



Siegrunen

THE WAFFEN-SS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



The *Reich* Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels thanking highly decorated officers of the 1st Cossack Division, XV. Cossack Cavalry Corps for the donations of their soldiers to the "Winter Relief Fund." Note *Waffen-SS* sleeve eagles being worn

by the officers second and third from the right; the XV. Cossack Cavalry Corps was supplied and equipped by the *Waffen-SS*. The photo dates from 15 February 1945 and this is its first known publication. (Courtesy of Erik Rundkvist)

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EDITORIAL

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

A British slick-paper military history magazine titled *WW2 Investigator* which pompously announced that it would be presenting a unique picture of the "unknown" side of World War II, lapsed rather quickly into the same old hate-mongering that has been going on throughout the general media for the last half-century. This publication has launched some particularly irresponsible and virulent defamatory attacks against the *Waffen-SS* and former *Brigfhr.* Wilhelm Mohnke in particular. They are upset that Mohnke was never brought to trial by the Allies as a "war criminal" due to the fact that he was indisposed for more than a decade in assorted Soviet prisons and labor camps.

The people in charge of this publication have offered their services to the thugs of the OSI in an all out effort to "get" Mohnke, claiming he was responsible for some alleged shootings of POW's. These shootings, if they took place, were a spontaneous reaction to hideous British and Anglo-Canadian "war crimes" that have yet to have been answered for (see "The Lynching of Fritz Knoechlein" in *Siegrunen* 29), and Mohnke's ties to these actions are unsubstantiated. It would be nice if the British first took care of their own war guilt and atrocities (declaration of war on Germany, initiation of civilian terror bombing, direction of "resistance" terrorists and murderers, fire bombing of Dresden, support for Tito's killers, enthusiastic role in Operation KEELHAUL and the subsequent deaths of millions of anti-communists, etc.), before they went back to their perfidious and hypocritical attacks on their defeated adversary. In the meantime please boycott this publication and recommend to dealers that they do not carry it!

THE UNKNOWN NINETY-SEVEN

One of the most distressing factors about doing research for *Siegrunen* is the continual discovery of "new" atrocities that had been committed against members of the *Waffen-SS* and then assigned to the great "black

hole" of history. While always upsetting, these incidents do help give me a pretty good reason to keep publishing as otherwise the foul deeds would only be known to a small circle of comrades and relatives of the victims. So here is another installment in a never ending series:

In April 1945, 97 wounded members of the *Waffen-SS* who had been quartered in the village of Kuffern, Austria, were expelled from these billets by the villagers themselves, who were afraid of possible reprisals from the advancing Soviet forces. Their fears were justified, if their actions were not. Immediately upon arrival in Kuffern, the Reds fell upon the badly wounded *Waffen-SS* troopers and murdered them all in cold blood. A commissar then issued an edict forbidding the burial of the corpses in the local church cemetery. Soon afterwards a farmer donated part of his field for the burial. The bodies were never identified as to names or units; they remain undisturbed to this day, largely forgotten, except no doubt to the villagers themselves.

It was just another "war crime" that nobody cared about, and certainly nobody ever had to answer for! Well I care. This issue is respectfully devoted to the memory of those unknown 97 with the hope that they will not be permanently forgotten!

SHOW/SECRET TRIAL

The theatrical lynching of John Demjanjuk by the U.S. Justice Department and its Israeli cohorts recently came to its inevitable conclusion. He was, as expected, sentenced to die for having "exterminated" 950,000 people by running a "gas chamber" at the Treblinka Camp during World War II. He was also supposed to have tortured and killed people in other ways on his own sadistic initiative. The verdict and behavior of the spectators at this procedure drew some mild condemnation in the American media, but that was the extent of it.

For a wide variety of reasons, Mr. Demjanjuk was totally innocent

of the absurd charges brought against him but was pretty much helpless to defend himself. For instance, the "Nuremberg Tribunals" had long ago rejected the idea of "gas chambers" at Treblinka, although they had endorsed other novel (and unfeasible) methods of execution. And, one must say, that it is simply beyond all reason that a young, uneducated Ukrainian Red Army private/POW, would have suddenly been placed in charge of such a stupendous undertaking as alleged. Whatever else they did, the Germans did not operate in that manner; a massive "extermination" effort like this would have been supervised from a fairly high echelon to say the least.

Unfortunately, the prosecutors of Mr. Demjanjuk had to prove nothing. They used the "trial," appropriately held in a theatre building simply as an extravaganza for more "Nazi atrocity" stories. It was an extremely cynical procedure. Worse yet, Demjanjuk's alibi was weak (he had apparently belonged to an SS unit of some type, but could hardly own up to it), and the defense was fairly inept. For all that mattered the defense could have been brilliant and there would have been no change in the result. The defense effort was tolerated by the so-called "judges," but just barely. It was routinely disparaged and ridiculed. Defense witnesses were treated with contempt; one was even driven to the point of attempting suicide. Mr. Demjanjuk's alleged ID card (so easily procured personally by the "American" pro-Soviet capitalist, Armand Hammer), was denounced as a total fraud by every expert that was consulted. The same card was even used with the photo of an entirely different person affixed to it during Demjanjuk's original deportation hearing! This, however, was looked upon as a minor nuisance. All that was necessary was a person of the "right" nationality who had been somewhere within 1,000 miles of the alleged "crimes" at the same time as they were supposed to have been committed. Never mind that Demjanjuk did not fit any of the descriptions of the fictionalized villain. The fact that he was not identified by most of the eye-witnesses consulted by the "Justice" Department was also withheld.

It would still be possible to examine in detail the Treblinka Camp to determine if people were actually "gassed" there in large numbers, as the Germans totally lacked the means of conveniently disposing of the huge number of bodies that would have to have been dealt with. So what is needed urgently is some archaeological spade work on the site, since absolutely no hard facts exist to confirm the atrocity stories. But don't look for that to happen any time soon!

Interestingly, the U.S. Justice Department poured more than a million dollars into the Demantuk prosecution effort while deliberately concealing vital evidence from the defense. The OSI has learned through a variety of unsavory methods, how to keep material secret and away from the prying eyes of the public. By classifying vast quantities of "documents" as "in use by attorneys" they have been able to stop their release via the Freedom of Information Act. The OSI, through its legal maneuverings, has also been able (up to recently at least), penalize defendants for having utilized the Fifth Amendment and other constitutional rights; it seems that this had been "automatic" grounds for losing one's citizenship! Don't even ask me how they managed to do this, but the OSI does not operate within the laws of the land as we know them to be.

The OSI director in a hysterical speech to an ethnic pressure group, screamed that there would be "no justice for Nazis." Yet of the hundreds of people picked on by the OSI to date, only a couple could have ever been classified as "politically oriented." Most OSI victims have been East Europeans, who were scarcely "Nazis" at all by any stretch of the imagination. I suspect that they have been singled out for persecution not due to any imaginary crimes that they committed, but due to the fact that some people of their nationalities took lethal action against Communist collaborators, during the interim period that existed during the retreat of the Red Army and the German occupation of Eastern Europe that existed early in World War II.

Modern day brethren of these collaborators now have the clout to take "judicial" revenge against national groups that they don't care for. Guilt or innocence is not in question; all that matters is the fulfillment of a crazed, hate-filled vengeance. So it will continue for some time to come, until the citizenry actually regains control of its own government and judiciary system.

Demantuk farce was the virtually secret retrieval of the publisher Ernst Zundel in Canada for having distributed the booklet, *Did Six Million Really Die?*, a publication critical of some of the basic atrocity stories. The charge against Zundel was that he was knowingly disseminating "false news." It is a little more complicated than that, but not much. The obscure, century-old law being used against him had never before been utilized until some members of an ethnic pressure group decided to give it a try. Ernst, as the only prominent, visible spokesman against German defamation in Canada had been quite a thorn in their side and the only way they saw to shut him up was to take advantage of the weird and peculiar legal system that exists up there. After one long and convoluted trial, in which Zundel was convicted but had this overturned on appeal, the prosecution decided to launch another trial on the same premise - a process banned in most civilized countries as "double jeopardy."

In this dubious proceeding the "fix" was in advance when the judge ruled that the atrocity tales had to be accepted as absolute fact. From that point on the defense could only concentrate on making the best possible case for posterity that they could. And what a job they did! A parade of survivors, historians, engineers, and eyewitnesses all testified against the basic "holocaust" propaganda with extreme effectiveness. An engineering firm that made a survey and chemical analysis of the "gas chamber" areas at the Auschwitz, Birkenau and Majdanek camps, testified with stunning clarity that no "mass gassings" could have taken place at those facilities. It was a bombshell that should have made headlines around the world, but only a numb silence prevailed.

The trial culminated with the testimony of historian David Irving, the greatest living authority on the Third Reich era. It was his conclusion that the booklet in question was accurate in all critical areas, and that in his opinion, after enormous original research and study spanning decades, the notorious "six million" figure could be reduced to 100,000 or less! This should have been another headline, considering its source, but once again the mass media was still. No publicity must be allowed!

I cannot even begin to detail the devastating testimony that came out of this trial, but I believe that because of what happened here, the course of history will eventually be changed forever. In the meantime, Ernst Zundel has been sentenced to nine months in prison and deprived of his civil rights and freedom of speech. This is a travesty of such cynical depravity

SR
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Running almost parallel to the

that it defies belief. He may even be deported from the People's Republic of Canada, once he is let out of the Gulag. No "civil liberties" group has come to his defense. I have known Ernst for quite a few years now and I can attest to his high integrity, courage and nobility of character. He personally encouraged me when I was struggling along in the early days of *Siegrunen*, and his kindness and concern was always deeply appreciated. You are not likely to find a finer, more honorable individual, anywhere. His defense effort against the absurd charges laid against him was extremely expensive. I would encourage any one that believes in basic human rights and freedoms to write a letter of support directly to Ernst and enclose a donation. The address:

Ernst Zundel
206 Carlton Street
Toronto ON M5A 2L1
CANADA

If you would like to read the most banned publication of modern times, the same publication that drove "them" to imprison Ernst Zundel in Canada, I will provide

copies of *Six Million Lost and Found* (the current title), for \$4.00 plus \$1.00 postage. A percentage of all sales will be sent directly to Ernst Zundel's defense fund.

UPDATE

It is a pleasure to report that Prof. Vladimir Sokolov, who was mentioned in *Siegrunen* No. 45, is now safely out of the hands of "Los Federales." The OSI had sought his deportation to death at the hands of one of our "Allies" due to the fact that they found some of his wartime writings offensive. Fortunately the professor did not attend his deportation hearing but instead implemented other plans, which, at least for now, place him well outside the jurisdiction of our "secret police." The lessons of the "trials" of Fedorenko, Linnas, Demianuk, and others are finally sinking in. There is no way to fight a rigged, criminal frame-up on equal terms. Once these people, with all best intentions, let themselves be caught up in the web thrown out by the goons in charge, they are as good as dead. The good news is that

the OSI is now being thwarted, if not actually defeated, in advance by prepared citizenry. After all, the leftists have been giving "sanctuary" in this country to illegal, Third World aliens for years, it is about time that the same treatment be accorded to some of our honorable, legal citizens who have been unjustly hounded by the hate-mongers. It will not be easy, but at least a very good start has been made in that direction!

NEXT ISSUE

A complete review of the new, massive pictorial history of Legion "Wallonie" and the 28th SS Division. A truly incredible book!

STOP THE PRESS

As of this writing (November 1988) *Charlemagne's Legionnaires* will be issued in December 1988. At that time the price will go to \$29.95. My thanks to everyone who ordered this in advance - it was a big help!



WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY



SS-Sturmann Helmut Gros (photo), was born on 13 July 1926. A student, he served as a signals man with II. and III. Detachments, SS Artillery Regiment 22. 22nd SS Cavalry Division "Maria Theresia." He was declared missing-in-action near Budapest on 16 December 1944.

SS-Oberfuehrer Erwin Tschoppe (also spelled Tzschoppe), born 5 September 1902, was a senior member of the SS (Nr. 11,965), who served in the SS-TV. During the war he commanded II. Battalion, SS-Infantry Regiment

8 of 1st SS Infantry Brigade (motorized), before taking command of the entire regiment. In 1944 he was assigned to the staff of the *Waffen-SS* Commander-in-Chief for the Netherlands. He died on 21 August 1972. Among his decorations was the Iron Cross, 1st Class, which was awarded to him in the field. He also bore the SS Sword of Honor and Death'shead Ring of Honor.

SS-Hstuf. Hanns Jauss (born 28 June 1890; SS Nr. 134,499), was a World War I vet who volunteered for duty with the *Waffen-SS*. After suffering multiple woundings as a frontline officer, Jauss was assigned to the staff of III. SS-Panzer Corps (Germanic), ending the war with the title of "Staff Commandant." He died on 18 February 1970 at the age of 79.

SS-Hstuf. Dr. Rudolf Beck, born on 28 June 1907 in Halle (SS Nr.

93,809), commanded the SS Signals School at Leitmeritz. His last promotion (to *Hstuf.*) came on 9 November 1943.

SS-Hstuf. Gustav Kanth (born 30 December 1914; SS Nr. 340,756), commanded a battalion in the SS-Kampfgruppe Division "Bohemia-Moravia," which was in action at Laa on the Thaya River until the end of the war.

At the beginning of April 1945, SS-Panzer Grenadier Training and Replacement Battalion 12 from Nienburg, was fighting as a battle-group around Leese-Stozenau to the Aller Bridgehead. The commander was *Stuf.* Heinz Peinemann (born 4 September 1915; SS Nr. 120,126). Commander of 5th Company was *Ostuf.* Wilke. *Ostuf.* Langer from 6th Company was wounded at Leese and later declared MIA. *St.Oberfunker* Guenter Gruhn was KIA at Dorfmark.

PARACHUTE BATTALION

THE HISTORY OF THE ⚡-FALLSCHIRMJÄGER-Bataillon 500/600

PART II

by
Antonio J. Munoz, R.T.R.

FIRE IN THE EAST

The 200 or so survivors of Rybka's battalion arrived at Ljubljana exhausted. The wounded had been the first to arrive via Fieseler 'Storch' aircraft, straight from Drvar. The battalion had almost ceased to exist, however. The Field Reserve Company was able to make good some of the losses, and some men who had only very slight wounds eventually returned to duty. The rest of May was spent reorganizing. The debriefing period lasted for many days, as a lot had happened in those two days at Drvar.

Because of Rybka's serious wounds, a new commanding officer had been appointed for the battalion. SS-Hauptsturmführer Siegfried Milius had been unofficially in charge of the battalion since the end of May and right into June. He was officially posted on 26 June 1944. This occurred in a simple but moving ceremony held at the Zagreb airfield. Scanning the thinned ranks of his battalion, Milius's thoughts centered on what an honor it would be to lead these men. He had no idea that he was to be their CO for the rest of the war. Had he known, he probably would have considered himself all the luckier. These were excellent troops, he thought to himself. A pity so many had been lost at Drvar. How many would he lose, he wondered.

Just three days after their return to barracks, and long before any reorganization could begin, the battalion was given orders to move out. The battalion was to be turned over to Naval Supreme Command Baltic Coast. The headquarters of this command was located at Gotenhafen (Gdengen). The battalion was scheduled to jump over the Finnish Åland Islands. It seems that Finland had sued for peace with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had demanded in return staggering war

reparations, vast territories which had been Finland's for years, and numerous other "penalties" for their "unprovoked aggression." Among one of these many demands was the withdrawal of German units stationed in Finland. The Germans were to leave within a given time period. If this time limit was not met, the Soviet Union would consider this an act of breach of "contract" and would continue its attacks. The Finns had to get the Germans out. If it could not be accomplished by peaceful means, or the Germans refused, they were told that they would have to use force. Of course, the time limit imposed was too short a time to withdraw the German 20th Mountain Army. The Soviets had done this on purpose, for they wanted the Finns to attack their former ally. It was the way the Soviets did business, but Finland, now economically shattered by years of warfare, had no choice. They had to avoid complete Soviet domination at any means. No one could really blame them.

Hitler's rage could not be controlled. He didn't see the futility of opposing the Finnish request-ultimatum. He did not remember that it had been the Finns who had sided with him during the last three years. He did not see that they were doing what they thought was best for their country, and that they really did not have much of a choice. Hitler planned. The German Armed Forces would gain control of vital Finnish positions. This would be done in order to prevent the Soviets from taking these positions once the Finnish Army laid down their arms. In northern Finland the Germans attacked several key bases, but were met with failure. Now the Finns could justify any aggression against the Germans. Hitler's rage had

worked against him. The Soviets were gloating with delight.

The operation scheduled to take place on the Åland Islands was cancelled. A few days later, on 5 July 1944, the SS Parachute Battalion 500 was entrained and forwarded to the eastern front. Their assignment would be the III. (Germanische) SS-Panzerkorps (3rd Germanic SS Tank Corps) which formed part of Army Group North near Narva. Their posting there was very brief indeed, for by 9 July, transport aircraft were waiting for them to take them to Kaunas, Lithuania. This prompt removal from one front to another was caused by the amazing success that the Soviet summer offensive was having against Army Group Center.

The Soviets had launched their great summer offensive on 22 June 1944, mocking the starting date of the German invasion three years before. The Red Army was making a shambles of Army Group Center. A most striking illustration of the size of the German catastrophe was the number of German generals which in one way or another became casualties. Out of 47 generals, only 16 reached the relative safety of a still haphazard German front. Thirty-one had been killed, captured, or had taken their lives! Over half a million men had been lost and dozens of divisions had been shattered. It was certainly a dark time for the German Army.

The battalion was transferred in part by air from Wesenberg to Kaunas. Their transport included the planes and pilots which had transported them to Drvar. With much joy, the Italian pilots and their CR.42AS 'Falcos' greeted the SS paratroopers. The Italians stayed away from asking for a particular comrade, for they knew many had fallen at Drvar. Instead, cigarettes

were traded and small talk given. Both groups shared the ride in true comradely association. The spirit of a New Europe was very much alive and flying over the Baltic country of Lithuania.

The Soviet juggernaut was moving westward toward the Polish and East Prussian borders, almost unopposed. By 4 July Minsk was captured. The main Soviet armored spearhead now turned northwest and headed for the Baltic coast. The spearhead of the Soviet drive now pointed directly at the heart of Vilna (Vilnius), a Lithuanian city just 180 miles east of Königsberg (the capital of East Prussia). The Baltic coast was just a hop-skippping jump away from Vilnius. In order to keep their offensive rolling, the Soviets had to take this city, with its important communication and road network.

The fiercest fighting for that city occurred between 7-14 July 1944. Aware of the great danger threatening Army Group North (i.e., the threat of being cut off), every German unit fought with amazing determination. Several crack *panzer* divisions were brought into the area in order to blunt the Soviet drive. Although still in reserve under Army Group South Ukraine, the "Grossdeutschland" *Panzer* Division began to move north in parts. The 1st Battalion ("Panther" tanks) of the "Grossdeutschland" *Panzer* Regiment was the first combat unit of the division to arrive.

Meanwhile, the German defenders at Vilnius had been flanked and surrounded. General von Manteuffel, the commanding officer of 3rd *Panzer* Army, ordered an immediate counterattack in order to break the ring around Vilnius, and free the trapped German forces. Colonel Ludendorff, Manteuffel's quartermaster, produced 300 or so vehicles which would follow the German spearhead in order to bring out the wounded. A battlegroup was now formed for the counterattack. The 1st Battalion, "GD" *Panzer* Regiment, and the men of the *SS-Fallschirmjaeger-Bataillon* 500 were grouped together into a *kampfgruppe* and readied for action. On 10 July, this *kampfgruppe* moved off its assembly positions and became immediately embroiled in heavy fighting. The *Wehrmacht* companies had been brought up by rail and were more refreshed than the *SS* paras who had only recently arrived by air (9 July).

On that very first day in action, the *SS* paratroopers won praise in the Secret OKW War Diary. The text of the report is as follows:

On July 10th strong Soviet armored forces flanked the German defenses at Vilnius. The Vilnius Highway itself was cut off and enemy armored units

PHOTOGRAPH NOT AVAILABLE

SS-Sturmabfuhrer Siegfried Milius (here as an *SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer*). Note the right collar patch. It is the death's head emblem of the 3rd *SS Panzer* Division "Totenkopf."

began to advance towards Kaunas. The stiff resistance put up by the *SS* Paratroop Battalion 500 and 1. Battalion, "GD" *Panzer* Regiment, attacking the highway from its flanks, stopped the Soviet advance on Kaunas, placing the enemy armored units in a tight vice. This allowed battlegroup Schmidt to attack in the direction of Vilnius, by Sirvintos, and then by Giedralciai. By this move the battlegroup was able to once again cover the flank of IX. Army Corps, bringing it some relief.

The tank-mounted *SS* paratroopers, together with the Panther tanks of the "Grossdeutschland" Division, made an unbeatable combination which managed to pierce the Soviet armored ring around Vilnius. The trapped German forces were now able to withdraw, taking with them most of the wounded. The 300-odd vehicles carrying the injured became like the "wagon train" of the Wild West. This German "wagon train" was the object of numerous attacks by the Red ("Indian") tank units in the Vilnius area. The *SS* paratroopers, riding the Panther tanks like U.S. Cavalrymen, again and again chased away the "Red hordes" which attempted to get at the wounded. At one point the Vilnius airport was also relieved. The paratroopers managed to put this important airport out of action before they were forced to withdraw.

The battalion, having accomplished its mission, now retreated past Kaunas (northwest of Vilnius), following the German

withdrawal between the last week in July and the first week of August 1944. A recently published work on the *SS* paratroopers (*SS-Fallschirmjaeger der Waffen-SS im Bild*) included a photo taken by a former *Wehrmacht* sergeant. It was taken on 29 July 1944 near the bend of the Memel River at Kaunas. His comments are included here to describe the ferocity of the fighting in those days:

On July 29, 1944, I took this photo at the bend of the River Memel at Kaunas, of two *SS* soldiers who passed by my tank after a hard fighting withdrawal. I should think they belonged to a paratroop unit and had resisted until their unit was wiped out. At that time, anyway, we had great respect for these men, which, as far as I am concerned, has not changed.

The faces of these two *SS* paratroopers, when seen in the photograph, attest all too well to the hard fighting which they and their unit had gone through. For these two men, and the rest of the *SS* parachute battalion, it had been another typical engagement!

In August 1944, sources state that the *SS* Parachute Battalion 500 was used considerably by the 3rd *Panzer* Army, as a type of "fire brigade." It was a great honor to be given this title since the battalion was greatly reduced in strength. It was a battalion in name only. On 14 August, after fierce fighting, the *SS* paratroopers re-took Raseiniai (Raseiniai), just 40 miles northwest of Kaunas. Towards the end of August the battalion was given a few days rest in the Lomza region of Poland (south of East Prussia). It then moved out once again, attaching itself to the "Grossdeutschland" *Panzer* Division (under XXXIX. *Panzer Korps*). This German corps was the northernmost unit of Army Group Center. It was trying desperately to keep a line open to Army Group North. The *SS* parachute battalion fought alongside the "GD" Division at Dobilje (Dobolo), just west of Mitau, Latvia.

During the middle of October the thin line connecting both Army Groups North and Center was broken. The line there snapped like a tight rubber band, sending the remnants of the German divisions in two directions (north and south). The last action of the *SS* parachute battalion in the Baltic states was at Garliava, in Lithuania (just nine miles east of the port city of Memel). In this action, the *SS* paratroopers were able to keep an escape route open for German units.

The 7th *Panzer*, "Grossdeutschland" *Panzer*, and 58th Infantry Divisions were trapped at Memel once

the Soviets broke through to the coast. The SS para battalion was spared the hell of Memel when an order was received recalling the remnants of the battalion back to a rest camp near Vienna, Austria. Thus, after being transported to Zichenau (in East Prussia), the remaining men of SS-Fallschirm-Jaeger-Bataillon 500 were flown to Deutsch-Wagram near Vienna. There they were given a week's rest and then assigned to SS-Sturmabfuhrer Otto Skorzeny's command. For their actions on the eastern front, the remaining disciplinary cases in the battalion had their sentences commuted, and their former ranks restored to them.

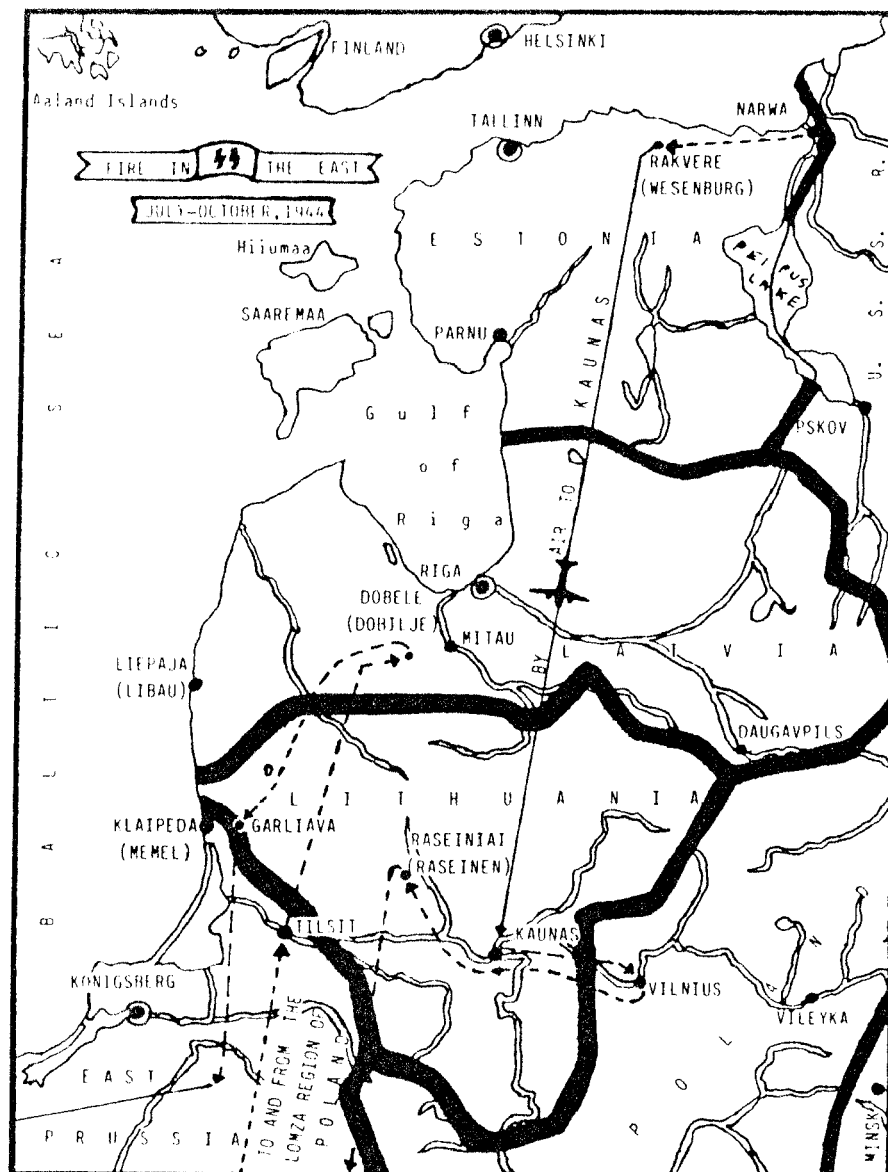
The remnants of the battalion were to be distributed among the companies of a new SS paratroop battalion. This new battalion (with the help of the Reserve Training Company) had been forming ever since September 1944. Since this other paratroop battalion was virtually a new unit, the SS-Fallschirmjaeger-Bataillon 500 was now disbanded, and in its place this new battalion took over. Actual redesignation occurred on 1 October 1944 in a ceremony at Deutsch-Wagram. The SS-Fallschirm-Jaeger-Bataillon 500 was now withdrawn from the active list of the Waffen-SS rolls, and in its place the SS-Fallschirmjaeger-Bataillon 600 now took over. The spirit of self-sacrifice that was synonymous with the name of the SS Parachute Battalion 500 carried on, however, in the new SS parachute battalion.

HUNGARIAN INTERLUDE

While the remnants of the SS Parachute Battalion 500 fought on desperately to put out the fire in the east, the newly-forming SS Parachute Battalion 600 was already being earmarked for yet another dangerous mission. Though not yet completely trained or manned, it was intended that this new SS parachute unit should participate in a paratroop assault on Castle Hill. This was the heavily defended palatial fortress of Admiral Horthy, Hungary's Regent, ruler and dictator.

Admiral Horthy, influenced by his playboy son Nicholas and the changing winds of war, had begun secret surrender negotiations with the communists in Moscow. The Soviets had slyly assured Nicholas Horthy and his father that their "dynasty" could survive under Soviet domination. It was typical Bolshevik bullshit, but these two jackals were ready to buy any line which offered them continual rule. The Horthys bought the Soviet bait.

The scene was now set for a



treacherous stab in the back against Germany. The rats were leaving the sinking ship! On 13 September, the Hungarian Chief of Staff (who was privy to the plot) transmitted an "assurance of loyalty" from the Regent (Horthy) and the Hungarian nation to Hitler. This did not put up a smoke screen between Hitler's eyes and what was occurring in Hungary (as had been the intention). For a very long time now, Hitler had been receiving disturbing reports from SD (Sicherheitsdienst; the SS Security Service) formed in 1932 under Reinhard Heydrich. Intended to be the sole Party intelligence organization. The headquarters of the Sipo and SD formed the core of the RSHA in 1939. After the discovery that Admiral Canaris was a traitor, his Abwehr was absorbed by the SD, becoming Germany's sole security service. Agents and Hungarian Arrow Cross (Arrow Cross:

the name of the Hungarian Fascist Party headed by Count Ferenc Szalasi) members in Budapest.

On 23 September, the day that two eastern Hungarian cities (Temesvar and Arad) fell to the Soviet juggernaut, Hitler held a last-minute briefing after the regular daily conference. This impromptu session was attended by such court notables as Field Marshals Keitel and Jodl. Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, long out of favor in Hitler's court, also attended. Also present was Reichsfuehrer-SS Heinrich Himmler, whose power was just reaching its zenith.

Present at the "Wolf's Lair" (Hitler's East Prussian headquarters) since the second week of September 1944 was Otto Skorzeny, who had stood on the sidelines every day, watching the goings on at the daily conferences. Now he was to be



SS Paratroopers with Panzerfausts in Lithuania.

the "guest of honor" at this last-minute palaver. That day (23 September), Hitler had asked him to stay behind after the conference. Something was definitely up, Skorzeny thought.

Hitler began the meeting with a vicious tirade of accusations and insults on von Ribbentrop for "throwing his one remaining ally to the Russians" (i.e., Hungary). Ribbentrop could only stand there, dumb-founded and pale as a piece of chalk, while Keitel and Jodl studied the ceiling to avoid eye-contact with their raving *Fuehrer*. Himmler, whose power and prestige had grown while that of others had dwindled, was the only one in the room which remained unaffected.

Skorzeny studied this scene carefully. It was obvious to him that he would soon be off on another dangerous mission. Hitler continued: "Hungary is our last ally. If she falls, my only source of oil, grain, and bauxite will also go. Hungary's collapse will cut-off seventy of my best divisions from the main battle front. In the Carpathian Mountains alone, one million German soldiers are standing side by side their

Hungarian cousins defending the Hungarian plains. If Admiral Horthy is allowed to make a separate peace with the Bolsheviks, these men will be doomed, and so will our defenses in the southeast. The Red Army will then pour across the Danube plains into Austria. Admiral Horthy is a traitor to his people and to Germany." Even after his crippling injuries sustained during the attempt on his life on 20 July, Hitler still had the capacity to clearly see his situation (though he would choose to ignore reality more and more, when it suited him).

Hitler now turned his attention directly at Skorzeny, his eyes making contact with his tall commando extraordinaire. "You, Skorzeny, will deal with this Admiral Horthy!" The die was once again cast, and the characters of this next scene were chosen. Skorzeny was now tasked with capturing Admiral Horthy, thus preventing his country's defection to the enemy. The catch was that Skorzeny had to accomplish his mission without bringing the whole Hungarian Army on his back, or worse still, having it defect to the

communists. If Skorzeny played his cards wrong (and he didn't have many to play with), the Hungarian Armed Forces could possibly throw their lot into the Red camp.

The first plan was formulated by Hitler, Jodl, and Keitel. As Hitler explained: "Four to five parachute battalions" were to stand by "in order to lay their hands on the Regent." Preparations were also made for the Hungarian Arrow Cross Movement under the ex-Major Count Ferenc Szalasi to take over the government. Skorzeny first asked which paratroop battalions Hitler was talking about. Jodl picked up the ball and described which units were involved. Skorzeny would have a hand-picked *Luftwaffe* parachute battalion, his own newly-formed *Jagdverband* "Mitte" (Hunter Battalion "Middle"), an infantry battalion of officer cadets from Wiener-Neustadt (acting as glider troops), and the *SS-Fallschirmjaeger-Bataillon 600*. Skorzeny was aware of the first two units mentioned. The *Jagdverband* "Mitte" had originally been formed from the remnants of the *SS-Jaeger-Bataillon 502*. He assumed that the officer cadets would perform well. The *SS-Fallschirmjaeger-Bataillon 600* was a new formation, but had a cadre of men who had fought at Drvar, though not enough for it to perform well. That was four battalions, not five. Very good men, to be sure, but what could four picked battalions do against the whole Hungarian Army?

"What happened to the SS Parachute Battalion 500?" Skorzeny queried Jodl. "It's still in the east," came back the reply. Keitel, now sensing that the conversation was "safe" enough to join, added: "It's been beat up pretty good, but we can still make some use of them." Skorzeny stared icily at Keitel. Here was this paper-pushing general, talking about brave men like they were common cannon-fodder. Skorzeny held his rage. He hated Hitler's court lackies. Skorzeny turned his attention to Hitler and requested that the remnants of the SS Parachute Battalion 500 be withdrawn in order to augment the newly-formed 600th Battalion. If he was to have only four battalions, he would make sure he had the best men to work with. Germany was now scraping the bottom of the barrel. He wanted to be sure the 600th Battalion would have enough veterans to smooth out the "rough edges" of the unit. His mission's success would depend on excellent troops.

Jodl imparted that the unit was due to be withdrawn anyway since it had already "shot its bolt." Skorzeny had heard enough. He once again turned to Hitler and asked about gliders. Hitler, sensing that Skorzeny had no wish to carry on a conversation with Keitel or Jodl, replied that two squadrons (24

gliders) were already enroute and would be ready to use in a few days time. "Where is Horthy residing?" asked Skorzeny. "At Castle Hill," came the reply. This was the fortress castle in Budapest, located on a hill overlooking the Danube River.

Skorzeny paused for a minute. "What kind of troops are stationed in Budapest?" Jodl, who had not realized the animosity Skorzeny felt, was the first to reply: "About three divisions, one of them a Hussar unit." Four battalions against three divisions. The odds had not changed, Skorzeny thought sarcastically. "What about the castle itself?" he continued. "The troops identified so far are listed here." Keitel passed a sheet of paper to Skorzeny, who quickly glanced at it. A *Flak* (anti-aircraft) regiment, a tank platoon, two Honved (reserve) infantry battalions, elements of a mountain brigade, plus Admiral Horthy's 200-man personal bodyguard. "In addition," Jodl added, breaking Skorzeny's concentration, "a Hungarian parachute regiment has recently made its appearance in Budapest. But intelligence tells us that the commander is a stout anti-communist, though we have no idea what his reaction will be if Horthy declares that a peace settlement has been reached with the Bolsheviks."

Seeing the long face Skorzeny was now wearing, Hitler broke the silence of the moment. "Skorzeny, SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Bach Zelewsky has brought a 650 mm mortar, fresh from the victory at Warsaw. He has promised to level Castle Hill if necessary. In addition, I've given orders that you are to be assisted in carrying out your orders by all German military and civil personnel. This letter will confirm that order." Skorzeny was handed a crisp clean sheet of paper by the German leader, surmounted by the German eagle and Iron Cross in gilt. It was the equivalent of a blank check from Hitler. He could commandeer whatever German troops and armaments that were available in the Budapest area.

Even so, Skorzeny remained perplexed as to how he would accomplish this most difficult task. Compared to this new mission, the Mussolini rescue now seemed like a Sunday walk in the park! Hitler continued his sales pitch: "I am giving you a Condor (four-engined bomber) from my Leader's Squadron, for your own use. Mind you, Skorzeny, I'm counting on you!" would have to reconnoiter his objective before unleashing all this force. Within a few days he would arrive in Budapest disguised as a "Dr. Wolf." With typical determination in the face of great odds, Skorzeny promised Hitler to do everything he could. With that said, he left the Wolf's Lair in all



An SS Paratroop signals post in Lithuania.

haste.

Upon arrival at Budapest airport, "Dr. Wolf" wasted no time in getting about his job. His hunch had been right. Castle Hill was a veritable fortress. Barbed wire, mines, anti-tank ditches, and gun emplacements surrounded the Regent's home. In addition, a threatening number of heavy and light *Flak* guns were pointed upwards towards the bright sunny sky. An air drop or a frontal assault was definitely now out of the question. In fact, any type of aggressive action on the part of the Germans would be met with failure. Skorzeny radioed Berlin: "Paratroop drop highly unlikely to be successful. Will try different approach."

The paratroop battalions were kept on stand-by, however, in case Skorzeny could find no other way at getting to the Regent. This insurmountable problem seemed to be solved when, on the cloudy Sunday morning of 14 October, Skorzeny, aided by a company of his SS commandos and a *Gestapo* (*Geheimstatapolizei* = the State Secret Police) squad, kidnapped the Regent's son, Nicholas. Nicholas Horthy had been meeting with communist representatives of Marshal Tito, who in turn represented Sta-

lin. The Germans had let the meeting take place. Once Nicholas and his group entered the apartment building, they waited five minutes, then they rushed inside. The first German police officer was not even inside the door, when a hail of submachine gun fire riddled his body. Skorzeny and a companion ducked behind their Mercedes before the bullets began flying in their direction. Now von Foelkersam, Skorzeny's aide, rushed forward with the SS commandos. The Hungarian troops which had been kept in the adjacent building for just such an eventuality had no choice but to duck inside. With Horthy's guards neutralized, Skorzeny now raced into the building and headed upstairs. The *Gestapo* agents which had rented a flat one floor above the apartment where the meeting was taking place had already rushed in and captured the conspirators. Skorzeny ran into the apartment, took one look at the Regent's son who was now vigorously protesting and insulting his German captors, and pushed him down to the carpet on the floor. With the help of a policeman, he rolled the heir apparent into the carpet and whisked him off!

The enraged Horthy announced that very afternoon over the radio



SS Paratroopers on the march in Lithuania.



SS Paratrooper in Lithuania.

that Germany had lost the war, and that Hungary had accordingly concluded a preliminary armistice with Russia. That same day, because of the radio broadcast, the Hungarian Cabinet had resigned *en masse*, citing that it could not approve an armistice, and Parliament had not been consulted on the negotiations. Since Horthy ruled with almost total control, it had no effect on him. It did, however, have an effect on the Armed Forces, since they did not know who to turn to. In the end, the resignation of the Cabinet worked to Germany's favor. A confused Hungarian Army now held its breath and waited for further direction. But none came. Horthy was afraid for his son's life. Skorzeny had once again gambled correctly!

Skorzeny did not (nor could he) lose any time. At any minute, the Regent might change his mind about the value he placed on his son's head, and could pass the order for the Hungarian Army to resist the German Army. Would the Army follow this command was a question Skorzeny did not want to wait and find out. A mad rush for Castle Hill or a paratroop assault would surely bring the Hungarian Army on Horthy's side for sure. The fight that would ensue in Budapest would surely spread throughout Hungary, and his mission would become a fiasco. Skorzeny would have pushed the Hungarians

straight into the Soviet's arms. He also had to contend with the hot-heads in his own camp, like Bach-Zelewsky, who wanted to flatten Budapest.

That same day (14 October), the *SS-Fallschirmjaeger-Bataillon* was transferred from Hitler's direct control to Skorzeny's command detachment. This was in anticipation of its use against Castle Hill. By the time of Admiral Horthy's proclamation on the radio, Skorzeny's troops were already in the Budapest railroad station. Time was running out. *SS-Obergruppenfuhrer* Bach-Zelewsky was pushing for pounding Castle Hill into oblivion with the super-heavy "Karl" mortar he had brought from Warsaw.

Skorzeny thought out a plan which he quickly proposed to Hitler via the OKW. The German forces in Budapest were slowly but surely converging on Castle Hill. Skorzeny's promised battalions had already arrived and were ready to be employed. The following morning he would move up the main road leading to the fortress. The only thing was that he planned to drive his troops through the Hungarian defenses! No assault would take place. He would simply drive his troops up the Castle Hill road as if they were going for a Sunday drive! Skorzeny was counting on the Hungarian troops not opening fire at such a group of

troops who, driven in trucks, would be ill-disposed to fight. Troops which by their mere defenselessness, showed that they were not aggressive in their intentions. It was a big gamble, but Skorzeny could think of no other alternative. If they assaulted the fortress, they would surely be cut to pieces before they even reached the second line of defenses. This alternative was just as (if not more) dangerous, but it offered a better chance at success.

If it didn't work, his cadets and paratroopers would suffer greatly. For once in his life, Skorzeny was not exactly sure if he had thought out his situation correctly, but there was no turning back. Every other choice was out of the question. That midnight, a senior Hungarian officer from Castle Hill visited Skorzeny, asking for a parley. The visitor complained of all the German activity around Castle Hill. He also mentioned Horthy's anxiety for peace with the Russians which, as the Regent stated, would not exclude friendship with Germany. Skorzeny knew the ruse all too well. The Hungarians were stalling for time. It was "crapola" in the smelliest sense of the word, but Skorzeny turned this meeting to his advantage.

When the Hungarian officer seemed to be catching his breath, readying himself for yet another

tirade of demands and complaints, Skorzeny took the opportunity of directing a few complaints of his own at the Hungarian officer. Why was the German ambassador and his entourage imprisoned on Castle Hill (the German Embassy was there)? Why couldn't they come down to the city? Was the German ambassador a captive, or an ally? The Hungarian officer, not having any real excuse for these actions, wavered. Skorzeny saw a streak of embarrassment overcome his opponent, and decided to gamble right there and then. He wasted no time and suggested that as a sign of good intentions on the part of the Hungarians, the road leading from Castle Hill should be cleared of mines so that the German ambassador could use it. "If the mines and barricades are not cleared from this road by six a.m.," Skorzeny told his opponent, "Germany will draw the necessary conclusions." The Hungarian promised to at least try to have that wish met. Skorzeny hoped he had sized up the Hungarian well enough. The success of his plan depended on it. Operation PANZERFAUST was on!

Half an hour before daylight, Skorzeny's column formed up near Castle Hill. At exactly 5:55 a.m. his troops moved off, Skorzeny at the lead. There were only ten German tanks in all of Budapest that misty morning of 16 October. They included four Panther tanks and six King Tiger tanks which were scheduled to be sent to the eastern front. Skorzeny used them all. Up Castle Hill they went, Skorzeny standing at attention and upright in his Mercedes. As the column neared the first Hungarian positions, Skorzeny noticed the Hungarian troops getting fidgety. It was now or never. He saluted them smartly, and, being soldiers that they were, they returned his salute like automatons. Instinct was what Skorzeny had banked on, and apparently it was working.

Skorzeny's thoughts now centered on whether the Hungarian officer had kept his part of the bargain. At any second a mine could explode underneath him and he would know his ruse had not worked. Holding their breath, the German trucks and tanks rolled up the hill. Nothing happened! The ruse had worked! The Vienna Gate, entrance to the castle itself lay ahead. Hungarian sentries now showed themselves. Skorzeny, still standing upright, saluted cheerfully. The guards responded properly, as had the others prior. Surely this column was authorized to enter, they must have thought. How else could they have gotten up the hill?

Skorzeny proceeded to repeat this same tactic with the next obstacle - the Army barracks, and again it worked. Now his troops split into two groups as had been



Paratroop command on the Memel Front: in the center is Major Witzig, who had participated in the

conquest of Fort Eben-Emael, conferring with SS-Hauptsturmführer Milnes, commander of the SS Para Battalion.

prearranged. One group made for Horthy's palace, passing the Hungarian Ministry of War building. Three Hungarian tanks were now visible, and were blocking the path. Skorzeny's Panthers only had to show themselves for the Hungarian tank crews to raise their tanks' main guns into the air, a sign of submission. There would be no tank battles this day.

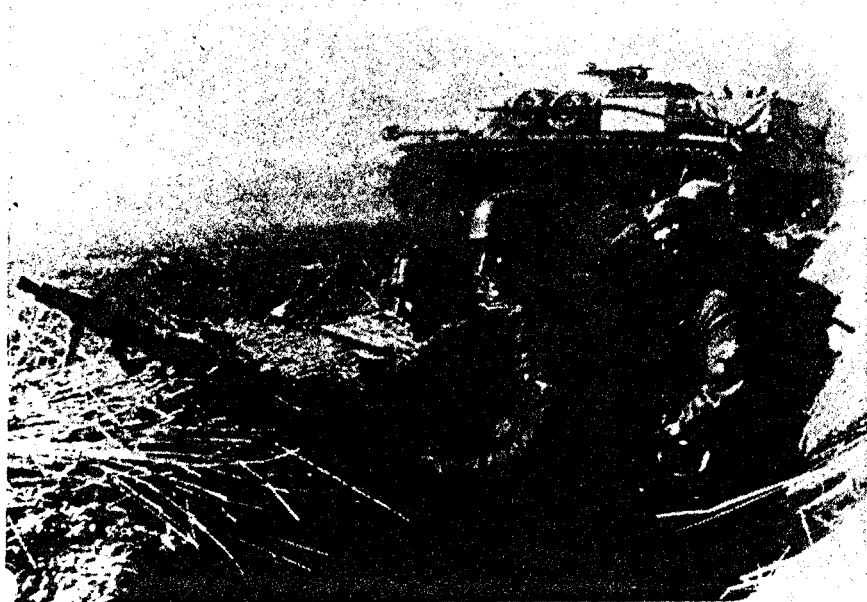
Skorzeny now moved off the lead of his column and let one of his Panther tanks pass him, crashing into the brick wall shielding the Regent's palace. As Skorzeny moved his Mercedes through the gaping hole in the wall that his Panther had left, he noticed six anti-tank guns about to face off with the leading tank. He didn't wait to see how his tanks would fare, but instead rushed inside the palace, von Foelkersam and four SS men following close behind.

Several Hungarian officers were encountered inside the palace by the large spiral staircase leading to the upper levels of the palace. All were quickly manhandled and disarmed before they could react. Skorzeny was keeping his lead ahead of von Foelkersam and others in the group. He had reached half-way up the stairs when another Hungarian officer made an appearance, running down the marble staircase, in the direction of all the commotion. "Quickly!" Skorzeny bellowed out. "Take me to see the commanding officer. I have news that is most pressing. I must see your CO!" The officer responded in the proper manner, and Skorzeny was led to the Hungarian general's office by the officer. Skorzeny had just hood-winked.

Once inside the outer office, Skorzeny saw that a soldier was firing at the German troops outside. One swift kick and his weapon went flying out the window. Now the commando group forced their way into the inner office and confronted the Hungarian garrison commander. "The whole castle is under our control," Skorzeny told his captive. "I order you to cease hostilities so that no further blood be shed uselessly." The barrel of a German PO-8 pistol, pointed at the temple of the Hungarian general was enough to convince him that Skorzeny was right. The necessary orders were passed, and soon the quiet atmosphere that pervaded the castle before Skorzeny's daring raid, once more engulfed her and its occupants.

The SS paratroopers of the 600th Battalion had fared very well. There had been only a few wounded, but no one had been killed. The Army cadets had not fared so well, however. A good number had been killed, as had numerous Hungarian guards. That same day both groups of men were buried together after a ceremony which was attended by the Germans and the Hungarians. It was important to begin a peaceful coexistence with the Hungarian Army as quickly as possible.

Admiral Horthy was personally flown out of Budapest that same day, Skorzeny escorting him. A German honor guard sent him off on his way to see his son Nicholas who, as Hitler had sarcastically worded, was in "protective custody." The hyenas had been caught and dealt with! The SS paratroop battalion had a few days rest in Budapest before being relieved. They even had time for a victory parade through the Hungarian



SS Paratroops serving as a rearguard during the breakout from the "Vilva Pocket" in Lithuania.

capital. They departed from Budapest almost half-heartedly. For the veterans of the old 500th Battalion, this Hungarian interlude had seemed like a vacation from the rigors they were accustomed to. Had it not been for Skorzeny, they probably would have departed with a "business as usual" attitude, and a lot of empty holes in their ranks. Milius could not thank the Gods of War enough!

WINTER TWILIGHT

The men of the SS Parachute Battalion 600, now at least technical veterans of a "battle," were sent to a barracks in

Neustrelitz, in Mecklenburg, where they were to receive more replacements and continue their interrupted training. Winter was now fast approaching, and with her she was bringing Germany's enemies ever so closer. The Third Reich was being slowly strangled by two firm hands, one from the east, and one from the west. Several stab wounds at the groin (Italy and the Balkans) had left her bleeding. If some miracle did not occur soon, Germany would be crushed come the springtime.

Recruits for the battalion were now being drawn from reserve units and convalescent companies. The *Wehrmacht*, *Luftwaffe*, and *Kriegsmarine* were also handing out volunteers who were all herded

together in Schleswig Holstein in Mecklenburg and in Lower Saxony. Though the majority of the men now had no parachute training whatsoever, their morale was high. These new recruits quickly absorbed the *esprit de corps* which the battalion's veteran officers and men imparted on them. With the careful guidance of parents tending their young, the veteran SS paras were able to form a truly unique body of men from the diverse flock which rushed to join their ranks. They would soon prove their mettle in some of the most fiercest fighting the Eastern front would see.

The percentage of disciplinary cases had by now shrunk to only less than 20% of the battalion's total strength. This included the old reserve company, which was now incorporated into the unit on a combat basis. The battalion now once again attained the strength of about 1,000 men (maybe a little over 1,000). While this was going on, the commander of the battalion, SS-*Hauptsturmfuehrer* Milius received an order from Skorzeny. It was signed by Field Marshal Keitel. This order had been distributed via the OKW and read as follows:

The *Fuehrer* has ordered the formation of a special unit of a strength of about two battalions for employment on reconnaissance and special tasks on the Western front. The personnel will be assembled from volunteers of all arms of the Army and *Waffen-SS*, who must fulfill the following requirements:

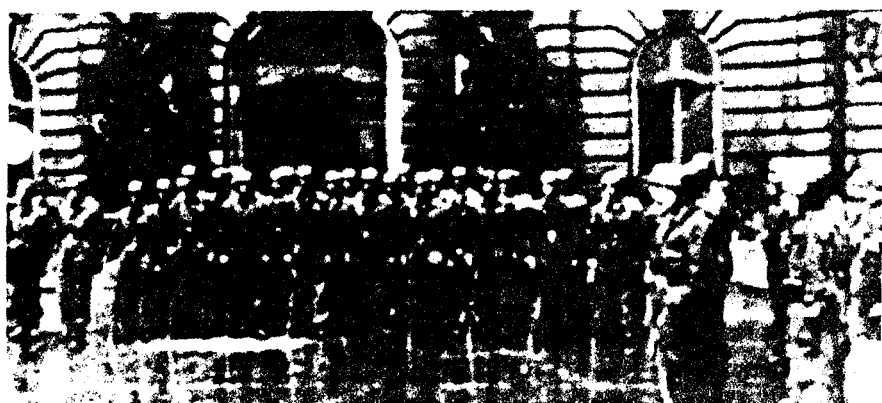
(a) Physically A-1, suitable for special tasks, mentally keen, strong personality.

(b) Fully trained in single combat.

(c) Knowledge of the English language and also the American dialect. Especially important is a knowledge of military technical terms.

This order is to be made known immediately to all units and headquarters. Volunteers may not be retained on military grounds but are to be sent immediately to Friedenthal near Oranienburg (Headquarters Skorzeny) for a test of suitability, but a value will be put on his fighting spirit and temperament.

Captured U.S. clothing, equipment, weapons and vehicles are to be collected and reported for the equipment of the above special troops. Personal wishes of the troops to make use of this kind of



SS Paratroops reassemble after their successful action on Castle Hill in Budapest, October 1944.

Skorzeny told Milius that he had tried to cancel this "mission" shortly after the release of such a secret plan to "the general public." Word of this order, and its intentions (which were quite clear) would surely reach the ears of Allied intelligence, who would draw the necessary conclusions. It was incredible that there could be such idiocy and knuckle-headedness in such a high *Wehrmacht* command (the highest, since the OKW was only responsible to Hitler himself).

Eventually Hitler refused to cancel the plan, and 2,000 men from all the branches of the German Armed Forces were grouped together to form the now-famous 150th *Panzer* Brigade. This brigade and several small squads were to infiltrate the American lines held by the U.S. VIII Corps in the Ardennes mountains, a region of land which is located in the eastern part of Belgium, near the German and Luxemburg borders. They would take part in what would become known as the "Battle of the Bulge."

The operation was to go ahead as planned. Milius was to select the best men from his battalion. These men would then be temporarily assigned to the 150th *Panzer* Brigade. Their return to their battalion would only become effective after the conclusion of the operation. Milius chose one of his best company commanders for this mission. He also requested volunteers to come forward from SS-*Obersturmfuehrer* Leifhert's 1st Company. When 1st Company was asked for volunteers for a special mission which their company commander had chosen to participate in, all of them eventually stepped forward. They were sent as a whole company to Friedenthal.

One reliable source states that two SS parachute companies from the SS Parachute Battalion 600 were used in the 150th *Panzer* Brigade. If this is true, then the percentage of SS paras in the brigade would have been a very large amount (380 men out of 2,000, or about 20% of the total strength!). The operation was a complete failure in that the 150th *Panzer* Brigade was never employed as the "Trojan Horse" it was intended for. For one thing, the promised American equipment never materialized in sufficient numbers to fully outfit Skorzeny's command. Drastic measures were taken, like trying to camouflage German tanks into looking like U.S. armored fighting vehicles. Like one American author put it: "These tanks and assault guns could only pass as U.S. tanks only at great distances, in the dark; and then only by untrained, green replacements." The composition of



"Mess Night" in Friedenthal: SS-*Stubaf.* Skorzeny with his commandos.

the 150th *Panzer* Brigade was as follows:

Staff/*Panzerbrigade* 150
 (with a reinforced signals company - motorized)

Staff/*Panzer Kampfgruppe* 1
 (with a signals platoon - motorized)

5./SS-*Jagdverbande* "Mitte"
 (with ten Sherman tanks)

Three companies of motorized infantry (120 to 150 men each). These companies contained two platoons of heavy mortars (six 120 mm mortars per platoon), one engineer and two anti-tank platoons



SS-*Stubaf.* Skorzeny prior to an awards ceremony at Friedenthal.



Officers of SS-Jagdverband "Mitte" in Friedenthal, October 1944. Second from right: SS-Hstuf. Adrian von Foelkersam, Skorzeny's chief-of-

staff. Far right: Hstuf. Werner Hunke, chief staff officer of SS-Jagdverband "Mitte."

in various U.S. and German vehicles.

Staff/Panzer Kampfgruppe 2
(with a signals platoon - motorized)

6./Panzer Regiment 11
(with 12 Panzer IV, V, and Jagd-panzer IV armored fighting vehicles)

Three companies of motorized infantry (120 to 180 men). These were composed in the same fashion as the above companies.

Staff/Infantry Kampfgruppe
(with a signals platoon - motorized)
The motorized infantrymen in this battle group had been dispersed into the above two armored battlegroups.

Supply and Maintenance companies

The command of the 150th Panzer Brigade was entrusted to SS-Obersturmbannführer Otto Skorzeny, while his second in command was Oberstleutnant Wulf of the Wehrmacht. Another problem which came up during the Ardennes offensive was the lack of roads which greatly reduced the number of units which could be employed at any one time. Skorzeny's unit, for example, could not be employed as proposed due to the road being jammed. Skorzeny realized the futility of using the brigade in the manner intended, and instead opted for committing the unit as a regular ground combat group. It fought as a brigade during the Battle of the Bulge, and was disbanded shortly thereafter.

The men of the SS parachute battalion were then returned to their parent unit after seeing combat as armored infantrymen. The brigade was disbanded on 25 December 1944. By the time that the SS paras returned to Neustrelitz, a new year had arrived. 1945 brought a very cold winter to Western Europe. This cold winter spell was shadowed by another large-scale Soviet offensive, launched on 12 January. The dark and ominous clouds that were converging over north-central Europe indicated the beginning of the end of the Third Reich. The German nation held its breath and awaited the twilight of war to fall upon them. Germany's *Gotterdammerung* was about to begin.

(to be concluded in next issue)

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CLOTHING OF THE SS PARACHUTE TROOPS 1943 TO 1945

The SS paratrooper wore the standard Luftwaffe paratroopers camouflage smock which was designed in a geometric pattern. The helmet was the standard Luftwaffe issue of the later period of the war. The forage cap (*Feldmütze*) was of the Waffen-SS pattern, complete with SS eagle and death's head emblem. The soft cap was the 1943 pattern with similar insignia. The steel helmet was worn either with or without the camouflage netting. In his seven-volume masterpiece, *Uniforms of the SS, 1939-1945*, Andrew Mollo states (in Volume 6) that the Luftwaffe breast eagle was worn on the right breast of the camouflage smock. Looking at the numerous illustrations at my disposal, I found no such evidence

of this. Either the paratroopers removed them, or the camouflage smocks were issued without them. Mr. Mollo also indicates that the field gray trousers with the side opening thigh pockets was used. Though many photos support this, another trouser was much widely used. It included the field gray trouser with the front-angled side pockets. Canvas gaiters and ankle boots were used. The SS belt buckle was worn outside of the camouflage smock (as was the black leather harness). Knee pads were used for all parachute drops. Personal equipment included the standard Army canteen and entrenching tool (plus a fighting knife). The parachute used was the later version, the RZ-20.

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SS-Stubaf. Skorzeny decorating an SS-Oberscharfuehrer at Friedenthal.

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WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY



Hungary and with SS emergency units in Bohemia-Moravia. It is not known exactly where Splettstoesser ended up and was declared missing.

Hstuf. Karl Guse (born 27 July 1916; died 14 February 1975; SS Nr. 367,387), was one of the top students in his officer's training class at SS-Junkerschule "Toelz" in 1938. His instructor in signals/communications at the time was Ernst Kempen, who would later command *Hstuf.* Guse and his artillery detachment from 17. SS Panzer Grenadier Division "Goetz von Berlichingen" during the defense of Metz in October 1944.

After seeing active field service, *Hstuf.* Guse became an artillery school instructor. Following the Allied invasion of France in June 1944, Guse's whole training class was mobilized to serve in the 49th SS Panzer Grenadier Brigade. During the brigade's training and formation in Denmark, the "class," under Guse's continued command, was expanded into a battalion-size artillery detachment. From the end of July through the month of August 1944, the artillery detachment along with the rest of the brigade gave a good account of itself defending the Seine River line and the German withdrawal through Northern France.

In September 1944, Guse's detachment was transferred intact to the badly depleted SS Artillery Regiment 17, "GvB" Division (the rest of the brigade was also transferred into this division). During the battle for Metz in October 1944, *Hstuf.* Guse and his command distinguished themselves by shattering repeated American attacks on the southwest quarter of the city. The detachment was in continuous action during this time despite a very difficult munitions and re-supply problem which *Hstuf.*

Guse worked around the clock to overcome. As a result of the success of his command during the critical battle of Metz, *Hstuf.* Karl Guse was awarded the German Cross in Gold, one notch below the distinction of the Knight's Cross.

Ostuf. Werner Grothmann (born 23 August 1915; SS Nr. 181,334), joined the "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler" in 1934 and in the following year graduated from SS-Junkerschule "Braunschweig" as the best in his class. He then served for a long time with the SS Regiment "Deutschland," eventually being awarded the Iron Cross, 1st Class, for battlefield valor.

Grothmann ended up as the Chief Adjutant of the *Waffen-SS* on the Staff of the *Reichsfuehrer-SS*. At the end of the war, *Ostuf.* Grothmann attempted to get *RF SS* Himmler to issue a last "order of the day" assuming full responsibilities for the actions of the SS and specifically stating that the "*Waffen-SS* was solely a military (combat) formation." Himmler rejected this proposal but Grothmann still followed him around as he tried to evade captivity in early May 1945. *Ostuf.* Grothmann eventually fell into British hands along with the *Reichsfuehrer*, but unlike his boss, did not commit suicide and was eventually released.

Three *Waffen-SS* soldiers from the 7th SS Mountain Division "Prinz Eugen" who were hospitalized in Landau-Quelchheim, Pfalz, were seized and executed by American soldiers on 3 March 1945 without any provocation! They were later buried by nuns from the Landau-Quelchheim Monastery in the cemetery attached to the Monastery. This war crime went unreported and unpunished.

SS-Sturmann Walter Splettstoesser (photo) was listed as MIA on 13 March 1945 while serving with a "March Company" of the SS Panzer Grenadier Training and Replacement Battalion 1. He had undergone training in 1943 with 9th Company, II. Hitler Jugend Training Battalion at the Berlin Lichterfelde Barracks. He then served with II. Battalion, SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment 2, "LSSAH" (Field Post Nr. 14 103 D), and was badly wounded. He was sent to recover at the Bad Aussee Military Hospital.

On 8 January 1945 he left the hospital to join the ad hoc "March Company" of SS-Panzer Grenadier Training and Replacement Battalion 1 in Margrafpieske. The battalion had been broken down into detached battle-groups, most of which were absorbed by the SS Regiment "Falke" of the 32nd SS Division "30 Januar" on the Oder River Front. However, small parts of the battalion also served with 6th SS Panzer Army in

⚡-FELDERSATZ BATAILLON 2

⚡-FELDERSATZ BRIGADE 102

December 1944-May 1945

At the beginning of the Ardennes Offensive which commenced on 16 December 1944, 6th (SS) Panzer Army command ordered training activities for replacement units to continue at an elevated level in the nearby Westerwald area with the stipulation that these troops would be utilized for combat duties if necessary. Because of the imminent potential of the latter possibility it was decided to combine the smaller training elements into larger structures where possible. This led to the creation of the *SS-Feldersatz* (Field Replacement) Brigade, II. SS Panzer Corps (which by the end of the year had been retitled *SS-Feldersatz* Brigade 102 to conform with the Corps' numbering system).

SS-Sturmabfuhrer Hans Bissinger was named the brigade commander. Bissinger (born 25 January 1913; SS Nr. 53698), was a holder of the Iron Cross, 1st Class, who had been the commanding officer of II. Battalion, *SS-Panzer Grenadier* Regiment 3 "Deutschland" of the 2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich." Brigade troops came from the replacement units of II. SS-Panzer Corps and to some extent from throughout the 6th SS Panzer Army. This led to the fact that the unit was sometimes referred to as the *SS-Feldersatz* Brigade, 6. SS-Panzer Armee. Serving as the nucleus element for the brigade was the *SS-FEB* 2 (i.e., *SS-Feldersatz-bataillon* 2), "Das Reich," which had been reinforced by the "Reich" close-combat school, the personnel of which were utilized to form a 5th Company for the battalion.

In January 1945, *Stubaf.* Helmut Schreiber was named to command *SS-FEB* 2. He was a holder of the Knight's Cross and the German Cross in Gold (born 25 March 1917; SS Nr. 361,292), who had graduated from the *SS-Junkerschule* "Toelz" in 1939. Schreiber had spent his entire career with the "Deutschland" Regiment of the "Das Reich" Division and had achieved great prominence while commanding 10. Company, III. Battalion, "Deutschland." At the time Schreiber took over *SS-FEB* 2 he had just recovered from a severe wounding received during the heavy fighting of the previous summer in

Normandy.

On 6 March 1945, *SS-FEB* 2 was ordered to rejoin the "Das Reich" Division in Hungary, but while preparations for this move were in progress, some news arrived at the headquarters of *SS-Feldersatz* Brigade 102 that changed everything. On 8 March 1945 a surprise American attack had seized the Rhine River bridge at Remagen and the brigade staff in Altenkirchen was ordered to immediately dispatch all combat-ready troops to the bridgehead front. *SS-FEB* 2, which had been in a state of high alert anyway, was literally pulled off of the trains that were to take it to Hungary, turned around and sent towards Remagen in a motorized convoy, while the rest of the brigade began mobilizing. The battalion was to come under the command of 11th Panzer Division.

Upon reaching the front sector, *SS-FEB* 2 was ordered to take up positions which ran along the Dattenberg-Reifert road to the south-southeast of the American bridgehead. Naturally, there were no prepared defenses in the area, so digging in commenced immediately and improvisation was the order of the day. The battalion command post was set up in the tiny village of Haehnen (all of 50 residents). The terrain in the defensive sector was hilly and rolling and gave a view of the whole bridgehead area. The SS companies were deployed in separate strongpoints along the sector front. From these positions, American vehicles could be seen crossing the Ludendorf Bridge and the construction of a new military bridge adjacent to the destroyed railroad bridge could also be observed in progress.

On 9 March 1945, American artillery spotter planes flew over the battalion's positions and shortly afterwards the unit began receiving incoming fire, which also extended to the village of Haehnen. Casualties, including some fatalities, were instantaneous, and included some local civilians. This latter development in particular upset *Stubaf.* Schreiber who had hoped to somehow keep the villagers out of the conflict. He ordered the

battalion medics to evacuate and treat the wounded civilians along with the *Waffen-SS* casualties.

By 10 March 1945 the overwhelming material "muscle" of the enemy had amply demonstrated itself. Haehnen had been reduced to ruins and most of the battalion's motor vehicles had been destroyed in the ceaseless American bombardment. The ground situation became even more critical when the 9th U.S. Armored Division secured a breakthrough of the German lines to the south of *SS-FEB* 2's left wing. As a result the battalion was forced to adjust its lines to a point behind the Hargarten-Haehnen road. Part of the Pattenberg-Hargarten road was yielded in hard fighting, but the battalion avoided being outflanked.

During this battle two of the *Waffen-SS* troopers fell into the hands of the Americans and were taken to the rear where they were held captive by members of a mortar unit from the 99th U.S. Infantry Division. In the night of 13/14 March, the two SS soldiers overpowered their guards and took their weapons. An all-out pursuit developed, punctuated by sharp exchanges of fire. By the time the SS men had been recaptured, six GI's had been killed. Now there would be no mercy for the prisoners. With their hands shackled behind their backs the SS men were knocked to the ground, shot in the back of the neck, and left to lie where they fell. They were later buried in the cemetery at Bad Honef by some local villagers. One of the murdered men was identified later as Franz Wilke (born 12 May 1925), who originally came from the *SS-Flak* Replacement Regiment in Munich. His comrade remains unknown.

March 14, 1945 saw an all-out attempt by the *Luftwaffe* to destroy the Remagen bridges. Around 100 planes were utilized for this desperation mission in what was one of the last major undertakings of the German Air Force. And it failed miserably! The disaster was caused by the enormous concentration of anti-aircraft guns on the American side which literally swept every quadrant of the skies. How any

planes got through at all was a miracle in itself. Twenty-four German bombers were downed on this day in the bridgehead area. On 15 March, 21 more *Luftwaffe* bombers again attacked the Remagen bridgehead; six of them were brought down and the bridge remained intact.

On the ground, *SS-FEB 2* was still getting pounded by the enemy artillery and fighting off American probing attacks. So far the front sector held but manpower attrition was setting in fast with little to show for it. *Stubaf. Schreiber* was in radio contact with the brigade headquarters in Altenkirchen and he made several requests for the withdrawal of the battalion so it could rejoin the "Das Reich" Division in the "East." All requests were denied, however, and the losses continued to mount. *Ustuf. Bauer* was one of those killed repelling an enemy attack on the 14th.

In the morning of 15 March, a battalion from the Engineer Training Regiment 403 under Major von Koeller

arrived in Haehnen to begin relieving the increasingly battered *SS-FEB 2*. To the northwest of the town an American regimental task force from the 99th U.S. Infantry Division had broken through the German lines on a broad front and by 10:15 had begun to threaten Haehnen. At this time the unit change-of-position around the village was still very much underway and before anyone realized it the Americans had arrived on the scene. Bursts of wild firing in front of the *SS-FEB 2* command post provided *Stubaf. Schreiber* with the first evidence of the enemy presence.

Schreiber and his radio man immediately rushed outside with automatic weapons in their hands. They found the Americans moving into the middle of the village. The only hope now was to make a run for it! The *Sturmabfuhrer* joined scattered troops from the town in dashing for a stone bridge about 500 meters to the north of Haehnen. But could they make it? The Americans

were in hot pursuit!

Fortunately, about 150 meters out of town, a *Waffen-SS* machine gun team halted and went into position - determined to buy time so that their comrades could escape. In this they were successful; *Stubaf. Schreiber* and the last remnants of his command reached the bridge and dug in on either side of it. But back in Haehnen the Americans were able to bag much of the engineer battalion, including its commander, who had the misfortune to be carrying the intact German battle plans for the Remagen Front in his brief case! Some *Waffen-SS* men were also taken prisoner in the village along with most of the teenage members of a *Flak* helper unit.

A very intense battle then raged for the stone bridge, continuing until 1630 hours in the afternoon, when *SS-FEB 2* finally abandoned the edifice to troops from the 99th U.S. Infantry Division. The survivors of the *SS* replacement battalion threaded their way through



Dr. Goebbels meeting with representative soldiers of various Eastern nationalities, in December

1944. First known publication. [Courtesy of Erik Rundkvist]

the ~~Stifelsen norsk Okkupasjonshistorie, 2014~~ Stifelsen norsk Okkupasjonshistorie, 2014. At this town a new collecting station for "Das Reich" replacements had been established on orders of the divisional staff. The officer in charge at Bruck was *Hstuf.* Eugen Maisenbacher (born 20 November 1914; *SS Nr.* 110,198); the former commander of I. Battalion, *SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment 3 "Deutschland," "DR" Division*. Only enough troops turned up to permit the formation of two new replacement companies and they were quartered in the town grammar school.

Back in Haehnen, the bodies of six *SS NCO's* and a private who had been killed in the town on 15 March were buried by Father Detsche, a priest from Linz, assisted by some local boys. On 23 March 1945, *SS-FEB 2* left its positions on the small Wied Brook to go into combat reserve to the south of Hennef. At the end of the month the remnants of the battalion left the vicinity of

Stifelsen norsk Okkupasjonshistorie, 2014. At this town a new collecting station for "Das Reich" replacements had been established on orders of the divisional staff. The officer in charge at Bruck was *Hstuf.* Eugen Maisenbacher (born 20 November 1914; *SS Nr.* 110,198); the former commander of I. Battalion, *SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment 3 "Deutschland," "DR" Division*. Only enough troops turned up to permit the formation of two new replacement companies and they were quartered in the town grammar school.

However, the two new companies served as the nucleus for a new *SS-Feldersatz Battalion 2* which took

shape in early April, again under *Stubaf.* Schreiber. On 6 April 1945, the battalion was forced to withdraw from Bruck and on the 12th it became the main part of a battle-group led by *Stubaf.* Schreiber that was rushed to the Traisen sector in Austria. *SS-Kampfgruppe "Schreiber"* was soon heavily engaged against the Red Army near Herzogenburg and St. Aegy. After extremely costly fighting in the hilly slopes of the Dunkelsteiner Forest, the survivors were withdrawn from the front and sent to Langlois, where *SS-FEB 2* was to have been reconstituted once again had not the war ended first!



WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY

At around noon on 20 April 1945, troops from a U.S. 12th Armored Division task force and the 101st U.S. Cavalry Group murdered at least 15 captured, wounded members of the *SS-Battalion "Deggingen"* in the town of Merkendorf. When the U.S. troops suddenly withdrew in the night of 20/21 April, the town was re-secured by *SS-Battalion "Deggingen."* At 0900 hours on the 21st, two mass graves were discovered in the town cemetery and were personally inspected by the battalion CO, *Stubaf.* Baumgaertel.

One grave contained the bodies of 11 men who had been killed in action on 20 April (including that of company commander, *Hstuf.* Willy Sommer), and the other contained the bodies of at least 15 wounded men who had been left when the battalion had been forced to evacuate Merkendorf on the previous day. The precarious battlefield situation precluded a more detailed examination of the atrocity, as the *SS* battalion was once again on the move, however, no one was ever brought to justice for this deliberate war crime!

Ostuf. Peter Hoppe (born 8 June 1921; died 6 June 1975) served as the battalion adjutant with *SS Signals Abteilung B, "Florian Geyer" Cavalry Division*.

SS-Unterscharfuehrer Dr. Gerhard Richter (born 5 April 1904), was a

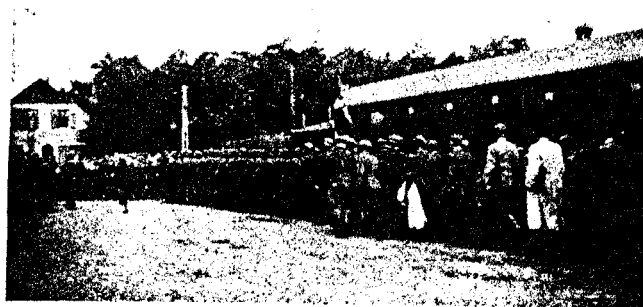
dentist at the *Fuehrer Headquarters* in April/May 1943. He served from 1 August to 14 November 1943 with 6th Company, *SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment 20, 9. SS Panzer Division "Hohenstaufen."* He was then with the divisional *Sturm (Assault) Company* for an unspecified period of time before transferring to II. *Abteilung, SS-Panzer Regiment 2, "Das Reich,"* where he served at the regimental dental station. Further information about him is not available.

Stubaf. Dr. Franz Sturm, born 7 January 1908, served in the *Waffen-SS* from 1938 to 1945. He was a senior doctor and then battalion medical officer with I.

SS-"Totenkopf" Standarten. He later went on to become the divisional medical officer for 10th *SS Panzer Division "Frundsberg"* (1943-1944) and 25th *Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS "Hunyadi"* (Hungary *Nr. 1*) (1945). He died on 7 June 1954.

Another medical doctor with the same name but five years older also served in the *Waffen-SS*. Dr. Sturm, although not a member of the *NSDAP*, held *SS Nr.* 310,424. He was also awarded the *SS Deathhead Ring* and *SS Dagger of Honor*.

Horst Hermann, from Danzig, was an X-ray technician with the Field Hospital of *SS Medical Detachment 5, "Wiking" Division*.



Danish *SS* volunteers marching to the Ochsenzoll railroad station enroute to their training camp in Germany.

STURMJAEGER REGIMENT "BOBRUISK/PANNIER"

In the wake of the assassination of *Reichscommissar* Kube in Weissruthenia (Byelorussia) in September 1943 by communist partisans, new security forces were created in the rear area of Army Group Center to help track down the terrorists. Among the units mobilized were two battalions of SS men from the supply depots in the area and the troops of the Higher SS and Police Leader for the region. These battalions were initially known as: I. and II. Battalions, *Nachschubkommandantur* *der Waffen-SS und Polizei*, coming under the command of *SS-Standartenfuehrer* Rudolf Pannier (born 10 July 1897; SS Nr. 465,891), who was in charge of the *Waffen-SS* rear area supply system in Weissruthenia. These battalions were answerable to the SS Main Office in Berlin. In addition to these two battalions, the *Nachschubkommandantur* also mobilized an SS Penal Work Detachment in the war against the partisans.

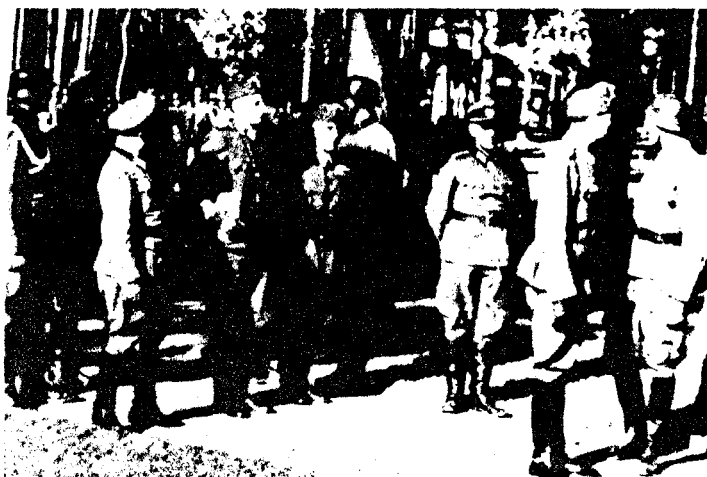
By the early part of 1944 the twin battalions had been rechristened *SS-Sturmjaeger* Battalions 500 and 501 and it was intended to form them into an independent regiment, the staff of which began forming at the SS Training Camp Debica in Poland. The regiment was assembled under the camouflage title of "Formation Staff



Staf. Rudolf Pannier (Police uniform).

Debica" and was ready for use by the spring of 1944. It was considered only a temporary formation and was referred to either as *SS-Jaeger* Regiment "Bobruisk," or *SS-Sturmjaeger* Regiment "Pannier" (after its commander). The regiment came under the daily operational control of *SS-Gruppenfuehrer* Curt von Gottberg (born 11 November 1896; SS Nr. 45,923), who at the time was the Higher SS and Police Leader for Weissruthenia.

In addition to Staf. Pannier, the following SS officers were also



Officers of the *SS-Sturmjaeger* Regiment visiting Hungarian VIII. Corps Headquarters in 1944. The Hungarians by this time were only fighting partisans. Pannier is third from right; an unknown *Stubaf.* is fourth from right.



Staf. Pannier (left) with Hungarian Lieutenant General Laszlo (center) at Hungarian VIII. Corps Headquarters in Byelorussia, 1944.

known to have been affiliated with the regiment:

SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer Schaeffer, regimental weapon's master;
SS-Sturmabfuhrer Dr. Jakob Nagel (born 2 October 1899; SS Nr. 416,387), the unit medical officer;
SS-Hstuf. Kurt Kanzy (or Kansyl) (born 7 December 1912; SS Nr. 106,652), regimental administrative officer.

Dr. Nagel was wounded in action

at Berezna Kartuska. The II. Battalion, SS *Sturmjaeger* Regiment, was known to have been deployed at Poldzk.

During various operations in the spring and summer of 1944, the *Sturmjaeger* Regiment was broken up between various commands. SS-*Sturmjaeger* Battalion 500 frequently came under the jurisdiction of 9th Army while SS-*Sturmjaeger* Battalion 501 was often found operating with 3rd Panzer Army. They also served with the SS Battlegroups "Jeckeln" and "von Gottberg." In July and August 1944, the regimental battalions, fighting initially as part of SS-Kampfgruppe "von Gottberg," strove with some success to keep open withdrawal routes for the shattered Army units of Army Group Center. After sacrificing themselves totally in battle the twin SS-*Sturmjaeger* Regiments fell

back into Poland, being at least partially intermingled with the SS Penal Regiment "Dirlewanger" for a time.

The survivors from the battalions finally regrouped and fought with IV. SS Panzer Corps outside of Warsaw and were eventually used as replacements within the corps. By September 1944 the SS-*Sturmjaeger* Regiment "Bobruisk/Pannier" had ceased to exist and Staf. Pannier had taken charge of the reforming *Waffen-Grenadier Regiment der SS 31* in the 14. *Waffen-Grenadier Division der SS* ("Galizien"/Ukrainian).

OPERATIONAL STRENGTHS OF THE SS-STURMJAEGER BATTALIONS AS OF 30 JUNE 1944

SS-*Sturmjaeger* Battalion 500

14 officers
120 NCO's
1,137 other ranks

TOTAL: 1,271

SS-*Sturmjaeger* Battalion 501

9 officers
113 NCO'S
820 other ranks

TOTAL: 942

SS-*Sturmjaeger* Regiment strength
3,000 troops all ranks.



WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY

The chaplain for the 15th Latvian SS Division was the Evangelical Lutheran Pastor Julius Straume, who received the rank of *Waffen-Sturmabfuhrer*. He was later killed in action near Landeck, Pomerania, in early 1945. The chaplain of MGR 32 in the 15. *WGD* was Pastor Elmars Kocins. The division also had a Roman Catholic chaplain, Father Kazimir Rucs.

Chaplains in the 19th Latvian SS Division included the Evangelical Pastors Verners Voltkus and Olgerts Kraulis, the latter of whom died in captivity in 1946. A number of Catholic and Protestant chaplains in the *Waffen-SS* (the latter were predominantly ethnic-Germans from Eastern Europe, many of whom served with the "Prinz Eugen" Division) underwent officer's training at the supposedly "Godless" SS-*Junkerschule* "Toelz," which had chapels for both faiths. About one-fourth of the *Waffen-SS* divisions had either Christian or Moslem religious leaders in their ranks, and some of them had considerable influence in divisional affairs.

The nucleus of the three-battalion SS Penal Regiment "Kaltfofen" was

derived from troops belonging to the command of the *HSSuPF* "Danzig-West Prussia." The regiment also incorporated a portion of the SS *Panzergranadier* School at Sophienwalde, West Prussia. Rank and file members of the regiment were mostly military convicts.

In February/March 1945 an SS-*Grenadier* Battalion 2 was stationed in the Netherlands; its composition and fate are unknown, although it was possibly formed from or treated as an SS-*Polizei* battalion and as such would have been considered less than a full-grade *Waffen-SS* unit.



8TH ROCKET MORTAR (PROJECTOR) TRAINING AND REPLACEMENT DETACHMENT "LANGLINGEN"

The SS Rocket Detachment "Langlingen" was one of the stranger late-war formations of the *Waffen-SS*. It was formed primarily from SS chemists who had been running classes in "Poison Gas Defense" and their pupils, NCO's who had been attending courses at the *SS-Junkerschule*. The SS Rocket Mortar School at Celle provided the unit's senior NCO's and officers.

Organized as an improvised rocket battery without, however, the weaponry that went along with such a formation (one can only surmise the appropriate weaponry was supposed to be provided if conditions allowed), Detachment "Langlingen" was in motion on 1 April 1945, moving from its namesake town towards Celle. To further complicate matters, the unit had been divided into two groups of equal size, each commanded by two officers. Group I came under *Ostuf.*

Dr. Wicke and *Ustuf.* Uhrig, while Group II was commanded by *Ostuf.* Schultze and *SS-Oberjunker* Schlemmer.

Due to the rapid advance of American forces, the twin groups of the detachment were forced to take up defensive positions for infantry action to the north of the Aller River on the south edge of the village of Gross Hehlen. The SS troops were armed only with hand weapons, *Panzerfauste*, and a grand total of two machine guns. An effort was also made to halt regular Army troops who were fleeing northwards and put them as well into the improvised defensive line with the SS men, which ran from Boie to Gross Hehlen to Altenhagen.

On the next day (2 April?), Celle was abandoned without a fight after the Aller River bridge was blown up at dawn by two infantry

officers. The detachment now pulled back to a line running from Hermannsburg to Misselhorn to Unterluess, without engaging the foe. A couple of days later a fall back to Mueden - Poltzen - Gerrel - Munsterlager was ordered. But it was too late for Group I (Wicke/Uhrig), which had already gone into Allied captivity at Unterluess.

Group II (Schultze/Schlemmer) made it to Mueden, where it too went into captivity. The brief history of 8. *SS-Werfer Ausbildung und Ersatz Abteilung* "Langlingen," a unit which never really got off the ground, had reached its conclusion. The few casualties, including some fatalities, that it had absorbed, had been taken in unavoidable skirmishes that resulted when rapidly moving enemy spearheads came into contact with the battery troops.



WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY

Until 25 November 1943, *Kampfgruppe* "Wiedemann" from 1st SS Infantry Brigade was engaged in road security duties to the east of Bobruisk in support of the 25th Panzer Division.

In early 1943 a motorized SS battle-group was formed from the 1st SS Infantry Brigade for the possible relief of the Veliki-Luki Pocket. The force was designated *SS-Kampfgruppe* "Bildstein" after its commander *SS-Stubaf.* Otto Bildstein (born 11 May 1912; *SS Nr.* 107,606). Little is known of the actual

deployment of the battle-group but Veliki-Luki was not relieved and much of the garrison would be executed in captivity. *Stubaf.* Bildstein went on to command *SS Panzer Detachment* 18 of the 18th *SS Panzer Grenadier Division* "Horst Wessel" and was killed in action on 23 July 1944.

During the advance from Narva to the east along the Kingisepp road on 18 August 1941, an Estonian SS Volunteer Company (possibly police troops) was supposed to have been serving in the ranks of Infantry

Regiment 272, 93rd Infantry Division.

On 10 April 1945 an equipment repair and maintenance staff was formed for the 38th *SS Panzer Grenadier Division* "Niebelungen" in Titisee. The commander was *Ostuf.* Windigen (or Winnigen) from the 6th *SS Mountain Division* "Nord."

Adrien Godsdeel, born in Brussels, was a battalion commander in the 28th *SS Panzer Grenadier Division* "Wallonien." He died on 6 May 1972.

THE "NORDLAND" DIVISION FLAK UNITS

- SS-Flak Abteilung 11*
(Field Post Nrs. 43 111 A-E)
14. (Flak) Company, *SS-Panzer*
Regiment 23 "Norge"
(Field Post Nr. 33 725)
14. (Flak) Company, *SS-Panzer*
Grenadier Regiment 24 "Danmark"
(Field Post Nr. 35 637)
- Flak Platoon, *SS-Artillery Regiment*
11
(Field Post Nr. 42 973)



SS-Stubaf. Walter Ploew, commanding officer, SS Flak Abteilung 11 "Nordland."

COMMAND ROSTER

- SS-Flak Abteilung 11*
- Commanders
Ostufaf. Walter Ploew
Stubaf. Emil Kurz
- Adjutants
Ustuf. Adam Dietrichm
Ustuf. Georg Anweiler
- Signals Officer
Hscha. Schneidemeier
- Supply Officer
Ostuf. Heinz Schneider (also
commanding officer of the Staff
Battery)
- Ordnance Officer
Ostuf. Besch
- Weapons Master
Ostuf. Fred Prescher
- Battery
Hstuf. Leubem
Hstuf. Wirth
- 2nd Battery
Hstuf. Delfs
- Battery
Hstuf. Menke
- 4th Battery
Hstuf. Holzboog
- 14., "Norge"
Ostuf. Hoechstam
Ostuf. Petersen
Ustuf. Bruenestedt

on 1 December 1943. The detachment officers came largely from the *SS Flak Training and Replacement Regiment* in Munich, while the NCO's and men came from other parts of the "Nordland" and "Wiking" Divisions. Numerous nationalities were represented in the ranks, including "Reich" Germans, Balkan ethnic-Germans, Dutchmen, Flemings, Norwegians and Swiss. Many of the ethnic-Germans had served as NCO's in the Romanian Army and after some retraining, were accorded the equivalents of their old ranks. Some of the Dutch volunteers were Royal Dutch Army veterans who had seen action in assorted small colonial wars, and were thus considered combat experienced. About a third of the men in the "Norge" and "Danmark" Flak Batteries were Scandinavian volunteers. The regimental Flak units had been formed along with the "Nordland" Division in Grafenwoehr, Bavaria, in May 1943, and would be with "Nordland" from beginning to end.

At the end of February 1944, *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* left East Prussia by rail to join the rest of the "Nordland" Division at Narva, Estonia. While enroute the troop train derailed due to what was probably partisan sabotage, causing great damage and injury. Practically all of the Flak detachment's

weaponry and equipment were lost in the incident and most of the officers were injured as well. Several weeks would pass before the unit would be considered fit for duty again. In the meantime it was shipped by rail back to the Ayras Camp "South" for refitting.

In mid-April 1944 the "Nordland" Flak troops started out for the front again, arriving at Narva in the latter part of the month. Fortunately this was the "slack" season for combat due to the heavy rains and resultant mud, so the Flak batteries had a chance to become acclimated to the frontline situation. Initially the batteries were based in villages around the town of Taps, being deployed in the protection of bridges and artillery firing positions.

In early May 1944, the "Nordland" Flak batteries (three 88 mm batteries, one 3.7 cm battery, and a mixed staff battery - each 88 battery also had attached platoons of 2 cm Flak), were deployed for air defense and ground support actions in the Narva bridgehead on the east bank of the Narva River. Among other things they were responsible for protecting the essential bridge and river crossings over the river between the twin fortresses of Hermannsburg and Ivangorod.

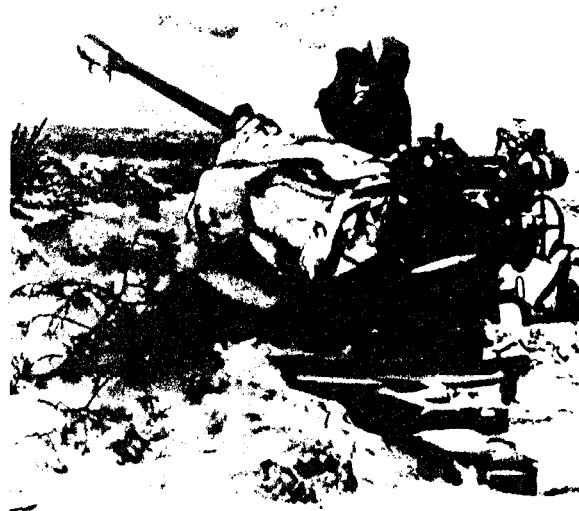
Towards the end of July 1944, Narva was abandoned for the Tannenberg defensive line about 30 km to the west. *Hstuf. Holzboog's* 4. Battery, *SS-Flak 11*, was given the job of covering the withdrawal of the heavy artillery and the rearguard elements of *SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 49 "De Ruyter"* from the neighboring "Nederland" Brigade. In the process of carrying out its mission, the battery was cut off by advance Red Army forces and had to fight its way back to the new main German lines via a circuitous route through the swamps and backwoods. Oftentimes the gun crews had to clear small Soviet elements out of the way with their infantry weapons so that the retreat could proceed. In the end, Holzboog's battery reached safety after two arduous days of struggle.

"Nordland's" Flak batteries were then used in both frontline ground defense and rear area air defense positions during the fierce battles for the Tannenberg line. In the intense fighting that ran over the next couple of weeks the gunners

SS-Flak Abteilung 11 was assembled on the SS Troop Training Grounds "Ayras-North" in East Prussia



"Nordland" commanding officer, *Gruf.* Fritz von Scholz, decorating *Stuf.* Ploew with the Iron Cross, 2nd Class.



"Nordland" Flak on the Narva Front, early 1944.

downed no fewer than 20 enemy aircraft, mostly fighter-bombers. The 4th Battery, which was utilized in the defense of the hard-pressed Grenadier and Orphanage Hills, took heavy losses in the fighting but also seriously hindered the advance of the foe and as a result received a special commendation from III. SS Panzer Corps (Germanic) commander, *Ogruf.* Steiner.

In the further retrograde combat that took place during the relocation from Estonia to Latvia, *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* served with a battle-group from the East Prussian 21st Infantry Division. The unit's actions during this time were acknowledged by the 21st Infantry Division's commanding officer who personally awarded the German Cross in Gold to both *Ostuf.* Ploew and *Hstuf.* Holzboog. The detachment rejoined the rest of the "Nordland" Division in the Doblen area of Latvia and played its role in helping man a "strong-point" defensive line which was in place until a permanent front could be established in Kurland. The detachment was used for air defense duties around the key Latvian port city of Liepaja (Libau), which served as the supply terminal for Army Group "Kurland."

During the critical Third Battle of Kurland in December 1944, *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* lent support to the VI. Latvian SS Army Corps and the 19th Latvian SS Division by successfully blunting an enemy advance on Frauenberg. Despite taking high losses during this engagement, the detachment was able

to destroy numerous enemy tanks and won a personal commendation from VI. SS Corps commanding general, *Ogruf.* Walter Krueger.

In early February 1945, *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* was shipped from the port of Libau to Stettin, Germany, with the rest of the "Nordland" Division. Upon reaching Jakobshagen, the detachment was briefly overhauled and received a new commander, *Stuf.* Emil Kurz, who had previously commanded *SS-Flak Abteilung "B,"* *SS-Kommando "Obersalzburg."* On 2 March 1945, *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* joined the 3. Company, *SS Engineer Battalion 11*, and part of II. Battalion, *SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 49 "DeR"* in driving off a strong Soviet armored attack near Jakobshagen. The "Nordland" Flak gunners disposed of ten of the attacking 20 enemy tanks.

Since it now proved impossible any longer to construct cohesive defensive lines in the face of superior enemy forces, what followed were a number of desperate holding actions. The Flak detachment joined the partially formed *SS-Panzer Regiment 11* under *Ostuf.* Kausch in defensive battles near Sassenburg and Rossow. On 7 March 1945, the detachment was heavily engaged along both sides of the Autobahn near Hinzendorf with the *SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 23 "Norge."* The Flak gunners claimed several more enemy tanks in this action, but towards midnight the town had to be abandoned to the Reds. The "Nordland" '88' guns covered the subsequent withdrawal towards Augustwalde, accurately blasting the

Soviet spearhead.

On the next day the Reds launched a cavalry attack on the "Nordland" positions which was easily shattered by the *SS* grenadiers supported by 14. (Flak) Company, *SS Regiment 24 "Danmark."* No further protracted defensive effort was made until the "Nordland" troops reached Stettin on the Oder River. After a brief but violent stand at Hohenkrug, the divisional units retreated down Reich Highway 104 to the outskirts of Altdamm (south of Stettin), which were reached in the night of 14/15 March. Here a fortified bridgehead was constructed on the east bank of the Oder, and the *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* troops were deployed in the portion of the frontlines running towards Gollnow as infantrymen. After several days of truly heroic effort the bridgehead had to be abandoned. In the night of 19/20 March, the "Nordland" Flak troops in conjunction with combat engineers from Regiment "Danmark," served as a rearguard for the withdrawal of German forces from the Altdamm bridgehead to the west bank of the Oder.

Once behind the Oder River line, the badly depleted "Nordland" and "Nederland" Divisions began to rebuild and re-equip in an effort to get back to minimum combat strength. For awhile, the enemy pressure abated and *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* was reformed in the Schwedt-Angermünde area where it served as a reserve element of III. SS Panzer Corps (Germanic). On 15 April 1945, the "Nordland" Flak batteries were sent

into combat against Soviet forces that were attempting to break out from the Wriezen bridgehead on the west bank of the Oder. They destroyed a number of tanks in difficult fighting.

The great Soviet "final offensive" began on 16 April, and the "Nordland" Division was forced slowly back towards Berlin. The *Flak* detachment held on to Strausberg on 17/18 April, where one of its '88' batteries knocked out three Soviet tanks that were trying to take the airfield. The "Nordland" Division was then ordered to fall back into Berlin to defend the city. The *Flak* troops were deployed first at Karlshorst and then on 22 April at Adlershof where they repulsed a Soviet armored attack from the direction of Eichwalde. As ammunition ran out the big guns were "spiked" and the crews became

infantrymen. The remnants of the detachment then fought in Neukoelln and on the Hasenheide before taking up the defense of the Tempelhof airfield.

On 30 April 1945, "Nordland" *Flak* gunners expended their last shells and destroyed one final tank at Tempelhof. The guns were then destroyed by hand grenades and the surviving 63 members of *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* were formed into an infantry battle-group under *Hstuf*. Holzboog. These men joined in the general breakout attempt at the Weidendammer bridge on the night on 1/2 May 1945. Few, if any, got out of the city. The survivors were largely captured and shipped off to Siberia and only a handful were to return home from this captivity some ten years later.

THE TALLY SHEET

In its year or so at the front, *SS-Flak Abteilung 11* accounted for more than 30 enemy aircraft and an equal number of enemy tanks. It also helped to break up or drive off countless Soviet ground attacks. The *Flak* companies (Nr. 14) with the "Danmark" and "Norge" Regiments, unlike the divisional *Flak* detachment, had served with "Nordland" from the start at Grafenwoehr through its sojourns in Croatia (autumn 1943), at the Oranienbaum and Narva Fronts, and in Latvia and Pomerania. They were used extensively against Soviet tank forces, but also provided air defense. In the brutal fighting in Latvia alone, 14. Battery, "Norge," shot down 14 Red aircraft but was nearly wiped out itself.



WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY

At the end of January 1945, Waldemar Schink (or possibly Sinkus), was assigned to 1. Battalion, SS Penal Regiment "Kaltfofen," as a medical doctor. Schink was born in Mariampol on 20 July 1919 and spoke Russian, German, and Lithuanian fluently. While in action near Dirschau-Peplin, Schink's unit was hard hit by the Soviets and the 1st Company was totally overrun; most of its members were taken prisoner then liquidated in cold blood by the R. The 2nd and 3rd Companies, 1. "Kaltfofen," were able to re-group and reach the town of Praust. They later participated in the defense of Danzig.

SS Regiment "Kaltfofen" (commanded by *Stubaf*. Hansheinrich K. fen, born 25 April 1909; SS Nr. 22,226) also included regular SS replacements, including soldiers returning from leaves that could not rejoin their original units. Part of the Latvian SS Replacement Battalion 15 also served with this regiment in the waning days of the war. When SS-Regiment "Kaltfofen" capitulated to the Red Army in the Danzig area, Waldemar Schink (who had earned a field promotion to *Untersturmfuehrer*), entered Soviet captivity. He was last seen at the Vorkuta slave labor camp later in 1945, and more than likely perished there or

elsewhere in the Gulag.

Hstuf. Peter Reese (born 24 January 1914; SS Nr. 257,860), was the commander of 10th Company, *SS-Panzer*

Grenadier Regiment 6 "Theodor Eicke", Division "Totenkopf." He was killed in action in the "Wet Triangle" of the Vistula River near Warsaw in Poland on 5 August 1944.



Flemish volunteers in 8 Company, *SS-Standarte "Nordwest,"* Hamburg, 1941.

FLAK UNITS OF 23RD VOLUNTEER PANZERGRENADIER DIVISION "NEDERLAND"

A *Flak* battery for the "Nederland" SS Brigade was assembled by the SS-*Flak* Training and Replacement Regiment in Munich during the spring of 1944. The commander was *Ostuf.* Meigel. It spent part of the summer of 1944 engaged in the air defense of the northern part of Munich. However, in 1943 several other *Flak* elements had been attached to "Nederland." These were the following:

14. Company, SS-Panzergrenadier Regiment 48 "General Seyffardt" (Field Post Nr. 43 990)

14. Company, SS-Panzergrenadier Regiment 49 "De Ruyter" (Field Post Nr. 58 298)

Flak Platoon, Headquarters Staff Security Company (Field Post Nr. 59 884)

Flak Platoon, SS-Artillery Regiment 54 Staff

These units served with the "Nederland" Brigade and Division in

all of its actions in Croatia, the Baltic region, Pomerania and the vicinity of Berlin. They absorbed heavy losses but always gave a good accounting of themselves although their exact success rate against enemy planes and tanks is not known.

In the meantime, the "Nederland" Brigade *Flak* battery was sent to Danzig on 18 July 1944. It now bore the designation SS-*Flak* Batterie 54. In November 1944 it relocated to the Hammerstein training grounds in Pomerania to be reformed into a divisional *Flak* detachment, SS-*Flak* Abteilung 23, under *Hstuf.* Grimm. But due to the critical battlefield situation the proposed detachment never got off the ground, although a commander, *Hstuf.* Esser, had been named.

In December 1944, the combat-ready portion of SS-*Flak* Abteilung 23 was combined with the depleted III. Abteilung, SS-AR 54 under *Stuf.* Hofer to form a mixed arms battle-group. The contribution of the *Flak* detachment to III. Abteilung, SS-AR 54, consisted of four '88' guns along with four

multi-barrelled machine gun air defense pieces, along with staff elements, tracked transport and specialized equipment.

The "Nederland" *Flak* battery finally joined the rest of the division in action for the first time in Pomerania in January 1945. It quickly found itself subordinated to SS-Panzerjaeger Abteilung 54 for use in fighting off enemy tank attacks. In March 1945, the "Nederland" *Flak* detachment (such as it was), was subordinated to III. SS Panzer Corps (Germanic) in Prenzlaw, and in the last days of the war it participated in retrograde fighting from the Liebenwalde-Neuruppin area to the Elbe River where it surrendered to the Americans on or around 1 May 1945. The last unit commanding officer (since April 1945) was *Ostuf.* Hummel.

In its few months of actual combat deployment, SS-*Flak* Abteilung 23 shot down four enemy bombers and destroyed six tanks and another 17 artillery pieces. Losses due to all causes amounted to one officer, two NCO's and about 50 men.



WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY

The staff of the 5th SS Construction Brigade was located in Osnabrueck in early 1945 and withdrew through the South Harz-Thuringia area. It may have come under the control of SS Panzer Brigade "Westfalen" (*Ostuf.* Karl-Heinz Fruehauf). Staff members were soldiers of the *Waffen-SS*, while the rank and file of the construction brigades were usually convicts.

The 12. SS Panzer Division "Hitler Jugend" medical detachment (which

included members of the SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment 26 band), came under a heavy mortar bombardment while situated in an exposed meadow near Neuwald - St. Corona - Kaumberg, Austria, on 21 April 1945 and took many fatalities. The dead had to be buried quickly as "unknowns."

SS-Sturmann Johann Klein, born 19 January 1925 in Mechiasch, Romania, was a radioman with 3rd Company, SS-Jaeger Battalion 500. He was

listed as MIA during the fighting around Warsaw in 1944. SS-Jaeger Battalion 500 contained many ethnic Germans from Romania, while its sister battalion, SS-Jaeger Battalion 501, had a large concentration of Hungarian ethnic-Germans.

SS-Mann Johnny Andersson, born in Oslo, Norway, on 30 March 1925, was listed as an MIA with the 36th SS Division "D" at Dublonitz in March 1945.

WAFFEN-SS PERSONALITY PROFILES

Lieutenant General
HENDRIK A. SEYFFARDT

Commander in Chief of
SS Volunteer Legion "Niederlande"

Lieutenant General Hendrik A. Seyffardt was born in the Netherlands in 1872, the son of a respected minister. Early in life he opted for a military career and by the time he was 20 in 1892, he held the rank of second lieutenant in the Dutch field artillery. In 1898, Seyffardt was promoted to first lieutenant and in 1900 he became an instructor at the Royal Military Academy while at the same time taking courses at the Higher War School.

In subsequent years, Seyffardt served on the Dutch General Staff and with the artillery service, first as a captain then as a major. In 1924 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and took charge of the 2nd Regiment of Field Artillery. He soon became the commander of the 1st Dutch Artillery Brigade, receiving the rank of colonel in 1926. Two years later, Seyffardt was promoted to *General-major* (equivalent to Brigadier) and became chief of the Dutch Army General Staff, a position which he held throughout the remainder of his military career. Seyffardt was promoted to lieutenant general on 2 May 1930 and retired from active duty in 1934.

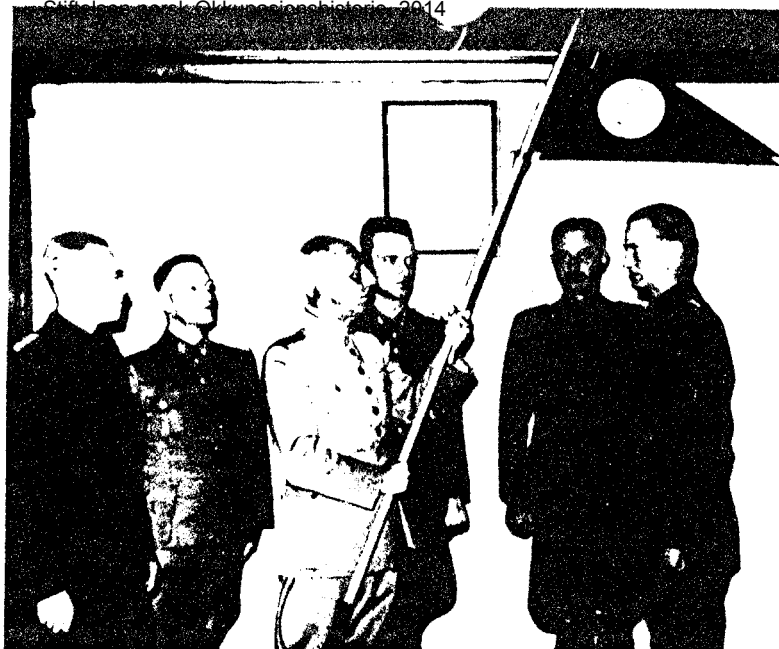
He was not happy with the disintegration of the armed forces and society in general under a series of inept far-left Dutch governments and he soon became politically active, lending his support to Anton Mussert's National Socialist Movement (N.S.B.), which was modeled on the N.S.D.A.P. in Germany. For Seyffardt, the German example, which the N.S.B. attempted to emulate, offered a new renaissance for a decaying Europe.

When the war with the Soviet Union broke out in June 1941, Lieutenant General Seyffardt immediately volunteered his services for what he saw as a battle for European civilization. Dressed once again in his old Dutch Army uniform,



Seyffardt became the titular "commander-in-chief" and first soldier of the SS Volunteer Legion "Niederlande." He recruited tirelessly for the regimental-sized Legion and his efforts bore fruit as thousands of Dutch volunteers quickly stepped forward to do their

duty on the Eastern Front. General Seyffardt's services to the German side did not go unnoticed by the Allied camp who saw him as a dangerous figure due to his popularity and prestige in his homeland. Unfortunately, the Allies had adopted mobster-like terrorism



Lieutenant General Seyffardt presenting the official pennant of

I. Battalion, SS Volunteer Legion "Niederlande."

as a military tactic, against it must be stated, all of the treaty sanctified laws of warfare, and soon a "hit order" was placed out on Seyffardt.

On 6 February 1943, the old general answered a knock on the front door of his house and was greeted by two innocuous looking delivery men carrying parcels. The "delivery men" stepped forward into the door frame and ripped open the parcels, producing Sten guns, which had been thoughtfully provided to them by the British. Lieutenant General Seyffardt was then murdered in cold blood, his body cut in half by the impact of the automatic weapons fire at close range.

The Allies were, of course, elated by this cowardly assassination. On 9 February 1943, Lieutenant General Seyffardt was given a state funeral and his name was bestowed as a battle honor on the proven 1st Company of the SS Legion "Niederlande." With the creation of the 4th SS *Panzer* Grenadier Brigade "Nederland" in May 1943, the title "General Seyffardt" was transferred to the brigade's first regiment (48. SS). In subsequent savage battles on the Eastern Front, the "General Seyffardt" Regiment would be destroyed and reformed three times over, in the process gaining a military reputation second to none and thus guaranteeing for the name "General Seyffardt" a place of honor for all time in the annals of military history!

SS-Brigadefuehrer
Dr. GERD UNBEHAUN

Gerd Unbehaun was born on 1 April 1903 in Frankenhausen am Kyffhauser. He was the son of Hermann Unbehaun, a school teacher. He completed his secondary schooling at the Kaiser Friedrich-Realgymnasiums in Berlin, graduating in 1921. He then immediately entered the University of Berlin to study medicine, continuing through the summer semester of 1924. He also enlisted in the Army in 1923 and underwent training with the 3rd Prussian Engineer Battalion in Kustrin.

Unbehaun finally concluded his medical studies in Giessen, taking his final exams in 1927. He spent a year's internship at the University-Women's Clinic in Giessen and at the Hindenburg Hospital in Berlin-Zehlendorf. From 1 July 1928 on he worked as an assistant doctor in Giessen. Later in the year he became a full medical doctor when his thesis on "The Effects of Tobacco Use on the Functioning of Reproductive Organs" was approved. He continued to work as a doctor at the Giessen Clinic until December 1932, specializing in women's health problems. A supporter of the NSDAP, Dr. Unbehaun joined the SS on 1 February 1932 (SS Nr. 33,025) and received an officer's commission with the rank of *Untersturmfuehrer* on 30 January 1933.

He then went to work for the SS Medical service and was promoted rapidly, becoming a *Hauptsturmfuehrer*

on 15 September 1935. On 1 November 1936, *Hstuf.* Dr. Unbehaun began his association with the Armed SS, becoming commander of SS Medical Detachment 2 of the SS-Verfuegungstruppe in Arolsen. He was next promoted to *Sturmabfuhrer* on 20 April 1938 and this was followed by his appointment as chief medical officer on the staff of Higher SS District "South" on 15 December 1938. On 10 October 1939, Dr. Unbehaun became the regimental surgeon for the SS-Standarte "Deutschland" before going on to become the chief medical officer of the 5. SS-Panzer Grenadier Division "Wiking." Effective 21 June 1943, Dr. Unbehaun was promoted to *Oberfuhrer* and on 30 June, he was named Corps Medical Officer for the newly authorized III. SS Panzer Corps (Germanic). He would hold this position until the end of the war, receiving a final promotion to the rank of *Brigadefuehrer* on 30 January 1945.



SS-Sturmabfuhrer
HELMUT SCHREIBER

Helmut Schreiber was born in the town of Giessen on 25 March 1917, the son of a railroad official. After completing his basic schooling in Potsdam he became active in the German Youth Movement before joining the Reich Labor Service. In 1938 he volunteered for active duty in the Armed SS and was accepted into the SS-Standarte "Deutschland" of the SS-VT. Schreiber then served as an NCO and squad leader with the *ad hoc*, partially SS, Panzer Division "Kempf" in the Polish Campaign of 1939. Afterwards he was admitted to SS-Junkerschule "Toelz" for officer's training.

On 1 August 1940, Schreiber graduated from "Toelz" and was commissioned an *Untersturmfuehrer*. At the start of the Russian Campaign he was serving as a platoon leader in the "Das Reich" Division. During the drive on Moscow he became a company commander and led his command in the assault on Moscow's defensive perimeter. After extremely bitter fighting, Helmut Schreiber

was awarded both classes of the Iron Cross. In the bitter cold and raging blizzards of the winter of 1941/1942, Schreiber and his men fought off scores of mass attacks by fresh Siberian troops in the Rusa and Istra defensive positions.

In early 1942, during the defensive fighting west of Rzhev, Schreiber led an improvised ski company. Following this episode, he was attached to the staff of I. Battalion, "Deutschland" as battalion adjutant while it was in action as part of the SS-Kampfgruppe "Ostendorf." Then Regiment "Deutschland" and the entire "Das Reich" Division were withdrawn to the Fallingbomel training grounds for reformation and Schreiber was placed in charge of 10th Company, "Deutschland," with the rank of *Obersturmfuehrer*.

During the surprise attack aimed at retaking Pavlograd by the "Das Reich" Division in late January 1943, *Ostuf*. Schreiber led the point company with verve and daring. The operation proved successful, and for his part in the action and the later reconquest of Kharkov, Schreiber was awarded the German Cross in Gold on April 1943. In the Kursk offensive (Operation "Citadelle"), Schreiber once again led his company at the point of the III. Battalion, "Deutschland," assault into the well-prepared enemy defenses. Just prior to this, on 20 June 1943, Schreiber had received a promotion to *Hauptsturmfuehrer*.

In July 1943, to the north of Bjelegorod, a strong communist armored and infantry force smashed into the "Deutschland" Regiment's exposed flank. Disaster threatened. Quickly, *Hstuf*. Schreiber formed an assault group from his company and led it in a counterattack against the superior enemy force. After much hard and vicious fighting, the Reds broke and without waiting for further orders, Schreiber and his men pursued them back to their own lines and seized a series of high and defensive positions in close combat. They were then able to attack and capture a Soviet jumping-off area where preparations for further assaults on the "Deutschland" Regiment were in progress. This successful undertaking, wholly improvised in the heat of battle, brought Helmuth Schreiber the award of the Knight's Cross on 30 July 1943; he personally received it at Stepanovka in early August.

In the heavy fighting that followed in the Dneiper River positions, all of the "Deutschland" battalion commanders were killed and *Hstuf*. Schreiber was selected to take over a leaderless battalion. His command was comprised of the surviving remnants of assorted badly battered "Deutschland" elements. With this *Kampfgruppe*, Schreiber led

a valiant fight against the Soviet Dneiper bridgehead positions while under the tactical control of 1st Infantry Division. *Hstuf*. Schreiber was wounded on 30 October 1943 and finally left the front. His divisional commander, *Gruppenfuehrer* Walter Krueger, praised him as "The Hero on the Dneiper."

Later on, during the reformation of the "Deutschland" Regiment at the Stabak troop training grounds in East Prussia, the recovered *Hstuf*. Schreiber took command of the regiment's III. Battalion. "Das Reich" and "Deutschland" were next heavily engaged on the Normandy Front and on 12 August 1944, Schreiber was severely wounded at Mortain. It took him until January 1945 to recover and in that month he assumed command of SS-Feldersatz Battalion 2 and the "Das Reich" close combat school, both of which were part of the SS Feldersatz Brigade 102, stationed in the Westerwald.

The now *Sturmabfuhrer* Helmuth Schreiber directed the battalion during its emergency deployment against the Remagen bridgehead in March 1945 and then led survivors of SS-FEB 2 in a battle-group in Austria in April 1945. On 20 April 1945 Schreiber received the Wound Badge in Gold and at about the same time was re-posted to the main body of his old "Deutschland" Regiment, where he was held as a regimental reserve officer.

On 4 May 1945, *Stubaf*. Schreiber was part of a parliamentary party of *Waffen-SS* officers, including the "Deutschland" commanding officer, *Ostuf*. Guenther Wisliceny and the 9th SS Panzer Division "Hohenstauffen" commander, *Brigfhr*. Sylvester Stadler, who crossed the Enns River to try and negotiate an honorable surrender to the Americans. SS-Regiment "Deutschland" was at the time subordinated to the "Hohenstauffen" Division. The Americans were not interested discussing anything but "unconditional" surrender, so the talks soon broke off. As a result *Stubaf*. Schreiber and the men of "Deutschland" did not lay down their arms until the general surrender transpired on 8 May 1945. At that time the extraordinary military career of the Knight's Cross Holder Helmuth Schreiber came to its conclusion.

SS-Brigadefuehrer
ERNST FICK

Ernst Fick was born on 5 February 1898 in Kirchdorf, Bavaria. He was the son of a salesman. Fick completed his secondary schooling in December 1914 and volunteered for

military duty in January 1915. He served until the end of the war in the frontlines as an enlisted man. After the war, Ernst Fick joined a "Freikorps" and battled communists from the spring of 1919 to the autumn of the same year.

Following this, Fick joined his father's business and remained with it until it collapsed and was auctioned off in 1931. In the meantime, like many veterans, Fick had become attached to the resurgent NSDAP, joining up in the winter of 1928/1929. After much preparation, he helped found Party groups in the towns of Zwiesel, Spiegelau and Grafenau. In early 1930, Fick joined the young SS organization and was assigned to the 6th SS *Standarte* as a probationary member in February 1930. He subsequently "won his spurs" and was given the SS Nr. 2,853 - a good indication of his seniority in terms of service!

On 30 March 1933, Fick became an *Untersturmfuehrer* and was assigned to the 31st SS *Standarte*. Early in 1934 he transferred to the Personnel Department II of the SS Main Office in Berlin; receiving a promotion to *Obersturmfuehrer* in the process on 10 January 1934. From 16 March 1934 until 12 April 1935 he was an officer in the SS Auxiliary at Dachau (an outfit that contained voluntary "helpers" who aspired to join the Armed SS). During this time he attended courses at the Higher SS Police School "Eiche" and from 28 November 1934 until 19 January 1935 he was temporarily attached to the famous "LSSAH."

A series of very rapid promotions brought Fick to the rank of *Obersturmbannfuehrer* (lieutenant colonel) on 13 September 1936. From 1937 to 1940 he served at the SS *Junkerschule* "Braunschweig" and "Toelz," becoming a political instructor at the latter facility. On 4 December 1940, Fick was assigned to the staff of the Germanic-SS Training School Sennheim in Alsace. Then on 28 April 1941, *Ostuf*. Fick was sent to the SS Artillery Regiment "Wiking" (commanded at the time by *Ostuf*. Herbert Otto Gille), for the rather vague purpose of "informational service."

Fick was basically an "extra hand" with no real function, so when the command position for I. Detachment, SS-Artillery Regiment "Wiking" became available on 30 May 1941, he was given it. This would prove to be a mistake, as Fick was primarily a "political" officer. In any event this would be Ernst Fick's only wartime field command and he proved inadequate to the task, getting sacked on 1 September 1941.

It is not known upon whose instigation Fick was removed, but it was probably that of *Gruppenfuehrer* Steiner, the "Wiking" commander, who did not suffer fools or incompetents

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gladly. In any event, Fick soon found himself back on the staff of the Sennheim Training School as an instructor. He was promoted to *Standartenfuehrer* on 30 January 1942 (his political credentials remained excellent) and assumed command of *SS-Schule "Sennheim"* on 1 June 1942. While holding this position he was promoted to *Oberfuehrer* on 30 January 1943.

On 1 January 1944, *Oberfhr.* Fick became the Inspector (literally "supervisor") of Political Instruction in the *Waffen-SS* and on the 30th of that month he received his almost annual promotion, this time to *Brigadefuehrer*. *Brigfhr.* Fick ended the war up on duty in Berlin and participated in the final battle for that city in a mixed battle-group. In the course of the fighting, *SS-Brigadefuehrer* Ernst Fick was killed in action.



SS-Gruppenfuehrer
Dr. KARL GENZKEN

Karl Genzken was born on 8 June 1885 in Preetz, Holstein, the son of a minister. After completing his secondary education in Kiel and Wandsbek, Genzken studied medicine at the Universities of Tuebingen, Marburg, Munich and Kiel. In 1906 he also joined the 10th Wurttemberg Infantry Regiment Nr. 180. Then in 1911 he passed his state examinations at the University of Kiel and was then given the title of medical doctor. From June to July 1912, Genzken worked as a medical practitioner at the city hospital in Plauen. He then signed on as a physician with a commercial

expedition to Morocco.

Dr. Genzken next served as a Naval Medical Officer for almost seven years. During World War I he was the "Harbor and Fortress" doctor to the besieged German garrison at the Chinese post of Tsingtau. He then became a ship's surgeon on the S.M.S. *Hamburg* before ending the war as a medical officer on the Headquarters Staff of the Commandant of U-Boats. In 1919 Dr. Genzken left the service and took up a civilian medical practice. He was an early recruit to the NSDAP, receiving the Party Number 39,913.

On 5 November 1933, Dr. Genzken joined the SS (Nr. 207,954), and initially served with the 4th *Sturm*/III. *Sturm*bann/40th SS (General) *Standarten*. On 28 February 1946 he received the rank of *Sturm*bannführer; at the time he was serving as the commanding officer of the Medical *Sturm* (Company) of the S-VT (Armed SS) in Berlin. When this Medical *Sturm* expanded into an *Abteilung* (Detachment) on 1 February 1937, Dr. Genzken remained its commander. He also began to climb the promotion ladder very rapidly, becoming an *Obersturmbannführer* on 1 April 1937 and a *Standartenführer* on 12 September 1937.

Following three more years in the same position, Genzken was promoted on 20 April 1940 and at the same time joined the staff of the SS Medical Inspectorate in Berlin. On 4 December 1940 he took charge of the SS Medical Department of the SS Main Office and he would remain at this post throughout most of World War II. Dr. Genzken received further promotions to *Brigadeführer* (1 August 1941) and *Gruppenführer* (30 January 1943), and in November 1944 he was listed as Chief of *Amstgruppe* D of the SS Main Office.

His subsequent fate is unknown to this writer.

S-*Brigadeführer*
ANTON VÖGLER

Anton Vogler was born on 5 September 1882 in Mering, Upper Bavaria (now a part of Swabia). He was the son of a medical doctor. Upon completion of his secondary education he joined the 6th Royal Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment "Prinz Ferdinand von Bourbon," which was located in Fuerth. Vogler attended the army and engineer schools in Munich and soon gained an officer's commission. He initially served as an artillery battery officer before becoming artillery detachment and brigade adjutants. On 26 November 1911, Anton Vogler was promoted to *Oberleutnant* (First Lieutenant).

Vogler saw considerable action in World War I, serving first as a unit adjutant, then as an artillery



field commander, first with a battery, then an entire detachment. He was promoted to *Hauptmann* (Captain) in the process. In 1918, a bout with rheumatism removed him from action, and he was put to work training field artillery officers for the II. Bavarian Army Corps in Muerzburg.

In April and May 1919, Vogler served with the Quartermaster of the headquarters troops directing operations against the Bolshevik insurgents in Munich. Afterwards he was assigned to the headquarters staff of III. Bavarian Army Corps in Nuremberg. But the "Versailles Treaty" cutbacks for the German Army were now in effect and Vogler soon found himself released from service with the rank of major.

From 1922 to 1932, Anton Vogler worked in the textile industry, but along with other forcibly retired officers, still participated in Army training courses, planning exercises and war games. His career took a new turn in April 1933 when he joined the NSDAP and became an instructor for the *Artillery-Sturm* (battery) of the SA *Standarte* I. 16. His success here led to the expansion of artillery training within the SA. In 1934, Vogler played a role in the suppression of the so-called "Roehm-Putsch"; an operation which effectively curtailed the power and the influence of the unwieldy SA, much to the delight of the Army.

As a result of Vogler's services he was offered a position in the SS, which he accepted on 1 February 1935 with the SS Nr. 260,723. He also had to accept a one-notch down-grading in rank from major (retired) to SS-*Hauptsturmführer*. *Hstuf.* Vogler was now employed as a tactical instructor at the new SS-*Junkerschule* "Toelz." He

held teaching positions at both Toelz and the SS-JS "Braunschweig" until 1 November 1938. During the same period he was steadily promoted in rank until he reached SS-*Standartenführer* (colonel) on 30 January 1938.

From 1 November 1938 until 1 August 1943, Vogler worked on the staff of the Higher SS District "South," administering social works and becoming effective chief-of-staff to the district commander. He was promoted to SS-*Oberführer* on 9 November 1940, and then to SS-*Brigadeführer* (major general or brigadier), on 30 January 1943. Effective 1 August 1943, *Brigfhr.* Vogler became the SS Garrison Commander for Munich, at which time all of the numerous *Waffen-SS* training and replacement units in the area (including artillery and *Flak* regiments), came under his jurisdiction. Vogler held this position until 30 September 1944. He then left the service of the *Waffen-SS* permanently on 9 November 1944 for unspecified (possibly health) reasons, and his further fate is unknown.



WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY

SS-*Jaeger* Battalion 501, SS-*Sturm-Jaeger* Regiment "Bobruisk," probably saw action around Vitebsk and then Jasiolda in July 1944. This unit has been mentioned as the first element of the *Waffen-SS* to have been largely composed of Hungarian ethnic-Germans.

SS-*Hauptsturmführer* Emil Batzlen, born in Nuremberg on 7 June 1913 (SS Nr. 405,827), served with the 4th SS *Polizei* Division and the 10th SS *Panzer* Division "Frundsberg" before assuming command of the SS-Signals Training Detachment 1 on 9 November 1944.

SS-*Schuetze* Noel Debuy, a Belgian volunteer (born 25 December 1925), served with 14. (*Flak*) Company, SS-*Panzer*grenadier Regiment 39, 18. SS Division "Horst Wessel." He was last heard from in Prague in September 1944; he was listed as an MIA soon afterwards.

WAFFEN-SS MISCELLANY

TER ROEMRIJKE GEDACHTENIS

VAN

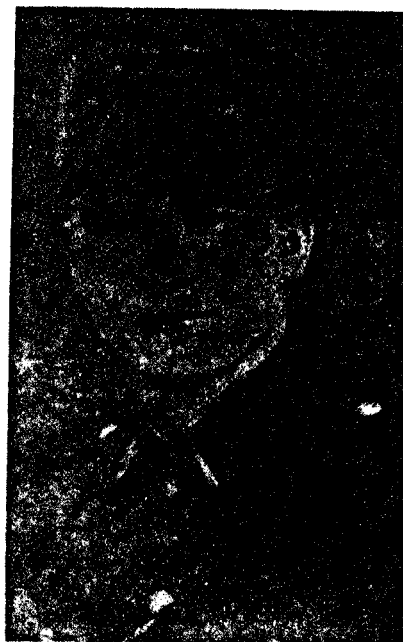
Karel FIERMANS

Geboren te Borgerhout, op 25 Augustus 1923
Vrijwilliger bij de **SS**-Standarte "Langemarck",
In heldhaftigen kamp gevallen op het Oostfront,
op 6 Februari 1943.

Hij was een jongeling, die schitterde door vele gaven en op de handen gedragen werd door al wie hem betrafte. Hij had een edele borst, een open karakter, een ijzersterken wil en was vervuld met een blakend idealisme. Steek van geest was hij even steek van lichaam en muntte uit door zijn groote kracht en lenigheid. Het nieuwe geluid was vaardig over hem geworden, hij was voor het Nationaal Socialisme tegen het bolsjewisme. Overtuigd van het overweldigende tijdsgebeuren, trad hij aan om van zijn jong leven een offergave te maken.

Door zijn moed verwierf hij hooge eerbetekens en stierf, ten slotte, den heldendood in de ijswoestijnen van Sowjet-Rusland. Zijn herinnering zal ons allen bijblijven.

Beste Ouders, ik weet dat het thans still is geworden in onze woning en dat gij treurt, omdat gij den laaisten gang naar mijn graf niet kunt gaan. Doch over de verre vlakten grijpen mijn handen naar Uw hart en het hart van Vlaanderen. Ik ben bij U, dagelijks, op elk oogenblik. Heft fier Uw tranenzware hoofd in het zonlicht. Eens zijn wij voor eeuwig te zamen bij den God der Rechtvaardigheid.



Obituaries for fallen Flemish SS volunteers.

« Hoop op den oogst, O Vlaanderen ».



TER ZALIGER GEDACHTENIS

van

WILLY VAN DEN BERGHE

zoon van Remi en van Coleta Van der Stockt

Sturmmann der Wapen SS,

geboren te Erembodegem, den 19 Februari 1922
en gesneuveld « Voor Ouder en Heerd » te
Archangelowka (Rusland), den 27 Februari 1943.

De noodlot bidda over de wereld en, ook in Vlaanderen, en riep de jongsten singla tegen den vijand van geloof en beschaving.

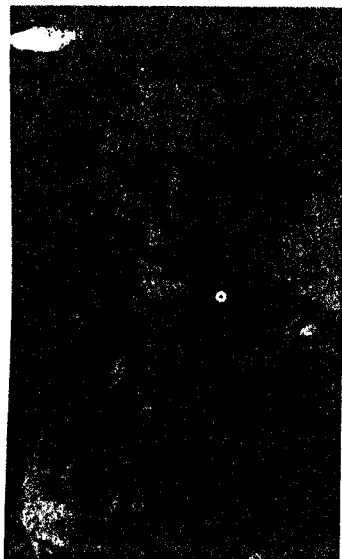
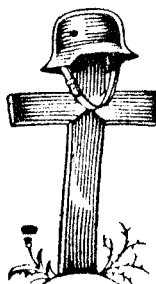
De roep naar genot zou de beste zonen van ons volk niet weerhouden den weg van offer en stijf der kruisvaarders en bijgaders op te gaan.

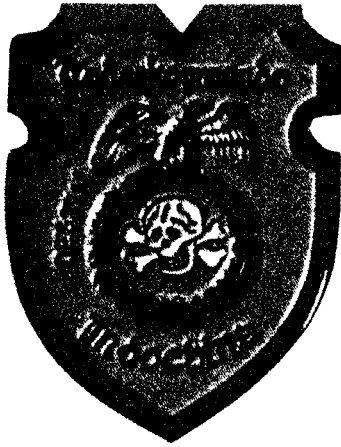
Ook Willy had dien roep gehoord en met jonge geestdrift is hij gegaan.

In hooge heldedaad heeft hij als bloedgetuige zijn leven gegeven voor den Kriston, zijn en het Duitch verleden van zijn volk met leuteloop op een heerlijksten oogst: « Mijn volk wordt groot ».

Vader, moeder, broers en zusters, het weest in uwe groote droefheid een troost dat uw zoon en broeder gevallen is in uwerne trouw aan zijn volk. Uw gebed en volkacht trouw blijve de bindende band over het graf heen.

Kamersden en vrienden, die mijn levensoffer begript, bouwt voor ons volk een Vaderland dat het kan bevesten en bidt voor mij: « O! Vrouwen van Vlaanderen bekom hem de eeuwige vree ».





After years of searching, we have finally located the correct design of the badge used by the former German SS soldiers that chose to fight alongside the French Foreign Legion troops in Indochina. Originally these troopers wore the standard Legion 3REI insignia. When Radio Hanoi started to refer to them as Commandos of Death they designed and started to wear this badge. A large multi colored enamel badge using the French badge style double loop attachments on the rear. Of special interest is the word DESTIN on the upper left hand of the badge. This word is composed of the following: DEutsche StOSSTruppen INdochina.....BA309 \$9.95

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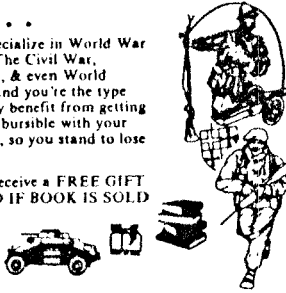
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SS-Scharf. Menne Saathoff, born in Ostfriesland in 1914; missing in action in Russia.



SS-Ustuf. Erwin Rauscher, born in Sternberg in 1911; missing in action at Leningrad in April 1943.

A Waffen-SS recruiting stand in France, circa 1944.

