



Siegrunen

THE WAFFEN-SS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



Unidentified SS-Standartenfuehrer. If anyone knows who he is or with what outfit he served, please write in!

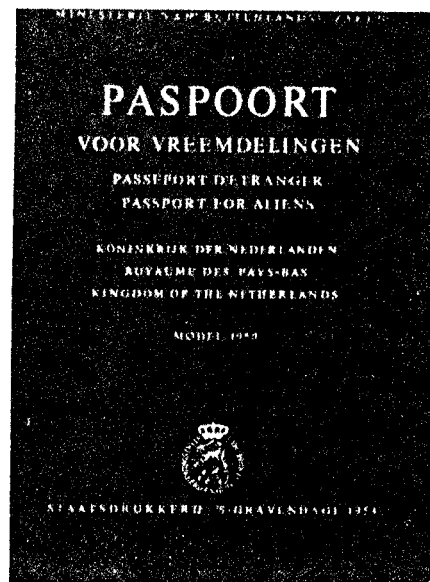
EDITORIAL

Whenever the contributions of the Waffen-SS on the field of battle are discussed the general consensus now is that its soldiers were good, if not superior soldiers and the organization as a whole was well ahead of its time. Of course this sentiment is only valid in the field of professional military journalism; for the most part the popular press and media is still content to portray the members of the Waffen-SS as "deranged beasts" and "Nazi monsters."

But even more impressive to me than what the soldiers of the Waffen-SS accomplished in combat, was their performance after the war when they became perhaps the most highly persecuted body of soldiery of modern times. They faced execution on the spot, long internments in prisons and slave labor camps (and many were faced with so-called "automatic arrest" even after being released the first time!), cruel and grueling trials for alleged "war crimes," general ostracization from society and inability to secure even minimum benefits for disabling war wounds, etc. For many foreign W-SS volunteers the situation was even worse; they often found themselves deprived of their citizenship and basic civil rights. In Holland for instance, nearly 50,000 surviving W-SS volun-

teers (according to one Dutch SS officer who was expelled from the country after he tried to speak up for the veterans, more than 60,000 Dutchmen actually served in the Waffen-SS), found themselves to be declared "aliens" following their release from concentration camps.

Not only were they no longer Dutch citizens but they



Dutch passport that Dutch W-SS vets are required to carry, signifying their "alien" status!

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were forced to carry around a passport certifying them as "resident aliens," without the benefits of Dutch citizenship. It made quite a contrast to the hordes of non-Europeans from the Dutch colonies who flooded the country after the war and gained automatic citizenship! In any event, many former veterans were forced to hide their past identities as best as possible if they wished to get anywhere in society. One former Dutch Waffen-SS volunteer rose to the leadership of a major political party in parliament before he was "exposed" by the usual disinformation network.

For those SS soldiers who were incarcerated in communist countries, their lot was an extraordinarily hard one. If they managed to survive the constant threat of execution or starvation, it was still nearly impossible to maintain their health. And this resulted in many premature deaths among returnees from the Gulags of Eastern Europe (and France - which also ran brutal slave labor operations with SS prisoners!).

Faced with the worst possible prospects in all regards, a small group of veterans from the 7th SS Mtn. Div. "Prinz Eugen" along with their former commander, Otto Kumm, met in a Hamburg beer cellar in 1949, with the aim of doing something to assist their broken comrades. What developed was a tight-knit self-help organization (the H.I.A.G.), which over the years became highly successful in providing assistance to those veterans and their families who needed it, combatting the constant defamation of the Waffen-SS and seeking out MIA's and lost comrades. Without any whining or complaining, and with virtually the entire global "establishment" against them, the veterans of the Waffen-SS managed to rebound



from devastating personal hardships and resume successful, worthwhile lives. In the process, through a vigorous publishing program, they have also restored the proper respectability due to their former "troop" in the eyes of most military professionals and historians.

What the veterans in Germany and Belgium in particular have accomplished in the post-war years, in the face of the massive hate and smear campaign against them, is certainly as admirable in its own way as their achievements on the battlefield!

Disinformation

One of the obstacles the veterans of the Waffen-SS and other German military services (see the present case of Kurt Waldheim in Austria) have had to contend with is a continuous campaign of slanderous disinformation conducted by people who are seemingly cursed by an endless supply of hatred. A few years back the photo shown here was "floated" to the world news media as a tie-in with the ceaseless anti-Nazi/anti-Arab-Moslem propaganda campaign. It is a pretty good demonstration of distortion at its finest.

The original caption read: "The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem visiting a Concentration Camp with Adolf Eichmann," and the arrow was put in place to indicate "Eichmann."

What the photo really showed was an inspection of a member of SS-Gebirgsjaeger Rgt. 27/13th SS Div. "Handschar" (i.e. Croat Moslem), by the Grand Mufti. The man identified as "Eichmann" was the commander of a "Handschar" medical company, and the man on his right in the ski cap was a Croatian veterinarian in the division. The corrections were pointed out in the W-SS veteran's magazine but it is highly doubtful that any retraction was ever made in publications where the photo may have appeared.

Perspective

On a semi-annual basis here in the U.S.A., a grand howl is raised to the high heavens by our "establishment" leaders about the endless horrors of "Nazi Atrocities," allegedly committed some 40+ years ago and how they must always be remembered because they can never be "surpassed" and so on and so forth. Of course what they never bother stating is that the "Nazi Crimes," even in their most wildly exaggerated form have long since

been surpassed many times over by the crimes of International Communism. The following figures for the "International Communist Holocaust" were compiled by a group of independent scholars and originally appeared in the French Figaro-Magazin for 18 November 1978:

Victims of Communism in the USSR 1917-78: 69,700,000

Red China: 63,784,000

The Katyn Massacre: 10,000

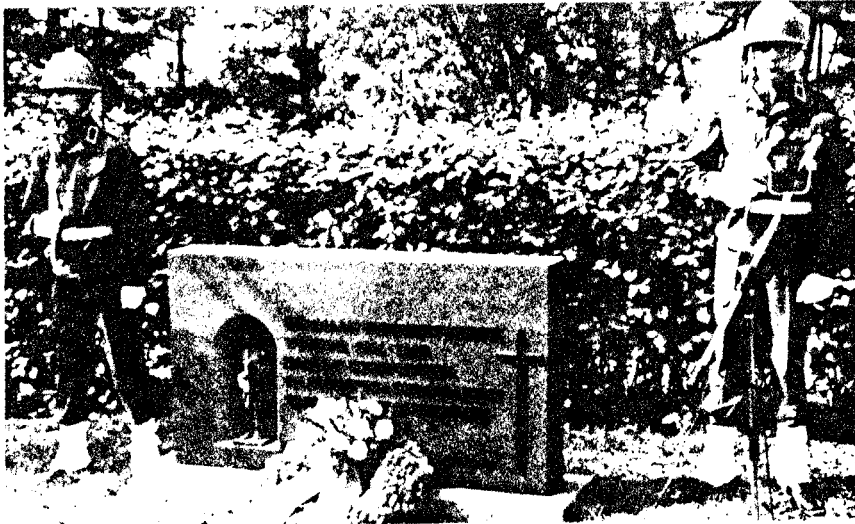
The Massacre of German Expellees and Refugees in 1945/46: 2,923,000

Cambodian Massacres: 2,500,000

Murders in East Germany, Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, 1945-75: 500,000



German POWs after 10+ years in Soviet confinement.



memorial to the fallen members of the Finnish Volunteer Battalion of the Waffen-SS being guarded by present day Finnish soldiers! Quite a contrast to the Bitburg

Murders due to Communist Aggression in other lands:
500,000

Total number of deaths attributable to Communism
(through 1978!): 142,917,000

Of course you can add on a few hundred thousand at least since 1978. But don't bother looking for our newspapers or politicians to go into a frenzy over these figures. In fact they would rather not deal with this situation at all, since Western Capitalism and the USA in particular played quite a huge role in supporting our "noble" Communist allies while they were carrying out the bulk of their butchery. It was U.S. rations, munitions and motor vehicles that enabled the mobile NKVD extermination squads to move through Europe in the wake of the Red Army and slaughter the local freedom fighters, and that is something our politicians cannot deal with. Best to stick with the nasty "Nazis" and their alleged misdeeds - but no questions permitted, please!

Of course we must also ignore the fact that it was the "Nazis" and their European allies, with the Waffen-SS in the vanguard, that carried out the only serious attempt made to eliminate the world's greatest butchers, the International Communists!

One last figure of note to mull over about this "hidden holocaust." The German Armed Forces lost 985,316 men (including European volunteers) killed in action on the Eastern Front, but they lost 1,110,000 men in Soviet captivity! These are truly the "lost" victims of WWII.

Next Issue

some more extended commentary on the despicable terrorist actions of the OSI/KGB in the U.S.A.

Also forthcoming: The "Prinz Eugen" Div. in the Frontlines, The Combat History of the 15th Waffen-Grenadier Div. der SS (Latvia #1), SS Brigade "Shudlt" and the Stalingrad Relief Effort, and much, much more.

Welcome

A new staff member of Siegrunen is Mark C. Yerger, whose first superlative research effort, "The Command Roster of the 31st SS Volunteer Grenadier Division" appears in this issue. He has already turned in several remarkable contributions for use in future issues of Siegrunen and I am certainly delighted to have his erudite assistance!

Cemetery, where Reagan said he tried to "turn his back" to the graves of the Waffen-SS dead!

He is also working on a full-scale history of the "Das Reich" Div. and is particularly interested in obtaining photos and documents on personalities connected with that formation. If you can assist him in any way, please contact him at:

Mark C. Yerger
846 Pleasure Rd.
Lancaster PA 17601

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COMMAND ROSTER OF THE 31ST SS VOLUNTEER GRENADIER DIV. ("BATSCHKA") FEBRUARY-MARCH 1945

Compiled by Mark G. Yerger

Commander: Oberfuehrer Gustav Lombard, holder of the Knight's Cross and previous commander of an SS cavalry regiment and the Italian SS Brigade. He completed a divisional commander's instructional course in Hirschberg, Silesia in August 1944.

Chief-of-Staff (1a): Sturmbannfuehrer Otto Reuter, a recipient of the German Cross in Gold on 14 February 1942. He had previously served as "1a" with the 13th SS Mtn. Div. "Handschar" (Croation Nr. 1).

Logistics Officer (1b): Obersturmfuehrer Johann Lehner

Intelligence Officer (1c): Ostuf. Gerhard Krauschaar (or Krauschar).

SS Volunteer Grenadier Rgt. 78

(Reformed from the remnants of Waffen-Gebirgs-Rgt. der SS 55 from the 23rd SS Mtn. Div. "Kama" [Croatian Nr. 2].)

Commander: Obersturmbannfuehrer Hermann Frimmersdorf, who had previously commanded the SS Panzergrenadier School "Kienschlag," near Prague.

I. Btl.: Stubaf. Kurt Pacher, who had previously commanded the Replacement Bn. (SS Feldersatz Btl. 54) of 4th SS Panzergrenadier Bde. "Nederland."

II. Btl.: Hauptsturmfuehrer Emil Maitre; previous commands included a company in SS Inf. Rgt. 4 and II. Btl./SS-



Hstuf. Maitre, CO II./SS-Rgt. 78.



MIA



41 399
ADAMES, Wilhelm
SS Pz Gren., 1926,
Pustberg
Stubf. SS Frw.
Gren.-Rgt. 80
MARBURG Ungarn

31. SS-Frw. Gr. Div. "Batschka"

Emblem: A 12-point Stag's head, adopted during the Division's formation in the Summer of 1944 in the Batschka-German region of Southern Slovakia and Northern Hungary. The Division absorbed part of 23. Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS "Kama" and the SS Polizei Rgt. "Brixen." Otherwise it was mostly ethnic German in composition (plus some Reichsdeutsche trainees and officers).

Panzergrenadier Rgt. 4 "Der Fuehrer."

III. Btl.: Hstuf. Theodor Clausen, who had transferred to the 31st SS Div. from 3rd SS Panzer Div. "Totenkopf."

SS Volunteer Grenadier Rgt. 79

(Reformed from the remnants of Waffen Gebirgs Rgt. der SS 56/"Kama".)

Commander: Stubaf. Sepp Syr, formerly the commander of Waffen-Gebirgs-Rgt. der SS 56.

I. Btl.: Hstuf. Robert Gloning, previously the Logistics Officer (1b) on the staff of the "Haudschar" Division.

II. Btl.: Stubaf. Ewald Schumacher; he was a pre-war officer in the General (Allgemeine) SS.

III. Btl.: Hstuf. Werner Zimmermann; transferred to the 31st SS Div. from the SS Troop Training Grounds "Moorlager."

SS Volunteer Grenadier Rgt. 80

Commander: Stubaf. Rudolf Schoen.

I. Btl.: Stubaf. Helmut Gantz.

II. Btl.: Standartenfuehrer (?) Hans Kurt Kaestner.

III. Btl.: Used as a replacement unit at this time; commander not known.

SS Volunteer Artillery Rgt. 31

(Reformed from the remnants of Waffen-Gebirgs-Artillerie-Rgt. der SS 23.)

Commander: Not known; possibly Stubaf. (reserve) Karl Dohnen.

I. Detachment: Stubaf. Karl Dohnen, who was the previous commander of Waffen-Artillerie-Rgt. der SS 23/"Kama."

II. Detachment: Hstuf. Josef Kahlhammer; he had formerly commanded III. Detachment/SS Artillery Rgt. 2/"Das Reich" Div. and had received the German Cross in Gold

on 4 June 1944.

III. Detachment: Stubaf. Johannes Neugebauer, who had transferred to the division from the SS Artillery Replacement Rgt.

IV. Detachment: Hstuf. Hans Dotterweich.

SS Volunteer Fusilier Btl. 31

(This unit performed the duties of a reconnaissance detachment and was reformed from the remnants of SS Recce Detachment 23/"Kama"; it was possibly commanded by the former commander of the cadre element and contained four companies.)

SS Volunteer Anti-tank Detachment 31

(This unit consisted of three companies reformed from the remains of SS Anti-tank Detachment 23.)

Commander: Stubaf. Albert Landwehr, whose previous commands included the Anti-tank Detachments of the "Das Reich," "Prinz Eugen" and "Kama" SS Divisions.

SS Volunteer Signals Detachment 31

(Reformed from the SS Signals Det. 23.)

Commander: Hstuf. (reserve) Albert Reimann.

SS Volunteer Engineer Btl. 31

(Consisting of three companies, this battalion was reformed from SS Eng. Btl. 23/"Kama.")

Commander: Stubaf. Hermann Otto, previously the commander of SS Eng. Btl. 23.

Comments

Helmut Gantz and Hans-Kurt Kaestner are listed in the March 1945 edition of Stellenbesetzungsliste der Waffen-SS, but did not appear in the Dienstalterliste of October and November 1944. As no date of promotion appears with their command listing they may have transferred to the Waffen-SS from the Army, or some other organization, after January 1945. Kaestner's rank is possibly a mistake since he outranks his CO! The 1945 Stellenbesetzungsliste gives the unit terms for the 31st SS Div. as if it were an SS mountain division. This is incorrect. The mistake is due to the SS-FHA records listing the cadre units from the 23rd SS Mtn. Div. "Kama."



Stubaf. Albert Landwehr (center, behind pennant bearer), CO of SS Anti-tank Det. 31.

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- SS Verordnungsblatt, 1943 and 1944 (promotions).
- Personal files for Herman Frimmersdorf and Albert Landwehr.
- Verbände und Truppen der deutschen Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS, Vols. 4 and 5.
- Uniforms, Organization, and History of the Waffen-SS, Vol. 3 (Bender & Taylor).

Editor's Note

Unit titles were "Anglicized" by the editor, for better or worse!

In April 1945, with military disaster threatening Germany, a group of around 20 Bulgarian Waffen-SS volunteers led by Maj. Kosta Karaneshev deserted from the Bulgarian Volunteer Rgt. of the Waffen-SS at the Dollersheim training camp. A mixed Bulgarian-German contingent under Waf.-Hstuf. Ivanov was sent out to track them down. The deserters were rounded up after a brief firefight in which three of their number were killed. Several of the captured men were then shot by other Bulgarian W-SS soldiers as punishment for their actions. The whole episode deeply demoralized the entire regiment which shortly thereafter was broken up and its battleworthy members assigned to assorted battle-groups as "tank destroyers."

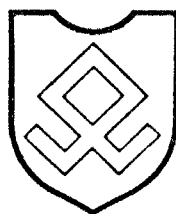
Many Bulgarian SS men later surrendered to the Americans but they were not forcibly repatriated to their homeland where the newly installed communist regime was busy slaughtering some 100,000 Bulgarian patriots.

- 5 -

Waffen-Sturmabfuhrer Purpeters Talival, originally a bookseller from Riga, Latvia (born 8 February 1913), served as a detachment commander in the SS Artillery Rgt. 19 while it was assigned to the 2nd Latvian SS Brigade. He was listed as missing-in-action near Utogosh, Russia in February 1944.

- 5 -

"Prinz Eugen"



THE 4TH SS-POLIZEI DIV. KAMPFGRUPPE ON THE ORANIENBAUM FRONT

For a few weeks in late 1943/early 1944 the 4th SS-Polizei Panzergrenadier Div. provided a task force to help contain the Soviet-held Oranienbaum salient to the west of Leningrad. For much of the year 1943, the SS-Polizei Div. was in a process of reformation while at the same time providing battle-groups to serve on both the northern and southern portions of the Eastern Front. The SS-Polizei Div. Kampfgruppe assigned to the Oranienbaum sector consisted of the bulk of the core segment of the 4th SS Div. that had been left in place on the Leningrad-Tosno front.

On 24 October 1943 this Kampfgruppe came under the command of Ostbaf. Friedrich-Wilhelm Bock and contained the following units with troop strengths:

	Officers	NCOs	Men
Staff SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3	8	20	102
Reconnaissance Detachment	6	46	207
I. Bn./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 2	7	63	313
I. Bn./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3	8	58	290
III. Bn./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 1	9	75	313
13. Co./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3	3	17	112
14. Co./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3	1	11	86
SS-Artillerie Rgt. 4 (Part)	22	122	615
Engineer Co. (SS Eng. Bn. 4)	2	6	106
Flak Detachment (from SS Flak Det. 4)	8	45	255
2nd Co./SS Anti-tank Det. 4	2	14	109
Signals Co. (from SS Signals Det. 4)	3	26	120
Supply & Support troops	11-13	43	159*
Total strength:	92	546	2,787
Sum total: (all ranks)			3,425

* = including 11 Hiwis

On 19 November 1943 this task force was officially titled the 4. SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Kampfgruppe. At 14:00 on 24 November the command of the main portion of the battle-group, organized as SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3 and consisting of the regimental staff and the three Panzergrenadier battalions, was assumed by Stubaf. Wilhelm Dietrich, who had just finished leading another Polizei Division Kampfgruppe that had served with Army Group South. On the same day the task force was ordered to the Oranienbaum Front.

At the same time the Panzergrenadier battalions were renumbered and officially incorporated into SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3 as follows:

III./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 1 became I./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3

I./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 2 became II./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3

I./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3 became III./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3.

The II. Bn. under Hstuf. Hauser was ordered to proceed to Dpatitzky (via Gatschina, Krassnoje Selo and Ropscha). The I. Bn. was to be sent to Kaporje (via Gatschina, Kipen and Begunitzy). The 225th and 24th Inf. Divisions were to take over the battle-group's former positions. The Kampfgruppe command elements were to be quartered in the following towns:

HQ Staff in Kaporje

Artillery Rgt. Staff in Podosvanje

SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3 Staff in Gross Koporki.

The III. Detachment/SS-Pol. Art. Rgt. 4 left for its newly assigned area on 26 November and it was followed by the Engineer Co. and the Flak Detachment. Relocation

movements continued as planned for the next several days aided by cloudy skies and little or no enemy air activity. Following a quiet night the remainder of the Kampfgruppe on the Tosno front received some harassing artillery fire on 29 November and responded in kind. But this did not stop III./SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3 from moving out for the Oranienbaum sector. By the next day Staf. Bock had established the Kampfgruppe HQ at Lutschki near Kaporje and the relocation movement was deemed complete.

On the Oranienbaum Front the battle-group's lines began on the coast of the Gulf of Finland and encompassed the southwest portion of the pocket, running from Kernovo in a southeasterly direction to the northern part of Gorbvitz. The Kampfgruppe HQ had taken over a small cluster of houses in Lutschki for its use, while the staff of SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3 wound up in Klein (Small) Koporki instead of its larger twin village. The command post of III. Bn. under Stubaf. Hohlwein was set up in the woods about 1½ km from the regimental HQ. This battalion held down the battle-group's left wing.

The center of the lines were manned by Hstuf. Hauser's II. Bn., which had its command post about 2½ km southeast of the regimental HQ in a "worker's house" along a stretch of the Leningrad railway line. The HQ of the Artillery Rgt. (which consisted only of III. Detachment with 7, 8 and 9 Batteries and IV. Detachment with 5, 6, 10 and 11 Batteries), was in Podosvanje, but was switched to the vicinity of the Kampfgruppe HQ once properly fortified bunkers had been prepared.

The command post of III./SS-Art. Rgt. 4 was in Gross (Large) Koporki, not far from the HQ of SS-Pol. Pz. Gr. Rgt. 3. This detachment had 6th Battery attached to it for part of the month of December. The Kampfgruppe's right-hand neighbor was the 10th Luftwaffe Field Div. which along with 9th LW Feld Div. held down the rest of the Oranienbaum perimeter to the east. At this time the entire front sector was relatively quiet.

Most of the terrain in the Polizei-Kampfgruppe area



SS-Polizei Division troops.

was flat and consisted of small forests with intermittent marshes and meadows. The actual frontlines were lightly held through a series of strongpoints surrounded by wooden palisades and work parties were kept busy around the clock building up the fortifications. Despite the calm (or perhaps because of it!), a Soviet offensive aimed at relieving Leningrad was anticipated. As a result the German Army High Command sought to reinforce the Oranienbaum Front through "Operation Luetzow": the transfer to that sector of the new III. SS Pz. Corps (Germanic) from Croatia. Although this was a top-secret undertaking the SS-Polizei troops on the Oranienbaum sector soon got wind of it from a motorcycle messenger who had spotted Gruf. Steiner (the Corps' commander) and his advance commando visiting the frontlines.

Steiner was quickly followed by the bulk of the SS Artillery Rgt. 11/"Nordland," which became the new right-hand neighbor of the Polizei Div. Kampfgruppe with its HQ set-up at Kirova. On 13 December, the battle-group and the 9th and 10th LW Feld Divisions were all subordinated to III. SS Pz. Corps and on 20 December the entire 11th SS Div. "Nordland" entered the frontlines between the SS-Polizei Kampfgruppe and the Luftwaffe divisions. The latter two divisions found themselves pushed into small front sectors farther to the east.

It was next learned that the other components of the III. SS Corps, 4th SS Assault Bde. "Nederland," was on its way from Croatia to assume the Polizei-Kampfgruppe sector. "Nederland's" advance elements arrived between

Christmas and New Year's Day and began making preparations for the transfer of the area to the Dutch and ethnic-German volunteers. The III. Det./SS-AR 4 led by Hstuf. Schlueter found itself indefinitely assigned to the "Nederland" Bde. which was still lacking an artillery element (its own artillery detachment was still in training).

By the end of the year 1943 the SS-Pol. Div. Kampfgruppe strength had risen (due to recovered wounded and replacements) to the following totals: 111 officers, 903 NCOs, 4,053 men for a sum total of 5,067 all ranks.

After a period of very little combat activity the battle-group began pulling out of the frontlines on 4 January to be replaced by "Nederland" units. Over the next few days the SS Police troops would be transported from Kotly back to the Volkhov River sector. The last Kampfgruppe elements reached Babino on the Volkhov on 10 January 1944. The soldiers of the battle-group were then inserted platoon-by-platoon into the frontline positions of the 96th Inf. Div., which was being withdrawn. Only III./SS-Pol. AR 4 (Detachment "Schlueter") remained behind on the Oranienbaum Front and it would never rejoin the SS-Polizei Div. being fully incorporated instead into the SS Art. Rgt. 54 of the "Nederland" Bde. and Division.

For what next happened on the Oranienbaum Front see the book *Narva 1944*. The further actions of the SS-Polizei Div. Kampfgruppe will be recounted in future issues of *Siegrunen*. <

SWISS AND LIECHTENSTEIN SS VOLUNTEERS

As of 1 May 1940, 65 Swiss citizens were serving in the Waffen-SS as follows:

Seven in the SS-"V" Division (five listed as ethnic Germans); 15 in SS-"VT" replacement units; 14 in the SS-"Totenkopf" Div.; 16 in the SS-"Totenkopf" Standarten (eight listed as ethnic Germans); 14 in the SS "Polizei" v. (eight listed as ethnic Germans).

As of 15 January 1942 a total of 135 Swiss and Liechtenstein volunteers were listed on the rosters of various Waffen-SS units.

A house, located at Panoramastrasse 11 in Stuttgart, served as a welfare office for Swiss and Liechtensteiner volunteers. Throughout the war years it processed or assisted some 1,500 people of those nationalities who had crossed the borders (for the most part illegally), to offer their services to the German Reich. The first administrator of this facility (known as the "Panoramaheim") was the Swiss SS-Ostuf. Alfred Nikles. He was replaced by a fellow countryman in October 1942, a 31-year-old SS-Uscha., named Benno Schaeppi. Schaeppi had been the propaganda leader for the Swiss-Fascist National Front Party before he left for Germany in May 1939. When he returned home in July 1939, Schaeppi found that the Swiss government was after him for having engaged in "anti-democratic activities"; on this trumped up charge he was jailed for four months. The experience embittered Schaeppi and he left Switzerland for good after his release, returning to Stuttgart.

On 15 March 1941 Benno Schaeppi enlisted in the Waffen-SS, stressing his journalist credentials and he was assigned to the "Das Reich" Div. as a war reporter. Following a stint of field service, Schaeppi set up a publicity agency to operate in conjunction with the SS "Germanic Volunteer" recruiting office. He then was placed in charge of the "Panoramaheim" in October 1942 and held this post until March 1944 when he was replaced by the Liechtenstein volunteer Sepp Naegle.

Schaeppi then went on to attend an officer's training course at SS-JS "Toelz." He graduated in November 1944 and was sent to join the III. SS Panzer Corps (Germanic) in Latvia, where he was placed in charge of the Corps' War Reporter Company.

Following the war, Benno Schaeppi was repatriated to Switzerland, where he was placed on trial for "treason" for having collaborated with the "Nazis" and thus threatening Swiss security. He was found guilty, of course, and sentenced to 16 years in prison. To say the least the trial of Swiss "collaborators" were controversial and attracted a significant degree of opposition. But it was not of much help to the defendants. Benno Schaeppi's sentence was finally commuted and he was released from prison on 1 August 1956.

FLAK DETACHMENTS OF THE V. SS MOUNTAIN CORPS

I. SS Flak Abteilung 105/505

On 8 July 1943 the Waffen-SS General Command authorized the formation of the V. SS Mtn. Corps (officially backdated to be in effect as of 1 July 1943) to control the disposition of the 7th and 13th SS Mtn. Divisions ("Prinz Eugen" and "Handschar"). As part of the "Corps Troops" establishment, a Flak detachment with the Field Post number 56 466 was ordered to commence forming at the Milowitz Military Training Grounds near Prague. The detachment structure was to be as follows:

Staff/Staff Battery

1st Battery: Nine 3.7 cm medium Flak guns

2nd Battery: Four 8.8 cm heavy Flak guns

3rd Battery: Four 8.8 cm heavy Flak guns

4th Battery: Four 8.8 cm heavy Flak guns

One light artillery transport column with 20-ton trucks.

The entire detachment was to be motorized. From the beginning there were shortages in trained personnel, weapons and equipment to overcome, and subsequently, when the unit was sent to join V. SS Corps in the Mostar area of Yugoslavia in October 1943 it consisted of only the first three batteries and a transport column. On 22 October 1943 the unit received the official title of SS-Flak Abteilung 105 (all of the separate specialty contingents assigned to V. SS Corps initially bore the "105" ID number in their titles).

SS Flak Abt. 105 was first deployed for anti-aircraft duties around Split, Yugoslavia in November-December 1943. In January 1944 the detachment served around Skoplje-Nisch and did coastal guard duty at Dubrovnik and the nearby offshore islands. The 1st Battery was stationed on the island of Brac. On 22 January an evaluation report by the command staff of V. SS Corps noted an improvement in the overall training and demeanor of the Flak detachment but also mentioned that it still suffered from a shortage of NCOs and motor vehicles.

From February to June 1944 the detachment was responsible for the air defense of Mostar. Then on 22 June a restructuring and reformation was ordered for the unit. It was temporarily removed from the roster of V. SS Corps "Troops" and made a special formation of the SS Main Administrative Office (SS-FHA) in Berlin, which meant that it was answerable to the W-SS High Command rather than to the Corps Commander.

On 1 July 1944, SS-Flak Abt. 105 was upgraded to the SS-Flak Abt. 505 with the addition of the 2nd (3.7 cm) and 3rd (8.8 cm) Flak Batteries from SS-Flak Abt. 7/7th SS Mtn. Div. "PE." The new unit was no longer to be an integral part of V. SS Corps, but was simply to be attached to it at the direction of the SS-FHA. The structure for SS-Flak Abt. 505 was as follows:

Staff/Staff Battery

1st Battery with nine 3.7 cm Flak guns (ex-1./SS-Flak 105)

2nd Battery with nine 3.7 cm Flak guns (ex-2./SS-Flak 7)

3rd Battery with six 8.8 cm Flak guns and a light Flak (2 cm) platoon (ex-3./SS-Flak 7)

4th Battery with six 8.8 cm Flak guns and a light Flak (2 cm) platoon (ex-4./SS-Flak 105)

5th Battery with six 8.8 cm Flak guns and a light Flak (2 cm) platoon (ex-3./SS-Flak 105)

6th Battery 2 cm multi-barreled Flak guns (other details

lacking)

All of the above elements were motorized.

From 22 June to October 1944, the new SS-Flak Abt. 505 was responsible for air and ground security on the Dalmatian coast near Dubrovnik and the immediate offshore islands of Brac, Dvar and Korcula. Part of the job was the prevention of "partisan" landings on the islands. Air defense duties were carried out in the Metkovic, Mostar and Imotski areas. Mobile, combat ready SS Flak troops were also used to patrol and guard the highway and rail lines that ran from Brod to Sarajevo, Mostar and Trebinje. The detachment was specifically assigned the task of keeping the road to Jablanica free of terrorists.

In the night of 29/30 June 1944 the SS Flak Battery from SS-Flak Abt. 505 that was commanded by Ostuf. Hacke succeeded in sinking an enemy gunboat after a heavy exchange of fire near the harbor of Korcula. The deed won the unit a commendation. From 29 September to 11 October 1944 a portion of the detachment was engaged in ground defensive fighting in support of the 7th SS Mtn. Div. "Prinz Eugen" on two sides of the city of Nis (or Nisch) and to the east of the line running from Zajecar to Leskovac through Knjazeva and Bala Palanka. On 11 October an SS Flak combat troop maintained blocking positions on the Knjazeva-Svrlig road while attached to the III. Bn./SS Mtn. Rgt. 13. Soon afterwards the Flak troops began covering the "Prinz Eugen" relocation movements behind the Morava River.

On 12 October, Flak troops from SS-Flak Abt. 505 assigned to SS-Kampfgruppe "Deutsch" of the SS Mtn. Rgt. 13, fought off a Red Army tank attack to the south of Kocaac, destroying five tanks but losing two of its own guns in the process. After participating in the defense of Nis, an "88" battery from the detachment fought in the battle for Dubrovnik and shot down two enemy planes. From 20-24 October, the detachment took part in retrograde fighting against the Chetniks (Royal Yugoslav guerrillas), during the pullback from Dubrovnik and in the drive on Naum-Metkovic.

During November and December the detachment relocated from Capljina and took up firing positions on the so-called "Ivan's Ridge." The SS Flak troops also provided security for the roads and rail lines and air protection for military construction workers from the "Organization Todt." On 23 December, a battery was sent by rail to Jalbinca where it provided air cover until the 28th; in the process it had shot down a "Boeing Fortress" on 24 December. On the 28th the battery helped in the effort to free the Jalbanica-Sarajevo rail line.

In the course of the year 1944 SS-Flak Abt. 505 was credited with downing seven aircraft and destroying five tanks and a gunboat. Its most valuable contribution may well have been in its close combat support for "Prinz Eugen" mountain troopers. Throughout most of January 1945 the detachment was engaged in providing air and ground cover in the Sarajevo-Bosnian Brod area. On 23 January 1945 the unit assembled with other "Corps Troops" in its old security area in preparation for the transfer of V. SS Mtn. Corps staff and troops to Army Group "Weichsel." At this time a significant number of ethnic German personnel deserted.

Rail transport back to Germany began on 31 January 1945 and in the first part of February, troop trains carrying

V. SS Mtn. Corps elements began arriving in the vicinity of Frankfurt-on-the-Oder. On 28 February, the last part of the detachment, 4th Battery, left Bosnia for the Oder, travelling from Bosnian Brod through Zagreb, Cilli, Marburg, Graz, Budweis, Prague, Aussig, Goerlitz, Cottbus and Muellrose. From 10 February to 14 April, the detachment was engaged in defensive fighting to the south of Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, between Ziltendorf and Brieskow; the unit HQ was located in Muellrose.

From 10 to 12 February, the detachment was assigned to assist the 391st Inf. Div. during the battle to contain the Soviet bridgehead to the north of Fuerstenberg. On 15 and 16 February it provided support during the effort to regain Fuerstenberg. On 1 March 1945, firing positions were taken up between Brieskow and Finkenherd to support an attack aimed at eliminating an enemy penetration in the southeast part of the town of Vogelsang.

From 14 to 16 April, SS-Flak Abt. 505 was engaged in battling off battalion strength Soviet attacks. At times hand-to-hand fighting raged for the firing positions and one detached platoon was entirely lost. On the 17th heavy fighting raged for the Soviet bridgehead across the Oder-Spree Canal near Rautenkrantz as the great Red Army spring offensive was now in full swing. From 18 to 20 April there was more defensive fighting in the Muellrose-Beeskow area during which the detachment was forced to destroy its remaining Flak guns. The personnel were converted into infantrymen and were incorporated into the SS-Kampfgruppe "Fischer." On the 22nd a general withdrawal to the west began from the Lieberose-Beeskow-Spree line and on 28 April the remnants of the detachment disbanded in the Halbe Pocket and each man was left to his own devices to escape from the inferno. Needless to say, many didn't.

At its peak strength in 1944, SS-Flak Abt. 505 consisted of four heavy batteries each with six 8.8 cm guns, two light batteries each with twelve 2 cm guns, and one medium battery with twelve 3.7 cm guns. Although authorized to contain 1,200 men, the detachment actually exceeded this figure, numbering 1,355 men of all ranks at one point, including 32 officers, 146 NCOs and 1,177 enlisted men. The six batteries bore the Field Post numbers 56 466 A-F.

The detachment commander throughout much of its existence was Stubaf. Tobien. Other officers included Ostuf. Hacke, Ostuf. Dehne and Ostuf. Walter Bodlos, who was awarded the Iron Cross, 1st Class on 22 February

1945. On that same date an NCO from the detachment, Uscha. Heinrich Schlosse, received the Iron Cross, 2nd Class.

II. SS-Flak Abteilung 550

At the end of 1944 a special-use SS Flak detachment was authorized to assemble in Munich, drawing upon troops from the SS Flak Training and Replacement Rgt. that was stationed there. Its formation was completed by 31 January 1945, at which time the regimental commander, Ostubaf. Dirnagel, certified its readiness for use. The detachment's structure was as follows:

- 1st Battery with six 8.8 cm Flak guns
- 2nd Battery with nine 3.7 cm Flak guns
- 3rd Battery with twelve 2 cm Flak guns
- 4th Battery with twelve 2 cm Flak guns
- One light Flak transport column
- Detachment Commander: Hstuf. Loeschnigg
- Adjutants: Ostuf. Schwarz, Ostuf. Koehl
- Administrative Officer: Ostuf. Holzapfel
- Medical Officer: Luftwaffe Dr. Cossmann
- Transport Officer: Ostuf. Pagel (also in charge of light Flak column)
- Pyrotechnic Officer: Oscha. Weirich
- Staff Battery Commander: Ostuf. Hohengassner
- 1st Battery: Ostuf. Huebner
- 2nd Battery: Ostuf. Deuschle
- 3rd Battery: Ostuf. Hiebler, later Oberjunker Scholz
- 4th Battery: Unknown

The detachment left Munich by rail and reached Bad Saarow on 4 February 1945, travelling via Trebbin, Zossen and Fuerstenwalde under the camouflage designation: "Deployment Staff Iceberg." It was now subordinated directly to the SS Main Administrative Office (SS-FHA). The unit was given two principal missions:

1. To provide air security in the vicinity of the SS-FHA office complex.
2. To protect the aforementioned complex from any surprise enemy armored breakthrough.

To accomplish these assignments the individual elements were deployed as follows:

One 8.8 cm gun positioned to the north of the autobahn northwest of Lindenberg and another one stationed to the south of it; both guns were to be used primarily against tanks.

A 2 cm platoon with three guns situated in the "Fuchsbau" area for air defense.



Staff of the SS Motor Vehicle School in Vienna. The school commander was SS-Oberfuehrer Arthur Nebe, the officer

wearing the greatcoat in the middle of the first row.

The remainder of the detachment to be held in readiness around Glienicke, Behrensdoerf and Wendisch Rietz, to be used against any ground attacks from the north, east or south and to be used against any air attacks directed towards the SS-FHA complex. The 3rd "Alarm" Co./SS-FHA (an emergency contingent), led by Hstuf. Kuehne, was deployed in conjunction with the "88" Flak guns along both sides of the autobahn.

At the beginning of March 1945 the detachment had a change of mission. It was assigned to V. SS Mtn. Corps on the Oder Front and received the official title: SS Flak Abteilung 550. The numbering was simply to distinguish it from the Corps' other Flak unit, SS Flak Abt. 505. The Corps' front sector took in Brieskow, Pohlitz, Ziltendorf and the Oder-Spree Canal by Fuerstenberg. SS Flak Abteilung 550 was initially disposed as follows:

1st Battery on the high ground before Riessen;

2nd Battery in Brieskow;

3rd Battery deployed for air and ground defense (anti-tank) on the Oder-Spree Canal bridge between Pohlitz and Ziltendorf;

Most of the supply/transport section was mobilized as an infantry contingent that occupied a blocking position in the Riessen-Pohlitz line alongside two other small Waffen-SS battle-groups.

In mid-March 1945, the detachment CO, Hstuf. Loeschnigg, was sent to 1st SS Div. "LSSAH" and was replaced by Hstuf. Keyck. At the same time V. SS Corps command staff transferred the SS Flak Abt. 550 to the jurisdiction of the 32nd SS Div. "30 Januar" which then came under the command of SS-Oberfuehrer Hans Kempin. This came about because the "30 Januar" Div. still did not have its own Flak detachment, although the Luftwaffe Flak Abt. 1204 had been providing it with air defense support. On 6 April 1945, SS Flak Abt. 550 was reinforced by a portion of the SS Flak "Alarm" Battery 103 (3.7 cm guns), which came from the Lichterfelde Barracks in Berlin. Due to illness, Hstuf. Keyck was replaced as detachment commander by Hstuf. Hohengassner on 1 April 1945.

Until the middle of April the bulk of the detachment was utilized with good effect against enemy ground forces along the Oder-Spree Canal line to the north of Riessen. During this time some excess supply personnel were formed into a mortar squad using captured Russian weaponry. Then on 16 April everything broke loose as the main Soviet drive on Berlin got underway at 08:20. To the south of Ziltendorf a Red infantry platoon broke through the German lines and began threatening the flank of a 2 cm battery from SS Flak Abt. 550. The Flak guns were turned point blank on the Red force and totally destroyed it. On the next day fierce fighting raged again, but enemy penetrations in the Flak detachment sector were ringed off and eliminated with the help of SS grenadiers from SS Gr. Rgt. 87/"30 Januar," led by Hstuf. Brandt and Ustuf. Plos.

Small but vicious combat engagements continued through 19 April when 32nd SS Div. received new withdrawal orders. SS Flak Abt. 550 first fell back to Tschersndorf then on 22 April it was forced to retreat under stiff enemy pressure through Grunow, Dammendorf, Beeskow, Glienicke, and Wendisch Rietz to Storkow. On 25 April the detachment was in the vicinity of Hermsdorf in the Hammer Forestry District. It was now firmly entrapped in the Halbe Pocket with the rest of V. and XI. SS Corps.

Hstuf. Hohengassner received orders to lead his troops in a breakout attempt to begin at 04:00 on 26 April; oddly enough this was the first time the SS troops learned that they had been encircled. All unnecessary vehicles now had to be destroyed; exceptions being the armored troop carriers and the vehicle mounted weapons such as the 2 cm Flak guns. The breakout attempt got underway



at first light under the cover of a final barrage from SS Rocket Mortar Detachment 505. Assault guns and tanks attached to Kampfgruppe "Krause" from the 32nd SS Div. smashed a hole in the enemy lines around Lake Wolziger, and SS Flak Abt. 550 was able to reach the vicinity of Friedersdorf. Here it was miraculously rejoined by its own detached 2nd Battery which had been in action near Muenchehofe.

By 27 April it was discovered that the SS troops had simply moved out of one entrapment and into another. Continuous enemy attacks were now being carried out by contingents of the turncoat "Free German Army," a collection of renegade POWs and German communists that the Soviets had assembled under the sponsorship of the captured Gen. von Seydlitz. The "Seydlitz Troops" wore German uniforms which could be distinguished from those of the regular German Army due to the fact that they were always much cleaner and newer!

On 28 April, the remnants of SS Flak Abt. 550 attempted another breakout in the vicinity of Schenkendorf-Gross Besten. At the Wendisch Buchholz-Koenigswusterhausen road crossing the SS "Alarm" Battery 103 went into action for the last time to provide cover for the "breakout" elements. It did its job but suffered extensive casualties in the process, including the loss of its commander who was killed. The survivors later latched on with an Army unit.

Events quickly began to dissolve into chaos as the escaping troops got pushed into narrowing retreat corridors. High losses and the confusion strewn by the "Seydlitz" soldiers caused a near panic to develop, but everyone continued on in a westerly direction. Hstuf. Hohengassner led his men through yet another enemy position with the aid of tank support, but the death toll kept rising and among the new fatalities was the detachment medical officer, Dr. Cossmann.

Hstuf. Hohengassner mustered his survivors and led them on to the west through Teupitz, Egsdorf, Zehrendorf to the Reich Highway 96 between Baruth and Zossen. At this point a small contingent of 25 men from the detachment led by Hohengassner, attacked and overran an enemy position, destroying anti-tank guns and machine guns and capturing 12 prisoners.

With fuel nearing an end, more and more vehicles had to be abandoned and ammunition also began to run low. The SS troops moved on towards the Mellensee then turned off the road and began travelling cross-country to Kummersdorf. It was discovered that the main road here was blocked off, so the remnants of SS Flak Abt. 550 veered off through the woods towards Sperenberg. With fire support from the last self-propelled 2 cm gun they stormed the village of Gottow and took it from the communists in hand-to-hand combat.

From here the survivors made their way towards Luckow, but before they could get there they were ambushed by an enemy tank force. At the head of his men, Hstuf. Hohengassner grabbed a panzerfaust and knocked

out the lead tank. The rest were then driven off. But the exhausted soldiers had nearly reached the end of their strength. Hindered constantly by "Seydlitz" turncoats and burdened by swarms of civilian refugees, the men of SS Flak Abt. 550 were unable to make any further headway. Thus, in an effort to avoid a complete bloodbath, Hstuf. Hohengassner ordered his command to surrender to the Red Army at 19:00 on 1 May 1945. For the Waffen-SS troops their long ordeal in combat had come to an end, but a new and even more taxing one in the Soviet slave labor camps was about to begin.

32nd SS Grenadier Division Flak and SS Flak Abteilung 550 Order of Battle

	Field Post Numbers
Staff and Staff Battery	31 765
1st Battery	64 273
2nd Battery	66 779
3rd Battery	67 964
4th Battery	67 944
Light Flak Column	
14./SS Gr.Rgt. 86 "Schill"	26 667
14./SS Gr.Rgt. 87 "Kurmark"	07 776
Luftwaffe Flak Abteilung 1204/Posen District	25 655
Detachment Commanders	
SS-Hstuf. Loeschnigg, late December 1944 to mid-March 1945;	
SS-Hstuf. Keyck, mid-March 1945 to 1 April 1945;	
SS-Hstuf. Hohengassner, 1 April 1945 to 1 May 1945.	<

THE HUNGARIAN SS KAMPFGRUPPE "NEY"

The SS Kampfgruppe "Ney" (also known as the SS Rgt. and the SS Bde. "Ney" depending on who was filling out the battle reports!), was commanded by SS Ostubaf. Dr. Karoly Ney and consisted exclusively of Hungarian SS volunteers in four partially formed battalions that were organized very loosely into two regiments. The total personnel strength was somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000. These soldiers were intended originally as replacements for the 22nd SS Cav. Div. "Maria Theresia," but never reached it due to its entrapment in Budapest. When the 22nd SS Div. was destroyed during the breakout effort of 11/12 February 1945, it formally ceased to exist.

Some thought may have been given to using SS KGr. "Ney" to reconstitute the "MT" Div., but since this formation was heavily engaged since December 1944, it would have been impractical to remove it from the hard-pressed frontlines. SS-KGr. "Ney" served for the most part of its existence as an independent battle-group with IV. SS Pz. Corps ("Wiking," "Totenkopf" Divs.) from January to May 1945. It participated in the Budapest relief attempts and the difficult fighting around Stuhlweissenberg. From time-to-time parts of SS-KGr. "Ney" were assigned to other formations. For instance, on 5 April 1945, I. Bn./"Ney" was assigned to a battle-group formed under the Artillery Commander of III. Pz. Corps, Oberst Semmer, in the Friedberg area. The other elements of this battle-group were the Engineer Construction Bn. 504, the "Panther" Tank Bn. I/Rgt. 24, Assault Gun Bde. 303 and SS Mtn. Replacement Bn. 18 (Graz, Austria). Only the two SS battalions in this task force were relatively intact; all of the other elements were merely splinters and fragments. Some thought was given to incorporating SS-KGr.

"Ney" directly into the "Wiking" Div., but the Hungarians resented this idea.



SS-Ostubaf. Dr. Ney (center, black hat), commander of the Hungarian SS Brigade "Ney."

SS-STURMBATAILLON 500

SS ASSAULT BN. 500

KAMPFVERBAND 500 DER WAFFEN-SS

Structure of SS Assault Bn. 500, Summer 1943

Organization: Reinforced Infantry Battalion.

Internal Units:

- Bn. HQ
- Bn. Staff and Staff Troops
- Bn. Medical Section
- Flak Platoon
- Engineer Platoon
- Mortar Platoon
- Radio Section
- Transport Staff
- Supply and Maintenance Staff
- Assault Companies I, II, III, IV
- Convalescent Squad (Bn. Reserves)

Assault Company Organization:

Twelve man staff plus a 10 man sharpshooter squad.

Four platoons of four 10-man squads each plus a platoon leader.

Each 1st Platoon was armed with machine pistols (MPs), all other platoons had one light machine gun each. Each platoon also had a seven-man staff contingent, armed with MPs.

The company strength was theoretically 210 men in total.

Other Unit Organizations:

Battalion Staff HQ and Troops consisted of 22 men.

The medical section consisted of three doctors and 12 medics.

The Flak Platoon consisted of a platoon leader and 40 men in four squads manning four major and four minor air defense guns. MPs and pistols were the sidearms.

The Engineer Platoon consisted of a platoon leader and 40 men in four squads, each of which had two flame throwers. MPs and handguns were the sidearms.

The Mortar Platoon deployed a platoon leader and 30 men who manned a total of six 12 cm mortars. Sidearms were again MPs and handguns.

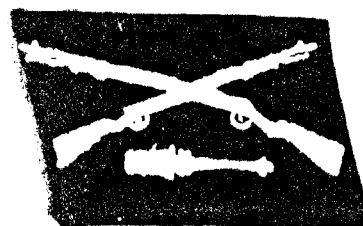
The Radio Section consisted of a troop leader and 10 men who operated two communications trucks and a radio car. Sidearms were MPs and handguns.

The Transport Staff consisted of one troop leader and 20 men, who had two light machine guns in addition to MPs and handguns. They were responsible for the horses and motor vehicles assigned to the battalion.

The Supply and Maintenance Staff consisted of one officer and 30 men who were armed with two light machine guns in addition to MPs and sidearms. Responsibilities included a tailoring and clothes dispersal facility as well as food distribution. This element along with the Convalescent Squad, served as the battalion reserve.

The Convalescent Squad had no set formation but consisted of whatever lightly wounded or recovering ill soldiers that were available for duty.

Troop strength for the entire battalion was set at 1,053 men.



Collar patch of SS Assault Bn. 500 (not the "Dirlewanger" Bde.).

The Commando Companies

In May 1944 the battalion formed two commando units, "Dora I" and "Dora II" (named after the internment camp near the Matzkau military prison which was the "home base" for the battalion). The "Dora" units maintained the strengths and structures of the battalion assault companies but their troops were given special paratroop training and instruction in operations behind enemy lines. The "Dora" weaponry included pistols or U.S. Army revolvers, machine pistols and automatic assault rifles. Special radio transmitting equipment was also given to the "Dora" units.

After several successful commando operations, the "Dora" units were reformed into anti-tank companies in early 1945 and were heavily equipped with Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck "bazookas." While deployed for commando actions the "Dora" commander was Stubaf. Golz, but otherwise these units came under the control of the Battalion CO, Ostubaf. Blohm, who never used the rank he was entitled to. After being stripped of his original rank and sent to a punishment battalion he had refused ever again to accept any rank other than that of a common private and he insisted that his subordinates refer to him as Rifleman Blohm!

The "Dora" anti-tank companies were assigned to operate independently on the Oder River Front in March/April 1945, but for awhile "Dora II" was subordinated to the 35th SS Polizei Division. Both were almost totally destroyed in action.

Command Roster, SS Assault Bn. 500 [where known]

Bn. CO: SS-Schuetz (actually Ostubaf.) Blohm, MIA

Bn. Adjutant: Ostuf. Fondrell, KIA

Bn. Clerk: Uscha. Bender, KIA

HQ Troops: Ostuf. Ladowski

Bn. Medical Officers:

Hstuf. Dr. Reiners, KIA

Ostuf. Dr. Patrick O'Neill (from County Donegal, Ireland), KIA

Ostuf. Dr. Greindl, KIA

I. Company:

Ostuf. Frithjof Elmo Porsch

Ostuf. Pahlke, KIA

Platoon Leaders:

Hscha. Ehlers (Company troops), KIA
Hstuf. Schuler, KIA
Oscha. Wiesemann, KIA
Oscha. Grabski, KIA
Oscha. Semm, KIA
Staf. Hanke, KIA

II. Company: Hstuf. Tommsen, KIA

Company Troops: Oscha. Sendich, KIA

III. Company: Ustuf. Holt, KIA

Platoon Leader: Oscha. Gusleb, KIA

IV. Company: Ostuf. Prell, KIA

Engineer Platoon: Ustuf. Schilling, KIA

Bn. Maintenance Officer: Hstuf. Schumm, MIA

Flak Platoon: Ostuf. Grail, MIA

Transport Officer: Ostuf. Baerwolf, KIA

Communications Officer: Ostuf. Galz, KIA

Commando Units: Stubaß. Golz

"Dora I": Ustuf. Ladowski

"Dora I" Platoon Leaders:

Oscha. Bendix, KIA

Ustuf. Schild, MIA

"Dora II": Ostuf. Porsch

Wartime Achievements of SS Assault Bn. 500

From the summer of 1943 to the end of April 1945 the battalion and its attached commando units captured

following enemy war material intact:

17 T-34 tanks

92 trucks and autos

72 motorcycles

21 heavy artillery pieces

44 medium caliber artillery pieces

35 heavy anti-tank guns

41 anti-tank rifles

116 light mortars

86 heavy mortars

72 heavy machine guns

144 light machine guns

811 machine pistols

plus rifles and handguns too numerous to count.

In addition to the above the battalion captured 3,116 enemy prisoners, shot down 38 aircraft and destroyed 338 tanks and armored vehicles in close combat. As a result of the battalion's superlative accomplishments the following decorations were bestowed upon its members:

Knight's Cross: To Ostuf. Porsch as CO of "Dora II" while attached to the 35th SS Police Div. on the Oder Front in April 1945.

German Cross in Gold: Ostuf. Porsch in August 1943 as CO of I. Company. Hscha. Ehlers as a platoon leader in "Dora II." Uscha. Schuler as company troop leader in "Dora II." Oscha. Golz and Oscha. Bendix as platoon leaders in "Dora I." These last four awards were all made in April 1945.

Porsch, Schuler, Ehlers, Bendix and Schild were also mentioned in the Wehrmacht Roll of Honor and awarded the Honor Roll Clasp.

Close Combat Clasp in Gold: Received by 108 members of the battalion.

Close Combat Clasp in Silver: Received by 488 members of the battalion.

Close Combat Clasp in Bronze: Received by 516 members of the battalion.

Iron Cross, 2nd Class: Received by 1,128 members of the battalion.

Iron Cross, 1st Class: Received by 644 members of the battalion.

Infantry Assault Badge in Gold (75 actions): Received by 113 members of the battalion.

Infantry Assault Badge in Gold (100+ actions): Received by 27 members of the battalion. Note: the number of



SS-Ostuf. Frithjof Elmo Porsch, company commander in SS Assault Bn. 500.

actions participated in was engraved on the individual badges.

Battalion Battle Honor: As members of a "punishment" unit, the members of SS Assault Bn. 500 were initially not permitted any unit distinctions or badges of rank. The sole rank determination was made through the use of white sleeve stripes in the following manner:

One stripe for squad leaders;

Two for platoon leaders;

Three stripes for company commanders, and

Four stripes (probably never implemented) for the battalion commander.

Although shoulder board ranks were eventually reintroduced to soldiers who had won back their old postings, the sleeve stripes remained in use throughout the battalion's history.

As a result of its splendid battlefield performance the Reichsfuehrer-SS bestowed a special collar patch (to be worn on both collars) upon all members of the battalion in the autumn of 1943. It depicted two crossed rifles over a stick grenade. Despite many reports to the contrary, this was not the insignie of the more roguish "Dirlewanger" Brigade. That unit was eventually supposed to have used a collar patch depicting two crossed stick grenades.

The battalion mascot was a wolf hound named "Baska" who accompanied members of the unit on many a combat mission. As a result, soldiers of the battalion unofficially decorated the dog with both grades of the Iron Cross, the Infantry Assault Badge and the Silver Wound Badge and the Close Combat Clasp in Bronze. These decorations were kept for "Baska" on a special display pillow; the dog was eventually killed in action.

All told, a majority of the soldiers to serve with SS Assault Bn. 500, 1,263 in total, were killed on the battlefield; a figure which gives some small indication of the unit's sacrifices!

LITHUANIAN WAFFEN-SS VOLUNTEERS

After Poland, Lithuania was the one country in which Reichsfuehrer-SS Himmler was the least interested in recruiting Waffen-SS volunteers from. This attitude was due to Himmler's belief that the Lithuanians were too nationalistic and too fervently religious (Roman Catholic) to make them trustworthy. Also, for a time at least, the Lithuanians were looked upon as racial inferiors, a notion that gradually disappeared.

Despite these strikes against it in the eyes of Himmler, the manpower of Lithuania was still coveted. Soon after the country was occupied a fully armed auxiliary police force and militia was organized and on 6 November 1941, the Reichsfuehrer-SS ordered the formation of Lithuanian home defense battalions to begin. These grew by leaps and bounds and by early 1942 fully 15 Lithuanian Self-Defense (or "Schuma") Battalions, numbered consecutively from 1 to 15, were in existence. By July 1942 some 10,000 Lithuanians were on duty with the "Schuma" Bns. and another 6,000 were serving with Police battalions. Actually this was quite a number of soldiers as is since the pre-war Lithuanian Army only had a strength of between 22,000 and 28,000 troops.

The Lithuanian troops soon found themselves heavily engaged both at and behind the frontlines in Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania. The resultant casualties caused an increase in recruiting and a general expansion of the Lithuanian forces. In early 1943 RF-SS Himmler had a change of mind over the recruitment of Lithuanians for the Waffen-SS. He decided that the time was now ripe for the development of a Lithuanian SS Legion, a decision no doubt encouraged by setbacks on the Eastern Front and the high losses already absorbed by the Waffen-SS.

In any event the pro-German head of the Lithuanian civil administration, Gen. Petras Kubiliunas (the chief-of-staff of the pre-war Lithuanian Army), was asked to cooperate with the Legion proposal. So on 3 March 1943 he issued a proclamation officially declaring the Lithuanian people to be on the side of the Germans in the anti-Bolshevik struggle and simultaneously establishing a national Legion to be filled primarily by young conscripts. Army veterans were generally not available since many were already in service with the "Schuma" Battalions. The proposed Lithuanian SS Legion was to be largely staffed and officered by Germans, a proposal which did not sit well with the large, well-organized Lithuanian anti-communist underground.

While the Lithuanian underground refrained from carrying out violent acts of resistance against the Germans it stood up for what it considered to be in the country's best interest and a German officered SS Legion did not meet with its approval. Therefore the men that were called up to serve in the unit were heavily pressured to not report in. This meant that fewer than 20% of the required personnel actually reported for duty. The German Commissioner for Lithuania was so disgusted that he promptly cancelled the Legion altogether and shipped off the unfortunate few that had responded to the call-up to work in armaments factories.

In the meantime the "Schuma" Bns. continued to expand and flourish to the point where they had grown to 23 individual units manned by some 13,000 soldiers and 250 officers. By the end of the war at least 30 Lithuanian "Schuma" battalions (numbered 1-15, 251-265 and 301-310), had been authorized, although those in the latter numbering sequence may not have been fully formed. These battalions initially had a complement of 460 men in three companies

but were enlarged as the war progressed to include 501 men in four companies.

In February 1944, with the military situation in the east growing ever dimmer, plans to form a Lithuanian SS Volunteer Formation (Litauenische Waffen-Verband), were again advanced. This time the force was to be commanded entirely by Lithuanian officers with a few German advisors. General Kubiliunas selected the respected Lithuanian Gen. Plechavicius to lead the formation. The goal was to put an initial ten battalions in the field against communist partisans and to eventually expand to 20 battalions. This time the underground did not oppose the plan as they saw this new formation as a possible forerunner to a new national army.

As a result, by early March 1944, some 12,600 volunteers had been accepted for admission to the Waffen-Verband, a number which would soon increase to about 16,000. All told more than 30,000 Lithuanian men had applied for service, but many could not meet the stringent Waffen-SS admission standards that were in effect. The Germans were surprised and pleased by the turnout and wanted to use the excess personnel to man anti-aircraft batteries in the Reich. In fact, the proposal was made to Gen. Plechavicius that he could continue to expand the Waffen-Verband if for every 1,000 men he added, 2,000 more would be made available to the Luftwaffe. The Lithuanians didn't like the idea at all since they didn't want to see their manpower being drained to Germany while the Red Army was rapidly moving towards the frontier.

Now began a series of fateful disagreements and misunderstandings between the Lithuanians and Germans which caused relations between the two to seriously deteriorate over the next several weeks. General Plechavicius and his officers refused to permit the Lithuanian soldiers in their command take an oath of loyalty to Hitler and they began balking at the full incorporation of the Waffen-Verband into the Waffen-SS. It was learned that the Lithuanian nationalist underground had widespread contacts and influence within the formation and because of his ultra-nationalist tendencies, Gen. Plechavicius was looked upon with increased suspicion.

For the Germans a serious problem had developed. With the Red Army poised on the borders of Lithuania and a life-and-death struggle for the country about to ensue, absolute reliability from all allied elements was a necessity and this could no longer be guaranteed from the Litauenische Waffen-Verband. Therefore the decision was made to disband the formation effective mid-May 1944. The Lithuanian soldiers were not prepared for this, and rather than lay down their arms many of them mutinied. Violent clashes with the Germans took place in Kaunas and at the Military Academy in Mariampole on 14 and 15 May. But the revolt was promptly crushed and 100 of the ringleaders were rounded up and shot both as a punishment and an example to the rest.

For the most part the members of the Waffen-Verband simply took off for the forests to form guerrilla bands, but about 3,500 of the Lithuanians remained loyal to the Germans and were incorporated into the Luftwaffe. General Plechavicius was seen to be the instigator of the rebellion so he was sent off for internment in a concentration camp.

The Waffen-SS made two further attempts to develop a Lithuanian volunteer formation, in June and December 1944, but things did not go smoothly and both efforts had to be abandoned. The failure of the Lithuanian Waffen-SS to get off the ground must be at least partially blamed

on the Reichstuehrer-SS who had only a marginal interest in the idea at best, and that reluctantly. Quite a few individual Lithuanians, and certainly many with at least partial German ancestry, did however wind up in one Waffen-SS unit or another.

Despite the collapse of the Lithuanian Waffen-SS, Lithuanian soldiers served with the German armed forces right up to the bitter end. As of January 1945, some 36,800 of them were still listed on duty in the following capacities:

5,400 in the Wehrmacht in 12 engineer companies and 3 combat battalions;

12,000 in the Luftwaffe, mostly in their own companies;

3,000 in Lithuanian police companies;

16,400 in various military construction services.

In addition about 30,000 Lithuanian guerrilla soldiers (a great many from the "Schuma" Bns. and the ill-fated Waffen-Verband), fought on in Lithuania against the Soviet occupation forces and the last of them did not give up until the early 1950s. <

SS-BATTALION "REHDER" 23. SS DIV. "NEDERLAND"

In late March 1945, the SS offices in Berlin combed out SS personnel to be formed into an emergency combat battalion. This collection of clerical personnel, convalescents and partial cripples was put together into a cohesive unit under the experienced front officer, Stubaf. Werner Rehder at Oranienberg. Weapons and equipment were in short supply and the battalion was given a batch of rifles of all different European makes and models plus only a few machine guns.

Battalion "Rehder" was quickly sent to Angermuende without any preliminary training. Ogruf. Berger from the SS Main Office had promised to send on more weapons and an artillery contingent, but none of these ever arrived. At the end of March the battalion took over Volkssturm positions on the Oder River in and around Friedrichstal south of Gartz. The men immediately went to work improving their positions as at that point in time the frontlines were quiet.

Battalion "Rehder's" adjacent neighbor to the south was II. Bn./SS Pz. Gr. Rgt. 49 "De Ruyter" from the

"Nederland" SS Division. This regiment, commanded by Ostubaf. Lohmann, who had his HQ at Biesendahlshof, was in a rebuilding phase after suffering severe casualties in Kurland and Pomerania. In fact, the entire I. Bn./"DeR" could only now field about 100 men, so it was decided to disband this unit and incorporate the personnel into Stubaf. Petersen's II./"DeR." The I. Bn. CO, Stubaf. Unger, was posted to the regimental staff for "special assignments."

The arrival of Bn. "Rehder" boosted the regimental fortunes, and Ostubaf. Lohmann obtained permission to have it converted into a new I. Bn. for Rgt. "De Ruyter." This was quickly accomplished and the regiment was then brought up to strength. "De Ruyter" was, however, separated from the rest of the "Nederland" Div. at this time and had been subordinated to the 547th Volksgrenadier Division. It was supported by II. Detachment/SS Artillery Rgt. 54 under Stubaf. Hofer which was positioned in the Vierraden area, directly behind II./"DeR." <



Dutch SS soldiers from 23rd SS Div. "Nederland."

PROFILE OF THE 1ST SS INFANTRY BRIGADE (MOTORIZED)

Background

The 1st SS Brigade (Motorized) was authorized on 24 April 1941, with its establishment following on 1 May 1941. It was officially renamed the 1st SS Inf. Bde. (Motorized) on 1 September 1941. The primary component parts of the brigade were the SS Inf. Rgts. 8 and 10, formerly SS-Totenkopf Standarten 8 and 10, part of the pre-war military reserve of the Armed SS.

The 1st SS Bde. was assembled in Poland in May-June 1941 and on 21 June it was subordinated directly to the Field Staff of the Reichsfuehrer-SS (Himmler). After the beginning of the Russian Campaign it was decided to use this brigade in battling cut-off Red Army elements and/or partisans in Ukraine. But in the course of the next two years it also saw considerable frontline service as well.

In June 1943 the brigade was withdrawn from the front to be used in the formation of the new Estonian SS Volunteer Brigade, but as only staff troops were needed for the latter unit, 1st SS Brigade was quickly reformed and was back at the front a month later in July 1943. In August 1943 the brigade's two infantry regiments were upgraded into SS grenadier regiments, although the brigade title itself did not change. On 25 January 1944 much of the 1st SS Bde. was withdrawn from the front to be used as the nucleus of the newly authorized 18th SS Panzergrenadier Div. "Horst Wessel," which commenced forming in Yugoslavia in March 1944.

1st SS Brigade Structure and Field Post Numbers

Staff and HQ	16 441
Field Police Troop	45 913
SS-IR 8 Staff	18 830
I. Bn.	19 087
II. Bn.	19 644
III. Bn.	20 387
13. Co.	20 926
14. Co.	21 135
15. Co.	37 552
16. Co.	?
Light Transport Column	21 135
SS-IR 10 Staff	22 110
I. Bn.	22 782
II. Bn.	22 948
III. Bn.	23 331
13. Co.	23 719
14. Co.	23 846
15. Co.	23 719
16. Co.	39 394
Light Transport Column	16 504
Brigade Medical Co.	17 166
Ambulance Platoon	44 650
Signals Co.	18 610
Maintenance Platoon	45 431
SS Flak Battery 8	38 183
SS Flak Battery 9	39 840
Fusilier (Recce) Co.	18 610
Heavy Artillery Battery	26 253
Flak Companies (Winter 1942/43)	48 631
Anti-tank Detachment (Winter 1942/43)	48 365
Motorcycle Co. (Winter 1942/43)	48 682

In the course of the summer of 1942 both of the regimental 16th Companies were disbanded.

Brigade Commanders

24 April 1941-25 May 1941
SS-Brigfhr. Karl-Maria Demelhuber
25 May 1941-25 June 1941
SS-Brigfhr. Friedrich-Wilhelm Krueger
25 June 1941-4 July 1942
SS-Brigfhr. Richard Hermann
4 July 1942-1 February 1943 (?)
SS-Brigfhr. Karl von Treuenfeld
18 October 1943-30 June 1944
SS-Staf. Wilhelm Trabant (Acting CO as well as CO of 18th SS Division. Apparently the 1st SS Bde. never officially left the books until 30 June 1944.)

Operational Chronology

20 June 1941: Deployed for security duties in the General-government.
24 June 1941: Crossed through the Soviet border positions without II. Bn./SS-IR 10.
25-27 June 1941: Engaged in battle near Bialystok and Slonim, again without the services of II./SS-IR 10.
2-22 July 1941: 5th and 6th Companies/SS-IR 10 handled security duties in the Generalgovernment; on detachment from the brigade until 7 August.
28-30 July 1941: In combat with terrorists in the area south of Zwiabel while under the orders of Army Group "South."
5-7 August 1941: Advance and penetration to Korosten, without SS-IR 10. SS-IR 10 was engaged in battle with partisans and stragglers behind the frontlines around Tschernjachov and Goroschki (without 5th and 6th Companies).
8-20 August 1941: Combat in the Korosten area with 5. and 6./SS-IR 10 joining in on 12 August.
12 August 1941: Drive towards Bialokurovice without SS-IR 10.
21-26 August 1941: Pursuit fighting in the direction of the Dnieper River up to the Pripet Swamp, again without SS-IR 10, which was to the rear of Owruutsch.
27 August-14 September 1941: Combat in the rear area to the west of Owruutsch.



Crew of a SS radio car.

23-30 September 1941: Security duties in the Dnieper basin.

1-9 October 1941: Combat in the rearward area in the Donets River basin.

22 October-9 December 1941: Battles with terrorists to the south of Bryansk.

13-20 December 1941: Participation in frontline defensive fighting before Moscow.

21 December 1941-2 January 1942: Engaged in defensive fighting to the northwest of Livny.

3 January-10 June 1941: More defensive fighting around Kursk with Combat Group "Moser" from the 299th Inf. Division.

10-27 June 1942: More fighting around Kursk under the LV. Army Corps.

28 June-8 July 1942: Penetration through enemy positions and pursuit of Soviet forces to the Upper Don River.

9-12 July 1942: Defensive fighting around Voronezh and Livny.

13-31 July 1942: More defensive action around Voronezh and Livny under the control of 2nd Army. The brigade was now designated a part of Army and Army Group reserve.

31 July-10 August 1942: Continued combat in the vicinity of Voronezh and Livny under the control of VII. Army Corps.

11 August-9 October 1942: Battling terrorists in the area around Borissov and to the west of Minsk under the command of the Higher SS and Police Leader "Ostland."

10 October-16 November 1942: Battles with partisans in the area south of the Minsk-Borissov highway under the Higher SS Leader "Russland Mitte" (i.e., Russia Center Sector).

17-26 November 1942: More partisan fighting around Glebokie as part of SS-Kampfgruppe "Gottberg."

26-30 November 1942: The brigade was placed at the disposal of the Army High Command and/or the Reichsfuehrer-SS.

1 December 1942-15 January 1943: Defensive fighting near Velikiye-Luki under LIX. Army Corps.

16 January-30 June 1943: Engaged in static, positional warfare to the southwest of Velikiye-Luki.

23 June-2 July 1943: During this period only the following brigade elements remained in action to the southwest of Velikiye-Luki: Staff SS-IR 10, III./SS-IR 10, II./SS-IR 8, support troops and one heavy artillery battery.

1 July-10 August 1943: Combat with terrorists in the Naliboki forest to the west of Minsk, under the command of the Chief of Anti-Partisan Operations, SS-Gruppenfuehrer von dem Bach-Zelewski.



11-29 August 1943: Positional warfare on the Upper Duna River and around Newel under the XXXIII. Army Corps.

30 August-5 September 1943: defensive fighting at Yelnya and Smolensk.

6-18 September 1943: More defensive fighting around Jarzevo and Duchovitschina under 4th Army.

19 September-15 October 1943: Back near Yelnya and Smolensk.

16 October-23 November 1943: Participation in the 1st through 4th defensive battles waged to the west of Smolensk.

24-28 November 1943: Defensive fighting to the southwest of Kritschev under 9th Army.

28 November-12 December 1943: A battle-group from the brigade continued in action to the southwest of Kritschev; the remainder of the brigade is withdrawn from the front.

13-27 December 1943: The brigade battle-group remained in combat along the Dnieper River. The rest of the brigade was sent to Stablack, East Prussia for rest and reformation.

25 January 1944: The entire 1st SS Bde. is withdrawn from the front to be used as the nucleus for the 18th SS Div. "Horst Wessel."

March-May 1944: Elements of the brigade join recruits in training for the 18th SS Div. in Northern Croatia and the Batschka region of southern Hungary.

June 1944: 1st SS Bde. is officially dissolved on paper, although it had long since been incorporated into the 18th SS Division.

1st SS Motorized Infantry Brigade Troop Strengths

31 December 1942

179 officers / 5,956 NCOs and men. Total: 6,135.

31 December 1943

129 officers / 859 NCOs / 3,137 men. Total: 4,125.



WAFFEN-SS PERSONALITY PROFILE

SS-Brigadefuehrer CHRISTIAN-PEDER KRYSSING

Born: 7 July 1891 in Denmark Died: 7 July 1976

On 3 July 1941, as a Danish Army Lieutenant Colonel and the commander of the 5th Artillery Detachment in Holbaek, C.P. Kryssing accepted the command of the Freikorps Danmark, a Waffen-SS Danish volunteer legion formed to fight Soviet communism. The Freikorps was open to all men who had completed their national

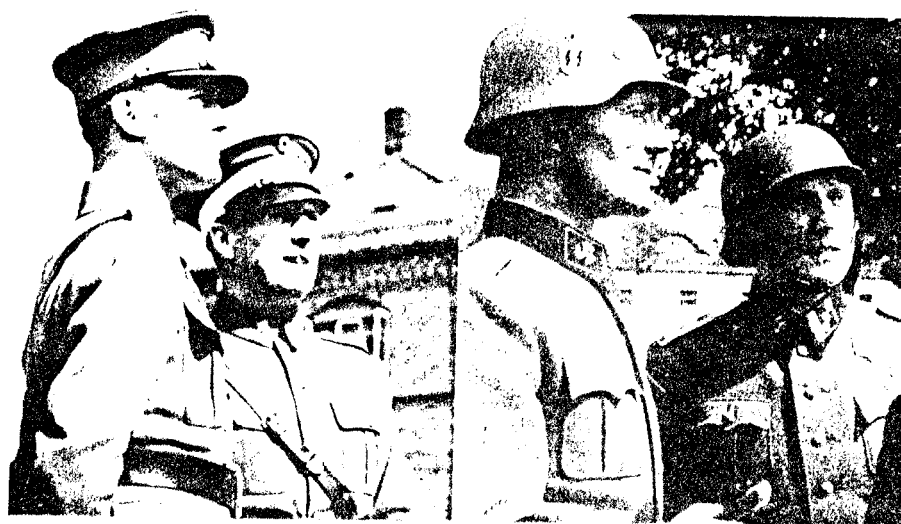


Ostuf. Kryssing (center) and Ogruf. Juettner (left).

military service since 1931 and its chief of staff was the Danish Army infantry Captain Thor Jorgensen. Kryssing, a veteran of 32 years in the Danish Army - chiefly with the artillery branch - was given the Waffen-SS rank of Obersturmbannfuehrer (Lt.Col.). It soon became apparent that Kryssing was not quite the man to command a modern, reinforced infantry battalion like the Freikorps, so after trying to build and train the unit with the help of a German training staff at Hamburg-Langenhorn and Posen-Treskau, Kryssing relinquished acting command to Hstuf. Jorgensen. Kryssing's removal was also partially political it seems, since some of the influential Danish National Socialists in the Freikorps considered him insufficiently partisan to their cause.

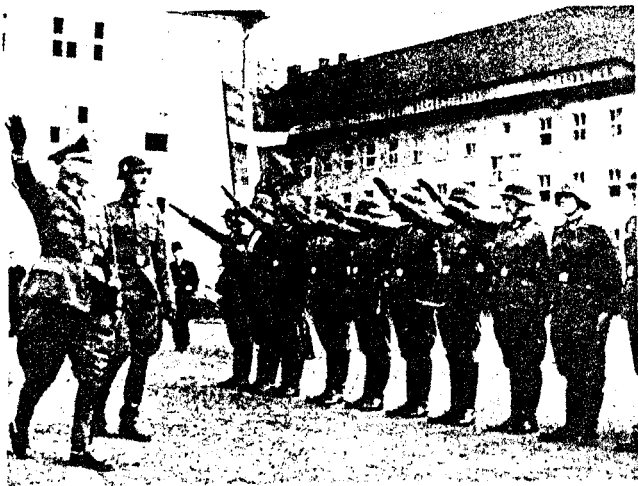
In March 1942 the dynamic, pro-National Socialist Stuf. C.F. von Schalburg took over the Freikorps and within a few short weeks had it ready for action. In the meantime, Kryssing, who remained in the Waffen-SS, attended training classes at a German Army artillery school and then was assigned to the staff of the 3rd SS "Totenkopf" Div. as an artillery officer. He later served a short stint in the same capacity with the 5th SS "Wiking" Division. In the summer of 1943, during the formation of the III. SS Pz. Corps (Germanic), Kryssing, who now held the rank of Standartenfuehrer (Col.) was made the Corps' artillery commander.

He accompanied the Corps to the Oranienbaum Front to the west of Leningrad, and quickly proved his worth by his ability to make effective improvisations during critical combat situations. This was all the more important since III. SS Pz. Corps had few reserves or replacements to count on (most were being sent to the southern part of the Eastern Front). Following the desperate retreat to the Narva River line, Kryssing (now a Brigadefuehrer [Maj.Gen.]), was given the job of organizing a mixed battle-group to defend the northern Estonian sea coast to the west of Hungerburg. This formation, called Kampfgruppe "Kueste," consisted of about 9,000 European volunteers (Germans, Estonians, and Scandinavians), culled



Before and after: Kryssing and Jorgensen in Danish uniform (left) and in SS uniforms (right). They wear the soon

to be discontinued "trifos" collar patch.



Juettner and Kryssing inspect the Freikorps Danmark.

from a variety of units. In February 1944 this battle-group under Kryssing's direction (with help from his Danish chief-of-staff, Ostubaf. Englehardt), successfully eliminated a major Soviet amphibious landing west of Hungerburg. This would probably be the highlight of Kryssing's lengthy military career.

When III. SS Pz. Corps pulled back from Narva to the Tannenberg positions in July 1944, KGr. "Kueste" followed suit along the northern Estonian coast. The formation was disbanded in September 1944 with the evacuation of Estonia. In the interim, Kryssing had become ill and had been sent back to Germany to recover. While in the hospital he was badly wounded in an "Allied" bombing attack, which forced him to remain hospitalized until the end of the war. He was eventually joined by his wife who served as a Red Cross nurse at the III. SS Pz. Corps hospital in Tallinn, Estonia before also being severely wounded during a bombing attack on that facility!

It would be fair to say the Brigfhr. Kryssing's life was almost totally ruined by the war. Both of his sons were killed while serving with the Waffen-SS; one with the SS "Totenkopf" Div. near Demyansk, the other with the SS Armored Recce Det. 11/"Nordland" during the retreat to Estonia. The latter son was actually mortally wounded and died soon afterwards in Soviet hands. After the war, still in bad health, Kryssing was hauled before a tribunal in Denmark accused of being a traitor. Found guilty he was given a long prison term which was commuted in 1951 when he was finally released. He was denied all of his "civil rights" and his military pension. Even though all of his actions were approved of by the legitimate wartime Danish government, Kryssing remained stigmatized for the rest of his life.

He suffered his fate without complaint, never apologizing for his actions which he would have unhesitatingly repeated despite the dire consequences. He lived a quiet life in a small Jutland town until his death on his birthday in 1976. A man of dignity, honor and bravery, Christian Peder Kryssing deserves to be remembered as one of the outstanding Waffen-SS combatants in the struggle against international communism.

SS-Obersturmfuehrer HANS-CASPAR KRUEGER

Hans-Caspar Krueger was a Swedish officer cadet who volunteered for the Swedish battalions that went to the aid of Finland during its "winter war" of 1940/41 with the Soviet Union. The Swedes got as far as Hango, Finland

but never actually saw any action. Upon their return home in early 1941 they were honored by a parade march before the King in Stockholm. Once Germany and the USSR went to war, many of these same Swedes, including Krueger, went to Oslo to volunteer their services to the Waffen-SS.

Krueger was accepted and sent to the SS-Junkerschule Toelz for officer's training. He subsequently saw substantial combat action with the "Wiking" Div., the Estonian SS Vol. Bn. "Narwa" and the "Nordland" Div., before being assigned as a war correspondent from the SS-Kriegsberichterstatter Standarte "Kurt Eggers" to the SS Pz. Rgt. 5/"Wiking." He was with this unit during the difficult fight to escape from the Cherkassy Pocket, where he laid fir boughs (in lieu of flowers) on the graves of the Swedish volunteers who died there and immortalized their deeds in a dispatch that was widely published in newspapers throughout Europe. A great believer in the Pan-European war against Bolshevism carried on by the Waffen-SS, Krueger's articles and writings frequently appeared in the Scandinavian press.

After having participated in nearly all of the "Wiking" Division's combat missions, Ostuf. Krueger took on one last assignment - perhaps his greatest of all - in April 1945 when he joined the French SS Assault Bn. "Charlemagne" during its heroic struggle in the battle for Berlin. Krueger survived the fighting, and with the help of a U.S. Army Captain was able to leave captivity and immigrate to Argentina where he began a new life with four Scandinavian Waffen-SS comrades.

He later returned frequently to Europe to attend Waffen-SS veteran's reunions. A veteran of some of the most savage fighting on the Eastern Front, Hans-Caspar Krueger died in a tragic automobile accident at an unmonitored railroad crossing in Buenos Aires on 15 November 1977.



SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer FRIEDRICH RICHTER

The Waffen-SS Ritterkreuztraeger, Friedrich Richter, was born in 1911 and began his military career at the Mecklinburg Police School in Schwerin in 1929 where one of his best friends was Kurt Meyer, later to become famous as "Pantermeyer" (CO of 12. SS Pz. Div. "HLJ" in Normandy). After joining the militarized SS and graduating from an SS Junkerschule, Richter became a personal adjutant to SS-Gruppenfuehrer Paul Hausser, the pre-war "Inspector General" of the SS-Verfuegungstruppe, and served several years in this capacity.

During the first phase of the Russian Campaign, Richter was the commander of 14th Co./SS-Rgt. "Deutschland" of the "Das Reich" Div., with the rank of Hauptsturmfuehrer. He saw action at the Yelnya Bend and at Istra on the road to Moscow while with this company. During the reformation of the "Das Reich" Div. in 1942, Hstuf. Richter took charge of 5th Co./"Deutschland" and was wounded while holding this position. After getting out of the hospital, Richter was promoted to Sturmbannfuehrer and placed in charge of the replacement battalion of

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the "Das Reich" Div., SS-FEB 2.

This was followed by a stint as the commander of III. Bn./SS-Pz. Gr. Rgt. 4 "Der Fuehrer" ("DR" Division). Following this Stubaf. Richter was posted as a tactical instructor to the SS-JS Toelz under Ostubaf. Fritz Klingenberg before serving in a similar capacity at the SS Artillery School in Beneschau (Bohemia) under Ostubaf. Schlammelcher.

In 1944 Friedrich Richter returned to active battlefield command, first as commander of I. Bn./SS Pz. Gr. Rgt. 22/10th SS Pz. Div. "Frundsberg" in Normandy and at Arnheim, then as the leader of the division's close-combat school and replacement battalion. In 1945 Ostubaf. Richter led III. Bn./SS Pz. Gr. Rgt. 21/"Frundsberg" in the vicious fighting for Alsace and Pomerania. He fell wounded in the latter area and spent the last weeks of the war in a military hospital.



Hstuf. Adolf Weiss (left).

SS-Standartenfuhrer ADOLF WEISS

Adolf Weiss was born on 26 February 1903. At the age of 20 he joined the Reichswehr in 1923 and underwent officer's training in conjunction with specialist communications training. Thus, in the mid-1920s, Weiss found himself a Leutnant in the Signals troops. He passed through many more advanced training courses and became a platoon trainer and an instructor in a radio company. After obtaining his engineer's accreditation, Weiss was posted to the East Prussia Fortress Construction and Engineering Staff as a communications officer. By the early 1930s he had been promoted to Hauptmann and led a company in the Signals Detachment 9 that was stationed in Hofgeismar.

On 1 April 1936, Weiss transferred at his own request into the SS-Verfuegungstruppe, becoming a tactical and communications instructor at the SS Junkerschule Braunschweig. On 1 April 1937 he was placed in charge of the new SS Signals Bn. at the Berlin-Adlershof barracks, and was made responsible for the formation and training of this unit which eventually provided key signals personnel to most of the Waffen-SS divisions. Weiss led the battalion

in the field with other SS-VT units during the occupation marches into Austria, the Sudetenland and Bohemia-Moravia, and helped to perfect its ability to function efficiently under emergency situations.

In the Polish Campaign of 1939, Stubaf. Weiss led the SS Signals Bn. into combat action for the first time with the Panzer Div. "Kempf" (an ad hoc formation which consisted of mixed Army and SS elements). From the summer of 1940 through the summer of 1942, the now Ostubaf. Weiss directed the Signals Bn. in action as part of the SS-VT Div. in France and the 2nd SS Pz. Gr. Div. "Das Reich" in Serbia and Russia (with the battalion being renamed SS Signals Bn. 2 in the process). Adolf Weiss proved himself to be a brave and able officer in combat and was decorated with both classes of the Iron Cross.

In the fall of 1942, Ostubaf. Weiss was placed in charge of the communications command for southern Russia, which coordinated the signals operations for all German forces in the region. During the two years that followed he held a variety of positions, including the command of Panzer-Grenadier regiments in the 10th SS Div. "Frundsberg" and the 16th SS Div. "RF-SS." His last posting was as staff signals officer for the Waffen-SS commander-in-chief Hungary (SS-Ogruf. Georg Keppler), with the rank of Standartenfuhrer.



SS-Jaeger Arvid Sven Harry Gauffin [photo above left], born 4 July 1913 in Sweden, MIA (most likely killed) near Achtachma on 7 April 1944 while serving with the predominantly Norwegian SS Ski Bn. "Norge" of the 6th SS Mtn. Div. "Nord."

SS-Schuetze Lars Gunnar Hellmer [photo above right], born 21 January 1921 in Sweden. He was a member of the SS Training and Replacement Bn. 5 (Div. "Wiking") in Klagenfurt, Austria. MIA in September 1943, probably while serving with the 11th SS Div. "Nordland" in Croatia.

The Swedish volunteer Oskar Thuresson-Bergstrand died on 2 June 1984 at the age of 64. He was a Rottenfuhrer in the "Germania" Rgt. of the "Wiking" Division.

SS Sturmabfuhrer FRIEDRICH MESSERLE

Friedrich Messerle was born on 22 April 1915 in Sulzbach, Saar, the son of a miner. He completed his schooling in 1934 and from 1935-38 served in the mountain artillery of the German Army. In 1938 he received the rank of Leutnant and one year later he transferred into the Waffen-SS with the rank of Untersturmfuhrer. He subsequently became a signals platoon leader, an adjutant and a battery commander all in the IV. Heavy Artillery Detachment of the SS-"Totenkopf" Artillery Regiment. He served with this unit from its inception to the last months of the war.

Messerle next commanded the Staff Battery/IV. Det.,

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then the 12. Battery/SS-AR 3 before taking charge of the "Artillery Group Messerle" which distinguished itself in the defense of the Demyansk Cauldron "corridor" (or pipe-line). Messerle was eventually promoted to Sturm-bannfuehrer and made commander of IV./SS-AR 3/"Totenkopf," in which capacity he served until his wounding in March 1945. In the course of the war he was decorated with both classes of the Iron Cross and the German Cross in Gold. He returned home from captivity in 1947 and worked in the mining industry in the Saarland until his retirement. He died on 14 April 1984.



Sturm-bannfuehrer

Dr. ERICH GATTERNIGG

Erich Gatternigg was born in the Carinthia region of Austria on 20 July 1907. He studied medicine in the years prior to WWII and eventually became a physician. With the threat of war in the air, Gatternigg volunteered his services to the Wehrmacht and served as an Army doctor in the Polish Campaign of 1939. In April 1940 he decided to transfer to the elite Waffen-SS and he was assigned to the special SS "Totenkopf" Rgt. that was stationed in Kirkenes, Norway on the Barents Sea.

In February 1941, Gatternigg was sent to the "Leibstandarte" SS Adolf Hitler" Bde., where he became the medical officer for the SS Recce Detachment "LAH" led by the daring Kurt "Panzer" Meyer. He stayed at this post, often in the forefront of the battlefield action, through the Balkan campaign and during the invasion of Russia up until the period following the Battle of Kharkov in 1943.

When "Panzer" Meyer was assigned to command the SS Panzergrenadier Rgt. 25 of the new 12th SS Pz. Div. "Hitler Jugend," he saw to it that his close friend Erich Gatternigg went with him to become the regimental surgeon. Following some tough duty with the "IIJ" Div., Dr. Gatternigg was sent to the 9th SS Pz. Div. "Hohenstauffen" in November 1944 where he became the chief divisional medical officer, in charge of the "Hohenstauffen" field hospital and dressing stations. He served in this capacity until the end of the war with the rank of Sturm-bannfuehrer (Major).

In the course of the war Stubaf. Dr. Gatternigg was awarded both classes of the Iron Cross, the war service medal, the close combat clasp, the infantry assault badge and the German Cross in gold. He remained in American

captivity until May 1947 when he was turned over to Austrian "authorities" (put into power by the "Allies" and Soviets), who immediately saw to it that he was confined for another 22 months for having served in the "criminal" Waffen-SS. Following his eventual release from confinement in 1949, Gatternigg was able to regain his civilian "Doctor" title and began a medical practice in the town of Winklarn which he maintained for many years. He also became active in post-war Waffen-SS veterans affairs.

SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer
WERNER HOERNICKE

Werner Hoernicke was born on 9 March 1907 in Dresden. He completed his schooling at the Wettiner Gymnasium in 1926 and then trained and worked as a salesman until 1934 when he joined the Reichswehr. He then attended a motorcycle troop training course in Doberitz-Elstgrund and a year later participated in a reserve officers training course with the Inf.Rgt. 10 in Dresden and the Inf.Rgt. 101 in Doebeln.

In the years that followed Hoernicke took part in the marches into Austria, the Sudetenland and Bohemia-Moravia. On 1 September 1939 he became a Lieutenant of the reserves but a better deal was in the offing. The newly developing Waffen-SS urgently needed proven officers and Hoernicke was offered the rank of Hauptsturmfuehrer (reserve) in return for transferring in. He accepted this arrangement and became a member of the Waffen-SS on 15 November 1939.

Hstuf. Hoernicke was placed in charge of a "Totenkopf" motorcycle company in Cracow which in 1941 became the motorcycle recce company of the 1st SS Brigade. He led this unit during the first stages of the Russian Campaign and proved himself to be a competent and successful commander, winning a number of combat decorations including both classes of the Iron Cross (in November 1941 and December 1942 respectively), the assault badge, the close-combat clasp and the wound badge in silver. He would later receive the wound badge in gold after being wounded for the sixth time.

On 21 June 1943, Hoernicke was promoted to Sturm-bannfuehrer (reserve). He then served as the CO of L.Bn./SS-IR 10/1st SS Brigade. Later in the year, during the pull back from the Smolensk area, a gap in the frontlines suddenly appeared between XXXIII. Army Corps and its neighboring Corps to the south. L/SS-IR 10 was attached to this southern Corps in support of an Army division that was trying to plug up the hole in the front.

After coming under severe pressure from enemy fighter planes and tanks, the Army troops gave way. While standing with his unit in reserve, Stubaf. Hoernicke observed this route and decided to take immediate action. At the head of his troops he launched an immediate counterattack. In hand-to-hand combat L/SS-IR 10 re-took the lost Army positions and then threw the Reds back off of a hill they had occupied. This broke the back of a major Soviet offensive and saved the day for the withdrawing German forces. It also brought the award of the Kni-

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ght's Cross to Stubaf. Hoernicke on 1 December 1943.

Hoernicke's battalion was soon incorporated into the 18th SS Div. "Horst Wessel" and on 9 November 1944 he was promoted to Obersturmbannfuhrer. Then on 1 December 1944 he became one of the few W-SS officers to ever permanently transfer back into the regular Army. He was given the rank of Oberstleutnant and made commander of the Volksgrenadier Rgt. 1083/544th VG Div. - position which he held until the end of the war. Hoernicke died of a stroke in Nuremberg on 30 April 1982.



**SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer
KARL-HEINZ ERTTEL**

Karl-Heinz Ertel was born on 26 November 1919 in Luenen-Brambauer, Luenen District, North Rhine-Westphalia. He was the son of a police official. From 1926 to 1930 he attended the Catholic "Old City" School in Luenen. He then attended the Friherr-vom-Stein Realgymnasium in Luenen and the Hindenburg Realgymnasium in Dortmund until his graduation on 25 February 1938. From April to October 1938 Ertel served with the Reich Labor Service Detachment 8./205 in Ergste, Westphalia, then on 1 November 1938 he volunteered for the SS-VT, joining 1st Co./SS-Standarte "Germania" in Hamburg-Langenhorn.

He served as a company messenger during the Polish Campaign of September 1939, then from November 1939 until February 1940, he attended the first wartime officers training course at SS-Junkerschule Tuelz. In March 1940 the newly commissioned Untersturmfuehrer Ertel was assigned to the replacement battalion of SS Rgt. "Germania." In April he was posted to 3rd Co./"Germania" in Westphalia and by the beginning of the Western Campaign in May 1940, he had become the 2nd Ordnance Officer for I./SS-"G." Following the ceasefire with France, Ertel became a platoon leader in 10th Co./SS-"G," a position he held until June 1941.

In this month Ertel was attached to the newly authorized Finnish Volunteer Bn. which began forming and training in Vienna, Stralsund and Gross Born. In December 1941 the Finnish Bn. was sent to the "Wiking" SS Div. on the southern part of the Eastern Front, arriving in January 1942. It would remain with the "Wiking" Div. until July 1943. During this time Ertel served as a company commander with the battalion and during the fighting at Malgobek and in the Caucasus he won both grades of the Iron Cross, the Finnish Freedom Cross, 4th Class, the Silver Close-Combat Clasp, the Black Wound Badge and the Infantry Assault Badge.

In August 1943, Obersturmfuehrer Ertel became the regimental adjutant of the new Dutch SS Pz.Gr.Rgt. 49 "De Ruyter" of the "Nederland" Brigade. He was with the Regiment in Croatia, on the Oranienbaum Front and at Narva. On the morning of 29 July 1944 the "De Ruyter" positions to the west of Narva came under a massive enemy attack. The Regimental commander, Ostubaf. Hans Collani (whom Ertel had served under in the Finnish Bn.), was badly wounded and shot himself when it looked like the "DeR" command post would be overrun. It was then left to Hstuf. Ertel to take charge of the Regiment. He led it through two days of desperate close-combat, successfully repelling countless Soviet attacks. For this display of decisiveness and personal bravery, Karl-Heinz Ertel was awarded the Knight's Cross.

In January 1945, after several more months of hard fighting, Hauptsturmfuehrer Ertel left the "De Ruyter" Rgt. when it arrived back in Stettin from Kurland. He then served until the end of the war as the First Ordnance Officer on the staff of III. SS Pz. Corps (Germanic). On 6 May 1945, Ertel went into American captivity near Lippspringe, Westphalia. He was turned over to the English when the area fell within the British Zone of Occupation. For three months in the summer of 1946 Ertel served as a defense witness for the Waffen-SS at the Nuremberg Tribunal. That was a mistake as the vengeance-minded "Allied" prosecutors didn't take too kindly to "defense witnesses" and in almost every instance went out of their way to seek a measure of revenge. Thus Hstuf. Ertel found himself singled out for a "special investigation," but nothing could be found against him.

Finally a casual "tip" arrived from British intelligence: Ertel had served briefly in Yugoslavia as a member of an SS unit and according to "Allied" logic all SS units in that country committed atrocities, thus Ertel was undoubtedly a "war criminal"! What to do next? Why, turn him over to Tito's butchers, of course. Thus on 20 April 1947 (a fine sense of "timing" that!), Hstuf. Ertel was dispatched to Yugoslavia to be tried as a "war criminal." The Yugoslavs carefully checked their voluminous "hit list" and were unable to find Ertel's name on it. As far as they were concerned he was a "nobody" but something had to be done. They promptly sentenced him to six years at hard labor for belonging to a "criminal organization" - the Waffen-SS. Karl-Heinz Ertel was finally released from a totally unjustified captivity on 15 October 1950 due to the personal intervention of Konrad Adenauer.

**SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer
TALBOT VON PISTOR**

Talbot von Pistor was born on 14 August 1906, the son of a finance official in Vienna. Later on in life he spent four years in East Africa before returning to Vienna in 1931. Attracted by the positive growth of National Socialism in Germany, von Pistor soon applied for membership in the General SS (banned in Austria), and crossed the border to join the Austrian SS Legion in Klosterlech, Germany in August 1933. In 1935 he was attached to

the SS-Verfuegungstruppe, joining II. Bn./SS-Standarte "Deutschland" stationed at Dachau.

After obtaining his officer's commission, von Pistor was sent to the staff of the newly authorized SS-Polizei Div. at Wandern/Kurmak on 1 October 1939. He served very efficiently with the Polizei Division's reconnaissance detachment during the French Campaign of 1940 before being reassigned to the divisional staff in the autumn of that year. He served as a staff officer (quite frequently on the battlefield), during the Polizei Division's toughest actions in Russia; at Luga, Krasnogvardiesk, Tschudovo, Nikolskoje and elsewhere.

In 1943, von Pistor spent time at a support troops training facility in the Generalgouvernement (Poland), and in 1944 he was named the supply officer of the 21st Albanian SS Mtn. Div. "Skanderbeg," helping with the formation of the division at Prizren, Albania. He was next assigned to help with the reconstruction of the 20th Estonian SS Div. at Oppeln/Neisse. During the last months of the war he served as a staff officer with the 25th Hungarian SS Div. "Hunyadi" and he accompanied this formation into American captivity on 5 May 1945.

Following his release from confinement, Talbot von Pistor was one of the founders of the Waffen-SS veteran's society in Munich. He later moved to Cologne, still remaining active in veteran's affairs, and eventually took up a position with Munin-Verlag, the Waffen-SS veteran's publishing house.



SS-Brigadefuehrer
OTTO GIESEKE

Otto Gieseke was born in Hohenhameln, Peine District, on 24 March 1891, the son of farmer August Gieseke. After completing his schooling in 1910, Gieseke volunteered for one-year's service with the 16th Dragoon Rgt. in Lueneberg. From 1911 to 1914 he attended a teachers' training course and became an accredited elementary school teacher. With the outbreak of WWI, Gieseke rejoined his old Regiment in the field and fought on the Western Front.

In the second year of the war Gieseke was promoted to Lieutenant, and somewhat later he joined a machine gun detachment of a Guards Rifle Rgt. with the rank of Oberleutnant. In the course of the war he was wounded four times and was awarded both grades of the Iron Cross. He also received the Order of the House of Hohenzollern with Swords. The end of WWI found Gieseke in Berlin, disgusted with the surrender and eager to continue his military service. His only option therefore was to join a Free Corps Regiment, whose mission was to resist the onslaught of Bolshevik tyranny and try to prevent Germany from sliding into total anarchy. Gieseke signed on with the famous "Iron Division" which from 1919 to 1921 battled the communists in the Baltic States and Polish insurgents in Upper Silesia. For his actions during this period, Otto Gieseke was decorated with the Baltic

Cross (1st and 2nd Class) and the Order of the Silesian Eagle.

In 1922 Gieseke joined the Schutzpolizei (Protection Police), keeping his old Army rank of Oberleutnant in the process. He spent time at posts in several different towns until 1930 when he was sent to Cologne where he stayed for five full years. By 1939 he had been promoted to Major and was made commander of the Schutzpolizei in Erfurt, Thuringia. He was next posted to the Police Training Bn. in Itzehoe, and following the Polish Campaign he was made commander of a Police Bn. stationed in Lublin. After being promoted to Oberstleutnant, Gieseke took charge of a Police Rifle Rgt. in Radom, Poland in early 1940 and a short while later he became the chief of-staff of the newly authorized SS-Police Division.

At the beginning of the Russian Campaign, Gieseke was in charge of the SS-Police Rifle Rgt. 1 of the SS-Police Division. He enjoyed good relations with his officers and men and served as sort of a father-figure for them. He also liked to be in the thick of things on the battlefield and it wasn't very long before he suffered another wound and was decorated with the Silver Wound Badge. He also quickly won the WWII clasps to his WWI Iron Crosses.

During the fighting on the Volkhov River Front, Ostbaf. Gieseke led a battle-group formed around his Regiment. In the summer of 1942, Kampfgruppe "Gieseke" spearheaded the effort to eliminate the trapped 2nd Soviet Storm Army. After days of heavy fighting through the swamps, forest and brush country, the now Standartenfuehrer Gieseke led his troops in the assault on the enemy command centers at Voschod and Fenev-Lug. Following a few hours of stiff fighting with Staf. Gieseke at the hottest spots in the action with the first assault wave, the SS Police troops broke the communist resistance and captured their objectives. Along with many of his soldiers, Gieseke received the Assault Badge in Silver - the mark of a true "storm soldier."

Staf. Gieseke's Regiment was next switched to a new front sector where the Tosna River joined the Neva. Late in the summer of 1942 a major battle erupted here when the Reds attempted to break through the ring around Leningrad. The focal point of the enemy attack was the sector held by Stubaf. Karl Schuemers' II.Bn./SS-Pol. Rgt. 1. No fewer than 20,000 massed enemy troops along with a variety of assault boats, supported by fighter planes, bombers, artillery and tanks, made a supreme effort to smash this small part of the German front. Staf. Gieseke had only one order to give the defenders: "You must hold these positions, and you will hold them." To help out he assembled a company from members of his staff and last reserves and personally led it in counter-attacks whenever the situation warranted.

For seven days and seven nights the battle at the Tossna-Neva juncture raged with unmitigated fury. In the midst of this firestorm the SS troops held firm with steadfast resolve. The Soviets never broke through and were forced to break off the assault due to enormous losses. The SS Police troops had proven themselves masters of the most difficult situation imaginable. Never once had they faltered, even though the pressure was overwhelming at times.

For the performance of his regiment during this fighting, Staf. Otto Gieseke was awarded the Knight's Cross on 30 September 1942. His subordinate, Stubaf. Schuemers, was similarly decorated. Otto Gieseke went on to become a Brigadefuehrer and commander of all Order Police troops in the Baltic states. In the summer of 1944, he led a battle-group of Latvian, Estonian and German police troops (formerly Kampfgruppe "Jeckeln") in the fighting for Latvia.

Brigfhr. Gieseke's three brothers and two sons all saw frontline service during the war as well. One of his sons

was with the famous "Hermann Goering" Div., while the other, Hans-Guenther Gieseke, served as an Ostuf. in 2nd SS Pz. Div. "Das Reich." Otto Gieseke survived the immediate aftermath of the war but died of a heart attack on 26 February 1968 in Hannover at the age of 76.



**SS-Brigadefuehrer
JUERGEN WAGNER**

Juergen Wagner was born on 9 September 1901 in Strassburg, Alsace, the son of General-of-the-Infantry Ernst Wagner. After attending schools in Wesel, Muenster and Erfurt, he joined the Corp of Military Cadets in Naumburg in 1915. In 1917 he was transferred to the main military cadet installation at the Lichterfelde Barracks in Berlin. With the dissolution of this facility in early 1920, Wagner returned to the home of his parents in Muenster. Here he became a member of the "Student Free Corps Muenster" which was formed to battle Bolsheviks and other subversives in the Ruhr area.

In May 1920, Wagner returned to Berlin-Lichterfelde which had been turned into a government institute for training civil servants. But he soon found this activity not to his liking and in March 1921 he enlisted in the Reichswehr. By 1925, Wagner was serving as an officer-candidate NCO in the Army but his career seemed to have reached a dead-end, since officer appointments were highly restricted in the 100,000 man Reichswehr. So in 1926 he used his recent marriage as a reason for leaving the service. He then studied and trained in mechanical engineering in Friedberg, Hessen until 1929 when financial difficulties forced him to seek full-time employment.

He was able to secure a position as an assistant engineer at an electrical power works in Hoechst and later on he held the same job in Nassau an der Lahn. During the depression, Wagner was laid off and moved to Quedlingburg in a fruitless effort to find employment. With the help of his wife and in-laws he was able to open a small jewelry shop (his father-in-law was a jeweler), but this was really not very satisfying employment for him.

In March 1931, Juergen Wagner decided to join the SS organization of the NSDAP, where he was able to put his military skills to work with good effect. By October he was serving as a Scharfuehrer (Sgt.) and after successfully training a 13-man SS-"Sturm" he was promoted to Oberscharfuehrer and squad leader. In October 1932 Wagner took charge of the SS Sports School at Kalvoerde in the Altmark and he now received a small salary of 50 Reichsmarks per month. The jewelry store was now forgotten.

On 20 April 1933, Wagner was promoted to "Sturm-fuehrer" (a rank that was soon changed to Hauptsturmfuehrer or Captain), and on 8 July he was sent to the SS-Sonderkommando at the Army Jueterbog training grounds. This was one of the formative elements of what would become the "LSSAH." Wagner became the instructor for the 3rd Training Co. until his promotion to Sturmbann-

fuehrer on 1 October 1933, when he was also named the commander of II.Bn./"LSSAH," a position he would hold until 1939.

Wagner next served as a battalion commander in the SS Rgt. "Deutschland" and SS-Inf.Rgt. 11 of the "Das Reich" Division. From May 1942 until October 1943, he commanded the "Germania" Rgt. of the "Wiking" Div. with extraordinary distinction. His name will forever be connected with the victory at Krassno-Armavskoe, the destruction of the Soviet Armored Group Popoff and the capturing of the west bank of the Don near Isjum. For his great success in leading the regiment, Oberfuehrer Juergen Wagner was decorated with the Knight's Cross on 24 July 1943.

He was then promoted to Brigadefuehrer and in October 1943 assumed command of the 4th SS Assault Bde. "Nederland." Wagner led this unit, first as a brigade and then as a division, throughout the remainder of the war in Croatia, at Oranienbaum and Narva, in Kurland and Pomerania and on the Oder. Due to the fact that "Nederland" was in constant combat action all during its existence it never was able to fight as a cohesive whole; parts of it constantly served as components of other divisions and battle-groups, while likewise numerous unattached elements from other units would serve from time-to-time under the "Nederland" staff. But never once did the Dutch and ethnic-German soldiers of this division falter; against overwhelming odds they did their job over and over and fully paid the price in blood. SS Panzergrenadier Rgt. 48 "General Seyffardt"/Div. "Nederland" was completely destroyed and reformed three times over and all too many of the 11,000 Dutch Waffen-SS wartime fatalities came from this division.

Brigfhr. Wagner and his troops gained the reputation for doing the impossible and saving one hopeless situation after another. As a result he became the 630th recipient of the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross on 11 December 1944. In the end the last few remnants of the "Nederland" Div. managed to fight their way out of numerous entrapments to the south of Berlin (except for the Dutch SS Rgt. 49 "De Ruyter", which was to the north of Berlin), and reached the Elbe River in early May 1945 where they surrendered to the Americans.

For Juergen Wagner, his ordeal had only just begun. After being held for two years in U.S. captivity, he was treacherously turned over to the communist regime in Yugoslavia, which was controlled by some of the bloodiest cut-throats imaginable. In the course of 1947 Wagner was tortured, put on "trial" and executed for utterly fictitious "war crimes." It was a sorry end for a great and courageous military leader and his blood remains on the hands of an unrepentant U.S. government, which stubbornly refuses to acknowledge its own cruel misdeeds from the WWII and post-war era.

SS-Untersturmfuehrer KURT FRANKE

Kurt Franke was born on 13 June 1915 in Wurzen, Saxony. In the pre-war years he served with the SS-"Totenkopfverbände" and along with many of his comrades joined the new SS-"Totenkopf" Div. in October 1939. While serving ably as an NCO in the Western Campaign in June 1940 he received the Iron Cross, 2nd Class for bravery. He subsequently accompanied the SS-"T" Div. into Russia and served with it during its hardest battles over the next few years.

In February 1943, Franke led a daring counterattack that drove back an enemy force that had penetrated the "T" Div. lines near Tschugujev and was then able to hold the key ground against all further Soviet attacks. This brought him the Iron Cross, 1st Class.

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In other actions at Sovokovka and at the Mius Bridgehead, Franke led small assault troops with great coolness and audacity under fire while always setting an example for his men to follow. At the end of summer 1943, when an attack by the SS Panzergrenadier Rgt. 6 "Theodor Eicke" got stuck before a tenacious enemy defensive fire, Franke assembled a small group of battle-hardened veterans and led them over the Merla River to a point behind the Soviet lines. With total surprise, Franke and his men then hit the Red positions from the rear and rolled them up, enabling the general attack to proceed forward. This deed brought the award of the Knight's Cross to Kurt Franke on 3 October 1943.

After many more testings of his abilities, Franke was given a battlefield promotion to Untersturmfuehrer and made a company commander. During the third attempt by IV. SS Panzer Corps to relieve Budapest, Ustuf. Franke was severely wounded to the west of Stuhlweissenberg. He died from this wounding on 19 January 1945 at the field hospital in Veszprem.



**SS-Brigadefuehrer
HERBERT ERNST VAHL**

Born: 9 October 1896 in Posen, West Prussia.

Died: 22 July 1944 in Greece (accidental death)

In the war year of 1914, Herbert Ernst Vahl responded with patriotic fervor to the national call-to-arms and enlisted in the German Army. After a short training period he was sent directly to the front. In May 1915 he became an officer and served with distinction as an adjutant and company commander in the battles before Verdun, on the Somme and in the Champagne. As a result he received both classes of the Iron Cross for bravery. Following the war he remained on duty with the Reichswehr and served as an instructor at several different military training schools. He was promoted to Hauptmann (Captain) in 1931.

During the expansion of the Reichswehr into the Wehrmacht in the 1930s, Vahl's expertise was put to good use in the construction and training of new units. By the end of 1935 he was serving as the CO of a motorized company. During the Polish Campaign of September 1939 he led a tank detachment with the rank of Major. In subsequent battle actions over the next two years he was awarded the WWII clasps to his WWI Iron Crosses, and in 1941, during the advance into Russia, Vahl became the recipient of the German Cross in Gold. At the time he was an Oberstleutnant in command of a Panzer regiment.

On 1 August 1942, Vahl transferred into the Waffen-SS, which was in the process of forming its premiere formations (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Divisions) into armored divisions and needed qualified tank officers. In November 1942, with the rank of Standartenfuehrer (Col.), Vahl became the CO of the new SS Panzer Rgt. 2/2nd SS Div. "Das

Reich." He then led this regiment with particular brilliance and tenacity during the effort to retake Kharkov in March 1943. For the vital performance of his command and his own personal leadership, Herbert Ernst Vahl received the Knight's Cross on 31 March 1943. For much of the time from 15 February to 3 April 1943, Staf. Vahl actually served as the acting commander of the "Das Reich" Division.

Vahl was now promoted to Oberfuehrer and continued to lead his panzer regiment in the violent fighting near Kursk and later on on the Donez during the summer of 1943. In the course of the Donez defensive operations, Vahl was seriously wounded and had to relinquish his command. His convalescence lasted until the early part of 1944, when he received a promotion to Brigadefuehrer and was put back into the Waffen-SS officer's replacement pool. In July he was appointed to command the 4th SS Polizei-Pz.Gr.Div. in Greece. His first order of business was to pay a visit to the far-flung divisional units. While traveling through rough mountain country to visit SS Panzer Detachment 4 under Stubaf. Etthoefer, Vahl's command car swerved off of the road into a ravine. He was instantly killed but his ordnance officer, the Knight's Cross holder Rudolf Seitz, who was with him was only badly injured.

Brigfhr. Vahl was subsequently buried with full military honors (and in formal tropical uniform), at the divisional cemetery in Greece. He left behind five children who after the war were declared ineligible for public assistance due to their father's service in the "criminal" Waffen-SS.

**SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer
JOHANNES HELLMERS**

Johannes Hellmers was born in Oremandsgard (near Allerslev), Denmark on 23 October 1918. He was the son of a small farmer. He completed his secondary schooling in 1934 and began working and studying in the field of agriculture. But two years later Hellmers decided to join the Danish Army. In 1938 he was promoted to Kornet (roughly officer candidate) and a year later became a second lieutenant.

On 19 July 1941, Johannes Hellmers volunteered his services to the Waffen-SS and was accepted with the rank of Untersturmfuehrer. He was first assigned to the Freikorps Danmark (the Danish SS Legion), and was on duty with its replacement company in January 1942. But the unit was undergoing leadership and training difficulties and Hellmers sought duty elsewhere. In May 1942 he was sent to the SS Inf. Rgt. 9 of the newly established SS Div. "Nord" (it was not yet a mountain division) on the Finnish Front. He gained considerable combat experience both with his unit and the SS "Totenkopf" Div. and in October 1943 he was selected to attend a special, advanced officer's training course at SS-Junkerschule "Toelz." Hellmer's "class" consisted of 176 European volunteers from Denmark, Norway, Holland, France, Latvia and Estonia, most of whom had already been commissioned officers in the armies of their native countries.

Hellmers completed the course on 11 March 1944 and was promoted to Obersturmfuehrer. On 1 May 1944 he took command of 6th Co./SS-Pz. Gr. Rgt. 49 "De Ruyter"/4th SS Bde. "Nederland" on the Narva Front in Estonia. His many courageous acts and deeds during the subsequent violent fighting in Estonia and Latvia brought him to the attention of RF-SS Himmler, who personally promoted him to Hauptsturmfuehrer on 30 January 1945. His actions also did not go unnoticed by the "Nederland" Divisional commander, Brigfhr. Juergen Wagner, who on 2 February 1945 successfully recommended him for the award of the Knight's Cross with the following

report:

During the fighting around Kaleti, a company formed from the remnants of a battalion succeeded in restoring the old battle lines 400 meters to the east of Kaleti. The commander of this company was SS-Ostuf. Hellmers.

On the morning of 25 January [1945], the Russians had attacked from the woods that lay before the lines with tanks and 200 men. This force penetrated into the trenches, rolling up most of the positions. In the face of this nearly hopeless situation, SS-Ostuf. Hellmers along with a few men, sought to undertake a counterattack. Leading the point of the attack himself with a machine pistol, he stormed forward (with his command) and threw the enemy out of the trenches with bloody losses.

Though twice wounded himself, he stayed with his men in the main lines and while under heavy infantry fire, resisted all attempts by the foe to retake them. It is thanks to his resolute and exemplary bravery that the main battle lines around Kaleti were able to hold in their entirety on 25 January, and the enemy attempt to break through Kaleti was repulsed. His display of resistance was of decided importance to the entire sector between Purmasati and Skuodas.



**SS-Sturmabfuhrer
ERNST DEHMAL**

Ernst Dehmal was born on 7 April 1915 in Hilden, the Rhineland. He joined the "LSSAH" on 12 April 1934, being assigned to the 4th Machine Gun Co. at the Berlin-

Lichterfelde barracks. On 1 April 1938, following several years service as an NCO, Dehmal graduated from the SS-Junkerschule "Braunschweig" but it was not until a year later that he finally received his officer's commission as an Untersturmfuehrer. For part of the year 1939 he was detached from his unit to serve with security forces in the Sudetenland (a number of local militias, bolstered by armed SS personnel, had been formed there on a temporary basis), returning back to the "Leibstandarte" at the end of the year. He soon transferred to the SS "Totenkopf" Div., becoming an artillery spotter with I. Detachment/SS Artillery Rgt. "T."

In 1942, Hstuf. Dehmal was assigned to the newly created assault gun detachment of the "T" Div., which underwent formation at the SS training base in Debica, Poland. When the detachment returned to the Eastern Front in early 1943, Dehmal accompanied it and soon became its acting commander. In this position he led it during the battles for Bjelgorod-Kursk and on the Mius River with considerable success. Operating with a few of his assault guns, Dehmal twice eliminated large-scale enemy armored penetrations that threatened the whole division.

During the first such action, Hstuf. Dehmal and his gunners knocked out 25 T-34 tanks at close quarters, and in the process he was wounded in the arm and shoulder. Despite this, Dehmal stayed with his command and led it in action again against a massive, follow-up enemy assault. This time 22 more T-34's were destroyed and the foe completely abandoned the field, sparing a "Totenkopf" regiment from possible encirclement and annihilation.

This prodigious accomplishment brought Ernst Dehmal the award of the Knight's Cross; he had already been awarded the Iron Cross, 2nd Class in June 1940 during the Western Campaign and the Iron Cross, 1st Class in September 1941 for deeds during the heroic defense of Lushno. In 1944, Hstuf. Dehmal was badly wounded for the sixth time. He was now blind in one eye, deaf in one ear, and missing a shoulder joint and partially crippled in the back. In addition he had assorted shell fragments permanently lodged in all parts of his body! His last hospital stay lasted from June 1944 to 16 April 1945 when he took up a short-lived instructor position at the SS Assault Gun Training School in Janowitz. In the meantime he had been promoted to Sturmabfuhrer on 9 November 1944.

At the end of the war, Ernst Dehmal returned to his home in Hilden, still badly disabled from his war wounds. But the French occupation authorities were not willing to let a crippled former Waffen-SS officer live in peace so they arrested him and incarcerated him in a brutally run internment camp at Remscheid-Luettringhausen. On 7 August 1945, the Waffen-SS Ritterkreuztraeger Ernst Dehmal was bestially murdered without cause by French soldiers.

SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer Dr. FRITS CLAUSEN

SS-Ostuf. Dr. Frits Clausen was born in Abenra, North Schleswig, Denmark in 1893. He served in the German Army in WWI and studied veterinary medicine at German colleges, in particular at the University of Heidelberg. In 1933 he became the leader of the Danish National Socialist Workers Party for DNSAP, which was modelled on the German NSDAP, and in 1939 he was elected to the Danish Parliament.

When the DNSAP failed to gain any real influence during the German occupation, Clausen decided to volunteer his services to the Waffen-SS. He was accepted in that formation on 1 November 1943 and was given

the rank of Obersturmbannführer (Lt.Col.) and senior medical officer position. There soon proved to be one catch in this arrangement: Dr. Clausen was an acute alcoholic and when it became apparent that his drinking problem was affecting his work a decision was made to send him to a sanatorium in Wurzburg to "dry out" in February 1944.

Unfortunately, Ostuf. Clausen's "cure" never stuck, and in May 1944 he received his walking papers from the Waffen-SS and was sent back to Denmark where he once again took over the reins of the DNSAP. But in November 1944 he was kicked out of the party for unspecified (but guessable!) reasons.

After the war, Dr. Clausen was arrested by the newly installed leftist government in Denmark and was charged with treason. While waiting to go on trial for his life, he was kept at hard labor. The extreme exertion probably helped to bring on the heart attack which killed him. A tragic and lonely figure in history, Frits Clausen was nonetheless a stout-hearted idealist and man of his convictions.



SS-Obersturmführer
SOEREN KAM

Soeren Kam was born on 2 November 1921 in Copenhagen, the son of a Danish textile wholesaler. In the course of his international business dealings, Soeren Kam's father came more and more impressed with the new society that began taking shape in Germany after 1933 and thus he encouraged his son to participate in the Danish National Socialist Youth Movement.

After completing his basic schooling, Soeren Kam began training as a carpenter, with the ultimate aim of becoming an architect. In the winter semester of 1938, he was able to attend the architectural school in Copenhagen, but his studies would be interrupted a year later when the Soviet Union attacked Finland. Upon this occurrence, Kam immediately went to Finland to offer his services to the Finnish Army. He was assigned to a Danish volunteer battalion and found that his idol and longtime Danish N.S. Youth leader, the Danish Royal Guard Captain, Count Christian von Schalburg, was already at the front. Von Schalburg went on to become a legendary

figure in the Waffen-SS.

When Finland capitulated, the Danish volunteer battalion was demobilized and Kam went home to Copenhagen. At the end of May 1940, not long after the German occupation of Denmark began, Soeren Kam became one of the first 40 Danish volunteers for the Waffen-SS. All of these men had been granted the King's permission to serve in the German Armed Forces, though it would not save them from being branded traitors, when the post war "resistance" government took over.

Kam was sent to the newly forming I. Bn./SS Rgt. "Nordland" in Klagenfurt, Austria. In early 1941, the regiment was sent to the military training grounds at Heuberg to join the rest of the European volunteer Division "Wiking." Soeren Kam was with "Wiking" when it entered the Soviet Union in June 1941. In September 1941, while serving as a machine gunner with 1st Co./"Nordland," Kam was severely wounded in the lungs and upper arms at Dnepropetrovsk. Following a long hospital stay he eventually rejoined the "Nordland" replacement battalion in Klagenfurt with the rank of Unterscharführer.

He was next selected to attend the SS-Junkerschule "Toelz," from which he graduated in December 1942 as an officer designate. In the summer of 1943, Untersturmführer Kam returned to the Eastern Front, serving as an ordnance officer to Sturmbannführer Hans Dorr, who was then commanding I.Bn./SS-Rgt. "Germania"/Div. "Wiking." Somewhat later on, with the rank of Obersturmführer, Kam assumed command of 1st Co./"Germania."

During the third major defensive battle for the "Wiking" Div. between the Bug and Weichsel Rivers, the then commander of I.Bn./"Germania," Stuf. Martin Kruse, fell wounded. A crisis situation developed and it was left to Ostuf. Kam to take charge of the remnants of the battalion. With these soldiers he was able to hold key positions in the frontlines for three critical days against superior communist forces in extremely violent fighting. His cool and collected leadership helped the "Wiking" Div. re-stabilize the front. For his heroic achievements, Ostuf. Soeren Kam was nominated for the Knight's Cross which was bestowed upon him during a home leave in Copenhagen on 7 February 1945. He became one of three Danes to win this prestigious award.

SS-Sturmbannführer HUGO LAHAYE

Hugo Lahaye, born on 18 August 1912, was a Dutch volunteer who served as a staff officer with the 5th SS Div. "Wiking." He joined the Waffen-SS in 1941 through the SS Recruiting Office "West." In September 1942 he was with the Replacement Bn. of the SS Rgt. "Westland" in Klagenfurt, Austria, before being sent to a special course in anti-tank warfare at Kienschlag in Bohemia-Moravia.

In April 1943, Lahaye joined the "Wiking" staff as an interpreter and liaison officer for the division's numerous Dutch volunteers. He saw frequent combat action as a battle-group commander and in July 1943 he was wounded by a shell fragment in his upper left arm and was hospitalized briefly. In October 1943, while again in the frontlines, a bullet grazed his forehead, but otherwise did no damage.

In January 1944, Stuf. Lahaye was trapped with the rest of the "Wiking" Div. in the Cherkassy Pocket. There was no further news of him after that although it was thought that he did survive the war. But he did prove himself to be a brave and capable soldier and was decorated with both grades of the Iron Cross, the War Service Medal, 2nd Class, the Wound Badges in Bronze and Silver, the Infantry Assault Badge and the Close-Combat Clasp in Silver.

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THE SS PIONIER-SCHULE HRADISCHKO

The formation of a Waffen-SS combat engineer school was authorized in August 1942 but there was some difficulty selecting the proper geographical setting. Territory at Bad Schandau on the Elbe and near Dresden were considered but rejected due to the space and specialty requirements involved. Finally it was decided to locate the "Pionier-Schule" at the large Waffen-SS military training grounds at Beneschau near Prague in the Bohemia-Moravia Protectorate. Here there was more than enough room to handle all training contingencies. The staff of the school was based in Hradischko, from which the institution took its name, from beginning to end.

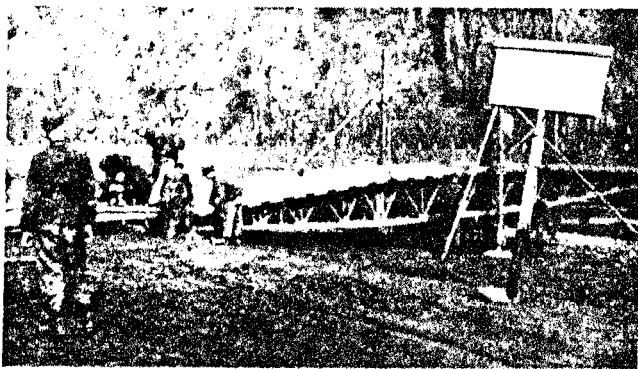
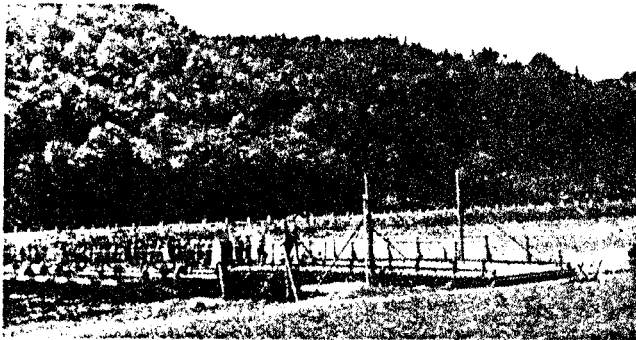
The first SS engineer/NCO training course at the school began in August 1942 at Pikowitz, a village close to Hradischko. There were 40 participants half drawn from frontline infantry units. All had spent at least three months at the SS NCO School Lauenburg, and all were combat veterans. Pilowitz lay on the Sassau River and its small railroad station could only be reached by a small foot bridge over the water course.

The second NCO training course at Pikowitz involved 120 men and it was quickly superseded by a third training course, whose participants were quartered in Hradischko along with the school staff, the Instructional Groups I-IV, the school hospital and motor transport park.

The school set up a river crossing training facility on the Moldau River below Brunschau. Three bridging squads, "B," "J" and "K" (later joined by "C") were stationed here. In addition, an engineer training battalion (which enabled the combat engineers to train within the structure of a larger unit) was established in Brunschau, but due



Flemish SS Engineer Frans Baeten from the "Langemarck" Div. at Pikowitz on 12 February 1945.



16-ton and 24-ton bridges being constructed at Hradischko.

to manpower pressures it was immediately sent to the front after reaching authorized strength. It became the SS Engineer Bn. 8/8th SS Cav. Div. "Florian Geyer," under Hstuf. Schlemmer. In the town of Dawle was the SS Engineer Bn. 1 which was supplied through the SS Engineer School Hradischko but came under the control of the SS Main Office in Berlin.

The initial staff at the engineer school consisted of Ostubaf. Willi Boden, Hstuf. Willi Peetz and 40 NCOs and engineers. They were subordinated to the commander of the Beneschau Grounds, Brigfhr. Karasch. In the next few months after the school's founding, the NCO training contingent increased to 200 and a class of 80 officer candidates was also added. They were drawn from every fighting unit of the Waffen-SS. The specialized Instructional Groups III and IV, although papered-in in 1942 were not fully activated until 1943.

The supervision of the school administration was carried out through the Army Engineer Inspectorate (Gen. Runge) until the Waffen-SS established its own Engineer Inspectorate in late 1942 under Ostubaf. Frosch. The engineer officer's training course at Hradischko was directed by Ostubaf. Boden with Stubaf. Hillig (later with 51st SS Pz.Gr.Bde.) and Stubaf. Schweiger as tactical instructors. The initial duration for the officer's course was six months, but this was subsequently reduced to four months and then three months as the war dragged on

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and demand for personnel to fill new units and make up for losses increased.

By 1943 the SS Engineer School Hradischko had taken on the following structure:

Commander: Staf. Emil Klein

Adjutant: Hstuf. Schlemmer (later CO SS Eng.Bn. 8)

Chief-of-Staff: Staf. Richard Herrmann (ex-SS-KGr. "Nord" CO)

Specialist School for Assault Boats and Motor Vehicles: Hstuf. Berger

Instructional Group I (Officers): Ostubaf. Boden

Instructional Group II (NCOs): Stubaf. Bunse (later CO of SS Eng.Bn.11) replaced by Stubaf. Held

Instructional Group III (Technical training, equipment usage, storage and maintenance): Stubaf. Witt

Instructional Group IV (Specialist training in weapons and equipment from other service branches): Hstuf. Frank

The quarters for members of the engineer school consisted of 32 barracks in the towns of Brunschau, Pikowitz and Treppsin, which were all within the confines of the Beneschau Training Camp. The water crossing training facility utilized the Moldau and Sassau Rivers along with two reservoirs, one of which was 4 km long and 1 m wide and was considered excellent for training in the use of amphibious vehicles and boats.

Other portions of the Beneschau facility (shared with other Waffen-SS schools) were used for training with flame throwers, mines and high explosives. In addition to German material, enemy manufactured items were also practiced with so that battlefield booty could be immediately put to use when necessary. Assault troop and close combat training was also carried out and the SS engineers were required to gain proficiency in the use of German, "Allied" and Soviet hand-held anti-tank weapons (bazookas, etc.).

The training staff at Hradischko consisted only of men who had already had considerable frontline experience. By late 1943/early 1944 their jobs had expanded considerably due to the growing requirement for more combat engineers by the constantly expanding Waffen-SS. By war's end more than 40 Waffen-SS field divisions (some of which had been dissolved) had formed their own engineer battalions using Hradischko graduates. In addition each of their regiments also had to have an engineer platoon

attached. Waffen-SS Corps and independent elements also endeavored to form their own engineer detachments, so the school was kept busy to the end.

For the benefit of engineers being trained for the SS cavalry and mountain divisions, 100 mules and 80 horses were eventually added to the school's inventory. In February 1945 the school was assigned to Army Group "Schroener" as the crumbling Eastern Front drew ever nearer. The training schedule was now drastically curtailed and by April, the school was providing troops to hastily formed battle-groups. Some of the Hradischko personnel were assigned to the Regiment "Joerchel" of the SS-Kampfgruppe Div. "Bohemia-Moravia" while others went to the security force led by Brigfhr. Karasch, the Beneschau CO. But most of the school's members by far were incorporated into the 12,000 man SS-Kampfgruppe "Emil" (really a division in itself!), commanded by Staf. Emil Klein and incorporating many detached Army elements.

On 5 May 1945, KGr. "Emil" went into action against the Red Army and Czech partisans but a few days later it was enroute to the U.S. lines where it surrendered to the Americans around Pilsen. But backstabbing was again the order of the day and within a short time the members of KGr. "Emil" were handed over to the communists. Staf. Klein would spend the next 19½ years in Soviet labor camps and Czech prisons, being released on 24 December 1964 only because his health was broken. He died a few years later. Klein had committed no discernable "war crimes"; his imprisonment had been due to the obscene "vengeance at all costs" program carried out by the "Allies" and their communist friends and currently being run to this very day by "special political agents" in the U.S. Dept. of "Justice" (i.e., Office for Special Investigations)!

In the course of its existence the SS Pionier-Schule Hradischko had processed the following contingents of combat engineers:

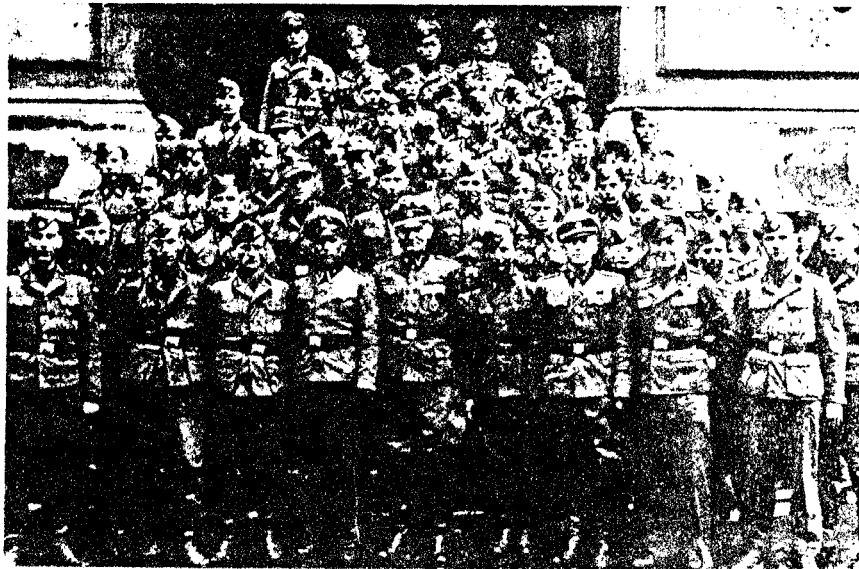
Instructional Group I: 1,600 officer candidates

Instructional Group II: 4,000 NCOs

Instructional Group III: 400 technicians and equipment managers

Instructional Group IV: 1,800 engineers for other service branches of the Waffen-SS

Total: 7,800 men trained.



Group photo of an NCO training class at Hradischko in mid-1944. Most of these men went on to serve with SS Rgt. "Schill" and the 32nd SS Div. "30 Januar."



NCO training class held at Pikowitz/Hradischko in 1943 under Stubaf. Held (center, leather coat).

Inspectorate 5 of the SS Main Office was the agency responsible for the development of Waffen-SS combat engineers. It was established in late 1942 under Ostubaf. Forsch (formerly the CO of SS Eng.Bn.4), whose mission was to supervise, regulate and supply the SS engineer training elements and replacement units. At the end of the war the Inspector along with his adjutant and assorted transport troops were in the Stubai Valley of Italy as part of the SS Main Office "South"; administrative personnel who had been relocated to carry on their duties in a secure area if northern Germany was completely lost. In the meantime most of the Inspectorate's staff officers remained with the SS Main Office "North" in Berlin and served with emergency battle-groups during the final struggle for that city.

town of Celle. He worked hard trying to help his "dispossessed" comrades until his death on 27 April 1981. Tiedt was considered an outstanding citizen of Celle and had been instrumental in building up the town's volunteer fire department and civil defense emergency organization.

SS-Obersturmfuehrer KURT TIEDT

Kurt Tiedt was born on 21 August 1919 in Stargard, Pomerania. After completing his schooling and doing his stint in the Reich Labor Service, Tiedt joined the SS-Verfuegungstruppe on 1 November 1938, being assigned to the SS Engineer Bn. in Dresden. He served with this unit for the next few years before transferring to the 6th SS Mtn. Div. "Nord" in Karelia, Finland, where he saw most of his wartime combat action. In the latter part of the war Tiedt was assigned to the SS Engineer School "Hradischko" in Bohemia-Moravia where he became the school's adjutant with the rank of Obersturmfuehrer.

Towards the end of the war the school was mobilized and fought as a part of various SS battle-groups on the Eastern Front and Ostuf. Tiedt was subsequently captured by the Russians. He then spent five full years in Soviet slave labor camps, not returning home until May 1950. On 20 March 1954 Kurt Tiedt was one of the founders of the Waffen-SS veteran's self-help association in the



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THE SS TRAINING BATTALION IN PRAGUE

On 20 June 1942, Ostubaf. Ernst Deutsch became the commander of the Waffen-SS Training Bn. in Prague. Deutsch had previously led the SS-Inf. Rgt. 9 (up until January 1942), which had distinguished itself in much costly fighting in Karelia and on the Volkhov Front becoming in the process the first German unit in WWII to be awarded a title as a "battle honor," being named SS Rgt. "Thule" on 24 July 1942. As such it served as one of the component panzer-grenadier regiments of the SS "Totenkopf" Division.

On 28 March 1942 (retroactive to 20 March), Deutsch had taken charge of the "Recruit Depot" of the Waffen-SS at the Debica SS Training Camp in Poland. The depot was organized as a "regiment" with a staff and 20 rifle replacement companies and five machine gun replacement companies to handle the recruits. During his time as CO of the depot (up until 5 June 1942), Ostubaf. Deutsch supervised the training of some 6,000 Hungarian ethnic-rmans, who were slated for assignment to the SS Cav.

Bde. (in order to bring it to divisional strength).

At the same time Deutsch was assigned to command the SS Training Bn. in Prague, the "Recruit Depot" at Debica was shut down and its responsibilities transferred to the Training Battalion. As a result, Deutsch was able to take some 20 of his NCOs and officers with him from Debica to Prague. Also sent to the battalion were 15 NCOs and 31 men from Deutsch's old command, SS-IR 9.

The Training Bn. now took on an influx of new recruits, most of whom had signed on in late 1941/early 1942, and was forced to expand into a full regiment to accommodate them all. This was accomplished with the creation of a second training battalion (or II./SS Training Rgt. "Prag"), under Hstuf. Lenz. In the year ahead the regiment would be involved in the formation of several new Waffen-SS units and Ostubaf. Deutsch would transfer to the 7th SS Mtn. Div. "Prinz Eugen", where he took charge of SS Mtn. Rgt. 13 with the rank of Standartenfuehrer. <



Franz Josef Rosennal commanded the Fife and Drum Corps of the SS Regiments "Deutschland" and "Der Fuehrer." He died on 4 June 1980 at the age of 69.

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Artillery Regiment of the SS-Polizei Div. provided training detachments, cadres and command personnel to a number of other Waffen-SS formations including the 14th, 19th and 31st SS Divisions.

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The SS Panzer Special-use Signals Replacement Detachment "Jaenschwalde" was used to help form the SS Signals Lt. 32/32nd SS Div. "30 Januar," although part of the unit had to be deployed for infantry action in the area north of Forst/Lausitz at the beginning of February 1945. The detachment commander was Hstuf. Paul Barvon.

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SS-Oberscharfuehrer Walter Tegtmeier (born in 1902), was the HQ staff photographer for the 13th SS Mtn. Div. "Handschar" from June 1943 until his transfer to an unknown unit in October 1944. In civilian life Tegtmeier worked as a horticulture inspector. Many of his photos still appear in books on the Waffen-SS.

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SS-Ostuf. Wilhelm Dzillum was a company commander in the SS Engineer Bn. 14 of the 14th Ukrainian SS Div.

"Galizien." He died on 13 July 1980 at the age of 74.

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Waffen-Hstuf. Ladislaus Husztik transferred from the Royal Hungarian Army into the Waffen-SS in 1944 and served as a staff officer with SS Supply Rgt. 26/26th SS Div. "Hungaria" (Hungary #2). He died on 15 May 1980 at the age of 78.

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The twin brothers Kurt and Otto Schreckenbach, born on 2 October 1927 in Utrecht, Holland, both served in the SS Military Geology Bn. 500 (motorized).

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The Moslem volunteer Hodic Solejmann was badly wounded while on duty with the 13th SS Mtn. Div. "Handschar" on 10 July 1944 near Tuzla, Yugoslavia and lost his right arm. After the war he made his way to West Germany and escaped extradition to the communist Tito regime which conducted a policy of outright extermination of former "Handschar" members.

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The SS-Jagdkommando "Sued-Ost" was in action around Nickelsdorf, and then in Singerin near St. Pölten, Lower Austria up until 1 April 1945. After that its precise deployment is not known. The unit commander was Ostuf. Schumann; another officer with the unit was Ostuf. Vasil Nievolov, nationality unknown.

CZECHOSLOVAK ATROCITIES

The so-called "Slovak Uprising" of September 1944 which was suppressed to a large extent by Waffen-SS units (see SR #30), led to a large number of gruesome atrocities being committed against ethnic-Germans by the communist-led terrorists. On 21 September 1944, a total of 226 ethnic-Germans were murdered by "resistance fighters" in central Slovakia and the entire population of the town of Glaserhaue, ranging in age from 14 to 60 years, was massacred. After this incident, grave markers were erected in Glaserhaue noting the cause of death of its citizens. When the Czechoslovak state was re-established in 1945 these markers were immediately removed and the town abolished from the record books. Yet we still continually hear today about the great German "atrocities" against the town of Lidice! A number of other ethnic-German towns in Slovakia met the same fate as Glaserhaue.

After the war the Czech partisans claimed to have killed 55,810 German soldiers in the hostilities, but this number includes a large number of murdered civilians. In the days and weeks immediately following the end of WWII, the "freedom fighters" running Czechoslovakia went on an orgy of blood-letting. Fully 800,000 defenseless Germans were put to death. This figure included 300,000 Sudetenlanders and 400,000 German soldiers, including many members of the Waffen-SS. At the town of Budweis in southern Bohemia, some 12,000 German POWs were disarmed and machine gunned by the Czech terrorists; but out of this total some 300 managed to survive to tell the tale. Unfortunately nobody ever listened. While the "horrors of Auschwitz" are regurgitated ad nauseum, the truly repugnant war crimes of the victors still lay hidden to sight; buried under by a thick layer of lies and hypocrisy.

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One of the few members of SS Rgt. 48 "General Seyffardt" to escape death or captivity during the regiment's hopeless battle for survival to the west of Narva on 26 July 1944, was the Dutch Ustuf. Nieuwendijk-Huek. It was he who brought back the story of the catastrophe that befell the regiment to III. SS Pz. Corps HQ and also reported on the death of the regimental CO, Ostufaf. Richard Benner. Small contingents from "General Seyffardt" continued to fight on behind the enemy lines before eventually being wiped out.

- 5 -

On 17 April 1945, SS Pz. Gr. Rgt. 48 "General Seyffardt," which was in the process of reformation, left its billeting area around Briest, Passow and Schoenow to advance to a newly assigned deployment sector around Eberswalde-Strausberg. Having been almost totally destroyed twice this Dutch-Volksdeutsche regiment was far from up to strength and consisted of only one combat-fit battalion led by Hstuf. Troeger, which in turn was based on two strong companies led by the SS officers Reischuetz and Bender. There were some additional regimental units attached to the "GS" staff however, and during the last days of the war the regiment would be augmented by the "Nederland" Div. engineer battalions.

On 19 April, Bn. "Troeger" spearheaded a counterattack that succeeded in recapturing the town of Marxdorf and in the process regaining a lost German Flak gun that was immediately put into use against Soviet tanks. Despite this victory, the regiment was forced to give ground a short time later in very heavy fighting when confronted by a vastly superior enemy force.

- 6 -

In the first eight months of 1942, there were about 1,200 Luxembourg volunteers on service in the German Army and Waffen-SS. They ranged in age from 18 to 45. On 30 August 1942 a compulsory draft went into effect in Luxembourg which eventually affected all men born from 1920 to 1927. By August 1943, some 1,500 Luxembourgers had seen service in the Waffen-SS. By the end of the war the total number of Luxembourg soldiers on German service stood at 4,241 volunteers and 11,168 conscripts, for a total of 15,409. Out of this amount, 2,752 had been killed-in-action and 3,510 had either deserted or been released from active duty.

- 5 -



The first known military camouflage jackets and helmet covers were issued to members of the SS-Verfuegungstruppe in 1936. This clothing was developed with the encouragement of Oberfuehrer Dr. Wim Brandt, who really deserves to be known as the "father of military camouflage attire." Brandt was killed-in-action while leading SS Inf. Rgt. 11/Div. "Das Reich" on the road to Moscow in October 1941. It is not precisely known when the first camo trousers were introduced but they were a later development of the Waffen-SS clothing branch.

- 6 -

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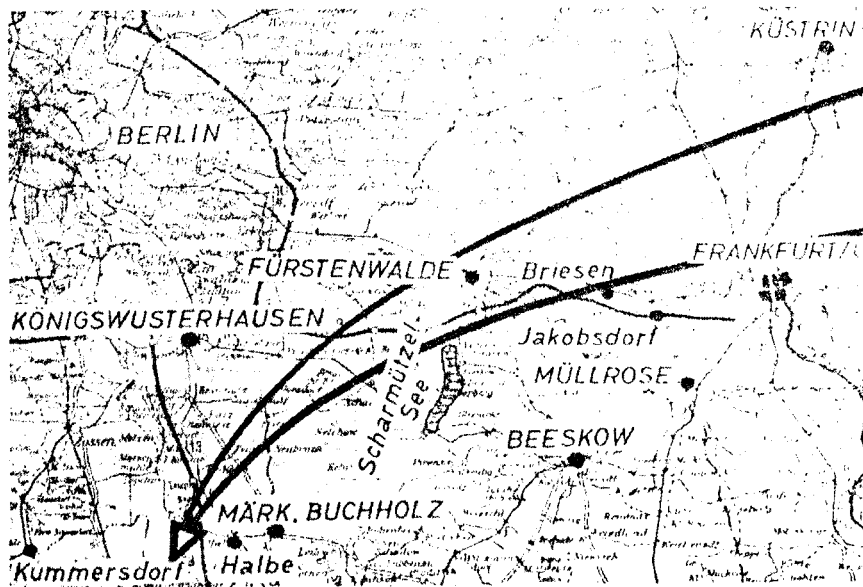
Better Late Than Never Dept.

The following photos all were inadvertently omitted from the Personalities section in the last issue.

A map of the withdrawal route from the Oder Front utilized by V. and XI. SS Corps in April 1945. See earlier SR articles on the V. SS Mountain Corps and the "Frundsberg" Divisions. We try to use maps whenever possible, but this is a case of better late than never!



SS-Ostuf. Hans Keil



SS-Uscha./Junker Hans Warnitz



SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer Bruno Hinz



SS-Brigadefuehrer Otto Kumm



WAFFEN-SS BOOKS

Resistance Warfare 1940-45

by Carlos Caballero Jurado; Osprey, London; 1985; 41 photos; color plates.

This is a truly exceptional little book on the German allied militias (and Waffen-SS units) in Western Europe and their battles against the Allied-equipped resistance groups. A very fair-minded and factual treatment by a writer who is on the SR staff. It helps clear up a complicated subject. Very good illustrative material as well. Make sure you pick this up! Available from many book dealers at around \$7.95.

Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, Vol. 3

by David Littlejohn; R. James Bender Publishing, San Jose CA; 1985.

This third volume in a series covers military and para-military elements from Bohemia-Moravia, Slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania that were either aligned with or controlled by Germany in WWII. While it contains the usual fine illustrations to be found from a Bender publication, the coverage of the Waffen-SS units from the above listed territories is somewhat less than adequate and marred by a number of errors. There is a nice color cover for the Croat Moslem SS Division "Handschar" by the SS war artist "Anton," but in the text the division is given short shrift.

As usual, Littlejohn confuses the 31st SS Div. with the Kampfgruppe Div. "Bohemia-Moravia" and a mythical "33rd Hungarian SS Division," which never existed. There are also very derogatory and inaccurate comments about the "Prinz Eugen" and "Handschar" Divisions, not to mention the "Kama" and "Karstjaeger" Divisions! With the limited amount of space he gives to these units you would think he could get it right. For the record, "Handschar" remained a full-fledged division right to the end of the war and "Prinz Eugen" first saw frontline action in September 1944 and not just in the last days of the conflict as the author indicates.

I don't appreciate a lot of Littlejohn's sarcastic comments and descriptive phrases as well, as they do detract from the overall package. That doesn't mean I don't endorse the book; the author knows quite a bit about very obscure outfits and when he tries he can convey this information in a useful manner. In addition, the photos and illustrations, many quite rare I'm sure, are generally very interesting. The production and graphics are basically sharp except for a few pics taken from newspapers I guess. One of the latter photos depicts the Slovene General Leo Rupnik, who commanded the Slovene Home Guard or Domobrans. If you check back to an article in SR No. 34 titled "In Memory of a Comrade," you will see that this is the same general referred to in that piece, though the author of that memoir identified him as a Croatian.

Despite its occasional flaws I would certainly recommend this book (available through SR at \$21.95 + postage). The first volume in this series is now out of print.

World War II Revisionists**Part II: Hans von der Heide**

Videotape (VHS format only); color; 70 min.; \$39.95 ppd. (New York state residents add sales tax); Independent Research, P.O. Box 6402, Ithaca NY 14851.

Hans von der Heide was a teenager when he was accepted for service in the German military in WWII. Eventually he was accepted into the 10th Panzer Div. of the

SPECIAL NOTICE

Frontfighters: The Norwegian Legion of the Waffen-SS is very near completion and the pre-publication price for SR subscribers (\$12.00 instead of \$15.00) will remain in effect until at least 1 June 1986. As always thanks for your patience with this project!

Waffen-SS, and saw intense action on the Eastern and Western fronts.

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I was as much impressed with the quality of the tape production as I was with the content itself. This is a must for readers of Siegrunen.

[There are at least five other tapes in the series, although they do not provide any specific W SS coverage; more details on these are available on request.]

—Ray Merriam

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