



Siegrunen

THE WAFFEN-SS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

118222



*Om Richard Landwehr
als Beweisen aus
Wehrmacht 1984
den
Schrynen*

SS-Unterscharführer Remi Schrynen, the only Flemish Knight's Cross holder, who personally destroyed 12 Soviet tanks on the Narva Front in July 1944 after the rest of his anti-tank gun crew had been incapacitated. [Photo courtesy of Remi Schrynen and Erik Rundkvist]

Flemish Waffen-SS anti-tank gunners from the "Langemarck" Brigade in action. [Photo courtesy of Kenneth Nieman]



EDITORIAL

The Myth of the "Big Lie"

One of the more famous quotations attributed to the late Propaganda Minister for wartime Germany, Dr. Josef Goebbels, was a statement to the effect that the "bigger the lie one propagated, the more people would accept it." Precisely where and how Goebbels made this alleged remark is unknown and the words were probably either false or taken out of context, but in any event the term "Big Lie" became a standard media expression. It would be interesting to examine side-by-side the various media and press works of the wartime powers, particularly the U.S. and Germany, to see precisely which best promoted the "Big Lie"!

Of course, while much of the press and publishing industry in Germany remained in private ownership, it was all subservient to one degree or another to state controls. Ditto the film and radio broadcasting agencies. No opposition media was permitted. But despite that

fact, the German press remained relatively restrained and accurate. Bad news was reported (although not emphasized!), and the figures and facts that appeared were usually as accurate as possible, particularly in the last months of the war when it was often of life and death importance to civilians to know what the military situation was so that relocations and evacuations could be carried out if need be.

Interestingly enough the German media treatment of some of its military enemies was mild to the point of being almost too soft. Anti-Americanism was simply not a part of the standard operations. Press criticism of America centered on some of its capitalist abuses, "cultural decadence" (in contrast to Europe), and past blunders. The U.S. was depicted as having a limited and often barbaric military tradition in which the finer points of chivalry were not known. Particular emphasis was placed on the suppression of the American Indian and such innovations as "waging war on civilians" through the example of Sherman's "March to the Sea." In all cases the criticism was not far off the mark and was neither hateful or spiteful. The German film industry, which turned out hundreds of films during the Third Reich era - none of which were anti-American - was even more restrained. Only a very few films contained any passages which could be even vaguely construed as critical of America.

Now contrast the government controlled media in Germany with the "non-controlled" media in the U.S.! Our press wallowed in anti-German hate propaganda from at least the day Hitler came to power. Hundreds and even thousands of films were produced with the purpose of deliberately slandering the Germans. And this process largely continues right through to this day. The opposition press and radio market in the U.S. such as it existed, was thoroughly crushed through the machinations of minority interest groups and their keen grasp of the potentials of economic blackmail (i.e., advertisers and sponsors were "scared off" off of anti-communist, or non-interventionist media outlets). And finally when the U.S. managed to officially entangle itself into the war, the government just simply out-and-out went after anyone they considered to be "dangerous." The result was that the media in the U.S., although not state controlled, certainly followed the "party line" every bit as faithfully as did that in Germany.

Of course the U.S. government also had total control over "military" or "national security" news, so that censorship of unpleasant facts or developments was routinely practiced. This along with the slobbering anti-German tone of nearly everything being filmed, broadcast or published in this country led to a nearly unprecedented brain-washing of the American people. While it was hard to find "American haters" in Germany, German-haters in America (including people of German descent), were nearly universal!

So what it really boils down to, is who practiced the "Big Lie" technique the most? The answer is not really hard to decipher, since in the U.S. one can still pick up a daily newspaper and see the same old headlines about "Nazi Butchers" on a regular basis! The "Big Lie" technique as practiced by our media outlets obviously has and continues to serve some purpose. It has maintained hate and falsehood, including the constantly routine slanders against the Waffen-SS, for the ulterior motives of certain ethnic hate groups and political factions, and they seemingly find great profit and advantage in such actions.

SIEGRUNEN

Vol. 8 No. 2

Whole Number 44

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SIEGRUNEN (ISSN 0733-0367) is published by
Weapons and Warfare Press, Bennington VT
in conjunction with the Editor

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Subscription rate for four issues: \$20.00 (outside the U.S., add \$2.50 for surface mail postage). Single copy: \$5.00 (outside U.S. add 75¢ for surface mail postage).

Contributions: Manuscripts, photographs, drawings are submitted at the contributor's own risk. Material should be mailed to Siegrunen, Box 512, Glendale OR 97442, and cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Any material accepted for publication is subject to revision as is necessary to meet the editorial requirements of SIEGRUNEN. All manuscripts must be typed double-spaced. All photographs and artwork should be credited and accompanied by captions. All manuscripts are considered contributions to SIEGRUNEN.

Advertising: (subject to Editor's approval) in SIEGRUNEN is available at the following rates: Full page, \$80.00; Half page, \$40.00; Quarter page, \$20.00; Eighth page, \$10.00; Short classifieds, \$5.00. A 20% discount will be allowed for multiple insertions.

But even if Dr. Goebbels had "invented" the "Big Lie" technique, neither he or his people ever practiced it to the minutest fraction of the extent that it has gotten utilized in the U.S.A.!

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The Martyrs of Charleroi

In November 1947, the government of Belgium sanctioned and carried out the murder of 27 Walloon and Flemish nationalists, who had been imprisoned for various "acts of collaboration" during the war. The executions had no legal basis and were in fact carried out in reprisal for something entirely different that was said to have happened during August 1944.

During the night of 17/18 August 1944, with the "Allies" advancing towards Belgium and the "resistance" terrorists growing bolder and more dangerous by the day, some 27 "resistance" members and sympathizers were alleged to have been shot in the main street of Charleroi. The assailants were not specifically known but they were obviously members of "flying squads" from the local security forces and nationalist groups who had carried out this deed probably out of sheer desperation. The "resistance" had already liquidated hundreds upon hundreds of their "enemies" or most often, innocent relatives of the same including Leon Degrelle's non-political brother. The killing of the resistance people in Charleroi was not overlooked by the post-war government, which was loaded to the hilt with former terrorists.

Thus someone in the Justice Ministry eventually hit upon the scheme (more than three years after the original deed!) to gain "vengeance." Twenty-seven political prisoners, only a few of whom had ties to the Charleroi area, were designated "Fascist murderers" and without benefit of trial or jury were sent to the local jailhouse in Charleroi to await execution.



At 02:00 in the morning of a day in November 1947 (not specified, although the only account of this incident ever to appear was dated 11 November 1947), the Charleroi police were instructed to begin final preparations for the executions. The prisoners were allowed to attend a last church service and then at 06:00 the public square in front of the police barracks was roped off for the benefit of spectators. It was absolutely forbidden to photograph the proceedings and cameras were banned.

Four squads of ten men each from the 40 man police platoon were designated to carry out the killings in rotation. At 07:30 the first four victims were brought out into the plaza and tied to posts that had been erected before a sand bag barricade. All were members of Degrelle's Rex Movement, the most prominent of whom was the Rex Propaganda Leader Collard. The others were Dargent, Merlot and Honore Navez, the latter a former Captain in the wartime "collaboration" police. One salvo finished them all off.

The next four victims were brought forth at 07:37; they included Heuschen, De Mayer, Colyns and a youth, Jadoul, who was supposed to have been linked to the "flying squads." Three were killed instantly but Jadoul was still alive after the volley of shots. A policeman

quickly ran over and shot him in the back of the neck. Four more, Dubois, Rossens, Struys and Hutkeet were quickly disposed of and they were followed by the next group of four, Bertrand, Deslin, Van Meersel and Victor Matthys, a Rex District Leader. All but Matthys fell dead at the volley. Matthys was merely grazed and fell stunned to the ground, when he jumped up to his feet and policemen quickly grabbed him and hurled him back to the ground and then shot him in the back of the neck.

The next four victims included Bracke, an ex member of the Flemish Guard, Fontaine, Marchal and another youth, Dupont. They were given a chance to speak their last words while being blindfolded and Bracke defiantly shouted: "Long live Flanders!" At 08:07, Niselle, Wijnen, Bodson and Gosset-Empain all went calmly to their deaths. That only left three more to go: Charles Jacques, DeHeug and Wery. Wery was "defiant" and "arrogant" and refused to answer questions about his birthplace for the police records. When the final volley had sounded, Jacques was still alive, so it was another bullet in the back of the neck for him. The 500-odd spectators dispersed soon afterwards. Yet what they had witnessed never "officially" took place. Although an eyewitness account in favor of the action appeared in the local newspaper saluting the termination of the "27 Fascist murderers," the whole event was swiftly expunged from the records.

The victims, most selected at random, had never been convicted or brought to trial for the original Charleroi killings, and once they were dead they were officially consigned to the great "black hole" of history as if they had never existed! For those who cannot speak, whose memory has been forgotten and indeed obliterated, it is important to at least make mention of how they died. Interestingly the very people who speak so highly of "human rights" and the "democratic virtues" that motivated them could also sanction and condone cold-blooded "vengeance" murders and then suppress all information relative to such deeds. If I can help expose these hypocritical killers in the so-called "Allied" camp to the slightest degree then I think an important service will be rendered. Let it be remembered that the people who have vilified the "Nazis" and assorted European anti-communist groups the most have demonstrated over and over again that they were not above carrying out the same or worse actions than those they so loudly condemned.

For all those in unmarked graves who died at the hands of the victor's injustice, this publication is always dedicated. Let the truth be known and let them not be forgotten.

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War Criminal Nr. 1

It has never been my intention to bother commenting on the patently absurd international campaign to turn the Austrian President Kurt Waldheim into a "war criminal," but the appearance of a new, strange defamatory "public service" (i.e., "free") newspaper advertisement really deserves some sort of mention. The ad, which has appeared in numerous big city newspapers, runs the standard "war criminal" photo of Kurt Waldheim (similar to the one accompanying this piece), shown waiting before an airplane in the company of an Italian General, another Army Group "E" staff officer and SS-Gruppenfuhrer Arthur Phleps. In the ad a big white noose-like circle is drawn around Waldheim's head and this is linked to a malicious text which runs something like this: "If it were not for the First Amendment we would never know about certain High Ranking Nazi Officials." (The exact text eludes me as I did not keep a copy of this.) The

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sponsor of the ad was something called "Journalists for the First Amendment."

After seeing this for the third time, the utter strangeness of it dawned on me. What precisely does the freedom of speech, etc. granted by the First Amendment actually have to do with the background of Kurt Waldheim anyway? Actually nothing since Waldheim's service record has never been a secret and "incriminating" photos have been published before (see pages 116-117 of *Prinz Eugen im Bild*). The photos date back to an inspection of the newly re-outfitted Italian "Ferrara" Infantry Division in the early summer of 1943, shortly before that formation defected to the "Allied" camp.

Being a mainstream career politician, Waldheim saw no need to mention his service in Yugoslavia in his memoirs, since that obviously offered some drawbacks in his dealings with the assorted Third World left-wing riff-raff and oddball dictators that he occasionally encountered (all of whom of course are "anti-Fascists" first and foremost!). Besides that it hardly needs mentioning that the Yugoslav communists murdered nearly everyone from the "enemy" camp that they could get their hands on. That's an adequate deterrent right there to skip mention of service in that part of the world.

It should go without saying that Waldheim was not a "Nazi" and was hardly a "high ranking official," but the constant efforts at slander, innuendo and ridicule (check the editorial cartoons!), by certain ethnic pressure groups and the controlled news media (not to mention the U.S. government), has managed to elevate a rather decent politician into a "monster." Getting back to the "public service" advertisement that newspapers run for free, it finally struck me that if someone was really concerned about the "First Amendment" they would pick up some item on the domestic agenda that would fit an appropriate scenario.

Kurt Waldheim's story is only symbolic of our lax libel laws; the advertisement itself should be considered grounds for slander if the laws were a little more stringent. It is going pretty far afield to select Kurt Waldheim as a candidate for an ad supposedly promoting the value of our First Amendment. So the question now must be asked is, who are the sponsors of the ad? Does this so-

called group "Journalists for the First Amendment" actually exist or is it a paper front organization? Scarcely any newspaper in the country would turn down a "public service" ad from an outfit with such a name. All this ad does is offer free publicity for the continuing campaign of malicious slander against Kurt Waldheim. Has the media been manipulated again? You can bet something "funny" is going on here!

It is only appropriate to mention that Kurt Waldheim's only "war crime" actually transpired during his tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations, when some proposals sympathetic to the sadly dispossessed Palestinian people were actually issued by that august body. All of a sudden Waldheim was turned from a respected, establishment politician into an international ogre. And when he decided to re-enter politics in his homeland, the black-mail really began! That the charges against Waldheim are accepted as "serious" is just one more indication of "Alice-in-Wonderland" logic that our rulers have adopted and regularly utilize!

- Richard Landwehr

Odds and Ends

Italian Volunteers of the Waffen-SS is now on hand and ready for shipping. The price is now \$6.95 postpaid. It turned out fairly well from a printing standpoint and contains more than 50 photos and illustrations pertaining to the 24th and 29th SS Divisions. The photos of insignia on page 30 should have been credited to the Military History Shop, 110 W. State St., Kennett Sq. PA 19348 (write for their lists!), and my thanks to them for providing them. Pre-publication prices of \$5.00 each are still valid for the Hungarian Waffen-SS which will be followed by the Croatian Waffen-SS, which are now in the process of being assembled. Charlemagne's Legionnaires (French Waffen-SS) has been largely assembled and typeset and will be published as soon as feasible (I'm always wrong when I name an appearance date, so I refuse to do it anymore!). In addition to the text and some great photos

and maps, there will be a fantastic color cover by Ramiro Bujeiro (easily his best job yet!), which is an absolute knock-out. Pre-publication price of \$14.00 is still valid but not for much longer. As usual my thanks to everyone who orders in advance as this saves a lot of wear and tear on this end and helps with some of the necessary financing. My plans are to continue putting out books and booklets on the different nationalities serving in the Waffen-SS as time and funds permit, over the years to come.

Leibstandarte Vol. I should at long last be available by the time you read this and will include (I'm told) a special map booklet to accompany the main book. The price is \$30.00 plus \$2.00 postage, available through SIEGRUNEN, and this is highly recommended!

Also forthcoming in a future issue of SIEGRUNEN, a fine, authoritative article on the Spanish Volunteers in the Waffen-SS by the noted historian Carlos Caballero-Jurado (translated by Antonio Munoz). This is an important piece and I'm delighted that it will appear here for the first time in English. You can also be on the lookout for a number of great photos of Waffen-SS personalities and foreign volunteers in coming issues, most of which have never before been published. Thanks to loans, donations and purchases a sizable number of extremely good items have turned up recently and you will start seeing them with SR issue #45. The featured cover photo for that issue is one of the most striking action/insignia pics I have ever seen!

On other fronts, both of the elderly "war criminals" that the U.S. forcibly extradited to the Soviet Union have died. One, Feodor Federenko was killed by a firing squad. At one point in time our OSI commissars let it slip that: "We have nothing on this guy!" But they still managed to get him executed without benefit of jury trial or the legal guarantees accorded U.S. citizens by our Constitution. So much for that little obstacle! The other "war criminal," Karl Linna, supposedly died of heart failure and other complications. He had no jury trial, either. Also, the "death camp" he was supposed to have commanded at Dorpat (Tartu), Estonia when he was 21 years old, has yet to appear in any records, official or otherwise! Its non-existence didn't stop our secret policemen and their friends in the KGB from carrying out their duties! If these fine American citizens can be shipped to death on such flimsy, non-existent premises, then we are all in trouble! The next person likely to be sent to the Soviets is rumored to be a Latvian patriot, whose journalistic efforts during the war upset the "Nazi-hunters." No freedom of speech or freedom of the press for this guy! The only solution for his type of "thought crimes" can be a firing squad!

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WAFFEN-SS BOOKS

SOLDATEN, KÄMPFER, KAMFRADEN VOL. III
by Wolfgang Vopersal; published by the SS "Totenkopf"
Division Veterans Association.

This is actually the fourth volume in the complete (almost encyclopedic) history of the 3rd SS Division "Totenkopf"; Volume II was so massive that it was divided into two parts. This covers the history of the Division from early 1943 until the end of September 1943, taking in such events as the death of the divisional commander (Ogruf. Eicke), and the major battles for Kharkov, Kursk and the Mius positions. Also included is the complete history of the SS Rgt. "Thule" (former SS IR 9), and its operations in Norway and Finland.

Practically every page (and there are 570 of them) is filled with rare photos, documents and maps and other illustrations, making this volume just an overwhelming experience just to glance through. This book is an incredible achievement in itself, covering a vital part of history in the most comprehensive manner possible. Large, massive format, German text (but that shouldn't stop anyone given the great pictorial content), and all printed on slick paper, this volume and the others in this series (about two more to go), are highly recommended! Unfortunately the price may be fairly steep at this time, but if you can afford it, by all means purchase it!

THE JUNKERSCHOOLS

OFFICER TRAINING IN THE WAFFEN-SS

by R. Schulze-Kossens; 2nd edition; English/German text; 436 pages; 223 photos, charts, maps, documents, colored endpapers and two colored plates.

An extensive, essential work on what has been a somewhat complicated and much maligned subject. Concentrating on SS Junkerschule Tölz, this book provides the first detailed examination of every facet of W-SS officer training for the first time in English. Also covered in depth the sports and athletic programs, the training programs for the war disabled (even the badly wounded and blinded were given retraining through a very innovative approach), the training course for Germanic volunteers and the various specialty and branch-of-service schools.

The text is detailed, literate and comprehensive and answers fully every charge and false statement ever made about Waffen-SS training facilities. The photos and illustrations, many dealing with non-German volunteers are superb and you may note a few things that were not even mentioned in the caption, such as the fine photo of a Ukrainian SS officers' training class at the Panzer Grenadier School Kienschlag on page 309.

The author was the last commander of SS-JS Tölz, who also formed (and named) the 38th SS Division "Nibelungen" (also covered in the text), so he knows probably more about this subject than anyone. What is immediately apparent after reading this book is the vast degree of superiority of the Waffen SS training schools over almost anything that went before and probably most of what has followed since! This is must reading for anyone interested in the basics of the Waffen-SS and no doubt will find its way into the libraries of most present day military academies and training facilities. Naturally, extremely expensive, but well worth it. It can be ordered through SIEGRUNEN at \$42.00 plus \$2.00 postage.

SS BRIGADE "SCHULTDT"

AND THE STALINGRAD RELIEF EFFORT

On 19 November 1942, a massive Red Army armored offensive shattered the Don River Front to the north of Stalingrad, splintering the Italian, Romanian and Hungarian defensive forces into panic-stricken fragments. These German allies had the manpower but lacked the will and the leadership to stand up to the resurgent Red Army. In addition, their own armored forces and their anti-tank capabilities were antiquated and nearly useless. One reforming German panzer division was in reserve behind the crumbling Axis armies, but it alone was unable to stop the Soviet offensive. Even then it has been stated that one more fully equipped German armored regiment might have prevented the encirclement of the 6th Army in Stalingrad that took place on this day. But such was not the case.

With an enormous gaping hole in the southern part of the Eastern Front to fill and the large German forces in the Caucasus region being threatened, something had to be done fast. Improvisation was the order of the day, and any battle-worthy contingent that could be spared for action was given consideration for use. The Waffen-SS was not left out; it was requested to dig into its "reserve" pool to make a contribution. Unfortunately, its three major divisions (1st, 2nd and 3rd SS Panzergrenadier), were being refurbished in France and had been tied down there longer than anticipated due to the "Allied" invasion of North Africa and the resultant complications from that action. So they were not immediately available. And nearly every other segment of the Waffen-SS was fully engaged elsewhere on the Eastern Front. That meant that the training camps and homeland garrisons had to be combed out for experienced troops.

In early December a couple of Waffen-SS contingents had been zeroed in on. One was the "Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler" Guard Battalion in Berlin, which was nominally listed as VII. Battalion/1.SS Pz.Gr.Div. "LSSAH"; its troops were all front veterans. Another unit that was available was 1./SS-Polizei Infanterie Rgt.1 from the 4.SS-Polizei Grenadier Div. that had been refitting in East Prussia. It was a veteran element as well and nearly ready for action. The idea was to combine these battalions into a regimental or brigade strength battle-group along with troops from assorted Waffen-SS specialty training schools.

On 4 December 1942, authorization was granted to form this ad hoc "brigade," under the command of SS-Standartenfuehrer Hinrich "Kapt'n" Schuldt (a former Navy Captain). Schuldt was a natural selection for this role, as during the previous winter he had directed a number of mixed emergency groups (based on his SS Inf.Rgt.4), during a very critical situation in the central part of the Eastern Front. His success at handling make-shift forces had clearly made him the top candidate for his new position.

SS Brigade "Schuldt," as it was called from the start, quickly assembled a staff and staff company from reserve pools and replacement units. The VII./"LSSAH," with a staff, staff company and three rifle companies, became the first brigade unit, though it was not at full strength. It had to leave the equivalent of a full company behind in Berlin to continue the tradition of a "Leibstandarte" guard troop in the German capital. The 1./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1 was added on paper to the brigade and it was commonly

designated SS-Kampfgruppe "Dietrich" after its commander, Sturmbannfuehrer Dietrich. This battalion would make its way separately to the brigade assembly area in Russia.

On 6 December 1942, all of the brigade elements, including a new heavy weapons company under Ostuf. Drescher which was assigned to VII./"LSSAH," were to begin making their way by rail to the Eastern Front. The structure and command roster for SS Brigade "Schuldt" initially looked like this:

Commander: Staf. Schuldt

Adjutant: Hstuf. Molt

Ordnance Officer: Ostuf. Vogel

Staff Company containing the following elements:

Motorcycle Messenger Platoon from the SS Motorcycle Replacement Bn. in Ellwangen

Anti-tank Platoon from the staff troops of the Waffen-SS Commander-in-Chief for the Netherlands

Combat Engineer Platoon from the SS Engineer Replacement Bn. in Dresden

Signals Platoon from the Field Command Staff of the Reichsfuehrer-SS (Himmler)

VII.Bn./"LSSAH":

Permanent commander in Berlin: Stubaf. Ernst Mayer, who had been rendered unfit for frontline service due to his severe battle wounds. He took over the guard company left behind.

Commander during transport: Hstuf. Beutler

Commander after arrival in Russia: Hstuf. Ott

Commander as of 31 December 1942: Hstuf. Lantscher

1st Rifle Company: Hstuf. Ott, later Ostuf. Horvath

2nd Rifle Company: Ostuf. Leiteritz; wounded during disembarkation in Russia and replaced by Ostuf. Knoesel

3rd Rifle Company: Ostuf. Blunck

4th Heavy Weapons Company: Ostuf. Drescher; this company was assembled as follows: infantry gun platoon from the staff troops W-SS C-in-C "Netherlands," anti-tank platoon from the same place and combat engineer platoon from the SS Engineer Replacement Bn. in Dresden.

1./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1 (SS-KGr. "Dietrich")

Commander: Stubaf. Wilhelm Dietrich

Staff Company: Ostuf. Kersten, then Oberjunker Schroeter

1st Company (portion of it only): Ostuf. Tigge

2nd Company (intact): Ostuf. Waldmann, then Ostuf. Drieske

3rd Company (portion only): Ostuf. Schneider

4th Company (portion only): Hstuf. Schwarting

The first elements of SS-Bde. "Schuldt," consisting of the staff, staff company, 1./VII./"LSSAH" and part of 4./VII./"LSSAH," arrived in the threatened city of Millerovo on 16 December 1942. The formation was assigned to Army Detachment "Fretter-Pico" and was given orders to assemble at Meschkoff and then dig-in in the hills surrounding the town to block off a Soviet advance.

Just before midnight on 17 December, the bulk of VII./"LSSAH" reached the railroad station in the southern part of Meschkoff. Due to the close proximity of the

front the unloading of men, vehicles and equipment had to proceed with utmost haste, and this procedure was further hampered by the bitterly cold weather. To top it off, a Soviet fighter-bomber attack interrupted the "Leibstandarte" disembarkation and caused significant damage to the train station as well as casualties to the troops. Both Ostuf, Leiteritz (CO of 2nd Co.) and Hstuf, Beutler (Bn. CO) were wounded, and early on the next day, Hstuf, Ott took charge of the unit.

SS-KGr. "Dietrich" (Polizei Div.) had a more chaotic journey to the brigade assembly area. It had been sent by rail to Tschertkovo from where a truck convoy was to take it to Meschkoff. However, before it had even arrived at Tschertkovo, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" had had some of its troops siphoned off for other emergency duties. The bulk of the 1st and 4th Companies along with a portion of the battalion staff had been re-routed to Zschertkovo to help stop an enemy armored breakthrough in the sector of 19th Panzer Division. This contingent led by Hstuf, Schwarting, would in fact never join the brigade but would instead link up with the 1st SS Pz.Gr.Div. "Leibstandarte" in early February 1943 near Kharkov. Thus from SS-KGr. "Dietrich," SS-Bde. "Schuldt" only received the major portions of the battalion staff and 2nd Co. along with small contingents from the 1st and 3rd Companies. Promised Flak and anti-tank troops were not initially available.

During the evening hours of 18 December, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" reached the brigade and was sent to Nasaroff, about 6 km to the west of Meschkoff. In the meantime, VII./"LSSAH" had already gone into action in the hills about 3 km to the northwest of Meschkoff. This was a relief attack designed to save elements of the 8th Italian Army which were in full retreat. After fighting a delaying action, the battalion disengaged and fell back on the northern part of Meschkoff at around midnight on the 18th. On the next, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was inserted in the main defensive lines around Meschkoff.

At noon on 19 December, a Russian armored force approached SS Brigade "Schuldt" from the west, driving towards Nasaroff. A violent battle developed in which the SS troops were able to destroy four enemy tanks. This caused the Reds to break off the attack, but reconnaissance troops observed a massing of Soviet infantry, transported

in captured Italian trucks, to the southwest. In the night of 19/20 December the situation at Meschkoff grew more serious. A pair of Russian tanks broke through the lines of Brigade "Schuldt" and raised havoc in the rear area, destroying three trucks filled with German wounded in the process. Enemy forces were also reported in virtually all directions. Aware of the dangerous predicament facing the brigade, Army Detachment "Fretter-Pico" gave it the go ahead to withdraw from Meschkoff.

At midnight, Brigade "Schuldt" pulled out of Meschkoff and began withdrawing towards Millerovo. But not far down the road a Soviet tank force put in a surprise appearance and effectively split-up much of the SS task force. Part of VII./"LSSAH," consisting of 1st Co., the bulk of 2nd Co. and part of 4th Co., fought its way to Millerovo under Ostuf, Dahl (ex-Polizei Division). These troops were then attached to the 3rd Mountain Div. and reorganized into two combat companies which were designated Kampfgruppe "Dahl." This force was then caught up in the Soviet encirclement of Millerovo along with 4,000 German and 12,000 Italian troops. The SS men were generally held in reserve for use in counter-attacking enemy penetrations. The siege of Millerovo lasted until 15 January 1943 when a successful breakout was made. By 20 January, KGr. "Dahl" had rejoined SS Bde. "Schuldt."

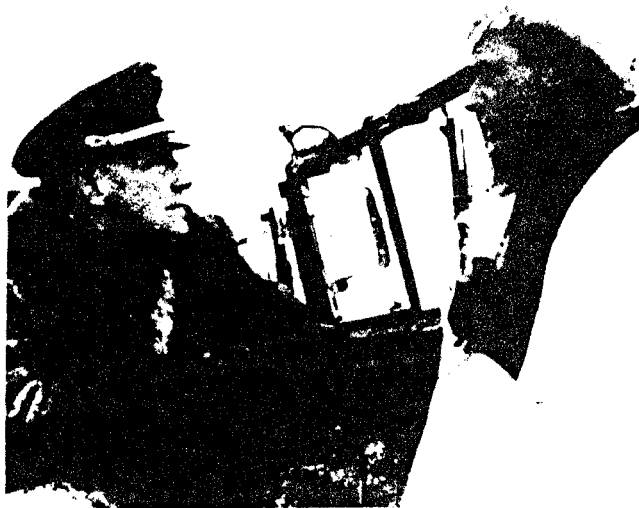
While Ostuf, Dahl and his men made their way to Millerovo, the other components of Brigade "Schuldt" began to regroup at Donskoj at 0400 on 20 December 1943. All that now remained of VII./"LSSAH" was the battalion staff, a part of 2nd Co., 3rd Co., and engineer and heavy mortar platoons from 4th Company. After it had reassembled the brigade continued on in a southeasterly direction, passing through the Jablonovaja and Bolschoja sectors to Ssmolin on the Metschettka Creek. Ssmolin was reached at 1430 on 20 December after some 70 km had been covered in a motorized "march." Here the SS men were able to rest for the first time since their front-line deployment.

On 21 December, most of the brigade, except for the supply troops, was sent west to fortify the nearby village of Kijevsky. In the night of 21/22 December positions on the west/southwest part of Kijevsky were fully occupied and extended even further westward. At the same time the survivors from various dispersed Army artillery and anti-tank units were incorporated into the brigade and used to strengthen SS-KGr. "Dietrich." An entire emergency "march" battalion was also latched on to.

In the early afternoon of the 22nd, an enemy armored attack was brought to a screeching halt through the destruction of four of the advancing tanks. But a neighboring Italian unit was unnerved by the incident and began an unauthorized withdrawal. As a result, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was ordered to extend its lines to cover the gap left by the Italians. Only 80 men were available for this task which really required the services of a full battalion!

On 23 December, Army Detachment "Fretter-Pico" ordered SS Brigade "Schuldt" to sever the enemy supply route near Roshek, 10 kms to the south. To do this job properly the town itself would have to be taken. In preparation for this attempt, the brigade relocated to Metschettka, 7 kms to the south. SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was deployed due north of Ssnetschinikovo, a village about 1 km west of Roshek, while VII./"LSSAH" was placed to the north and east of Roshek. Staf. Schuldt personally led the assault on the town on 24 December. In a swift, decisive action, the SS troops seized Roshek, while knocking out two T-34 tanks in the process. One T-34 was captured intact along with a number of prisoners.

Following this success, Staf. Schuldt took stock of the troops still left under his command and began reorgan-



Staf. Schuldt and Stubaf. Dietrich discuss the battlefield situation.

izing the brigade units "downward" to reflect the depletion of personnel. SS-KGr. "Dietrich" became the new 1st Co., with the remnants of VII./"LSSAH" becoming 2nd Co. and the Army March Bn. 179 being used to constitute a 3rd Company. The remaining troops and heavy weapons elements were simply attached directly to the "brigade" staff. Now only battalion size at best, Bde. "Schuldt" was rechristened a "Group" for operational purposes.

On Christmas Day, Group "Schuldt" found itself attached to the XXIX. Army Corps Staff under Gen. Geier in Krassnojarkovka, about 5 kms southeast of Roshek. At midnight on the 25th, a powerful Soviet armored force attacked the town. The foremost tanks were knocked out but the following ones broke into Krassnojarkovka and began rambling about at will. One T-34 smashed right through a house wall and drove on into the building that housed the supply troop from what had been 3./SS-Pol.Rgt.1 (KGr. "Dietrich"), interrupting the preparations for a Christmas feast. This action enraged Stubaf. Dietrich who was in the building at the time. Without hesitation he clambered up on top of the tank, flung open the turret hatch and shot all of the individual crew members with his pistol! That was one way to capture a tank intact, but it probably would never have happened if he had given it any forethought!

Fortunately the Red infantry failed to follow-up on the armored breakthrough and when the tanks were forced to withdraw, the Germans still held the town. But Krassnojarkovka was now completely surrounded and orders soon arrived for the trapped troops to break out and evacuate the town during the night of 25/26 December. There would be no more waiting around for another Stalingrad to occur!

After throwing back further Red armored onslaughts in the early morning hours of 26 December and destroying two more tanks, SS Group "Schuldt" left Krassnojarkovka and began moving to the southeast; KGr. "Dietrich" was still motorized but the "LSSAH" troops had to march on foot. The withdrawal route led southeast through Vodjany to Romanovsky, where the task force regrouped before marching south to Pritschensky. Due to the deep enemy inroads all over the place, resupply had to be carried out via air drops when possible. In order to secure supplies, units had to set up agreed upon recognition signs (usually Swastika flags) that were visible from the air.

SS Group "Schuldt" reached Pritschensky at around dusk on 26 December and found it filled with milling Romanian and Italian troops from units that had largely collapsed and evaporated. XXIX. Army Corps and Group "Schuldt" was now told to continue advancing towards the Skassyrskaja bridgehead in the southwest where a link-up with the neighboring Army Detachment "Hollidt" needed to be made. SS Group "Schuldt" spent the entire morning of the 27th fighting off enemy attacks and when things calmed down in the afternoon, Staf. Schuldt again regrouped his dwindling command.

At 0300 on the 28th the march towards Skassyrskaja continued. During a rest break a pair of armored recce cars suddenly appeared, sending the surprised SS troops scurrying for cover. But the vehicles were revealed to be "friendlies" from a German Army unit, and the alarm was soon over. Staf. Schuldt appropriated them for his use and they would later prove helpful in escaping through enemy envelopments. By now the "brigade" had only a few functional motor vehicles and these were relegated to transporting the badly wounded and needed supplies; the soldiers were left to make their way through the deep snow on foot.

When SS Group "Schuldt" reached Skassyrskaja on 29 December, Staf. Schuldt reported that his "brigade"

was no longer battleworthy and he left for parts unknown. It is thought that he visited the Fuehrer HQ for new instructions, but his exact whereabouts for the next several days were not recorded. In any event, command of the "brigade" now passed entirely over to Stubaf. Dietrich.

The brigade was outfitted with ten new field kitchens and informed that it was to proceed to a refitting area on the next day. On 30 December an advance commando arrived at the designated refitting area at Alexejev with the objective of lining up some more motor vehicles for the battle-group. The rest of the SS troops arrived at dusk after a difficult 20 km foot march. They reported that they had heard heavy gunfire emanating from the direction of Skassyrskaja behind them.

After a day of rest, the SS battle-group was attached to the 6th Panzer Div. under Gen.Lt. Raus, which was part of XVII.Army Corps/Army Det. "Hollidt," on 1 January 1943. SS-Brigade "Schuldt" was considered temporarily out of commission and the entire task force adopted the interim title of SS-Kampfgruppe "Dietrich." To confuse things even further, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" would remain functioning even after Brigade "Schuldt" was reformed!

In any event, Bde. "Schuldt"/KGr. "Dietrich" was next ordered to relocate to Kamensk and for this purpose it was given a 17 vehicle truck convoy to transport the troops. But once Kamensk was reached on 3 January, the trucks were recalled to XVII. Corps. On the 3rd, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" reached its new reassembly area and was quickly deployed in blocking positions in the sector that ran from Makjev to Alexejev and thence to Kovytkin and Bakova. I./Pz.Gr.Rgt.114 was now temporarily subordinated to the battle-group. In terms of other individual units, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" also contained the following:

- Staff I./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1
- 2nd Co./I./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1
- 3rd Co./I./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1
- Mixed Improvised Rifle Co./VII./"LSSAH"
- Engineer Platoon/4.Co./VII./"LSSAH"
- Infantry Gun Platoon/4.Co./VII./"LSSAH"
- Staff Co. (portion only)/VII./"LSSAH" (Hstuf. Lancher)
- Anti-tank Detachment 518 (Oberleutnant Wilde)

In the course of 3 January 1943, the battle group's sick and wounded were evacuated and the resupply process was completed. The 6th Panzer Div. had been given a two-pronged mission: 1. To restore a gap in the front north of Tazinskaja left by fleeing Italian troops, the success of which operation would cut off the line of retreat of the XXIV. Red "Guards" Tank Corps under Gen. Badanov. 2. Hold down the frontlines between Morosovskaja and Tazinskaja. The first assignment was to be carried out by an armored task force based on the armored recce detachment, while SS-KGr. "Dietrich" and the remainder of the division took care of the latter task. In conjunction with the above, 11th Pz.Div. was to bag and destroy Soviet breakthrough forces near Tazinskaja. All operations were to be carried out with "dash and precision."

In the meantime the portion of SS Bde. "Schuldt" that had gotten separated from the main force during the retreat from Meschkoff in the night of 19/20 December 1942 (i.e., KGr. "Dahl"), was having its own problems in the besieged town of Millerovo. This contingent, two companies in strength, drawn from parts of VII./"LSSAH" and I./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1, came under the control of Group "Kreysing" of 3rd Mountain Div. in Millerovo.

At 0600 on 27 December 1942, the Soviets attacked

the town from all sides with substantial armored support. Numerous tanks broke through the lines, but each was eliminated in close combat. Continuous fighting raged until 0800 on the 28th when it was finally broken off. At dusk on the 29th, the Reds again assaulted Millerovo from the north, west and east, with extensive artillery backing. SS-KGr. "Dahl" was kept busy all night long battling off enemy attack waves. It was now known that Millerovo was severed from the main German lines by three Soviet Army Corps (note: a Soviet "Corps" was equivalent to a German division). The raging battle continued on through 30 December and an attempted relief attack by 19th Pz.Div. from the north, was thwarted by a counterattack launched by 3½ Soviet divisions. On the 31st the fighting eased off but Millerovo still remained surrounded.

On 1 January 1943, the remnant of SS-Brigade "Schuldt" which was not attached to SS-KGr. "Dietrich" or encircled in Millerovo, reported in to the Army Brigade "Nagel" in Donskoj. This consisted of the brigade staff company, part of 4th Co./VII./"LSSAH," with two light infantry guns and six anti-tank guns, and a portion of the Polizei Mortar Bn. 15, which had 12 heavy mortars and four anti-tank guns. This was to be the nucleus for an entirely new Bde. "Schuldt," which was authorized to begin forming on 5 January 1943, at about the same time that Staf. Schuldt returned to the front.

"Kapt'n" Schuldt had received a new assignment, perfectly suited to his improvisational command skills: at 0000 on 7 January 1943 he was to take command of all detached mobile combat groups attached to Army Group "Fretter-Pico" and the strongpoint at Donskoj Krassnovka. The "new" SS-Brigade "Schuldt" (which to add to the confusion was also referred to as "Detachment Schuldt"), was to be headquartered at Tarassovo and take its orders directly from the Army Det. HQ, except when it became necessary to assign it to the 304th Infantry Division.

SS Brigade "Schuldt's" neighbor was to be the improvised Army Brigade "Nagel" and the boundary line between the two formations ran through the following towns:

Boundary terminating in the Donez River, then proceeding through Jelán (occupied by Bde. "Nagel"), Prognoy (Bde. "Nagel"), and Blagoschveschtschenka (Bde. "Schuldt") to Rognalik Creek. SS Brigade "Schuldt," as reconstituted, now contained the following elements:

Staff, Staff Company and Signals Platoon with communications assistance provided through the Corps' Signals officers. Attached to the staff was a Luftwaffe Observation/Signals Troop under Lt. Schreiber.
 Luftwaffe Feld Bn. 100 (composed of mixed units)
 4./VII./"LSSAH"
 One company from Polizei Mortar Bn. 15
 6th Battery/Flak Det.43 ("88" guns)
 4th Battery/Flak Det.100 (2 cm guns)
 One improvised heavy field howitzer battery
 One infantry battalion comprised of soldiers dispersed from their original units
 Mobile Kampfgruppe (composed of mixed units)
 One infantry battalion from 304th Inf.Div. with improvised motor transport
 Panzer Det.138
 Staff and 3rd Battery/Luftwaffe Flak Det.100
 The "Fuehrer" Flak Detachment (whenever it arrived and reassembled)

In addition to the above, other units would be added as the situation dictated.

On 9 January 1943, Army Det. "Fretter-Pico" launched a relief attack towards Millerovo along the main road from Tarassovo. SS Bde. "Schuldt" spearheaded part of

the effort and drove the enemy out of his positions at the road curve about 2 km to the west of Turoveroff, which was in turn 6 km to the south of Millerovo. Heavy casualties were inflicted upon the foe. On 11 January, SS Bde. "Schuldt" was ordered to secure and defend Matvejevka and then reconnoiter the area to the southeast to see if a further advance was possible. Afterwards the route of advance for a 360 man replacement battalion for 3rd Mnt.Div. had to be scouted out and protected. On the next day, SS Bde. "Schuldt" was able to report that all objectives had been secured and that the key Hill 201.3 had also been occupied.

With this accomplished the brigade was ordered back to Tarassovo to carry out recon duties around that town and from Donskoj to Kossnovka to make sure that no enemy reinforcements got through. The fighting on 11 and 12 January 1943 had not been easy and the list of casualties for SS Bde. "Schuldt" reflected the severity of the combat. Forty-two men had been killed including the following four officers: Ostuf, Hemsiecke, 7./VII./"LSSAH," Ustuf, Friedrichs, 1./VII./"LSSAH" and Oblt's Vogel and Finster from H./Inf.Rgt.575/304th Inf. Division. In addition, 118 soldiers including four officers (one from the "LSSAH"), had been wounded and 16 NCOs and men were listed as missing.

SS Brigade "Schuldt" was given several new missions on the extreme south flank of the Army Detachment for 13 January. Its most important assignment was to secure and keep open the river crossing at Oreschkin and occupy a string of villages running from Djadin to Demischoff. Reconnaissance was to be conducted to the south, east and northeast of those towns. At the same time contact was to be maintained with the extreme right wing of 304th Inf.Div. near Ostaschkin. The brigade's supply and maintenance troops were to relocate to Kamensk and the strongpoint of Donskoj was to be turned over to Bde. "Nagel" at midnight on the 13th.

SS Brigade "Schuldt" spent the entire day moving its forces to the assigned area. A sharp, violent clash with the Reds took place at Oreschkin, which ended with the enemy forces being thoroughly routed. Thirty Soviet dead were left on the battlefield while two prisoners and anti-tank gun were captured. Staf. Schuldt subsequently moved his HQ up to Oreschkin and by 2030 hrs. had been able to report the successful accomplishment of all the day's assignments.

About 40 km to the south was the brigade's old component part, SS-KGr. "Dietrich," which was holding down the extreme left wing of Army Detachment "Hollidt," but it would be more than another month before the two forces linked up again. On 14 January, SS Bde. "Schuldt" was ordered to hold and defend Kalitvinskaja and Novy Jerochin in the Kalitvinez sector, as strong enemy attacks were expected there. At this time the brigade lost the services of Polizei Mortar Co. 15 which was detached from the formation and sent to help defend the Donskoj strongpoint. To the north a deep enemy penetration was made near Kamensk and some of the supply troops from SS Bde. "Schuldt" were sent there to reinforce KGr. "Baer," effective 15 January.

January 15, 1943 also saw a successful breakout made from the Millerovo Pocket. Ostuf, Dahl's two SS companies helped to spearhead this effort along with troops from 3rd Mnt.Div. along with several broken Italian units. Despite the very cold weather and savage fighting the Millerovo garrison was able to effect a link-up with the main German lines. SS-KGr. "Dahl" then took up new defensive positions around Petrova (effective 21 January 1943), before rejoining SS Brigade "Schuldt" on 23 January.

In the meantime, SS Bde. "Schuldt" had been placed in Army Detachment reserve and saw little action for

several days. On 23 January it was located in the south part of the city of Voroschilograd, where it received the following reinforcements:

Anti-tank Det.138
Fuehrer Flak Det. with one heavy, one medium and one light Flak batteries
I./SS-Pz.Gr.Rgt.4 "Der Fuehrer"; stiffened by two batteries from SS Art.Rgt.2 "Das Reich," a platoon from 16./"DF" (engineers), 14./"DF" and 3rd Battery/SS Flak Det.2, all under the command of Hstuf. Hans Opificius
SS-KGr. "Dahl" under Ostuf. Dahl

The newly refurbished SS Brigade "Schuldt" was given an offensive assignment for 24 January: It was to advance to the northwest of Podgornoje and destroy any enemy forces that had crossed the Denez in that direction and were moving southwards. In addition the area around the towns of Sslavjanosserbsk, Ssmelyj-Novo-Grigorjevka and the terrain towards Sheltoja and Dolgoje was to be captured from weak enemy forces and held. Following all of this, combat strength recce troops were to scout the line to locate good crossing points over the Denez for motorized and armored forces.

The attack by SS Bde. "Schuldt," which ran due north of Hill 168.1 to the northwest of Podgornoje, met with only weak resistance. The foremost elements, I./"DF" and Pz.Det.138, were able to achieve their objectives rapidly despite encountering strong enemy artillery fire. Enemy flank attacks from Sheltoje and Dolgoje were easily repulsed. By the end of the day, around 100 Soviets had been killed and six of their heavy field pieces had

been eliminated. Brigade losses totalled one killed and six wounded. During the night of 24/25 January, brigade HQ was established in Alexandrovka, and the attached units, including I./"DF," were positioned in the nearby hills and villages.

This night proved to be one of the coldest of the winter with strong, gusty winds and temperatures dipping to -28° C. To make matters worse, most of the soldiers had left their heavy winter clothing behind before the day's action in a motor vehicle park. The results were disastrous. What the communists had not accomplished on the battlefield, "General Winter" did. By morning fully 50% of the troops belonging to I./"DF" reported on sick call with frostbite!

Be that as it may, the war went on and on the 25th, SS Bde. "Schuldt" was ordered to relinquish its positions and attack Soviet penetrations across the Don near Skeltoje and Dolgoje. The III./Gr.Rgt.682 was to be attached to the brigade for this operation only. Afterwards, Bde. "Schuldt" was supposed to regroup in the southern part of Voroschilovgrad to remain again at the disposal of the Army Detachment.

Actions on this day fell somewhat short of the mark. SS Bde. "Schuldt" was unable to regain much territory and had to spend much of the day trying to retake the high ground southeast of Sheltoje which had been seized by the Reds. For most of 26 and 27 January, the brigade simply dug in where it stood and fought off a number of Soviet attacks, which were mostly in company strength. On the 27th a significant defensive success was achieved and the brigade was able to report that another 80 enemy soldiers had been captured and more than 100 others had been killed. Numerous Soviet heavy weapons, including



Members of an entrapped SS-Polizei-Div. battle-group that fought their way free.

ten anti-tank guns, were also destroyed. The brigade was supplemented on this day by I./Art.Rgt.335 and reported that it had 15 operational armored vehicles.

Staf. Schuldt now sought to have all the parts of his brigade reunited (he was thinking in particular of the still absent SS-KGr. "Dietrich"), but was informed by Army Det. staff that the battlefield situation was still much too fluid to enable that to take place. About 300 kms to the northeast of Bde. "Schuldt's" positions, the first contingents of the "Leibstandarte" and "Das Reich" Divisions had begun to arrive from France.

On 28 January 1943, SS Bde. "Schuldt" was relieved by Grenadier Rgt. 684 and relocated to Alexandrovka and Rodakovo to prepare for further operations. In addition, III./Gr.Rgt.682 and I./AR 335 were removed from the brigade's jurisdiction, while Pz.Det.138 and two Flak platoons from the Fuehrer Flak Det. were subordinated directly to the Army Detachment. So instead of gaining strength as Staf. Schuldt had hoped, the brigade was instead further truncated. SS Bde. "Schuldt" was ordered to relocate to Voroschiloff on the 29th and make contact with 304th Inf.Div. in preparation for an attack on Bolschoj Ssuchodol, where the enemy had constructed a small bridgehead across the Donez. After arriving in Voroschiloff on 30 January, I./"DF" was reinforced by the replacement battalion of the 304th Inf.Div., less its staff and supply section.

The planned attack on the bridgehead never developed due to an enemy breakthrough and advance on Petrovka to the northwest. SS Brigade "Schuldt" was ordered to intercept this communist force near Shiroki while at the same time maintaining the defense of Voroschiloff.

The latter town was to be held by 3rd Co./"DF" under Hstuf. Lex along with the engineer platoon from 16./"DF," under Oberscharführer von Eberstein and SS-KGr. "Dahl" from VII./"LSSAH."

On 1 February, the bulk of I./"Der Fuehrer" under Hstuf. Opficius made a desperate attempt to block off the Soviets at Shiroki, but in the end the town had to be abandoned. The focus of the fighting then shifted to Petrovka which was stoutly defended by 1st Co./"DF," a platoon from 14./"DF" and part of 3rd Btry./SS Flak Det. 2. All enemy attacks here were repulsed, and SS-Rottenführer Heider was decorated with the Iron Cross, 1st Class on the spot for destroying five Soviet tanks with his anti-tank gun. But due to another enemy penetration farther to the north, the "Der Fuehrer" Battalion had to be withdrawn to Vodjanjo.

On the following day, 2 February, both the 304th Inf.Div. and SS Bde. "Schuldt" were transferred to the XXXXVIII. Pz.Corp of the neighboring Army Detachment "Hollidt," and on the 3rd, the brigade was attached to 6th Pz.Div. and immediately saw some heavy fighting. A full-scale enemy assault was launched against the German positions, and I./"DF" found itself fighting for its life. Hand-to-hand combat raged in the Waffen-SS foxholes, trenches and in the nearby buildings. Only the intervention of Stuka bombers and tanks from 6th Pz.Div. managed to save the day and turn the tide. But severe losses had been sustained and a direct artillery hit on the battalion HQ had killed the commander of 4./"DF," Hstuf. Hocke.

SS Brigade "Schuldt," along with panzergradiers from 6th Pz.Div., advanced to Popovka on 4 February and proceeded on to Voroschiloff on the following day. Popovka was evacuated on 6/7 February, and a new security line, manned by part of the brigade until 12 February was set up in the hills north of the town. The 12th saw a renewed Soviet offensive due south of Voroschilovgrad, and the brigade, which was in the course of needed regrouping, had to be rushed to 304th Inf.Div. of XXI.Army Corps for emergency deployment. This caused the reunion of the brigade with SS-KGr. "Dietrich" to be postponed again.

SS Brigade "Schuldt" reassembled in Krassnoskij on 14 February, where it was at the disposal of XXI.Army Corps. On the 15th it was sent towards Uspenka to provide support for 22nd Pz. Division. Upon arriving in its new area, Bde. "Schuldt" was deployed in the hills 2 km to the northwest of Lutogino, and for the next few days defended this sector in fierce fighting. During this struggle, individual positions frequently changed hands several times over. The area was evacuated on 18 February and by the next day, Bde. "Schuldt" was back under the control of Army Det. "Fretter-Pico" in the vicinity of Adrianopol. Here the brigade was finally rejoined by SS-KGr. "Dietrich" and a major restructuring got underway using soldiers from the 1st, 2nd and 4th SS Divisions. The brigade structure that resulted looked like this:

Commander: Staf. Schuldt
Adjutant: Hstuf. Molt
Staff/Staff Company
SS Battalion "Dietrich"

Commander: Stubaf. Dietrich, replaced by Hstuf. Lex on 23 February

1st Co. (Rifle Co./"DF" Rgt.): Hstuf. Lex

2nd Co. (formed from troops of VII./"LSSAH" and I./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1): Ostuf. Knoesel

3rd Co. (same composition as 2nd Co.): Ostuf. Dahl

4th Co. (Heavy Weapons Co./"DF" Rgt.): Hstuf. Replinger

2nd Battery/SS-Art.Rgt.2 "DR"

3rd Battery/SS-Flak Det.2 "DR"

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A portion of the "Fuehrer" Flak Detachment
It is not clearly known whether or not some of the previously attached Army and Flak troops remained with the brigade.

Regrouping continued until 22 February when the brigade was put on alert. An enemy force in battalion strength, with heavy weapons support, had secured and fortified a ravine to the north of Utkino and the brigade was ordered to eliminate this penetration. Preparations for this undertaking got underway by Bn. "Dietrich" but they were brought to a halt when a new emergency arose. A stronger enemy force had gotten a foothold in the Vassjukova Gorge near Baschtewitsch, and Bn. "Dietrich" was needed to dislodge it.

The march to the new locale was a different one, hampered by heavy snow drifts and clashes with dispersed enemy troops. However, on 23 February, Bn. "Dietrich" began its attack towards an enemy-held destroyed village at the far end of the gorge between Jelisavetovka and Schterovka. The SS troops were supported on both flanks by Army units, and had good heavy weapons backing. In a brief but violent clash the Reds were pushed out of the town and into the wild and rocky ravine. In this type of terrain the fighting was particularly difficult and both sides took high losses. Stubaf. Dietrich was wounded during the afternoon but he stayed with his men until Staf. Schuldt ordered him to leave for medical treatment that evening. Dietrich's replacement was Hstuf. Lex from the "Der Fuehrer" Rgt., who had commanded the 1st Co. in Bn. "Dietrich."

By now, Stalingrad had gone under and the Soviets were able to concentrate on driving westwards, so each day the pressure increased on the mixed and scattered German forces that opposed them. On 24 February, Bn. "Dietrich" reported observing strong enemy units advancing towards Vodino through the Olchovka Valley. The brigade ordered the battalion to take up defensive positions to the east of Baschtewitsch to block off this advance. In the course of 24/25 February the SS troops of Bn. "Dietrich" fought off a number of tank supported enemy probing attacks with the backing of Stuka dive bombers. The battalion was able to report the destruction of two of the three enemy tanks involved in the fight.

On 25 February, SS Bde. "Schuldt" was reinforced by a full regiment from the 62nd Inf.Div. along with the assault gun detachment from the 19th Pz. Division. The brigade was then given a major mission to carry out using these new components. It was to seal off a gap in the lines near Jelisavetovka, with the aim of securing the hills to the east of the town. The attack was to be carried out in conjunction with an offensive operation by the now fully arrived SS Panzer Corps.

The carefully planned brigade assault began at 0700 on 26 February with a Stuka bombardment of the enemy positions. Staf. Schuldt directed the operation from the foremost element and as a result was lightly wounded at about 0900 and was forced to return to his HQ in Nitovka. At 1015 he was visited by Gen. Fretter-Pico, the commander of XXX.Army Corps, who gave him his best wishes and congratulated him on the successful development of the attack. By noon all objectives had been attained and the pursuit of fleeing Red soldiers had begun. But any serious follow-up action had to be put aside, since the regiment from 62nd Inf.Div. was now immediately withdrawn from SS Bde. "Schuldt."

In the following days, the brigade relocated to the Debalzevo sector where it was engaged until 7 March in maintaining the link-ups between XXX.Army Corps (facing east) and III.Pz. Corps (facing north). Many small engagements were fought during this time. On 7 March

the "Das Reich" and "Der Fuehrer" troops that remained with the brigade were ordered to immediately return to the 2nd SS Pz.Div. "Das Reich" (which was in the vicinity of Kharkov), via Pavlograd. This effectively reduced SS Bde. "Schuldt" to a hollow shell, but it remained in existence until 15 March 1943, when the survivors of VII./"LSSAH" and I./SS Pol.Inf.Rgt.I were sent by train back to the Debica SS training camp in Poland for rest and refitting.

It had been a supremely trying time and the members of the improvised SS Brigade "Schuldt" had done all that was required of them, despite the terrible weather and the chaotic battlefield conditions. Losses were so high that all of the original intact units that comprised the brigade, ceased to exist as such and had to be rebuilt as rapidly as possible. But the heroic sacrifices and achievements of SS Brigade "Schuldt" deserve an honorable mention in the pages of the history of the Waffen-SS. §



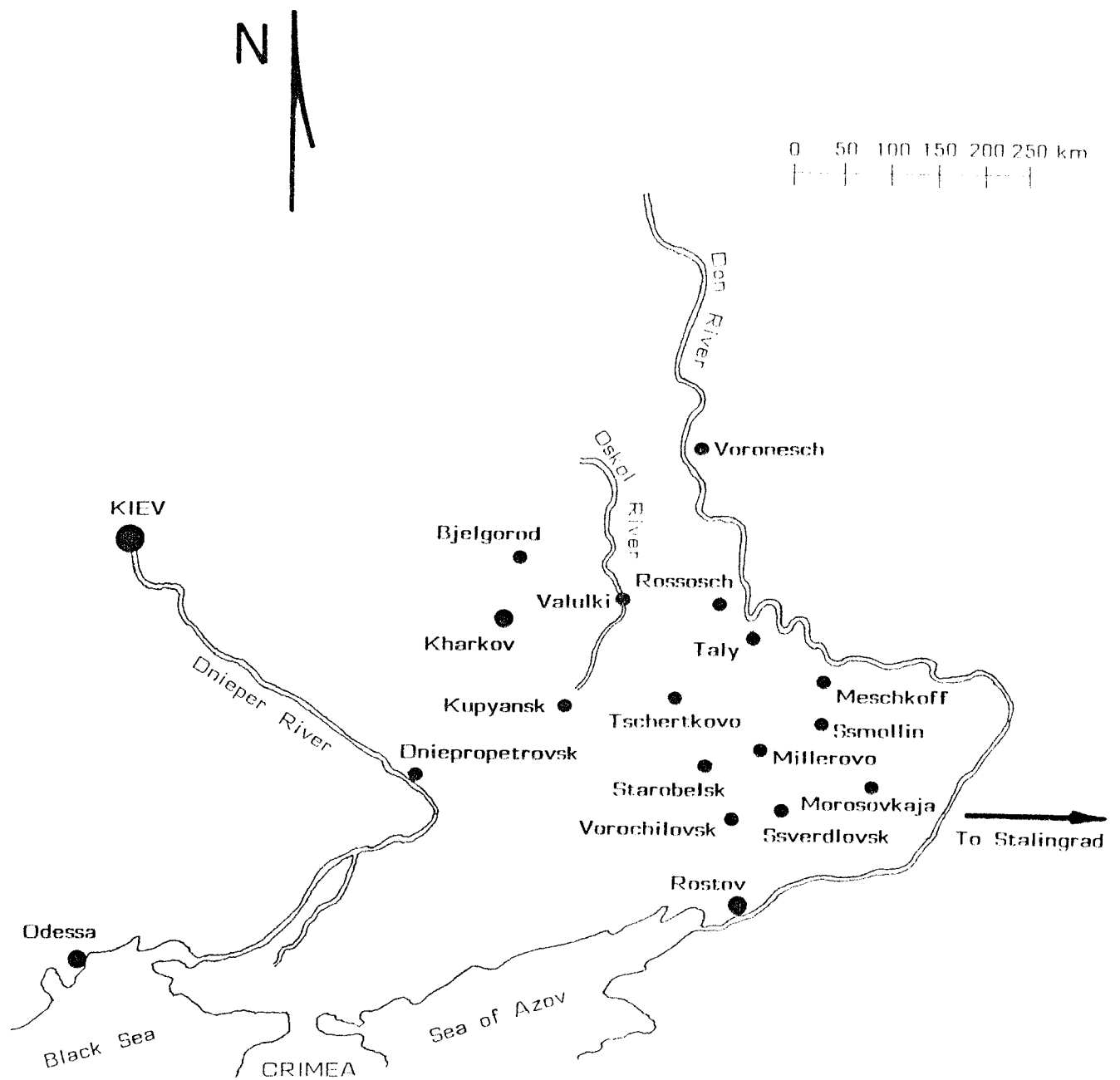
Grenadiers from the 4.SS-Polizei-Panzergranadier Division.

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DEPLOYMENT AREA OF
SS-KGR. "SCHULDT"
AND SS-KGR. "DIETRICH"
December 1942 - February 1943

THE INDEPENDENT COMBAT ACTIONS OF SS-KAMPFGRUPPE "DIETRICH"

4 JANUARY - 19 FEBRUARY 1943

After leaving SS Brigade "Schuldt," SS-Kampfgruppe "Dietrich" ("LSSAH" and SS Polizei Div.), was assigned to the Army KGr. "Unrein," led by Oberst Unrein (CO of Panzergrenadier Rgt. 4), on 4 January 1943. In addition to Pz.Gr.Rgt.4, the battle-group contained II./Pz.Rgt.11 under Major Dr. Baeke. KGr. "Unrein" was deployed in the Verchne-Obljvskiy sector. Upon its arrival in this area, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was forced to launch a counter-attack, with the support of tanks from KGr. "Unrein," just to regain and occupy its assigned positions.

In the course of 6 January, SS-KGr. "D" was withdrawn from the front under the cover of artillery fire and was then ordered to Kovytkln, from which point it was to take up defensive blocking positions in the Alexejev area. At 1830 hrs., the process of loading the SS troops and their equipment into vehicles began prior to their transfer to Alexejev. Four trucks were available to transport the "Leibstandarte" personnel, while two more were at the disposal of the battalion staff and 2nd Co./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1. The men of 3rd Co./SS-Pol.Inf.Rgt.1 were to make their way to Lugovoj, some 12 km away, by riding on top of tanks and in armored scout cars. In addition, the battle-group's recent fatalities were to be transported to Kovytkln for interment.

When the "LSSAH" troops reached Alexejev they were deployed in front of the town along the Stalingrad railroad line, in positions which were only 250 km due west of Stalingrad. They were later joined by the men of the

SS-Polizei Div. companies. On the SS battalion left was the Army Anti-tank Detachment 518. SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was subordinated to Pz.Gr.Rgt.114 under Oberst Zollenkopf on 7 January, and three Army self-propelled guns were attached to the SS command. Towards evening on the 7th, some Russian raiding parties broke into the northern part of Alexejev but were subsequently thrown out in a rapid counterattack and left 20 of their dead behind. To the southwest, Army Det. "Hollidt" had begun pulling back to the west of Morosoff so it was only a matter of time before the Alexejev positions had to go.

On 9 January 1943, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" sent out assault troops to probe the enemy lines. Afterwards the Reds responded in kind with a vigorous attack on the battle-group's positions early in the morning of 10 January. The fighting continued until noon when the communists broke off their assault. On 11 January, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was pulled out of Alexejev and was ordered to proceed as rapidly as possible through Tazinskaja and Masslof to Krassny Gornjak, 6 km to the west of Masslof. The Reds were making a concerted effort to break into the rear of the German forces before Rostov in this general area.

The front on both sides of Krassny Gornjak was held by the hard-pressed Pz.Gr.Rgt.7, and SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was instructed to reinforce it. Upon arriving, the SS troops were flung into violent fighting, and hard close combat raged around the town throughout 12 January



Stubaf. Dietrich (left) with officers from his battle-group.

and into the early morning of the 13th. The pressure was then taken off somewhat by a relief attack launched towards Masslof by 7th Pz. Division. Although this operation ultimately proved indecisive, it helped stabilize the shaky front, and the men of SS-KGr. "D" were able to enjoy a calm day on 14 January. On the 15th and 16th the hard close-in combat resumed and in the midst of it the SS battle-group was ordered to relocate to a spot about 8 km south of Karpovo-Obryvskiy.

On 17 January, SS-KGr. "D" travelled through Forchstadt to Olchovskiy where it was attached to 6th Pz.Div. and given a new assignment. The battle-group was ordered to put scout troops into operation in order to maintain contact with neighboring units and to keep track of any enemy movement across the Donez, particularly at night. SS-KGr. "D's" other mission was to prepare random "break-water" defenses in case of enemy breakthroughs in the sector facing west and southwest from Ravine #5 and the village of Kossovyj to the open fields between the railroad line and the Donez River. To the right of the SS battle-group was Group "Franke," which consisted of poorly armed combat troops and assorted soldiers who had been grouped together indiscriminately after returning from home leaves, while on the left was the Rgt. "Huenersdorff."

SS-KGr. "Dietrich" stayed in place on the western edge of Olchovskiy until 3 February. In that time there was only one day of heavy fighting or close combat, and that was 27 January. Other than that, only scouting operations and occasional skirmishes took place. During this period of time the battle-group received the services of the light infantry gun platoon of 4th Co./VII./"LSSAH."

On 24 January the HQ of 6th Army in Stalingrad announced its intention to surrender as soon as feasible and by 1 February all German resistance in that city had ceased. This meant that massive new Red forces would be available for use against the German troops to the west of Stalingrad. Preparations had to be made quickly in an effort to stem the flood.

On 3 February, SS-KGr. "Dietrich" was removed from the control of III./Inf.Rgt.129/306th Inf.Div. and sent 15 km to the west in the Lipoff Ssasonoff sector, where it was attached to Oberst Rodt's 22nd Pz. Division. The battle-group had been reduced in size to two companies, one "LSSAH" and one "SS Polizei," and assorted staff troops. On the 4th it entered the lines, facing southwards, with the "LSSAH" Co. holding positions from Knoesel, 1½ km north-northwest of Werch Ssasonoff to the east part of the town. The "Polizei" Co. then took over as far as the Boganoff Ravine. The lines could only be manned by strongpoints placed at strategic intervals. A 2 cm Flak platoon under Lt. Bogainy was placed in support of the battle-group positions. The right-hand neighbor of the SS troops was the Army Rifle Bn. 24.

The next few days saw a considerable amount of enemy movement and reconnaissance activities. A major Russian penetration some 50 km to the northwest once again caused the German front to contract and begin adjusting backwards. For one whole day, SS KGr. "Dietrich" was left on its own to defend an exposed angle where the front veered off sharply from the east to the south, but no particular problems developed. In the late afternoon of 9 February, the SS battle-group was relieved by II. and III. Battalions of Inf.Rgt.581 and was transferred by trucks from the divisional supply column to the area due east of Sverplovsk.

SS-KGr. "D" now had 11 trucks and two motorcycles (one with a sidecar), at its disposal, but the trucks had to be used for hauling supplies, munitions and field kitchens and were thus not able to transport any troops. On 10 February it was rumored that the battle-group would either be sent to join the 6th Pz.Div. or SS Bde. "Schuldt" and on the next day a few trucks arrived from SS Bde. "Schuldt" to transport the SS battalion to Krassnodonsk. It was "Kapt'n" Schuldt's second attempt to regain control of the battle-group before someone else latched on to it again. But once again something came up. A new Soviet breakthrough to the south of Voroschilovgrad caused



Stubaß. Dietrich presenting decorations to his men.

SS-KGr. "Dietrich" to be rushed to the south to join 22nd Pz.Div. in an attempt to block off any further Red advances. It was subsequently posted along a line running from Volnuchino to Malaja to Nikolajevka.

On the 12th, SS troops had to reconnoiter the area on foot (due to a heavy snow storm), and found it to be still free of the foe. By 13 February, SS-KGr. "D" had occupied its designated line and had scouted the terrain to the southwest, west and northwest. While the villages were found not to be enemy occupied, some enemy cavalry movement to the west and northwest had been observed. On the 15th, 22nd Pz.Div. was ordered to fall back on Voroschilova. While accompanying this division on its withdrawal, SS-KGr. "D" was ordered out of line to help Gebirgsjaeger Rgt. 114 clear out yet another enemy penetration near the Hills 220.5 and 199. With the backing

of three assault guns, the "LSSAH" and "Polizei" Companies were able to restore the situation by the onset of dusk, following which they continued on to Voroschilova. The next day was peaceful, but the SS men remained wary and on the alert due to the uncertain military situation.

The 17th of February saw the battle-group contain a small Red breakthrough in the hills north of Voroschilova. During the evening hours, SS-KGr. "D" served as the rearguard for a general withdrawal from the area, but no enemy pursuit was noticed. On the next day the battle-group reached Petro Krassnosselje and took its leave from the 22nd Pz. Division. After a long absence, SS-Bn. "Dietrich" was then ordered to rejoin the SS Brigade "Schuldt" on 19 February 1943.

8

SS-FORTRESS-GRENADIER RGT. "BESSLEIN"

In early 1945, all military training and replacement units in the vicinity of Breslau were mobilized to help defend the threatened city. Under the code-name "Action Gneisenau," these troops were formed into special battle-groups, among which was the Fortress Rgt. Breslau "D" under Ostubaf. Besslein, the commander of the SS Infantry Gun (Close Support Artillery) Training School at Breslau. This unit soon became the SS-Fortress-Gr. Rgt. "Besslein."

The Regiment was comprised of 15 individual companies formed from the following elements: SS-Inf. Gun Training & Replacement Bn. 1/Deutsch-Lissa, SS-Pz. Gr. Training & Replacement Bn. 1/Breslau, and the SS NCO Administrative School/Breslau. The following Army elements also were incorporated into the regiment: a portion of the Army NCO School at Striegau, the Drivers Replacement and Training Detachment 28 in Schweidnitz and the Veterinary Training and Replacement Detachment 8 in Schweidnitz. The regimental order of battle and command roster looked like this:

- Commander
 - SS-Ostubaf. Besslein
- Ia. (Chief-of-Staff)
 - Hauptmann Eberhard Seiffert
- I. Bn.
 - Hstuf. Greger
- II. Bn.
 - Hstuf. Zielske
- III. Bn.
 - Hauptmann Sommer (from the Army NCO School at Striegau)
- IV. Bn.
 - Ostubaf. Scharpwinkel

II./"Besslein" was attached to the 609th Infantry Division and its commander was killed in action in late February or early March 1945. His replacement was Hstuf. Zitzmann, who was in turn wounded and replaced by Hstuf. Roge. During the fierce struggle for the besieged city of Breslau, the SS troops put up a particularly tough resistance and won the praise of the Breslau Fortress commander. Three members of Rgt. "Besslein," Ostubaf. Besslein, Ostuf. Budka and Ostuf. Roge were decorated with the Knight's Cross for their deeds during the struggle for the city.

8



Ostubaf. Georg Robert Besslein.



Ostuf. Franz Budka.



Ostuf. Alfred Roge.



SS-Standartenführer
JOHANNES RUDOLF MUEHLENKAMP

PHOTO: SS-Stubaf. Johannes Muehlenkamp after the award of the Knight's Cross, 3 September 1942.

Johannes Muehlenkamp was born in Metz, Lothringen (Lorraine) on 9 October 1910, the son of government official Emil Muehlenkamp. Known as "Hannes," he joined the SS-Standarte "Germania" in September 1934 and a year later became part of the first SS officer's training course at the SS-Junkerschule Braunschweig. In 1936, with the rank of Untersturmführer, he was attached to the Army's 2nd Panzer Division in Eisenach for armored warfare training.

Following a stint as a platoon leader, Muehlenkamp assumed command of "Germania's" 15th Motorcycle Recon Company in 1938 and led it with considerable distinction during the Polish Campaign of 1939 and the Western Campaign of 1940. In the Polish Campaign he became one of the first German soldiers in the war to be decorated with both classes of the Iron Cross. At the conclusion of the Western Campaign, Hstuf. Muehlenkamp served for a time as the personal adjutant of Gruf. Paul Hausser, the first commander of the SS-"V" (later "Das Reich") Division.

By 1941, Muehlenkamp was in charge of the recon detachment of the "Das Reich" Division which he led with vigor in the Yugoslavia Campaign and the early stages of the war with the Soviet Union. At the Yelnya River bend in August 1941, Muehlenkamp personally led a scouting party through difficult swampland and suffered multiple severe wounds when he was caught in a Soviet mortar barrage. His adjutant managed to bring him safely back to the German lines. Muehlenkamp's strong constitution and attitude helped him to fully recover in only a few month's time.

Now bearing the German Cross in Gold, Sturmabführer Muehlenkamp was next given the job of forming a tank detachment for the European SS volunteer Division "Wiking" in early 1942. He subsequently led this unit in action during the summer offensive of 1942 and played a major role in the conquest of the key city of Rostov (see SR #25 for details). This brought about the richly



WAFFEN-SS PERSONALITY PROFILE

deserved award of the Knight's Cross to Stubaf. Muehlenkamp on 3 September 1942.

Muehlenkamp continued to lead SS Panzer Abteilung 5 during the drive to the Soviet oilfields to the south of the Caucasus Mountains. The detachment heroically distinguished itself in action after action alongside the "Germania," "Westland" and "Nordland" Regiments of the "Wiking" Division.

In March 1943, SS-Pz.Abt. 5 was ordered expanded into a full-scale regiment with the addition of another armored detachment, though as it turned out this element, II./SS-Pz.Rgt. 5, would not be ready for use for a full year. In the meantime, I./SS-Pz.Rgt. 5 had to remain at the front and was engaged in heavy defensive fighting on the middle Don River, near Kharkov and Isjum, in the area west of Kharkov and east of Kiev and then later on the Dnepr River and at Cherkassy. In March 1944, II./SS-Pz.Rgt. 5 finally went into action, leading the successful "Wiking" effort to relieve the encircled German forces at Kowel. The entire SS-Pz.Rgt. 5 was then pulled back into Poland and underwent refitting at the SS Training Camp Heidelager near Lublin from May to early July 1944.

When SS Pz.Rgt. 5 returned to the front to the west of Kowel, the now Obersturmbannführer Muehlenkamp led it as part of a larger "Wiking" Kampfgruppe, which he was also in charge of. On 8 July 1944, SS kGr. "Wiking" met one of the greatest challenges in the division's history when a total of ten Red Rifle Divisions and five Brigades (three of them armored), rolled up the German frontlines and bore down on the "Wiking" positions. Though vastly outnumbered, Muehlenkamp led his refurbished Panzer troops in an immediate counterattack. In one day of unrelenting, violent combat, the "Wiking" soldiers destroyed 103 Soviet tanks and restored the main defensive lines. This incredible achievement brought the division and Ostuf. Muehlenkamp a prominent mention in the Wehrmacht Communique for 11 July 1944.

Muehlenkamp was then promoted to Standartenführer and assumed temporary command of the entire "Wiking" Division on 6 August 1944 when the former commander, Gruppenführer Herbert Otto Gille was placed in charge of IV. SS Panzer Corps (3rd and 5th SS Divisions). From 4 to 6 August, the Soviets made an attempt to smash through to Warsaw in the area from Stanslavov and Tuszcz-Sulejov to the southeast. Standing in their way were the valiant panzergrenadiers of the "Wiking" Division who stopped them cold, albeit at a high price in casualties.

Another communist "Warsaw Offensive" began in the Trojany-Malepole-Slopsk sector on 19 August 1944, once again against Div. "Wiking." But Muehlenkamp and his Vikings, even though faced by ten more Red Rifle Divisions and a Tank Corps, not only managed to hold firm but even managed to launch a counterattack of their own, with Staf. Muehlenkamp directing it from the frontlines! The result was a severe setback for the Soviets who were forced due to heavy losses to cancel their drive on Warsaw. In the period from 4 August to 3 September 1944, the "Wiking" Division destroyed or captured the following quantities of enemy war material: 151 tanks, 19 assault guns, 13 self-propelled guns and armored cars, 176 artillery pieces, 94 machine guns and anti tank weapons and five airplanes.

This triumph of arms and courage brought the award of the Oak Leaves to Staf. Muehlenkamp on behalf of

Ord. Nr.	Zuname	Vorname (Namen)	Geburts-		Dienstgrad	Truppenteil
			Ort	Jahr		
1	Mühlenkamp	Rudolf	Metz- Montigny	9.10. 1910	SS-Sturm- bannführer	SS-Pz.Abt.5
		E.K.II am	3.10.39			
		E.K.I am	14.11.39			
		D.K.I.G. am	2.1.42			

Kurze Begründung und Stellungnahme der Zweifelsmomente

SS-Sturmabführer Mühlenkamp, Kor. SS-Pz.Abt.5 hat als Führer einer Vorpostenabteilung der Div. am 22. - 23.7. nach hartem Kampf 3 Panzergrabenstellungen vor Rostow in Mähen durchstoßen und ist am 23.7., 14,30 Uhr in den Westteil der Stadt Rostow eingebrochen. Er hat diesen gesäubert und bereitet und ist auf breiter Front an das Ufer des Don vorgestoßen. Im Laufe des Kampfes wurden 10 feindliche Geschütze und 12 Pak vernichtet und zahlreiche Gefangene erbeutet.

Durch Mähen und umsichtiges Handeln hat er entscheidend dazu beigetragen, dass die West- und Nordwestfront der tief besetzten Panzergrabenstellungen vor Rostow zusammenbrach, der Gegner in regelloser Flucht über den Don auswich und hat damit den vorrücken der Nordwesten vordringenden Infanteriedivisionen den Weg nach Rostow und an den Don frei gemacht. Er ist somit entscheidend an der Fortnahme von Rostow beteiligt und hat die Voraussetzungen für den Übergang der nachfolgenden 73. und 125. Infanteriedivisionen über den Don geschaffen.

SS-Sturmabführer Mühlenkamp ist Träger des Eisernen Kreuzes 1. und 2.Klasse aus dem Polenfeldzug und ist für seine Verdienste im West- und Ostfeldzug mit dem Deutschen Kreuz in Gold ausgezeichnet worden.

gez. Steiner

SS-Gruppenführer u. Generalleutnant
der Waffen SS. SS-Div. Wiking.

Hauptquartier OKH

Befürwortet.

Generalfeldmarschall.

the achievements of his soldiers on 21 September 1944. He was the 596th recipient of this decoration. On 9 October 1944, Muehlenkamp handed the reins of the "Wiking" Division over to its new permanent commander, Staf. Karl Ulrich from the "Totenkopf" Division. He then became the Inspector of SS Panzer Troops at Waffen-SS Headquarters.

In January 1945, Staf. Muehlenkamp was placed in charge of forming the new 32nd SS Division "30 Januar." He turned command of it over to Staf. Richter on 5 February 1945. Muehlenkamp then reassumed his post of SS Panzer Troops Inspector, which he held until the end of the war. Johannes Muehlenkamp will go down in military history as one of the greatest and most successful German armored commanders of the Second World War.

Johannes Rudolf Muehlenkamp died after a long illness on 23 September 1986.

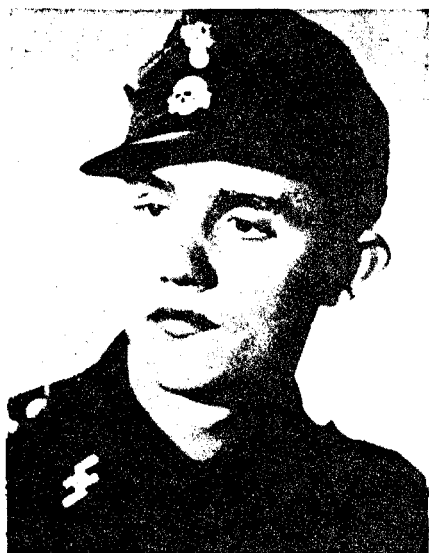
RENE VAN EYNDOHOVEN

Rene van Eyndhoven was born in Arendonck (Kempen), Belgium on 15 December 1899. He became a chemical engineer and a reserve officer in the Belgian Army. He was also an ardent Flemish nationalist and anti-communist. In July 1941 he took a leave from the company he worked for in Belgium to join the Waffen-SS. Because of his

age and seniority he was accepted for service with the equivalent of his Belgian Army reserve officer's rank.

Van Eyndhoven was posted to the SS Volunteer Legion "Flandern" and served with it during its early days on the Eastern Front. In December 1941, when the Legion had been pulled back to Zabite, Latvia for some rest and refitting it was inspected by SS-Gruf. Lothar Debes. Debes made the acquaintance of Rene van Eyndhoven and upon learning of his technical expertise he recommended that he be transferred to the Main Office of the SS Medical Branch in Berlin. Thus for the remainder of the war van Eyndhoven worked for the SS medical services in Berlin. A committed National Socialist he also applied for permanent resident status in Germany (and later Austria), which saved him from being extradited to "liberated" Belgium after the war.

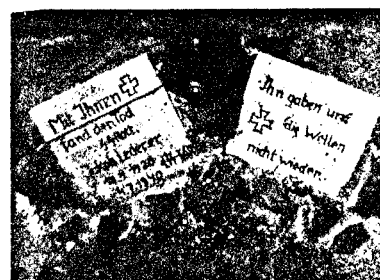
In the post-war era, van Eyndhoven worked for the firm of Doubrava in Voecklabruck, Austria. Despite having once been "sentenced to death" (in absentia), by the Allied-installed Belgian government, he did manage to return to Flanders privately for a visit of a few weeks to his old home region and the city of Antwerp with the help and assistance of Flemish patriots and old comrades. Rene van Eyndhoven died after a brief illness on 21 January 1985 in Voecklabruck-Schoendorf, Austria. He was buried with full ceremonial honors provided by the Austrian Kameradschaftsbund (WWII Veterans' Organization), on 25 January 1985.



MURDERED IN CAPTIVITY!

SS-Panzer-Schuetzen Walter Kemker (photo) was born on 27 November 1927. His last unit was 5th Company/SS-Panzer Regiment 2 "Das Reich" where he served with the crew of Panzer 564 under SS-Unterscharfuhrer Launer. He last saw action around Hellerau and went into Soviet captivity. From the Helfta/Eisleben POW Camp he was turned over to the Americans who incarcerated him briefly in the Babenhausen POW Camp on 3 July 1945.

Then, on 10 July 1945, Kemker was turned over to the French and was placed in the Siershan POW Camp at Montabauer. At this place, on 28 July 1945, he was executed by the French. No legal proceedings had been conducted and no charges of any sort had been made. Walter Kemker was only 17 years old - still another "unknown" victim of the victors!



Grave of SS-Rittfhr. Jakob Lederer from 1st Battery/SS-Totenkopf Artillerie Regiment, drowned in France on 4 July 1940. He was born on 18 April 1920.

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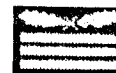
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WAFFEN-SS

OBERST AND OBERGRUPPENFUEHRER

A Profile



There were 25 Waffen-SS Oberst and Obergruppenfuehrer, two (Dietrich and Hausser) in the former category. The oldest of the lot was the Latvian General Rudolf Bangerskis (born in 1878), with the youngest being Medical Dr. Ernst Robert Grawitz (born in 1899). Sixteen of these SS Generals were born in the 1890s. Fourteen of them plus three born in Alsace-Lorraine, were of Prussian lineage. Three Ogruf. came from parts of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Often referred to as "Hungarian Germans," they were: Arthur Phleps (from the Saxon Siebenburgen), and the Hungarian Generals Eugen Ranzenberger (Jeno Ruskay) and Franz Zeidner (Ferenc Feketchalmy-Czeydner). The latter two were Hungarian citizens who adopted Hungarian names, while Phleps was a Romanian citizen and General.

Two of the Oberst/Ogruf. came from Bavaria (Sepp Dietrich and Karl-Maria Demelhuber). Gotlob Berger came from Wuerttemberg, Walter Schmitt from Hamburg and Rudolf Bangerskis from Latvia. Thirteen of these SS Generals retained their religious affiliations, and of this total, 11 were Evangelical Lutherans. Felix Steiner was a Roman Catholic, who was born in East Prussia of Austrian heritage. On a social scale, three Ogruf. (Gille, Grawitz, and von Herff) came from the upper class, while seven were of upper middle class descent (Hausser, Breithaupt, Keppler, Krueger, Pfeffer-Wildenbruch, Phleps and Ruskay). Another seven (Berger, Czeydner, Juettner, Knoblauch, Sachs, Schmitt and Steiner) came from middle class backgrounds. Six Ogruf. (Bittrich, Demelhuber, Eicke, Kleinheisterkamp, Wuennenberg and probably Bangerskis, the son of a farmer) came from the lower middle class. Both Sepp Dietrich and Oswald Pohl had lower class backgrounds; Dietrich's father was a handy-man while Pohl's was a blacksmith.

Educationally all but three of the 25 Oberst/Ogruf. had achieved some level of higher education. At the bottom rung was Sepp Dietrich who only had an elementary school education. He was followed by Wilhelm Bittrich who only got through the equivalent of junior high school and Theodor Eicke, a high school drop-out. Four of the Ogruf., Demelhuber, Grawitz, Czeydner and Ruskay, received higher university degrees. Eighteen of the Oberst/Ogruf. were career military officers, through four (Demelhuber, Keppler, Pfeffer-Wildenbruch and Wuennenberg), had switched from the Army to the Police, while another four (Breithaupt, Gille, Krueger and Schmitt) had gone into private business when a size limit was placed on the German Army after World War I. Four of the Oberst/Ogruf. (Berger, Bittrich, Grawitz and Juettner) had been reserve Army officers, while Sepp

Dietrich had been a career NCO.

Both Theodor Eicke and Oswald Pohl had been Army paymasters, with Pohl getting his start in the German Navy. Bangerskis had served in the Imperial Russian and Latvian Armies, while Dietrich and Demelhuber had been in the Royal Bavarian Army. Phleps, Czeydner and Ruskay had all served in the Austro-Hungarian armed forces; Phleps went on to become a Romanian Army General, with the latter two becoming Generals in the Hungarian Army.

The senior N.S. Party member in the group of Generals was Oswald Pohl who held Party Number 30,842. On the other end of the scale was Maximilian von Herff with Number 8,858,661. Ten other Oberst/Ogruf. had Party Numbers over one million. Five of the Generals (Bangerskis, Demelhuber, Czeydner, Phleps and Ruskay) were not Party members. Sepp Dietrich was the senior member of the SS, holding Number 1,177. Six other Oberst/Ogruf. had SS numbers under 100,000, while 13 had numbers above 200,000. The Latvian and Hungarian Waffen-SS Generals were not members of the SS proper.

Fifteen of the Oberst/Ogruf. were decorated with the Knight's Cross. Two (Dietrich and Gille) held the diamonds, swords and oakleaves; four (Hausser, Bittrich, Krueger and Steiner) held the swords and oakleaves; five (Eicke, Kleinheisterkamp, Pfeffer-Wildenbruch, Phleps and Wuennenberg) held just the oakleaves. Gottlob Berger and Hans Juettner were decorated with the Knight's Cross to the War Service Cross for their non-combat contributions to the war effort.

Ogruf. Theodor Eicke was killed-in-action (his scout plane was shot down), while Ogruf. Phleps was murdered soon after being captured by the Soviets. Three Ogruf. were supposed to have committed suicide: Walter Krueger, Ernst Grawitz and Mathias Kleinheisterkamp. At the time of his death, Krueger was trying to make his way back to Germany on foot from Latvia in May 1945, while Kleinheisterkamp was technically MIA while commanding XI SS Army Corps in late April 1945. His body was never found.

Franz Breithaupt died in an accident, while Maximilian von Herff perished in British captivity. Four Ogruf. were executed as "war criminals": Oswald Pohl at Nuremberg, Ferenc Feketchalmy-Czeydner by the Yugoslav communists, Jeno Ruskay by the Hungarian communists and Walter Schmitt by the Czechs. The latter three were all extradited to their deaths by the "Allies," who were unconcerned about their guilt or innocence and applauded the actions of their Bolshevik friends!

THE LATVIAN SS GRENADIER TRAINING AND REPLACEMENT BRIGADE 15

In September 1943, the Training and Replacement Battalion for the Latvian SS Legion was relocated to the city of Jelgava (Mitau), where it was renamed the SS Grenadier Training and Replacement Bn.15 (SS-Ausbildung und Ersatz Btl.15). Up to the end of the year its primary function was to handle convalescent soldiers who had been released from hospitals but were not yet fully recovered. Once the 15th SS Division left for the front in late 1943, the battalion took over the job of training recruits as well.

Since there were large numbers of Latvian recruits and recovering wounded to take care of, the battalion quickly expanded to brigade strength and was reorganized to include the following elements:

- Staff
- Training Regiment
- Replacement Battalion
- Truck Transport Company
- Vehicle Drivers (Training?) Company
- Light Infantry Gun (close support artillery) Company
- 2 cm Light Flak Battery
- Light Mortar Company
- Anti-Tank Company
- Communications Company
- Engineer Company

Ostubaf. Garthe became the brigade commander; he had previously commanded the Escort Bn. "RF-SS" in the 2nd Brigade during 1941/42. In the summer of 1944 he would be replaced by Staf. von Bredow and the brigade title would be changed to "Latvian SS Training and Replacement Unit 15." As such it soon became engaged in combat following the Soviet breakthrough near Vitebsk and the rapid advance of the Red Army into Latvia. Following a penetration by the communists into Lithuania, terrorist activity along the Lithuanian-Latvian frontier began to develop in earnest. So on 18 July 1944, the T. & R. Brigade formed an emergency battalion to help deal with the partisan threat along the Lithuanian border.

But the overall military situation continued to deteriorate and on 26 July 1944, Staf. von Bredow was ordered to form a battle-group from his command and place it at the disposal of Lt.Gen. Koeller. This task force was formed from the Emergency Bn. and several other Latvian SS companies and was sent to Janiski in the night of 26/27 July. Here it received orders to retake the enemy-held town of Sauli. In the morning of the 27th the battle-group advanced towards Sauli. Enemy artillery fire was received about 5 km from the town, but the troops managed to elude any direct hits and began a full-scale attack along both sides of the road leading into Sauli.

The Soviets were slowly driven back, but the Latvians were hindered by a lack of heavy weapons and machine guns and took heavy casualties. Towards noon their ammunition ran out and the Latvian soldiers fell back for resupply purposes. This completed, the assault was renewed in the afternoon, but the village was set on fire by Lithuanian partisans assisted by some of the villagers. As a result another withdrawal had to be conducted. The only problem was that the retreat route to Jelgava was now occupied by enemy forces and had to be cleared!

Following much fierce fighting in which fully two-thirds of the battle-group was lost, the Latvian troopers reached Janiski at 21:00 hours. Out of the Kampfgruppe's original

32 officers, 25 had been killed or wounded. But the worst was yet to come. In the course of the night a communist tank force overran the small Latvian SS contingent, completely scattering it. Staf. von Bredow and his entire staff became missing-in-action in this engagement.

The Latvian troops from the brigade that had remained behind in Jelgava now came under the control of Army Lt.Col. Jurko. On 27 July 1944 the city was declared a "Fortress" by Lt.Gen. Pflugbeil, who ordered it held "at any price." Lieutenant Colonel Jurko was instructed to form his Latvian troops into some sort of combat force. He was able to assemble them into two companies, which on the surface at least appeared to be of dubious value, since they were chiefly composed of either sick soldiers or raw recruits. Nevertheless they had to get ready for action.

On 28 July, Soviet motorized troops began their attack on Jelgava. Lieutenant Colonel Jurko's Latvians were joined by assorted German units and another full battalion of Latvian soldiers and they fought like tigers! Throughout the day, numerous tank-supported Red attacks were shattered and the defensive lines held despite the fact that the city had been turned into a blazing inferno by enemy air raids. The Soviet onslaught died off during the night and did not resume again until 14:00 on 29 July. During the break in the action, the Latvian battalion that had joined the Latvian Training Brigade troops was pulled out of the lines and sent to join another German division.

When the communist attack began again, the weakened defenders found themselves hard-pressed and were forced to give ground, albeit grudgingly. The Latvians and Germans were pushed back into the city center where they continued to hold out in small groups. They kept up the fight in the heart of the burning city until 30 July, when they were compressed into a tight defensive zone around the Aa River bridge. Orders to evacuate Jelgava were finally received in the night of 31 July/1 August 1944. The battle proper ended at 02:00 on the 1st with the destruction of the Aa Bridge after the last defenders had passed over it.

The surviving Latvian soldiers were then ordered to return to their original units. Recruits and others who had gotten detached in the battle for Jelgava were shipped to Germany to serve as a nucleus for a new Latvian SS Grenadier Training and Replacement Bn., that was to be formed in Berent, West Prussia. This new unit was able to rapidly expand to roughly regimental size, and in February 1945 part of it was used to form another emergency battalion that consisted of eight officers and 375 NCOs and men.

This battalion was deployed for the defense of Marienburg and the combat engagement that ensued proved to be both its first and last. It was almost totally destroyed in the action with the survivors going into Soviet captivity. In the meantime the troops from the Latvian SS Grenadier T & R Bn. that had stayed behind in Berent were marched to Gotenhafen and from there they were shipped to Denmark via Swinemünde. They finished the war here and went into English captivity, eventually winding up at the Zedelyghem POW Camp in Belgium. A few of the Latvians (chiefly officers), who were on a KGB "wanted" list were obligingly extradited to their deaths in the Soviet Union by the accommodating English, but most

of the rank and file troops were eventually released to immigrate to various countries in the "free" world. On the whole, the story of the Latvian SS Training and

Replacement Brigade mirrored that of the Latvian Waffen-SS in general: a continual round of courage, calamity and ultimate catastrophe!

VI. LATVIAN SS ARMY CORPS STAFF COMMAND ROSTER 1943-45

COMMANDERS

Gruf. von Pfeffer-Wildenbruch
October 1943-June 1944
Gruf. von Treuenfeld
June-July 1944
Ogruf. Walter Krueger
July 1944-May 1945

CHEIFS-OF-STAFF

Staf. Nikolaus Heilmann
October 1943-February 1944
Staf. Somner
February 1944-December 1944
Lt.Col. Kuhn
January 1945
Lt.Col. Ziervogel
January 1945-?

FIRST STAFF OFFICERS (Ia)

Stubaf. Heissler
Stubaf. Janssen
Stubaf. Thoemy

01 (1ST ORDERLY OFFICER TO THE Ia):

Hstuf. Richter
Lt.Col. Henseler (acting)

Ib (SUPPLY OFFICER):

Stubaf. Pruss
Stubaf. Kiep
Major Elble

02 (2ND ORDERLY OFFICER TO THE Ib):

Stubaf. Taubold

Ic (INTELLIGENCE OFFICER)

Stubaf. Neuss
Stubaf. Reimer

03 (3RD ORDERLY OFFICER TO THE Ic)

Ostuf. HeineIt
Ostuf. Sprenger (acting)

IIa ()

Hstuf. Karst
Hstuf. Martins
Stubaf. Rehmann

IIb ()

Ostuf. Kramer

III (LEGAL OFFICER)

Dr. Zentgraf

IVa (MAINTENANCE & REPAIR OFFICER)

Ostuf. Eggert
Intendant Schneider

IVb (CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER)

Oberfuehrer Dr. Kahrenke

V ()

Staf. Hildebrandt

VI ()

Ostuf. Bernhard
Ustuf. Varlejs

LdN ()

Ostuf. Bruders

SS WAR CORRESPONDENT PLATOON

Oscha. Juergens

SS MAP OFFICE 506 (MOTORIZED)

Hstuf. Egelhaff

SS STAFF COMPANY 506

Hstuf. Pester

SS CORPS ESCORT COMPANY

(later SS Corps Security Company 506)
Hstuf. Lindenberg
Ostuf. Schmerbach
Ostuf. Heim

RADIO/LISTENING POST

Oberleutnant (1st Lt.) Vader (Luftwaffe)

SS ARTILLERY COMMAND 506

Oberst (Col.) Dr. Mueller
Oberst Tridel
Oberst von Knobelsdorf

SS ENGINEERING COMMAND 506

(later converted into Latvian SS Engineer Construction Bn.5)
Stubaf. Viffert (Danish volunteer)

ANTI-TANK/FLAK OFFICER

Stubaf. Gebhard

WAFEN-GREANDIER REGIMENT DER SS 106

(surviving remnants largely incorporated into 19th Latvian SS Division in early 1944)
Waffen-Staf. Janssons (KIA)

SS ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTERY 506

Hstuf. Rohlfing

SS CORPS FLAK DETACHMENT 506

Waffen-Stubaf. Gusevs

SS CORPS TRAINING BN.506

Stubaf. Holwein

SS CORPS SIGNAL DET. 506
Stubaf. Huettig

SS CORPS FIELD POLICE CO.506
Hstuf. Preuss

SS CORPS MOTOR TRANSPORT CO.506/1
Hstuf. Rentsch

SS CORPS MOTOR TRANSPORT CO.506/2
Hauptmann (Captain) Moeschke

SS CORPS FIELD HOSPITAL 506
Dr. Paul

SS CORPS PHARMACIST
Hstuf. Stahl

SS CORPS FIELD POST OFFICE A 506
Hstuf. Caesar

LOCATIONS OF VI. LATVIAN SS ARMY CORPS HEADQUARTERS, 1943-45

After being established in Riga in October 1943, VI. SS Corps Headquarters was on the Nevel River Front and took part in the withdrawal fighting from the Nevel Front to the "Panther Positions" in Latvia. It eventually wound up in Kurland Province/Western Latvia. The chronology of the various Headquarters locations runs as follows:

DECEMBER 1943

At Volosonovo (25 km northwest of Novosokolnik)

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1944

At Bolgotovo.

MARCH/APRIL 1944

At Velye (60 km southeast of Ostrov, due west of the main rail line).

MAY/JUNE 1944

At Chanino (10 km east of Lake Kudevi).

JULY 1944

At Puschovo (20 km southwest of Ostrov).
At Minina (8 km southwest of Krasanyil).
At Naglani (4.5 km southeast of Karasava).
At Lubana.

AUGUST 1944

At Tirza.

SEPTEMBER 1944

At Ranka, Keci and Grunduli.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1944

At Ramava (southwest outskirts of Riga).
At Prususkrogs (12 km southeast of Tukums).

NOVEMBER 1944/FEBRUARY 1945

At Grenai/Irlava (12 km southwest of Tukums).

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1945

At Strutele (10 km southwest of Grenai).

APRIL 1945

At Zante (15 km northwest of Strutele).
At Graudi (4 km northeast of Zante).

MAY 1945

At Vane (15 km northwest of Graudi).

As can be seen from the above, VI.SS Corps Headquarters was almost constantly relocating, which demonstrates very clearly the supreme application of constant enemy pressure during this whole period of time! From the time it was first deployed in the field to the bitter end of the surrender, the Latvian SS Corps was continuously engaged against the Soviets without the slightest respite. The tenacity and heroism of the Corps and its troops under these circumstances was simply unsurpassable! 8

Part of the brigade-sized Hungarian SS Kampfgruppe "Ney" which had been fighting with the IV. SS Panzer Corps, retreated at the end of the war towards the Attersee where it joined the 25th SS Div. "Hunyadi" and surrendered to the Americans.

On 3 April 1945, a field howitzer detachment from IV. Det./SS Artillery Training and Replacement Rgt. "Prag" in Komotau, Bohemia-Moravia, was sent by rail through Dresden to the area south of Stettin where it was assigned to the 27th Flemish SS Div. "Langemarck." Included in the unit were a few Latvian artillery trainees from the 15. WGD who finished up the war serving in a Belgian SS Division!

CLASSIFIEDS

Recommended: W.U.N. Enterprises, P.O. Box 644, New Monmouth NJ 07748. Always a good selection of hard to find Waffen-SS/Third Reich books and other items. Send them \$1.00 for their latest lists. [15]

WANTED: Waffen SS sleevebands, awards, documents, etc. up to \$3,000 for complete SS soldier's estates. Paying up to \$200 for SS Soldbuch. Free, no obligation appraisals. Will travel to view on either side of the Atlantic. All transactions strictly confidential. Write to: Robert Springer, Genco Oil Corp., 725 E. Market St., Wilmington DE 19801. [16]

REPORT ON THE RHINELAND AND SOUTHERN GERMANY CAMPAIGN

by Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Max Simon

previously Commanding General of the XIII SS-Armee Korps

Preliminary Remarks

This report was written down from memory in the prisoner-of-war camp. Its completion was delayed because the author was transferred to prisons and prisoner-of-war camps in England, from the end of October 1945 until January 1946. It could not be completed because of another transfer to England.

The report is based purely on personal experience. Official German records were not available. Therefore errors, especially in regard to locations and time are possible.

[signed] MAX SIMON

P.S.: On 21 March my dictations were interrupted so that I could be taken away immediately. Only in Mestre did I have a chance to correct the finished pages. Maps, etc., were not, however, at my disposal. Therefore, I cannot make the sketch. The records are in Allendorf.

Mestre (Italy) Transit Camp
on 9 April 1947

[signed] MAX SIMON

PART I

Metz-Saarbruecken

16 November to 27 December 1944

History of the Pre-battle Period

The Commands Territory

I took over command of the XIII.SS-Armee Korps on 16 November 1944 from Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Hermann Priess. Oberst von Einem was the Chief of the General Staff.

From 16 November until 27 December 1944 the following were subordinate to the Staff of the XIII.SS-AK:

Corps' troops

SS-Artl.Abt.113, commander ?

SS-Korps-Nachr.Abt.113, Commander SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer (Captain) Mueller.

II.Pz.Div.

Commander, Generalleutnant von Wietersheim. From 19 January to 6 December 1944.

17.SS-Pz.Gren. Division

Commander, Generalmajor d.W.-SS Ostendorf, until the beginning of December. Then SS-Stand.Fhr. (Col.) Lingner.

21.Pz.Div.

Commander: Generalleutnant Feuchtlinger, until 17 November, and on 30 November and 1 December 1944.

25.Pz.Gren.Div.

Commander, Oberst Burmeister, from 29 November to 5 December 1944.

36.Volks.Gr.Div.

Commander, Generalmajor Welim.

48.Inf.Div.

Commander ?

347.Inf.Div.

Generalleutnant Trierenberg.

559.Volks.Gr.Div.

Commander, Generalmajor Freiherr v. Muehlen.

The 48.Inf.Div. and the 559.V.G.D., both consisting only of remnants, had been joined as 'Kampfgruppe von Muehlen' on 16 November already.

The Staff of the XIII.SS-Armee Korps was in turn subordinate to the I.Armee (Heeresgruppe 'G') - Gen.d.Pz.Tr. von Knobelsdorff was the Army's commander. After 6 December 1944 it was Gen.d.Inf. von Obstfelder.

Task

Repulse the enemy attack before the West Wall in the outpost area.

Strength and Striking Power of the Troops

SS-Artl.Abt.113

It was formed in addition to the regular plan, by the Corps. It had only one battery with four 100 mm cannon at the time with which this report is dealing. It was motorized according to orders. Its training and fighting qualities were good.

SS-Korps-Nachr.-Abt.113

It had 80% of its full strength. Its training was sufficient. Its material equipment was insufficient! Therefore, in spite of its good will, it was not always able to get and keep signal connections to the four-six subordinated divisions.

II.Pz.Div.

It was a proven division, with good striking power. It was 50-70% up to strength. It had 30-40 committable tanks.

17.SS-Pz.Gren.Div.

At the time that this report discusses, its fighting quality was moderate, since there was a continuous change of command during commitments, since the start of the invasion. It had many and only scantily trained Volksdeutsche. It was 60-70% up to strength. It had few anti-tank weapons, but a good artillery.

21.Pz.Div.

Used division, which had little infantry and few tanks. It was 40-50% up to its strength. Its fighting quality was exaggerated a lot by higher authorities.

25.Pz.Div.

During the short time that it was subordinated to me, it had only two infantry battalions and little artillery. Therefore, its fighting strength was insignificant. The excellent will of the division to fight, must here be mentioned.

36.V.G.D.

Battle-weary division which was, however, well led, and had a good defensive strength. It was badly equipped. It had especially few anti-tank weapons, but comparatively good artillery was present.

48.V.G.D.

When I took over the command, it had already been withdrawn from its frontal parent units, for the purpose of reorganization. Its fighting-fit parts were united

with the 559.V.G.D. to form the Kampfgruppe von Muehlen.
347.Inf.Div.

They were local troops coming from the Eifel. They were badly trained, badly equipped, and had bad artillery. It had 70% of its strength. Its fighting ability was just passable.

359.V.G.D.

It had been very hard hit. To a certain extent it had been filled up by parts of the 48.V.G.D. For the time being it had no anti-tank weapons. Its artillery was limited. Its fighting quality, however, was good. This was due to the influence of its courageous commander.

I did not dictate an estimate of the situation, because I was suddenly taken away.

The Battles

Detailed Report on the Battles

16 November 1944

I took over the command at 0000 hours. The Corps' command post was located in the mining district, 3 kms. northwest of Falkenberg (Faulquemont). It was committed from right to left.

17.SS-Pz.Gren.Div. - Its divisional command post was ?

21.Pz.Div. - Its divisional command post was at Elvange.

36.V.G.D. - Its divisional command post was at Fletrange.

559.V.G.D. - Its divisional command post was at Bischofswald-Ferme.

Neighbor on the right: 462.Inf.Div. (divisional command post at Metz), LXXXII.Armeekorps.

Neighbor on the left: II.Pz.Div. (divisional command post at hospital St. Anna), LXXXIX.Armeekorps.

Command post of the I.Armee: St. Avoldt.

Main line of resistance: Magny (1½ kms. south of Metz) - railroad Metz, Herny - Herny (excl.) - Many - Suisse - Landroff - Viller - Bertring.

Border on the right: Magny (incl.).

Border lines:

17.SS - 21.Pz., in the Sanry Sur Nied area.

21.Pz. - 36.Div., Herny was the eastern boundary.

36. - 559., Landroff was the eastern boundary.

Border on the left:

Bertring (II.Pz.).

On the 15th the enemy had taken Herny and Landroff and made deep penetrations into the 559.'s sector, and on the right wing of the II.Pz. Division. The 36.V.G.D. was able to recapture the northern part, Landroff, with a counterattack.

On the 16th, the enemy continued his attacks with strong armored support. He now took Suisse and Landroff. He then thrust ahead via Eincheviller to Adelunge, on both sides of the road.

In the 559.'s sector, the enemy succeeded in thrusting ahead into the Bois de Guesling and into the territory west of the Bois-Freybouse.

At the neighbor on the right, Metz was enveloped. The II.Pz.Div., our left neighbor, had to withdraw to Francaltroff. During the night of 16-17 November, the 17.Pz.Gren.Div. was taken back to the Nied sector according to the I.Armee's command. Even though there was little time, the battle-weary division succeeded in conducting this withdrawal without attracting the enemy's attention. Early on the 17th, they were in their new positions ready for defense.

Early on the 17th the main line of resistance was: Bettange - the Nied's east bank up to Sanry Sur Nied - railroad up to Many - Hemery - northern boundary of Adelange

- Guesling - Point 259 - western edge of Bois de Freybouse - Francaltroff.

Corps' border on the right:

Bettange (XIII.-SS-A.K.) right neighbor 19.V.G.D. (LXXXII.A.K.).

Border line

17. - 21. unchanged.

21. - 36. unchanged.

36. - 559. Guesling (559.).

Corps' border on the left

Erstroff (II.Pz., LXXXIX.A.K.).

Corps' command post

Cite de Valmont.

Divisions command post

17.SS-Div. Berweiler.

21.Pz. unchanged.

36.V.G.D. mining district, 3 kms. northwest of Falkenberg.

559. Barst-Merienthal.

On the 17th the enemy renewed his attacks in the Falkenberg direction. However, his main thrust was directed against the 559. and II.Pz.Divs., in the Puttlinge direction. His intention of reaching Saar-Gemuend was obvious. In spite of the courageous resistance of the 36., 559., and II.Divs. it was not possible to stop the enemy's advance. Therefore, during the night from 17-18 November, the 17.SS-Div.'s left wing was withdrawn to the German Nied. The 36.V.G.D. took up new positions on both sides of Falkenberg. The 559. surrendered Bois de Freybouse. The II.Div. occupied the Hellimer - Insming line. The Corps requested the Army to withdraw the completely exhausted Kampfgruppe von Muehlen (559.).

Thereupon the I.Armee ordered:

1. Parts of the 347.I.D., arriving from the Eifel, were to be subordinated to the XIII.-SS Armeekorps, to relieve part of the subordinated 17.SS-Division.

2. The relief of the Kampfgruppe von Muehlen by the 17.Div. was to be prepared during the night from 18-19 November.

3. The 21.Pz.Div. was to be detached and added to the Army. Parts able to fight were to be left facing the enemy.

After following these orders, the Corps was organized for defense, on the 18th, as follows:

17.SS-Pz.Gr.Div. with subordinated parts of the 347.I.D.

36.V.G.D.

559.V.G.D.

The battalions of the 17.SS-Div., relieved by parts of the 347.I.D., were brought into the 559.'s area in order to relieve them.

The main line of resistance was Bettange - Nied's east bank - Loutremange - German Nied's east bank - Falkenberg (here only a bridgehead) - Pompiere - Lelling - Freybouse - Hellimer.

The Corps' border to the right, to the 19.V.G.D. (LXXXII.A.K.) was Bettange (17.).

The Corps' border to the left, to the II.Pz.Div. (LXXXIX.A.K.) was forest part northwest of Hellimer.

The border lines:

17. - 36., eastern edge of Crehange.

36. - 559., Lelling (36.).

559. - II., Freybouse.

Corps' command post:

Heiligenbronn (2½ kms. east of hospital).

Division's command post:

Berweiler (17.SS).

36.Div., 2 kms. northwest of Teting.

559., Barst - Merienthal.

The 36.V.G.D. surrendered the Falkenberg bridgehead, because of strong enemy and local partisan attacks. At the 559. and the II.Pz.Div. the enemy attacked with

the same momentum and both divisions were thus driven back. The II.Pz.Div. was subordinated to the Corps. During the night from 18-19 November, the Corps withdrew to the Maginot Line with the 17. and 36.Divisions. With the 559. and the II.Pz.Div. it withdrew to the line which ran along the southern edge of Bois de Vahl - Eberding - southern edge of the copse west of Puttlange - St. Jean Rohrbach - western edge of Mitterwald - Altviller.

Fighting-fit parts of the 559., and armored parts of the II.Div. remained to face the enemy.

Border lines:

36. - 559., Liking - St. Avold (36.) - Marienthal.

559. - II., St. Jean Rohrbach (II.).

Corps' boundary on the left:

LXXXII.Corps, Altviller (II.).

The commander of the 347.Inf.Div., who had arrived the day before, Generalleutnant Trierenberg, took over the command of the 17.SS-Div.'s sector, which was to relieve the Kampfgruppe von Muehlen the next night.

Command posts:

347.I.D., Bisten.

36.V.G.D., St. Avold.

559.V.G.D., Boustviller.

II.Pz.Div., Saarlbe.

20 November 1944

During the night, parts of the 559.V.G.D. of the 17.SS-Div., arriving in the sector, relieved the Kampfgruppe von Muehlen. The 17.SS-Div. took over the command of the 559.Division. Parts of the 17.SS-Div. remained in the 347.'s sector for the present, and were subordinated to it. They were relieved during the next few days by arriving parts of the 347.Inf.Div., and brought back into the 17.SS-Div.'s new territory.

The 559.V.G.D. was to be taken out for three to four days. However, on a I.Armee order, it had to march north, because the enemy had been successful with his attacks on our neighbor to the right in the Saar direction. At our left neighbor the enemy broke through at Zabern and captured the Vosges passes.

21-24 November 1944

During these days the enemy had only local successes in the Corps' territory. On the right wing, at the 347.Inf.Div., he captured Bolchen, and at the 17.SS-Div. and the II.Pz.Div. he approached the Hostenbach sector. The 559. was committed to the Corps' right wing. The Nied sector, between Niedaltdorf and Busendorf, was subordinated to the Corps.

Our left neighbor lost Saarunion. It was recaptured after a tough battle, by the II.Pz.Division. Saarunion now remained in the Corps' sector.

25 November 1944

In the early morning the Corps' situation was as follows: The main line of resistance was Niedaltdorf - Busendorf - Velving - Denting - Narbefontaine - Laudrefang - Vahl - Ebersing - Puttlange - Schopperten - Saarunion.

Corps' border on the right to the 19.V.G.D.: Niedaltdorf (XIII).

Corps' border on the left, to the Armor.Train Division: Saarunion.

Border lines:

559. - 347., Velving (347.).

347. - 36., Bambiderstroff (347.).

36. - 17., Biding (17.).

17. - II., Remering (II.).

Corps' command post: Heiligenbronn.

Division's command posts:

559., Berviller, later Wallerfanger.

347., Bisten.

36., St. Avold.

17.SS, Boustviller.

II.Pz., Herbitzheim.

Early on the 25th, the enemy attacked over the Corps' whole front, with strong armored and air support. Tough battles developed at the 559. and the 347.Divs. in the Busendorf - Denting area, at the 36.Div. on both sides of the Falkenberg - Landerfang road, and at the 17.Div. around Puttlange. In spite of determined resistance, the enemy succeeded in pushing ahead its penetration 3 kms. west of St. Avold, at the 36.Division. Otherwise, his successes were small and unimportant, notwithstanding of the large losses on our side.

Despite its much weakened fighting ability, because of the heavy battles, during the night from 25 to 26 November 1944 the Corps managed to set up a new line of defense. Its course was about Niedaltdorf - Busendorf via Teterchen - Niedervisse - Boucheporn - Longviller - St. Avold Puttlange.

Early on 26 November 1944, the enemy continued his attack with the same force. St. Avold, which he had been mistakenly reported as encircled, in the morning, was cleared, by parts of the 36.V.G.D. In the wood north-west of St. Avold, parts of the 36. and 347.Divs. were fighting all day long, with varying luck. Again the enemy did not penetrate, as he hoped, on any day. In the night from the 26 to 27 November 1944, the Saar hill positions were occupied.

Corps' border on the right, to the 19.V.G.D.: Niedaltdorf (559.).

Corps' border on the left: unchanged.

Border lines:

559. - 347., Berviller (559.).

347. - 36., Carling (36.).

36. - 17.SS, Farchersviller (17.).

17. - II., Hambach (II.).

The main line of resistance was along Niedaltdorf - Berviller - Falek - Carling - Beting - St. Avold - Hunding - Hambach - Schopperten - Saarunion.

Corps' command post: Scheidt (4 kms. east of Saarbruecken).

Divisions' command posts:

559., Wallerfanger.

347., Bisten.

36., Forbach.

17.SS, Gross Bliedersdorf.

II.Pz., Herbitzheim, later Etting.



During the period up to 2 December 1944, the enemy broke through the front piece by piece. The Corps' troops, who had been fighting bitterly for months without rest, without enough ammunition, with little and sometimes without anti-tank weapons, defended themselves desperately against the superior enemy, who was attacking with a strong air force. The Saar hill positions, west of Saarlautern, were lost by the 559.V.G.D. A counter attack by the 21.Pz.Div., brought up temporarily and subordinated to the Corps for the time being - which was supposed to recapture the commanding Saar hill emplacements - was unsuccessful. The 347. had to surrender Falek and Merten. The 347. and the 36. were fighting bitterly for every foot of ground in the woods north and east of Carling. The 17. lost woods and towns, one after the other. Our counterattacks accomplished only a temporary recapture. Only the well-equipped, well-proven II.Pz.Div. could keep the Saar positions.

On 28 November 1944, the counterattack by the Gruppe Bayerlein (Armored Training Division, 25.Pz.Gr.Div.), started on 26 November, failed. It was conducted in the left neighbor's territory, with the purpose of recapturing the Vosges passes. It failed because of a strong concentrated enemy armored attack, which was directed in a generally northeastern direction, east of the Saar.

On 1 December, the 25.Pz.Gren.Div. was subordinated to the Corps. The Corps' border was thus extended up to Tiefenbach, on the right. By evening of 1 December, the left wings of the II.Pz. and the 25.Pz.Gren. had been withdrawn into the Saarunion - Diemerinfen - Waldhambach line. For reasons connected with the chain of command, the Corps subordinated the 25.Pz.Gren.Div., which consisted only of weak units, to the Commander of the II.Pz. Division.

Command post of the 25.Pz.Gren.Div.: Butten.

On 2 December, the 559.V.G.D. joined the right neighbor (LXXXII.A.R.) according to the Army's order. The Corps' new border ran from Berviller (LXXXII.) to Griesborn (LXXXII.).

3 December 1944

The enemy penetrated into Saarlautern at our right neighbor. The enemy armored attacks in the sectors of the 17.SS, the II.Pz. and the 25.Pz.Gren.Div. were continued. They caused deep penetrations. Saarunion was permanently lost.



4 December 1944

The enemy attacked the whole Corps' front with renewed force. He forced the Corps to withdraw the front, in the night from 4 to 5 December 1944 to the line along Karlsbrunn woods - Hollengraben - Vorbach - Saargemuend - Wittlingen - Rohrbach les Bitsch.

Corps' border on the right: (559.V.G.D.) unchanged.

Corps' border on the left: (Petite - Redersching) ?

Border lines:

347. - 36., Grand Roselle (347.).

36. - 17., Nousseviller (36.).

17., Wietersheim - Wittlingen (17.).

Divisions' command posts:

347.I.D., Puettingen.

36.V.G.D., Saarbruecken.

17.SS-P.G.D., Eschringen.

Gruppe Wietersheim: Obergailbach.

The intended counterattack by the 21.Pz.Div., under the LXXXII.A.K.'s leadership, from the northern part of the Karlsbrunn forest, did not come off. Its purpose was the recapture of the Saar's west bank. The 347.I.D.'s right wing had to be withdrawn to the West Wall. The 17.SS-Pz.Gren.Div. determinedly defended the Saargemuend bridgehead.

During the evening, the II.Pz.G.D. and the 25.Pz.G.D. were subordinated to the Corps Headquarters of the XC.A.K., which had been committed to the Corps' left wing. The new border of the Corps, on the left, ran from Wittlingen to Bliesbrueck.

Author's note: Here I had to interrupt my dictation because I was ordered to get ready for shipment at once. §

COMING NEXT ISSUE
The History of SS Para. Bn. 500/600, the beginning of an epic article by Antonio Munoz. Don't miss it!



Photo of an unknown SS Obersturmfuehrer who was either killed or missing in action.

THE "SMOKE-MAKING" DETACHMENT OF THE WAFFEN-SS, 1943-45

In August 1943, a special SS "Smoke-making" Detachment (SS-Nebelabteilung) was authorized for eventual deployment in the vicinity of Berchtesgaden in the Obersalzberg region, where Hitler had his country retreat, the Berghof. Its mission was to manufacture clouds of artificial haze to obscure the area from the viewpoints of enemy aircraft. Some 600 recovering wounded soldiers and about 40 NCOs were drawn from the ranks of assorted SS Training and Replacement battalions to serve in the Detachment. Specifically, some of the troops came from the following units:

- Four NCOs and around 70 men from SS-Panzer-Grenadier T&R Bn. 2 at Prag-Rusin.
- 10 NCOs and 15 men from the SS Mountain T&R Bn. 6 in Hallein.
- Unspecified numbers of NCOs and men from the SS-Pz.Gr. T&R Bns. 3 and 9 in Warsaw and Stralsund.

A brief training course in air defense techniques was given to the members of the new Detachment at Wurzen near Leipzig by Luftwaffe troops. The course was completed on 24 September 1943 and the SS "Smoke" troops were sent by rail to Berchtesgaden. They were initially quartered in the Strub Barracks on 26 September 1943 and on the next day the unit was assembled under the direction of Hstuf. Schwaiger, the former CO of the SS Guard Company "Obersalzberg." At this time about 15 Rottenfuehrer (Corporals) were transferred from the Guard Company to the "Smoke" Detachment to make up for an NCO shortage in the unit.

The original unit formation looked like this:

- Detachment Staff
- Staff Battery with Meteorology Platoon
- 1st Battery with I-III. Platoons
- 2nd Battery with I-III. Platoons
- 3rd Battery with I-III. Platoons

The detachment troops were armed with pistols, carbines and a few light machine guns. The motor pool contained only a few staff cars. The main "weapon" for the detachment was the "Fassnebelgeraet '43," a 200 liter tank filled with fog-producing chemicals. The operational function of this device was rather simple: once certain valves had been opened the chemicals in the tank were propelled into the air by means of compressed air jets and then a haze of smoky fog would hopefully form throughout the nearby locality. This would be enough to obscure accurate aerial observation under most circumstances. Special articles of rubber clothing along with leather coats, and trousers and gas masks, were issued to all troops who handled the chemicals and fog-producing equipment.

For about a week after the Detachment had been assembled in Berchtesgaden, the squad and platoon leaders were assigned as observers to the Luftwaffe "Smoke Detachment" elements that were scattered through the region. Afterwards the Staff Sergeant and three of the NCOs set to work passing on the acquired operational information to the rank and file of the SS formation.

Some of the men from the "Smoke-making" Detachment were also detached for guard duty on the Obersalzberg.

On 10 October 1943, Hstuf. Schwaiger declared the Detachment to be ready for deployment, whereupon it came under the jurisdiction of the SS Kommando "Obersalzberg," which controlled all of the SS units in the immediate vicinity. The "Smoke" Detachment operated under the titles: SS-Neberlabteilung/Wach Kp. "Obersalzberg" and "SS-Nebel-Kompanie Obersalzberg"; a Field Post number of 05 849 was assigned to the latter title.

Upon deployment, the Detachment's platoons were assigned to specific locales that had been manned by Luftwaffe troops. Once relieved, the latter soldiers then passed on their equipment to the SS "Smoke" troops. The Detachment took over some 270 smoke/fog generators from the Luftwaffe and assigned about 30 to each platoon. The deployment area for the Detachment sub-units were as follows:

- Staff at the SS Barracks Obersalzberg.
- Staff Battery, Meteorology Platoon and 1st Battery at Obergau.
- 2nd Battery at Berchtesgaden with the battery command post troops quartered at the "Schwabenwirt" Inn and III. Platoon under Uscha. Dietsch in Bischofswiesen with quarters at the "Neuwirth" Inn.
- 3rd Battery around the Koenigssee (Lake Koenig).

In close proximity to the SS "smoke" troops were the batteries of the newly formed SS-Flak-Detachment "B" (for "Berchtesgaden"). One of the hazards of locating the smoke-making troops next to Flak sites was that the artificially generated haze frequently obstructed the view of the air defense gunners. The only solution was to move the affected Flak batteries higher up the mountainsides, above the noxious fog. This in turn created new supply problems as only pack trains of mules could reach the higher elevations. For the most part, the troops were quartered in private houses or in hotels near their deployment areas. Troops stationed next to Flak batteries had no trouble getting hot meals, but those farther afield were not so lucky. Eventually volunteer female helpers and office staffers pitched in to take hot provisions out to the more isolated elements. SS-Sturmabfuhrer Frank, the garrison commander at the Obersalzberg, also had direct command of SS-Flak-Det. "B" and command jurisdiction over the SS "Smoke-making" Detachment. Supplies and provisions to the SS "Smoke" troops came through the Flak Detachment, but replacements were provided through the SS-Werfer (Rocket) Training and Replacement Det. at Kurmark (relocating to Celle in late 1944/early 1945).

The "smoke" producers went into action after receiving an alert from the "Fuehrer Air Report Central," an office attached to the Staff Battery of SS Flak Det. "B" that came under the Detachment Adjutant, Ostuf. Guenter Bulla until August 1944. This office was notified every time aircraft were spotted within 30 minutes flying time of Berchtesgaden. The various Flak and "Smoke" batteries were then immediately contacted by direct field telephone hook-up.

Air attacks on the Obersalzberg were virtually non-existent until the last month of the war; the worst that usually transpired was an occasional overflight by "Allied" aircraft. The HQ of SS-Flak Detachment "B" was able

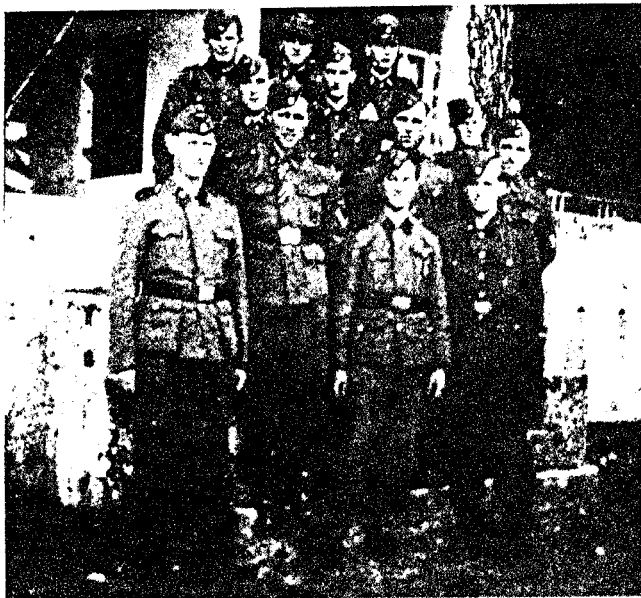
to make the following report on 30 June 1944: "Direct raids upon the object have so far not occurred. In several cases of overflight, fire was opened. The hit situation was generally good." Another principal concern was that the enemy might make an airborne landing of troops in the area. To counter this threat periodic exercises were held where W-SS troops had to be combat ready within five minutes of hearing the code word that signalled the assault. The code word that kicked off the training exercises was "Ente" (Duck), while the code word "Geier" (Vulture) was to be used in the case of a real attack.

In the first half of 1944 (around spring), Hstuf. Hallman assumed direct command of SS-Flak Det. "B," but Stubaf. Frank remained in overall charge of the Obersalzburg garrison. At this time the roster of "Obersalzburg" units stood as follows:

SS-Kommando "Obersalzburg"
 SS-Flak Det. "B" - Hstuf. Hallman
 Staff Battery - Ostuf. Schmitz
 1st Battery (8.8 cm) - Ostuf. Matthies
 2nd Battery (8.8 cm) - Ostuf. Schueller
 3rd Battery (8.8 cm) - Ostuf. Heumann
 4th Battery (3.7 and 2 cm) - Hstuf. Kurz
 SS "Smoke-making" Det. "Obersalzburg" - Hstuf. Schwaiger
 SS Guard Company 9 - Ostuf. Urbar
 SS "Fuehrer" Motor Transport Column
 SS Stollenbau (Tunneling & Fortifications) Company

Authorized strength
 49 officers
 322 NCOs
 1,865 men
 TOTAL: 2,236

Actual strength
 30 officers
 260 NCOs
 1,621 men
 TOTAL: 1,911



Squad led by SS-Rottenfuehrer Schupp; quartered in the "Glueck-auf" Inn.

In the summer of 1944 a majority of the "combat fit" troops assigned to the Obersalzburg Flak and "Smoke" Detachments were sent to frontline Waffen SS units. Their places were assumed by young members of the Reich Labor Service, although the bulk of the units were still comprised of recovering wounded or partially disabled soldiers. As of 1 August 1944, the "Smoke" Detachment was still listed as an independent W-SS replacement unit, but late in the fall of 1944 it was officially incorporated into SS Flak Det. "B" and then shared the Field Post number (02 786 B) of 1st Battery in the Detachment.

As of 20 September 1944 the troop strength of SS-Kommando "Obersalzburg" stood as follows:

"Smoke" and Flak Detachments
 49 officers
 291 NCOs
 1,530 men
 TOTAL: 1,870
 SS Special Transport Column
 5 officers
 61 NCOs
 186 men
 TOTAL: 252
 SS Guard Company "Obersalzburg"
 1 officer
 37 NCOs
 326 men
 TOTAL: 364
 Police Fire Fighting Platoon
 1 officer
 7 NCOs
 20 men
 TOTAL: 23

Total strength
 56 officers
 391 NCOs
 2,453 men
 GRAND TOTAL: 2,600

In February 1945, the men of the SS "Smoke-making" Detachment began being replaced by female SS Maiden from the SS-Helferinnen-Schule at Heidenheim. Most of the last male troops left in March 1945 and were grouped with the SS Flak Det. "B" Staff Battery in Ober-



SS-Unterscharfuehrer Ludwig Horna operating a smoke generating device.

gau. Some of these men were then reassigned to SS Guard Co. "Obersalzburg," the local SS Barracks staff, or to Labor Service construction contingents. The leader of the SS-Maiden "Smoke" Detachment was Traudl Rockstroh. The SS women were largely quartered in private houses and drew their meals and rations from the Obersalzburg Labor Service barracks. When a major "Allied" air raid was launched on the Obersalzburg on 26 April 1945 (an obvious necessity since this was a target area of no military value whatsoever!), the alarm was given too late for most of the Flak and "Smoke" units to do much good. Some 80 W-SS troops were killed in the attack and an unknown number were wounded. However, the SS Flak troops did manage to shoot down three enemy aircraft.

On 4 May 1945, the female SS "Smoke" troops were advised to change into civilian dress and try to make their way home via Ramsau. Some of them took this advice, but most apparently didn't. Two or three platoons of male SS members of the original "Smoke" Detachment were ordered to march to Schellenberg to help with the defensive effort there, while another "Smoke" group of about company strength (which had possibly been assigned to the 38th SS Div. "Nibelungen"), was ordered to join an Army battle-group at Bad Reichenhall. As things turned out none of the above troops ever saw any more combat action.

Berchtesgaden fell to the U.S. 7th Army with only token resistance on 5 May 1945. Soon afterwards the "Smoke" troops who were en route to Schellenberg gave up the effort after having marched for two days in difficult mountain country. They disbanded, and individually and in small groups tried to make their way home. Their success rate in this endeavor is unreported. Of the SS-Maiden "Smoke" troops, most were captured by the Americans on the Obersalzburg and held for several weeks in a POW camp at Bischofswiesen before being released.



Squad led by SS-Uscha. Dietsch (standing, back right) from III. Platoon/2nd Battery stationed in Bischofswiesen near Berchtesgaden, January 1944.

One small group of SS women and men, in civilian attire, spent about three weeks in the mountains before encountering American soldiers. They were then able to successfully pass themselves off as married woodcutters and thus evaded captivity.

[For more information on the SS "Smoke-making" Detachment see "Die SS-Nebelabteilung 'Obersalzburg'" by Wolfgang Vopersal in *Der Freiwillige* for February and March 1975, and Hitler's Personal Security by Peter Hoffmann (MIT Press, 1979).]

6



SS-Ostuf. Emil Borchert, born 23 May 1897 in Königsberg; MIA in the Halbe Pocket south of Berlin on 29 April 1945. He had earlier served in the Engineer Bn. of the "Das Reich" Division.



SS-Gren. Kurt Reck, born in 1925 in East Prussia. MIA January 1945 in Budapest while serving with SS Anti-tank Detachment 8/"Florian Geyer" Division.

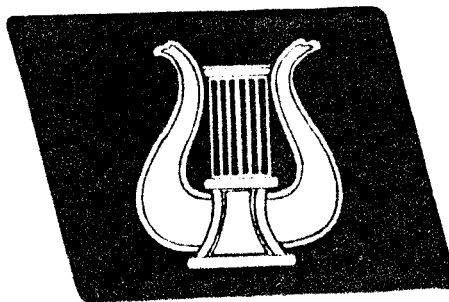


SS-St.Oju. (Officer Candidate) Willi Doering, born 27 January 1923 in Memel and served with 1st Co./SS Armored Recce Detachment 1/"LSSAH"; listed as an MIA at an unknown date.



SS-Uscha. Benedikt Scharschmidt, born in Yugoslavia in 1919, and served with the HQ Staff Escort Company 18 of the 18th SS Division "Horst Wessel." MIA near Lake Balaton in November 1944.

THE WAFFEN-SS MUSIC SCHOOL AT BRAUNSCHWEIG



The special "lyre" collar patch for SS Music School pupils.

The Waffen-SS Music School was established in Braunschweig on 1 July 1941 with the assistance of the SS Officer's School in the same town. There were 60 students in the first training class and the first school director was Hstuf. Edgar Siedentopf. Most of the individual training group instructors were drawn from the NCOs attached to the band of SS Rgt. "Germania"/Division "Wiking." The students would frequently receive instrumental training from members of the Braunschweig City-Theatre Orchestra, but at all times their activities were supervised either by the school commander or an SS instructor.

Tight supervision was necessary since most of the students were young teenagers who enrolled in the school at age 14, with parental permission, for a four year term. After completing their studies at the Music School the students were then obligated to serve for 12 years in the Waffen-SS. Structurally the school consisted of one main building which housed the staff, a large examination hall, numerous practice rooms and supply and maintenance shops for clothing dispersal, tailoring, shoe repair, etc. There was a barracks (actually a boarding house), for the pupils, with quarters, wash rooms and a kitchen along with a band chamber. Lastly there was a training barracks that contained a gym for physical education and a number of sound-proof practice rooms.

The school provided the students with a full range of musical instruments, including about 40 large and small pianos, which all pupils were required to play. The study program at the school ran as follows:

1. Instruction in a main instrument, such as a trombone.
2. Instruction in a secondary instrument, such as a cello.
3. Obligatory piano training.
4. Instruction in music theory, harmony, history, instrument construction and operation, etc.
5. Training in orchestral and chamber music playing.
6. Basic musical exercises (up through the second year at the school).
7. General instruction in German, Math, Geography and History.
8. Physical education and sports.

The aptitude and progress of the students was tested and monitored throughout the year. The training methods at the school proved very successful and within a year,

students were able to give public concerts which proved quite popular to both participants and spectators alike.

In 1942 the school severed its logistics connections to the SS-Junkerschule "Braunschweig" and became a totally independent facility. By 1944 the number of students had grown to 220 and Hstuf. Eberhardt had succeeded



Students at practice. Note collar patch.

Edgar Siedentopf (who had been promoted to Stubaf. and transferred elsewhere) as commander of the school. During the same year the town of Braunschweig became more and more the target of vicious enemy air attacks, which endangered the Music School, its young pupils and of course, its inventory of many valuable instruments. A decision was therefore made by the Musical Inspectorate of the Waffen-SS under Stubaf. Leander Hauck (later KIA), to relocate the school to the safety of the small town of Bad Saarow in Brandenburg.

In January 1945, Bad Saarow itself became endangered by the advancing Red Army and the Music School of the Waffen-SS had to be dissolved. The pupils were sent home where possible, and the staff members were assigned to the newly authorized 32nd SS Grenadier Division "30 Januar," where they were used in the formation of the divisional reconnaissance detachment.

During the school's existence, the pupils wore the standard field gray uniform of the Waffen-SS with twin black collar patches bearing silver lyres. A metal lyre emblem was also worn on the shoulder straps. A Waffen-SS sleeve title bearing the wording "Musikschule Braunschweig" was worn, but the somewhat ambiguous status of the youthful students was emphasized by the wearing of Hitler Youth belts and armbands at the same time. §

Students on dress parade with collar patches, armbands and sleeve titles.



SS-Ustuf. Anton Schaden, born in 1912 in Czechoslovakia. Occupation: salesman. Unit unknown. MIA at Gablonz in May 1945.

On 1 May 1945, in the city of Lipaja (Libau), Kurland Province, Latvia, a provisional, free Latvian government was established, with the tacit approval of the German occupying forces. Because of continuous, heavy "Allied" air raids the members of the new government were not able to assemble and meet until 5 May 1945. At that time, Waffen-Standartenfuehrer Osis, the former commander of Waffen-Grenadier Rgt. 43 of the 19th Latvian SS Div., was selected as Minister-President. He immediately proclaimed the existence again of a sovereign Latvian nation.

Osis tried to negotiate an agreement with Col.Gen. Hilpert, the German C-in-C for Kurland, to guarantee the safety of the soldiers of the 19th WGDdSS in the event of a German capitulation. But Hilpert could give no promises as he was bound to follow orders from the new Doenitz government. At 1400 hours on 8 May the German surrender in Kurland went into effect and the last free government of Latvia, led by a Waffen-SS officer no less, passed into history. On 7/8 May 1945, 25,000 military personnel, mostly wounded and including some Latvian troops, were evacuated by sea from Kurland. Two hundred thousand others either went into Soviet captivity or took off for the woods.

SS-Ustuf. von Schwalbe (born 1915) from the 31st SS Gr.Div. "Batschka" was killed in Soviet captivity between Koeniggratz and Glatz on 14 May 1945.

SS-Mann Ferdinand Wolf, born 28 February 1926 in Baden, Odessa (Ukraine), joined the Waffen-SS on 15 July 1944 in Rastenburg, East Prussia. After completing basic training he was sent to the 12th SS Panzer Div. "Hitler Jugend" in November 1944 at Wefelinghofen near Essen, where he was assigned to 10th Co./SS Pz.Gr.Rgt. 26. He participated in the Ardennes Offensive with this unit and was wounded near Aachen on 22 December 1944.

Wolf was then sent to various hospitals, winding up in one in Bregenz on the Bodensee (Lake Constance). At the end of April 1945 he went into American captivity and was held until March 1946 in POW camps at Ziegenhain and Wiesbaden. A treacherous decision was then made (at this late date when all of the Soviet intentions in Europe were well known!) to deport Wolf to the communists. This stemmed from the fact that he was still a "citizen of the U.S.S.R.." despite his ethnic-German heritage. As a result Wolf was swiftly placed on trial for treason and given a lengthy sentence to the slave labor camps.

In January 1955, after lengthy stints in concentration camps at Vladivostok and Magadam, Wolf was released but not permitted to leave the country. Finally, in 1974, Ferdinand Wolf realized his ambition to vacate the "worker's paradise" in which he had been forcibly detained and emigrate to West Germany.

SS-Mann Walter Karl (born 1922), a medic with SS Mountain Medical Co. 13/"Handschar" Div., was killed by terrorists in March 1944 at Tuzlar, Bosnia.

THE "SWEDISH COMPANY"

3./SS ARMORED RECCE DET. 11/"NORDLAND"

From 1943-45, 3rd Company of the Recce Detachment of the "Nordland" Division bore the sobriquet, "The Swedish Company," chiefly because it contained a nearly all-Swedish platoon (IV. Platoon), and had Estonian ethnic-Swedes scattered throughout the company along with either a Swedish company commander or Swedish officers attached to the company. In format the company consisted of three light armored scout car platoons and the IV. (heavy) Platoon, whose armored vehicles had heavy machine guns mounted upon them.

Almost all Swedish in composition, IV. Platoon consisted of one or two officers, five NCOs and 30 to 35 men. Its first commander was Oscha. Walter Nilsson, was KIA on 25 January 1944 near Rogovitzky. Four Swedish officers eventually served with IV. Platoon, and two of them were also killed-in-action.

Much of 3rd Company was composed of ethnic-Germans from Romania, and there were concentrations of other Scandinavians and Swiss in it and the detachment as a whole. In early September 1944, the Swedish crew of an armored personnel carrier from 3rd Company (Sven Alm, Markus Ledin and Ingemar Johansson), were repairing the motor of their broken-down vehicle in a concealed position near Dorpat, Estonia when they noticed Soviet motorized forces bypassing them. They went on with their work and in a few hours had the motor operating again, but it then proved impossible to make any further contact with their unit. So they traveled by night in their vehicle through Soviet occupied territory until they eventually reached the Estonian coast. Here the trio was able to secure civilian clothes and a fishing boat which they used to take them safely across the Baltic to Sweden, thus escaping both Soviet captivity and the travails of the rest of the war.

One of the Swedish officers killed with 3rd Company was Ustuf. Rune Ahlgren, who had broken off his officer's training course at the War College in Stockholm to join the Waffen-SS. He fell near Duna, Latvia on 30 October 1944 and was buried in the outskirts of the town. Another Swedish officer who had spent some time with the company

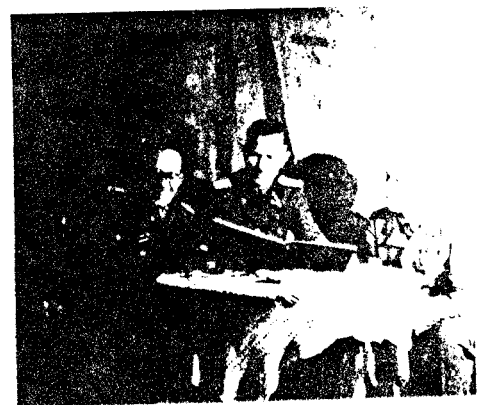
at Narva, Ustuf. Thorkel Tillmann, was KIA near Cheux in Normandy on 20 July 1944 while attached to the staff of an SS Panzer Corps as a war correspondent. During the final battles of the "Nordland" Division in Berlin the surviving members of the "Swedish Company" generally



Uscha. Sven Erik Olsson, Swedish radioman with the "Nordland" Division.



Swedish SS volunteers with the "Nordland" Division on the Narva Front.



"Nordland" medical officers; a Swedish SS doctor is on the right (note armshield!).

fought on foot as infantrymen. At least some members of the company, including its long-time commander, Hans-Goesta Pehrsson utilized a Swedish armshield in the national colors of blue and yellow.

Reported Numbers of Swedish Volunteers in the Waffen-SS

One hundred and one as of 31 January 1944 (from a speech by Ogruf. Berger; out of this total nine had been killed and seven wounded).

One hundred and thirty (David Littlejohn in Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, Volume 3).

One hundred and fifty (as of October 1943 according to the head of Germanic Volunteer recruiting, the Swiss Ostufaf. Dr. Franz Riedweg).

One hundred and seventy-five (as of 25 July 1942 according to H. Picker in Hitler's Table Talk).

Three hundred and fifteen as of 31 October 1944 (from

an unpublished biography of Ogruf. Gottlob Berger by Robert Kuebler - this is close to the "usual" estimates by assorted Waffen-SS historians).

Swedish Casualties in the Waffen-SS

About 30 to 45 killed. Lennert Westberg, who is probably the most accurate among those who have written about the Swedish volunteers lists 130 survivors out of an estimated 175 Swedes in the Waffen-SS.

Additional Material on Swedish Volunteers

See articles by Lennert Westberg on the Swedish Waffen SS in the Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch for 1984, 1985, and 1986, and Der Freiwillige magazine for September and October 1984. Also see the chapter on Sweden in An Deutscher Seite by Hans Werner Neulen.



Anti-tank gunners from the SS-Totenkopf Division in combat during a defensive engagement.

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The Flemish volunteer Jan Rampelberg from Londerzeel was killed in action at Kharkov in early 1943 while serving with SS Panzer Regiment 2/"Das Reich" Division. Two other Flemish volunteers with the same unit, Marcel Vercauter from Oostende and a medic named De Clercq from Ghent, were both murdered by French terrorists (i.e., "partisans"), in France in 1944.

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Jacques Th. Kuiper, a former Dutch Army Captain and pilot, was a long-time member of the Dutch National Socialist movement, and during the war years served with the N.S.B. Labor Service and the Landwacht Nederland (a Waffen-SS run home-guard militia). During the winter of 1944/45 he was the Landwacht commandant in Amsterdam. Because the severity of the winter weather and the shortages that affected much of the Netherlands at the time, it was not uncommon for civilians to pilfer motor oil for heating purposes from German tanker trucks and other vehicles. Although this probably constituted "sabotage," Kuiper instructed his Landwacht patrols

to turn a "blind eye" to this practice whenever possible.

Of course the post-war "liberation" government in Holland demonstrated no gratitude whatsoever for this and Kuiper was treated to a long and brutal imprisonment. After his release he left for a new life in South Africa and he died there on 13 April 1986.

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The Flemish volunteer officer Hstuf. Rafael de Wolf, born 30 June 1904 in Antwerp, was an art professor who taught at a school for war-disabled Waffen SS veterans that was set up by the SS Main Office in Graz, Austria. De Wolf was last heard from in Graz at the end of the war.

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Denis Smits, a former member of the Germanic SS in Flanders, the SS Guard "St. Truiden" and the Waffen-SS who survived the brutal post-war concentration camp at Beverlo, Belgium, died on 8 January 1972. He was only 50 years old. His credo in life was to: "Fight for a free Flanders, within a free Germany, within a free Europe."

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Photo of a special holiday mess night at the staff of V. SS Mountain Corps. An unidentified Oberfuehrer (possibly Corps' Artillery Commander Martin Konradt), sits on the right. Second from the left is Franz Maurice, who transferred into the Waffen-SS and served with V. SS Corps staff in November 1944.

The Military History Enthusiast

PREMIER ISSUE - #1 - 1 December 1987

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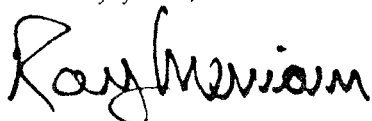
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