum up, an "ideal soldier". At the same time, Goebbels presented Rommel – truthfully enough – as an enthusiastic follower of Hitler's, who admired and even loved his "Führer". In this way Rommel, more than any other Wehrmacht general, embodied the unity of the Wehrmacht and the Nazi regime for the German public. Rommel was the star of the war in North Africa, and not at all against his will; indeed, with his own active assistance.

In this way, in 1942 Rommel advanced to become the best-known German soldier of his time in Germany. There was another phenomenon, which might appear strange at first glance. At the same time as in Germany, the propaganda experts of the enemy British were also working on the Rommel myth, by praising the operational capabilities of the German field marshal. Their obvious aim was to magnify the British overall victory over the Germans and Italians in North Africa, when the time came. As a consequence of British and American propaganda, Rommel became the second best-known German *internationally* – directly after Hitler, as shown in a Gallup poll at the time.⁹

Losses in the war in North Africa were extremely heavy.¹⁰ My colleague in Freiburg, Gerhard Schreiber, estimates: The Allies lost close to 220,000 (dead and prisoners of war), and the Axis powers 620,000, making a total of 840,000.¹¹ This does not include the inhabitants of the North African countries Tunisia, Libya and Egypt who were killed; apparently, they were regarded as regrettable "collateral damage".¹² In view of the enormous loss of human lives, it is not surprising that contemporaries compared the war in North Africa with the battle of Stalingrad, with its heavy losses.¹³ They referred to it as a "second Stalingrad" or "Tunisgrad".¹⁴

Phase Two: Rommel and the legend of the "clean Wehrmacht"

After the end of the Second World War, generals of the Wehrmacht deliberately disseminated the legend of the supposedly "clean" Wehrmacht. They claimed that the Wehrmacht had fought a purely military war in conformance with international law; and had not been involved in war and National Socialist crimes. This image was created as early as November 1945 by a group of high-ranking former Wehrmacht generals. Among them was General Siegfried Westphal, one of the initiators of the Rommel memorial in Heidenheim in 1961.¹⁵ Westphal had been Rommel's closest confidant during the Africa campaign. The memorandum which the generals composed whitewashed and played down the role of the

Wehrmacht in the Second World War. It has been said – pointedly – that although the Wehrmacht lost the war in 1945, it won the subsequent battle for its public image.¹⁶

The prominent name of Rommel was now presented as the “face” of the supposedly “clean” war fought by the Wehrmacht. It is interesting to observe how the assertion that Rommel had somehow been involved in the resistance of 20th July, 1944, was gradually woven into the legend of the “clean” Wehrmacht. His former chief of staff, General Hans Speidel, who later became a Nato general, was particularly influential in suggesting Rommel’s proximity to the resistance.¹⁷ The idea that Rommel had been active in the resistance to Hitler gained increasing acceptance, especially after the trial of Otto Ernst Remer in 1952.¹⁸ Fritz Bauer, the Chief Public Prosecutor in the trial, argued that the members of the resistance were not traitors and perjurers, but that it was legitimate and a dictate of conscience to take forcible action against the dictator and the illegitimate National Socialist state. As Fritz Bauer well knew, this argument could have consequences for former Wehrmacht soldiers.

The victorious Allies did nothing to prevent using Rommel in the service of the Wehrmacht legend. Instead, the Rommel cult flourished anew, with Britons and Americans contributing biographies and popular motion picture films revering the general.¹⁹ The intent remained the same: the British-American victory over the legendary general, the “desert fox”, would cause the victory of the Allies in North Africa to shine all the brighter.²⁰

It is no accident that this second phase of Rommel’s further elevation to hero-status coincided with West Germany’s rearmament and the integration of West German armed forces into the Nato. This was the historical and political context for the dedication of the Rommel memorial in Heidenheim in 1961. The memorial drew a direct and entirely uncritical line of continuity back to the National Socialist era.

Phase Three: Farewell to the Wehrmacht legend and to Rommel

In the third phase, research in military history gradually destroyed the Wehrmacht legend. Historians from Germany’s Military History Research Office published the first critical research papers at the end of the 1960s. At this point I would like to mention two colleagues by name: Manfred Messerschmidt and Klaus-Jürgen Müller. Public enlightenment on the role of the Wehrmacht culminated in the two Wehrmacht exhibitions, which attracted a great deal of attention and more than one million visitors in the years 1995 to 2004.²¹ Generally speaking, the deeper historical research went into the history of the Wehrmacht, the clearer it became that not only did it wage wars in violation of international law; it was also involved in many crimes, including the murder of European Jews.

Rommel, an important protagonist in the wars of Nazi Germany, must be placed in this context, although he had nothing to do with the systematic murder of Jews during his operations in North Africa. During this campaign, however, Jews were persecuted in other ways, for example, as forced labourers in defence construction. More on this subject can be found in the commendable papers written by Wolfgang Proske.²² Furthermore, it is important to know that the political command in Berlin planned to extend the Holocaust to the states of North Africa and the Near East. The SS Task Force for Egypt, under the command of Walter Rauff,²³ had already begun preparations for the murder of the approximately 700,000 Jews in North Africa. They never came to fruition, but only because of the negative course of war for

the Axis powers Germany and Italy.²⁴ When Rommel later served as commander in the Italian theatre of war, he gave commands contrary to international law, whose diction is hardly different from the criminal orders given by German generals in Eastern Europe.²⁵ They exude the spirit of National Socialist annihilation policy.

The third phase was marked by critical, historical clarification. The veneration of Rommel became less and less acceptable, and the Africa veterans lost influence. On the local level of civil society, including Heidenheim, critical voices became louder. Beginning in the 1990s, German civil society parted with the post-war politics of history, which had been given the unfortunate name of “coming to terms with the past”. In its place, a democratic culture of remembrance developed, in which there was and is no room for the glorification of war and the military. Some historians call this new orientation “post-heroic”. For present-day generations, the democratic culture of remembrance creates a framework for orientation and sets the standards for evaluating Rommel.

Mine war and mine victims

Rainer Jooss’ sculpture of a landmine victim, which is presented to the city today, gives occasion to say some words about the landmine war in North Africa and its late-term consequences. Both warring parties used tanks and landmines on a large scale as weapons of war in the North African desert.²⁶ Tank mines and anti-personnel mines served to limit the mobility of the enemy’s tank units. Exact statistics on the mines used then are not available. They are estimated to have been in the millions, perhaps 20 million or more.

For example, German Afrika-Korps pioneers, under the command of Rommel, planted so-called “*Teufelsgärten*” (devil’s gardens) in the area around the small Egyptian town El Alamein. These were “*labyrinths of horseshoe-shaped landmine fields, which opened in the direction of the British enemy*”(Montgomery)²⁷. They were intended to entangle the enemy and hinder him from continuing his advance.

It cannot be determined how many people fell victim to the landmine war, because mine victims are not a special category in the statistics of war losses. Who were the victims of the mine war? They were primarily the soldiers of both parties of war. It is eye-opening to list their countries of origin so that we can better understand the multi-national character of this desert war. The participants were Britons, South Africans, Indians, Australians, New Zealanders, Arabs, Circassians, Jews, Frenchmen, men from France’s African colonies, Americans, Italians, Libyan soldiers under Italian command, and, of course, Germans. In addition, the native Arab civil population was affected by the mine war; that includes Tunisians, Libyans and Egyptians. Nobody asked them if they were willing to let the aggressors use their countries as battlefields. The international dimension of the world war unleashed by Germany is reflected in North Africa.²⁸

The parties of war generally planted their mines according to a plan, so that they could remove them after a battle and use them in their next operations. Under pressure, however, as when an enemy attack was imminent, the pioneers did not bother with any mine-laying plans, but simply threw them out of their trucks onto the desert. Later, covered with sand, they could no longer be found. Even today mines can come to the surface, exposed by wind or rain, where they glisten in the sunlight. They catch the interest of nomads – men, women, children

– who frequently pay for their curiosity with their lives or with mutilation. *“According to Egyptian data, around 3300 people have lost their lives through the explosion of abandoned landmines, since Egypt started to keep statistics in the 1980s; 7500 have been maimed.”*²⁹ This is just in Egypt! The country does not have the financial means to completely clear these areas of mines. Since 1981 they have been able to clear 40% of the areas in question. 60% are still unsafe. *“If we continue to work at this speed”*, said an Egyptian minister, *“it will take another 100 years to clear all mines and unexploded bombs.”*³⁰ The landmines in the desert sand also inhibit the economic development of Egypt and Libya, where natural resources such as oil, natural gas, and ores lie under the mined sand. The mines continue to be a downright curse for the population.

The sculpture “Landmine Victim” can stimulate any number of questions and investigations. For example: Why is it so difficult to obtain reliable information about the number of landmine dead during the war in North Africa?³¹ Are there reports about mines planted, but never retrieved? What do we know about the civilian victims of the landmine war in North Africa, both during the Second World War and in the decades that followed? What sort of attention has been given to the landmine war in the historical depictions of the participating countries? What did German, Italian and British military historians write about the Arab population of North Africa? Were agreements signed after the war covering the compensation of native victims and the question of costs for a systematic clearing of the mines?³² Were there reparations of any kind?

The continuing threat by landmines to many people world-wide led to a huge international campaign in the 1990s. Its goal was to condemn and outlaw the production and use of anti-personnel mines in general. The campaign was successful. In December 1997 the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was signed in Ottawa, Canada. More than 160 states have signed it by now, but some superpowers have not. The “International Campaign to Ban Landmines” (ICBL) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997. Since 1999 the treaty is legally binding international law.³³

As part of his America-first policy, President Donald Trump, the friend and protector of the American weapons industry and the National Rifle Association (NRA), struck out in January 2020. He made void the prohibition of anti-personnel mines enacted by his predecessor, Barack Obama, and allowed American armed forces to make use of this weapon again world-wide.³⁴ That is the present situation. It urges us to leave Rommel’s virtual commander’s post and to concern ourselves with the victims of war violence, landmine victims, in particular.

Our civil society and our democratic culture of remembrance do not need “desert foxes” as role models, but people with a humanitarian and peaceful orientation.

The Shadow of the Counter-Monument

In the military milieu – the Bundeswehr, reservists, veterans’ associations – there are still traditionalists who lament the passing of the Wehrmacht as a model.³⁵ They are interested in keeping Rommel, the model soldier and icon, in the tradition as a craftsman of war. But the change in thinking cannot be halted. Most of the names of Wehrmacht generals given to properties of the Bundeswehr in the 1960 – under the protection of the legend of the “clean” Wehrmacht – have been deleted.³⁶ The remaining two Rommel barracks will not last

indefinitely, since it has become clear that Rommel did not belong to the resistance of 20th July, 1944. The latest directive of the Bundeswehr concerning standards for tradition said unequivocally in 2018: “*Military excellence is not sufficient.*”³⁷ Only an outstanding deed in the name of justice and freedom can be considered worthy of tradition, for example, in the resistance against National Socialism. This is not the case with Rommel.

Rommel belonged to a different world. In 1996 the Munich historian Ludolf Herbst characterized this world as follows: “*National Socialism was a product of war, found its purpose in war and there, in war, it finally found its downfall.*”³⁸ Our historical-political position today was expressed succinctly in an important resolution of the German Bundestag (Parliament) on 15th May, 1997. Our representatives acknowledged: “*The Second World War was a war of aggression and annihilation, a crime for which National Socialist Germany was responsible.*”³⁹ When we speak offhandedly of Hitler’s favourite general, we should always keep in mind that Hitler was not just any statesman and commander-in-chief, but the key player in these happenings. He was the “*criminal of the millennium*”, as it was recently put by Heribert Prantl in the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*,⁴⁰ in order to counter those new voices who would relativise and play down the crimes of the Third Reich. This was precisely in the spirit of Ralph Giordano, the writer whom I quoted at the beginning of this talk, as designating the war of weapons as the main crime of National Socialism.

The world of Rommel, the professional soldier, was – drawing on the words of his biographer Ralf Georg Reuth – that of “*battlefields and barrack yards, which he had never left*”⁴¹. In the 1920s he participated in the organisation of the illegal “*Schwarze (black) Reichswehr*”, paramilitary formations hostile to the Weimar Republic. Rommel was not involved in the resistance. He had some knowledge of it – precisely what cannot be determined – and he did not denounce anybody, at least, which speaks in his favour.⁴² But he did not belong to the resistance.

To make one thing clear: Rommel will retain the status of a prominent person of his time. But the evaluation of his actions has changed fundamentally in the last decades, and it will continue to change. What we are renegotiating here today is only one step in a process of discourse which has not yet been completed.

The world of “barrack yards and battlefields” has nothing in common with the values of our constitution, nor especially with its central maxim of peace. This means: Rommel is history, war history, National Socialist history, just as are Ludendorff, Hindenburg, Manstein, Jodl, Keitel and others. They have nothing to say to us today, at least nothing which could serve as an orientation for the future. They are history, museum and nothing else. **Rommel, the archetype of German militarism, is not of our time, but contrary to it. We owe him nothing, neither within the military milieu nor without. Our civil society’s culture of remembrance is committed to other values: democracy, a just state, human rights, freedom and peace.**

From now on, the shadow of a fragile-looking sculpture of a landmine victim will fall on the monumental and martial memorial to the commander, here, in Rommel’s very place of birth. In my view, the sculpture is not an addition to the heroic monument of 1961, but rather a **counter-monument**. The cripple directs our attention to the victims, and these cast a shadow upon the prominent warrior and his martial spirit. To conclude with a more general statement:

On the one hand, we see the symbol for the war logic of the past; on the other hand, we see the symbol for the hundreds of thousands of victims of the war in North Africa, who urge us to create a lasting peace. I believe that this is a good basis for the continuing development of the culture of remembrance in Heidenheim. I congratulate the city on taking this step into the future.

*I thank my friends and colleagues Detlef Bald, Helmut Donat, Jakob Knab and Klaus A. Maier for their comments and suggestions.

¹Ralph Giordano: Die Traditionslüge. Vom Kriegerkult in der Bundeswehr. Köln 2000, S. 337 f.

² Die unterschiedlichen Rommel-Bilder wurden zuletzt analysiert von Daniel Sternal: Ein Mythos wankt. Neue Kontroverse um den „Wüstenfuchs“ Erwin Rommel. Gerstetten 2017.

³ Siehe dazu das Gutachten des Wissenschaftlichen Dienstes des Deutschen Bundestages zur Traditionswürdigkeit Erwin Rommels für die Bundeswehr (2019). Im Internet greifbar unter: www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/645808/244e391b6318b5a.

⁴ Das Rommel-Ehrenmal wurde im Jahre 1961 vom „Verband Deutsches Afrika-Korps“, einer Organisation ehemaliger Wehrmachtssoldaten, errichtet. Als Schirmherr fungierte seinerzeit der baden-württembergische Innenminister Hans Karl Filbinger (CDU).

⁵Ralph Giordano: Die zweite Schuld oder von der Last Deutscher zu sein. Hamburg, Zürich 1987, Kap. „Wehrmacht und Krieg – die heiligen Kühe. Über das Hauptverbrechen Hitlerdeutschlands“, bes. S. 170 f.

⁶ So wird Norbert Blüm zitiert in: Der Spiegel Nr. 28 vom 10. 7.1978. Siehe: <https://www.stiftung-20-juli1944.de/reden/widerstandskampfer-und-kriegsopfer-karl-weishauptl-20071978>

⁷ Giordano, Traditionslüge (wie Anm. 1), S. 338

⁸ Peter Lieb: Krieg in Nordafrika 1940-1943. Leipzig 2018, weist darauf hin, dass es sich aus der Sicht der Alliierten zu diesem Zeitpunkt um den Hauptkriegsschauplatz gehandelt habe.

⁹ Ralf Georg Reuth: Erwin Rommel. Des Führers General. München, Zürich 1987, S. 90.

¹⁰ Gerhard Schreiber: Der Zweite Weltkrieg. München 2002, S. 75 f.

¹¹Gerhard Schreiber: Das Ende des nordafrikanischen Feldzugs und der Krieg in Italien 1943-1945. In: Die Ostfront 1943/44. Der Krieg im Osten und an den Nebenfronten. (= Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, Bd. 8. Hrsg. vom Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt). München 2007, S. 1100-1163, Zitat: S. 1109.

¹² Zu den Opfern aus Ländern der Dritten Welt siehe den innovativen Band: „Unsere Opfer zählen nicht“. Die Dritte Welt im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Hrsg. von Recherche International e.V. Bonn 2014, Nachdruck Bonn 2019 (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Schriftenreihe Bad 10408).

¹³ Bezug auf Rüdiger Overmans: Das andere Gesicht des Krieges. Leben und Sterben der 6. Armee. In: Stalingrad. Ereignis, Wirkung, Symbol. Hrsg. von Jürgen Förster. München/Zürich 1992, S. 439-446.

¹⁴ Siehe den Eintrag „Tunesienfeldzug“ in: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunesienfeldzug>.

¹⁵ Zur Vita von Westphal siehe Wolfgang Proske: Siegfried Westphal: „Erfüllt von der moralischen Verpflichtung, stets ‚Coleur‘ zu beweisen ...“. In: ders. (Hrsg.), Täter Helfer Trittbrettfahrer, Bd. 8: NS-Belastete aus dem Norden des heutigen Baden-Württemberg, Gerstetten 2018, S. 397 - 415; vgl. auch Hendrik Rupp: Vehikel für die „saubere Wehrmacht“. Rommel-Denkmal. Beim Heidenheimer Heimat- und Altertumsverein sprach Dr. Wolfgang Proske über Siegfried Westphal, den „großen Unbekannten“ hinter dem Denkmal. In: Heidenheimer Zeitung, 3.5.2019.

¹⁶ Das Bild stammt von dem US-amerikanischen Historiker Omer Bartov.

¹⁷Hans Speidel: Invasion 1944. Ein Beitrag zu Rommels und des Reiches Schicksal. Tübingen 1948. Hier wurde Rommel gezielt zum Widerstandskämpfer stilisiert und damit heroisiert. Siehe auch Elmar Krautkrämer: Generalleutnant Dr. phil. Hans Speidel. In: Gerd Ueberschär (Hrsg.), Hitlers militärische Elite, Bd. 2: Vom Kriegsbeginn bis zum Weltkriegsende. Darmstadt 1998, S. 251.

¹⁸ Irmlud Wojak: Fritz Bauer 1903-1968. Eine Biographie. München 2009.

¹⁹ Im Einzelnen beschrieben von Reuth, Erwin Rommel (wie Anm. 9).

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- ²⁰ So auch das Urteil des britischen Generals Sir David Fraser: Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel. In: Gerd R. Ueberschär: Hitlers militärische Elite. Bd. 2: Vom Kriegsbeginn bis zum Weltkriegsende. Darmstadt 1998, S. 184-193, hier: S. 192.
- ²¹ Hannes Heer/Klaus Naumann (Hrsg.): Hannes Heer/Klaus Naumann (Hrsg.), Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941-1944. Hamburg 1995.
- ²² Siehe Wolfgang Proske: Zwei Rollen für Erwin Rommel beim Aufmarsch der Wehrmacht in Libyen und Ägypten, 1941-1943. In: ders. (Hrsg.), Täter Helfer Trittbrettfahrer. Bd. 3: NS-Belastete aus dem östlichen Württemberg, Gerstetten 2016.
- ²³ Siehe Martin Cüppers: Walter Rauff – in deutschen Diensten. Vom Nazi-Verbrecher zum BND-Spion. Darmstadt 2013.
- ²⁴ Siehe im Einzelnen Proske, Zwei Rollen, S. 153-176, bes. 175; sowie Klaus-Michael Mallmann/Martin Cüppers: Halbmond und Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich und Palästina. Darmstadt 2. Aufl. 2007.
- ²⁵ Siehe besonders den berüchtigten „Gesindelbefehl“ vom 23.9.1943, den Rommel als Oberbefehlshaber Italien-Nord (Heeresgruppe B) herausgab: „Irgendwelche sentimentalen Hemmungen des deutschen Soldaten gegenüber Badoglio-hörigen Banden in der Uniform des ehemaligen Waffenkameraden sind völlig unangebracht. Wer von diesen gegen den deutschen Soldaten kämpft, hat jedes Anrecht auf Schonung verloren und ist mit der Härte zu behandeln, die dem Gesindel gebührt, das plötzlich seine Waffen gegen seinen Freund wendet.“ Zit. nach Proske, Zwei Rollen, S. 175. Zum Zusammenhang Gerhard Schreiber: Deutsche Kriegsverbrechen in Italien. Täter, Opfer, Strafverfolgung, München 1996, S. 49-55, und Friedrich Andrae: Auch gegen Frauen und Kinder. Der Krieg der deutschen Wehrmacht gegen die Zivilbevölkerung in Italien 1943/1945, München/Zürich 1995, S. 49.
- ²⁶ Zur Definition von Landminen und Streumunition sowie zu weiterführenden Informationen siehe den Eintrag: <https://sicherheitspolitik.bpb.de/m5/articles/landmines-and-cluster-munitions>.
- ²⁷ Paul Anton Krüger: Rommels explosives Erbe. Vor 75 Jahren begann die Schlacht von El-Alamein – und für viele Bewohner im Nordwesten Ägyptens ist der Zweite Weltkrieg noch immer nicht vorbei: Mehr als 17,5 Millionen Minen liegen hier weiter im Boden vergraben. In: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 20.10.2017. Siehe: <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/aegypten-rommels-explosives-erbe-1.3717426>. Siehe auch den Beitrag von Elisabeth Lehmann: Ägypten. Das Land der vergessenen Minen: In: Deutschlandfunk 13.6.2015: www.deutschlandfunk.de/aegypten-das-land-der-vergessen.
- ²⁸ Siehe den Band „Unsere Opfer zählen nicht“ (wie Anm. 12).
- ²⁹ Krüger, Rommels explosives Erbe (wie Anm. 27).
- ³⁰ Ebd., gemeint ist die Entwicklungsministerin Sahar Nasr.
- ³¹ Zu Ägypten gibt es Forschungen und eine reichhaltige internationale Literatur. Siehe: Landmines from External Powers in World War II at El-Alamein in Egypt: link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-64255854-2_3, nicht dagegen zu Libyen.
- ³² Zum Komplex Minenräumung siehe den gut informierten Eintrag: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minenraeumung.
- ³³ Übereinkommen über das Verbot des Einsatzes, der Lagerung, der Herstellung und der Weitergabe von Antipersonenminen und über deren Vernichtung (1997). In: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%9Cbereinkommen_%C3%BCber_das_Verbot_des_Einsatzes,_der_Lagerung,_der_Herstellung_und_der_Weitergabe_von_Antipersonenminen_und_%C3%BCber_deren_Vernichtung g. Siehe auch den Eintrag „Landmine“ : de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landmine
- ³⁴ Die USA traten dem Ottawa-Ankommen nicht bei. Gleichwohl wies Präsident Obama das amerikanische Militär an, keine Personenminen einzusetzen. Zu Trumps gegenläufiger Politik siehe: DIE ZEIT, 1.2.2020: www.fr.de/politik/donald-trump-hebt-landminen-verbot-..
- ³⁵ Zu diesen Traditionalisten siehe Detlef Bald/Johannes Klotz/Wolfram Wette: Mythos Wehrmacht. Nachkriegsdebatten und Traditionspflege. Berlin 2001.
- ³⁶ Siehe dazu das Gutachten des Wissenschaftlichen Dienstes des Deutschen Bundestages (wie Anm. 3), Abschnitt 2: Die bisherige Umbenennungspraxis bei Namensgebern mit Wehrmachtbezug.
- ³⁷ So die Bundesministerin der Verteidigung, Ursula von der Leyen, in einem Tagesbefehl vom 28.3.2018 zum neuen Traditionserlass. Zitiert nach: Deutscher Bundestag, Wissenschaftliche Dienste (wie Anm. 3).
- ³⁸ Ludolf Herbst: Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933-1945. Entfesselung der Gewalt. Rassismus und Krieg, Frankfurt am Main 1996, S. 9.
- ³⁹ Entschließung des Deutschen Bundestages, 13. Wahlperiode, 175. Sitzung am 15.5.1997, S. 15818-15835.
- ⁴⁰ Heribert Prantl: Von Eis bedeckt. Vor 75 Jahren wurden Dietrich Bonhoeffer und seine Mitstreiter von den Nazis ermordet. Der Mut des Gedenkens: Erinnerung statt Klopapierwitze. In: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Nr. 80, 4./5.4.2020, S. 5.
- ⁴¹ Reuth, Erwin Rommel (wie Anm. 9), S. 17.

⁴² Vgl. die neueste Studie zum Thema von Linda von Keyserlingk-Rehbein: Nur eine „ganz kleine Clique“? Die NS-Ermittlungen über das Netzwerk vom 20. Juli 1944. Berlin 2018. Ergebnis: Die Verschwörer seien sich sicher gewesen, dass Rommel sie nicht unterstützen würde.