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NUREMBERG AND THE WAFFEN-SS:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHARGE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CRIMINALITY

by
Richard D. Wiggers

Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
M.A. degree in History.

Universite d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa

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UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

This work is dedicated to Dr. Ted Kaminski,
my friend, colleague and mentor.

Ted was a great historian, teacher,
and humanitarian.

He died in a tragic accident on April 26, 1990,
but he will live in my memory,
and those of his family and friends,
forever.

"During the earlier years of the war, on the other hand, a man belonging to the Waffen-SS as a rule had no more and no less to answer for than any other German soldier."

Simon Wiesenthal, Justice Not Vengeance, (London 1989), p. 295.

"It was a gigantic task trying to convince the German people and their politicians that the SS were not all criminals like Himmler's Gestapo, the concentration camp guards or the Einsatzgruppen extermination battalions."

"The Waffen-SS had been soldiers, proud soldiers who had given their lives and limbs and reputations out of all proportion to their numbers during a war not of their making. Privately, the politicians agreed the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS should be treated equally, but felt it to be politically dangerous to voice such opinions in public."

Tony Foster, Meeting of Generals, (Toronto 1986), p. 514.

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PREFACE

On October 1, 1946, rulings against six indicted Nazi organizations were handed down by the Allied judges of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in occupied Germany. The Waffen-SS and its membership, which comprised 1 million military personnel in 38 divisions and various smaller units by the end of the war, was included in the criminal findings of the four Allied judges against the SS and SD organization. This ruling was based on charges that the SS and its military arm had comprised an ideological and military elite of dedicated National Socialists whose members had committed war crimes and crimes against humanity on a grand scale throughout the war.

There is undoubtedly a deep moral dilemma inherent in any discussion about the criminality of the Nazi regime or any of its component organizations. This is especially true about an institution as notorious and admittedly evil in its intent and tasks as Himmler's SS and police empire. Yet even the Allied judges on the Nuremberg Tribunal in their final rulings in 1946 did not intend the charge of organizational criminality made against various National Socialist institutions most directly implicated in the criminal activities of the Nazi German regime, especially the SS, to lead to the automatic condemnation of individual members as criminals, or the ignoring of distinctions within each organization. Legal experts too have concluded since the 1946 Nuremberg rulings that the concept of collective guilt to which Waffen-SS veterans have been subjected since the war, and which was

not the final intention of the Tribunal, has been generally rejected as a concept which has no place in democratic law.¹

A great deal of research conducted since the 1946 Tribunal rulings has also indicated that some of the conclusions reached by the Allied judges at Nuremberg about the Waffen-SS and its membership were either wrong, or at the very least exaggerated. The military Waffen-SS, as a separate organization within the SS, probably should not have been dealt with by the Nuremberg Tribunal as an integral part of the larger SS and SD organization, or as a uniformly criminal organization in its own right. According to facts produced both during the Tribunal proceedings and subsequent to them regarding the nature and activities of the Waffen-SS organization, its functions during the Second World War were primarily military, and the behaviour of its war-time members largely indistinct from that of the other branches of the armed forces of the Nazi German regime. The condemnation and guilt by association with which nearly a million Waffen-SS veterans (and their families) were painted in such a global sense after the war was thus largely unjustified.

This study will investigate each of the four major categories of conclusions arrived at by the Nuremberg Tribunal about the nature and activities of the Waffen-SS military organization and its war-time members, and analyse their accuracy based on the

¹ Andrew Mollo, To the Death's Head True: The Story of the SS, (London 1982), p. 12.

findings of subsequent historical research. It will also attempt to explain the political pressures in 1945-46 which caused the primarily military Waffen-SS to be tried and convicted as a criminal organization, and clarify what the rulings of the Nuremberg Tribunal actually said about members of organizations declared criminal by the latter.

It should be noted that for the purposes of this study the Waffen-SS is being defined along similar lines as those employed by German historian Bernd Wegner, namely as consisting of all "armed" SS units except those belonging to the German police or performing largely police functions, and those assigned to the maintenance and guarding of concentration camps.² Another authoritative German historian, Helmut Krausnick, has employed a similar formula, describing the Waffen-SS as "the fully militarized combat formations of the SS" exclusive from the various police organizations.³ The time-frame covered by this study will also extend from the outbreak of the war on September 1, 1939, and end with the collapse of Germany in May 1945, thus focussing on the war-time activities of the Waffen-SS rather than on its pre-war origins.

² Bernd Wegner, "Die Garde des 'Fuehrers' und die 'Feuerwehr' der Ostfront: Zur neueren Literatur ueber die Waffen-SS", Militaergeschichtliche Mitteilungen, Militaergeschichtlichen Forschungsamt, volume 26, number 1, (1978), p. 230.

³ Helmut Krausnick et al., (eds.), Anatomy of the SS State, (New York 1968), p. 572.

Finally, this paper is dedicated to my parents, John Henry and Ann Victoria Wiggers, who sparked my interest in this subject through their stories of growing up in Nazi-occupied Holland. Both my mother and my father instilled in me the desire to work hard, and the confidence to pursue my dreams, whatever they might be. It is also dedicated to Professor Robert Keyserlingk of the History Department of the University of Ottawa, a mentor and a friend who has guided me into a very exciting - and successful - field of study.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In 1977, more than three decades after the end of the Second World War, three German military veterans were expelled from Great Britain where they were promoting a newly-published book. A massive public outcry had forced the British government to take this action when it was discovered that the three individuals had served in units of the Waffen-SS during the Second World War.⁴ Eight years later, in 1985, U.S. President Ronald Reagan was met with a storm of public criticism when he decided to lay a wreath at a German military ceremony during a forthcoming official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. The controversy arose when it was discovered that 47 former members of the Waffen-SS were among the hundreds of German military casualties buried at Bitburg, the site of the ceremony.⁵ To many people then, and still today, membership in a war-time Waffen-SS unit was equivalent to SS membership and direct involvement in the most heinous crimes of the Third Reich.⁶

⁴ Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 12, and Leslie Aitken, Massacre on the Road to Dunkirk: Wilhelm Moehnke and the Wormhoudt Massacre, (London 1988), p. 175.

⁵ Charles Krauthammer, "Essay: The Bitburg Fiasco", TIME, (April 29, 1985), p. 31, and Charles Ashman and Robert J. Wagman, The Nazi Hunters: The Shocking True Story of the Continuing Search for Nazi War Criminals, (New York 1988), p. 273.

⁶ The North American media continues to refer to the graves at Bitburg as belonging to former members of the "SS", which is simply not correct. Most members of the Waffen-SS, and especially young recruits such as those buried at Bitburg, were never actual members of the General SS, and the military Waffen-SS organization in which they did serve during the war, and in which they died, was

In Germany itself, former members of the Waffen-SS are still prohibited from laying wreaths at memorial services for Germans killed during the Second World War.⁷ Veterans of Waffen-SS military formations and their survivors continue to be denied equivalent benefits and pensions to their counterparts who served in other units of the German Wehrmacht, and they have now formed lobby organizations in Germany to pressure the national government to grant them benefits to which they feel they are entitled.⁸ Even in Canada as recently as the summer of 1987, newspapers and Jewish organizations were criticizing the federal government and a "quite right-wing RCMP officer with German sympathies" for permitting an "alleged Nazi war criminal" to enter Canada in 1983. The charge that the individual may have committed war crimes was based solely on information that he had served during the war as a soldier in a Waffen-SS unit.⁹

Much of the post-war stigma surrounding the Waffen-SS was a product of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) held at

linked administratively to Himmler's sprawling SS empire, but operationally to the regular German Armed Forces. See APPENDIX 4, German Command and Administrative Channels.

⁷ Ilya Levkov (ed.), Bitburg and Beyond: Encounters in American, German and Jewish History, (New York 1987), p. 63.

⁸ George H. Stein, The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939-1945, (New York 1966), p. 252, 255.

⁹ Janice Turner, "Probe Mountie who let alleged Nazis come to Canada, Jewish group urges", Toronto Star, (August 10, 1987), p. A5, and Ashman and Wagman, The Nazi Hunters, p. 243.

Nuremberg from November 1945 until October 1946. Most post-war scholars and historians who have studied the Nuremberg trials have focussed their attention on the trials of the major individual defendants of the IMT, the 22 surviving leaders of Nazi Germany's political, military and economic apparatus who were in Allied custody after the war. Of those 22 Nazi figures, the judges of the four Allied occupying powers eventually acquitted three, and condemned 12 to execution (one in absentia), while the remaining 7 were given various terms of imprisonment ranging from 10 years to life.¹⁰

But there was a larger purpose for the Nuremberg Tribunal, one which has remained only in the backgrounds of the analyses made both then and subsequently, but which nonetheless had a huge impact on hundreds of thousands of lives after the war; that was the trial and conviction of the "criminal organizations". The list of Nuremberg defendants, in fact, began not with the captured leadership of Nazi Germany cited above but with the six major Nazi military-political organizations. One historian has even suggested that the 22 individual defendants were themselves primarily selected in 1945

not because of their personal actions, cruelty, or notoriety, but because they fitted into the American plan for prosecuting organizations. Frequently, the prosecution of organizations at Nuremberg has been treated as if it were an

¹⁰ Bradley F. Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, (New York 1977), p. 307, and Albrecht Goetz, Bilanz der Verfolgung von NS-Straftaten, (Koeln 1986), p. 16.

afterthought, but, in fact, it was the heart of the American trial plan. The individual defendants were merely the performers through which the main drama was played out.¹¹

Early on in the preparations for the Tribunal, it became apparent that the American prosecution team was determined to use the rulings of Nuremberg not only to pass judgement on the 22 surviving leaders of Nazi Germany, but also to provide a precedent for thousands of subsequent trials which they planned to conduct throughout occupied Germany.¹² Article 9 of the Nuremberg Charter directed that an organization or a group whose members had been found to have committed Crimes Against Peace, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity could be declared criminal, and Article 10 provided that the members of such organisations or groups could then be tried and convicted without the prosecution having to provide any further proof of their criminal character.¹³ These follow-up trials would involve thousands of lesser Nazi officials and leaders, but would be handled with despatch because it was intended that the Tribunal rulings would be applied automatically to each subsequent trial of a member of the same organizations.

¹¹ Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, p. 63.

¹² Whitney R. Harris, Tyranny on Trial: The Evidence at Nuremberg, (Dallas 1954), p. 545, Ashman and Wagman, The Nazi Hunters, pp. 70-1, and Henri Meyrowitz, La Repression par les Tribunaux Allemands des Crimes Contre l'Humanite et de l'Appartenance a une Organisation Criminelle, (Paris 1960), pp. 419-21.

¹³ Tadeusz Cyprian and Jerzy Sawicki, Nuremberg in Retrospect: People and Issues of the Trial, (Warsaw 1967), pp. 76-7.

A United Nations War Crimes Commission memo of the period explained that this concept of trying and convicting entire organizations and their memberships

grew out of the necessity to meet a new type of criminality which had never before faced human society so directly or on so vast a scale - mass crimes, committed by large groups of individuals, "specially organized and trained for the purpose of the Nazi Government".¹⁴

Six groups and organizations representing some 3-5 million individuals¹⁵ were eventually selected to be prosecuted at Nuremberg; the Reich Cabinet, the Leadership Corps of the N.S.D.A.P. (German National Socialist Party), the General Staff and High Command of the German Armed Forces, the S.A. (Sturmabteilung, or Storm Detachment, the first paramilitary arm of the Nazi Party), the Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei, or secret state police), and the S.S. (Schutzstaffel, or Protection Detachment, the elite guard of the Nazi Party)¹⁶ and S.D.

¹⁴ United Nations War Crimes Commission, History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission and the Development of the Laws of War, (London 1948), p. 289.

¹⁵ Tom Bower, Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, America and the Purging of Nazi Germany - A Pledge Betrayed, (London 1981), p. 335, and Cyprian and Sawicki, Nuremberg in Retrospect, p.77. This figure is the Nuremberg estimate based on their own criteria of what constituted "membership" in the various organizations; for instance, although the NSDAP (Nazi Party) had 8 million members in total, only those who joined up to a certain time period or rank were considered the subject of the organizational prosecution at Nuremberg.

¹⁶ In "The Organization and Activities of the SS in Germany", p. 1, from file 800/SS/12, Military Intelligence (MI) 14 Appreciation File, Record Group War Office (WO) 208/3130, Public Records Office, London, England, the SS is described as the

(Sicherheitsdienst, or Reich Security Service, the umbrella organization for most of the remainder of the German police and security forces).¹⁷ Incorporated into the same indictment against the SS and SD was the Waffen-SS, the military arm of the SS which grew out of a small pre-war core of several thousand and eventually developed into a major component of German military strength on the battlefields of World War II, with a total war-time membership of some one million men.¹⁸

In 1944 the U.S. War Department had contemplated excluding the field units of the Waffen-SS from the indictment against the SS organization.¹⁹ Allied intelligence reports of the period had concluded that

it is clear that from the outset the Waffen-SS was modelled on the Army both in organization

organisation "charged with guarding the security of the Nazi movement, internal security of the Reich, and carrying out that part of Nazi philosophy dealing with race and blood".

¹⁷ The SA were eclipsed after the Roehm purge of 1934 by the SS. Under Heinrich Himmler, the SS grew to be almost a state within a state, encompassing police and military units, concentration and labour camps, and various industrial enterprises, while the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) became the sole intelligence organization of the NSDAP and Security Service of the SS, and was responsible for some of the most brutal war-time activities of the SS. For further reference consult the Appendices which appear in Krausnick, Anatomy of the SS State, pp. 539-74.

¹⁸ Bruce Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai: The Waffen-SS in Action, (England 1983), p. 14. See Appendix 1 for an enumeration of these units, their origins and combat histories, allegations of crimes committed by them, and the post-war fate of their surviving members.

¹⁹ James J. Weingartner, Crossroads of Death: The Story of the Malmedy Massacre and Trial, (California 1979), p. 2.

and training and it was clearly envisioned that they would fight under Wehrmacht orders in time of war ... During the period of war, in spite of the great expansion of the Waffen-SS, the Army maintained its authority in all fundamental matters concerning the planning and policy of the Waffen-SS.²⁰

Even the Legal Secretariat of the United Nations War Crimes Commission concluded that according to its own findings the Waffen-SS might be exempted from the Nuremberg indictment against the SS and SD since "members of the 'Waffen-SS' comprised units independent of other SS formations. They were mostly members of the regular army, and bore no prima facie guilt of crimes."²¹

However, just as the decision about whether or not to include the Waffen-SS in the indictment against the SS and SD was being deliberated in London and Washington in 1944, two incidents occurred which changed many attitudes in Allied military circles. They involved the massacres of captured Allied prisoners-of-war by different Waffen-SS military formations just behind the landing beaches at Normandy, France in June and during the Battle of the Bulge near Malmedy, Belgium in December.²² These killings gained widespread attention in the Allied media, and the idea of exempting

²⁰ "The Higher Staff Organization of the Waffen-SS", 1944 Report of M.I.R.S. (Military Intelligence Research Section), Record Group War Office (WO) 208, File 4281, Document No. 136482, p. 172, Public Records Office, London, England.

²¹ UNWCC, History of the UNWCC, p. 296.

²² See below, CHAPTER 4: Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes.

the military wing of the SS organization from the indictment was subsequently dropped.²³ Thus, as the Tribunal commenced its deliberations in late 1945, some 150,000 former soldiers who had served in Waffen-SS military formations during the war were among those interned in Allied prisoner-of-war camps awaiting the final judgement of the International Military Tribunal.²⁴

On September 30 and October 1, 1946, after more than 11 months of presentations of evidence, testimony and deliberations, the rulings against the twenty-two individual defendants and the six indicted Nazi organizations were handed down by the Allied judges at Nuremberg. The Reich Cabinet, the S.A. and the General Staff and High Command of the German Armed Forces were all acquitted on the charges of organizational criminality for various reasons,

²³ Robert E. Conot, Justice at Nuremberg, (New York 1983), p. 10, and Ashman and Wagman, The Nazi Hunters, p. 71.

²⁴ Felix Steiner, Die Armee der Geachteten, (Germany 1971), p. 298.

while the remaining three groups, the Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party, the Gestapo, and the SS and SD, were found guilty.²⁵

The Waffen-SS and its membership was included in the criminal findings of the four Allied judges against the SS and SD organization based on the following four general groups of charges:

- 1) Ideological: the members of the Waffen-SS were mainly volunteers, part of a physical and ideological elite of dedicated National Socialists and fanatical fighters;
- 2) Organizational: Waffen-SS units were active participants in the steps leading to aggressive war, and they remained throughout the war an integral component of the larger SS organization;
- 4) Ties to Criminal Units: the Waffen-SS retained command over - and responsibility for - the notorious concentration camp system, and was likewise implicated in the activities of the Einsatzgruppen and the infamous "Kaminski" and "Dirlewanger" Brigades;
- 6) Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes: Waffen-SS military units were directly responsible for numerous massacres and atrocities committed against the civilian populations in the territories occupied by Germany, and the shooting of unarmed

²⁵ The acquittals of the first three organizations were made because it was felt that the SA "lacked cohesion", and was largely an irrelevant organisation after the Roehm purge of 1934, and because both the Reich Cabinet and the General Staff and High Command were similarly not cohesive and functioning "organizations" during the war in the true sense of the term. Because of the small size of the latter two groups, it was also felt that subsequent trials of individual defendants would accomplish the same task more thoroughly. Ann Tusa and John Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, (New York 1984), p. 452, Eugene Davidson, The Trial of the Germans, (New York 1966), p. 563, and Airey Neave, Nuremberg: A Personal Record of the Trial of the Major Nazi War Criminals in 1945-6, (London 1978), p. 294.

prisoners-of-war became almost general practice in Waffen-SS units.²⁶

During the course of this study, each of these points will be examined systematically, and their accuracy will be analysed in the light of subsequent post-war historical research.

There is a massive amount of primary and secondary material available on the subject of the Waffen-SS. The most interesting collections, including daily war reports, personnel files, and administrative materials of Waffen-SS units in the field, is unfortunately held in Czechoslovakia away from easy access to western researchers. These records originally formed part of the War History Section of the Waffen-SS established outside of Berlin during the war, and were evacuated to occupied Czechoslovakia in early 1944 to avoid their being damaged during Allied bombing raids. The collection now forms part of the holdings of the Czechoslovakian State Archives.²⁷

Those documents which did remain at the main SS archives in Berlin after the war related mainly to personnel matters of the General-SS (Allgemeine-SS) and Waffen-SS. Today the US-administered Berlin Document Center (BDC) retains a vast collection of war-time documents showing the ranks, training and dates of

²⁶ Summarized by the author from Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, (Nuremberg 1947), vol. 1, (Blue Series), pp. 269-71 (Judgement against SS).

²⁷ Dr. K.-G. Klietmann, Die Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation, (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 49-50.

promotion of individual Waffen-SS members. These records are supplemented by other personnel records held at the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht-Auskunftstelle or WAST) for wounded or missing German military personnel, also situated in Berlin. The federal German archives (Bundesarchiv) in Aachen-Kornelimuenster, meanwhile, contains materials relating to prisoner-of-war, military award and courts-martial records for Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht personnel.²⁸

A vast array of war-time documentation pertaining to the SS can also be found within the microfilm collection entitled Captured German War Records which is held by the National Archives in Washington. The 25,000 feet of original documentation from which these microfilms were made were returned to the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1960s, and are now held in their own main archival facilities in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz, or their military archives (Bundesarchiv/Militaerarchiv) in Freiburg if the documents concerned mainly military records relating to Waffen-SS field units.²⁹

²⁸ For a full discussion of the state of German records and archival centres, consult Robert Wolfe (ed.), Captured German and Related Records: A National Archives Conference, (Washington 1974), pp. 134-5, and 243-4.

²⁹ These materials were seized after the war by the US Army, and shipped to their archival facilities at Alexandria, Virginia. Between 1956 and 1963 the collection was microfilmed, and the originals were returned to the Federal Republic of Germany. Most of the material on the Waffen-SS is scattered throughout the 536 microfilm rolls of Record Group T-175, the collections of documents of the Reichsfuehrer SS and Chief of the German Police. Operational materials on Waffen-SS units can be found scattered

Also of interest to the researcher beginning work in this area are the published series and document collections relating to the main trial at Nuremberg; 15 volumes of Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (the Red Series); 42 volumes of Trials of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal (the Blue Series); and the 15 volume Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals (the Green Series) which covers 12 U.S. follow-up trials conducted at Nuremberg between 1946 and 1949 against the members of the German High Command, Krupp and other industrialists, the S.S. Einsatzgruppen, etc. Unpublished but also accessible to the contemporary researcher are records for the numerous military trials conducted by the US, Canadian and British Armies in occupied Germany commencing in the fall of 1945. Material on all post-war war crimes trials conducted in both theatres of operations can also be found in the recently-opened files of the United Nations War Crimes Commission in New York City.³⁰

For the purposes of this paper, the Public Records Office in London, England proved to be a valuable source for primary

throughout rolls 116-342 of Record Group T-354, the collections on the German Armed Forces. See also Wolfe, Captured German and Related Records, pp. 55-6.

³⁰ These records were recently opened to public viewing in December of 1987, although the records of the United Nations War Crimes Commission itself are valuable mainly for the legal background which they provide to the work of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

documentation. War-time and post-war Allied intelligence estimates were found there which indicated that American and British military officials had a clear picture at that time, based especially on interrogations of captured German prisoners-of-war, of the structure and activities of the Waffen-SS, and the training and performance in battle of its members.

Another striking document which is mentioned briefly in the transcripts of the Nuremberg trials (the Blue Series), but which was not finally entered into evidence at Nuremberg, was discovered at the Imperial War Museum in London, England. Those researching the Waffen-SS since the war either overlooked this document, or were unable to find it. The compilation, known as Nuremberg Document Number D 961, sets out under the names of each of the 38 Waffen-SS divisions the crimes alleged by UNWCC member states to have been committed against their citizens by those units, including the date and place of the alleged offence, and the nature of the incident and the source of the allegation.³¹

As for secondary material, a large number of memoirs on the subject of the Waffen-SS have been written by former senior

³¹ Clues to the possible existence of this document came from Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 388-91, (Presentations of the prosecution). Major Jones of the prosecution team attempted to enter a summary of charges against the Waffen-SS into evidence before the Tribunal. After deliberating, the judges of the Tribunal rejected the document, numbered simply D 961, since it had not been entered into evidence by the prosecution following proper procedure. It is the only comprehensive listing of allegations against Waffen-SS formations known to be in existence.

officers of the organization such as Paul Hausser and Felix Steiner, or lower-ranking officers who decided to write the histories of their own former Waffen-SS units. The title of one of Hausser's books, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch ("Soldiers Just Like the Others"), indicates that the emphasis of many of these memoirs/unit histories is on the similarities of Waffen-SS military units with Wehrmacht formations, rather than on stressing their implication in crimes which occurred during the war or their links to other criminal components of Himmler's SS empire. To this body of basically apologist material can be added Bruce Quarrie's Hitler's Samurai and Hitler's Teutonic Knights, and multi-volume series by Roger James Bender and Hugh Page Taylor on the Uniforms, Organisation and History of the Waffen-SS, and by David Littlejohn on the Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, most of which were Waffen-SS units. These works focus on the military reputation of Waffen-SS units rather than engaging in intensive discussions about their involvement in war crimes or their relationship within the larger SS organization.

Charles Sydnor and James Weingartner are two American historians who have done much more comprehensive, and critical, jobs researching two of the more notorious Waffen-SS military formations, the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf"³² and the 1.

³² Charles W. Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction: The SS Death's Head Division, 1933-1945, (New Jersey 1977).

Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte".³³ Unfortunately, the focus on individual units by these two authors prevented them from analysing the larger and more complicated picture of the whole organization, and their conclusions cannot be extrapolated to the Waffen-SS as a whole.

A second body of secondary literature also ignores the wider picture of the Waffen-SS, and focusses its attention instead on the alleged involvement of specific Waffen-SS military units in particular war crimes or crimes against humanity. Included in this group are such studies as Leslie Aitken's Massacre on the Road to Dunkirk,³⁴ James Weingartner's Crossroads of Death,³⁵ Tony Foster's Meeting of Generals,³⁶ and Max Hastings' Das Reich and Robin

³³ James J. Weingartner, "Sepp Dietrich, Heinrich Himmler, and the 'Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler', 1933-1938", Central European History, volume 1, number 3, (September 1968), pp. 264-84, and Hitler's Guard: The Story of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler, 1933-1945, (California 1979).

³⁴ Leslie Aitken, Massacre on the Road to Dunkirk, (London 1977), covering the 1940 murders of British prisoners-of-war at le Paradis, Belgium, by members of the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf". The discovery in 1988 of one of the officers considered responsible for these murders living a peaceful life in Germany led Aitken to produce an amended edition, Massacre on the Road to Dunkirk: Wilhelm Moehnke and the Wormhoudt Massacre, (London 1988). See also APPENDIX 1.

³⁵ James J. Weingartner, Crossroads of Death: The Story of the Malmedy Massacre and Trial, (Berkeley 1979), covering the 1940 murders of British prisoners-of-war near Wormhoudt, Belgium, committed by members of the 1. Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler". See also APPENDIX 1.

³⁶ Tony Foster, Meeting of Generals, (Toronto 1986), covering the 1944 murders of Canadian prisoners-of-war at Normandy, France, by members of 12. Waffen-SS Division "Hitler Jugend", and the subsequent trial of Waffen-SS officer Kurt Meyer, with the author's

Mackness' Oradour,³⁷ These works deal exclusively with particular war-time incidents involving specific Waffen-SS units, describing each crime and post-war trial in the minutest detail, but again ignoring wider analyses of the Waffen-SS as an organization, or the fate of its members in the wake of the Nuremberg rulings.

Historical works dealing with analyses of the role of the military Waffen-SS within the larger SS structure only began to emerge a decade after the war in the wake of the opening of a number of archival collections of captured German war records to historical researchers. Almost without exception the scholarly works which have emerged subsequently on the subject of the Waffen-SS have been revisionist, rejecting many of the sweeping conclusions made by the judges of the Nuremberg Tribunal about that organization. One historian explains that after the opening of the captured collections of German war documents, no researcher with access to the mass of war-time material which survived the collapse of Germany could claim any longer that the SS was a monolithic organization.³⁸

father as chief Canadian prosecutor. See also APPENDIX 1.

³⁷ Max Hastings, Das Reich: Resistance and the march of the 2nd SS Panzer Division through France, June 1944, (London 1981) and Robin Mackness, Oradour: Massacre and Aftermath, (London 1988), both covering the 1944 murder of French civilians in Oradour, France, committed by members of the 2. Waffen-SS Division "Das Reich". See also APPENDIX 1.

³⁸ Walther Hofer, "Fifty Years On: Historians and the Third Reich", Journal of Contemporary History, volume 21, number 2, (April 1986), p. 227, 229.

The first historian to analyse critically the role of the Waffen-SS within the SS structure was Gerald Reitlinger in his work The SS: Alibi of a Nation.³⁹ Reitlinger's thesis was that the entire SS organization, including the Waffen-SS, became a "scapegoat" at Nuremberg, a sacrificial lamb for the war guilt of German civilians and the search for vengeance of the nations which had once been occupied by Nazi Germany.⁴⁰ Although somewhat outdated now, Reitlinger's thesis remains an excellent introduction to the topic, and one contemporary German expert on the Waffen-SS has explained that

for many people both inside and outside Germany the delicate moral question of their own involvement in the events of the National Socialist period seemed expeditiously answered simply by reference to the terror apparatus of the SS and the unwanted threat it represented.⁴¹

German historian Heinz Hoehne was the first to follow Reitlinger's lead in 1960 with a work entitled The Order of the Death's Head.⁴² He too took a revised view of the Waffen-SS, concluding that "the daily grind of World War II turned the Reichsfuehrer's [Himmler's] legionnaires into practically normal

³⁹ Gerald Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, (London 1956).

⁴⁰ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 452.

⁴¹ Bernd Wegner, "The 'Aristocracy of National Socialism': The Role of the SS in National Socialist Germany", in H.W. Koch (ed.), Aspects of the Third Reich, (London 1985), p. 430.

⁴² Heinz Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head: The Story of Hitler's S.S., (London 1960).

soldiers, almost indistinct from those of the Wehrmacht".⁴³ However, like Reitlinger's, Hoehne's book contained only a small section devoted exclusively to the Waffen-SS. It also suffered from the fact that it was only translated into English more than a decade after it originally appeared. The same can be said of Hans Buchheim's and Helmut Krausnick's Anatomy of the SS State,⁴⁴ which also contained only a section on the Waffen-SS, and did not appear in its English form until 1968. Krausnick also questioned the inclusion of the Waffen-SS in the 1946 Nuremberg ruling, stating that the nearest to an exception about the generally criminal nature of the SS was this military component; "it was, of course, part of the praetorian guard, but nevertheless its training was clearly exclusively military and it had nothing to do with the political duties of the Allgemeine-SS [General-SS], with police matters or with concentration camps."⁴⁵

It was another American historian, George H. Stein, who became the first scholar to focus his analysis exclusively on the subject of the military arm of Himmler's SS, and define its role and activities during the war. Stein concluded his 1966 work,

⁴³ Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 437.

⁴⁴ Helmut Krausnick et al., Anatomy of the SS State, (New York 1968).

⁴⁵ Krausnick, Anatomy of the SS State, p. 390.

appropriately titled The Waffen SS,⁴⁶ by stating that "the doctrine of criminal conspiracy and collective guilt formulated during the Nuremberg era no longer satisfies serious investigators ... some components - like the ... Waffen-SS - took on a life of their own and followed a course distinct from that of any of the others."⁴⁷ Although Stein took a generally more critical stance against the war-time Waffen-SS legions, he also reminded his readers that "most of the old guard - the professionals of the pre-war SS - died on the eastern front".⁴⁸

Stein's authoritative study was followed five years later by a PhD thesis written by Robert Gelwick, another American historian. Gelwick's "Personnel Policies and Procedures of the Waffen SS"⁴⁹ dealt largely with questions about the administrative structure of the organization, but left the reader with an even more exculpatory view of the Waffen-SS than Stein's earlier and more comprehensive work. According to Gelwick,

as a result of the general acceptance of the criminal label applied by the [Nuremberg] Court to the Waffen-SS, the popular sentiments of distaste, and the high degree of defamation of the Waffen-SS in articles, memoirs of the war, fiction, motion pictures, and television plays,

⁴⁶ George H. Stein, The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939-1945, (New York 1966).

⁴⁷ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. vii.

⁴⁸ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 287.

⁴⁹ Robert A. Gelwick, "Personnel Policies and Procedures of the Waffen SS", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (University of Nebraska 1971).

few historians have had the interest or temerity to examine the historical evidence and the problem of the Waffen-SS.⁵⁰

In 1983 yet another American historian, Robert Koehl, published The Black Corps: The Structure and Power Struggles of the Nazi SS.⁵¹ But it too contained only a limited section dealing with the Waffen-SS, and was largely a rehash of earlier analyses of Himmler's SS empire. Koehl also noted in his section on the military Waffen-SS that "there was nothing coherent about the last waves of the Waffen-SS", and that by the time the war had ended this Waffen-SS "was no longer an elite corps of political soldiers".⁵²

It was only with the emergence of various published works by German historian Bernd Wegner during the late 1970s that truly professional contemporary analyses of the Waffen-SS emerged. Wegner noted that "most studies have stressed the role of the Waffen-SS as a terror instrument and neglected its military significance" while other literature has focussed solely on its military role.⁵³ In his various articles and his book, soon to be published again in English, Wegner incorporated the views of the

⁵⁰ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 2.

⁵¹ Robert L. Koehl, "The Character of the Nazi SS", The Journal of Modern History, volume 34, number 3, (September 1962), pp. 275-83, and The Black Corps: The Structure and Power Struggles of the Nazi SS, (Wisconsin 1983).

⁵² Koehl, The Black Corps, pp. 221-2.

⁵³ Wegner, "'My Honour is Loyalty'", pp. 220-1.

various schools of thought, and approached the issue of the place of the Waffen-SS field formations within the larger SS organization, analysing at the same time the social and ideological background of its officer corps.⁵⁴

The larger question of "organizational criminality", meanwhile, has never received a great deal of attention either in the legal literature written about the Nuremberg trials, nor in the various historical analyses. Almost without exception, books which have been published since the war about the SS or the International Military Tribunal have ignored this aspect of the proceedings, or devoted several pages or part of a chapter only to the subject. It is that lack of examination in particular which this study will attempt to address.

⁵⁴ The list of publications produced on this subject by Bernd Wegner during the past decade is an extensive one: "Die Garde des 'Fuehrers' und die 'Feuerwehr' der Ostfront: Zur neueren Literatur ueber die Waffen-SS", Militargeschichtliche Mitteilungen, Militaergeschichtlichen Forschungsamt, volume 26, number 1, (1978), pp. 210-36, "Auf dem Wege zur pangermanischen Armee: Dokumente zue Entstehungsgeschichte des III ("germanischen") SS Panzerkorps", Militaergeschichtliche Mitteilungen, Militaergeschichtlichen Forschungsamt, volume 28, number 2 (1980), pp. 101-36, Hitlers Politische Soldaten: die Waffen-SS 1933-1945: Studien zu Leitbild, Struktur und Funktion einer nationalsozialistischen Elite, (Paderborn 1982), "The 'Aristocracy of National Socialism': The Role of the SS in National Socialist Germany", in H.W. Koch (ed.), Aspects of the Third Reich, (London 1985), pp. 430-50, "'My Honour is Loyalty': The SS as a Military Factor in Hitler's Germany", in Wilhelm Deist (ed), The German Military in the Age of Total War, (Leamington Spa 1985), especially pp. 220-39. Bernd Wegner's book on the Waffen-SS, originally entitled Hitlers Politische Soldaten, is due to be published in London later in 1989 as a revised and translated edition entitled The Waffen-SS: Ideology, Organization and Function.

CHAPTER II

THE WAFFEN-SS AS AN ELITE FORCE

Much of the mythology surrounding the Waffen-SS involves its supposed status as Hitler's elite guard. According to many post-war critics, the members of the Waffen-SS were the products of rigorous racial and physical standards, all volunteers imbued with intense political and ideological indoctrination, an elite military force which cared nothing for human life, and which itself fought to the death. The Nuremberg prosecution team⁵⁵ put a great deal of stock in the ideological indoctrination of Waffen-SS troops and its impact on the actual war-time behaviour of Waffen-SS personnel. In closing statements before the Allied judges, the prosecuting attorneys stated that

long before they had enrolled themselves in the SS their members had been saturated with racial hatred and Fuehrer worship. SS training was only a more advanced course. When they joined the SS, to whatever part they went they saw the practical application of all that they had learnt before. Everywhere, in every office, in every unit, murder was the trade. And wherever

⁵⁵ In addition to the background material supplied by the United Nations War Crimes Commission, the U.S. Judge Advocate General, and the British War Department, Lieutenant Colonel Neave was the head of the Applications and Motions section which selected documents to be used in the cases against the various organizations, sorted sworn affidavits supplied by members, and selected witnesses to appear before the Tribunal. The British, and particularly Major Elwyn Jones, M.P., Junior Counsel, and Barrister-at-Law, handled much of the cross-examination of Waffen-SS witnesses before the Tribunal Judges. Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, pp. 2-4.

murder was to be done it was the members of the SS that were enrolled to do it.⁵⁶

In its final judgement against the SS organization, the judges of the International Military Tribunal accepted those prosecution arguments when they concluded that the entire SS membership, including the Waffen-SS, constituted a fanatical elite

concerned with perpetuating the elite racial stock with the objective of making Europe a Germanic continent and the SS was instructed that it was designated to assist the Nazi Government in the ultimate domination of Europe and the elimination of all inferior races. This mystic and fanatical belief in the superiority of the Nordic German developed into the studied contempt and even hatred of other races which led to criminal activities of the type outlined above being considered as a matter of course if not a matter of pride.⁵⁷

Given the importance attached by the Nuremberg Tribunal to the "ideology" and the alleged elite status of the Waffen-SS membership, more thorough analysis of this aspect of the indictment is therefore necessary.

There is no question that Adolf Hitler had ambitious goals for the Waffen-SS in a future National Socialist Europe. When the first armed SS formations were established under the title of Verfuegungstruppe (Special Service Troops) in 1938, a Fuehrer Decree emphasized that the troops were meant to serve neither as

⁵⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 229, (Neave Report).

⁵⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 272, (Judgement against SS).

part of the police nor as part of the Wehrmacht, but as a unit of the NSDAP, loyal only to the Fuehrer and the party.⁵⁸ Later, in a directive of August 6, 1940, Hitler outlined his hopes that after the war "the Waffen-SS formations will return home having proved themselves in the front and so will have the authority required to carry out their duties as state police".⁵⁹

SS Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler also possessed plans for his Waffen-SS legions which went far beyond internal use for the protection of the Nazi Party. The Reichsfuehrer-SS had the long-term aim of creating an SS army as an elite force which would rival and eventually supplant the Army as the external defender of Germany.⁶⁰ This vision, however, was never shared by Hitler, and it was he and not Himmler who would be the final arbiter of the fate of the SS formations.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 21.

⁵⁹ Jacques Delarue, The Gestapo: A History of Horror, (New York 1964), p. 199, Hans Buchheim, "The SS - Instrument of Domination", in Helmut Krausnick, et al., Anatomy of the SS State, (London 1968), p. 264, Miroslav Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", Jahrbuch fuer Geschichte, volume 33, (Berlin 1986), p. 244, David Irving, Hitler's War 1939-1942, volume 1, (London 1977), pp. 155-7, Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 85, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 16.

⁶⁰ Die Geschichte der Waffen-SS: Entstehung, Aufbau, Gliederung, Einsatz under Sonderstellung der Rechtsstand der Angehoerigen der Waffen-SS, Darstellung der Bundesarchiv, (Kornelimuenster 1955), appendix, pp. 2-8.

⁶¹ Matthew Cooper, The German Army 1939-1945: Its Political and Military Failure, (New York 1984), p. 41, and Wegner, "Auf dem Wege zur pangermanischen Armee", p. 105.

As the racial czar in charge of the various Aryanization and resettlement programs of Nazi Germany, Himmler also dreamt of using the cadres of Waffen-SS veterans to provide a future leadership elite in the occupied lands of a new Germanic Europe.⁶² In the eastern territories, for instance, Himmler envisioned a new Nazi German frontier dotted with defensive SS settlements occupied by Aryan warrior-peasants and former Waffen-SS veterans.⁶³ These warrior-peasants would in turn serve as the breeding stock for a new Germanic race. Thus, in one of Himmler's war-time speeches which was entered into evidence by the prosecution at Nuremberg, the Reichsfuehrer stated that

it must be a matter of course that the most copious breeding should be from this racial super-stratum of the Germanic people. In 20 to 30 years we must really be able to present the whole of Europe with its leading class. If the SS, together with the farmers ... then run the colony in the East on a grand scale without any restraint, without any question about any kind of tradition, but with nerve and revolutionary impetus, we shall in 20 years push the national boundary 500 kms. eastwards.⁶⁴

⁶² Steiner, Die Armee der Geachteten, p. 276, Leon Degrelle, "Epic: The Story of the Waffen SS", The Journal of Historical Review, volume 3, number 4, (Winter 1982), pp. 466-7, Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, p. 50, pp. 303-4, 310-16, and Wegner, "My Honour is Loyalty", p. 224, 234.

⁶³ Alexander Dallin, German Rule in Russia 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies, (New York 1980), p. 284, David Irving, Hitler's War 1943-1945, volume 2, (London 1977), pp. 123-4 and 310-16, Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 27, and Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, p. 18, 41-75.

⁶⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 228, (Documents 1919-PS, USA-170).

In fact, Himmler played with many future plans for his Waffen-SS legions.⁶⁵ But most of them were just as far-fetched, and have little bearing on the reality of whether or not the Waffen-SS membership constituted a true ideological elite by the time the war ended in 1945. What should have concerned the judges at Nuremberg were not just Himmler's strange dreams, but to what extent the head of the SS succeeded during the war in implanting his bizarre vision of the world into the minds of his Waffen-SS recruits, and what effect that ideological indoctrination may in turn have had on their war-time behaviour.

The prosecution team at Nuremberg apparently took Himmler at his word. They claimed that the soldiers of the Waffen-SS were indeed fanatical volunteers, imbued with National Socialist doctrine even before they joined. The counsel for the defense,⁶⁶ on the other hand, argued that one of the main reasons for exempting the Waffen-SS from the general SS and SD indictment was that a large number of the members of that war-time military organization were in fact unwilling conscripts rather than fanatical volunteers. This argument was an important one, since one of the prerequisites for the establishment of criminality of

⁶⁵ For a brief description of some other of these ideas, consult Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, pp. 186-7.

⁶⁶ Counsel for the SS and SD was headed by Horst Pelckmann, a German barrister, although he was assisted by three other lawyers, all citizens of Germany. Most other teams responsible for defending the indicted organisations consisted of only one or two members. Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 7.

an organization by the International Military Tribunal was that "membership in such group must be generally voluntary".⁶⁷

The prosecution argued that war-time Waffen-SS training manuals and recruiting pamphlets, which it entered into evidence at Nuremberg, constituted sufficient proof that the organization was meant to be, and in fact was, a voluntary one, and thereby could legitimately be condemned as a criminal entity.⁶⁸ In their final ruling against the Waffen-SS, the judges of the Tribunal also ruled that although they were convinced that some of those who were members of the Waffen-SS at the end of the war were actually conscripts, "there continued to be a high proportion of volunteers until the end of the war."⁶⁹

Within the Reich itself, the competition between various arms of the German military for recruits had always been intense. In addition to the desire of Hermann Goering to expand his own Luftwaffe empire,⁷⁰ the navy and army were also undergoing a rapid

⁶⁷ UNWCC, History of the UNWCC, p. 305, and Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 430.

⁶⁸ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, pp. 227-8, (Documents 3429-PS, USA-446, 2825-PS, USA-441, 2768-PS, USA-447), and Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 2, p. 183.

⁶⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 270, (Judgement against the SS).

⁷⁰ Reichmarschal Hermann Goering was amassing military manpower at an astounding rate. At one point in late 1943, he was able to muster 2 armoured and 22 Luftwaffe airborne, field and static divisions before Hitler put a stop to it. See Cooper, The German Army, pp. 451-3, Albert Seaton, The German Army 1933-45, (New York 1982), p. 76, and H.P. Willmott, June 1944, (New York 1984), p. 60. The Luftwaffe thus often competed directly with the Waffen-SS for

war-time expansion. In fact, soon after the outbreak of the war the influx of new volunteers within Germany for Waffen-SS formations already began to dry up ; the same time as the creation and expansion of new army divisions increased the demands for manpower. Although the principle of voluntarism was never openly abandoned by the Waffen-SS, subtle and eventually openly coercive measures began to be implemented to assure the Waffen-SS a sufficient pool of manpower to expand Himmler's military arm to war-time strength. During a massive pre-war recruiting drive, for instance, 18-20 year old Reich German youths were told that they would be exempted from two years of compulsory labour service if they enlisted in the Verfuegungstruppe.⁷¹ This netted the Waffen-SS some 60,000 new recruits in the space of six months, and allowed it to expand to a total membership of 150,000 by the end of 1940.⁷² It also marked the first widespread use of "strong moral pressure"

personnel, and maintained its own collection of foreign legions and an Inspectorate to supervise them. See David Littlejohn, The Patriotic Traitors: A History of Collaboration in German-Occupied Europe, 1940-45, (London 1977), pp. 310-11.

⁷¹ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 43, and Gerhard Rempel, "Gottlob Berger and Waffen-SS Recruitment: 1939-1945", Militaergeschichtliche Mitteilungen, Militaergeschichtlichen Forschungsamt, volume 27, number 1, (1980), p. 113.

⁷² Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 97, Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions - Answers", (Osnabrueck 1986), p. 5, and APPENDIX 3.

to fill recruiting quotas while maintaining a facade of voluntarism.⁷³

The outbreak of the war on the eastern front in June 1941 caused the recruiting problem of the Waffen-SS to worsen yet again, and by 1943 the desperate search for new sources of Waffen-SS "volunteers" meant that 17 and 18 year-old draftees were forced straight out of the Reichsarbeitsdienst (German Labour Service) into the new 9. and 10. Waffen-SS divisions.⁷⁴ Similar pressure was exerted upon young members of the Hitler Youth the same year⁷⁵ to join the newly created 12. Waffen-SS Division "Hitler Jugend".⁷⁶

⁷³ Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, p. 275, and David Littlejohn, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 2, (California 1981), p. 9, and Rempel, "Gottlob Berger", p. 107..

⁷⁴ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 260, Gelwick, "Personnel, Policies", p. 495, Roger James Bender and Hugh Page Taylor, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, p. 46, and Bruce Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights: SS Panzers in Action, (England 1986), p. 123.

⁷⁵ The Hitler Youth was the youth organization of the Nazi Party. Membership in this organization was compulsory for all German males between 16 and 18 years of age, and during this service they received Wehrmacht military training or served in auxiliary Luftwaffe and naval units. Ironically, most Hitler Youth graduates tried to volunteer for the elite Wehrmacht division "Grossdeutschland" rather than the Waffen-SS. See Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 3, pp. 96-8, and Frederick J. Stephens, Hitler Youth: History, Organisation, Uniforms and Insignia, (London 1973).

⁷⁶ Normally the Waffen-SS would be last in line to receive Hitler Youth recruits after the other three branches of the German armed services. In this case special latitude was given to Waffen-SS recruiters to fulfill Hitler's dream of a Hitler Youth armoured division. Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 3, p. 100.

According to the Nuremberg testimony of one Waffen-SS recruiting official, "formally they volunteered but actually they enlisted under a certain moral pressure. I know this from the letters of complaints which reached the Ergaenzungsamt (Recruiting Office)."⁷⁷

In the case of the 12. Waffen-SS Division "Hitler Jugend", the "moral pressure" exerted on potential recruits within Germany was such that some Hitler Youth classes were told that "whomsoever now did not sign the voluntary enlistment papers could look to find himself soon in his grave".⁷⁸ Tactics employed by the Waffen-SS recruiters became so ruthless that Himmler was forced to apologize publicly in response to complaints from both the German Army and civilians, often parents of the German youths involved.⁷⁹ Other methods of compulsion employed by Waffen-SS recruiters varied;

some regiments of the general SS ordered their members to volunteer for the Waffen-SS under threat of punishment if they failed to do so. Members of the Hitler Youth were often prevented from returning home after attending a recruiting programme of the Waffen-SS until they had 'volunteered'. Young men waiting to be called to the armed forces were required to explain why

⁷⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 341, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of Waffen-SS).

⁷⁸ Foster, Meeting of Generals, pp. 279-80, Gelwick, "Personnel, Policies", pp. 499-500, H.W. Koch, The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development 1922-1945, (New York 1975), pp. 244-7, and Wegner, "Die Garde des 'Fuehrers'", p. 217.

⁷⁹ Craig Luther, Blood and Honour: The History of the 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitler Youth", 1943-1945, (California 1987), p. 33, Helmut Heiber, Reichsfuehrer!... Briefe an und von Himmler, (Stuttgart 1968), pp. 270-1, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 3, pp. 102-4.

they had not volunteered for the Waffen-SS; occasionally they received special delivery letters in the middle of the night informing them that it was the personal wish of their Fuhrer Adolf Hitler that they join 'his' service. After 1942 these and even more direct methods became the rule.⁸⁰

Thus, although the Waffen-SS never publicly abandoned the principle of voluntarism during its war-time recruiting within the Reich, it had long abandoned voluntarism in fact. Outside of Germany's borders, the same mixture of voluntary and forced enlistments could be found.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 there were approximately 2.5 million ethnic Germans, known as Volksdeutsche, living outside of Germany's pre-war frontiers.⁸¹ They constituted another potential pool of military reserves which the Waffen-SS recruiters began to develop as early as 1940.⁸² Initially, the recruiting offices of the German Army and the Waffen-SS, the Allgemeine Heeresamt and the Ergaenzungs Amt, cooperated in the recruiting of Volksdeutsche for military service in the German armed forces. But the Waffen-SS was soon able to gain supremacy because of the stranglehold which Himmler's various race and resettlement offices had on the identification and resettlement of ethnic Germans living outside

⁸⁰ Wegner, "My Honour is Loyalty", pp. 229-30.

⁸¹ Robert Herzog, "Die Volksdeutschen in der Waffen-SS", (Tuebingen 1955), p. 6.

⁸² Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 94, Wegner, "My Honour is Loyalty", p. 222, and Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 246.

of the borders of the Reich, and his control over the recruitment and operation of police and anti-partisan formations in the occupied countries.⁸³ Through his position as head of these varied offices, Himmler was able to tap directly into the huge manpower pool of racial Germans and deny them for the most part to other branches of the German armed forces.⁸⁴

The Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VOMI, Central Office for Ethnic Germans) was the office most directly responsible for identifying and resettling ethnic German minorities across Europe. By May 1940, some 10,000 Volksdeutsche from the occupied nations of Czechoslovakia and Poland, and almost 1,000 more from other countries in southeastern Europe, had already been directly recruited into the Waffen-SS with the assistance of the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle.⁸⁵ The manpower requirements of the Waffen-SS grew so critical that within months of the outbreak of hostilities on the eastern front, the VOMI organization began to actually resort even to physical force to push members of Volksdeutsche minorities to enlist. It became in effect

⁸³ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", 548-9, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 3, pp. 8-9.

⁸⁴ Philip H. Buss and Andrew Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, (London 1978), p. 16, Frederic Reider, La Waffen SS: Histoire de la SS par l'Image, (Paris 1975), pp. 46-9, Francois Duprat, Histoire des SS, (Paris 1968), pp. 79-84, Herzog, "Die Volksdeutschen", p. 3, 16, and Wegner, "'My Honour is Loyalty'", p. 219.

⁸⁵ Wegner, "Auf dem Wege zur pangermanischen Armee", p. 101, and Herzog, "Die Volksdeutschen", p. 4.

a press-gang for any Germanic-looking individuals in any country. Those who came under the protection of VOMI were made to fight in the ranks of the Waffen-SS for a Reich that had never been their's and never would be.⁸⁶

Recruiting of individual Volksdeutsche from Romania and Yugoslavia was initiated soon afterwards,⁸⁷ and by the beginning of 1942 ethnic Germans from Serbia and Romania were being coerced and conscripted into the new 7th Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen",⁸⁸ and "Volunteer Control Offices" of the Waffen-SS were being set up in most of the occupied and allied countries throughout Europe.⁸⁹ By 1944 a decree from Hitler made military service obligatory for those ethnic Germans under the supervision of Himmler's race offices.⁹⁰ Still later in the war, agreements were reached with the collapsing Slovak and Hungarian governments to transfer a further 50,000 Volksdeutsche to Waffen-SS control from the ranks of those

⁸⁶ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 129.

⁸⁷ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 168.

⁸⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 592, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 197, Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 170, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 3, pp. 9-11.

⁸⁹ Littlejohn, The Patriotic Traitors, p. 302, Herzog, "Die Volksdeutschen", pp. 10-15, and Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 458.

⁹⁰ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 592, Hans Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", in Helmut Krausnick, et al., Anatomy of the SS State, (London 1968), pp. 353-5, and David Littlejohn, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 3, (California 1985), p. 55.

national armed forces.⁹¹ All of these efforts combined to produce some 150,000 ethnic German recruits for the Waffen-SS by mid 1944,⁹² and double that figure by the end of the war.⁹³

Because the compulsion and direct force used to compel individual Volksdeutsche to join the Waffen-SS was even more blatant than within the Reich itself, many of the ethnic Germans drafted and press-ganged into the Waffen-SS during the war by the various racial offices of the SS had correspondingly low morale.⁹⁴ As early as 1943, it was becoming apparent that the ethnic German Waffen-SS "volunteers" who were being used as replacements for battle losses in front-line units were of poor quality. Many of the more than 300,000 Volksdeutsche who were compelled to join the Waffen-SS could not even speak German well. One historian has described Volksdeutsche members of the Waffen-SS as "badly trained,

⁹¹ J. Lee Ready, The Forgotten Axis: Germany's Partners and Foreign Volunteers in World War II, (North Carolina 1987), pp. 399-401, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 42, (Document SS-36), p. 486, Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 174, Herzog, "Die Volksdeutschen", pp. 9-10, Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 3, p. 140, 146, and James Bender and Hugh Page Taylor, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, (California 1975), volume 4, pp. 169-70.

⁹² Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 168.

⁹³ Heinz Hoehne, "The SS: The Butcher's Mentality", in Ilya Levkov (ed.), Bitburg and Beyond: Encounters in American, German and Jewish History, (New York 1987), p. 241, and APPENDIX 2 below.

⁹⁴ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 156.

indifferent to political ideology and sceptical of their leaders"⁹⁵, hardly specimens of the predominantly volunteer elite envisioned by the Tribunal at Nuremberg.

Another sizeable pool of military manpower for the war-time Waffen-SS was provided by the "Germanic" countries of occupied western Europe. By the end of the war, some 125,000 non-German west Europeans had been inducted into the front-line units of the Waffen-SS, in some cases forming entire legions and even divisions. Of these, the largest contingents were the Dutch, with a total of 50,000 in the war-time Waffen-SS, followed by Belgium with 40,000, France with 20,000, and the Scandinavian states, which combined supplied 20,000 volunteers for war-time Waffen-SS formations.⁹⁶

Among this group, conscription and coercion also occurred at times, but unlike the Volksdeutsche and even the Reich Germans, the vast majority of west Europeans inducted into the Waffen-SS can be said to have been volunteers.⁹⁷ In this case, however, the recruits were attracted less by the ideology of National Socialism or the world vision of Himmler and the SS, than by other more tangible factors such as better food, the prestige of the uniform,

⁹⁵ Hoehne, "The SS: The Butcher's Mentality", p. 237. For further information on the recruiting of ethnic Germans from the Balkan countries especially, see Henri Landemer, Les Waffen SS, (Paris 1972), pp. 203-12, and Duprat, Histoire des SS, pp. 277-82.

⁹⁶ See Stein, The Waffen SS, pp. 138-41, and Ready, The Forgotten Axis, pp. 295-6.

⁹⁷ Stein, The Waffen SS, pp. 138-41.

the possibility of avoiding compulsory labour service, adventure, a hatred of communism, and various other personal factors.⁹⁸

Many young west European volunteers were misled as to the years of military service which they were committing themselves to when they joined. Others were enticed to join the Waffen-SS with promises of separate national legions officered by their own fellow countrymen.⁹⁹ The problem of unfulfilled promises became such that by 1942 some of the formations of foreign volunteers were almost in a state of mutiny;

the failure to honour the promises made to the volunteers at the time of their enlistment, the mistreatment of individuals and groups, and the total lack of concern with the political implications of these acts had brought the whole foreign volunteer movement to the brink of complete collapse.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ For further information on the recruiting of west European volunteers, consult Henry L. Mason, The Purge of Dutch Quislings: Emergency Justice in the Netherlands, (The Hague 1952), pp. 23-5, Juergen Foerster, "Freiwillige fuer den 'Kreuzzug gegen den Boschewismus'", Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg, vol. 4, (Stuttgart 1983), pp. 915-34, Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 125-31, Duprat, Histoire des SS, pp. 224-37, and Jean Mabire, La Division Wiking: Dans l'enfer Blanc, (Paris 1981), pp. 43-67. For the story of the French Waffen-SS Division "Charlemagne" see Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 343-54, and Jean Mabire, La Division Charlemagne: les combats des SS francais en Pomeranie, (Paris 1974).

⁹⁹ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 152. According to Buss and Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, p. 105, and Ready, The Forgotten Axis, pp. 295-7, many of these volunteers refused to re-enlist when the western European legions were dissolved and incorporated into regular Waffen-SS units in 1943.

¹⁰⁰ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 161, and Buss and Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, p. 11.

Later in the war, as the manpower situation became even more desperate, compulsion was also employed at times to gain Waffen-SS "volunteers" from western European countries, a practice best exemplified by the forced recruiting of Belgian and French prisoners-of-war and foreign labourers working in Germany.¹⁰¹

Towards the end of the war, their desperate need to replace the huge manpower losses at the front led the Waffen-SS to compete with the Wehrmacht even in the field of eastern European volunteers, and it began recruiting legions from among the various ethnic groups of German-occupied Russia and south and south-eastern Europe.¹⁰² Here again, however, many of the recruits were compelled to enter service in the Waffen-SS either to gain release from German prisoner-of-war camps or exemption from compulsory labour service. Similarly, most eastern Europeans and ethnic Russians who volunteered for service in Waffen-SS units did so out of hatred of

¹⁰¹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 570-1.

¹⁰² See Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 533-86, for a listing of the various Osttruppen legions and units recruited by both the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS. According to Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 549, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 201, Buss and Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, pp. 18-19, and Paul Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch, (Osnabrueck 1966), p. 76, the Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS agreed during a conference convened by the German Foreign Office in 1941 to divide up the "spoils" of foreign volunteers as follows: the Wehrmacht recruited from Caucasians, Cossacks and Arabs (USSR), France, Belgium (Walloons), Poland, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania and Slovakia. The Waffen-SS continued to recruit ethnic Germans from throughout Europe, and Turks, Ukrainians and White Russians (USSR), as well as volunteers from Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Norway, Holland, and Belgium (Flems).

Soviet communism (especially true of the Baltic, Cossack, and Ukrainian divisions), or later in the war because they did not want to stay behind when the German front pulled out and face retribution for earlier service as German collaborators or auxiliary police.¹⁰³

In addition to the pools of Reich German, Volksdeutsche, west European and finally eastern manpower on which the Waffen-SS drew, there were also the other branches of the German police and military to draw from. The practice of whole-sale incorporation of units from other services into the Waffen-SS began in 1940 when some 15,000 former members of the Ordnungspolizei (Order Police, or ORPO) were transferred en bloc into the newly-created 4. Waffen-SS Police Division.¹⁰⁴ According to one witness from the Waffen-SS Recruiting Office who testified at Nuremberg, in 1940 alone some 36,000 individuals out of a total manpower at that time of 100,000 were conscripted into the Waffen-SS from other units of the SS and police.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, the newly-created 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" in 1940 was actually the product of the absorption of some 7,000 members of the Totenkopfverbaende (Death's Head Units)

¹⁰³ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 564-7, 609, 621.

¹⁰⁴ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 453.

¹⁰⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 339, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of Waffen-SS), and Die Geschichte der Waffen-SS, p. 4.

guarding the pre-war concentration camps,¹⁰⁶ and an almost equivalent number of members from the Ordnungspolizei (Order Police) and General-SS.¹⁰⁷

Whole-sale transfers of personnel from other units and other services of the military and police into the Waffen-SS, which began with the creation of the 4. Police and 3. "Totenkopf" Divisions in 1940, continued throughout the war, and peaked when Heinrich Himmler gained control of the German Replacement Army and Army Recruiting Office in 1944.¹⁰⁸ Himmler now had the authority to exchange personnel freely between police, Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS units.¹⁰⁹ According to one author, Himmler had a "collector's mania for amassing men", and tried to "muscle in" on any market,¹¹⁰ and during the final phase of the war he certainly attempted to do just that.

During the closing 12 months of World War II, 10,000 Wehrmacht survivors of the evacuation of Sevastopol were transferred into the

¹⁰⁶ See also CHAPTER IV: Organizational Links to the Criminal Components of the SS and Police.

¹⁰⁷ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 58.

¹⁰⁸ Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", p. 274, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 387, David Littlejohn, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, vol. 4, (California 1987), pp. 75-6, and Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 354, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

¹⁰⁹ Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", pp. 353-5, and Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 42, (Documents SS-48, SS-59, SS-66, and SS-68), pp. 495-504.

¹¹⁰ Littlejohn, Patriotic Traitors, p. 321.

Waffen-SS to guard labour camps for the Todt construction organization.¹¹¹ They were followed by 50,000 redundant ground personnel of the Luftwaffe¹¹², 5,000 from the Germany Navy,¹¹³ and a further 125,000 Wehrmacht troops.¹¹⁴ The latter included thousands of French and Belgian (Walloonian) Wehrmacht personnel transferred into a Waffen-SS legion in 1943,¹¹⁵ Serbian volunteers transferred from Wehrmacht to Waffen-SS control in 1944,¹¹⁶ and some 52,000 members of the Cossack Corps of General von Pannwitz,¹¹⁷ who were subordinated to the military control of the Waffen-SS during the closing months of the war.¹¹⁸ Many of these transfers were paper transfers only, and in the case of the Cossack divisions their commander even refused to accept SS officers into his units, or to

¹¹¹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 203.

¹¹² Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 170.

¹¹³ Hoehne, "The Butcher's Mentality", p. 237, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 3, p. 166.

¹¹⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 341, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS), and Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 523.

¹¹⁵ Stein, The Waffen SS, pp. 138-9, and Wegner, "'My Honour is Loyalty'", p. 221.

¹¹⁶ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 639.

¹¹⁷ Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 98, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 201, Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 4, p. 277, 302, and Littlejohn, Patriotic Traitors, p. 365.

¹¹⁸ See Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 480-5 and 522-23 for references to other piece-meal personnel and unit transfers into the Waffen-SS.

change the ranks and insignia on the traditional Cossack uniforms.¹¹⁹

According to the testimony of witnesses at Nuremberg and subsequent academic analyses, the turning point when the number of forced transfers, draftees and compelled "volunteers" surpassed the number of real volunteers in the Waffen-SS was reached in 1943,¹²⁰ although it would appear more likely that this point had actually been reached sometime towards the end of 1942.¹²¹ Once an individual had either volunteered for, or been drafted or transferred into, the Waffen-SS, there was no turning back. Like general conscription, "it was possible to leave the Waffen-SS only by means of desertion, and then the deserter would have had to accept the full consequences of the law",¹²² which in Nazi Germany usually meant the death sentence. For many Volksdeutsche and

¹¹⁹ Littlejohn, Patriotic Traitors, p. 365.

¹²⁰ The Canadian government decided in 1953 that December 31, 1943, would be taken as the date at which conscription or coercion began to play a major role in Waffen-SS recruitment. See Alti Rodal, Nazi War Criminals in Canada: The Historical and Policy Setting from the 1940s to the Present, (Ottawa 1986), pp. 270-1.

¹²¹ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 197. According to testimony given by a Waffen-SS official during the Nuremberg Tribunal, in 1942 the proportion of volunteers in the Waffen-SS was 75%, falling to 50% in 1943 and less than 40% volunteers in 1944. See Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 340, and Hoehne, "The Butcher's Mentality", p. 237.

¹²² Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 446 (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police), and p. 342, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS).

western and eastern Europeans, there was the added personal burden of being cut off from their national roots the moment they elected to join a German military formation and thus accept the label of "collaborator". Finally, as the front lines moved back towards the Reich, the original homelands of many Waffen-SS members were physically cut off as well.

There is little question then that by the time the war ended and the Nuremberg Tribunal was convened, the majority of surviving members of the Waffen-SS gathered in internment camps in occupied Germany were not volunteers in the true sense of the term. Voluntarism, although never abandoned by the Waffen-SS in principle during the war, had certainly been abandoned in practice. Prosecution claims that instances of drafting recruits were "relatively few" and that conscription into the war-time Waffen-SS was "the exception and not the rule", were incorrect.¹²³

Some contemporary literature also continues to perpetuate the myth born at Nuremberg that the Waffen-SS was permitted to recruit the best of German manpower during the war, the "cream off the top",¹²⁴ and that it maintained rigorous racial and physical standards for its membership throughout the six years of the

¹²³ Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, (Red Series), U.S. Government Printing Office, (Washington 1946), vol. 2, p. 236, (Prosecution Arguments Against the SS).

¹²⁴ Delarue, The Gestapo, p. 199.

conflict.¹²⁵ Once again, this image of the Waffen-SS as a force of Aryan "supermen" was partly a product of Himmler's own fantasies, partly of German war-time propaganda, and partly a product of the willingness of the Allied judges at Nuremberg to believe that those dreams had actually been carried out during the war. The report presented by the Nuremberg prosecution team stated that

not only was membership voluntary during the first 16 years of the existence of the SS from 1925 on, it was subject to most careful selection in an endeavor to produce what the SS called a "male racial elite", a "super-stratum", a "band of definitely Nordic German men." SS men had to be fanatical Nazis of "Aryan" descent.¹²⁶

Prior to the war entrance standards for Waffen-SS formations were indeed stringent, especially for elite parade formations like the "Leibstandarte". Pre-war Waffen-SS applicants, and some war-time officers who also belonged to the General SS, were required to submit to physical and even racial tests. Volunteers for the "Leibstandarte" and other units of the pre-1940 Verfuegungstruppe had to meet a minimum height requirement of 5 ft. 11 in., and be

¹²⁵ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. xxxi, and Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, pp. 11-12.

¹²⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 226, (Neave Report). During their testimony at Nuremberg, both Alfred Jodl and Hermann Goering perpetuated this myth of the Waffen-SS getting access to the "cream off the top" of German military recruits, demonstrating clearly the bitterness of the internal competition for manpower in war-time Nazi Germany. See Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 15, p. 443, (testimony of Alfred Jodl, Senior officer of the OKW), and vol. 9, pp. 416-7, (testimony of Hermann Goering, Reichmarschal of the Luftwaffe).

17-22 years of age. Even one filling in the tooth of an applicant might mean his rejection.¹²⁷ As a former official from the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS testified at Nuremberg about pre-war inductions,

we were interested only in healthy young men. We did not ask in inspections whether a man's father had Communist leanings or whether he and his parents were deeply religious. We were interested only in young spirited men of firm character. We accepted a young man who had not been in the SA or the General SS much more readily into the Waffen-SS than an older Party member who had a physical disability.¹²⁸

But the Waffen-SS recruiting system was set up in such a way that the organization never really did gain access to the "cream off the top" of German recruits of military age. The Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS was responsible for the enrollment and examination of recruits,¹²⁹ and SS recruiting centres were scattered throughout Germany, usually located in the same towns and cities as the district offices where the German Army did its own recruiting through the Army Recruiting Office.¹³⁰ Although it

¹²⁷ Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, p. 11, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. xxxi, 10.

¹²⁸ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 342 (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS).

¹²⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 338, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS).

¹³⁰ Roger Bender and Hugh Taylor, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, (U.S.A. 1971), volume 2, p. 21, "The Higher Staff Organization of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO208/4281, p. 152, and Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 456. In all,

possessed a parallel recruiting and induction infrastructure to that of the Wehrmacht, the Waffen-SS Recruiting Office remained subordinate to the Wehrmacht and Army in matters of recruiting,¹³¹ and in fact

cooperation between the personnel offices of the Waffen-SS and the Wehrmacht and Army offices was surprisingly free of the friction popularly believed to have aggravated relations between the Waffen-SS and the other elements of Germany's armed forces.¹³²

When the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS received an application from a recruit who met their strict physical and health standards, it would inform the local labour and Wehrmacht offices in that District or Kreis, and the Wehrmacht recruiting office would be asked to approve the induction of the recruit into the Waffen-SS.¹³³ In practice only one in three of those recruits who volunteered for service in the Waffen-SS and met its physical requirements was ever released by the Wehrmacht,¹³⁴ thus contradicting the myth that the Waffen-SS had access to the "cream off the top" of German recruits of military age.

there were 17 Waffen-SS recruiting stations within the German Reich, one located in each Wehrbezirk, or army district. See Rempel, "Gottlob Berger", p. 107.

¹³¹ Grunberger, Hitler's SS, p. 66.

¹³² Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 48.

¹³³ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 180-1, and Rempel, "Gottlob Berger", p. 108.

¹³⁴ Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 456, and Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", p. 9.

The Waffen-SS was in fact totally subordinate to the regular Army in matters of recruiting within Germany throughout most of the war. The navy, air force and army each received established percentages from the available military manpower of each recruiting year, but the quotas for Waffen-SS enlistment were set according to the number of units which it was permitted to create and maintain by agreement between Hitler and the Armed Forces. Thus until 1943 the Waffen-SS was permitted to recruit only 1.1% of the military manpower from each draft year, equivalent to 2-3% of the total for the German Army.¹³⁵

The Wehrmacht and its recruiting agency thus controlled the manpower allocation rights of the Waffen-SS, and took the "cream off the top" of Waffen-SS volunteers rather than the reverse; where differences of opinion arose the final decision rested with the Army and its recruiting arm.¹³⁶ A war-time Allied military intelligence estimate of Waffen-SS recruitment conducted in 1944 concluded that the Waffen-SS "does not appear to enjoy recruiting

¹³⁵ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 99, and Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 152.

¹³⁶ Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 127, Rempel, "Gottlob Berger", p. 111, and Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, pp. 416-17. See also "The Recruiting of the Waffen SS", p. 2.

advantages" and "some categories (of recruits) are closed to the Waffen-SS".¹³⁷

The limited size of the Waffen-SS recruiting quota and the continual decline in the number of Waffen-SS volunteers from Germany made it increasingly difficult for the Waffen-SS recruiters to be selective. Both within the Reich - and most certainly as more recruits originated from outside of the Reich after 1940 - the physical standards required of Waffen-SS inductees rapidly declined to the point where they were little different in practice than those of the other arms of the German armed forces.¹³⁸ By 1942 even Waffen-SS applicants who suffered from epilepsy, tuberculosis and other serious physical disabilities were being accepted into front-line units.¹³⁹ Nor should it be forgotten that other military units such as the "Hermann Goering" division of the Luftwaffe and "Grossdeutschland" of the German Army also maintained high physical standards during the war including minimum height requirements and restrictions against bearers of eye-glasses.¹⁴⁰ This only served to

¹³⁷ "The Recruiting of the Waffen-SS", Military Intelligence Appreciation File 14, file number 800/SS/12, Record Group War Office (WO) 208/3130, Public Records Office, London, England, p. 1.

¹³⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 183, 195, and Rempel, "Gottlob Berger", p. 110.

¹³⁹ Henry Woodhead (ed.), The SS, (Virginia 1989), p. 171.

¹⁴⁰ Roger James Bender and George Peterson, "Hermann Goering": From Regiment to Fallschirmpanzerkorps, (California 1975), p. 10, and Helmuth Spaeter, Die Geschichte des Panzerkorps Grossdeutschlands, (Bielefeld 1958), vol. 1, p. 214.

further restrict the pool of available top physical specimens on which the Waffen-SS could draw. An Allied intelligence study of the SS conducted in 1944 thus concluded that the standards of physical fitness for Waffen-SS recruits was equivalent to that required by Wehrmacht units, with the exception of certain units such as the "Leibstandarte".¹⁴¹

The same process of progressive dilution occurred to the racial standards which Himmler had established for the pre-war Waffen-SS. In addition to the principle of voluntarism and the rigorous physical standards, an individual applying to join the Waffen-SS before the war was required to submit a personal history, a hereditary health certificate and geneological chart establishing his Aryan background, as well as sworn statements about his character and honesty.¹⁴² As noted above, in keeping with Himmler's goal of creating a military force of pure Aryan racial stock, one of the first new sources of recruits to which his Waffen-SS recruiters turned after 1939 was the ethnic German communities living outside of the borders of the Reich.¹⁴³ Here, after all, was a group dear to Himmler's heart, and their incorporation into Waffen-SS units would be consistent with Himmler's desire to reunify and resettle racial Germans.

¹⁴¹ "The Recruiting of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/3130, p. 1.

¹⁴² Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 214.

¹⁴³ Foster, Meeting of Generals, pp. 170-1.

With the flood-gates already open to foreign Volksdeutsche, the next target of Waffen-SS recruiting drives were the "Germanic" peoples of western Europe, many of whom could hardly be considered Aryan. Studies have shown, in fact, that it was within the officer corps and recruiting offices of the supposedly "racially pure" Waffen-SS, rather than in the regular German Army, that the greatest shift occurred during the war towards the acceptance of non-German and non-Aryan volunteers from western Europe and subsequently from eastern Europe.¹⁴⁴ The opening of Waffen-SS recruitment to individuals from other ethnic backgrounds meant that there was a rapid deviation from the concept of maintaining the "racial purity" of the Waffen-SS legions.¹⁴⁵ By the end of 1940, members of the Waffen-SS drafted only for war service were not required to fulfill the marriage and other racial restrictions required of earlier Waffen-SS recruits,¹⁴⁶ and by the time the war ended nearly two-thirds of its members were not even Reich Germans,

¹⁴⁴ Ready, The Forgotten Axis, p. 156, 194, Gerald Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand: The Conflicts of German Policy in Russia 1939-1945, (London 1960), pp. 353-6, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 201, Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 621-50, Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 464, and Jurgen Thorwald, The Illusion: Soviet Soldiers in Hitler's Armies, (New York 1974), pp. 192-3.

¹⁴⁵ Wegner, "Auf dem Wege zur pangermanischen Armee", p. 105, and James Lucas and Matthew Cooper, Hitler's Elite: Leibstandarte SS 1933-45, (London 1975), pp. 35-6.

¹⁴⁶ Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 42, (Document SS-42), p. 490.

and it contained entire divisions of Ukrainians, Muslims, and Cossacks.¹⁴⁷

In conclusion, the Waffen-SS "was neither the elite force of perfect physical specimens nor the great reservoir of pure racial stock Himmler desired."¹⁴⁸ By the end of the war 23 of the 41 divisions of the Waffen-SS were composed of non-German volunteers and conscripts, and many of the Volksdeutsche in the other divisions were unwilling recruits who could not even speak German in many cases. Himmler tried to maintain the facade of a racial strata of Aryan "supermen" by codifying the divisions along racial lines.¹⁴⁹ In the words of one contemporary historian, the creation of Waffen-SS ethnic legions

sent the practitioners of the Higher Aryan Semantic Hogwash into a positive frenzy. The title [of the Waffen-SS unit] had to indicate not only nationality, arm, and number within that arm; but also, by a system of bureaucratic euphemism, the degree of racial respectability of the populations among which it had been recruited.¹⁵⁰

Of the 7 units which were elite Panzer divisions, all but one - "Wiking" - were composed largely of personnel of pure Reich

¹⁴⁷ Reider, Histoire de la SS, pp. 109-12, Hoehne, "The Butcher's Mentality", p. 241, and APPENDIX 1 below.

¹⁴⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 204.

¹⁴⁹ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 181, Reider, Histoire de la SS, p. 223, and Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, p. 139.

¹⁵⁰ Martin Windrow, The Waffen-SS, Men-At-Arms Series, (London 1982), p. 4.

German stock.¹⁵¹ Even among this first strata of "pure" Reich German units, however, a great deal of dilution had occurred by the time the war ended in 1945 as Volksdeutsche and "Germanic" recruits were increasingly used to replace Waffen-SS losses at the front. Other units formed from Reich German personnel included special formations like the 4. Police Division and the 8. Cavalry Division "Florian Geyer", in addition to 9 regular Panzer-Grenadier divisions.

These 18 "German" divisions were supplemented by eight divisions labelled "Freiwillige" (volunteers). These units were composed of mixtures of "Germanic" (but non-German) west European, Hungarian, and ethnic German members with heavy cadres of German officers and specialists. A third strata was composed of 15 "Divisionen der Waffen-SS". The latter were considered Divisions "of" the Waffen-SS, rather than Waffen-SS or "Freiwillige" Divisions per se, because they were composed of non-Germanic volunteers and conscripts from east and south-eastern Europe, only "stiffened with a cadre of Germans and Volksdeutsche".¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ These included the descendants of the premiere divisions of the Verfuegungstruppe, the 1. SS-Panzer Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", the 2. SS-Panzer Division "Das Reich", and the 3. SS-Panzer Division "Totenkopf", in addition to the later-formed 5. SS-Panzer Division "Wiking" (1940), 9. SS-Panzer Division "Hohenstaufen" (1942) 10. SS-Panzer Division "Fruntsberg" (1943), and the 12. SS-Panzer Division "Hitler Jugend" (1943).

¹⁵² Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 58, and APPENDIX 1 below.

To keep pace with the casualties inflicted by front-line combat and Himmler's own determination to build a vast SS army at any price, the Waffen-SS had been transformed from an elite force of volunteers and racially pure Reich Germans with demanding physical standards into Europe's largest multinational conscripted army of 400,000 Reich Germans, 310,000 ethnic Germans, and 410,000 other allies.¹⁵³ In the words of one historian, "the snobbery of 'purity' yielded to a thirst for manpower arising from a sense of competition with the weakening Wehrmacht and a quest for authority within the Nazi elite."¹⁵⁴

The prosecution at Nuremberg was convinced not only about the voluntarist, and physically and racially elitist, nature of the entire SS organization, but they were also of the view that members of the Waffen-SS were imbued with the Nazi political and racial doctrine to the extent that the commission of crimes during the war became almost second nature to members of that organization. In the eyes of the Nuremberg prosecution team

the men of the SS were particularly qualified for this plan of crime. Physically trained and selected, they were politically indoctrinated in Nazism and were committed to blind obedience to the commands of Hitler and Himmler and the rest of the Nazi leaders.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Hoehne, "The Butcher's Mentality", p. 241.

¹⁵⁴ Dallin, German Rule in Russia, p. 596.

¹⁵⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 226, (Neave Report).

Some contemporary historians who have written extensively on the Waffen-SS, such as American historian George Stein, have also concluded that

there can be little doubt that most of the men who made up the Waffen-SS of 1941 - particularly the officers and NCOs - subscribed to the basic views set forth in Himmler's statements on the racial struggle and similar matters.¹⁵⁶

It has been argued that this Nazi indoctrination imbued the soldiers of Waffen-SS combat formations with an ideological fervor and hatred of their enemies as subhuman which made them especially ruthless as fighters. Another historian has claimed that Waffen-SS members were "usually political extremists or fanatics, sometimes of criminal tendencies".¹⁵⁷

The defence counsel at Nuremberg, on the other hand, argued that the ideological training of the Waffen-SS, particularly during the latter stages of the war, "was not such as would lead to the commission of crimes mentioned in the Indictment."¹⁵⁸ The lawyers for the Waffen-SS argued that Himmler "tried to instill his own ideology into the Waffen-SS but, as is natural with a front line unit, the troops paid little attention to the utterances of people

¹⁵⁶ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 125.

¹⁵⁷ Seaton, The German Army, p. 77.

¹⁵⁸ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 42, p. 69, (Defence arguments).

in the offices at home."¹⁵⁹ Waffen-SS officers who were called before the Tribunal to testify also gave evidence which denied that the Waffen-SS was "educated with a view to irregular or especially cruel methods of fighting",¹⁶⁰ and argued that physical and not ideological standards were the basis upon which new recruits were inducted into the Waffen-SS.¹⁶¹

Subsequent studies have shown that the Waffen-SS was in fact not the vast reservoir of ideological believers which the prosecution made it out to be at Nuremberg. Consider the case of the Nazi political organizations like the NSDAP and the General SS. It is true that prior to 1938 the majority of recruits for the ranks of the original Verfuegungstruppe came from either the General SS or the Hitler Jugend youth organization.¹⁶² But limitations on recruiting imposed by the Army Recruiting Office meant that the vast majority of personnel recruited into the German military from the Reich, including members of Nazi political organizations like the General SS and the NSDAP, were inducted into

¹⁵⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 42, p. 85, (Defence arguments).

¹⁶⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 42, p. 85, (Defence arguments).

¹⁶¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 360, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

¹⁶² Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", 179.

other arms of the German Wehrmacht rather than the Waffen-SS.¹⁶³ 100,000 members of the General SS were already serving in Wehrmacht units by 1940,¹⁶⁴ and by the end of the war the General-SS was largely disbanded,¹⁶⁵ with 120,000¹⁶⁶ inducted into the Wehrmacht by 1942 and 240,000 by the end of the war.¹⁶⁷ Figures vary, but all post-war analyses show higher numbers of former General-SS members ending up as personnel in units of the regular German Army than in Waffen-SS formations.¹⁶⁸

The Neave Report, which was prepared for the prosecution at Nuremberg, also admitted that "at the outbreak of war the majority of the Allgemeine-SS (General SS), the great mass of the SS members

¹⁶³ "The Higher Staff Organization of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 140, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 290.

¹⁶⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, pp. 224-5, (Neave Report).

¹⁶⁵ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. xxvii, and Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 417, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

¹⁶⁶ Wegner, "'My Honour is Loyalty'", p. 235.

¹⁶⁷ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 444.

¹⁶⁸ Because members of the General SS and Nazi Party were required to relinquish those memberships upon entry into the Armed Forces, the figures are unclear. Steiner, Die Armee der Geachteten, p. 138 cites 36,000, The Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 466, mentions a figure of 64,000, and Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 18 cites 300,000. The latter figure would coincide with that of Hoehne, "The Butcher's Mentality", p. 237, who states that of 1.1 million real and nominal members of the Waffen-SS at the end of the war, 300,000 at most were ever members of the General-SS, most of those being granted General-SS status automatically upon entering Waffen-SS military service. See also Windrow, The Waffen-SS, pp. 4-5.

who had remained unarmed, was drafted into the Wehrmacht."¹⁶⁹ Certain Wehrmacht units were even set aside for former members of the SA, another para-military Nazi organization, and attempts to attract SA members to Waffen-SS divisions later in the war failed for that reason,¹⁷⁰ while the Luftwaffe division "Hermann Goering" maintained higher standards for proof of Aryan ancestry and National Socialist following than the war-time Waffen-SS.¹⁷¹

More than 80% of the nearly 1 million members who served in the war-time Waffen-SS were thus neither members of the Nazi Party nor of the General SS.¹⁷² This should hardly be surprising given the Waffen-SS emphasis on the recruiting of youthful rather than older inductees. Many of those who entered the Waffen-SS straight out of the Hitler Youth, for instance, averaged 17-19 years of age, too young for membership in either the General SS or the Nazi Party. And in the latter case, the Hitler Youth recruits inducted into the Waffen-SS were the products of exactly the same Nazified education system and Hitler Youth indoctrination from which the

¹⁶⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 224, (Neave Report), and vol. 20, p. 417, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police), and Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, p. 306.

¹⁷⁰ Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 4, p. 165.

¹⁷¹ Bender and Peterson, "Hermann Goering", p. 60.

¹⁷² Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 274.

young inductees into the war-time German army, air force and navy had come.¹⁷³

In addition, of the 125,000 west Europeans volunteers who joined the divisions or foreign legions of the Waffen-SS, less than one in three was a member of a pro-Nazi party in their native country. As non-Germans, they tended to be more opportunistic or nationalistic than pro-German.¹⁷⁴ As a rule, members of Waffen-SS foreign legions were not even permitted to belong to the General SS, or wear SS runes and take the SS oath.¹⁷⁵

Among Waffen-SS officers the story was the same. The prosecution at Nuremberg admitted that by mid-1944 less than one half of the high-ranking officers serving in Waffen-SS military units had been members of the pre-war SS organization.¹⁷⁶ Paul Hausser, the father of the original Verfuegungstruppe, and Felix Steiner, the creator of the training programme for Waffen-SS recruits, both had backgrounds in the German military rather than in the political ranks of the SS organization.¹⁷⁷ Himmler himself

¹⁷³ Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 210, Koch, The Hitler Youth, pp. 229-31, and Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 679.

¹⁷⁴ Buss and Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, pp. 27-30, and Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 450.

¹⁷⁵ Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 3, p. 73.

¹⁷⁶ Wegner, "'My Honour is Loyalty'", p. 231, Seaton, The German Army, p. 77, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, pp. 44-5.

¹⁷⁷ Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, p. 23, Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 59, and Landemer, Les Waffen SS, p. 74. In Nikolaus Preradovich, Die Generale der Waffen-SS, (Berg am See 1985), pp. 10-66, and Ernst-Guenther Kraetschmer, Die Ritterkreuztraeger der

complained at one point that Hans Juettner, responsible for the administration of the Waffen-SS through the Fuehrungshauptamt (Operations Department), "was far removed from the SS ideology in his thinking and actions, and was concerned only with the military organization and operations of the Waffen-SS."¹⁷⁸ Guidelines for officer promotions in the military arm of the SS were also supposed to be based upon National Socialist convictions and other racial criteria unrelated to military performance.¹⁷⁹ But like voluntarism and physical and racial elitism, this principle too was eventually down-graded in practice.

If young inductees were not already dedicated National Socialists when they joined the Waffen-SS, it was unlikely that as soldiers they would learn ideological hatred within its ranks. Neither the pre-war nor the war-time training of Waffen-SS members was as imbued with ideological indoctrination as the prosecution at Nuremberg suggested.

A tiny pre-war training system which included only 2 "Junker" training schools expanded during the war into a network of 10 NCO and 46 other centers to deal with the massive numbers of new

Waffen-SS, (Oldendorf 1978), it is clear that most senior members of the officer corps of the Waffen-SS all had military roots that went back to the years prior to the First World War, 18 of the top 25 being career officers (p. 241), and one in five not even being a member of the Nazi Party.

¹⁷⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 234.

¹⁷⁹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 262.

members constantly being inducted into the Waffen-SS during the war.¹⁸⁰ An educational office was created within the SS Main Office with responsibility for supplying instructors and training materials for the ideological indoctrination of Waffen-SS classes.¹⁸¹ But the effort was hardly effective, and

the National Socialist indoctrination of the youths was primarily that given them prior to their entry into military service. Even SS ideology received short shrift in the training units and combat units as unit commanders were more concerned about training men in their military duties and to function efficiently as members of weapon teams in the shortest possible time.¹⁸²

The German Army supervised much of the military training program for new Waffen-SS recruits, and thus further discouraged any education not concerned with improving combat performance.¹⁸³ Waffen-SS officers and instructors also often viewed the political indoctrination sessions as a "necessary evil" which interfered with the much more important business of preparing the troops for

¹⁸⁰ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 73-4.

¹⁸¹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 123, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, volume 2, p. 23.

¹⁸² Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 679, 48, and Birgit Harprath, Unpublished Masters Thesis, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband und sein Geschichtsbild der Waffen-SS im Dritten Reich", (Muenchen 1986), pp. 86-8.

¹⁸³ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 46-7, 404-5, Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 51, and Landemar, Les Waffen SS, p. 79.

military combat.¹⁸⁴ Testifying before the Nuremberg Tribunal, Paul Hausser, the real father of the Waffen-SS formations, complained bitterly that

it was generally known that Heinrich Himmler, who had done only 1 year's military service, had no conception of the military and underestimated the military tasks and the work involved. He liked to play the role of the strong man through exaggeration and through superlatives. If someone comes along with big words, the soldier on the front does not pay much attention. The commanders, of course, were under him so far as military obedience was concerned. But they had the right to criticize through their own experience of life and of the world, and as a matter of fact this criticism was necessary in the face of Himmler's extravagant and romantic ideas.¹⁸⁵

Indoctrination sessions for Waffen-SS troops became even less effective as more ethnic Germans, west Europeans, and finally eastern Europeans began to be inducted into the Waffen-SS. These non-Germans had little interest in hearing about the myths of the 'Master Race'. Some of those inducted later in the war could even have been considered outright enemies of Nazism and Germany, and the growing influx of foreign recruits certainly encouraged an increasing down-playing of the ideological indoctrination of Waffen-SS inductees.

¹⁸⁴ Mabire, La Division Viking: Dans L'enfer Blanc, p. 33, Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 679, 4, Luther, Blood and Honour, pp. 46-7, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, pp. 54-5.

¹⁸⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 368, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

Even if the Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht officers supervising the training of new Waffen-SS recruits had not viewed political classes as a "necessary evil" which interfered with the more important business of combat training, one might ask if it was ever realistic to expect that soldiers could be imbued with an SS view of the world through only 4 hours of lessons per week over several months of training.¹⁸⁶ One historian suggests that the ideological indoctrination classes of the Waffen-SS were little different from those of the German Wehrmacht and Labour Service anyways,¹⁸⁷ contained just as much "waffle", and could certainly never be compared with the intense communist indoctrination undergone by units of the Red Army.¹⁸⁸ Even a historian highly critical of the Waffen-SS and its war-time activities admits that

postwar apologists for the VT(Verfuegungstruppe)-Waffen-SS are, in general, correct in assuming that pre-war indoctrination efforts, thick with heavy-handed and dreary dissertations on ancient and medieval German history designed to glorify the Nordic Germanic race, pinpoint its enemies, and encourage a return to the healthy peasant life failed to

¹⁸⁶ Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, pp. 160-70.

¹⁸⁷ According an Allied intelligence report on "The National Socialist Indoctrination Officer in the German Armed Forces", Military Intelligence Appreciation File 14, file number OCC-C1/25/44, Record Group War Office (WO) 208/3201, Public Records Office, London, England, pp. 2-6, there was a National Socialist command office attached to the Wehrmacht High Command, and Nazi indoctrination officers in most Wehrmacht units, an effort at political indoctrination which intensified as the war dragged on.

¹⁸⁸ Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", p. 320.

turn many VT men into enthusiasts of the rural-racial twaddle so dear to Himmler's heart.¹⁸⁹

Heinrich Himmler, too, recognized what was happening when he wrote in 1943 that "the Waffen SS is reaching such a stage of independence from its political background, that I fear it will lose its identity to the armed forces."¹⁹⁰

After the war, while testifying before the Nuremberg Tribunal, Waffen-SS General Paul Hausser became understandably exasperated at the persistence of this entire line of questioning by the prosecution. Responding to repeated accusations that the soldiers of the Waffen-SS had been specially trained to operate as a "cruel military tool" during the war years, General Hausser responded as follows:

I already testified, yesterday, that our training was not organized to that end, that our method of fighting was supervised and ordered by the Army, and that we did not gain prestige through cruel methods. The commanders who had personal pride in leading a clean fighting unit against the enemy saw to that... I regret to say that during my arrest I heard of two trials against members of the Waffen-SS... These incidents are not the result of training, but rather the failure of individuals, perhaps the giving way of nerves when in difficult situations deep in enemy territory.

¹⁸⁹ Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 8. On pages 35-7, on the other hand, he states the contrary view, that it was the indoctrination unique to the Waffen-SS which led to the killings at Malmedy.

¹⁹⁰ Lucas and Cooper, Hitler's Elite, p. 33.

But these accusations should not be generalized.¹⁹¹

In effect, there was little ideological coherence about the last ranks of the war-time Waffen-SS. Most of the thousands of Waffen-SS men sitting in internment cages at the end of the Second World War no longer represented the defeated of an elite corps of "political soldiers" and dedicated National Socialists as the Nuremberg prosecution charged.¹⁹²

The long-term plans of Adolf Hitler to employ its members as internal state police, or of Heinrich Himmler to eventually utilize them as the leadership corps of a new European order governed by Aryan "supermen", were recorded into evidence at the Tribunal, but were actually irrelevant to the charge of organizational criminality. The majority of the soldiers serving in Waffen-SS military formations at the time of Germany's surrender in 1945 were no longer volunteers. Most had been compelled, coerced, tricked or transferred into service in the military arm of the SS. This alone undermined one of the most important foundations of the charge of organizational criminality, which depended on general voluntarism to be proven.

Nor were the members of the Waffen-SS combat units interned in Allied prisoner-of-war camps in 1945 and awaiting the judgement

¹⁹¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 367, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

¹⁹² Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 480, and Koehl, The Black Corps, pp. 221-2.

of the Tribunal specimens of physical, racial or ideological eliteness, as reflected in Himmler's war-time speeches and the Waffen-SS recruiting pamphlets upon which the prosecution case at Nuremberg was based. Several reputable post-war authors have pointed out that even had these images been applicable during the early years of the Waffen-SS, most of those original veterans did not survive the war.¹⁹³ Most of those interned as prisoners-of-war in 1945 and 1946 were new recruits who had been inducted during the final years of the Second World War when standards for membership in Waffen-SS combat formations had already fallen considerably.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Windrow, The Waffen-SS, p. 10. This author and others like George H. Stein and Bernd Wegner have noted that "the entire establishment of the 'classic' divisions - 'Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler', 'Das Reich' and 'Totenkopf' - were casualties several times over".

¹⁹⁴ Wegner, "Die Garde des 'Fuehrers'", p. 216.

CHAPTER III

THE WAFFEN-SS AS A MILITARY FORCE

Another important aspect of the Waffen-SS which the prosecution and judges at Nuremberg confused was its organizational relationship with the Wehrmacht and the larger SS structure. Was the Waffen-SS in fact simply one more component of Himmler's SS empire as the prosecution argued, or were they front-line soldiers like the others of the Wehrmacht, as many of the veterans claimed both then and now?

The birth of the militarized arm of the SS occurred in March 1933 when 120 SS men were specially selected to act as a headquarters guard for Adolf Hitler at his Chancellory in Berlin.¹⁹⁵ Six months later in September 1933 this unit was annointed the "Leibstandarte (Body Guard) Adolf Hitler".¹⁹⁶ In 1935, corresponding with the the introduction of military conscription in Germany and the rebirth of the Wehrmacht, the military arm of the SS was permitted to expand within strict limits agreed to by the Fuehrer and the Army General Staff.¹⁹⁷ By 1936 the original "Leibstandarte" formation had grown from 120 personnel to a

¹⁹⁵ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, pp. 70-71.

¹⁹⁶ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 4. For a good summary of the early history of the "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", see Weingartner, "Sepp Dietrich, Heinrich Himmler", pp. 264-284.

¹⁹⁷ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, pp. 70-71.

regiment of over 2,000 members,¹⁹⁸ and two further regiments of Verfuegungstruppe, the "Deutschland" stationed in Munich and "Germania" stationed in Hamburg, were also being formed.¹⁹⁹

Before the German Wehrmacht launched its invasion of Poland in September, 1939, the Waffen-SS was again permitted to expand. In addition to the premier "Leibstandarte" regiment, by the time of the Polish campaign there were three other Verfuegungstruppe regiments; "Deutschland" and "Germania", and the more recently created "Der Fuehrer", the latter recruited mainly from Austrians. Each of the four regiments comprised roughly 3,700 men divided into four infantry battalions, with supporting anti-tank, engineering and reconnaissance detachments.²⁰⁰

A massive reorganization and expansion of the military arm of the SS was undertaken again after the conclusion of the campaign in Poland. It was during this period that the term Waffen- (or armed) SS first began to be used to denote the militarized wing of Himmler's growing SS empire. During the subsequent campaign in the West in 1940, the first Waffen-SS divisions - the Police Divisions and the divisions "Totenkopf" and "Verfuegung" - appeared in front-

¹⁹⁸ At some point, the bodyguard detachment which was stationed in Berlin was detached from the military formation by the same name which was normally committed to front-line service. See APPENDIX 1.

¹⁹⁹ Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 69-71, and Stein, The Waffen SS, pp. 8-10.

²⁰⁰ Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 89, and Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, p. 28.

line combat, as did the "Leibstandarte", still at regimental strength but now motorized.²⁰¹ At this time the combined front-line strength of the Waffen-SS still comprised barely 80,000 of the 7 million men then under arms in Germany.²⁰²

Before the launching of Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, the number of Waffen-SS divisions was increased yet again with the creation of a new division "Wiking" and the three-fold expansion of the "Leibstandarte" to divisional strength. Operating as motorized infantry (Panzer-grenadier) divisions, the five Waffen-SS formations distinguished themselves in a reserve and supporting role during their first campaign on the eastern front. The 1. Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte" first tasted combat in Yugoslavia and Greece, and then joined the 5. Waffen-SS Division "Wiking" and Army Group South. The 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf", with the 4. Police Division in reserve, fought with Army Group North in the drive to Leningrad, and the 2. Waffen-SS Division "Das Reich" (formerly "Verfuegung") operated with Army Group Center in its initial drive towards Moscow.²⁰³ From that point on, the growth of the military Waffen-SS was steady, peaking at more than 900,000 personnel by the autumn of 1944 serving in an

²⁰¹ Cooper, The German Army, p. 213, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 147.

²⁰² Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 147.

²⁰³ Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, pp. 99-100, and APPENDIX 1.

assortment of 38 divisions and uncountable smaller miscellaneous units.²⁰⁴

One of the charges levelled against the Waffen-SS by the prosecution at Nuremberg stated that prior to the outbreak of the Second World War "together with the S.A. it formed a private Nazi army and the basis of what was to become the vital instrument in the conspiracy to wage aggressive war"²⁰⁵, and that subsequently "the Waffen-SS came to be the spearhead of Nazi wars of aggression, particularly in the invasion of the Soviet Union"²⁰⁶. The Tribunal in the end accepted this view of the role of the Waffen-SS when it ruled that Waffen-SS formations "were active participants in the steps leading up to aggressive war."²⁰⁷ The implication made by such a ruling was that units of the Waffen-SS played a prominent or leading role prior to 1941 in Nazi Germany's wars of aggression.

Detachments of the "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" regiment did in fact participate in the occupations of the Saarland (1935),²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ See APPENDIX 3 on War-Time Growth, and APPENDIX 5, the Chronology of the Waffen-SS.

²⁰⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 224, (Neave Report).

²⁰⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 230, (Neave Report).

²⁰⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 270, (Judgement against SS).

²⁰⁸ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 64.

the Rhineland (1936), and Austria (1938).²⁰⁹ All three regiments of Verfuegungstruppe, "Leibstandarte", "Germania" and "Deutschland", were also employed in the campaign in the Sudetenland (1938).²¹⁰ In all of these cases, however, the role played by military units of the Waffen-SS was insignificant, and the detachments supplied for the campaigns were generally small, poorly-armed, and always operationally attached to larger regular units of the German Wehrmacht. Three of the four Verfuegungstruppe regiments also participated in the invasion and occupation of Poland in September 1939²¹¹, but again, because of the inferior equipment with which they were still being equipped at the time and their small regimental size, the Waffen-SS detachments operated on different fronts and always subordinate to regular field divisions of the German Wehrmacht.²¹²

The size and composition of the Waffen-SS, its organizational subordination to the regular German Army, and its lack of corps, army or general staff structures prior to 1941,²¹³ undermines

²⁰⁹ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 25.

²¹⁰ Cooper, The German Army, p. 43, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 25.

²¹¹ According to Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 416, the Waffen-SS units involved in the Polish campaign were criticized for having fought poorly when resistance was encountered.

²¹² Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 28.

²¹³ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 359, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of Waffen-SS). Corps and later Army staff structures did begin to emerge later in the war, after 1942. See Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization,

prosecution charges at Nuremberg that the Waffen-SS was a "private Nazi army" and "the vital instrument in the conspiracy to wage aggressive war" leading to the outbreak of the Second World War.²¹⁴ The Waffen-SS played no leading or significant role in the preparations for or conduct of the various German "wars of aggression". The vast expansion of the Waffen-SS and its reputation as an elite military force were gained only subsequent to the winter campaigns of 1941-2. As for the charge that it acted as a "private Nazi army", 1944 Allied intelligence reports clearly stated that "the Waffen SS during the war has not played the part of a private Party army".²¹⁵

Adolf Hitler was responsible for much of the confusion surrounding the organizational chain of command of the Waffen-SS. In his decree of August 17, 1938 outlining the role of the new militarized Verfuegungstruppe, he emphasized that they were not meant to be considered a component of either the police or the Wehrmacht but responsible solely to him and the NSDAP, and that "in case of mobilization ... it comes completely under military laws and regulations, but remains a unit of the NSDAP

vol. 2, pp. 20-32.

²¹⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 224, (Neave Report).

²¹⁵ "The Organisation and Activities of the SS in Germany", PRO, WO 208/3130, p. 4, and Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 2, (Document 647-PS), p. 181.

politically".²¹⁶ So what was the organisational relationship of the Waffen-SS to the SS and the army? Why was Allied intelligence able to declare in 1944 that it clearly was not a private Nazi army?

In some matters such as its finances the Waffen-SS did in fact develop a "special status" independent of both the SS and the Wehrmacht. Benefits for disabled retirees of the Verfuegungstruppe/Waffen-SS and their survivors, for instance, originated from the coffers of the SS and NSDAP, although the amounts were consistent with Wehrmacht guidelines.²¹⁷ Throughout the war the budget for Waffen-SS personnel was paid from funds supplied directly by the Reich government and the Ministry of the Interior, and not from those allocated to the Ministry of Defence and the Wehrmacht, or the SS and Police.²¹⁸

There is no question, on the other hand, that the Waffen-SS was born and raised in the womb of the SS. The prosecution team at Nuremberg correctly pointed out that throughout the war administrative matters related to the personnel of the Waffen-SS

²¹⁶ Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 2, p. 181, (Document 647-PS), and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 21.

²¹⁷ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 293, "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 164, and Die Geschichte der Waffen-SS, p. 7, 9.

²¹⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 287, Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 15, and Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 355, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS).

remained officially under the supervision of the Reichsfuehrer-SS through the offices of the SS Fuehrungshauptamt (Operational Headquarters).²¹⁹ SS-Reichsfuehrer Himmler remained titular commander in charge of the Waffen-SS divisions through his field command post,²²⁰ while the personnel office of the SS organization under Gottlob Berger continued to bear responsibility for recruiting, promotions and awards for Waffen-SS personnel.²²¹ As one Allied intelligence document of the period summarized,

(Himmler) continued to exercise a detailed and painstaking watch over the affairs of the Waffen SS. In particular he maintained considerable personal control over the officer corps of the Waffen SS through the promotion and appointment of all officers from battalion commands upward. In addition to this, however, though he rarely visited the troops in the field, he kept himself well informed on the general battle picture as it affected SS units.²²²

Almost as soon as they were first created, however, the first regiments of the Verfuegungstruppe began to develop a character more military than political. When the nascent Verfuegungstruppe was created on September 24, 1934, it was with the understanding

²¹⁹ Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, pp. 481-2. In his testimony before the Tribunal, Alfred Jodl tried to make the most out of the organizational links between the two. See Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 15, p. 560, (testimony of Alfred Jodl, Senior officer of the OKW).

²²⁰ Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 2, p. 17.

²²¹ Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 2, p. 16.

²²² "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 149.

that in time of war it would be at the disposal of the Wehrmacht and not of Himmler's SS and police.²²³ This agreement never changed, and at no time once hostilities commenced in 1939 was there ever any question of the German Army losing operational control over the units of the Waffen-SS.²²⁴ In May 1935, two months after the creation of the first armed units of Verfuegungstruppe, new orders were passed which made service in these units equivalent to regular military service.²²⁵ In October 1938 a special SS-Verfuegungstruppe Inspectorate was formed under Paul Hausser. This Inspectorate functioned as the Main Operational Office or headquarters of the Waffen-SS, and on August 15, 1940 it became known as the Fuehrungshauptamt under the direction of Hans Juettner. As such it became largely independent of the Hauptamt (Main Office) of the Reichfuehrer-SS,²²⁶ and was granted direct liaison to the headquarters of the Wehrmacht and the Fuehrer.²²⁷

²²³ Robert J. O'Neill, The German Army and the Nazi Party, 1933-1939, (London 1969), p. 102.

²²⁴ Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", p. 290, and Cooper, The German Army, p. 44.

²²⁵ Cooper, The German Army, p. 43.

²²⁶ Cooper, The German Army, p. 43, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 2, p. 11.

²²⁷ Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 2, p. 15, 9.

The ascendancy of the Wehrmacht over the Waffen-SS extended to its recruiting and personnel policies.²²⁸ Induction orders for those wishing to join the Waffen-SS were exactly the same as those used by other branches of the German Armed Forces, and recruiting was guided by regulations and quotas established by the Army rather than by the SS and police.²²⁹ Updates of personnel records for soldiers of the Waffen-SS were forwarded not to the SS offices but to the district recruiting offices of the Wehrmacht organization.²³⁰ The Wehrmacht was also responsible for setting policies for leaves of Waffen-SS troops at the front, and censoring and handling their mail.²³¹ In addition, while individuals who transferred or volunteered for Waffen-SS service from the Wehrmacht were allowed to maintain the equivalent of their former rank upon enlistment in the Verfuegungstruppe-Waffen-SS, officers of the General SS entering the organization were forced to forfeit their original ranks and begin anew.²³² As one witness explained

it is typical of this independence (from the SS) that even the highest leader in the General SS did not by any means join the Waffen-SS with

²²⁸ See also above, pp.

²²⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 344, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Ergaenzungs Amt of the Waffen-SS). See also above, pp. 42-45.

²³⁰ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 241.

²³¹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 297.

²³² Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 344, 419, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Ergaenzungs Amt of the Waffen-SS).

the same rank which he held in the General SS, but that in the Waffen-SS he was treated exactly as any other citizen; in other words, he had to begin as a recruit.²³³

Although the Waffen-SS gradually developed its own network of maintenance shops and supply depots for its troops and equipment,²³⁴ it remained dependent upon the Army for supplies of everything needed for battle except rations, uniforms, and some munitions.²³⁵ Soldiers and officers of the Waffen-SS received the same amount and method of pay as the Wehrmacht,²³⁶ and in 1937 the black uniform of the SS gave way to the basic grey combat gear of the regular German Army.²³⁷ The SS did succeed in regaining judicial authority over Waffen-SS troops from the Wehrmacht in 1940, but rulings continued

²³³ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 419, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

²³⁴ George M. Kren and Leon Rappoport, The Holocaust and the Crisis of Human Behavior, (New York 1978), p. 65.

²³⁵ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 65-6, "The General Staff of the SS: SS Fuehrungshauptamt", Military Appreciation File 14, file number 800/SS/12, Record Group War Office (WO) 208/3130, Public Records Office, London, England, p. 4, "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 173, and Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", p. 9.

²³⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 355, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Ergänzungs Amt of the Waffen-SS).

²³⁷ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 11.

to be based largely upon the standard German military code of law.²³⁸

The military instruction provided to the Verfuegungstruppe-Waffen-SS recruits was also based on Wehrmacht guidelines from an early point.²³⁹ As the war dragged on, the Waffen-SS personnel began to employ Wehrmacht rather than SS terms of rank.²⁴⁰ The senior officers of the Waffen-SS, from Hausser, Steiner and Juettner down, even began to develop a "manifest aversion" to social contact with members of the General SS,²⁴¹ and Wehrmacht Field Marshal Erich von Manstein testified at Nuremberg that "a large number of the reasonable leaders of the Waffen-SS, and during the war the mass of the Waffen-SS units, wished to be incorporated

²³⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 248-51, and Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 2, (Documents 2946-PS and 2947-PS), p. 184..

²³⁹ Landemer, Les Waffen SS, p. 79, Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 9, 51, Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", pp. 12-13, 33-34, and Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 46-7.

²⁴⁰ Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 16. According to Wegner, "Die Garde des 'Fuehrers'", p. 215, this practice of attempting to employ Wehrmacht rather than SS rank began even before the war within Sepp Dietrich's unit the "Leibstandarte".

²⁴¹ Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 479, and Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", p. 331. According to Weingartner, "Sepp Dietrich, Heinrich Himmler", pp. 282-3, Lucas and Cooper, Hitler's Elite, p. 13, and Mollo, To the Death's Head True, pp. 53-4, the attempt to maintain a distance from Himmler and mock his Weltanschauung began as early as 1935 in the ranks of the Verfuegungstruppe.

into the Army."²⁴² After 1939 there was a conscious attempt on the part of numerous Waffen-SS officers to encourage close contact and cooperation between the two military organizations despite Himmler's attempts to prevent that from occurring.²⁴³ As one post-war historian has explained,

inevitably this new military elite grew further and further apart from its spiritual base and its political leader. Himmler was for ever admonishing his Waffen-SS generals, who were a pretty independent lot, for using Army rank titles in preference to their SS ones, saluting in the military as opposed to the Nazi manner, and allowing their men to attend church parades and so on.²⁴⁴

Some Waffen-SS veterans have made the claim that they were part of a special "fourth arm" of the Wehrmacht, but this was hardly possible given the structure of the German armed forces at the time.²⁴⁵ Once the Waffen-SS organization developed an ethos of its own, however, it could play off the SS against the army. It thus exerted

a very real measure of autonomy which was maintained and enlarged through the execution of simple political tactics. If Waffen-SS leaders felt a threat of domination by the army, Himmler could be counted upon to support them; if Himmler threatened to wield his authority too

²⁴² Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 600, (testimony of Erich von Manstein, former Wehrmacht Field Marshal).

²⁴³ O'Neill, The German Army, p. 104, and Koehl, The Black Corps, pp. 235-8.

²⁴⁴ Mollo, To the Death's Head True, pp. 78-9.

²⁴⁵ Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", pp. 273-4, and Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 69.

heavily, then the army could provide countervailing support.²⁴⁶

These attempts to maintain administrative independence and even psychological distance from the Reichsfuhrer-SS and his SS officials came to a head in March 1942, when Himmler became angered by the refusal of his Waffen-SS officers to relay orders and unit status reports to his offices.²⁴⁷ He wrote a furious memo which complained that "my beloved Waffen-SS is once more demonstrating that it feels more loyal to the military Commander-in-Chief than to its own Higher SS and Police Fuehrer."²⁴⁸ Gottlob Berger, Himmler's adjutant and closest confidant, noted with resignation in a memo of his own that "hardly a single SS general took any notice", and that he found it "astounding that there are people in the SS who simply take no notice of an explicit order from the Reichsfuehrer".²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ George H. Kren and Leon Rappoport, "The Waffen-SS: A Social Psychological Perspective", Armed Forces and Society, volume 3, number 1, (Fall 1976), p. 97, and "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 173.

²⁴⁷ Ruth Bettina Birn, Die Hoeheren-SS und Polizei Fuehrer: Himmlers Vertreter im Reich und in den Besetzten Gebieten, (Dusseldorf 1986), pp. 112-3, and Heiber, Reichsfuehrer!, pp. 107-9.

²⁴⁸ Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", p. 231, and Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 466.

²⁴⁹ Charles Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator: The Life and Times of Oberstgruppenfuehrer and Panzergeneral-Oberst der Waffen-SS Sepp Dietrich, (London 1988), pp. 51-2, and Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 443.

On another occasion Himmler tried to dismiss Waffen-SS General Bittrich for insubordination. But his order was simply ignored, and non-compliance was supported by the Wehrmacht.²⁵⁰ Felix Steiner and other senior Waffen-SS officers openly referred to Himmler as a "sleazy rum" and "Reichsheini", name-calling which at one point became so widespread that another memo was circulated to the Waffen-SS which stated that "the Reichsfuehrer desires that (Steiner) put a stop once and for all to the scandalous expressions used about me, the Reichsfuehrer, by many in the "Viking" Division when talking in the mess, etc. I will no longer tolerate these things."²⁵¹

Himmler's frustration was understandable. In point of fact, the Waffen-SS carried on its own existence largely outside of the National Socialist institutions in which it had little influence. The Waffen-SS was, in effect

the one organization over which the Reichfuhrer SS did not have total control nor authority in the areas of policy and administration nor in the employment of the units. Accordingly, Himmler was more preoccupied with his political and security forces and other responsibilities.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 444.

²⁵¹ Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 445.

²⁵² Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 664, Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. viii, and Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, pp. 166-7, p. 127.

The SS Fuehrungshauptamt was thus little more than an administrative office for the combat formations, while Waffen-SS commanders in the field took their orders directly from the Army.²⁵³ The High Commands of the Armed Forces (OKW) and Army (OKH) did not contain a single SS officer, nor did Hitler ever appoint any member of the Waffen-SS or its Fuehrungshauptamt to his own staff.²⁵⁴ As one Allied intelligence report of the period correctly explained

(the Fuehrungshauptamt) does not control, and is not responsible for, the strategic employment of the main field formations of the Waffen SS. Still less does it exert any operational control over these formations when they are at the front. As soon as an SS division or corps is fit to take the field, it passes under the immediate authority of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (OKW)... Once subordinated to Wehrmacht authority, SS formations became for all general operational purposes part of the Wehrmacht for the period of their subordination.²⁵⁵

It should hardly be surprising, then, that the longer they fought side by side with Wehrmacht troops, the more indistinct the troops and officers of the Waffen-SS became from their Army counterparts.²⁵⁶ This further supports the claims of defence

²⁵³ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 42, p. 85, (Defence Arguments).

²⁵⁴ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 84.

²⁵⁵ "The General Staff of the SS: SS Fuehrungshauptamt", PRO, WO 208/3130, p. 3, and "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 172.

²⁵⁶ Hohne, "The Butcher's Mentality", p. 437, Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 174, Cooper, The German Army, p. 450, and Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, pp. 166-7.

counsel at Nuremberg that "the Waffen-SS was primarily a military organization which fought under the direct command of the Army and was only under the SS Main Office for administration".²⁵⁷ One witness for the defence testified that "the Waffen-SS had a definitely military character and its activities were military."²⁵⁸ A contemporary historian has agreed that

the more the Waffen SS and the Wehrmacht came into contact one with another, the better their relations became. As the war continued, the Waffen SS became increasingly detached from its political background, and developed into an organisation which was not just pro-Army but was in many ways almost exclusively military in outlook and performance.²⁵⁹

This explains why Waffen-SS General Paul Hausser testified that "the Waffen-SS considers it quite unjust that it is being treated differently from the mass of the German Armed Forces."²⁶⁰

If no other part of the mythical "eliteness" of the Waffen-SS was actually grounded in truth, its military reputation as an effective fighting organization was at least partially accurate. In fact, after the Second World War both American and British

²⁵⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 42, p. 69, (Defence Arguments).

²⁵⁸ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 420, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

²⁵⁹ Lucas and Cooper, Hitler's Elite, p. 27, and Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, pp. 181-3.

²⁶⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 370, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

front-line commanders had high praise for the fighting qualities of the Waffen-SS.²⁶¹

However, even when one discusses the military eliteness of the Waffen-SS, qualifications must be made. The fighting reputation of the military arm of the SS was won by five units in particular, namely the premiere divisions "Leibstandarte", "Das Reich", "Totenkopf", and "Wiking", and the later-formed division "Hitler Jugend".²⁶² Many other Waffen-SS units formed during the last stages of the war, on the other hand, particularly the Volksdeutsche and ethnic Russian legions, were divisions in name only and often fought poorly in battle, if they ever fought at all.²⁶³ One Muslim formation even mutinied while it was being trained in France, to the utter embarrassment of the Waffen-SS recruiting office,²⁶⁴ and three were disbanded before they ever saw major combat.²⁶⁵

Nor was the Waffen-SS the only arm of the German military which produced elite fighting formations during World War II. The

²⁶¹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 34-6.

²⁶² Wegner, "Die Garde des 'Fuehrers'", p. 217, refers to the division "Hitler Jugend" as the daughter of "Leibstandarte" since many of its officers were seconded from there.

²⁶³ Wegner, "The 'Aristocracy of National Socialism'", p. 448, and Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, pp. 278-82.

²⁶⁴ Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 3, pp. 209-13.

²⁶⁵ See APPENDIX I, especially references to the 13., 21., and 30. Waffen-SS Divisions.

Luftwaffe's 1st Parachute Division "Hermann Goering" possessed a reputation for effectiveness in battle equal to any of the premier Waffen-SS units,²⁶⁶ while the Army Panzer divisions "Grossdeutschland" and "Panzer Lehr"²⁶⁷ surpassed even the premiere Waffen-SS divisions as the most powerful and effective fighting units of all the German land forces.²⁶⁸ It is interesting to note that the "Grossdeutschland", like the "Leibstandarte" of the Waffen-SS, originated as a guard regiment in Berlin until 1937, that it also called itself a "fire brigade" elite formation, and that most youths leaving the Hitler Youth preferred to enlist in this formation rather than the Waffen-SS.²⁶⁹ The name-sake of the Luftwaffe leader, "Hermann Goering", meanwhile, originated as a special police unit when Goering was Minister of the Interior in

²⁶⁶ Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 243, and Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", p. 7.

²⁶⁷ This division was originally formed during the winter of 1943-44 from the personnel of a number of panzer training schools who were thrown together to prepare for a threatened Allied invasion of France. Helmuth Ritgen, Die Geschichte der Panzer-Lehr-Division im Westen 1944-1945, (Stuttgart 1979), pp. 11-12.

²⁶⁸ Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", p. 7, 12, James Weingartner, Hitler's Guard: The Story of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler, 1933-1945, (Illinois 1974), p. 95, and James Lucas and Matthew Cooper, Panzer Grenadiers, (London 1977), p. 29.

²⁶⁹ Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 3, p. 98, and Spaeter, Die Geschichte des Panzerkorps Grossdeutschlands, p. 623.

pre-war Prussia, and in many cases maintained higher physical and ideological standards than even the premier Waffen-SS divisions.²⁷⁰

The question of the military eliteness of the Waffen-SS poses other problems also. Many post-war apologists for the Waffen-SS have emphasized the battlefield achievements of certain units, while trying to ignore its ties with other criminal sections of the SS, and the involvement of certain Waffen-SS troops in war-time atrocities committed against military personnel and civilians. Critics, on the other hand, tend to ignore the exceptional fighting reputation of some of the front-line units of the Waffen-SS in their determination to condemn every aspect of the organization. They also attempt to explain away the military achievements of Waffen-SS formations as another product of preferential treatment by Hitler in terms of equipment,²⁷¹ or as part of a post-war mythology perpetuated by bitter ex-veterans.

The elite military character of the Waffen-SS was real to some extent, and its roots could be found in the minds of its first senior officers, Sepp Dietrich, Paul Hausser, and Felix Steiner.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Bender and Peterson, "Hermann Goering", pp. 7-10, 60, 130-1.

²⁷¹ Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, p. 68, Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 243, and Fritz Wilhelm Schuetter, Maenner der Waffen-SS: Der Weg einer Truppe 1935-1945, (Oldendorf 1982), p. 307.

²⁷² Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, p. 23, Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 12, Landemer, Les Waffen SS, p. 74, and Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, pp. 317-18.

These men, and other less senior to them, were responsible for the creation in the 1930s of a military training system for the Verfuegungstruppe which was based on rigorous physical endurance and combat training unlike any existing in the German Wehrmacht at the time.²⁷³ The original recruit training system of the Waffen-SS has been described as being akin to that of the contemporary U.S. Marines,²⁷⁴ and one historian argues that "under the influence of Hausser's cadet schools the Waffen-SS was to develop the most effective of all the military training systems of the Second World War."²⁷⁵

A close comraderie was also encouraged between officers and men of the Waffen-SS which was unlikely to be permitted in the more traditional regular Wehrmacht.²⁷⁶ This classless aspect in particular seemed to grow out of the traditions of the former German "storm troops" of the World War I trenches. Like Waffen-SS units during the Second World War, the German storm troops of the First World War trenches had a unit character distinct from that

²⁷³ Kren and Rappoport, "The Waffen SS", p. 94, Lucas and Cooper, Hitler's Elite, pp. 29-31, and Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, pp. 24-5.

²⁷⁴ Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 235, Duprat, Histoire des SS, pp. 247-9, 45, and Landemer, Les Waffen SS, p. 74.

²⁷⁵ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 77, and Luther, Blood and Honour, p. 49.

²⁷⁶ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 97. According to Wegner, "Die Garde des 'Fuehrers'", p. 216, Waffen-SS Generals Eicke and Dietrich in particular attempted to model their units after themselves.

of the remainder of the German Army. "They considered themselves to be an elite, which they indeed were. Discipline in the formal sense was much more relaxed, with much less of the wide gulf which separated officers from men in more conventional units."²⁷⁷ In Waffen-SS formations, the bond between different ranks was supplemented by a mystique which grew out of the fighting reputation won by Waffen-SS units at the front and the increasingly international character of its personnel.²⁷⁸ By the last stage of the war

they still trotted out the stereotyped phrases about Fuehrer and Reich, loyalty and final victory, but in their heart of hearts they withdrew into themselves and became a force owing allegiance to no one - no longer SS and not yet Wehrmacht ... the divisional symbol, the bitter battles, the memory of fallen comrades, formed a mystical bond holding the unit together, a closed circle into which no stranger might penetrate.²⁷⁹

It was not Hitler's intention at the beginning of the war to allow the Waffen-SS to develop into an elite fighting organization which might eventually replace the German Army.²⁸⁰ The Wehrmacht likewise fought any expansion or change in status of the Waffen-SS

²⁷⁷ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 6, Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, p. 175, and Reider, Histoire de la SS, pp. 25-8.

²⁷⁸ Kren and Rappoport, "The Waffen SS", p. 96, Kren and Rappoport, The Holocaust, pp. 66-7, and Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", pp. 89-98.

²⁷⁹ Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 478.

²⁸⁰ Lucas and Cooper, Hitler's Elite, pp. 21-3.

as it protectively guarded its own role as the sole "bearer of arms" and defender of Germany from external enemies. This accounted for much of the mutual animosity and mistrust which initially dominated relations between the Verfuegungstruppe and the Wehrmacht.²⁸¹ But by 1942 Hitler had begun to recognize the military usefulness of an expanded Waffen-SS, and so, grudgingly, did many senior officers of the Wehrmacht.²⁸² This occurred

because of the outstanding performance of Waffen-SS units during the difficult war fighting in Russia. According to all accounts, the four elite divisions ("Das Reich", "Viking", "Totenkopf" and "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler") had done so well - holding ground where Wehrmacht divisions faltered; attacking successfully when ordered even after taking very heavy casualties - that Hitler finally accepted Himmler's arguments for expansion.²⁸³

Henceforth the divisions of the Waffen-SS, and particularly those first created and subsequently re-grouped into Panzer units,

²⁸¹ Lucas and Cooper, Hitler's Elite, pp. 24-7.

²⁸² Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 206, and Charles W. Sydnor, "The SS 'Totenkopfdivision' in the German-Russian Conflict, 1941-1945", (Longwood College), p. 9. At times, especially during the early campaigns in Poland and the West, some Wehrmacht officers accused their Waffen-SS counterparts of "wasting lives" and employing poor tactics, but these complaints faded into obscurity as the war progressed. The expansion of the Waffen-SS was watched closely also, and it never grew to anything more than the equivalent of 10% of the strength of the rival Army. See Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, p. 14. As the war continued, Waffen-SS units increasingly were the subject of grudging praise and respect from their Wehrmacht counterparts. See Die Geschichte der Waffen-SS, pp. 11-12, and Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 105.

²⁸³ Kren and Rappoport, "The Waffen SS", p. 97, and Cooper, The German Army, p. 451.

became the "fire brigade" of the German front lines. Wherever the situation was most serious and the prospects for German recovery seemed least likely, the elite formations of the Waffen-SS were inevitably found.²⁸⁴ Moscow, Leningrad, Demyansk, Kursk, Italy, Normandy, the Ardennes; the premiere divisions of the Waffen-SS were represented in almost every major German offensive and defensive operation from 1942 onwards.

But the price paid by the Waffen-SS for its new-found respect as a military organization was a heavy one. Within five months of the outbreak of war on the eastern front, "Das Reich" had suffered 60% losses,²⁸⁵ while the "Totenkopf" division had less than 6,400 men left out of a full complement of 20,000 when it was finally pulled out of the line in late 1942 after a full year of continuous combat.²⁸⁶ At the Battle of Kharkov in 1943, three elite Waffen-SS divisions suffered a combined total of 11,500 casualties in only 3 days of fighting.²⁸⁷ By the time the war ended in 1945, some 220,000 Waffen-SS soldiers were dead, and almost 70,000 more

²⁸⁴ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 257.

²⁸⁵ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 168.

²⁸⁶ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 252.

²⁸⁷ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 278.

missing,²⁸⁸ equivalent to 20-25% of total war-time Waffen-SS strength.

The heavy losses, the sense of military eliteness, and the affinity with the Wehrmacht which developed in the ranks of the Waffen-SS as the war wore on also meant that its intended role as an "elite guard" for Hitler and the National Socialist regime began to decline in importance.²⁸⁹ The loyalty of the Waffen-SS officers to the Fuehrer even began to become questionable as Germany's military situation continued to deteriorate.²⁹⁰ It is somehow ironic that on July 20, 1944, while a regular unit of the German Wehrmacht protected Hitler in the aftermath of the plot against his life, officers of his personal bodyguard unit, the Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", and other Waffen-SS units fighting at Normandy, negotiated with the conspirators.²⁹¹ Most

²⁸⁸ Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 120.

²⁸⁹ Some historians have suggested that part of the reason that the Wehrmacht was reluctant to attempt the overthrow of Hitler, even during the last stages of the war, was the threat posed by the rival Waffen-SS, loyal to the end. This argument is not sustainable. See Joseph Wulf, L'industrie de l'horreur, (Paris 1970), p. 391, Duprat, Histoire des SS, pp. 247-9, Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 666, Walter Goerlitz, Die Waffen-SS, (Osnabrueck 1960), p. 19, and Cooper, The German Army, pp. 547-50.

²⁹⁰ Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, pp. 184-5, Hohne, "The SS: The Butcher's Mentality", p. 242, Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, pp. 529-30, and Kren and Rappoport, "The Waffen SS", pp. 98-9.

²⁹¹ Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, pp. 510-6, Weingartner, Hitler's Guard, p. 107, Kren and Rappoport, The Holocaust, p. 67, Wegner, Hitlers Politische Soldaten, pp. 184-5, Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 663-6, and Rudolf Lehmann and Ralf Tiemann, Die Leibstandarte, vol. 4, (Osnabrueck 1982), pp.

Waffen-SS soldiers were not blindly loyal to Hitler's regime, and had no wish to fight to the end as some historians have suggested.²⁹² The majority in fact attempted to avert Soviet captivity at the end of the war, and did their best to surrender themselves to British or American troops.²⁹³

By the time the war ended Allied intelligence had recognised the truly military nature of the Waffen-SS. In their 1944 analysis of the organisation and activities of Himmler's SS empire in Germany, the Waffen-SS was not even dealt with "as the Waffen-SS is primarily a military organisation".²⁹⁴ The prosecution and judges at Nuremberg apparently did not agree.

324-6.

²⁹² Albert Seaton, The Russo-German War 1941-45, (London 1981), p. 79.

²⁹³ Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 531.

²⁹⁴ "The Organisation and Activities of the SS in Germany", PRO, WO 208/3130, p. 12.

CHAPTER 4

ORGANIZATIONAL LINKS TO THE CRIMINAL COMPONENTS OF THE SS AND POLICE

The most condemning aspect of the prosecution's case against the Waffen-SS at Nuremberg were its organisational links to Himmler's notorious system of concentration and extermination camps. The prosecution produced letterheads originating from the offices of various concentration camps which were stamped with Waffen-SS logos and apparently signed by Waffen-SS officers.²⁹⁵ It also produced evidence to show that an interchange of personnel occurred during the war between guard units of the camps and front-line units of the Waffen-SS, and indicated that at one point in the war the concentration camp system, which imprisoned 18 million human beings during the war, and murdered 11 million,²⁹⁶ was actually subordinate to the administrative offices of the Waffen-SS Fuehrungshauptamt.

This evidence gravely weakened the credibility of defence pleas that the personnel of the Waffen-SS were soldiers "just like any others", with no ties to the criminal activities of the SS security and police forces, and undermined attempts made by the defence to clarify the administrative separation of the Waffen-SS from the other SS offices. The concentration camp link allowed the prosecution to introduce testimony and documents during the

²⁹⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 354-6, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS).

²⁹⁶ Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 248.

presentation of evidence against the Waffen-SS which concerned the inner workings of the extermination camps and horrified the Tribunal judges.²⁹⁷

The prosecution charged that the Waffen-SS offices "absorbed" and "had command over" the guards of the concentration camps during the war.²⁹⁸ As one of the prosecution lawyers asserted while questioning a witness for the Waffen-SS, "Did you know that the Waffen-SS was making quite a profitable business out of killing people in concentration camps? Did you know that? Did you know that?".²⁹⁹

This situation arose in good part because of Himmler's constant juggling of personnel and offices within his SS empire. In June 1940, the Concentration Camp Inspectorate was placed under the administrative control of the Waffen-SS Fuehrungshauptamt, only to be redesignated the next year as Amt VI of the Waffen-SS, and then transferred again in February 1942 away from the Waffen-SS to the SS Economic and Administrative Section (WVHA) under Oswald Pohl.³⁰⁰ Even though the administration of the huge concentration

²⁹⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 353, (Document USSR-511). Another was a series of orders relating to the supplying of live prisoners as a source of anatomical skeletons for medical research, (Document GB-575).

²⁹⁸ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 514, (Neave Report).

²⁹⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 459, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

³⁰⁰ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 95.

camp system was a largely self-contained operation with close links to the German police,³⁰¹ for a period of two years, at least on paper, the administrative offices of the SS concentration camp system were subordinate to the Waffen-SS. A whole series of documents produced by the prosecution at Nuremberg confirmed that the concentration camp organization formed "part of" the Waffen-SS during that period, and as one contemporary writer has concluded,

this was the most cogent argument against those SS apologists who claim that the Waffen-SS had nothing to do with the concentration camps. On both the highest formal and lowest guard level Himmler had irrevocably bound the knights of his black order to the murkiest corners of his deadly empire.³⁰²

Even after Amt VI was transferred to the WVHA in early 1942, the concentration camps and their personnel remained part of the Waffen-SS in that they continued to be paid out of the same budget and to wear the same uniforms and carry the same paybooks as the troops of the front-line formations of the Waffen-SS.³⁰³ However, as one of the defence witnesses at Nuremberg attempted to explain,

³⁰¹ Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", p. 272, and Birn, Die Hoeheren-SS und Polizei Fuehrer, p. 123.

³⁰² Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 42.

³⁰³ One noticeable difference being that they wore death's heads on their collars, which Waffen-SS combat troops did not, and that the symbols faced in the opposite direction from that of other military uniforms. See G.S. Graber, History of the SS, (London 1978), p. 11, Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", pp. 271-3, and Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 468, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

this arrangement was for purely administrative rather than command reasons;

the commands of the concentration camps were officially on the budget of the Waffen-SS... For economic reasons it was necessary that the commands, in their dealings with the Reich, operate under the name of an organization which had the possibility of working with Reich funds and with the Reich authorities... The Waffen-SS proper, that is the troops, were under a command office of the Waffen-SS unless they were at the front and thus under the Army. And this Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps was not under the command office of the Waffen-SS and received no orders from this office. The Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps, Gluck's office, had its own channel of command. As far as I know it received its mail independently and so forth. It did not come into closer contact with the Waffen-SS...³⁰⁴

Still, the SS Fuehrungshauptamt, out of whose offices the Waffen-SS was administered, continued to be responsible throughout the duration of the war for arming and providing military training to guards in the camp system.³⁰⁵ In other cases, concentration camps had the responsibility for supplying and maintaining facilities for locally-stationed Waffen-SS formations,³⁰⁶ and at one point during the first winter of the war on the eastern front

³⁰⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 354-5, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS) and vol. 20, pp. 459-60, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

³⁰⁵ Hoehne, "The SS: The Butcher's Mentality", p. 241, Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 246, and Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 17.

³⁰⁶ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 77, and Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 246..

Himmler ordered winter clothing for his Waffen-SS legions to be supplied from ghettos and camps which formed part of the concentration camp system.³⁰⁷ The WVHA, which administered the concentration camps after February 1942, was also the supreme financial authority for the Waffen-SS, administering its finances, supply depots, and certain engineering and construction projects on its behalf.³⁰⁸ Even the medical services of the Waffen-SS had some links to the concentration camp system.³⁰⁹

Even though many of these links may have been circumstantial, and do not prove a direct culpability of the Waffen-SS as a whole in Himmler's policies of genocide,³¹⁰ they did present a disturbing case for the prosecution's argument at Nuremberg that the Waffen-SS bore at least a certain degree of responsibility for Himmler's notorious concentration camp system.

The first major link between personnel of the Waffen-SS and those guarding the concentration camps came with the creation of the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" after the fall of Poland in 1939. At that time the Verfuegungstruppe consisted of 18,000 men

³⁰⁷ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 217, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 191, and Conot, Justice at Nuremberg, p. 266.

³⁰⁸ "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 159.

³⁰⁹ Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 94.

³¹⁰ Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 105, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 111.

divided into four regiments. At the same time there existed within the SS 14 Totenkopf (Death's Head) regiments containing 22,000 troops, nominally part of the police but eventually meant to act also as reserves for the Verfuegungstruppe.³¹¹ In the same 1938 Fuehrer decree which clarified the role of the Verfuegungstruppe in war-time, Hitler directed that in the event of the outbreak of war, these 14 Totenkopf regiments would be transferred to the Verfuegungstruppe as replacements.³¹² Some of the personnel in the 14 Totenkopf regiments, however, also served in the Totenkopfverbaende (Death's Head Units), the police units which guarded the pre-war German concentration camp system.³¹³ Although the distinction between the purely military units of the Verfuegungstruppe and the purely police concentration camp guard units known as Totenkopfverbaende remained clear at the time, the delineation of functions was already being blurred by the existence of the Totenkopf regiments which were meant to supply personnel for both in time of war.

³¹¹ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 34.

³¹² Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 2, pp. 185-6, (Document 647-PS).

³¹³ The camp guard units were also known as Totenkopfwachsturmbanne. See Stein, The Waffen SS, p. xxxii, Raul Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, (New York 1985), vol. 3, p. 902, and Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 325.

Thus, in the fall of 1939 and in accordance with Hitler's directive, 6,500 of the 22,000 Totenkopf regiment members,³¹⁴ some of whom had formerly guarded concentration camps and including the "father" of the German concentration camp system the notorious Theodor Eicke,³¹⁵ were transferred into a new 3. Waffen-SS Division called, appropriately, "Totenkopf", and the first direct link had been formed between the personnel of the concentration camps and those of the Waffen-SS.³¹⁶ After the first winter of the Russian campaign, the remaining Totenkopf regiments were also disbanded. Now numbering 40,000 personnel in total, 5 of the SS regiments were assigned to anti-partisan operations in the occupied east, and most of the remainder were transferred into new and existing divisions of the Waffen-SS.³¹⁷

Most of the men who were transferred from the Totenkopf regiments to the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" and other formations of the Waffen-SS between 1939 and 1941 had served as

³¹⁴ These, from the Totenkopf regiments "Oberbayern", "Thuringen" and "Braunschweig", formed the nucleus for the new division and were supplemented by drafts of Ordnungspolizei and other personnel. See Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 46.

³¹⁵ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, pp. 3-23.

³¹⁶ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 126, Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 259, and Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 93.

³¹⁷ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 103, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 168, Wiesenthal, Justice Not Vengeance, p. 265, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 72.

little more than reserve troops.³¹⁸ But some had actually served in the guard units of the pre-war German concentration camp system, while others had participated in various brutal police actions conducted by several of the Totenkopf regiments in Poland during the winter of 1939-40.³¹⁹ The first links between the field units of the Waffen-SS and the notorious police and concentration camp system of the SS and Gestapo thus appeared to be well-established.

The prosecution was incorrect, however, when it asserted at Nuremberg that the "Totenkopf" Division was "set up mostly in concentration camps".³²⁰ In fact, only 6,500 of the 15,000 troops of the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" were drafted from the pre-war Totenkopf Regiments, and guarding the pre-war concentration camps was the task of only parts of the latter formations.

The personnel links between the combat formations of the Waffen-SS and the concentration camp staffs are still confusing for the outside observer. It would appear that even the combat officers of the Waffen-SS formations were so preoccupied during the war with the expansion of their own numbers that they "hardly noticed how deeply Himmler kept entangling them in the murderous

³¹⁸ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 259.

³¹⁹ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 37, and Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 250.

³²⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 327, (Prosecution Arguments).

underworld of his empire."³²¹ At no time was this more true than when Himmler issued an order in 1941 making camp guards nominal members of the Waffen-SS, a seemingly insignificant decree which "turned the Waffen-SS into involuntary accomplices of concentration camp guards."³²²

At Nuremberg, the lawyers for the defence argued that the Waffen-SS was not in fact responsible for the guarding of the camps, and that the granting of nominal Waffen-SS status to those camp personnel was part of a deliberate deception on the part of Himmler to avoid having the 20,000 guards and other personnel of the SS Economic and Administrative Main Office (WVHA) drafted into other arms of the German military. Thus, in order to have their wages paid out of the budget of the Ministry of the Interior rather than the SS and police, the camp guard units were placed nominally under the Waffen-SS.³²³ An official of the Waffen-SS personnel office testifying at Nuremberg explained that

the expression "nominal Waffen-SS" was applied by us for the guards and commands of the Waffen-SS... Within the Waffen-SS, as I have already explained when mentioning the regulations for

³²¹ Hoehne, "The SS: The Butcher's Mentality", p. 241.

³²² Hoehne, "The SS: The Butcher's Mentality", p. 241, and Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 17.

³²³ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 42, pp. 69-70, (Defence Arguments). See also vol. 20, p. 427, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police), vol. 20, p. 366, 370, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS), Tom Segev, Soldiers of Evil: The Commandants of the Nazi Concentration Camps, (New York 1987), Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 14, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. xxii.

replacement, we had the Waffen-SS proper, that is, the troops; and then on the economic budget of the Waffen-SS, we had various formations which, at the order of Himmler, were put there so that they could enjoy the advantages of the Waffen-SS with regard to dealings of an economic nature, etc., with the authorities.³²⁴

This method of administrative deception was also employed in 1944 when Waffen-SS paybooks were issued to members of the Ordnungspolizei in 1944, a move also initiated for economic and personnel reasons, and also not to be construed as an indication of the merging of Waffen-SS and police administrations.³²⁵ But "nominal status" notwithstanding, the use of Waffen-SS pay-books, uniforms, and ranks, and the employment of the Waffen-SS logo on camp correspondence, did produce a convincing picture at Nuremberg of a concentration camp system with insidious links to the military organization then on trial.

The exchanges of personnel which took place between front-line units of the Waffen-SS and guard staff at the camps during the war was also heavy and bi-directional. By December 1943 21,000 SS personnel were engaged in the guarding of the camps,³²⁶ and by the summer of 1944 40,000 men employed by the WVHA branch of the SS were wearing the uniform of the Waffen-SS, 24,000 of them serving

³²⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 354, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS).

³²⁵ Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", p. 209, and Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 100.

³²⁶ Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 210.

in the Totenkopfverbaende which guarded the concentration camps.³²⁷ Some of the more fit of these individuals were rounded up during various recruiting drives conducted by the Waffen-SS in its search for front-line replacements, while others elected to volunteer for service at the front in either the Waffen-SS or the German Wehrmacht rather than remain in the death camps.³²⁸ Some published estimates show that 2,500 members from the guard unit of Auschwitz, and 1,500 from those of Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen, entered Waffen-SS service in this manner during the war.³²⁹

Waffen-SS troops wounded at the front and unfit for further military service could also be reassigned to the camps by the SS Main Office to avoid losing their service.³³⁰ Prosecution lawyers claimed that Waffen-SS military personnel were especially targetted for this duty because they were "ideologically" suited to the brutal task at hand, but this need hardly have been the case. Waffen-SS veterans discharged from front-line service due to combat

³²⁷. Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, pp. 224-5, (Neave Report), Karyn, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 247, and Goerlitz, Die Waffen-SS, p. 17.

³²⁸ Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", p. 395.

³²⁹ Wulf, L'industrie de l'horreur, p. 373, Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 261, Heinz Artzt, Moerder in Uniform: Organisationen, die zu vollstreckern nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen wurden, (Muenchen 1979), p. 110, p. 112, Kren and Rappoport, The Holocaust, p. 56, and Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 118.

³³⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 336, (testimony of General von Eberstein, officer of the Wehrmacht), Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 14, 318, and Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 167.

injuries were simply another accessible pool of able-bodied men available to the WVHA.³³¹ When other sources became available they too were used, as evidenced by the transfer of 10,000 Wehrmacht personnel to the WVHA in 1944,³³² and the incorporation during the latter stages of the war of a further 7,000 personnel from the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe.³³³ An equivalent number of Volksdeutsche who had been rejected by Waffen-SS recruiters as unfit for military service, and an undetermined number of former members of auxiliary police and security battalions, were also transferred to camp guard units throughout the war.³³⁴

Post-war studies of the personnel aspect of the Waffen-SS/concentration camp connection have tended to play down its significance. Historians who have looked at the question have concluded that their research does not indicate

that the exchange of personnel was a massive or continuous operation, but do indicate that the men assigned to the concentration camps as guards or administrators had a very tenuous connection with the Waffen-SS proper and were

³³¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 366, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS), and Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 330.

³³² Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 210, and Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 203.

³³³ Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 259.

³³⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 346, (testimony of Robert Brill, official of the Recruiting Office of the Waffen-SS), vol. 42, p. 85, (Defence Arguments), and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 261.

not regarded by Himmler as part of the Waffen-SS.³³⁵

Another historian has estimated that the total numbers involved never exceeded 10,000.³³⁶

At the end of the war Amt VI, the section of the SS main office responsible for the operations of the concentration camp system, was clearly a component of Pohl's WVHA and not of the Waffen-SS Fuehrungshauptamt.³³⁷ At that point, the largest percentage of the personnel then serving as guards in the concentrations camp system were not former members of the Waffen-SS, but of the Army and Luftwaffe.

The final judgement against the Waffen-SS, however, demonstrated that the defence lawyers at Nuremberg failed to convince the Tribunal that there was a clear distinction in the war-time relationship between the Waffen-SS and the concentration camps. This was unfortunate because the Tribunal judges were largely incorrect when they asserted in their final statement of findings that "there is evidence that where manpower considerations permitted, Himmler wanted to rotate guard battalions so that all

³³⁵ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 16, Karny, "Waffen-SS und Konzentrationslager", p. 247, and Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 105.

³³⁶ Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 183.

³³⁷ See APPENDIX 3, which shows the numerical strength of various Waffen-SS components at different stages of the war, and clearly shows the concentration camp commands as a separate heading along with other administrative organs of the SS which were granted "nominal" Waffen-SS status.

members of the SS would be instructed as to the proper attitude to take to inferior races", and that Waffen-SS combat formations also assisted at times in rounding up and guarding concentration camp labour.³³⁸

The notorious Einsatzgruppen (Special Service Units) and the "Kaminski" and "Dirlewanger" Brigades were other notorious units of the SS and police which the Nuremberg Prosecution team linked to the Waffen-SS in order to build the case about the generally criminal nature of the organization. According to the prosecution, "this simple enumeration of the units comprising the Waffen-SS fully proves their criminal character."³³⁹ Here too, however, distinctions must be made.

The Einsatzgruppen were the mobile killing units of Himmler's police empire³⁴⁰ which followed the German armies into Poland and the Soviet Union and were assigned the task of rounding up and exterminating Jewish civilians immediately behind the lines. These units were directly involved in the murders of some 900,000 civilians and Soviet prisoners-of-war during the first year of the

³³⁸ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 270, (Judgement Against the SS).

³³⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 327, (Prosecution Arguments).

³⁴⁰ Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service), another SS component responsible for police duties and distinct from the military Waffen-SS.

conflict on the eastern front,³⁴¹ usually by shooting their victims in anti-tank ditches on the outskirts of populated areas. Of the approximately 4,500 members who served in the various Einsatzgruppen, one in three were members of the Waffen-SS,³⁴² and during the time that the extermination squads operated in Russia, there is some evidence to suggest that other personnel were also rotated back and forth between the Einsatzgruppen and combat formations of the Waffen-SS.³⁴³

It must be emphasized, however, that the 1,500 so-called "Waffen-SS members" who were initially assigned to the various Einsatzgruppen originated from battalion "Dern", a special unit of the police rather than a front-line formation of the Waffen-SS.³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, vol. 1, p. 390. For more information on the activities of the Einsatzgruppen read pp. 341-90, and consult Helmut Krausnick, Die Truppe der Weltanschauungskrieges: Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938-1942, (Stuttgart 1981).

³⁴² Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 264, Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", pp. 146-7, Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, vol. 1, p. 289, and Delarue, The Gestapo, p. 248.

³⁴³ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 323, Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 435, Karl Sauer, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Praesidiums der VVN-Bund der Antifaschisten, (Frankfurt 1977), pp. 37-43, and Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", pp. 239-43, 287.

³⁴⁴ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 153. The 1. company of Sonderbattalion "Dern" was detached from the SSPF Ostland and transferred to Debica in 1943 for disbandment and transfer to the Estnischen SS legion. The 2. company provided sections of personnel to Sonderkommandos 7a and 7b and Einsatzkommando 8 of Einsatzgruppe B. There are no records of the final disposition or fate of the 3. company.

In addition, all personnel who served in the extermination units wore S.D. armbands over their uniforms, and were supervised by the S.D.³⁴⁵ It may also seem ironic that although a number of different German police organizations also supplied personnel to serve in the Einsatzgruppen, few historians have dwelt on a similar organizational link between those police bodies and the extermination operations.³⁴⁶

Nor were the Waffen-SS and police agencies the only groups with links to the Einsatzgruppen. Although the German Army did not often supply personnel for or participate directly in actions carried out by the extermination units, it was obligated by an agreement with Himmler to cooperate with the Einsatzgruppen, and this it did.³⁴⁷ The Army provided logistical support to the extermination units, and granted them near-total freedom to operate in the military rear areas.³⁴⁸ Although individual Army units at time also lent direct assistance to Einsatzgruppen operations, the German General Staff did at least discourage this practice. It officially refused to permit regular units of either the Army or

³⁴⁵ Irving, Hitler's War, vol. 2, p. 13.

³⁴⁶ Kren and Rappoport, The Holocaust, p. 58.

³⁴⁷ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 438, Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", p. 248, and Delarue, The Gestapo, pp. 232-43.

³⁴⁸ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 438, and Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", pp. 134-5.

the Waffen-SS to lend assistance to Einsatzgruppen operations,³⁴⁹ and the latter were thus usually forced to depend upon local volunteers to assist them in their gruesome task.

The link between the vast majority of Waffen-SS soldiers and the Einsatzgruppen, then, was a tenuous one. An argument can at least be made to the effect that the complicity of the average Waffen-SS combat soldier in the activities of the killing units was little different from the complicity of any member of the German Armed Forces or the various police organizations serving at that time on the eastern front.

Also employed by the Nuremberg prosecution team as examples of the notorious character of the Waffen-SS were the activities of the infamous "Kaminski" Brigade. Like the "Dern" brigade from which some Einsatzgruppen members were drawn, however, this unit did not constitute a regular formation of the Waffen-SS. It originated as a civilian band of 10,000 White Russian collaborators who were granted control over a semi-autonomous district near Bryansk in the German-occupied east in return for providing food supplies on a regular basis and combatting Soviet partisans.³⁵⁰ When the German front pulled back in 1943, Kaminski and his men

³⁴⁹ Krausnick, "The Persecution of the Jews", pp. 51-6.

³⁵⁰ Littlejohn, The Patriotic Traitors, pp. 98-9, and Mark Elliot, Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in Their Repatriation, (Chicago 1982), p. 16. According to Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 4, p. 309, this semi-autonomous republic even possessed its own newspapers, hospitals, and taxation system.

decided to retreat with their former beneficiaries, and the "unit" which was subsequently formed under the command of Kaminski included 3,300 men, over 10,000 civilians and 1,500 cattle.³⁵¹ In July 1944 the unit was made into a nominal "brigade" of the Waffen-SS, and Kaminski himself was granted an SS commission.³⁵² Part of the unit was subsequently sent to help put down the Polish uprising in Warsaw, where it built upon the notorious reputation for cruelty which the brigade had already earned elsewhere in the east.³⁵³ Eventually even the SS could no longer tolerate his excesses, and Kaminski was executed and his irregular unit of White Russian collaborators disbanded.³⁵⁴

The "Dirlewanger" unit, meanwhile, originated as one of 14 Totenkopf regiments which saw mainly police service until January 1942 when the Totenkopf regiments were disbanded and most of their personnel redistributed into Waffen-SS military formations. Unlike the other 13 Totenkopf regiments, this formation was transformed into a penal unit for both the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS under

³⁵¹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 620, and Duprat, Histoire des SS, pp. 389-90.

³⁵² Thorwald, The Illusion, pp. 48-9, 178-9, 241-4.

³⁵³ Littlejohn, Patriotic Traitors, pp. 321-2, Landemer, Les Waffen-SS, p. 288, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 265.

³⁵⁴ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 620, and Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 4, p. 309.

the command of a notorious criminal named Oscar Dirlewanger.³⁵⁵ The resulting "Dirlewanger" brigade numbered approximately 4,000 members at any one time.³⁵⁶

The prosecution team at Nuremberg tried to make much out of the fact that during most of its existence the "Dirlewanger" brigade was officially known as a formation of the Waffen-SS and contained members from the same.³⁵⁷ Yet its recruiting, discipline and activities differed substantially from that of other Waffen-SS formations.³⁵⁸ Unlike military formations the "Dirlewanger" brigade was patched together from Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht soldiers who had been convicted for criminal behaviour by German military courts and who had volunteered for service in the unit in order to win a reduced sentence.³⁵⁹ Later in the war, the brigade was also known to have recruited inmates from inside concentration camps in its search for manpower.³⁶⁰ As a measure of the special status of this

³⁵⁵ Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", pp. 382-4, Heiber, Reichsfuehrer!, p. 253, and "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 168

³⁵⁶ Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 286-8.

³⁵⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 382-3, (Document 2233(dd), GB-562).

³⁵⁸ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, pp. 172-4, Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 85, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 287.

³⁵⁹ According to Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 275, the "Dirlewanger" Brigade had a parallel unit in the Wehrmacht known as Brigade 999.

³⁶⁰ Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 276, and Segev, Soldiers of Evil, p. 18.

unit, its commander, Oscar Dirlewanger, was even granted total power of life or death over his men.³⁶¹

Like the "Kaminski" brigade, the "Dirlewanger" brigade gained a notorious reputation during the war for its activities on the eastern front, particularly against partisans in Belorussia. It was considered a "special unit" by Himmler for the carrying out of special tasks such as the extermination of civilians in partisan-infested areas of the occupied territories.³⁶² This is why the "Dirlewanger" brigade was also called in to help put down the Warsaw rebellion during the summer of 1944.³⁶³ Finally, late in the war, it was granted the status of 36. Waffen-SS Division, although it was a division in name only.³⁶⁴

Himmler's Chief of Anti-Partisan Operations, von dem Bach-Zelewski, had once supervised the unit while it served in Belorussia. He testified at Nuremberg that the "Dirlewanger" brigade was composed of criminals convicted of burglary and murder for the most part, and that it "did not belong to the Waffen-SS ... (and) was not supplied and kept up by the Waffen-SS" but by another

³⁶¹ Buchheim, "Command and Compliance", p. 382.

³⁶² Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 171.

³⁶³ Ready, The Forgotten Axis, pp. 352-5.

³⁶⁴ See APPENDIX 1.

office of the SS and Police.³⁶⁵ In fact, only 10-15% of the personnel in the "Dirlewanger" Brigade were ever former Waffen-SS troops.³⁶⁶

There were other links which the prosecution presented to strengthen its case about the relationship between front-line combat formations of the Waffen-SS and police units and operations. When first formed in 1939, recruits for the 4. Waffen-SS Police Division did not come from the ranks of the Verfuegungstruppe reserves, the Totenkopf regiments, or the new Waffen-SS volunteers. Instead, the division was created by the transfer of some 500 officers and 15,000 older men who had formerly belonged to the Ordnungspolizei.³⁶⁷ Although it was organized as a standard infantry division in accordance with Army guidelines for organization and equipment,³⁶⁸ Himmler himself made clear that the

³⁶⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 4, pp. 481-2, 493, (testimony of Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, Chief of anti-Partisan units on the eastern front), and Goerlitz, Die Waffen-SS, p. 22.

³⁶⁶ Artzt, Moerder in Uniform, pp. 112-3. According to Rupert Butler, The Black Angels: The Story of the Waffen-SS, (London 1978), p. 190, most members of both this unit and the "Kaminski" Brigade who were captured by Soviet forces at the end of the war were summarily executed.

³⁶⁷ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 453, and Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 128. An Allied intelligence report on "The Higher Staff Organisation of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/4281, p. 141, reported that this constituted the chief connection between the police and the Waffen-SS.

³⁶⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 453, and Georg Tessin, "Die Staebe und Truppeneinheiten der Ordnungspolizei", in Dr. Winter (ed.), Zur Geschichte der Ordnungspolizei 1936-1945, (Koblenz 1966), p. 24.

Police division was not to be considered a full unit of the Waffen-SS,³⁶⁹ and its members continued to wear their former green police uniforms.³⁷⁰

The second-rank status of the division meant that, like the battalions "Dern", "Dirlewanger" and "Kaminski", it remained under the direct operational control of the SS and police rather than the Waffen-SS Fuehrungshauptamt and Wehrmacht for the first years of its existence.³⁷¹ As such, it was used in brutal resettlement operations in Poland,³⁷² and anti-partisan operations behind the German front in the east. Only on February 10, 1942, were the 4. Waffen-SS Police Division and its replacement units officially transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Waffen-SS Fuehrungshauptamt.³⁷³ The unit was subsequently employed in anti-partisan operations in Greece and Yugoslavia,³⁷⁴ where it committed

³⁶⁹ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 138, and Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 334.

³⁷⁰ Die Geschichte der Waffen-SS, pp. 12-13, states that the personnel of the "Polizei" Division obtained Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht identification cards and other documents only during 1945.

³⁷¹ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 160.

³⁷² Landemer, Les Waffen SS, p. 103.

³⁷³ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 160, Tessin, "Die Staebe und Truppeneinheiten", p. 24, and Die Geschichte der Waffen-SS, p. 12.

³⁷⁴ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 138.

such atrocities as the massacre in 1943 of several hundred Greek villagers near Klissura.³⁷⁵

Some foreign legions of the Waffen-SS also had personnel links to various German police organisations. Some portions of the personnel of the 14. Ukrainian Waffen-SS Division "Galizien", the 15. and 19. Latvian Waffen-SS Divisions, the 30. and 36. Russian Waffen-SS Divisions, the 33. French Waffen-SS Division "Charlemagne", and the 34. Dutch Waffen-SS Division "Landsturm Nederland" originated at least partially from the ranks of locally-recruited auxiliary policemen from the occupied territories.³⁷⁶ These men represented part of the 2.8 million personnel recruited in the occupied countries of Europe who had served in the German Ordnungspolizei and had been responsible for local and rear area security and anti-partisan operations during the war.³⁷⁷ When they served as auxiliaries in the occupied territories, these individuals were actual members of neither the SS or Waffen-SS.³⁷⁸ But their transfer during the latter stages of the war into the

³⁷⁵ Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 320. See also Goerlitz, Die Waffen-SS, pp. 27-8, and Windrow, The Waffen-SS, p. 13, for a more thorough description of this incident.

³⁷⁶ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 161, 621, 639, Mason, The Purge of the Dutch Quislings, p. 21, Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 193, Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 4, pp. 71-2, Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 1, p. 157, 165, 169, Tessin, "Die Staebе und Truppeneinheiten", pp. 25-6, Windrow, The Waffen-SS, p. 26, and Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 343-54. See also APPENDIX 1.

³⁷⁷ Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", pp. 261-76.

³⁷⁸ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 161, 656.

Waffen-SS seemed to add one more criminal aspect to the image of that organization. It should be noted, however, that none of the Waffen-SS field formations which were the products of such transfers has ever been alleged to have participated in criminal activities during the course of its military service.³⁷⁹

Most of the SS and police or nominal Waffen-SS units cited on the preceding pages were not products of regular Waffen-SS military recruiting or training. In most cases the personnel guarding the concentration camps or serving in the "Kaminski" and "Dirlewanger" Brigades were little more than "nominal" members of the Waffen-SS. The prosecution at Nuremberg felt that it could prove the general "criminal character" of the Waffen-SS simply by enumerating the infamous units which had allegedly belonged to it during the war. However, except for the fact that some of their members wore the uniforms or rank of the Waffen-SS, with the exception of the 4. Waffen-SS Police Division after 1942 and the police auxiliaries who were conscripted into the foreign divisions after 1944, none of the units enumerated by the prosecution in its condemnation of the military Waffen-SS operated under the regular supervision of the Waffen-SS Fuehrungshauptamt during the war, or as a regular Waffen-SS military unit in the field. Because of Himmler's policy of personnel exchange and financial administration, some Waffen-SS links to concentration camps, extermination actions, and anti-

³⁷⁹ See APPENDIX I.

partisan warfare could indeed be established. As one author concluded when examining this question

the 'total separation' between the battlefield units of the Waffen-SS and even more sinister organizations such as the Einsatzgruppen and the Totenkopfverbände - a separation of which post-war apologists make much - does not stand up to detailed examination; there was a division, but it was somewhat porous.³⁸⁰

At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that these groups formed a small, and generally irregular, part of the military Waffen-SS.

³⁸⁰ Windrow, The Waffen-SS, p. 6.

CHAPTER 5

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND WAR CRIMES

Anti-partisan operations like those conducted by the 4. Waffen-SS Police Division and the 7. Waffen-SS Volunteer Division "Prinz Eugen" further scarred the image of the Waffen-SS at Nuremberg. Reports about war-time atrocities committed by the latter formation in particular, committed while it was engaged in brutal anti-partisan operations in Yugoslavia, were especially effective in the prosecution's case against the Waffen-SS organization.³⁸¹

The first "crimes against humanity" committed on a vast scale by units of the German armed forces occurred in Poland during the fall campaign in 1939 and in its aftermath. Thousands of killings of Polish civilians took place during this period, committed by SS, police and Wehrmacht units for the most part.³⁸² One incident was perpetrated by a member of a Waffen-SS unit then serving in Poland, and that crime captured the attention of the prosecution and judges at Nuremberg. This incident involved the murder of 50 Polish Jews in a barn, a crime committed by an SS private and a military

³⁸¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 374-6, (Document D-945, GB554, Report of Yugoslav State Commission).

³⁸² A Polish author named Szymon Datner has compiled two works: "Crimes Committed by the Wehrmacht during the September Campaign and the Period of Military Government", Polish Western Affairs, volume III, number 2, (Spring 1962), pp. 294-338, and Genocide 1939-1945: War Crimes in Poland, (Warsaw 1962). Because the Verfuegungstruppe units which served during the Polish campaign wore regular army uniforms and operated in small units subordinated to army formations, they would have been hard to distinguish from Wehrmacht personnel.

policeman from the Wehrmacht.³⁸³ This one incident involving an individual Waffen-SS soldier was focussed upon by the prosecution, and even mentioned in the final judgement against the SS organization, because the Waffen-SS soldier involved had been given only a three-year sentence for the crime by an SS court which tried him for the murders.³⁸⁴ No other crime of this nature was alleged then, or since, to have been committed in Poland by military units or members of the Waffen-SS, although the prosecution did attempt to link the organization with crimes of the SS and police committed in that country later in the war.³⁸⁵

Almost as soon as military operations ended in Poland, the Waffen-SS units engaged there were withdrawn to Germany to prepare for the upcoming invasion of France, and only returned to Poland and the eastern front in early 1941 immediately prior to the commencement of Operation Barbarossa. Subsequent Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS activities on the eastern front, particularly while engaged in anti-partisan operations, can not be thoroughly examined within the limited parameters of this study. From the opening days of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, it was apparent that

³⁸³ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 13, Alfred M. de Zayas, Die Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle: Unveroeffentlichte Akten ueber allierte Voelkerrechtsverletzungen im 2. Weltkrieg, (Muenchen 1979), pp. 245-6, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 271.

³⁸⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 272, (Judgement against the SS).

³⁸⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 383-7, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

this would be a conflict of ideologies which would permit little room for considerations of international law or propriety. Many of the atrocities committed by German military units, particularly during partisan-clearing operations, were reactions to similar acts perpetrated by the Soviet armies and the partisan units fighting on their behalf.³⁸⁶ Witnesses testifying on behalf of the Waffen-SS, including SS General von dem Bach-Zalewski the war-time chief of anti-partisan operations in the German rear areas in the east, thus testified that

partisan fighting was an intensified guerrilla warfare which was developed, especially by the Soviets, behind the front. It was intended to cause difficulties to the fighting troops by interfering with their maintenance channels, and it also took direct action against units in the rear. This type of warfare was all the harsher since the partisans knew that according to international law they could be considered as franc tireurs, and accordingly fought a bitter war.³⁸⁷

It was probably for these same reasons that the Soviets declined to make prosecution on matters relating to participation in anti-partisan operations in the east a priority in the case against the Waffen-SS at Nuremberg.³⁸⁸ As one historian has noted, individuals who wish to moralize about the cruel behaviour of

³⁸⁶ Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, pp. 16-7, and Davidson, The Trial of the Germans, p. 575.

³⁸⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 21, p. 603, (Defence Arguments).

³⁸⁸ Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, pp. 98-9.

military units on the eastern front during the Second World War "are on weak ground if they have no personal experience of it. The brutality on both sides was horrific. Both Wehrmacht and the SS had much to answer for, particularly after the outbreak of partisan warfare"³⁸⁹, and so did their Soviet and partisan adversaries.³⁹⁰

By the same token, the behaviour of Waffen-SS formations with regards to the treatment of civilian populations in the occupied east was indistinct for the most part from that of regular formations of the Wehrmacht.³⁹¹ The Wehrmacht generals pleaded before the Tribunal at Nuremberg that they followed the "rules of war" throughout the conflict, and that they "took the same attitude in regard to the civilian population and the administration of the occupied countries".³⁹² But evidence produced at Nuremberg and at subsequent trials of the German Army High Command³⁹³ cast doubt on

³⁸⁹ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 211.

³⁹⁰ One attempt made by the Soviet prosecutors at Nuremberg to blame the Germans for the murder of 700,000 civilians in the Lvov area of eastern Poland was particularly outrageous both because of the numbers cited and the fact that most were actually victims of the period of Soviet occupation from 1939-41. See Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 51, and de Zayas, Die Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle, pp. 355-61.

³⁹¹ See especially Rudolf Aschenauer, Krieg Ohne Grenzen: Der Partisanenkampf gegen Deutschland 1939-1945, (Augsburg 1982).

³⁹² Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 74, (Neave Report).

³⁹³ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, pp. 226-32, (Judgement Against the German Army High Command), Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals, (Green Series), volume XI, (Washington 1950), "The High Command Case, pp. 1-707. See also Dallin, German Rule in Russia, pp. 409-10, Davidson, The

this assertion of innocence. The German Army ordered the seizure and execution of civilian hostages beginning with the 1939 campaign in Poland.³⁹⁴ It also bore a great deal of responsibility for assisting the S.D. and the Einsatzgruppen in carrying out the notorious "Commissar Order", the automatic extermination by the SD during Operation Barbarossa of political officers attached to captured Soviet units.³⁹⁵

As for anti-partisan operations, Wehrmacht commanders on the eastern front were subordinate to Himmler's office when it came time for anti-partisan operations to be carried out behind the German front-lines. The Wehrmacht was expected to furnish troops and equipment for such operations,³⁹⁶ and in fact most of the units used to carry out anti-partisan operations in the German rear under the supervision of SS General Bach-Zalewski were formations of the

Trial of the Germans, pp. 564-76, and Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, pp. 70-5.

³⁹⁴ Richard Cavell Fattig, "Reprisal: The German Army and the Execution of Hostages During the Second World War", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (University of California 1980), pp. 25-6.

³⁹⁵ Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 17, and Harris, Tyranny on Trial, pp. 225-31.

³⁹⁶ Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 169, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 84. See also APPENDIX 4, an organizational chart which shows the subordination of military units for anti-partisan operations carried out by the SS and Police.

regular German Wehrmacht and not of the Waffen-SS.³⁹⁷ After 1943 the army even took full responsibility in those anti-partisan operations where the numbers of army personnel outnumbered those of other arms and services.³⁹⁸ Waffen-SS training and reserve units stationed in the rear areas were sometimes also ordered to participate in these semi-military operations. But in general the army general staff discouraged the participation of front-line formations of the Waffen-SS in anti-partisan operations,³⁹⁹ and employed instead locally recruited ethnic or Cossack formations to carry out the bulk of its security work.⁴⁰⁰ In any case, the

³⁹⁷ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 438, and Duprat, Histoire des SS, pp. 150-1. In the latter example 5 Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht divisions and 17 Regiments are listed as subordinate to von dem Bach for the conduct of anti-partisan operations in the German rear during a given period in 1943, and only three Waffen SS brigades or legions.

³⁹⁸ Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 204, Buchheim, "The SS: Instrument of Domination", pp. 261-76, Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, pp. 81-5, Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", p. 509, Davidson, Trial of the Germans, p. 569, Harris, Tyranny on Trial, pp. 184-92, Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 257, and Norbert Muller, Okkupation Raub Vernichtung: Dokumente zur Besatzungspolitik der faschistischen Wehrmacht auf sowjetischen Territorium 1941 bis 1944, (Berlin 1980). Especially interesting is Omer Bartov, The Eastern Front, 1941-45: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare, (London 1985). By studying the records of three Wehrmacht divisions, one infantry, one Panzer and the elite "Grossdeutschland", he concluded that the pattern of atrocity against both POWs and civilians on the eastern front was constant among all German military formations.

³⁹⁹ Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 182.

⁴⁰⁰ Ready, The Forgotten Axis, pp. 163-4, 216-17.

premiere Waffen-SS divisions were usually too heavily engaged at the front to detach units for such operations.

In response to accusations by the prosecution that the Waffen-SS was specifically trained for, and employed in, brutal anti-partisan operations in the eastern territories, former Waffen-SS general Paul Hausser concluded that

front line troops of the Army and of the Waffen-SS were used only in exceptional cases, for instance when they were in the rear areas. There were usually no partisan fights in the operational areas; they mostly took place in the rear areas only. This fighting was mainly the task of the Security Division of the Army and special defence battalions, and besides these of police troops. Units of the Waffen-SS at the front were not especially trained for this kind of fighting and were assigned this duty just as little as Panzer divisions of the Army.⁴⁰¹

The exception to this rule were special Waffen-SS formations such as the Police Division and the 7. Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen". The prosecution attempted to argue that the latter unit in particular exemplified the generally criminal behaviour of Waffen-SS formations towards civilian populations in the occupied countries during World War II.

The 7. Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen" was created in early 1942 out of drafts of Volksdeutsche recruits and auxiliary police

⁴⁰¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 365, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS), vol. 21, p. 603, (Defence Arguments and summary of testimony of witnesses), and Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 111.

units from Yugoslavia and Romania.⁴⁰² The army preferred to employ locally-raised units such as this one in anti-partisan operations because the recruits were considered of questionable value in front-line combat, and because historic frictions between the various racial groups of central Europe made them ideally suited to the brutal needs of partisan warfare.⁴⁰³ It was thus hardly surprising that the 7. Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen" came to develop a reputation for involvement in atrocities.⁴⁰⁴

For the prosecution at Nuremberg to have used this formation as a typical symbol of Waffen-SS brutality was incorrect, however. While in Yugoslavia the 7. Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen" operated under the direction of the German Army,⁴⁰⁵ and in general its behaviour and the atrocities which it committed were little different from that of the German Wehrmacht and Italian and Bulgarian units with which it served, or the Yugoslavian partisan

⁴⁰² Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 342, Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 197, Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 3, pp. 10-11, and Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 138.

⁴⁰³ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 199, "The Recruiting of the Waffen SS", PRO, WO 208/3130, p. 4, Sauer, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS, pp. 46-50, Birn, Die Hoeheren-SS und Polizei Fuehrer, p. 245, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 3, p. 11.

⁴⁰⁴ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 274, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 3, pp. 15-16. Sauer, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS, pp. 43-6, also cites the brutal activities of the "Kavallerie" Brigade of the Waffen-SS which conducted anti-partisan operations during 1941 in Poland and the Soviet Union while operating subordinate to the SS and Police.

⁴⁰⁵ Birn, Die Hoeheren-SS und Polizei Fuehrer, p. 238.

bands against which it fought.⁴⁰⁶ During World War II German military and police units destroyed hundreds of villages and executed tens of thousands of civilians in Yugoslavia and Greece in response to widespread guerilla activity there.⁴⁰⁷ The maltreatment, murder and mutilation of German prisoners-of-war captured by the partisan groups was equally brutal, and many Axis military survivors met the same fate at the end of the war which they had formerly meted out to their own enemies.⁴⁰⁸

In addition to the charges made against the 7. Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen", four specific allegations were raised by the Nuremberg prosecution concerning Waffen-SS involvement in atrocities committed against civilian populations during the war; Lidice, Kharkov, Warsaw, and Oradour. The village of Lidice in occupied Czechoslovakia was razed and its inhabitants exterminated

⁴⁰⁶ Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 3, p. 13, and Ready, The Forgotten Axis, pp. 167-78, 278-87.

⁴⁰⁷ See especially Fattig, "Reprisal: The German Army", for a summary of Wehrmacht anti-partisan operations and tactics during the Second World War. According to Ready, The Forgotten Axis, pp. 413-21, of 70,000 civilian hostages killed during the war-time occupation of Yugoslavia, 40,000 were the victims of Bulgarian and 9,000 of Italian occupation forces.

⁴⁰⁸ Fattig, "Reprisal: The German Army", p. 142, and Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 138. The best account of the massive postwar killings which took place in Yugoslavia after the war can be found in John Prcela (ed.), Operation Slaughterhouse: Eyewitness Accounts of Postwar Massacres in Yugoslavia, (Philadelphia 1970). Ready, The Forgotten Axis, has estimated that 40,000 were murdered by Italian partisans during the latter stages of the war (p. 486), and approximately the same number by Yugoslavian partisans (p. 514), into whose hands some 150,000 Axis military personnel and civilian collaborators or refugees were forcibly repatriated.

in the wake of the 1942 assassination of Reinhard Heydrich by Czech agents. The prosecution team at Nuremberg claimed that the 7. Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen" assisted in the elimination of that small community.⁴⁰⁹ But subsequent information has shown that the operation was actually carried out by units of the SS and Police, and that only one officer wearing a Waffen-SS uniform was even present.⁴¹⁰

The Soviets made similar allegations against two Waffen-SS divisions which it claimed had carried out the extermination of some 20,000 civilians in the city of Kharkov.⁴¹¹ Investigations into this allegation was reopened in Germany in 1967, but an inquest carried out by the Centre for the Investigation of War Crimes there concluded after interviewing over 700 witnesses that there was no foundation to the Soviet allegations.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 398-9, (Document D-944, GB-566), and Infield, Secrets of the SS, pp. 105-7.

⁴¹⁰ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 435, Butler, The Black Angels, p. 207, Goerlitz, Die Waffen-SS, p. 18, and Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 319. It is interesting to note that this myth of Waffen-SS involvement in the atrocity at Lidice is still perpetuated in contemporary literature. See Sauer, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS, p. 32.

⁴¹¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 328, (Neave Report), Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, pp. 295-6, Sydnor, "The SS 'Totenkopfdivision'", p. 18, Sauer, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS, p. 32, and Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 273.

⁴¹² The inquiry was carried out by the Zentralstelle fuer Landesjustizverwaltungen in Ludwigsburg, West Germany, and is cited in Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, pp. 210-11, 116.

The prosecution also produced evidence that two training and reserve battalions of the Waffen-SS, some 800 personnel in total, were among the forces which crushed the 1943 uprising of the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw.⁴¹³ It asserted that one company of one regiment of the Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" was responsible for the murder of 45,000 Jewish men, women and children.⁴¹⁴ Reserve Waffen-SS units stationed in the Warsaw area were indeed employed in this operation. But their members were 18-year-olds who had been in the armed forces less than 1 month and who had little more choice in the matter than members of Wehrmacht units stationed in the Warsaw area and also subordinated to the SS and police for the duration of the operation.⁴¹⁵

The prosecution also attempted to implicate unspecified front-line Waffen-SS units and personnel in the war-time murders and deportations of labourers from Poland. As it turned out, however,

⁴¹³ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 170, Sauer, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS, pp. 34-36, Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 209, and The Strop Report: The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More!, (New York 1979), p.7. The latter showed that 4 officers and 440 men of SS Panzer Grenadier Training and Reserve Battalion 3 and 5 officers and 81 men of the SS Cavalry Training and Reserve Division were included.

⁴¹⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 396, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

⁴¹⁵ Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 204, The Strop Report, p. 7, and Ready, The Forgotten Axis, p. 266.

these actions were actually carried out by units of the SS and police responsible for such duties in occupied Poland.⁴¹⁶

Also cited at Nuremberg was the execution of 642 civilians which occurred at the French village of Oradour in 1944. Like Lidice, this incident was considered so outrageous that mention of it was even made in the text of the final judgement against the Waffen-SS.⁴¹⁷ The Oradour killings would eventually become a symbol of SS (and Waffen-SS) cruelty with a special place in French history.⁴¹⁸

The shooting of civilian hostages for resistance activities had been carried out by the German occupiers in France since 1941.⁴¹⁹ The 1944 Oradour massacre was thus not one incident, but part of a chain of events which commenced in May of 1944 when French partisan activity intensified in anticipation of the Allied invasion of France.⁴²⁰ When the Allied armies landed at Normandy in June, the 2. Waffen-SS Division "Das Reich", then stationed in the south of France, was ordered by the Wehrmacht to undertake anti-

⁴¹⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 372-83, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

⁴¹⁷ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 270, (Judgement against SS).

⁴¹⁸ Theolleyre, Jean-Marc, Proces d'apres-guerre: "Je suis partout", Rene Hardy, Oradour-sur-Glane, Oberg et Knochen, (Paris 1985), p. 39.

⁴¹⁹ Birn, Die Hoeheren-SS und Polizei Fuehrer, p. 250, and Fattig, "Reprisal: The German Army", pp. 30-48, 70-147.

⁴²⁰ Hastings, Das Reich, pp. 23-4.

partisan operations against the French resistance as it proceeded north to the defensive perimeter around the Allied landing areas.⁴²¹ Guerrilla forces severely hindered the advance of the troops of "Das Reich", and at the town of Tulle French partisans captured or surrounded the Wehrmacht garrison troops, and murdered from 40-62 of their German prisoners.⁴²² When troops of the "Der Fuehrer" Regiment of "Das Reich" arrived in the town soon after, they summarily arrested and executed 99 civilians of the town in reprisal.⁴²³

As mentioned earlier, this action was fairly consistent with general German army policy in dealing with what it called "franc-tireurs" in occupied France. It was the second incident at Oradour-sur-Glane which gained the "Das Reich" its subsequent notoreity. In this incident 642 men, women and children were murdered by one battalion of the same "Der Fuehrer" regiment in reprisal for French partisan actions that are still unclear.⁴²⁴ Some post-war apologists have tried to explain away this action by

⁴²¹ Fattig, "Reprisal: The German Army", p. 104.

⁴²² Hastings, Das Reich, pp. 83-96, 117-21, 196, Mackness, Oradour, p. 99, and Otto Weidinger, Division Das Reich: Der Weg der 2. SS-Panzer-Division "Das Reich", (Osnabrueck 1978), pp. 148-54.

⁴²³ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 73, and Hastings, Das Reich, pp. 124-5.

⁴²⁴ Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 318, Ready, The Forgotten Axis, pp. 381-4, Mollo, To the Death's Head True, pp. 97-8, Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", p. 23, and Harris, Tyranny on Trial, pp. 197-9.

noting that many of the unit members involved were French Alsatians or recently-drafted Luftwaffe personnel, and thus of low calibre and poor discipline.⁴²⁵ No matter how it is explained, however,⁴²⁶ it cannot be denied that "the atrocity was committed calmly and methodically, not in a wave of battlefield hysteria", and the incident at Oradour thus remains in many people's minds "the most damning answer to SS apologists" and "a terrible stain on the record of German arms".⁴²⁷

Both Tulle and Oradour should be placed in some perspective however. The anti-partisan operations and harsh reprisals against civilian populations carried out by the men of the "Der Fuehrer" regiments of the 2. Waffen-SS Division "Das Reich" in 1944 were not

⁴²⁵ Most of the perpetrators who survived the war were subsequently tried in France in 1953. See Harris, Tyranny on Trial, pp. 197-9.

⁴²⁶ See especially Weidinger, Division Das Reich, pp. 142-67, which attempts to explain the events and the subsequent trial from a wholly apologist perspective. British historian Robin Mackness, in his book Oradour, tells an even more incredible tale involving a search for a large sum of stolen gold which senior officers of the Division had been secretly hoarding but which was inadvertently ambushed by French partisans near Oradour. See especially pp. 139-41.

⁴²⁷ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 73, and Theolleyre, Proces d'apres-guerre, pp. 102-73. It is interesting to note that by 1958 all those convicted by the French tribunal prosecuting the case had had their death sentences commuted and had been released from prison, while as recently as 1983 East Germany prosecuted another former member of the Division who had been implicated in these same atrocities. See Mackness, Oradour, pp. 133-4, vi.

undertaken spontaneously but on orders from the Wehrmacht.⁴²⁸ "Das Reich" was one of eight or more German Army divisions assigned to counter-insurgency operations in France in 1944 in the wake of the Allied landings at Normandy,⁴²⁹ actions in which a total of 12,000 to 15,000 French guerillas and civilians were killed.⁴³⁰ In most of its actions, including Tulle but not including Oradour, "Das Reich" operated "within its rights" under international law,⁴³¹ which held that "all cases of reprisal were for the purpose of preventing or avoiding acts of resistance by inhabitants of the occupied territories."⁴³²

The main French resistance organization, the FTP, was equally ruthless in its actions against French civilians and suspected informers during this period of the war, victims who were often shot out of hand.⁴³³ It shares at least part of the blame, together with the German security and military authorities, for the 100,000 French civilians who died in resistance actions and German reprisals during the Second World War. The FTP is itself suspected

⁴²⁸ Herbert R. Lottman, The People's Anger: Justice and Revenge in Post-Liberation France, (London 1986), pp. 33-4, 61-74.

⁴²⁹ Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", pp. 22-3, and Hastings, Das Reich, p. 217.

⁴³⁰ Fattig, "Reprisal: The German Army", p. 104.

⁴³¹ Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", pp. 19-21, and Hastings, Das Reich, p. 220.

⁴³² Hastings, Das Reich, p. 206, pp. 170-5.

⁴³³ Hastings, Das Reich, p. 148.

of having summarily executed 20,000 individuals in a post-liberation settling of old scores.⁴³⁴ It is also interesting to note that most of the perpetrators of the crime were French Alsatians, and that some of those who were eventually tried and convicted for the Oradour killings in 1953 had in the meantime served with distinction, and even won war decorations, fighting with the French army during their equally brutal occupation of Indo-China.⁴³⁵

Two other criminal incidents involving Waffen-SS units, but not cited at Nuremberg by the prosecution team, are also known to have taken place in Italy during the war. Both of these again involved retaliations against civilian populations in the wake of partisan attacks on German units. One occurred in 1943 at Boves and involved the 3rd battalion of the 1. Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte", which had just been transferred there to deal with an Allied offensive.⁴³⁶ The other occurred in September 1944 and

⁴³⁴ Lottman, The People's Anger, p. 33, 272-3, and Hastings, Das Reich, p. 218, 229. The former alleges that 126,000 individuals were interned in a series of French concentration camps where torture and maltreatment were not uncommon, p. 82, 85.

⁴³⁵ Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 98.

⁴³⁶ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 35, Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 97, Artzt, Moerder in Uniform, p. 111, Infield, Secrets of the SS, p. 4, and Robert Kempner, SS Im Kreuzverhoer: Die Elite, die Europa in Scherben schlug, Hamburger Stiftung fuer Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Band 4, (Noerdlingen 1987), pp. 213-20.

involved the murder of 2,700 civilians at Monte Sol by the newly-created 16. Waffen-SS Division "Reichsfuehrer-SS".⁴³⁷

In reviewing all of these facts, it should also be noted that while the commanders and soldiers of the Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht were being prosecuted at Nuremberg for the taking and shooting of hostages, and for the launching of retaliatory strikes against civilian populations in response to partisan activities in the Nazi-occupied countries, the Allies were known to have implemented similar policies in occupied Germany;

the French commander at Stuttgart threatened to kill Germans at the rate of twenty-five to one, a figure that was upped to two hundred to one by the Americans in the Harz region of Germany. At Reutlingen the French shot four German hostages for the killing of a French soldier. In September, 1944, forty German prisoners-of-war were shot by the French because a Russian battalion in German service had allegedly committed atrocities, and on the same day forty more Germans were executed apparently for the same reason. Eight German prisoners were shot by an American detachment in the spring of 1945 after an American had been killed by someone shooting from a house.⁴³⁸

The brutal realities of partisan warfare as it was conducted on both sides during the Second World War, the reprisals carried out by Allied military authorities in occupied Germany, and such incidents as the summary execution of "Prinz Eugen" survivors who

⁴³⁷ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 138, Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 4, p. 114, and Sydnor, "The SS 'Totenkopfdivision'", p. 18.

⁴³⁸ Davidson, The Trial of the Germans, p. 575.

were repatriated to Yugoslavia⁴³⁹ after the war, make any judicial ruling on this subject difficult at best. The nature of guerilla operations makes it difficult for the external observer to render a determination about whether certain operations were legitimate military actions or criminal acts.⁴⁴⁰ What is certain is that most war-time Waffen-SS military units were not more suited to the brutal needs of partisan warfare "owing to their extensive training in questions of race and nationality",⁴⁴¹ as the judges of the Nuremberg Tribunal stated in their final judgement. Indeed, front-line units of the Waffen-SS and their members were generally not more or less guilty in this regard than regular German military forces engaged in the same types of war-time operations.

One historian also notes that during the Second World War the Allies had an easier time with this problem because in most cases their soldiers were viewed as liberators rather than aggressors. In later wars of liberation, however, they too would experience the horrors and strategic and moral dilemmas of guerilla and partisan warfare;

during World War II the Allied armies had never had to contend with a hostile population, nor were they subjected to surprise attack and ambush by partisans in their rear, but in the

⁴³⁹ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 138, Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 355, and Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 3, p. 151.

⁴⁴⁰ Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 25.

⁴⁴¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 272, (Judgement against the SS).

postwar period it was a different story. The French experienced Indo-China and Algeria, the British, Palestine, Malaya, Kenya, Aden and Cyprus, and of course America went through the traumatic experience in Vietnam. In all these wars young soldiers - mostly conscripts - found themselves in the role of occupiers and oppressors and when fired upon and murdered by terrorists they too had to resort to rounding up civilians, women and children included, burning down villages, and extracting information from suspects by the use of torture. Even with restraints imposed upon them by democratic governments and with the press never far away, atrocities were also committed.⁴⁴²

The incidents which were finally most responsible for the last-minute inclusion of the Waffen-SS in the list of organizations indicted at Nuremberg in 1945, and which cast a dark shadow over the whole defence case throughout the trial, were the war-time shootings of captured Allied prisoners-of-war carried out by various units of the Waffen-SS. In the words of the prosecution, it was "not surprising that units of the Waffen-SS, a branch which had thus been employed for extermination actions and the execution of civilians, also violated the laws of warfare when carrying on ordinary combat activities".⁴⁴³

At the same time as the 22 individual defendants and six Nazi organizations were being tried at Nuremberg, two other trials were being conducted elsewhere in occupied Germany which were to have an immense impact on the larger case against the Waffen-SS

⁴⁴² Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 100.

⁴⁴³ Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, vol. 2, p. 229, (Prosecution Arguments and Document 2997-PS).

organization. These were the trial of Kurt Meyer et al. being conducted by Canadian military authorities in Hamburg,⁴⁴⁴ and the US trial of the perpetrators of the "Malmedy Massacre" of US prisoners-of-war.⁴⁴⁵ These apparently unrelated proceedings became important at that time because they seemed to involve especially ruthless atrocities committed by units of the Waffen-SS, and because they generated a great deal of unfavourable Allied public attention against the organization as a whole, even overshadowing at times the proceedings at the International Tribunal at Nuremberg in the western media.

Like the killings at Oradour or the concentration camp link, each individual incident in itself would have been serious enough to tar the entire military arm of the SS with guilt. But two separate incidents, plus a third about to be tried by Great Britain, each committed by different units of the Waffen-SS at different times of the war and against soldiers of different Allied countries, suggested a pattern of criminal behaviour. The trials appeared to destroy one of the arguments then being made by the Waffen-SS defence counsel at Nuremberg, namely that the members of the Waffen-SS "observed the laws of war and received special training to this end".⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ See especially Foster, Meeting of Generals.

⁴⁴⁵ See especially Weingartner, Crossroads of Death.

⁴⁴⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 42, p. 69, (Defence Arguments).

The first shootings of unarmed prisoners-of-war committed by units of the Waffen-SS occurred in northern France in 1940⁴⁴⁷ at the villages of Le Paradis and Wormhoudt. In the first incident, which occurred on May 27 at Le Paradis, the 2nd Regiment of the "Totenkopf" Division massacred approximately 100 British POWs who had been captured in recent fighting.⁴⁴⁸ The other incident occurred the next day 20 miles to the north of Le Paradis at Wormhoudt, and was carried out by the 2nd Battalion of the Waffen-SS Regiment "Leibstandarte" (it had not yet been expanded to a division like the others). It was remarkably similar to the first, with about the same number of British military POWs as victims, but post-war analyses have revealed no connection between the two massacres.⁴⁴⁹

All that is known about these two 1940 killings of captured British military personnel which can attempt to explain why they

⁴⁴⁷ There was one earlier incident in Holland, but this one was actually an accidental shooting. Overenthusiastic advance detachments of the Waffen-SS regiment "Leibstandarte" entering Rotterdam did not realize that its garrison had already surrendered, and when they ran into a crowd of Dutch soldiers they opened fire wounding some of the prisoners as well as several of their German captors, including the German paratroop general Kurt Student. See Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 14, and Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 179.

⁴⁴⁸ Aitken, Massacre on the Road to Dunkirk, p. 115, Reider, Histoire de la SS, p. 60, and Lt. Col. A.P. Scotland, The London Cage, (London 1954), pp. 73-87.

⁴⁴⁹ Aitken, Massacre on the Road, pp. 63-4, 114, Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 187, Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, pp. 16-7, and Scotland, The London Cage, pp. 94-7.

occurred is that in both cases the senior officers of the Waffen-SS units which perpetrated the crimes were either killed or missing in action just prior to the events, and that in both cases the troops had also just endured their first taste of heavy fighting and battle casualties.⁴⁵⁰ They were the first acts of their kind perpetrated by Waffen-SS troops, and it may also be notable that many soldiers involved subsequently complained to their superiors about the incidents or asked to be transferred.⁴⁵¹ The British investigation into these two massacres was still underway at the time that the Nuremberg tribunal was in session in 1946, and it would not be until 1948 that some of the perpetrators of the Le Paradis incident who had survived the war were tried and convicted.⁴⁵² No perpetrators were ever found or trial conducted related to the murders at Wormhoudt.

The only other allegations of war crimes committed by Waffen-SS troops during the first French campaign in 1940 consisted of rumours that they had murdered captured Moroccan and Senegalese

⁴⁵⁰ Aitken, Massacre on the Road, pp. 63-4, 115.

⁴⁵¹ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 78, and Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, pp. 78-9.

⁴⁵² Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 148, Ready, The Forgotten Axis, p. 372, and Scotland, The London Cage, pp. 73-87. According to the latter, attempts by the German Armed Forces to prosecute the most senior officer involved, Fritz Knoechlein, in this incident were fruitless during the war because of the personal protection which Himmler afforded to him, but the officer was prosecuted in a British military tribunal after the war.

prisoners, but these charges remain unsubstantiated.⁴⁵³ Most Waffen-SS field formations spent the bulk of the remainder of the war engaged in front-line combat on the eastern front. There are unsubstantiated charges that Waffen-SS units engaged regularly in the summary execution of Russian prisoners-of-war there, but like the partisan conflict in the Soviet Union discussed above, this was a controversial charge which the Soviets apparently preferred not to make a major component of the case against the Waffen-SS at Nuremberg.⁴⁵⁴ What is probable is that the Soviets, who were not signatories to the Geneva conventions themselves,⁴⁵⁵ did not wish to open a discussion which would illuminate their own non-compliance with its clauses through their own brutal treatment of captured Polish, Baltic, Finnish and Romanian military personnel prior to 1941.⁴⁵⁶

As for the German-Russian conflict which commenced in June 1941, both sides maintained a "no-holds-barred" attitude there as

⁴⁵³ Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 117, Sydnor, "The SS 'Totenkopfdivision'", p. 4, and Weingartner, "Sepp Dietrich, Heinrich Himmler", p. 345.

⁴⁵⁴ Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, pp. 98-9.

⁴⁵⁵ Elliot, Pawns of Yalta, p. 9, Reider, Histoire de la SS, pp. 77-8, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, "The Kommissarbefehl and Mass Executions of Soviet Prisoners of War", in Helmut Krausnick et. al., (eds.), Anatomy of the SS State, (New York 1968), pp. 527-8, Alfred M. de Zayas, The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, 1939-1945, (Nebraska 1989), pp. 87-9, and de Zayas, Die Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle, pp. 170-2.

⁴⁵⁶ Jacobsen, "The Kommissarbefehl", p. 515.

regards the treatment of captured enemy military personnel; "such was the hatred and barbarism of ideological war".⁴⁵⁷ Eventually it even became accepted practice in Waffen-SS and even Wehrmacht formations to give the 'coup de grace' to wounded comrades who could not be evacuated to escape capture by Soviet forces.⁴⁵⁸ It is thus understandable that the Russians themselves elected not to make the treatment of prisoners-of-war on the eastern front an issue at Nuremberg since "they probably feared that a detailed investigation by an international court of events in the war zone would also expose Soviet callousness and indifference to the suffering of its own population" and their own policies of "front-line capital punishment".⁴⁵⁹

In terms of specific incidents, Soviet prosecutors at Nuremberg did make one absurd attempt to link the Germans to the war-time murders of Polish officers at Katyn, but this accusation

⁴⁵⁷ Dallin, German Rule in Russia, p. 420, Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 432, Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 101, Lucas and Cooper, Hitler's Elite, p. 32, Stein, The Waffen SS, pp. 133-4, and Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 160, 220. See Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 221, 245, and de Zayas, Die Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle, pp. 278-84, 308-10, 318-19, for descriptions of several particularly gruesome killings of German prisoners conducted by Soviet troops. In de Zayas, The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, detailed descriptions are given of the mutilations of live and dead German POWs who fell into Soviet hands (pp. 66-71), the murder of 153 German POWs in Broniki in the Ukraine on 1 July 1941, and the butchering of 596 German POWs and wounded at Grischino in the Ukraine in February 1943 (p. 106).

⁴⁵⁸ Lucas, Panzer Grenadiers, p. 83.

⁴⁵⁹ Mollo, To the Death's Head True, p. 95, Elliot, Pawns of Yalta, p. 195, and Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, pp. 98-9.

failed for obvious reasons and only served to embarrass their western Allies.⁴⁶⁰ Most allegations against Waffen-SS formations involved the shooting of POWs on the eastern front only emerged long after Nuremberg in post-war literature. There are, for instance, war-time reports which indicate that both the Waffen-SS Divisions "Wiking" and "Leibstandarte" committed reprisal executions of captured Soviet military personnel for a period of time in July 1941 when they came across some of their own troops who had been murdered and mutilated after capture by the Soviets,⁴⁶¹ and another allegation involving the murder of 200 wounded POWs in a Kharkov hospital.⁴⁶² But accusations that Waffen-SS soldiers had a "lust for killing Russians" during this conflict remained vague.⁴⁶³ What is known is that the majority of the millions of deaths of Soviet prisoners-of-war which occurred during the war, often by maltreatment and starvation, were the responsibility of the German Army High Command and its Prisoner-of-War Department in

⁴⁶⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 58, and de Zayas, Die Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle, pp. 355-61.

⁴⁶¹ Weingartner, Hitler's Guard, p. 129, Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 273, Reider, Histoire de la SS, p. 78, Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, pp. 100-1, Hastings, Das Reich, p. 21, Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 20, and Alan Wykes, Hitler's bodyguards: SS Leibstandarte, (New York 1974), pp. 121-5.

⁴⁶² Wykes, Hitler's bodyguards, p. 125.

⁴⁶³ Kren and Rappoport, "The Waffen SS", p. 95, Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 123, Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, pp. 315-6, Aitken, Massacre on the Road, p. 124, Hastings, Das Reich, p. 21, and Landemer, Les Waffen SS, p. 159.

the rear, and not front-line units of either the Wehrmacht or the Waffen-SS.⁴⁶⁴

Two further incidents involving Waffen-SS participation in the murders of captured Allied military personnel were documented during the latter stages of the war, investigated by Allied courts of inquiry and tried in parallel with the Nuremberg prosecutions. It was these incidents in particular which would forever tarnish the image of the Waffen-SS. The first occurred in 1944 shortly after the Oradour killings, and took place behind the landing beaches of Normandy. These crimes were committed by the members of the 12. Waffen-SS Division "Hitler Jugend", which was first created in late 1943 and saw its first action in Normandy. Over the space of 10 days, from 7-17 June 1944, the 18-year-old youths of this unit killed 134 Canadian and British prisoners of war in a series of separate incidents immediately behind the German lines.⁴⁶⁵ Some post-war Waffen-SS apologists have attempted to explain away this incident as a combination of fanatical young soldiers facing their first combat and acting without official

⁴⁶⁴ Dallin, German Rule in Russia, pp. 409-10, Davidson, The Trial of the Germans, pp. 564-76, 523-3, 521, Koch, The Hitler Youth, p. 247, Krausnick, Anatomy of the SS State, p. 72, and Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, pp. 70-5.

⁴⁶⁵ The killings were the work of members of the 25th and 26th Panzer Grenadier Regiments and Reconnaissance and Engineering Battalions of the Division. See Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 128, 137, Lucas and Cooper, Panzer Grenadiers, pp. 81-104, Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 3, p. 114, Luther, Blood and Honour, p. 183, and Foster, Meeting of Generals, pp. 314-21.

sanction,⁴⁶⁶ and of officers, formerly of the 1. Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte", "who had just returned from the eastern front where atrocities and reprisals were second nature."⁴⁶⁷ Whatever their cause, the Normandy killings remain even today a crime of large dimensions, and were certainly much in the minds of the participants at Nuremberg.⁴⁶⁸

The other investigation undertaken simultaneous to the trials at Nuremberg was the U.S. prosecution of the perpetrators of the "Malmedy Massacre", which occurred at the end of December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge. In this incident 50 captured American soldiers were shot in a Belgian field by two tanks of the Peiper detachment of the Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte".⁴⁶⁹ There was some suggestion both at the trial and since that the

⁴⁶⁶ Bender and Taylor, Uniforms, Organization, vol. 3, p. 114, and Hubert Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend", (Osnabrueck 1982), pp. 556-9.

⁴⁶⁷ Landemer, Les Waffen SS, p. 261.

⁴⁶⁸ Known as the "Meyer Trial", after the commander of the unit involved, Kurt Meyer, the proceedings of the Tribunal are the basis for Tony Foster's book Meeting of Generals. See also Rodal, Nazi War Criminals in Canada, pp. 50-1, de Zayas, The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, pp. 118-20, and Scotland, The London Cage, pp. 88-91.

⁴⁶⁹ Actually also a series of incidents which occurred during the period 17-31 December 1944, although most of the other allegations other than that involving the shooting of American POWs at the Malmedy crossroads have never been thoroughly investigated. Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 181, Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, pp. 107-20, Butler, The Black Angels, pp. 236-7, and Jean-Paul Pallud, Ardennes 1944: Peiper and Skorzeny, Elite Series, volume 11, (London 1987), pp. 26-8.

incident was sparked by an attempted escape,⁴⁷⁰ and most post-war analysts of the trial have concluded that the incident was "entirely exceptional".⁴⁷¹ But even if the crossroads killings were indeed "the product of a set of military circumstances which would have created strong pressures for the shooting of prisoners in any army",⁴⁷² they were destined to damage irreparably the image of Waffen-SS soldiers in combat.

Whatever the circumstances which surrounded each case, the findings of the Canadian and American military tribunals in the two cases caused a stir at Nuremberg. Kurt Meyer was convicted and sentenced to death in the Normandy killings, and 73 criminal convictions were handed down in the Malmedy case, which included the commander of the division "Leibstandarte" and the leading officer of the Sixth Panzer Army.⁴⁷³

When asked about the significance of the Normandy and Malmedy killings during his testimony at Nuremberg, Waffen-SS General Paul

⁴⁷⁰ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, pp. 41-2, Paul Hausser, Waffen-SS im Einsatz, (Goettingen 1953), p. 249, de Zayas, Die Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle, pp. 213-16, de Zayas, The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, pp. 118-20, and Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, pp. 109-10, 127-8.

⁴⁷¹ Harris, Tyranny on Trial, pp. 176-81, and Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 126.

⁴⁷² Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 245.

⁴⁷³ Hausser, Waffen-SS im Einsatz, pp. 248-62, Lehmann and Tiemann, Die Leibstandarte, vol. 4, pp. 474-522, Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", pp. 18-9, and Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 417.

Hausser argued that such shootings were the exception rather than the rule in Waffen-SS units during the war, and that

these accusations should not be generalized. Even if there had been ten instead of only two cases, the ratio as applied to the entire membership of the Waffen-SS of 1 million men would mean there would be one case to every 100,000 men. Such incidents are the results of the intensification of combat on the ground and in the air during a long war; incidents which have occurred on both sides and will always continue to occur. You cannot hold the bulk of the Waffen-SS responsible.⁴⁷⁴

As Hausser indicated, the four incidents in which Waffen-SS formations are known to have massacred groups of captured and unarmed Allied military personnel during World War II need to be placed in perspective. The Regiment "Leibstandarte", whose 2nd battalion was responsible for the killings at Wormhoudt in 1940, captured 40,000 Polish servicemen in the wake of one battle in 1939, 3,500 Dutch prisoners in one day during the Dutch campaign, 700 English POWs in a single day during the 1940 campaign in France, 11,000 Greeks in one day during fighting there, 2,200 Soviet POWs in a single day during fighting there, and 2,000 Allied personnel during fighting in Normandy. Yet there was never any suggestion of killings occurring in any of these situations,⁴⁷⁵ and

⁴⁷⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, pp. 367-8, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

⁴⁷⁵ Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 110-18, Weingartner, Hitler's Guard, p. 36, 106, and Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, pp. 18-20.

similar statistics can be found for other Waffen-SS divisions.⁴⁷⁶ At Normandy six Waffen-SS divisions were in the line, but only one regiment of one of those divisions, the least experienced one composed of 18-year-old raw recruits in fact, was responsible for the infamous murders of Canadian POWs.⁴⁷⁷ Some of the other Waffen-SS divisions actually earned credit for a certain military chivalry and correctness during fighting at both Normandy and later at Arnhem.⁴⁷⁸ Four battle-hardened Waffen-SS divisions were engaged in the Battle of the Bulge, but again only one small detachment of one division was responsible for the crimes of Malmedy. An American Lieutenant-Colonel even offered his testimony at this trial to recount how well he and 140 fellow American POWs had been treated by other troops of the same Waffen-SS formation which had committed the Malmedy killings.⁴⁷⁹

Nor should the incidents involving Waffen-SS formations be viewed in isolation. As discussed earlier in this section, other arms of the German armed forces also engaged during the war in the

⁴⁷⁶ Landemer, Les Waffen SS, pp. 116-18, Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 117, 176, and Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 56, 78-9.

⁴⁷⁷ Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, pp. 105-6, John Keegan, Six Armies in Normandy, (New York 1982), p. 337, and Hastings, Overlord, p. 361.

⁴⁷⁸ Steiner, Die Armee der Geachteten, p. 198, Keegan, Six Armies in Normandy, p. 329, Lucas and Cooper, Panzer Grenadiers, pp. 105-15, and Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 126.

⁴⁷⁹ Hausser, Waffen-SS im Einsatz, p. 261, and Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 181.

murder of captured enemy personnel.⁴⁸⁰ The judges of the Nuremberg Tribunal thus were exaggerating when they ruled that the examples of the Malmedy and Normandy killings constituted "evidence that the shooting of unarmed prisoners of war was the general practice in some Waffen-SS divisions."⁴⁸¹

At Nuremberg the argument of "tu quoque" was disallowed concerning the shooting of POWs, as it had been for the seizing and killing of hostages in anti-partisan operations. Yet, for the sake of perspective it might also be interesting to mention some reports of similar Allied atrocities which occurred during the Second World War. In April 1944 sixty Italian and a truckload of German POWs were shot by Allied troops stationed in Sicily, an incident which only by chance was witnessed by an American war correspondent.⁴⁸² Canadian troops landed on the Normandy shore in June 1944 with orders to take no prisoners if it hindered their advance,⁴⁸³ and in two documented instances 35 German soldiers who

⁴⁸⁰ Harris, Tyranny on Trial, pp. 235-9, and Hoehne, Order of the Death's Head, p. 470. The files of the United Nations War Crimes Commission Archives in New York City are filled with dozens of investigations involving the murders of captured Allied personnel, most committed by Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe or police formations. See Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 127, concerning one incident where the 3rd Luftwaffe Paratroop Division executed 19 captured US military personnel.

⁴⁸¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 1, p. 270, (Judgement against the SS).

⁴⁸² Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS Panzerdivision, p. 559.

⁴⁸³ Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 323.

surrendered to Canadian troops at Normandy were murdered,⁴⁸⁴ and a U.S. unit accidentally shot a column of German prisoners-of-war being escorted to internment cages in the rear.⁴⁸⁵ Both sides habitually shot snipers who were taken prisoner during the Normandy battles,⁴⁸⁶ and German paratroopers and Waffen-SS members who surrendered to US units during the campaign in France were at times known to have been separated and executed,⁴⁸⁷ as were members of the elite army division "Panzer Lehr".⁴⁸⁸ After they learned of the Malmedy massacre, US troops in Belgium were allegedly issued "shoot to kill" orders for German military personnel captured subsequently,⁴⁸⁹ and one US veteran even bragged in a recent American newsmagazine article that "we didn't take any prisoners for three weeks".⁴⁹⁰ It is indeed ironic that Allied orders permitting the summary execution of POWs in the wake of the Malmedy killings could be found after the war, but not German orders to the

⁴⁸⁴ Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 334, 353.

⁴⁸⁵ Hastings, Overlord, p. 154.

⁴⁸⁶ Hastings, Overlord, p. 209.

⁴⁸⁷ Hastings, Overlord, p. 212, Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 408, Carlo D'Este, Decision in Normandy, (New York 1983), p. 507, and Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 245.

⁴⁸⁸ Luther, Blood and Honour, p. 188, and Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision, p. 559.

⁴⁸⁹ Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 424, Hausser, Waffen-SS im Einsatz, p. 249, and Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 44.

⁴⁹⁰ "Under the Headstones", Newsweek, (April 29, 1985), p. 20.

same effect.⁴⁹¹ In two other incidents, 80 German POWs were executed by French partisans on 2 September 1944 in Savoy,⁴⁹² and 47 German POWs were killed and 55 wounded in April 1945 when drunken French Army officers drove their jeep through, and shot up, an internment camp at Andernach, France.⁴⁹³

As a U.S. historian explained in his own analysis of one of these incidents, one atrocity inevitably led to another, and

once a definable atrocity had been discovered - as with the Canadians killed by 12th SS Panzer - and the conscious decision taken (by Allied troops) to respond in kind, it is difficult with hindsight to draw a meaningful moral distinction between the behaviour of one side and the other on the battlefield.⁴⁹⁴

Among scores of Allied veterans interviewed for the same narrative account of the battle of Normandy,

almost every one had direct knowledge or even experience of the shooting of German prisoners during the campaign. In the heat of battle, in the wake of seeing comrades die, many men found it intolerable to send prisoners to the rear knowing that they would thus survive the war.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹¹ Pallud, p. 28.

⁴⁹² de Zayas, The German War Crimes Bureau, p. 44.

⁴⁹³ James Bacque, Other Losses: An Investigation into the Mass Deaths of German Prisoners at the Hands of the French and Americans After World War II, (Toronto 1989), p. 92.

⁴⁹⁴ Hastings, Overlord, p. 212.

⁴⁹⁵ Hastings, Overlord, pp. 211-12, and Butler, The Black Angels, p. 229.

In his Selected Letters 1937-1961, even Ernest Hemingway boasted that while serving in the US army during the war he shot "an SS kraut" three times in the stomach when he "tried to claim protection of the Geneva Convention", yet Hemingway was never charged with having committed a war crime.⁴⁹⁶ Another author, too, has noted that it is ironic given the attention devoted to the Normandy and Malmedy trials that "the Americans have not seen fit to punish their own war criminals with equal severity for comparable crimes".⁴⁹⁷ Most disturbing of all is a study recently published in Canada, and entitled Other Losses, which indicates that thousands, and possibly tens of thousands, of German prisoners-of-war interned in camps administered by French and American military authorities perished after the war as the result of a deliberate policy of denying them the protection of the Geneva Conventions, and withholding food, medicine and shelter.⁴⁹⁸

Although war crimes such as the shooting of prisoners-of-war undoubtedly occurred on all sides during the Second World War, no Allied soldier in any theatre of the war was ever charged with a war crime in the aftermath of World War II.⁴⁹⁹ This is especially

⁴⁹⁶ "Die Krauts und ich ...", in Die Freiwillige, vol. 32, no. 9, (September 1986), p. 10.

⁴⁹⁷ Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 282.

⁴⁹⁸ Bacque, Other Losses, especially pp. 161-72.

⁴⁹⁹ Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 452, Schuetter, Maenner der Waffen-SS, pp. 268-9, Davidson, Tyranny on Trial, p. 574, and Earl F. Ziemke, The United States Army in the Occupation of Germany 1944-1946, Army Historical Series, (Washington, D.C., 1975), p.

troubling given the fact that revenge "is not considered as an extenuating circumstance in the Geneva Conventions and hence the Americans were just as guilty as their enemy of atrocities. The only difference was that they were the eventual victors."⁵⁰⁰

Also disturbing is the fact that until mid-1944, both the British Manual of Military Law and the United States Rules of Land Warfare, which provided the guidelines for the behaviour of Allied troops in combat during World War II, directed that "members of the armed forces who commit such violations of the recognized rules of warfare as are ordered by their Government, or by their commander, are not war criminals and cannot therefore be punished by the enemy."⁵⁰¹ This could have exempted many German military personnel accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity from Allied prosecution after the war, so amendments to these clauses of the

220.

⁵⁰⁰ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 212.

⁵⁰¹ "United Nations War Crimes Commission Human Rights Report: Preparatory Papers", draft of three parts of the report in so far as it relates to war crimes trials other than those conducted in Nuremberg and Tokyo, written by G. Brand, Legal Officer, III/112, 20 October 1947, UNWCC Archives, New York City, p. 38, and Ziemke, The United States Army in the Occupation of Germany, p. 171.

respective Allied military manuals were hurriedly drafted during 1944.⁵⁰²

It is hardly surprising that the perpetrators of specific war crimes like the Oradour, Le Paradis, Normandy and Malmedy killings were pursued by Allied military prosecutors after the war. But it was certainly not necessary for Allied courts to tar the entire membership of the Waffen-SS with war crimes guilt because small units in specific circumstances committed these crimes. In this area more than any other, emotional reaction to admittedly brutal acts probably got the better of judicial even-handedness.

⁵⁰² Where the late amendments to the Allied manuals were brought into defence arguments during the course of post-war trials, the original clauses were rejected and the more recent amendments were ruled to be the more valid. See the "United Nations War Crimes Commission Human Rights Report: Preparatory Papers", UNWCC, III/112, pp. 39-41.

CHAPTER 6

PROSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT

The price of membership in Waffen-SS formations was being paid by soldiers of the Waffen-SS long before the war ended. The defensive battles on both the eastern and western fronts had been costly, and some 250,000 Waffen-SS men were estimated to be dead or missing at the end of the war.⁵⁰³ Those Waffen-SS troops who surrendered to the Soviet army on the eastern front were often summarily executed, especially if they belonged to foreign legions recruited in territories claimed by Stalin.⁵⁰⁴ Waffen-SS soldiers captured by Canadian troops after the Normandy killings or by U.S. troops in the aftermath of the Malmedy massacre were sometimes severely beaten or shot out of hand.⁵⁰⁵ 1,000 survivors of the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" were handed over to Russian troops by the Americans in 1945, and all were subsequently executed or died in penal servitude.⁵⁰⁶ The same fate awaited survivors of the

⁵⁰³ Wegner, "My Honour is Loyalty", p. 221, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 120.

⁵⁰⁴ Dallin, German Rule, p. 420, and Stein, The Waffen SS, pp. 133-4. The most brutal examples of this were suffered by the personnel of the Cossack divisions forcibly repatriated to the Soviets by their British captors. See Reider, Histoire de la SS, pp. 112-35, and any books written by British historian Nikolai Tolstoy, particularly Victims of Yalta and The Minister and the Massacres.

⁵⁰⁵ Koehl, The Black Corps, p. 245, Munin Verlag, "Thoughts - Questions", p. 4, and Hausser, Waffen-SS im Einsatz, p. 249.

⁵⁰⁶ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 77, 94, Sydnor, "The SS 'Totenkopfdivision'", p. 13, and Sydnor, Soldiers of Destruction, p. 311.

7. Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen", most of whom were surrendered to Yugoslavian partisans by their American and British captors and either killed outright or executed subsequently for war crimes.⁵⁰⁷

Uncounted thousands of the foreign volunteers who served in Waffen-SS formations during the war were also subjected to execution or various terms of imprisonment when they were repatriated after the war to their country of origin.⁵⁰⁸ In Belgium over 4,000 individuals, many Waffen-SS volunteers of Belgian nationality, were sentenced to death after the war for "military collaboration".⁵⁰⁹ Of 50,000 Dutch citizens who volunteered to serve in German uniform during the war, many of whom ended up in the 23. or 34. Waffen-SS Divisions, 40,000 lost their citizenship and social benefits, as did their wives,⁵¹⁰ and received terms of imprisonment according to their rank and their length of service.⁵¹¹ As one author explained,

During the war, and immediately after the Liberation, even moderate Dutchmen believed that

⁵⁰⁷ Quarrie, Hitler's Teutonic Knights, p. 138. The best account of the massive postwar killings which took place in Yugoslavia after the war can be found in Prcela, Operation Slaughterhouse.

⁵⁰⁸ Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, p. 395, Bradley F. Smith, The Road to Nuremberg, (New York 1981), p. 15, and Schuetter, Maenner der Waffen-SS, p. 268.

⁵⁰⁹ Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 2, p. 77, 84.

⁵¹⁰ Most of these citizenships were reinstated in 1951 according to Mason, The Purge of the Dutch Quislings, pp. 66-8.

⁵¹¹ Buss and Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, p. 103, and Littlejohn, Foreign Legions, vol. 2, pp. 226-7.

only the death penalty would be severe enough for military collaborators. After all, carrying arms against one's own country, or its allies, seemed just about the purest form of treason imaginable.⁵¹²

Those Waffen-SS soldiers who avoided repatriation to their country of origin and survived capture on the front-lines were interned in occupied Germany where many alleged mistreatment at the hand of their Allied captors.⁵¹³ They were segregated from other POWs, and given more difficult and dangerous jobs such as mine-clearing.⁵¹⁴ They were soon joined by their Waffen-SS comrades who had been released from military service during the war due to injuries. When the organisations were indicted at Nuremberg, these crippled men were rounded up from hospitals and rehabilitation centres across occupied Germany - blind veterans and amputees alike - and interned in prisoner-of-war camps.⁵¹⁵

The decision to include the military arm of the SS in the indictment against the larger organization of the SS and SD was

⁵¹² Mason, The Purge of the Dutch Quislings, p. 25.

⁵¹³ Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision, p. 549, and Mason, The Purge of the Dutch Quislings, pp. 49-51.

⁵¹⁴ Buss and Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, p. 106.

⁵¹⁵ Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, 124-5. According to Dr. Eugen Kogon and Ferdinand Raemhild, "Das Internierungslager Darmstadt", (Wiesbaden 1947), of 11,300 prisoners present at that one internment camp, more than one in three was a former member of the Waffen-SS, some as young as 19 and including 450 who had been transferred into the Waffen-SS from other branches of the Wehrmacht and others who had been discharged before the end of the war due to war wounds.

made only at the last moment by Allied political and military officials largely because of emotional reaction to two particular incidents - the 1944 Normandy and Malmedy massacres.⁵¹⁶ These incidents made it impossible to avoid placing the organization and its leaders on trial. The Malmedy incident in particular was widely publicized in the Allied press, causing what one historian has called a "shock on the American psyche"⁵¹⁷ and convincing many American political and military leaders that "there was an overall clearcut plan for the SS and Gestapo to spread terror through atrocities."⁵¹⁸

In the wake of the Malmedy massacres, emotions against the Waffen-SS ran high for some time. Some US officials even contemplated deporting all former members of the SS, including their wives and children, to some sort of labour "gulag" after the war.⁵¹⁹ One report issued by the Allied occupation authorities admitted that the internment of Waffen-SS and other German military personnel after the war was understandably intended "to satiate the political and moral feelings of our Allies, the British people and

⁵¹⁶ Lehmann and Tiemann, Die Leibstandarte, vol. 4, pp. 521-2, and Ziemke, The United States Army, pp. 170-1.

⁵¹⁷ Smith, The Road to Nuremberg, pp. 114-5.

⁵¹⁸ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 156, Smith, The Road to Nuremberg, p. 52, and Bradley F. Smith, The American Road to Nuremberg, (California 1983), pp. 116-7.

⁵¹⁹ Smith, The American Road to Nuremberg, p. 28.

the Germans."⁵²⁰ All of this occurred despite reports from Allied military intelligence and the Legal Secretariat of the United Nations War Crimes Commission that according to their own research, "members of the 'Waffen-SS' comprised units independent of other SS formations. They were mostly members of the regular army, and bore no prima facie guilt of crimes."⁵²¹

Once the wheels of prosecution against the Waffen-SS were set in motion at Nuremberg, they became difficult to stop. Almost every nation in Europe had traitors who had served in Waffen-SS formations during the war, and the post-war European witch-hunt for former German collaborators inevitably also caught the Waffen-SS in its broadside.⁵²² The SS link likewise, no matter how tenuous, was a major impediment to finding in favour of the Waffen-SS at Nuremberg;

the peoples of Europe had been too physically and emotionally tortured by the Gestapo and SS system to be able to brush aside the criminal organization question once it had been raised

⁵²⁰ "Organisations indicted before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg", Legal Division, Control Commission for Germany, (British Element), 25 February 1946, Record Group War Office (WO) 32/12208, Public Records Office, London, England.

⁵²¹ UNWCC, History of the UNWCC, p. 296.

⁵²² France, for example, executed some 10,000 of its citizens who elected to fight in German uniform during the war, many summarily. Included were a number of personnel from the 33. Waffen-SS Division "Charlemagne". See Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, p. 395. The British similarly tried and executed John Amery, a British prisoner-of-war who attempted to form a British legion for the Waffen-SS during the war to fight on the eastern front. See Quarrie, Hitler's Samurai, pp. 153-4, and Butler, The Black Angels, p. 198.

... (and) if this inter-Allied Court declined to declare the SS and the Gestapo criminal, it would not only produce political protests, but would create a psychological situation that many Europeans would find simply unbearable.⁵²³

Part of the confusion about the nature of the Waffen-SS organization and its members was understandable because it was difficult for most to differentiate between the police and military sections of the SS organisation.

The Waffen-SS never fought as an army and its leaders never achieved more than local tactical control. But the racial transports, the concentration camps, the interrogation cells of the Gestapo, the medical experiments on the living, the massive reprisals, the manhunts for slave labour and the racial exterminations will be remembered forever.⁵²⁴

This made it difficult to contemplate exempting the Waffen-SS from the indictment against the SS and SD, and even more difficult to imagine not finding it guilty of criminality as part of that same organization. A large part of the prosecution arguments was based on the presumption that the SS was a unified organization, and exempting any component of it, even if for good reason, would weaken a major tenet upon which their whole case was based.⁵²⁵

The judges of the International Military Tribunal were not able to gain a clear understanding of the true nature of the

⁵²³ Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, pp. 162-3.

⁵²⁴ Reitlinger, The SS: Alibi of a Nation, p. 454.

⁵²⁵ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 377, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

Waffen-SS during the course of their deliberations at Nuremberg. Their judgement that the Waffen-SS "furnished forces for clearing ghettos, fighting partisans, and even engaging in ordinary military actions"⁵²⁶ showed their inability to understand, or accept, the primarily military nature of the Waffen-SS. This confusion was probably born even before the outbreak of the war,⁵²⁷ and the defence team did not succeed in correcting it at Nuremberg.

Airey Neave, who organized the case against the Nazi organizations on behalf of the prosecution, was a British military officer who had gained personal experience at the hands of SS interrogators while he was a prisoner-of-war interned in Italy.⁵²⁸ This may explain the fact that decades after the Nuremberg trials had ended, and despite existing and emerging evidence to the contrary, Neave wrote in his memoirs that he was still convinced that the Waffen-SS was composed "mainly of volunteers, all recruited for their racial purity and support of extreme Nazism."⁵²⁹ Neave charged as late as 1978 that he has "never seen any reason to disagree with this verdict, and now that the SS propaganda

⁵²⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 324, (Neave Report), and Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 472.

⁵²⁷ Wulf, L'Industrie de l'horreur, p. 367.

⁵²⁸ Neave, Nuremberg: A Personal Record, p. 285.

⁵²⁹ Neave, Nuremberg: A Personal Record, p. 285.

machine is at work in Europe, the tribunal's words should be remembered."⁵³⁰

Neave had responsibility for sifting through the evidence and choosing the witnesses in the cases against the organizations.⁵³¹ It would appear, however, that he and his staff made little use of the 136,000 signed affidavits produced by interned members of the SS for the commissioners who reported to the Tribunal.⁵³² During their cross-examination of witnesses testifying on behalf of the Waffen-SS, the prosecuting attorneys attempted to tar the Waffen-SS with crimes committed by any unit of the SS and police during the war.⁵³³ According to the logic of the prosecution, the war-time speeches of Himmler and other Nazi leaders themselves constituted primary evidence of the criminal nature of the organization; after all, they argued,

⁵³⁰ Neave, Nuremberg: A Personal Record, p. 287.

⁵³¹ Neave, Nuremberg: A Personal Record, p. 276, and "Report on Applications from Members of Organizations Alleged to be Criminal", from the Office of the General Secretary of the International Military Tribunal, 26 April 1946, Record Group Foreign Office (FO) 1019/69, Public Records Office, London, England.

⁵³² Werner Maser, Nurnberg: Tribunal der Sieger, (Dusseldorf 1977), p. 548, Robert K. Woetzel, The Nuremberg Trials in International Law, (London 1962), p. 2, "The Criminal Organisations in the Nuremberg Judgement", UNWCC, III/64, p. 3, and Schuetter, Maenner der Waffen-SS, p. 306.

⁵³³ See Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, pp. 418-23, for a perfect example of the unwillingness of prosecution counsel to let go of links that it should have been clear did not actually exist.

is it possible that officers and men in these Waffen-SS divisions who could be spoken to in such a way were high-minded, clean-living, decent and honourable soldiers? They show that every member of those SS units was a prototype of his SS Fuehrer.⁵³⁴

Yet the Allies' own intelligence reports produced during 1945 were able to differentiate those Waffen-SS offices from other "entirely separate SS Head Offices".⁵³⁵ But they were apparently ignored.

Other factors played a role in the inability of the Waffen-SS to obtain a balanced trial at Nuremberg. The case against the SS and SD was a massive one to start with, and overwhelmingly complex. At the same time as the defence counsel was dealing with specific crimes committed by specific units of the Waffen-SS, it had to try to show that the SS was not a unified organization; that the Waffen-SS was not an "elite, aggressive assault troop" organised to commit crimes; that it was not fanatically ideological; and that it was not responsible for the guarding of the concentration

⁵³⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 231, (Neave Report).

⁵³⁵ "The Final Report on Central Headquarters of German Para-Military Organisations", Record Group Foreign Office (FO) 1070/60, Public Records Office, London, England, identified the Waffen-SS as one of their counter-intelligence targets. According to their findings the entire Fuehrungshauptamt was involved with the day-to-day administration of Waffen-SS field units with the exception of Amt I, the Headquarters of the Allgemeine-SS. Also tied to the Waffen-SS were Amt B of the SS-Hauptamt, responsible for recruiting and registration, certain components of the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office responsible for supplies and buildings, and the entire SS Personalhauptamt.

camps.⁵³⁶ This represented a massive undertaking, even without the ambiguity of much of the evidence then available. Unlike the eloquence of the attorneys for the Armed Forces and High Command,⁵³⁷ the defence counsel for the SS did not perform as well in its arguments trying to clear the Waffen-SS of the charges against it. The Waffen-SS case was also hampered by a lack of relevant and organised data, and many of the defence arguments were not put forward with sufficient vigour before the judges of the Tribunal.⁵³⁸

The choice of SS judges Reinecke and Morgen to appear as witnesses on behalf of the Waffen-SS was not a good one, and the "sickening evidence" which they presented before the Tribunal worked against rather than in favour of the Waffen-SS.⁵³⁹ Reinecke, for instance, asserted in his testimony that training in the SS "was systematically directed to decency, justice and morality",⁵⁴⁰ and Morgen said of the concentration camp at Buchenwald that "it is situated on wooded heights with a wonderful view. The institutions were clean and freshly painted. There was much lawn

⁵³⁶ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, pp. 69-70, (Defence Arguments summarized in Neave Report).

⁵³⁷ Davidson, The Trial of the Germans, pp. 558-62, and Neave, Nuremberg: A Personal Record, p. 288.

⁵³⁸ Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, p. 112, and Neave, Nuremberg: A Personal Record, p. 275.

⁵³⁹ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 434.

⁵⁴⁰ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 429, (testimony of Gunther Reinecke, Chief Judge of the SS and Police).

and flowers. The prisoners were healthy, normally-fed, sun-tanned..."⁵⁴¹

It was statements such as these made during the testimony of Reinecke and Morgan in particular which led Neave to accuse all of the witnesses who appeared on behalf of the Waffen-SS of perjury and distortions, concluding that they should "by all rights rank foremost for the impudent lies to which they resorted in order to justify the SS and its members".⁵⁴² Many of the Waffen-SS veterans interned during the period in which the Tribunal operated also were vocal in their opposition to the selection of witnesses like Morgen called to testify on their behalf. The detainees at one internment facility forwarded a letter to the Tribunal judges protesting that

The applicants are of opinion that among the defendants there is no one who could be considered representatives of the SS in general (and) there is most urgent danger that the defendants will besides defending their own case not energetically enough plead on behalf of the SS as an organization nor will they be able to do so because of interfering own interests.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 499, (Testimony of Georg Morgen, SS Judge of the Reserve).

⁵⁴² Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, pp. 323-4, (Neave Report). On p. 228 witness Robert Brill is accused of "perjury", and on p. 373 Paul Hausser is accused of attempting to tell "unintelligent lies".

⁵⁴³ "Letter from SS PWs", sent from the PW enclosure at Dachau to the International Military Tribunal, 14 November 1945, Record Group Foreign Office (FO) 1019/49, Public Records Office, London, England.

Subsequent studies have shown that the major witnesses testifying on behalf of the Waffen-SS at Nuremberg, especially Robert Brill and Paul Hausser, were fairly credible witnesses. But they stated facts which the prosecution found impossible at the time to accept.

With SS chief Heinrich Himmler having committed suicide, the major SS official on trial at Nuremberg, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, did not help the Waffen-SS case either. Kaltenbrunner was responsible for directing police activities during the war, and in his determination to win his own individual defence, Kaltenbrunner refused to clarify the status of the Waffen-SS within the SS organization.⁵⁴⁴ Former officers of the Wehrmacht could also have corrected much of the distorted picture of the Waffen-SS produced and accepted at Nuremberg, but tried to save the army by disassociating themselves from the Waffen-SS and placing the blame for all war-time atrocities on the SS in general. Thus, "the majority preferred to hold their tongues."⁵⁴⁵ Like Kaltenbrunner, the Wehrmacht officers and their lawyers were preoccupied with their own defence, and wanted to maintain a circumspect distance from a military organization that was probably considered guilty

⁵⁴⁴ Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, p. 112.

⁵⁴⁵ Hoehne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 437, and Henry V. Dicks, Licensed Mass Murder: A Socio-psychological study of some SS killers, (New York 1972), p. 263.

before the trial even commenced.⁵⁴⁶ The officers and men of the Wehrmacht succeeded in convincing their Allied accusers, at least during the first trial at Nuremberg, that they had served as professional soldiers during the war, merely carrying out orders, as opposed to the ideological warriors of the Waffen-SS.⁵⁴⁷

Wehrmacht General Guderian was one of the few Wehrmacht generals willing to testify on behalf of the Waffen-SS at the Malmedy trial. But he was not permitted to appear there as a defence witness, thus raising "strong evidence of judicial mismanagement".⁵⁴⁸ There is no indication that any Allied military officers offered to testify on behalf of the military units of the Waffen-SS at Nuremberg, nor is it clear if any attempt was made in that direction by defence counsel.⁵⁴⁹ The Waffen-SS was caught up in the Allies' desire to arrive at a judgement about the whole SS

⁵⁴⁶ Hoehne, The Order Of the Death's Head, p. 6. Erich von Manstein did testify, however, that "the units of the Waffen-SS fought during the war very bravely as our comrades at the front", but he did little to clarify its operational character. Trial of the Major War Criminals, op. cit., vol. 20, p. 600, (testimony of Erich von Manstein, former Wehrmacht Field Marshal).

⁵⁴⁷ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, pp. 208-9.

⁵⁴⁸ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 195. The same thing happened when another Waffen-SS officer volunteered to testify on behalf of Kurt Meyer at the Canadian trial of the perpetrators of the Normandy killings. See Reider, Histoire de la SS, p. 168.

⁵⁴⁹ Waffen-SS General Paul Hausser did make such a suggestion during his testimony before the Tribunal. See Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 20, p. 370, (testimony of Paul Hausser, Senior officer of the Waffen-SS).

organisation in order to speed up subsidiary trials of individual members.

The initial plan to use the Nuremberg rulings as a model for subsequent mass prosecutions of members of the Nazi organizations was "gratifyingly coherent and seductively comprehensive".⁵⁵⁰ In the words of the prosecution, "the guilt of the organization having been established, it is no longer necessary to formulate complete proof of the guilt of the individual members."⁵⁵¹ Article 10 of the Nuremberg Charter also stipulated that

in cases where a group or organisation is declared criminal by the Tribunal, the competent national authority of any signatory shall have the right to bring individuals to trial for membership therein before national, military, or occupation courts. In any such cases the criminal nature of the group or organisation is considered proved and shall not be questioned.⁵⁵²

Allied intelligence reports written in 1946 indicated that while the Tribunal was in session at Nuremberg, former members of the Waffen-SS were "being treated prima facie as criminals and will

⁵⁵⁰ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 55.

⁵⁵¹ Trial of the Major War Criminals, vol. 22, p. 94, (Neave Report).

⁵⁵² Woetzel, The Nuremberg Trials, p. 190, and "Provisions Regarding the Trial of Members of Criminal Organisations in the United States Zone of Control in Germany", United Nations War Crimes Commission, Miscellaneous Report No. 115, 9 December 1947, UNWCC Archives, New York City, pp. 2-3.

be dealt with on that basis".⁵⁵³ In the British Zone of Control, arrangements were made immediately after the verdicts were announced to set up 100 German Tribunals which could pass various quick sentences of imprisonment, forfeiture of property and fines upon individuals who were members of organizations declared criminal at Nuremberg.⁵⁵⁴ Other plans then being considered called for the death sentence to be applied to all Waffen-SS officers above the rank of Colonel, 10 years penal servitude to all members of the SD, the Gestapo, and selected Waffen-SS Divisions such as "Totenkopf", and 1-5 years for other Waffen-SS personnel of lower ranks.⁵⁵⁵

As it turned out, the idea of turnstile sentencing was not to be as effective as it first appeared. As the trials continued at Nuremberg, 1 million individuals were targetted for internment throughout the Allied occupation zones as members of criminal organisations, and 230,000 were already held in custody, including

⁵⁵³ "Law Amending Control Council Law No. 10 of 20 December 1945 entitled 'Punishment of Persons Guilty of War Crimes, Crimes Against Peace and against Humanity'", memorandum from the Allied Control Council Authority, 21 December 1946, Record Group Foreign Office (FO) 945/354, Public Records Office, London, England.

⁵⁵⁴ "Explanatory Memorandum for Ordinance No. 69 Issued by Headquarters, Control Commission for Germany (British Element)", 13 December 1946, Record Group Foreign Office (FO) 1060/1389, Public Records Office, London, England.

⁵⁵⁵ "Organisations indicted before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg", PRO, WO 32/12208.

130,000 Waffen- and other SS personnel.⁵⁵⁶ These individuals were considered "Category One" internees, "War Criminals, Ardent Nazis or Militarists and those whose freedom would be a danger to the Allied cause". By January 1946, however, with the Tribunal proceedings barely begun, Allied occupation authorities began to worry that these continued large-scale internments might be considered unjust by the German civilian population. Civilian officials of occupied Germany warned about a possible severe shortage of skilled administrators which guilty rulings against the six indicted Nazi organizations and automatic punishment of their members might create.⁵⁵⁷ Allied authorities also began to receive increasing numbers of allegations from detainees of mistreatment and brutality at the hands of their Allied captors.⁵⁵⁸

Four-fifths of the Waffen-SS internees were therefore released during 1946 from internment, except for some 5,000 high-ranking officers, and 45,000 former members of five Waffen-SS Divisions, including the 4. Waffen-SS Police Division and the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf", known or suspected to have been involved in

⁵⁵⁶ "Report on Applications from Members of Organizations Alleged to be Criminal", from the Office of the General Secretary of the International Military Tribunal and dated Nuremberg, 26 April 1946, Record Group Foreign Office (FO) 1019/69, Public Records Office, London, England, and Harold Zink, American Military Government in Germany, (New York 1947), p. 140.

⁵⁵⁷ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 425.

⁵⁵⁸ "Report on Applications from Members of Organizations", PRO, FO 1019/69.

war-time atrocities.⁵⁵⁹ The majority of the latter were discharged from their Wehrmacht military service and transferred to civilian internment facilities to await trial as members of the SS subject to arrest under Categories 1 or 2 of Control Council Law #10.⁵⁶⁰

Because the concept of organizational criminality had no real precedent in international law,⁵⁶¹ the judges of the Tribunal eventually determined to drop the idea and to find a solution "which would not result in automatic collective responsibility and which would not blindly hit innocent as well as guilty individuals", or result in the persecution of individuals merely for having belonged to certain organizations.⁵⁶² As one United Nations War Crimes Commission Report warned about the concept of collective guilt, "this is a far reaching and novel procedure. Its application, unless properly safeguarded, may produce great injustice."⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁹ "Organisations indicted before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg", PRO, WO 32/12208, and Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision, p. 556.

⁵⁶⁰ "Repatriation of senior officers, automatic arrest categories and security suspects among German P/W", memorandum from the Control Officer for Germany and Austria to the P.W.1 War Office, 15 April 1947, Record Group War Office (WO) 32/12179, Public Records Office, London, England.

⁵⁶¹ Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, p. 156, and UNWCC, History of the UNWCC, p. 303.

⁵⁶² UNWCC, History of the UNWCC, p. 296, and Conot, Justice at Nuremberg, p. 484.

⁵⁶³ "The Criminal Organisations in the Nuremberg Judgement", UNWCC, III/64, p. 3.

As a result, it was decided that after the main trials were concluded at Nuremberg there would not after all be mass trials and convictions of the members of the organizations declared criminal at Nuremberg. Those who belonged to these organizations would be prosecuted only if they had actually committed criminal acts themselves, and would have to find mitigating circumstances to defend their actions if they had.⁵⁶⁴ The International Military Tribunal inserted further caveats within its final rulings against the organizations, including the exemption of certain sub-groups,⁵⁶⁵ the need for subsequent prosecutors to establish that an individual charged with membership in a criminal organization had known of the "criminal purpose" of the organization to which he belonged, and that he had "volunteered" for membership.⁵⁶⁶

Numbers alone helped to convince the Allies determined that it would be impossible to automatically process the members of

⁵⁶⁴ Kempner, SS im Kreuzverhoer, p. 190, and Goetz, Bilanz der Verfolgung, p. 21.

⁵⁶⁵ In the case of the ruling against the Gestapo, janitors were exempted, but in the case of the SS such distinctions were only made for honorary members and equestrian units of the SS while janitors, members of marching bands, music teachers, radio broadcasters, military geologists, etc. were not exempted because it was felt that the SS was more than an organization with different roles to perform, but also a "blood brotherhood". See Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, p. 96, Gelwick, "Personnel Policies", pp. 62-7, Goetz, Bilanz der Verfolgung, p. 21, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 100.

⁵⁶⁶ Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, p. 91, Ashman and Wagman, The Nazi Hunters, p. 79, Cyprian and Sawicki, Nuremberg in Retrospect, p. 78, and UNWCC, History of the UNWCC, p. 305.

organizations declared criminal at Nuremberg.⁵⁶⁷ In the end, the rulings of the Tribunal did little more than provide direction to the subsequent German denazification tribunals, and to establish for historical purposes that "these four organizations of the Hitler government were the primary institutionalities through which crimes of that regime, especially crimes against humanity, were perpetrated."⁵⁶⁸ In some countries, such as Czechoslovakia and France, mere membership in the Waffen-SS at first resulted in automatic terms of imprisonment, but this practice quickly became more the exception than the rule.⁵⁶⁹

Although the judges of the Nuremberg Tribunal hoped to avoid creating the stigma of collective responsibility or guilt which would hit the innocent as well as the guilty, this proved impossible. Former Waffen-SS troops were now living in a post-war world jaded by the shadow of the Nuremberg judgements against the organization to which they had formerly belonged. For some time after the conclusion of the trials, U.S. military officials continued to reject the release even of lower-ranked members of the Waffen-SS among the 72,000 individuals still in their internment camps because "the evidence at Nuremberg had proved the Waffen-SS responsible for some of the worst atrocities in Eastern Europe and

⁵⁶⁷ Tusa and Tusa, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 57, and Smith, Reaching Judgement at Nuremberg, p. 164.

⁵⁶⁸ Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 545.

⁵⁶⁹ UNWCC, History of the UNWCC, pp. 326-33.

Russia."⁵⁷⁰ British authorities held 16,000 in internment under the same reasoning.⁵⁷¹ France also held several hundred former German members of the Waffen-SS in prison ships in Bordeaux until the 1950s,⁵⁷² while a majority of the others were encouraged to escape prosecution by joining the French Foreign Legion.⁵⁷³

The Normandy and Malmedy trials, and the declaration of organizational criminality made by the International Tribunal at Nuremberg meant that for the Allied occupation forces, as for most members of the Allied public in 1945 and 1946, it became difficult

to view the SS prisoners as men (many of them very young) who, although some of them might have been guilty of brutal atrocities, were also frightened and discredited human beings. Wartime Allied propaganda and the Schutzstaffel's own widely publicized self-image had stressed the "hardness" and fanaticism of the SS man. And these, after all, were not garden-variety SS men but ... the "cream of the crop". This was a prejudice which would have been difficult to avoid soon after the war.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷⁰ Bower, Blind Eye to Murder, p. 338, and Schuetter, Maenner der Waffen-SS, p. 268.

⁵⁷¹ F.S.V. Donnison, Civilian Affairs and Military Government North-West Europe 1944-1946, History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series, (London 1961), p. 362.

⁵⁷² Hastings, Das Reich, p. 226.

⁵⁷³ According to Michael Bar-Zohar, The Avengers, (New York 1967), p. 145, the notorious Oscar Dirlewanger was one of a number of Waffen-SS veterans who managed to evade post-war prosecution by joining the French Foreign Legion.

⁵⁷⁴ Weingartner, Crossroads of Death, p. 76.

Most officers of the Waffen-SS remained in Allied internment camps for up to four years after the cessation of hostilities, and then appeared before denazification tribunals where 99% were cleared and finally released.⁵⁷⁵ As members of what was considered to be a "para-military organization", Waffen-SS veterans, even if they were refugees from eastern Europe or the Soviet Union, were not entitled to assistance from refugee organizations after the war.⁵⁷⁶ Former members of the Waffen-SS were prohibited from enlisting in the postwar German Bundeswehr until 1956, and those above the Waffen-SS rank of lieutenant-colonel remain excluded today.⁵⁷⁷ Those who had volunteered for service lost their full German retirement and disability benefits,⁵⁷⁸ and unlike their war-

⁵⁷⁵ Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 251, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 134.

⁵⁷⁶ United Nations, International Refugee Organization, Manual for Eligibility Officers, (Geneva 1946), p. 106, 115. This is a guide for IRO personnel handling refugees in post-war Europe.

⁵⁷⁷ According to David Clay Large, "Reckoning Without the Past: The HIAG of the Waffen-SS and the Politics of Rehabilitation in the Bonn Republic, 1950-1961", The Journal of Modern History, vol. 59, no. 1, (March 1987), pp. 106-8, even after that date the majority of those Waffen-SS veterans below the ranks of colonel who attempted to enlist in the post-war Bundeswehr failed to pass the strict screening panels set up to deal with them. See also Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 254, and Steiner, Die Armee der Geachteten, p. 251.

⁵⁷⁸ Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 119, Hoehne, "The Butcher's Mentality", p. 244, Stein, The Waffen SS, p. 252, 255, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, pp. 135-42, 178. According to Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 41, Cyprian and Sawicki, Nuremberg in Retrospect, pp. 181-7, and Rudolf Kahle, "Bundessozialreferat", Der Freiwillige, vol. 32, no. 9, (September 1986), p. 23, Waffen-SS veterans did begin to receive some social benefits because of amendments made in the policy of the German

time Wehrmacht counterparts, Waffen-SS veterans were not entitled to state war pensions, a situation made especially ironic when it was discovered that the widow of the notorious SD leader Reinhard Heydrich had received a large widow's pension for a number of years after the war.⁵⁷⁹ The veterans also suffered a number of other direct and indirect punishments,⁵⁸⁰ not the least of which was being prohibited from participation in military memorial services for the veterans of World War II.⁵⁸¹ Veterans of the Waffen-SS were also prohibited from emigrating to countries like Canada until a decade after the war.⁵⁸²

For foreigners who had served in Waffen-SS legions or units, the situation was often desparate, and

a greater problem was not surviving the defeat, but winning the battle for rehabilitation once he was released from prison. In many cases his home had been looted on VE day, or later commandeered by the State. If his wife or family had not been arrested as accomplices, they would almost certainly have been ostracised, and his children barred from attending the local school. As a collaborator he was not entitled to any form of pension or

government in 1961, and again in 1983.

⁵⁷⁹ Messenger, Hitler's Gladiator, p. 204.

⁵⁸⁰ Steiner, Die Armee der Geachteten, 247-53, and Hausser, Soldaten Wie Andere, p. 184.

⁵⁸¹ Levkov, Bitburg and Beyond, p. 63. According to Sauer, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS, p. 7, many in Germany still oppose the reunions of Waffen-SS veterans or Bundeswehr participation in the latter.

⁵⁸² Canada, Department of Justice, Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals: Report Part 1, (Ottawa 1986), p. 184.

social assistance, nor was it easy to find a job, especially for the disabled.⁵⁸³

German Waffen-SS veterans who survived the war formed a self-help and lobby organization known as the Hilfsgemeinschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit (HIAG) (Reciprocal Aid Association), a cooperative organization which assisted Waffen-SS veterans with medical expenses, organized social activities, and lobbied the government of the Federal Republic of Germany for recognition and rehabilitation.⁵⁸⁴ Their lobbying was so effective, and the injustices to which they had been subjected so apparent, that one German politician, Socialist leader Kurt Schumacher, finally complained that

most of these 900,000 people have become downright social outcasts. They are held judicially liable for the crimes of the Secret Service (SD) and the liquidation camps, although, as members of the Waffen-SS, they

⁵⁸³ Buss and Mollo, Hitler's Germanic Legions, p. 106.

⁵⁸⁴ Duprat, Histoire des SS, p. 260, Davidson, The Trial of the Germans, p. 564, Reider, Histoire de la SS, pp. 68-9, and Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 514. According to Large, "Reckoning without the Past", pp. 82-3, HIAG began in late 1950 as a loose association of local "support groups", and its peak membership was 20,000 out of an estimated 500,000 Waffen-SS survivors. According to Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", pp. 50-6, each year there are 20 or more reunions throughout Germany, and in 1963 HIAG also set up a military history institute to coordinate research into unit and formation histories and to collaborate with parallel Waffen-SS veterans groups set up in Austria, Holland, Belgium, Sweden and Finland (p. 40). See SS in Actie: Een documentatie over de misdaden der SS, (Amsterdam 1966), especially pp. 518-45, for an especially intense criticism of the post-war attempts being made by HIAG to rehabilitate the image of the military Waffen-SS.

hardly had any more to do with that than any other members of the Wehrmacht.⁵⁸⁵

But as much as German politicians of all parties agreed privately that the Waffen-SS should be treated equally, they feared the political costs of voicing those views in public.⁵⁸⁶ Nor was the Waffen-SS case helped by the fact that some former members and leaders of the Waffen-SS, particularly those actively involved in the HIAG organization, adopted especially vociferous tactics in their struggle for rehabilitation. Their confrontational tactics permitted critics to accuse them of being anti-Semitic and anti-democratic.⁵⁸⁷ This made it easier for many opponents of HIAG to continue to misunderstand what Nuremberg actually said about the Waffen-SS organization and its former members.⁵⁸⁸ Some contemporary historians still write that the veterans of the Waffen-SS were "political soldiers and war criminals".⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁵ Levkov, Bitburg and Beyond, p. 103.

⁵⁸⁶ Foster, Meeting of Generals, p. 514, and Wegner, "'My Honour is Loyalty'", p. 227.

⁵⁸⁷ Large, "Reckoning without the Past", pp. 93-4, 101.

⁵⁸⁸ Harprath, "HIAG: Ein Traditionsverband", p. 28.

⁵⁸⁹ Segev, Soldiers of Evil, p. 72.

CONCLUSION

The Waffen-SS as it existed at the moment of the final German surrender in 1945 could no longer be considered an integral component of the SS organization. In matters of personnel and administration, a branch of the SS known as the Fuehrungshauptamt maintained day-to-day control over the military formations formerly known as Verfuegungstruppe. But with the outbreak of the war links between the military formations of the Waffen-SS and the Main Office of Reichsfuehrer Himmler, the concentration camps, and certainly the police and security units of the SS became tenuous at best. In their day-to-day operations, and certainly whenever assigned to front-line duty, Waffen-SS units and their personnel functioned under the operational control and directions of the regular German Army.

In terms of personnel, the Waffen-SS soldier of 1945 had become almost indistinct from his Wehrmacht counterpart. No longer the specimens of physical or racial elitensess that Himmler had initially hoped for, the men of the Waffen-SS were products of a training and military system based largely upon guidelines established by the regular German Wehrmacht. From the induction and training of the recruits to their death or demobilization, the Wehrmacht maintained more of a hand in the military life of the individual Waffen-SS soldier than the SS. Some units bearing the Waffen-SS title, such as the "Dirlewanger" and "Kaminski" brigades and the Death's Head detachments guarding the concentration camps, can be termed "criminal" because of the nature of their war-time

activities. But most of those were components of the Waffen-SS in name only, and were considered "nominal" units of the Waffen-SS even by Himmler himself. The balance of the Waffen-SS organization and membership was engaged in activities of a nature indistinct from their counterparts in the German Army, and most reputable post-war historians acknowledge that the majority of Waffen-SS soldiers were in fact little different than their Wehrmacht counterparts.⁵⁹⁰

This study, on the other hand, also does not attempt to cast all war-time members of the Waffen-SS as "victims" or "scape-goats", or as soldiers entirely innocent of crimes or totally indistinct from those of the Wehrmacht. More members of the General SS were inducted into the Wehrmacht than into units of the Waffen-SS, but at the same time a greater proportion of Waffen-SS than Wehrmacht members had past ties with the SS or its police organs. The links between the Waffen-SS and the Einsatzgruppen and concentration camps were less significant than many at Nuremberg assumed, but they were certainly more insidious than those of more regular German military formations. The shooting of prisoners-of-war and mass reprisals against civilian populations was certainly not common practice in Waffen-SS formations, but the four largest and best-publicized incidents of that kind which occurred during the Second World War were carried out on different battle-fields

⁵⁹⁰ Large, "Reckoning without the Past", p. 86.

by different units of the Waffen-SS. Finally, clearly criminal groups such as the concentration camp guard units and the "Kaminski" and "Dirlewanger" brigades loosely attached to or part of the Waffen-SS and wearing the Waffen-SS uniform, even if only nominal members of the Waffen-SS, did commit some of the most heinous crimes against humanity of the war.

By the same token, this paper does question the whole-sale classification of Waffen-SS members as criminals who were ideologically seduced or mentally ill", or volunteer members of a physical, racial and ideological elite. A soldier was not bound to have committed some sort of crime simply because he wore the uniform of a Waffen-SS unit. By the estimate of one historian, no more than 50,000 of the more than 1 million individuals who served in all Waffen-SS formations during the war, nominal or other, were probably involved in the gruesome crimes for which that organisation has been blamed,⁵⁹¹ and many of those were early members who did not survive the war.

A careful and comprehensive analysis of the war-time Waffen-SS organization, its character and activities, indicates that the picture of the criminal organization presented by the prosecution at Nuremberg and by post-war critics,⁵⁹² was overblown, a result of

⁵⁹¹ Hohne, The Order of the Death's Head, p. 536.

⁵⁹² Charles Sydnor, "The History of the SS Totenkopfdivision and the Postwar Mythology of the Waffen SS", (Longwood College unpublished), p. 319, refers to such individuals as "right-wing academics sympathetic to the Waffen-SS".

heightened post-war emotions, and a victim of a failed legal innovation concerning collective guilt.

APPENDICES

ANALYSIS OF MAJOR WAFFEN-SS COMBAT FORMATIONS

Unit Information:

Information on the membership, activation dates, service and fate of Waffen-SS divisions was compiled from the list of secondary material attached to the summary for each unit and the following primary sources:

1. Sammlung Waffen-SS-Allgemeine: Schlacht und Gefechtskalender (Einsatzdaten) SS Divisionen im 2. Weltkrieg, Bundesarchiv/Militaerarchiv, Freiburg, NS 33/1001
2. SS Ordner Blaetter 2-4, Bundesarchiv/Militaerarchiv, Freiburg (compiled collections of published and unpublished materials).

Allegations of Crimes:

The "published allegations of crimes" have been extracted from the text of the preceding study or the secondary materials included on the list attached to each unit summary. Other allegations are derived from the following sources:

1. "Nuremberg Document Number D 961" is a compilation of materials produced by the UNWCC and entitled "Crimes Committed by Waffen SS Units", Record Group Foreign Office (FO) 645/106, Imperial War Museum, London, England. Only those allegations which are serious and which identify a known Waffen-SS combat formation have been listed here.
2. "Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396", is a compilation of materials submitted by the Soviet Union to the UNWCC and entitled "Excerpts from Report of Extraordinary Commission State". This material was obtained from the Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen in Ludwigsburg, West Germany, file 114 AR, Nr. 1055/1971. Only those allegations which are serious and which identify a known Waffen-SS combat formation have been listed here.

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APPENDIX 1

1st SS Panzer Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler"

Members:

German Nationals

Activated:

Regiment 1933, Brigade 1941, Division 1942

Service:

Poland (1939), Holland and France (1940), Yugoslavia, Greece, and southern Russia (1941), redesignated Panzer Grenadier Division in France (1942), Kursk, Kharkov and Italy, redesignated Panzer Division, Kiev, Tarnopol and Dnieper (1943), Normandy, Falaise and Ardennes (1944), and Hungary and Austria (1945).

Fate of members:

The division was almost completely destroyed during the winter of 1941-42 near Rostov, it was largely destroyed again at Skala in the Ukraine during the winter of 1943-44, and again at Falaise in 1944, and its remnants ended the war on the southern sector of the eastern front in Austria. Most of the 1,500 remaining personnel surrendered to US troops, but many were given over to the Soviets almost immediately. During January 1946 those Waffen-SS soldiers still held in internment camps by Allied occupation authorities in the western zones of Germany were released except for some 5,000 high-ranking officers, and 45,000 former members of five Waffen-SS Divisions known or suspected to have been involved in war-time atrocities, including this unit.

British attempts to uncover the perpetrators of the 1940 Wormhoudt massacres failed, although one officer involved, Wilhelm Moehnke, has since returned to Germany from Soviet captivity and the German investigation into his war-time activities was recently reopened. 73 members of the Peiper detachment which committed the atrocities at Malmedy, Belgium in 1944 were tried and convicted before a US military tribunal at Dachau, and another post-war trial in the Federal Republic of Germany saw the prosecution of several unit members responsible for the murder of the villagers of Boves, Italy in 1943.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

The first criminal incident known to have involved this formation occurred at Wormhoudt in northern France in 1940. At this time "Leibstandarte" was still only a Waffen-SS Regiment. The incident

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at Wormhoudt involving the 2nd Battalion was remarkably similar to the killing of British POWs by members of the 3. Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf", which occurred the previous day and had about the same number of victims, although there is no known connection between the two killings.

All that is known about these two 1940 massacres of captured British military personnel is that in both cases senior officers of the Waffen-SS units which perpetrated the crimes were either killed or missing in action just prior to the events, and in both cases the troops had just endured their first taste of heavy fighting and battle casualties. It was the first act of its kind perpetrated by troops of the Waffen-SS, and many soldiers in the Battalions involved subsequently complained about the incidents or asked to be transferred out of the units in which they had occurred.

The only other allegations of war crimes committed by Waffen-SS troops during the French campaigns were rumours that they had murdered captured Moroccan and Senegalese prisoners. These charges remain unsubstantiated, however. There are also war-time reports which have been found in archives which indicate that both the Waffen-SS Divisions "Wiking" and "Leibstandarte" committed reprisal executions for a period of time in July 1941 when they came across some of their own troops who had been murdered and mutilated after capture by the Soviets.

One other atrocity alleged to have been committed by personnel of the 1. Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte" occurred in 1943 at Boves, Italy, just after the unit had been transferred there to deal with an Allied offensive. It involved the reprisal killings of a number of civilians in a town by that name during an anti-partisan operation. In addition, many of the officers in charge of the 12. Waffen-SS Division "Hitler Jugend" units responsible for the Normandy killing in 1944 were part of a cadre transferred to that unit from the "Leibstandarte".

The Malmedy massacre which occurred at the end of December 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge also involved the 1. Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte". In this incident 50 captured American soldiers were shot down in a field by two tanks of the Peiper detachment of the Waffen-SS Division "Leibstandarte". There was some suggestion at both the trial and since that the incident was sparked by an attempted escape, and most post-war analysts of the trial have concluded that the incident was "entirely exceptional".

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

Music Co./25 Sept. 1939	Burzeum, Poland	Murder of 50 Jews
?	Oct. 1939	Czestochowa, Poland/Massacre

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?	27 May 1940	Wormhoudt, France	British PWs shot
?	1941	Zhitomir, Ukraine	mass murder of Jews
?	March 1943	Smyev, Ukraine	village wiped out
Rec. Bn.	Spring 1943	Jefremovka, Ukraine	village wiped out
?	March 1943	Smyev, Ukraine	village wiped out
Rgt. 2	20 Aug. 1944	St. Denis, France	village wiped out
?	24 Aug. 1944	Leshoguen, France	5 Allied PWs shot
?	6 Sept. 1944	Navaugle, France	hostages shot
?	7 Sept. 1944	Nerstal, France	hostages/forced lab.
Rgt. 1	17 Dec. 1944	Malmedy, France	100 US PWs shot
?	20 Dec. 1944	Stavelot, Belgium	civilians shot

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

"In action in Estonian SSR in July 1941 carried out mass shootings of population",

"In action in Kharkov and Kharkov region, tortured and shot civilians and prisoners of war, deported population for slave labour to Germany",

"In action in the Town of Taganrog of Rostov region, in December, 1941 and January 1942, mass brutal slaughter of civilian population, especially of Jews, women and children".

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held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 64 pp.

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T-354, Rolls 609-625, "Leibstandarte", 1939-45

APPENDIX 1

2nd SS Panzer Division "Das Reich"

Members:

German Nationals

Activated:

Formed in Germany during the winter of 1940-41 from the "Verfuegungs" Division, which was itself raised in October 1939

Service:

The "Verfuegungs" Division saw service in Holland, Belgium and France (1939). It was designated a Panzer Grenadier Division, reorganised and renamed "Das Reich, and fought in Yugoslavia and on the central front in Russia (1941), refitted and converted to a Panzer Division in Germany and France (1942), Kharkov, Kursk, Kiev (1943), Toulouse, Normandy and Falaise (1944), Ardennes, Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia (1945).

Fate of Members:

The division lost 10,000 men during the first winter of the war, and suffered heavy losses again at Kiev and Falaise. The division capitulated in the Dresden area of North Bohemia, and most of the surviving members were able to surrender themselves to US troops and enter American internment camps. During January 1946 those Waffen-SS soldiers still held in internment camps by Allied occupation authorities in the western zones of Germany were released except for some 5,000 high-ranking officers, and 45,000 former members of five Waffen-SS Divisions known or suspected to have been involved in war-time atrocities, including this unit. A number of former "Das Reich" members were also interned in France for several years after the war, or inducted into the French Foreign Legion. The perpetrators of the Oradour killings were tried in France in 1953, although most eventually received a general amnesty.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

Cited at Nuremberg, and used by the prosecution to help make its case about the generally brutal nature of Waffen-SS fighting units, was the execution of 642 civilians which occurred at the French village of Oradour in 1944. This incident was considered so outrageous that mention of it even made it's way into the text of the Nuremberg Judgement against the Waffen-SS.

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The massacre of Oradour was not one incident, but part of a chain of events which commenced in May of 1944 when French partisans began to become active in anticipation of the Allied invasion of France. With the Allied landings in Normandy in June, the Waffen-SS Division "Das Reich", then stationed in the south of France, was ordered by the Wehrmacht to undertake anti-partisan operations against the French resistance as it proceeded to the defensive perimeter around the Allied landing areas. Guerilla forces hindered the movement of the troops of "Das Reich", and at the town of Tulle in its line of advance French partisans captured or surrounded the garrison troops, and murdered from 40-62 of their German prisoners. When troops of the "Der Fuehrer" Regiment of the 2. Waffen-SS Division "Das Reich" arrived in the town they executed 99 civilians of the town in reprisal.

It was the second incident at Oradour-sur-Glane which gained the "Das Reich" its subsequent notoreity. In this incident 642 men, women and children were murdered by one Battalion of the "Der Fuehrer" detachment of the same division in reprisal for partisan actions that are still unclear. No matter how it is explained, it cannot be denied that "the atrocity was committed calmly and methodically, not in a wave of battlefield hysteria", and the incident at Oradour thus remains "the most damning answer to SS apologists" and "a terrible stain on the record of German arms".

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

Rgt. 3	May 1944	Ausonne, France	Civilians killed
Rgt. 4	May 1944	Montauban, France	Civilians killed
Rgt. 3	May 1944	Tarbes, France	Civilians shot
?	12 May 1944	Toulouse, France	6 villages destroyed
Rgt. 3	June 1944	Miremont, France	Jews shot
Rgt. 4	June 1944	Limoges, France	Civilians killed
Rgt. 4	June 1944	Vergt de Biron, Fr.	24 Civilians killed
Rgt. 4	June 1944	Oradour, France	793 Civilians killed
Rgt. 4	June 1944	Yuret, France	Rape and murder
Rec. Bn.	June 1944	Tulle, France	150 Civilians hanged
Rgt. 3	10 June 1944	Marsoulas, France	Civilians killed
Rgt. 3	14 June 1944	Flavigny, France	Murder
Rgt. 3	17 June 1944	Bazens, France	Murder
Rgt. 2	18 June 1944	Angouleme, France	Civilians killed
Rgt. 3	26 June 1944	Justiniac, France	Murder/Pillage
Rgt. 3	3 Sept. 1944	Permez, France	Civilians murdered

... in addition to other incidents during the same period of May-July 1944 of a less serious nature and/or carried out by unspecified formations of the division.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

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No allegations against this unit.

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- T-175, Roll 107, folder 329, various materials, 1940-44
- T-354, Rolls 120-130, "Das Reich", 1939-45

APPENDIX 1

3rd SS Panzer Division "Totenkopf"

Members:

German Nationals, including some former members of Death's Head Regiments

Activated:

October 1939 in Germany

Service:

First formed as a motorized division (1939), France and occupation service in same (1940), eastern front along northern sector, especially Demjansk (1941, 1942), redesignated Panzer Division in France, and fought in Kharkov, Kursk, and Dnieper (1943), Warsaw and Hungary (1944), Hungary and Austria (1945).

Fate of Members:

By the time the division was refitted at the end of 1942, it had lost more than 80% of its original complement. It also suffered heavy losses during the retreat out of Russia and Poland and the various battles in Hungary. In May 1945, 1,000 survivors of the Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" surrendered to American troops in Austria, but they were promptly handed over to Russian troops, and most were subsequently executed or died in penal servitude. By January 1946, with the Tribunal proceedings barely begun, Allied occupation authorities decided to begin releasing Waffen-SS internees except for some 5,000 high-ranking officers, and 45,000 former members of five Waffen-SS Divisions, including "Totenkopf", known or suspected to have been involved in war-time atrocities. British military authorities did investigate and prosecute some of the perpetrators of the Le Paradis massacre after the war, including Fritz Knoechlein, the commander of the company involved, in 1948.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

In the fall of 1939 6,500 of the 22,000 Totenkopf regiment members, and the "father" of the German concentration camp system, the notorious Theodor Eicke, were transferred into a new Waffen-SS division "Totenkopf". These constituted the first direct links between the personnel of the field units of the Waffen-SS and those of the notorious concentration camp system of the SS and Gestapo.

The first shootings of unarmed prisoners-of-war committed by units of the Waffen-SS occurred in northern France in 1940 at the

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villages of Le Paradis and Wormhoudt. In the first incident, which occurred on May 27 at Le Paradis, the 2nd Regiment of the "Totenkopf" Division massacred approximately 100 British POWs who had been captured in recent fighting.

A replacement battalion of the Waffen-SS Division "Totenkopf" was also stationed in Warsaw, Poland, in 1943, when it was subordinated to assist in the crushing of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Charles Ashman and Robert J. Wagman, in The Nazi Hunters: The Shocking True Story of the Continuing Search for Nazi War Criminals, (New York 1988), p. 43, also allege that "Totenkopf" Division members were the major investigation target of the U.S. Office of Special Investigations, but they are apparently confusing the front-line combat unit with the Totenkopfverbande which actually guarded the war-time concentration camps.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

3. Btn.	July 1942	Brno, Ukraine	40 civilians shot
1. Rgt.	August 1943	Kharkov, Ukraine	40 Russian POWs shot
?	April-May 1943	Warsaw, Poland	45,000 Jews murdered

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

"Novgorod region, carried out mass shootings of civilians and prisoners of war, looted and razed towns and cities, deported Soviet citizens for slave labour to Germany",

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T-175, Roll 107, folder 326, "Totenkopf", 1940
T-175, Roll 108, folder 297, "Totenkopf", 1942
T-175, Roll 108, folder 322, "Totenkopf", 1940-41
T-354, Rolls 130-137, "Totenkopf", 1939-42
T-354, Roll 645, administrative matters concerning Division

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4th SS Police Panzer Grenadier Division

Members:

German Nationals, including former members of Ordnungspolizei

Activated:

October 1939 in Germany, taken into Waffen-SS February 1942

Service:

Occupation duties in Poland, military campaign in France (1940), invasion of the Soviet Union on the northern front (1941), taken into Waffen-SS (1942), continued to fight in the area of Army Group North, security duties in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia (1943), Greece, Yugoslavia and Slovakia (1944), fought and largely destroyed during the battle for Berlin (1945).

Fate of Members:

The unit suffered heavy casualties during the first winter of the war on the eastern front, and throughout the duration of its anti-partisan duties. Most of its men who survived the war surrendered in the Berlin area and ended up in Soviet POW cages, although some may have escaped to surrender to the British and Americans. By January 1946, Allied occupation authorities began to release Waffen-SS internees except for some 5,000 high-ranking officers, and 45,000 former members of five Waffen-SS Divisions, including the 4. SS Police Division, known or suspected to have been involved in war-time atrocities.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

The 4. Waffen-SS Police Division maintained a special status within the military arm of the SS. The division was created by the transfer of some 500 officers and 15,000 older men who had formerly belonged to the Ordnungspolizei. Similarly, although it was organized as a standard infantry division in accordance with Army guidelines for organization and equipment, Himmler himself made clear that the Police division was never to be considered a full unit of the Waffen-SS, and its members continued to wear their former green police uniforms.

The second-rank status of the division meant that it remained under the direct operational control of the SS and police rather than the Waffen-SS Fuehrungshauptamt and Wehrmacht for the first years of its existence. As such it was used in resettlement operations in Poland, and in anti-partisan operations behind the German front in

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the east. It was only on February 10, 1942, that the 4. Waffen-SS Police Division and its replacement units were officially transferred to the Waffen-SS. The unit was subsequently employed in anti-partisan operations in Greece and Yugoslavia, where it committed such atrocities as the massacre of several hundred Greek villagers accused of assisting partisans near Klissura.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

The only allegation made against this unit is that during 1941 it burned a number of villages and massacred their inhabitants in the regions of Kharkov and the Ukraine. These allegations originated from materials supplied by the Soviets.

Nuremberg Document Number U&SR 396:

"Field of action, city of Pskov and Pskov region. Extermination of civilian population and prisoners of war, deported Soviet citizens for slave labour to Germany, destroyed city".

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Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 47 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

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APPENDIX 1

5th SS Panzer Division "Wiking"

Members:

German Nationals and West European volunteers

Activated:

December 1940 in Germany

Service:

Its precursor, the Regiment "Germania", took part in the French campaign before being expanded and designated a Panzer Grenadier Division (1940), after being renamed "Wiking", it fought on the southern sector of the Russian front and was converted to a Panzer Division (1941-43), fought at the battles of the Cherkassy pocket, Warsaw, and Hungary (1944), and various components fought in the battles of Berlin, Budapest, Czechoslovakia and Vienna (1945).

Fate of Members:

The division suffered heavy casualties at Kursk and again during its encirclement in the Cherkassy pocket, and the battles for Warsaw and Vienna. Components of the division were present during the final battle for Berlin in 1945, and most of its survivors ended the war in US captivity after capitulating in the Styria area of Austria.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

In terms of specific incidents, there are war-time reports which indicate that both the Waffen-SS Divisions "Wiking" and "Leibstandarte" committed reprisal executions for a period of time in July 1941 when they came across some of their own troops who had been murdered and mutilated after capture by the Soviets.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

The only allegations against this Division are that its precursor, the "Germania" Regiment, murdered British PWs at St. Venant, France, in 1940, and an allegation of "murder and pillage" committed by the 7th company of the same Regiment at the village of Jussey, France on 27 April, 1941 before the transfer of the Division to the eastern front.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

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"In action in the Town of Taganrog of Rostov region, in December, 1941 and January 1942, mass brutal slaughter of civilian population, especially of Jews, women and children",

"'Westland' Regiment in action in various towns, the years 1942-44, razing of villages, towns, shooting of civilian population and prisoners of war".

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4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 1, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 35-6, 51-3.
5. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 133-42.
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7. -----, La Division Wiking: La Lutte Finale: 1943-1945, Librairie Antheme Fayard, (Paris 1981).
8. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), pp. 446-7.
9. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 75, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part I, (Washington 1978), pp. 158-62.
10. Quarrie, Bruce, Hitler's Teutonic Knights: SS Panzers in Action, Bruce Quarrie and Patrick Stephens Limited, (London 1986), pp. 95-121.
11. Strassner, Peter, Europaische Freiwillige: Die Geschichte der 5. SS-Panzerdivision Wiking, Munin Verlag, (Osnabruck 1986).
12. Strassner, Peter, European Volunteers, J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing, (Winnipeg 1988).

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13. "5eme Division Blindee de Waffen SS 'Wiking'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchivs-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 44 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 66, weapons for "Wiking"
T-175, Roll 74, folder 260, organisation and use of "Wiking"
T-175, Roll 107, folder 329, "Wiking", 1940-44
T-175, Roll 107, folder 286, "Wiking", 1942
T-175, Roll 108, folder 328, "Wiking", 1943
T-175, Roll 111, folder 242, "Wiking", 1941-42
T-175, Roll 124, positions of "Wiking", December 1942
T-354, Roll 161, "Wiking", 1940-41
T-354, Roll 639, "Wiking", 1940-44

APPENDIX 1

6th SS Mountain Division "Nord"

Members:

German Nationals, including former members of Death's Head Regiments 6, 7 and 9

Activated:

Brigade 1941, Division Summer 1942

Service:

This unit saw its first service in Finland (1941), and remained on the northern front until the end of 1944 when it was transferred to the western front and fought in northern France and Germany (1945).

Fate of Members:

By the time it was encircled by American forces advancing on the Rhine in March 1945, the division numbered only 6,000, and it was largely destroyed there. Its survivors entered American captivity in Bavaria after the German capitulation.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

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3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 375-7.

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4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 143-50.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), pp. 447-8.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 75, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part I, (Washington 1978), pp. 163-72.
7. "6eme Division de Montagne des Waffen SS 'Nord'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 33 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 109, folder 298, "Nord", 1941
T-175, Roll 109, folder 301, "Nord", 1942
T-175, Roll 109, folder 312, "Nord", 1941
T-175, Roll 120, "Nord"
T-354, Rolls 137-145, "Nord", 1941-44

APPENDIX 1

7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division "Prinz Eugen"

Members:

Ethnic Germans, most from Yugoslavia

Activated:

March 1942 in Yugoslavia

Service:

Commencing in October 1942, it operated against partisans in Yugoslavia (1943) before becoming embroiled in the German retreat out of the Balkan region (1944-45).

Fate of Members:

Most survivors of this formation fell into Soviet or Yugoslavian captivity at the end of the war. Many of those captured by the Yugoslavs were later brought before war crimes courts in that country, while those who were surrendered to Yugoslavian partisans by their American and British captors were often either killed outright or executed subsequently for war crimes.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

Reports about war-time atrocities committed by the Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen" while it was engaged in brutal anti-partisan operations in Yugoslavia were especially effective in the prosecution's presentation of evidence against the Waffen-SS organization at Nuremberg. The prosecution attempted to employ the latter unit in particular as an exemplification of the generally criminal behaviour of Waffen-SS formations towards civilian populations in the occupied countries during World War II.

The Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen" was created in early 1942 out of drafts of Volksdeutsche recruits and auxiliary police units from Yugoslavia and Romania. The Army tended to employ locally-raised units such as this one in anti-partisan operations because the recruits were considered of questionable value in front-line combat, and because the frictions between racial Germans and Slavs made them ideally suited to the brutal needs of partisan warfare. It was thus hardly surprising that the "Prinz Eugen" would come to develop one of the worst atrocity records of any of the units in the German Army or Waffen-SS.

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For the prosecution at Nuremberg to have used the "Prinz Eugen" as a typical symbol of Waffen-SS brutality elsewhere was incorrect, however. While in Yugoslavia the "Prinz Eugen" operated under the direction of the German Army, and in general its behaviour and the atrocities which it committed were little different from that of the German Wehrmacht and Italian and Bulgarian units with which it served, or the Yugoslavian partisan bands against which it fought.

The Nuremberg prosecution also alleged that the Waffen-SS Division "Prinz Eugen" assisted in the 1942 elimination of the village of Lidice in occupied Czechoslovakia. That settlement was razed and its inhabitants exterminated in the wake of the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, and the Czech government alleged that members of "Prinz Eugen" had been involved in the action. But subsequent information has shown that the operation was actually carried out by units of the police, and only one officer of the Waffen-SS was present.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

?	June 1943	Montenegro, Yug.	mass. of civilians
?	27 March 1944	8 various villages	massacre and pillage
?	17 April 1944	Drasnica, Yug.	massacre/hostages
?	23 May 1944	Drvar, Yugoslavia	massacre
?	August 1944	Albania	civilians massacred

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1972), pp. 6-23.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 341-3.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 377-80.
4. Infield, Glenn B., Secrets of the SS, Military Heritage Press, (New York 1981), pp. 105-7.
5. Kletmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 151-6.
6. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1985), pp. 233-5.

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7. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), pp. 448-9.
8. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 75, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part I, (Washington 1978), pp. 173-78.
9. Ready, J. Lee, The Forgotten Axis: Germany's Partners and Foreign Volunteers in World War II, McFarland and Company Inc., (North Carolina 1987), pp. 167-78, 278-87, 413-21, 486-515.
10. Sauer, Karl, Die Verbrechen der Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Praesidiums der VVN-Bund der Antifaschisten, Roederberg-Verlag, (Frankfurt am Main 1977), pp. 43-6.
11. "7eme Division de Montagne de volontaires des Waffen SS 'Prinz Eugen'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 25 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 140, activities of 7. SS "Prinz Eugen"
T-354, Roll 145, "Prinz Eugen", 1942
T-354, Roll 146, "Prinz Eugen", 1943

APPENDIX 1

8th SS Cavalry Division "Florian Geyer"

Members:

German Nationals and Ethnic Germans, former members of 1. and 2. Death's Head Cavalry Regiments

Activated:

Brigade 1941, Division 1942 in occupied Poland

Service:

Fought on the central sectors of the eastern front in a combination of front line and rear area security roles (1942), central and southern sectors of eastern front (1943), dispersed units fought in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Romania (1944), and the entire division was encircled and destroyed in Budapest (1945).

Fate of Members:

Almost all members of the division were killed or captured by Soviet troops when this unit was encircled and destroyed in early 1945 in Hungary and Slovakia.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

In 1964 five former officers of the 2. SS Reiterregiment were tried for the murder of 5,200 civilians, including 1,000 Jews, in the Pripyet marshes near Minsk. The killings occurred in August 1941. See SS Ordner Blatt #1 at the Bundesarchiv/Militaerarchiv in Freiburg, West Germany. Both the 1. and 2. Death's Head regiments were precursors of the Division.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1972), pp. 24-41.

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2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 343-5.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 380-5.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 157-64.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), pp. 449-50.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 75, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part I, (Washington 1978), pp. 179-89.
7. "8eme Division de Cavalerie des Waffen SS 'Florian Geyer'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 28 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 178, SS Kavallerie Rgt. 1, general
T-175, Roll 109, folder 303, "Florian Geyer", 1942
T-175, Roll 109, folder 323, SS Kavallerie Regiments, 1941
T-175, Roll 111, folder 222, 8. SS Kavallerie, 1942-43
T-354, Rolls 640-645, "Florian Geyer", 1942-43

APPENDIX 1

9th SS Panzer Division "Hohenstaufen"

Members:

German Nationals

Activated:

Spring 1943 in France

Service:

Poland, Normandy, Falaise, Arnhem, Battle of the Bulge (1944), and Hungary (1945).

Fate of Members:

By August 1944 the division had lost almost its entire original complement of troops and equipment, and it ended the war fighting in the southern sector of the eastern front. Most of the survivors of this unit ended the war in US captivity in Austria.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

?	Feb. 1944	Gard region, France/Shooting of Hostages
?	2 March 1944	Nimes, France Murder
?	Sept. 1944	Arnhem, Holland British PWs murdered

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1972), pp. 42-55
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 345-7.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 385-8.

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4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 165-8.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), pp. 450-1.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 1-7.
7. Quarrie, Bruce, Hitler's Teutonic Knights: SS Panzers in Action, Bruce Quarrie and Patrick Stephens Limited, (London 1986), pp. 122-6.
8. "9eme Division Blindée des Waffen SS 'Hohenstaufen'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 24 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 111, folder 222, "Hohenstaufen"
T-354, Rolls 146-149, "Hohenstaufen", 1942-44

APPENDIX 1

10th SS Panzer Division "Fruntsberg"

Members:

German Nationals

Activated:

Spring 1943 in France

Service:

It remained in France after it was formed and was redesignated a Panzer Division (1943), Tarnopol, Normandy, Falaise, Arnhem and the Saar (1944), Strasbourg, Berlin and Czechoslovakia (1945).

Fate of Members:

The division was decimated during the battles in Normandy and Falaise, and most of its survivors entered Soviet captivity when they capitulated in the Brandenburg area. Few emerged from Soviet captivity almost a decade later.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1972), pp. 56-69.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 347-8.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 388-91.
4. Kletmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 169-74.

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5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), pp. 451-2.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 8-16.
7. "10eme Division Blindée des Waffen SS 'Fruntsberg'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 22 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Rolls 150-153, "Fruntsberg", 1943-45

APPENDIX 1

11th SS Volunteer Panzer Grenadier Division "Nordland"

Members:

West European volunteers, Ethnic Germans and German Nationals

Activated:

Summer 1943

Service:

Formed largely from former legions of Dutch, Danish and Norwegian volunteers, it trained in Yugoslavia and then served on the northern sector of the eastern front (1944), was evacuated from the Courland Pocket and destroyed during the battle for Berlin (1945).

Fate of Members:

Virtually annihilated in the Courland pocket, most of the survivors of this unit fought to the death or entered Soviet captivity in the Berlin area in 1945, from which few emerged almost a decade later.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

One allegation has been found referring to the murder of 24 American prisoners-of-war on July 15, 1944. Because it served continuously on the eastern front, and was heavily committed in fighting there during this period, this allegation is not credible or has identified the wrong unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1972), pp. 70-93.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 348-50.

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3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 391-4.
4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 1, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 53-6, 99-101.
5. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 175-80.
6. Mabire, Jean, La Division Nordland: les volontaires scandinaves sur le front de l'Est 1941-1945, Librairie Artheme Fayard, (Paris 1982).
7. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
8. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 17-19.
9. "11eme Division Mecanisee de Volontaires des Waffen SS 'Nordland'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 37 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Rolls 74, 108, 111, contain references to "Nordland"
T-175, Roll 125, SS in Norway and Denmark, 1942
T-175, Roll 174, creation of "Nordland"
T-354, Roll 153, administrative references, July 1943

APPENDIX 1

12th SS Panzer Division "Hitler Jugend"

Members:

German Nationals, most just completed Hitler Youth

Activated:

October 1943 in Belgium

Service:

Formed from German youngsters of the Hitler Youth and a training cadre from the 1st SS Panzer Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", the division first saw action at Normandy and later at Falaise and the Ardennes (1944), ending the war fighting in Hungary and Vienna (1945).

Fate of Members:

The division suffered 90% casualties during the battle at Normandy, and after Falaise only 300 men were left. It was never totally rebuilt, and it ended the war on the southern sector of the eastern front, although most of the 450 survivors of this unit were able to find their way into US internment camps in the Enns area of Austria. Kurt Meyer was among those members of the Division tried by Canadian military authorities after the war for the murders of their troops in Normandy.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

Over the space of 10 days, from 7-17 June 1944, the 18-year-old youths of this unit killed 64 Canadian and British prisoners of war in a series of separate incidents. Some post-war apologists have attempted to explain away this incident as a combination of fanatical young soldiers facing their first combat and acting without official sanction, and former "Leibstandarte" officers who had just returned from the eastern front where atrocities and reprisals were second nature. Whatever their cause, the Normandy killings remain a crime of large dimensions.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

Almost all of the allegations contained in this material concern the incidents which occurred in the Normandy region during June 1944. In addition to these, the following allegations have also been made;

AA unit March 1944 Belgian-French border/10 civilians shot

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Rec. Btl. Easter 1944	Ascq, France	110 murdered
Rgt. 25 31 Aug. 1944	Plomion, France	Murder, torture
Rgt. 26 August 1944	St. Martin, France	civilians shot

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further References:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1972), pp. 94-133.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 350-3.
3. Foster, Tony, Meeting of Generals, Methuen Publishers, (Toronto 1986).
4. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 394-6.
5. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 181-86.
6. Koch, H.W., The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development 1922-1945, Dorset Press, (New York 1975).
7. Luther, Craig W.H., Blood and Honor: The History of the 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitler Youth", 1943-1945, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987).
8. Meyer, Hubert, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend", Munin Verlag GmbH, (Osnabrueck 1982), volumes 1 and 2.
9. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), pp. 454-5.
10. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 20-29.
11. Quarrie, Bruce, Hitler's Teutonic Knights: SS Panzers in Action, Bruce Quarrie and Patrick Stephens Limited, (London 1986), pp. 128-37.

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12. Scotland, Lt. Col. A.P., The London Cage, Evans Brothers Limited, (London 1954), pp. 88-91.
13. "12eme Division Blindée des Waffen SS 'Hitlerjugend'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 32 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Rolls 153-156, "Hitlerjugend", 1943-44

APPENDIX 1

13th SS Mountain Division "Handschar" (Kroatische #1)

Members:

Bosnian Moslems and other ethnic Yugoslavians

Activated:

Spring 1943 in France

Service:

This division suffered mutinies while training in France and spent most of the spring of 1944 massacring Christians and establishing records for desertions. It was eventually disarmed and then disbanded during the course of the German retreat from the Balkans in October 1944.

Fate of Members:

Most surviving members of this unit entered British captivity in the Styria area of Austria at the end of the war.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

No authors have cited specific incidents, although most have alleged that members of this division were involved in a number of atrocities in 1944 committed in the course of anti-partisan operations in the Balkans.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1972), pp. 134-161.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 353-5.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 396-8.

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4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 187-92.
5. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1985), pp. 209-13.
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 30-32.
8. "13eme Division de Montagne des Waffen SS 'Handschar' (Croate Nr. 1)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 19 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 119, material on 13. SS Division "Handschar"
T-175, Roll 120, material on 13. SS Division "Handschar"
T-354, Roll 156, "Handschar", January 1944

APPENDIX 1

14th SS Grenadier Division "Galizien" (Galizische #1)

Members:

Ethnic Ukrainians from Galicia District, Poland, with some former Ukrainian police personnel added later.

Activated:

August 1943 in occupied Poland

Service:

During July 1944, the division was thrown into the path of a concentrated Red Army attack at Brody in the Ukraine where it was surrounded and destroyed. It began to be reconstructed and was transferred to Czechoslovakia to help deal with an uprising there (1944), and was transferred yet again to the Austrian-Yugoslavian border region (1945).

Fate of Members:

The majority of the casualties suffered by this unit during the war occurred at the battle of Brody where fewer than 1,000 members escaped back to German lines out of 11,000 troops committed. Most surviving members of this unit entered British and American captivity at the end of the war and were fortunate enough to avoid repatriation to Soviet territory.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

No serious and credible charge of "war crimes" or "crimes against humanity" has ever been levelled by any country against either the 14. Waffen-SS Division "Galizien" or any of the units serving under its authority. Allegations such as one about involvement of personnel of the division in the crushing of the 1943 or 1944 Warsaw uprisings are either not credible or lack specificity.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

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1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1975), pp. 6-57.
2. Dmytryshyn, Basil, "The Nazis and the SS Volunteer Division Galicia", American Slavic and East European Review, vol. XV, no. 1, (New York 1956).
3. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 355-7.
4. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 399-400.
5. Heike, Wolf-Dietrich, The Ukrainian Division "Galicia": The History of its Formation and Military Operations (1943-1945), summarized and translated from the Ukrainian, (Toronto 1970).
6. Heike, Wolf-Dietrich, Sie Wollten die Freiheit: Die Geschichte der Ukrainischen Division 1943-1945, (Dorlein 1979).
7. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 193-8.
8. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 29-33.
9. Mitchan, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
10. Strykul, Valery, We Accuse, Dnipro Publishers, (Kiev 1984).
11. Yurkevich, Myroslav, "Galician Ukrainians in German Military Formations and in the German Administration", in Yury Boshyk (ed.), Ukraine during World War II: History and its Aftermath, A Symposium, (Edmonton 1986).
12. "14eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS (Galicienne Nr. 1)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 19 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 74, folder 263, establishment of Division, 1943

APPENDIX 1

T-175, Roll 94, speech of Himmler before Division, 1944

T-313, Rolls 400, 401, and 413, various military records, 1943-44

APPENDIX 1

15th SS Grenadier Division (Lettische #1)

Members:

Latvian nationals, including former legion members and some former security personnel

Activated:

Early 1943 in Latvia

Service:

It fought on the northern sector of the eastern front throughout the German retreat from the Baltic states (1944), and was evacuated from the Courland Pocket only to be destroyed in the battle for Berlin (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most surviving members of this unit entered Soviet captivity at the end of the war, where most perished.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

Charles Ashman and Robert J. Wagman, in The Nazi Hunters: The Shocking True Story of the Continuing Search for Nazi War Criminals, (New York 1988), pp. 36-7, allege that unspecified "documents" show that the 15. Latvian SS Division was "responsible for the massacre of many Jewish civilians and others over a two-year period during World War II".

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1975), pp. 58-103.
2. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 5, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1982), pp. 13-53.

APPENDIX 1

3. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 357-9.
4. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 401-2.
5. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 199-202.
6. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 182-8.
7. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
8. Silgailis, Arthur, The Latvian Legion, Roger James Bender Publishing, (California 1986).
9. "15eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS (Lettone Nr. 1)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 27 pp.

National Archives Microfilm:

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

16th SS Panzer Grenadier Division "Reichsfuehrer SS"

Members:

German Nationals

Activated:

Late 1943 in Czechoslovakia

Service:

Soon after it was formed this unit was moved to Italy, and then to reserve in Germany, and back to Italy (1944) when it was transferred to Hungary, remaining on the southern sector of the eastern front until it was finally defeated in the battle for Vienna (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most surviving members of this unit entered British and American captivity at the end of the war.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

The one incident involving this division which is most widely written about occurred in September 1944 and involved the murder of 2,700 civilians at Monte Sol, Italy.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

?	1943	Italy	Reprisal shootings
?	April 1944	Italy	Destroyed village
?	29 June 1944	Guardistallo, Italy	46 civilians killed
?	July 1944	Hungary	civilians murdered
?	27 Aug. 1944	Bardine San Terenzo	174 civilians killed

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1975), pp. 104-125.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 359-60.

APPENDIX 1

3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 403-5.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 203-8.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 33-5.
7. "16eme Division Mecanisee des Waffen SS 'Reichsfuehrer SS'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 31 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Roll 156, various materials on "Reichsfuehrer-SS", 1944-45

APPENDIX 1

17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division "Goetz von Berlichingen"

Members:

German Nationals and ethnic Germans

Activated:

Early 1944 in France

Service:

The division remained in France as a reserve unit until the battle of Normandy where it was largely destroyed during several months of fighting, was subsequently rebuilt in France and committed again at Metz where it was severely mauled again (1944), and its remnants fought on in the Saar area and at Nuremberg (1945).

Fate of Members:

Like many German units which fought in Normandy, this division was almost totally destroyed there, and again later at Metz after it had been rebuilt. Most surviving members of this unit entered US captivity at the end of the war.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

?	3 July 1944	des Verrieres, France/PWs murdered
?	19 July 1944	Poitiers, France 30 PWs killed
?	5 Aug. 1944	Lussac, France hostages murdered

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1975), pp. 126-59.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 360-1.

APPENDIX 1

3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 405-7.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 209-14.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 36-44.
7. "17eme Division Mecanisee des Waffen SS 'Goetz von Berlichingen'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 26 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Rolls 156-160, "Goetz von Berlichingen", 1943-45

APPENDIX 1

18th SS Volunteer Panzer Grenadier Division "Horst Wessel"

Members:

German nationals and ethnic Germans from Hungary

Activated:

Early 1944 in Yugoslavia

Service:

It was committed to battles in the Ukraine and southern Poland (1944), and Czechoslovakia, ending the war in the pocket east of Prague (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most surviving members of this unit entered Soviet or US captivity at the end of the war.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1975), pp. 160-87.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 361-2.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 407-9.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 215-18.

APPENDIX 1

5. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1985), pp. 116-7, 120-21.
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. "18eme Division Mecanisee de Volontaires des Waffen SS 'Horst Wessel'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 21 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 74, folder 328, creation of "Horst Wessel"

APPENDIX 1

19th SS Grenadier Division (Lettische #2)

Members:

Latvian nationals, including former Schutzmannschaft personnel

Activated:

Early 1944 in Latvia

Service:

It was engaged in the northern sector of the eastern front during the German retreat (1944), and surrendered in the Courland Pocket (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most surviving members of this unit entered Soviet captivity at the end of the war from which few returned.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found. Prior to being transferred into this formation, most of these men were part of the 2.8 million personnel who were recruited in the occupied countries of Europe and served in the German Ordnungspolizei responsible for local and rear area security and anti-partisan operations during the war. As such these individuals were members of neither the SS or Waffen-SS when they served as police auxiliaries.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 5, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1982), pp. 13-119.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 362-4.

APPENDIX 1

3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 409-11.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 219-22.
5. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 182-91.
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 45-6.
8. "19eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS (Lettone Nr. 2)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 26 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Roll 160, order of battle charts for Division

APPENDIX 1

20th SS Grenadier Division (Estnische #1)

Members:

Estonian nationals, including former legion members

Activated:

Late 1943 in Estonia

Service:

This unit was engaged in the northern sector of the eastern front throughout the German retreat from Leningrad and the Baltic states (1944), was evacuated from the Courland Pocket, and recommitted to the eastern front until the division was finally captured with other German units in another encirclement east of Prague (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most of the surviving members of this unit entered Soviet captivity at the end of the war from which few returned.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 5, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1982), pp. 120-229.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 364-5.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 411-13.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 223-28.

APPENDIX 1

5. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 140-9.
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 47-9.
8. "20eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS (Esthonienne Nr. 1)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 24 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Roll 160, various materials concerning Division, 1945

APPENDIX 1

21st SS Mountain Division "Skanderberg" (Albanische #1)

Members:

Ethnic Muslims from Albania

Activated:

Summer 1944 in Albania

Service:

Formed during 1944 from the ranks of Albanian Muslims, this division was disbanded later in the year because of its preference for attacking Christian civilians to fighting as a military unit.

Fate of Members:

When it was disbanded in January 1945, most of its German staff and members were transferred to the 7th SS Volunteer Mountain Division "Prinz Eugen". The fate of most of its personnel is unknown.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 365-6.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH, (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 413-14.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 229-32.
4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1985), pp. 8-10.

APPENDIX 1

5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 50-1.
7. "21eme Division de Montagne des Waffen SS 'Skanderberg' (Albanaise Nr. 1)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 13 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Roll 160, various reports on Division, October 1944

APPENDIX 1

22nd SS Volunteer Cavalry Division "Marie Theresia" (Ungarnische)

Members:

Ethnic Germans and Hungarians

Activated:

Mid-1944 in Hungary

Service:

This division first saw action in Romania (1944), and was destroyed during the Battle for Budapest, Hungary (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most of this unit's personnel presumably entered Soviet captivity, from which few are likely to have returned.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Bender, Roger James, and Taylor, Hugh Page, Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-SS, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1971), pp. 70-93.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 367-8.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 415-16.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 233-36.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.

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6. "22eme Division de Cavalerie de Volontaires des Waffen SS 'Maria Theresia'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 16 pp.

National Archives Microfilm:

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

23rd SS Volunteer Panzer Grenadier Division "Nederland"

Members:

Dutch nationals

Activated:

Late summer of 1944 as a Moslem division, then disbanded in October 1944 and redesignated as a Dutch unit during the last weeks of the war

Service:

Battle of Berlin

Fate of Members:

The unit was virtually annihilated in the Courland pocket, and most survivors surrendered to Soviet troops, although some were able to escape to enter U.S. captivity. Those captured by the Soviets were repatriated to the Netherlands for the most part. Of 50,000 Dutch citizens who volunteered to serve in German uniform during the war, many of whom ended up in this formation, 40,000 lost their citizenship and all social benefits to which they were entitled as Dutch citizens, and received terms of imprisonment according to their rank and their length of service.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 368-9.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 417-18.

APPENDIX 1

3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 237-42.
4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1985), pp. 213-14.
5. Mason, Henry L., The Purge of Dutch Quislings: Emergency Justice in the Netherlands, Martinus Nijhoff, (The Hague 1952).
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 52-3, 96-103.
8. "23eme Division de Montagne des Waffen SS 'Kama' (Croate Nr. 2)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 7 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-175, Roll 66, training of Dutch collaborators for legion
T-175, Roll 159, lists and administration of Dutch volunteers
T-175, Roll 174, creation of "Nederland"
T-354, Roll 160, assorted materials on 23. "Kama", January 1944

APPENDIX 1

24th SS Mountain Division "Karstjaeger"

Members:

Italian nationals

Activated:

Late 1944 in northern Italy

Service:

This division was almost wholly engaged in anti-partisan operations until it was dissolved in 1945

Fate of Members:

This formation never attained more than regimental strength, and those of its members who did not desert or join other units entered British captivity at the end of the war.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 369-70.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 418-19.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 247-50.
4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 3, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1985), p. 266.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.

APPENDIX 1

6. "24eme Division de Montagne des Waffen SS 'Karstjaeger'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 10 pp.

National Archives Microfilm:

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

25th SS Grenadier Division "Hunyadi" (Ungarische #1)

Members:

Hungarian nationals

Activated:

Late 1944 in Hungary

Service:

This division disappeared soon after it was formed as the Soviets entered Hungary (1945).

Fate of Members:

Never organized to more than brigade strength, most survivors of this formation escaped to Austria and entered American captivity.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 370-1.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 419-21.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 251-4.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 54-5.

APPENDIX 1

6. "25eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen-SS 'Hunjadi' (Hongroise Nr. 1)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 14 pp.

National Archives Microfilm:

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

26th SS Panzer Grenadier Division (Ungarische #2)

Members:

Hungarian nationals

Activated:

September 1944 in Germany

Service:

This division fought in Hungary and was destroyed during the final battles there in 1945

Fate of Members:

Most members of this unit apparently entered Soviet captivity, from which few are likely to have returned

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 371-2.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 421-3.
3. Kletmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 255-6.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 56-7.

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6. "26eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen-SS (Hongroise Nr. 2)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 11 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Roll 150, orders and reports from France, August 1944

APPENDIX 1

27th SS Volunteer Panzer Grenadier Division "Langemarck"

Members:

Flemish Belgian nationals, including former legion members

Activated:

Late 1944 in occupied Poland

Service:

Engaged in the German retreats from Poland and Pomerania (1944), and destroyed during the final battle for Berlin (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most survivors of this unit apparently entered Soviet captivity, from which few are likely to have returned. Those who were repatriated to Belgium were tried and imprisoned for varying terms.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

A trial was held in Metz, Belgium in 1952 against members of the 51. SS Panzergrenadier Brigade, the precursor to this division. They were involved in the killing of several hundred civilians during the period 22-26 August, 1944 in the Treves area at which time they were under Wehrmacht orders. See SS Ordner Blatt 4 at the Militaerarchiv in Freiburg, West Germany.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 372-3.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 425-6.
3. Kletmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 257-60.

APPENDIX 1

4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 2, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), p. 77.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 58-60, 90-5.
7. "27eme Division d'Infanterie de Volontaires des Waffen SS 'Langemarck'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 17 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

T-354, Roll 160, several materials on administration, 1942

APPENDIX 1

28th SS Volunteer Panzer Grenadier Division "Wallonien"

Members:

Walloonian Belgian nationals

Activated:

Summer of 1944 in Germany

Service:

Remained posted in Germany until it was committed to the defence of Berlin in 1945

Fate of Members:

Most members of this unit apparently entered Soviet captivity, from which few are likely to have returned. Those who were repatriated to France were tried and imprisoned for varying terms.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 374-5.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 426-7.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 261-4.
4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 2, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 108-9, 117-23.

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5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
6. "28eme Division d'Infanterie de Volontaires des Waffen SS 'Wallonie'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 28 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

29th SS Grenadier Division (Russische #1)

Members:

Russian nationals, most former prisoners-of-war but also including former "Kaminski" brigade

Activated:

1944 in Belorussia and France

Service:

Disbanded and made part of "Vlasov Army" before serving on eastern front (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most survivors of this formation were able to surrender to U.S. troops but were subsequently repatriated to the Soviet Union where most died

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 375-6, 389-90.
2. Elliot, Mark, Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in Their Repatriation, (Chicago 1982),
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), p. 428.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 267-70.

APPENDIX 1

5. Littlejohn, David, The Patriotic Traitors: A History of Collaboration in German-Occupied Europe, 1940-45, Heinemann Publishers, (London 1977), pp. 98-9.
6. -----, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 4, (Poland, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Free India, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Russia), R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), p. 309
7. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
8. Thorwald, Jurgen, The Illusion: Soviet Soldiers in Hitler's Armies, Harcourt, Brace, Johanovich, (New York 1974), pp. 48-9, 178-9, 241-4.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

29th SS Grenadier Division (Italienische #1)

Members:

Italian nationals

Activated:

1945 in Italy

Service:

Destroyed almost as soon as it was formed during the final battles in northern Italy (1945).

Fate of Members:

Never more than regimental strength, the fate of its survivors is uncertain

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 375-6.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), p. 428.
3. Kliemann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 267-70.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. "29eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS (Italienne Nr. 1)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces

APPENDIX 1

Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 9 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

30th SS Grenadier Division (Russische #2)

Members:

Russian nationals, especially ethnic Belorussians, most with Schutzmannschaft and police experience

Activated:

Formed during the summer of 1944 in France and Germany

Service:

Fought in retreats from Alsace and the Rhine (1944), transferred to "Vlasov Army" and sent east where it surrendered at the end of the war (1945).

Fate of Members:

Survivors of this formation entered Soviet captivity from which few if any survived

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found. Prior to enlisting, many of these men were part of the 2.8 million personnel who were recruited in the occupied countries of Europe and served in the German Ordnungspolizei responsible for local and rear area security and anti-partisan operations in the occupied territories. As such these individuals were not members of the Waffen-SS when they performed those duties.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 376-7.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 428-30.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 271-4.

APPENDIX 1

4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 4, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 319-20.
5. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
6. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 61-3.
7. "30eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS (Russe Nr. 2)", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 14 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

31st SS Volunteer Grenadier Division "Boehmen-Maehren"

Members:

German nationals and ethnic Germans

Activated:

September 1944 in Hungary

Service:

Fought in Hungary and then Czechoslovakia where it was destroyed (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most survivors of this division surrendered to Soviet forces after the German capitulation, although few survived the subsequent years of captivity

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 377-9.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 430-31.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 275-8.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. "31eme Division d'Infanterie de Volontaires des Waffen SS 'Boheme-Moravie'", part of the documentary series Ordre de

APPENDIX 1

Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 15 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

32nd SS Panzer Grenadier Division "January 30"

Members:

German nationals

Activated:

1945 in Germany

Service:

Still half-formed and at barely regimental strength, this unit was committed to the defence of Berlin at the end of the war (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most survivors of this formation entered Soviet captivity at the end of the war, from which few returned, although some also were able to enter U.S. POW camps

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), p. 379.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 432-3.
3. Kletmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 279-84.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. "32eme Division Mecanisee des Waffen SS '30. Janvier'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex

APPENDIX 1

Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 15 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

33rd SS Grenadier Division "Charlemagne" (Franzoesische #1)

Members:

French nationals, most former legion members

Activated:

Brigade (1944), Division (1944-45) in Czechoslovakia

Service:

Served on the eastern front (1944), and largely destroyed during the battle for Berlin (1945).

Fate of Members:

Those unit members who survived the war entered Soviet captivity, although a number may also have been repatriated subsequently to France. Those members captured by French troops during the war were often shot immediately, imprisoned, or conscripted into the French Foreign Legion.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 379-82.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 433-5.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 285-90.
4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 1, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 158-61, 169-74.

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5. Mabire, Jean, La Division Charlemagne: les combats des SS francais en Pomeranie, Librairie Arthème Fayard, (Paris 1974).
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. "33eme Division d'Infanterie de Volontaires des Waffen SS 'Charlemagne'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchivs-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 22 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

34th SS Panzer Grenadier Division "Landsturm Nederland"

Members:

Dutch Nationals, many former members of the auxiliary police

Activated:

Fall 1943 in Germany

Service:

Yugoslavia and Baltic States (1944), Courland Pocket (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most of the personnel of this division who survived the war entered Soviet captivity, and those who survived that were subsequently repatriated to the Netherlands. Of 50,000 Dutch citizens who volunteered to serve in German uniform during the war, many of whom ended up in the 34th Waffen-SS Division "Landsturm Nederland", 40,000 lost their citizenship and all social benefits to which they were entitled as Dutch citizens, and received terms of imprisonment according to their rank and their length of service.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 382-3.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 435-6.
3. Kletmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 291-4.

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4. Littlejohn, David, Foreign Legions of the Third Reich, volume 2, R. James Bender Publishing, (California 1987), pp. 193-203, 217, 224.
5. Mason, Henry L., The Purge of Dutch Quislings: Emergency Justice in the Netherlands, Martinus Nijhoff, (The Hague 1952).
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 64-6.
8. "34eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS 'Landstorm Nederland'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 16 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

35th SS Police Grenadier Division

Members:

German nationals, most from the Ordnungspolizei

Activated:

Early 1945 in Germany

Service:

Czechoslovakia (1945)

Fate of Members:

Most survivors of this formation surrendered to Soviet troops in Prague in May 1945, from which few emerged a decade later.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), p. 383.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 436-7.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 295-8.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. "35eme Division d'Infanterie de Police des SS", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West

APPENDIX 1

Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 11 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

36th SS Grenadier Division "Dirlewanger"

Members:

Former members of the special SS Sonderbrigade "Dirlewanger"

Activated:

Brigade (1942), Division (1945)

Service:

Anti-partisan operations in Poland (1942), and Belorussia (1943), Warsaw Uprising and Hungary (1944), eastern front (1945).

Fate of Members:

Most surviving personnel of this formation were captured by Soviet troops, although many of them were summarily executed henceforth. Oscar Dirlewanger himself evaded capture and ended up joining the French Foreign Legion and then escaping to Egypt.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

The "Dirlewanger" unit was originally composed mainly of volunteers in a Totenkopf regiment which rarely saw any type of service until January of 1942 when the Totenkopf regiments were disbanded and their personnel redistributed into Waffen-SS formations. Unlike the other Totenkopf regiments, this unit was formed into a penal unit for both the Wehrmacht and the Waffen-SS, and its recruiting, discipline and activities thus differed substantially from that of other Waffen-SS formations.

The "Dirlewanger" brigade numbered approximately 4,000 members at any one time, and was originally recruited from convicted Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht criminals who had volunteered for service in the unit in order to earn a shorter conviction, although the Brigade was also known to recruit inmates from inside concentration camps in its search for manpower. As a measure of the special status of the unit, the commander, Dirlewanger, was even granted total power of life or death over his men. Like the "Kaminski" brigade, the "Dirlewanger" brigade had a notorious reputation, and was considered a "special unit" by Himmler for the carrying out of special tasks usually involving the extermination of civilians. This is why the unit was used to help put down the Warsaw rebellion during the summer of 1944.

Only 10-15% of the personnel in the "Dirlewanger" Brigade were Waffen-SS troops.

APPENDIX 1

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. "Brigade d'Assaut des Waffen SS 'Dirlewanger'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 23 pp.
2. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 85, 275-6, 384-5.
3. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag Gmbh., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 437-8.
4. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 299-302.
5. Landemer, Henri, Les Waffen SS, Balland Publishers, (Paris 1972), pp. 286-8.
6. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
7. National Archives and Records Service, Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia, No. 79, Records of the Waffen-SS, Part II, (Washington 1981), pp. 77-89.
8. Ready, J. Lee, The Forgotten Axis: Germany's Partners and Foreign Volunteers in World War II, McFarland and Co. Inc., (North Carolina 1987), pp. 352-5

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

37th SS Cavalry Division "Luetzow"

Members:

Ethnic Germans

Activated:

April 1945

Service:

Austria (1945)

Fate of Members:

The unit never exceeded regimental strength, and most of its survivors probably surrendered to American troops.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 385-6.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), p. 438.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 303-4.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. "37eme Division de Cavalerie des Waffen SS 'Luetzow'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in

APPENDIX 1

Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 10 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

38th SS Panzer Grenadier Division "Nibelungen"

Members:

German nationals, most from SS Officer Training School at Bad Tolz, Germany

Activated:

April 1945

Service:

Austria (1945)

Fate of Members:

This unit never exceeded regimental strength, and most of its survivors surrendered to U.S. forces in Austria.

Published Allegations of Crimes:

None found.

Nuremberg Document Number D 961:

No allegations against this unit.

Nuremberg Document Number USSR 396:

No allegations against this unit.

Further Reference:

1. Duprat, Francois, Histoire des SS, Les Sept Couleurs, (Paris 1968), pp. 386-7.
2. Hausser, Paul, Soldaten Wie Andere Auch: Der Weg der Waffen-SS, Munin Verlag GmbH., (Osnabrueck 1966), pp. 438-9.
3. Klietmann, Dr. K.-G., Die Waffen-SS: eine Dokumentation, Verlag "der Freiwillige", (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 305-6.
4. Mitcham, Samuel W., Hitler's Legions: German Army Order of Battle World War II, Leo Cooper Pub., (London 1985), p. 453.
5. "38eme Division d'Infanterie des Waffen SS 'Nibelungen'", part of the documentary series Ordre de Bataille de l'Ex Wehrmacht, compiled during the 1950s by the Armed Forces

APPENDIX 1

Information Center (Wehrmacht Auskunftstelle, or WAST) in Berlin, West Germany, and compiled from war-time documents held at WAST, the German Red Cross, the Bundesarchiv-Militaerarchiv Koblenz (now Freiburg), and the series "Order of Battle of the German Army", Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington, 11 pp.

National Archives Microfilm: (RG 242)

No material found concerning this formation

APPENDIX 1

Major non-Divisional Military Formations of Waffen-SS

- 14th Cossack Cavalry Corps
- Armed Turkish unit of the SS
- Armed Caucasian unit of the SS
- Serbian SS Volunteer Corps
- Indian Volunteer Legion of the SS
- British Volunteer unit of the SS
- 1st Romanian Infantry Regiment of the SS
- 2nd Romanian Infantry Regiment of the SS
- Bulgarian Infantry Regiment of the SS
- Norwegian SS Ski Battalion
- Special Battalion "Reichsfuehrer-SS" (Himmler's escort)
- Guard Battalion "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" (Hitler's bodyguard)
- SS Regiment "Kurt Eggers" (war correspondents)
- SS Paratroop Regiment
- SS Special Battalion "Friedenthal" (Skorzeny commandos)
- SS Special Battalion "500" (officer disciplinary unit)

[Annexe I, Frederic Reider, La Waffen SS, Paris 1965, p. 262]

APPENDIX II

ETHNIC ORIGINS OF WAFFEN-SS RECRUITS

German Nationals: 400,000

Citizens of the Greater Reich, including Germany, Austria, the Sudetenland, Alsace-Lorraine, Luxembourg, southern Tyrol

Ethnic Germans: 300,000

From "Volksdeutsche" minority communities, especially those in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Poland and Lithuania

"Germanic" Foreign Volunteers: 129,000

Belgium (Flemish) ...	20,000
Denmark	6,000
Estonia	15,000
Finland	4,000
Holland	40,000
Latvia	30,000
Lithuania	4,000
Norway	10,000
Sweden	300

Other Foreign Volunteers: 305,800

Albania	7,000
Belgium (Walloons) ..	8,000
Bosnia	20,000
Bulgaria	3,000
Croatia	8,000
Czechoslovakia	5,000
France	10,000
Great Britain	100
Greece	1,000
Hungary	40,000
Italy	10,000
Romania	5,000
Serbia	4,000
Slovenia	5,000
Spain	1,000
Switzerland	700
USSR:Belorussians ...	12,000
Cossacks	35,000
Russians	30,000
Turcomen	20,000
Ukrainians	30,000
Other	51,000

[Annex II, Frederic Reider, La Waffen SS, Paris 1965, p. 263-4]

APPENDIX III

WAR-TIME GROWTH OF THE WAFFEN-SS

1 May 1940

SS "Verfuegungs" Division	21,005
SS "Totenkopf" Division	21,331
SS Police Division	33,561
Other SS Verfuegungstruppe units	15,692
"Totenkopf" Regiments and reinforcements ...	32,630
Total	124,199

[Derived from Dr. K.-G. Kletmann, Die Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation, (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 497-8.]

APPENDIX III

WAR-TIME GROWTH OF THE WAFFEN-SS

30 June 1941

Military Formations:

1. SS Division "Leibstandarte"	10,796
2. SS Division "Das Reich"	19,021
3. SS Division "Totenkopf"	19,754
4. SS Police Division	17,347
5. SS Division "Wiking"	19,377
6. SS Division "Nord"	10,573
SS Volunteer Battalion "Nordost"	904
SS Military Schools	1,028
Training and Replacement Units	29,809
	Total 127,509

Nominal Waffen-SS:

Concentration Camp Personnel	7,200
Other SS Offices	25,496
	TOTAL 160,405

[Derived from Dr. K.-G. Klieemann, Die Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation, (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 501-4.]

APPENDIX III

WAR-TIME GROWTH OF THE WAFFEN-SS

31 December 1942

Military Formations:

1. SS Division "Leibstandarte"	20,844
2. SS Division "Das Reich"	17,112
3. SS Division "Totenkopf"	21,156
4. SS Police Division	13,398
5. SS Division "Wiking"	15,928
6. SS Division "Nord"	21,104
7. SS Division "Prinz Eugen"	19,835
8. SS Cavalry Division "Florian Geyer"	10,879
1. SS Infantry Brigade	6,135
Volunteer Legion "Flandern"	685
Volunteer Legion "Niederlande"	1,755
Volunteer Legion "Norwegen"	698
Freikorps Danmark	642
Other military formations	6,266
Training and replacement units	64,311
Total	220,749

Nominal Waffen-SS:

Concentration Camp Personnel (WVHA)	16,842
Other SS Offices	9,126
TOTAL	246,717

[Derived from Dr. K.-G. Klietmann, Die Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation, (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 505-6.]

APPENDIX III

WAR-TIME GROWTH OF THE WAFFEN-SS

31 December 1943

Military Formations:

1. SS Division "Leibstandarte"	19,867
2. SS Division "Das Reich"	14,095
3. SS Division "Totenkopf"	15,415
4. SS Police Division	15,776
5. SS Division "Wiking"	12,927
6. SS Division "Nord"	19,995
7. SS Division "Prinz Eugen"	21,102
8. SS Cavalry Division "Florian Geyer" ...	5,182
9. SS Division "Hohenstaufen"	19,611
10. SS Division "Frundsberg"	19,313
11. SS Division "Nordland"	11,393
12. SS Division "Hitler Jugend"	21,482
13. SS Mountain Division "Handschar"	21,065
14. SS Division "Galizien"	12,634
15. SS Division "Lettische #1"	15,192
16. SS Division "Reichsfuehrer SS"	12,720
17. SS Division "Goetz von Berlichingen" ..	11,147
1. SS Infantry Brigade	4,125
SS Volunteer Brigade "Nederland"	6,424
SS Volunteer Brigade "Wallonien"	1,972
SS Volunteer Brigade "Langemarck"	1,470
SS Unit "Landstorm Nederland"	1,938
SS Latvian Volunteer Brigade	8,033
SS Estonian Volunteer Brigade	5,099
Other military formations	11,570
Corps offices	12,379
Training and replacement units	143,389
Total	465,315

Nominal Waffen-SS:

Concentration Camp Personnel (WVHA)	20,937
Other SS Offices	14,797
TOTAL	501,049

[Derived from Dr. K.-G. Kletmann, Die Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation, (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 506-8.]

APPENDIX III

WAR-TIME GROWTH OF THE WAFFEN-SS

30 June 1944

Military Formations:

1. SS Division "Leibstandarte"	19,691
2. SS Division "Das Reich"	20,184
3. SS Division "Totenkopf"	20,063
4. SS Police Division	15,891
5. SS Division "Wiking"	17,368
6. SS Division "Nord"	19,355
7. SS Division "Prinz Eugen"	18,835
8. SS Cavalry Division "Florian Geyer" ...	12,895
9. SS Division "Hohenstaufen"	15,898
10. SS Division "Fruntsberg"	13,552
11. SS Division "Nordland"	11,000
12. SS Division "Hitler Jugend"	17,858
13. SS Mountain Division "Handschar"	19,136
14. SS Division "Galizien"	15,299
15. SS Division (Lettische #1)	18,413
16. SS Division "Reichsfuehrer SS"	14,218
17. SS Division "Goetz von Berlichingen" ..	16,976
18. SS Division "Horst Wessel"	8,530
19. SS Division (Lettische #2)	10,592
20. SS Division (Estnische #1)	13,423
21. SS Division "Skanderberg"	6,156
22. SS Cavalry Division "Maria Theresa" ...	4,914
23. SS Division "Kama"	2,199
4. SS Volunteer Brigade "Nederland"	6,713
5. SS Volunteer Brigade "Wallonien"	1,188
6. SS Volunteer Brigade "Langemarck"	1,731
7. SS Unit "Landstorm Nederland"	3,167
8. French SS Volunteer Brigade	1,688
49. SS Infantry Brigade	3,886
51. SS Infantry Brigade	2,923
Other military formations	21,431
Corps offices	14,846
Training and replacement units	165,009
Total	555,028

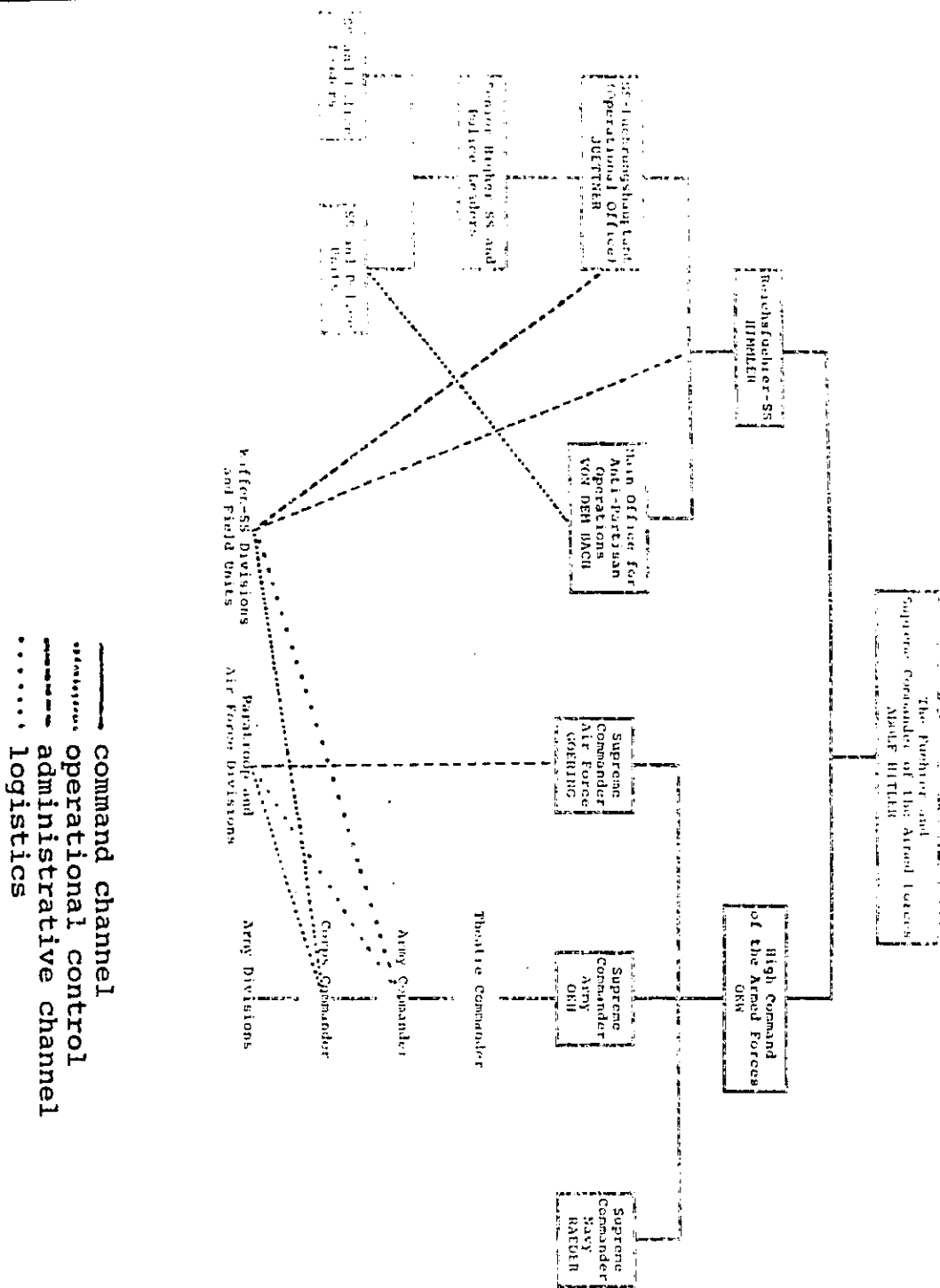
Nominal Waffen-SS:

All other SS offices including WVHA	39,415
TOTAL	594,443

[Derived from Dr. K.-G. Klietmann, Die Waffen-SS: Eine Dokumentation, (Osnabrueck 1965), pp. 508-10.]

APPENDIX IV

GERMAN COMMAND AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANNELS AFTER 1941



Command and administrative channels after 1941 between the Waffen-SS divisions in the field and the Reichsfuehrer-SS and the Armed Forces. Theater commanders of all of the armed services also were obliged to furnish troops for anti-partisan warfare to Higher SS and Police Leaders for operational control.

[Derived from Robert A. Gelwick, "Personnel Policies and Procedures of the Waffen SS", (University of Nebraska 1971), Appendix A, p. 687.]

APPENDIX V

CHRONOLOGY OF THE GROWTH OF THE WAFFEN-SS

1925	16 April	SS (Schutzstaffel) first created
1929	6 January	Heinrich Himmler becomes Reichsfuehrer-SS
1933	17 March	Formation of 120-strong "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler"
1934	30 June	Formation of first armed SS units known as "Verfuegungstruppe"
1939	1 September	"Verfuegungstruppe" strength raised to 9,000 and units utilised in Polish campaign
	October	Formation of the SS Divisions "Das Reich" and "Totenkopf"
1940	January	Introduction of title "Waffen-SS"
	1 June	The "Verfuegungstruppe" Inspectorate becomes Waffen-SS headquarters including the concentration camp inspectorate. Strength of the Waffen-SS reaches 100,000 in three divisions.
	15 August	Gottlob Berger becomes head of the new Military Headquarters of the Waffen-SS
1941	22 June	Six full Waffen-SS Divisions are among those German military formations which launch the invasion of the Soviet Union
1942	16 March	With the creation of an SS economic and administrative office (WVHA) the concentration camps are moved under its jurisdiction
1944	30 June	Overall strength of the Waffen-SS reaches almost 600,000
	October	Waffen-SS reaches peak strength of 900,000 in more than 38 divisions, most of them motorized or armoured
1945	23 May	SS Reichsfuehrer Himmler commits suicide
1946	October 1	The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg makes its ruling against the SS and SD, including the Waffen-SS, condemning it as a "criminal organization".

[compiled from Helmut Krausnick et al., (eds.), Anatomy of the SS State, (London 1968), pp. 597-600.]

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