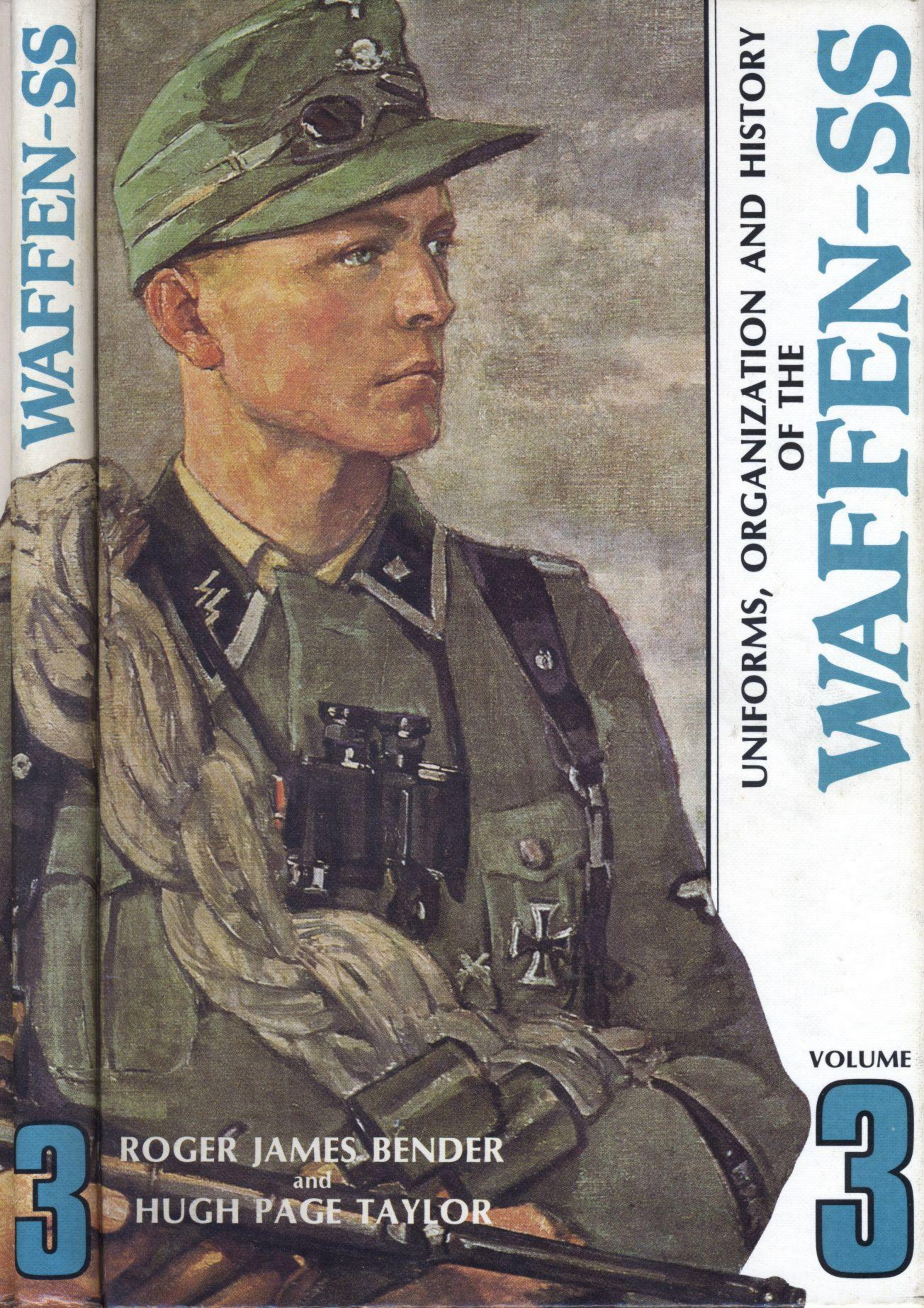


WAFFEN-SS



UNIFORMS, ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY
OF THE

WAFFEN-SS

3

ROGER JAMES BENDER
and
HUGH PAGE TAYLOR

VOLUME

3

Vol. 3



**UNIFORMS, ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY
OF THE**

WAFFEN-SS

ROGER JAMES BENDER AND HUGH PAGE TAYLOR

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U. S. ARMY PHOTOGRAPH



Introduction

This is the third volume in the present series and it continues the story of the Waffen-SS divisions where Volume 2 left off. Seven more divisions are covered in the sequence in which they were formed and in which they were numbered, in October 1943, from 7 to 13.

We begin and end with divisions formed in Yugoslavia to combat Tito's partisans. There is the predominantly Volksdeutsche (ethnic German) "Prinz Eugen" (7th) and the first complete departure from the absurd racial theories of the SS, the Moslem "Handschar" Division complete with fezzes (13th). Also covered in increased detail is the first of the three cavalry divisions of the Waffen-SS, "Florian Geyer" (8th). Then come two formidable armoured sister divisions, "Hohenstaufen" (9th) and "Frundsberg" (10th), whose fortunes were so closely interrelated for much of their brief lives.

Having seen the first multi-national division in Volume 2 (i. e. "Wiking"), the second, "Nordland" (11th), is described and a nationality - by - nationality summary given. The history of the "Hitlerjugend" Division (12th) is taken up from its establishment and follows it through its desperate struggle in the face of the Allied invaders in Normandy up to its spirited surrender to the Americans in May 1945.

Before listing all those individuals and agencies who have been good enough to assist both authors and publisher with the present book, we would like to express our special thanks to three very learned experts in this highly specialized field. Philip H. Buss, B. A. (Hons.) has continued to give generously and unselfishly of his time and incredible wealth of order-of-battle and historical knowledge. Markus Anaja of Helsinki and Friedhelm Ollenschläger of Bonn have also worked extremely hard in assisting us with our research and preparing the manuscript. It is difficult to describe the monumental efforts which these three gentlemen have given and we thank them very sincerely.

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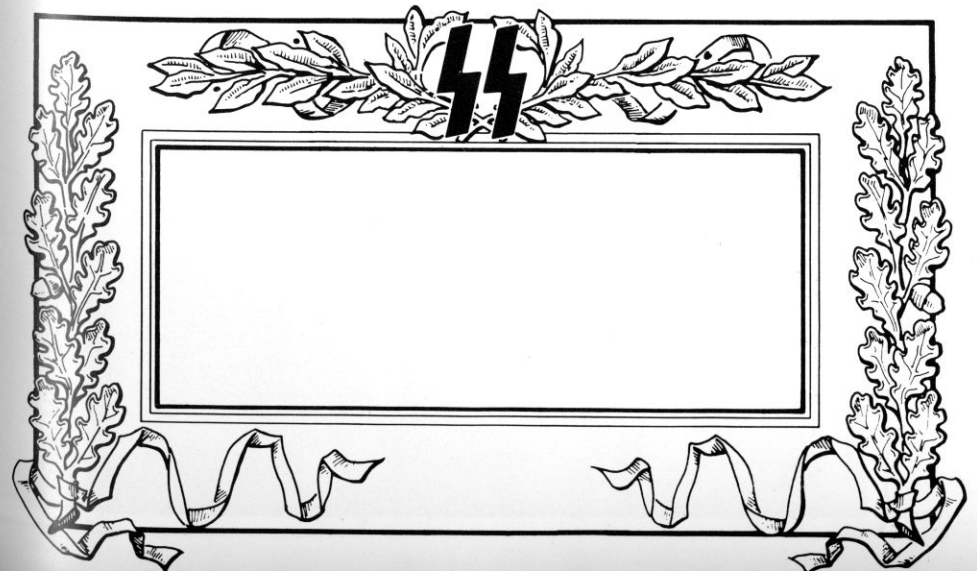
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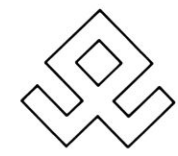
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**7. *W*-Freiwilligen-
Gebirgs-Division
"Prinz Eugen"**

EVOLUTION AND TITLES OF 7. SS-FREIWILLIGEN-GEBIGRS-DIVISION "PRINZ EUGEN"

March 1, 1942 - April 1, 1942 _____ Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division
April 1, 1942 - 1943 _____ SS-Freiwilligen-Division "Prinz Eugen"
1943 - October 22, 1943¹ _____ SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division "Prinz Eugen"
October 22, 1943¹ - May 1945 _____ 7. SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division "Prinz Eugen"

History



The establishment of the seventh Waffen-SS division fulfilled two important requirements. First of all, Himmler wanted another SS division and Gottlob Berger, Chief of the SS Main Office and consequently the man in charge of Waffen-SS recruiting, had his eye on a new and as yet virtually untapped pool of manpower. Secondly, German troops desperately needed on the Russian front were being tied down by extensive partisan activity.

Gottlob Berger's quest for fresh and suitable recruits for the Waffen-SS was running into serious difficulties. Germans were being drafted into the Army, Navy and Luftwaffe and the Wehrmacht paid little heed to the requirements of what they considered to be Himmler's upstart private army. Men were needed not only to establish new SS divisions, but also to bring the existing ones back up to strength after the extremely high casualties.

Beyond the German frontiers lived a large number of so-called ethnic Germans...the Volksdeutsche²...who were of German descent, and therefore eligible for SS membership. Berger, whose son-in-law, Andreas Schmidt, was the political leader (Volksgruppenführer) of the Eth-

¹SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh. v. 12.11.43, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

²Before the Second World War, the Germans were estimated to be a people of some 100 million. Every third German lived outside the Reich's frontiers with some 20 million in Europe and a further 13 million elsewhere. Yugoslavia was said to have contained some 700,000 ethnic Germans, and it was from these that the men of the "Prinz Eugen" Division were principally drawn.

nic German Group (Volksgruppe) in Rumania, was well aware of the fact that if he could make use of these ethnic Germans then the manpower problems of the Waffen-SS would be alleviated. The beauty of the plan lay in the fact that not only were these ethnic Germans eligible for SS membership, but also they fell beyond the jurisdiction of the Wehrmacht recruiters.

Berger's problems were obtaining permission to recruit from these ethnic Germans, and once that was secured, actually getting the men to volunteer. It was not to be an altogether easy task. On August 7, 1940, Berger put his plans into action and drew up a memorandum for Himmler suggesting the recruitment of ethnic Germans from the Balkans for the Waffen-SS. Himmler was naturally delighted and gave his approval. Berger's recruiting officers then went to work. In late 1940 and early 1941, Yugoslavia was not under Axis control and consequently such recruiting was strictly illegal. But on April 6, 1941, the Germans invaded Yugoslavia from Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania. The poorly led and organized Yugoslav Army was routed and after a few days the country fell. The recruiting was then made official and a minor drive in Serbia produced a handful of ethnic German volunteers, who found their way into the SS-Division "Reich"

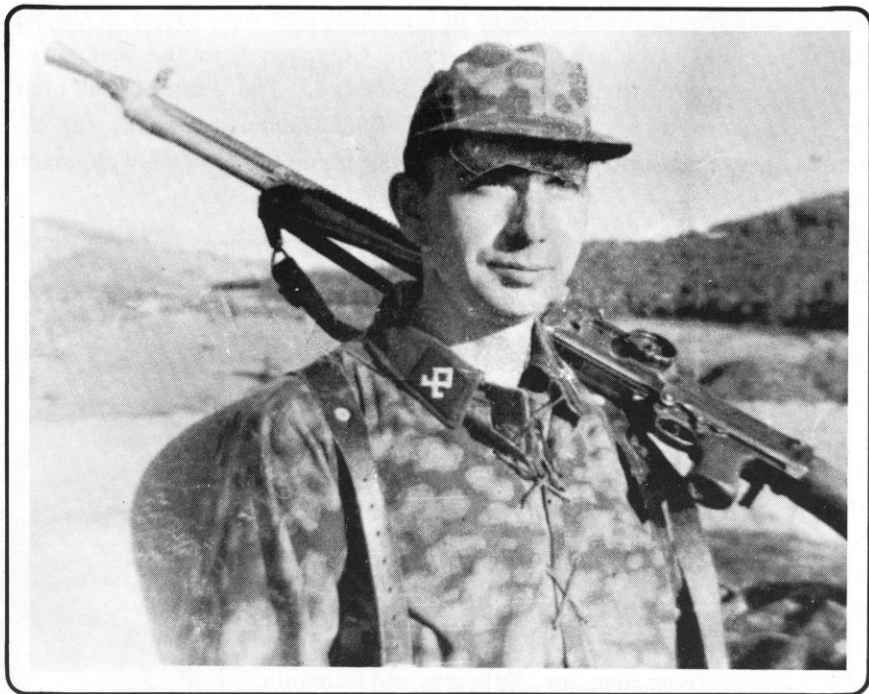


GOTTLob BERGER

This rather disappointing result did not satisfy Berger, who had visions of a Waffen-SS greatly expanded thanks to the ethnic Germans and a complete division composed of such volunteers from Yugoslavia alone. Once again he spoke with Himmler who in turn made his plan known to Hitler. The Führer was still wary of upsetting the Wehrmacht by allowing the Waffen-SS to grow too rapidly, but at the same time appreciated the value of having such a formation to take care of the increasingly troublesome partisans in Serbia and Croatia. Having a new Waffen-SS division to combat these guerrillas would release the regular German troops for front-line duty. Hitler risked offending the Army High Command and gave his blessing to the creation of the seventh division of the Waffen-SS. The news was relayed to Himmler by the Chief of the OKW himself, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, on December 30, 1943.³

41

³Aufstellung von volksdeutschen Verbänden in Serbien durch den Reichsführer-SS, g.Kdos., v. 30.12.41.



A MEMBER OF "PRINZ EUGEN" CARRYING A CZECH ZB26 (BRNO) L.M.G.

The Division was intended to consist of two regiments, trained and equipped for antipartisan warfare. It is reported to have been well-equipped, but a large number of the weapons and vehicles came from captured stock. Resort was made to the Postal Protection Service for small arms, as well as using captured Czech machine guns, Belgian and Czech anti-tank guns, French howitzers and Yugoslav medium guns.

An SS controlled Protection Force (Selbstschutz) had been formed by the ethnic Germans living in Serbia. This Protection Force, together with the Einsatz-Staffel from Croatia⁴ were used as a basis upon which to build the new division. The first volunteers were ethnic Germans from the Serbian Banat, these having to be supplemented by others from Rumania.

The SS-FHA ordered the "Volunteer Mountain Division" (Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division) to be formed on March 1, 1942,⁵ in the Serbian Banat,

⁴Another SS controlled formation, part of which was also called "Prinz Eugen".

⁵SS-FHA, Org. Tgb.Nr. 1268/42 geh., v. 1.3.42, Aufstellung der Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division.

with its formation and leadership in the hands of SS-Brigadeführer Artur Phleps. A further order issued a month later⁶ changed the formation's title to SS Volunteer Division "Prinz Eugen".⁷ The word "Mountain" was added again to the title in 1943 and it was given the number "7" in October 1943.

The Waffen-SS now had its new division, but reluctance on the part of the ethnic Germans themselves to join, created severe problems. In spite of Berger's confidence and intensive propaganda campaigns in the spring and summer of 1942, the men simply did not step forward to volunteer.⁸ Resort was made to conscription, and thus only shortly after its creation the Division's volunteer status came under suspicion. It was to happen again in 1943, when Himmler introduced compulsory military service for the ethnic Germans in German occupied Serbia. Conscription for this "volunteer" Division was then on a legal footing and produced some dramatic results. Serbia eventually yielded some 21,500 ethnic Germans for service in the Waffen-SS.

So it was that the Division was formed with considerable difficulty in Serbia and Croatia between April and October 1942, during which time its staff was located at Pančevo and the 1st Regiment (later renumbered the 13th) at Weisskirchen in Austria.

"Prinz Eugen" was created for antipartisan warfare, and this it was to wage in Yugoslavia almost without interruption between October 1942 and the end of the war. During this time, it was placed in various corps and

⁶SS-FHA, Org. Tgb.Nr. 1880/42 geh., v. 1.4.42, Aufstellung der Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division.

⁷"Prinz Eugen" is the German spelling of the name Prince François Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736), one of the greatest soldiers in European history whose record of victories in battle did much to enhance the reputation of the Austrian army in the 18th century. As the SS division which was later to bear his name, he was not a pure German.



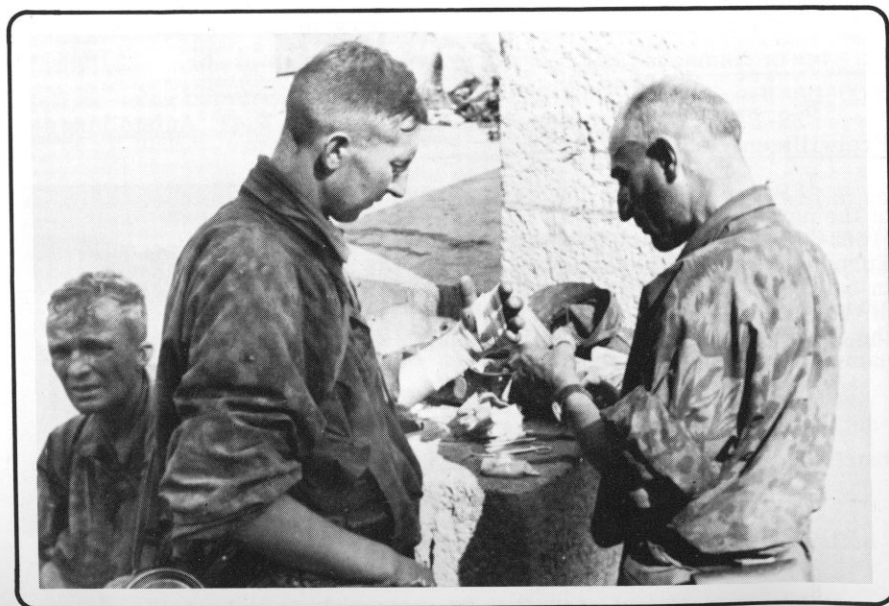
PRINCE FRANCOIS EUGENE OF SAVOY

⁸For recruitment of Waffen-SS personnel, in and outside of Germany, see Volume 2, pp. 21-22.

armies as will be shown, but throughout the war, its highest formation was Army Group "Southeast" (Heeresgruppe Südost).⁹

In October 1942, the Division transferred to the Užice-Caćak area on the Serbian-Montenegro frontier where it was soon engaged with the partisans for the first time in a short action in the mountains east of the Ibar River. This action over, the job of completing the Division was continued. In November 1942, "Prinz Eugen" came under the headquarters of the 12th German Army, which was a component of Army Group "Southeast", and transferred by road and rail to the Zagreb-Karlovac area. Under this HQ, it took part in the fourth German offensive against the partisans, code-named "Operation White" (Unternehmen "Weiss"), launched on January 8, 1943. The plan was to try and ensnare Tito's forces in a trap formed by Axis advances from three sides, with the Italian 6th Army moving in from the southeast from Mostar, two German divisions attacking from the north, and "Prinz Eugen" moving against the area east of Bihac. "Operation White" was undertaken in the Slunj, Bihac and Petrovac area and lasted until the middle of March. It proved a failure, however, for Tito moved his forces to the southeast over the Narenka and thus escaped.

⁹Previous confusion in this connection can be eliminated if one remembers that Army Group "Southeast" was also referred to as Army Group F, and that it contained Army Group E.



The Division was placed under the C-in-C Croatia, Army Group E, in February 1943 and remained as such until August of that year and moved to the Dalmatian coast in the spring. Towards the end of May, another action was begun in west Montenegro, this time called "Operation Black" (Unternehmen "Schwarz"). Here, two German army divisions moved on Foča and Sarajevo, two Bulgarian divisions on Prijepolje, the Italians on Cetinje and "Prinz Eugen" on Mostar.

Following "Operation Black", the Division employed elements of battalion strength to fight in the area northwest of Sarajevo, and in July it transferred to the Mostar area following the departure of the Italian troops.

The Division, in August 1943, came under the German army's XVth Mountain Corps (XV. Gebirgs-Korps) of the 2nd Panzer Army, where it remained for the months of September and October. When Italy capitulated to the Allies in September 1943, the Division was in the Dubrovnik, Metkovic and Split area on the Dalmatian coast. It disarmed some 18,000 Italians and considerable war supplies fell into German hands.

November 1943 saw "Prinz Eugen" come into an SS corps for the first time. Created for the purpose, the Vth SS Mountain Corps (V. SS-Gebirgs-Korps) was under the 2nd Panzer Army, Army Group F. In that month, the Brač, Hvar and Korčula islands and the Peljesac peninsula were occupied. In December it fought with the Vth Mountain Corps against Tito's partisans in the area northeast of Sarajevo from the north to the south (Goražde area), but once more this action met with limited success. Tito moved westwards and although "Prinz Eugen" pursued him ("Operation Snow Flurry" - Unternehmen "Schneegestöber"), he made good his escape.

"Prinz Eugen" was withdrawn from the Vth SS Mountain Corps in January 1944, and placed in reserve towards the end of the month behind the coast in the Split, Dubrovnik sector. Further training was completed and the Division was reorganized. It returned to central Bosnia at the beginning of March and once more took on the partisans under the Vth SS Mountain Corps.

"Prinz Eugen" took part in an operation directed against Tito's HQ near Drvar in early May, and engaged the 1st Partisan Division pushing it north towards the Drina River near Foča. It was then transferred to the Prijepolje, Pljevlja area and after a short rest took on the advancing Russian and Bulgarian troops in August of 1944. The Division suffered severe casualties at the hands of these troops as well as from the partisans near Nisch.

Once more in September 1944, "Prinz Eugen" left the Vth SS Mountain Corps, but remained under the 2nd Panzer Army, Army Group F. The following month it was part of Group Müller of Army Group E and it transferred to the Belgrade area to try and aid the 350,000 men of Army Group Löhr. These troops had served as the forces of occupation in Greece and the islands of the Aegean, and were now threatened with encirclement by the Allies. It is reported that "Prinz Eugen" actually became a component of Army Group Löhr for a time. In any case, however, it linked up with "Handschar" and other elements of the Waffen-SS (said to have



included remnants of the "Kama" and "Skanderbeg" Divisions) and created a bridgehead in the Vardar corridor in Macedonia to provide a passage for Löhr's men. For several months they engaged Russian and Bulgarian troops as well as the ever-present partisans. "Prinz Eugen" again suffered extremely heavy losses but the operation was a success and the majority of Army Group Löhr managed to escape by late November.

The Soviet Army entered Serbia in October 1944. Acting as a rear guard, part of the Division withdrew through Cačak and Užice, and later Banja Bosta, Ljubovija, Zvornik and Bijeljina towards Brčko and over the Drina.

Official German sources list "Prinz Eugen" as being in the XXXIVth Army Corps for special employment (XXXIV. A. K. z. b. V.), under Army Group E, and in November under Army Group F. The U. S. "Manpower Study",

however, gives it under the LXXXXIst Corps in December, coming under the XXXIVth in mid-January. It continued to engage the partisans and in January 1945, was near Otok, being force-marched to the area south of Vukovar in the middle of the month. It fought in this area against Russian and Bulgarian divisions, as well as Tito's partisans, and suffered heavy casualties. In February 1945, it was still under this Corps¹⁰ and fighting along with the regimental group formed from the disbanded "Skanderbeg" Division. During March and April 1945, the Division was in action under the XXIst Corps of Army Group E, but ended the war under the



LXIXth Corps of Army Group "Southeast". It was in action near Villach in Austria as late as May 6, 1945¹¹ and surrendered during that month near Cilli, a town in Slovenia on a branch of the Zagreb-Rijeka railway. The survivors entered Yugoslav captivity and many were brought before war crimes courts.

The Yugoslav War Crimes Commission found that the "Prinz Eugen" Division committed some of the worst atrocities attributable to any soldiers during the Second World War. In its admittedly unorthodox conflict against guerrillas (but for which it was formed, however) it committed various

¹⁰Also reported under LXXXXIst Corps in February 1945.

¹¹See "Waffen-SS im Einsatz", page 192. As the Division's depot is said to have been at Villach, possibly only a few men were involved.

excesses, such as the murder of unarmed prisoners, looting and burning of villages and the torture and massacre of helpless civilians.

NAMING OF THE DIVISION'S INFANTRY REGIMENTS

The Division's first commander was Artur Phleps, a native of Transylvania who became a general in the Rumanian Army and commanded the Rumanian Mountain Corps until 1941. He was appointed commander of "Prinz Eugen" on March 1, 1942, when an SS-Brigadeführer und General der Waffen-SS and it was he who was responsible for bringing the Division up to strength and training it for its mission. He was promoted to SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS on April 20, 1942, and became commanding general of the Vth SS Mountain Corps on the 21st of April, 1943. On June 21 of that same year he gave up command of "Prinz Eugen" and was promoted to the rank of SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS. In September 1944, he flew from Montenegro to Transylvania to try and form a guerilla front in his homeland. It is believed that he was killed on September 21, 1944, when his reconnaissance aircraft was shot down by enemy gunfire. But his fate is the subject of speculation. An alternative report has it that he committed suicide, yet in April 1945, Radio Moscow provided yet a third version by announcing that Phleps was leading a resistance movement in his native Rumania. Other versions also exist. Whatever his fate, his name was given as an honour to the 13th SS Volunteer Mountain Infantry Regiment of "Prinz Eugen" on November 13, 1944.

Towards the end of 1944, the 21st non-Germanic Mountain Division of the SS "Skanderbeg" (1st Albanian) was disbanded and it was planned to incorporate its German remnants, when grouped into a regiment-sized unit in the "Prinz Eugen" Division. This had still not been accomplished by March 1945, but the name of "Skanderbeg" was taken over by the Division's 14th SS Volunteer Mountain Infantry Regiment. A somewhat dubious honour, for the "Skanderbeg" Division had not enjoyed a particularly illustrious career, and in fact had never really existed.

Order-of-Battle

(COMPOSITE)

Stab der Division
Fliegerstaffel (part of the Luftwaffe, not the Waffen-SS)
Div. -Kartenstelle
Div. -Musikzug
Div. -Begleit-Kompanie (mot)

SS-(Freiwilligen-) Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 13 "Artur Phleps" (previously SS-(Freiwilligen-) Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 1... the number "13" was adopted on October 22, 1943, and the name "Artur Phleps" on November 13, 1944)

SS-(Freiwilligen-) Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 14 "Skanderbeg" (previously SS-(Freiwilligen-) Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 2... the number "14" was adopted on October 22, 1943, but the name was still not in use on March 1, 1945.

(1e.) SS-Panzer-Kompanie
SS-(Gebirgs-) Panzerjäger-Abteilung 7
SS-Kavallerie-Schwadronen (there were two)
SS-Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung/Batterie 7
SS-(Freiwilligen-) Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment 7
SS-Flak-Abteilung 7 (went to the Vth SS Mountain Corps)
SS-Fla-Kompanie (possibly never independent)
SS-(Gebirgs-) Nachrichten-Abteilung (mot?) 7
SS-(Freiwilligen-) Gebirgs-Aufklärungs-Abteilung (mot) 7 (went to Vth SS Mountain Corps)
SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Zug
SS-Radfahr-Abteilung (Bataillon?)/SS-(Gebirgs-) Aufklärungs Abteilung 7 (had a heavy motorized squadron)
SS-(Gebirgs-) Pionier-Bataillon 7
SS-Kradschützen-Bataillon 7
SS-Nachschub-Kompanie 7
SS-Dinafü 7 (in 1943)
SS-Werkstattkompanie/SS-Werkstattzug
SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 7
SS-Sanitäts-Abteilung 7
SS-Sanitäts-Kompanien
SS-KrKw. - Züge

SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Veterinär-Kompanie 1/7
SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Veterinär-Kompanie 2/7
SS-Veterinär-Kompanie 7 (assumed to be one of the above)
SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Kriegsberichter-Zug 7/SS-Propaganda-Zug
SS-Feldgendarmarie-Trupp 7
SS-Feldersatz-Bataillon 7

DIVISIONAL STRENGTHS*

Date	Officers	NCOs	Men	Total
31. 12. 42	411	19, 424		19, 835
31. 12. 42 ¹²	393	2, 010	18, 699	21, 102
30. 6. 44	385	2, 238	16, 212	18, 835
20. 9. 44	491	2, 737	15, 811	19, 039
1. 2. 45				25, 365
1. 3. 45				25, 785

*Actual strengths (including men in hospitals, on detachment or on leave)/Iststärke.

NOTE:

The enlisted men of "Prinz Eugen" were almost exclusively ethnic Germans from southeastern Europe (i. e. Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary), whereas the Division was led mainly by national German officers and NCOs.

Divisional Commanders

- March 1, 1942 - June 21, 1943 _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS (promoted on April 20, 1942, to SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS) Artur Phleps
- July 3, 1943¹³ - February 1, 1944 _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Carl Reichsritter von Oberkamp
- August 1, 1944¹⁴ - January 20, 1945¹⁵ _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Otto Kumm
- January 20, 1945¹⁵ - May 1945 _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS August Schmidhuber

CHIEF OF STAFF (as of March 1, 1945)

SS-Hauptsturmführer Sepp Niedermeier

¹²By this date, some 17,538 ethnic Germans from Croatia were serving in the Waffen-SS, but not all necessarily in this Division.

¹³Also reported as June 1943.

¹⁴Also reported as February 11, 1944.

¹⁵Also reported as February 1945.



SS-GRUPPENFÜHRER UND GENERALLEUTNANT
DER WAFFEN-SS ARTHUR PHEPS



SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR
DER WAFFEN-SS OTTO KUMM



SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR
DER WAFFEN-SS AUGUST SCHMIDHUBER
(HERE AN SS-STANDARTENFÜHRER)

Divisional and Unit Insignia

- (1) All units of the "Prinz Eugen" Division originally wore the "Prinz Eugen" cuffband in block letters (16). When named, SS Volunteer Mountain Infantry Regiments 13 and 14 wore the cuffbands shown under sections 2 and 3 below. The Odalrune was worn on the right collar patch (16), and in some cases on both left and right patches (no reason has so far been found for this practice). The Waffen-SS version of the Edelweiss insignia was worn on the cap (17) and the right upper sleeve. Ranks of SS-Standartenführer and above were supposed to have worn the Odalrune in silver thread on a circular (18) black badge, edged in silver cord, on the upper left sleeve.... in fact only



the Division's first commander, Artur Phleps, has been recorded as doing so. Full members of the SS wore the SS runes on the left breast of their tunics (16) (for illustration see page 126 of Volume 2).

Prinz Eugen



ERNST BIESEMEYER, DIVISIONAL SUPPLY OFFICER IN 1943, WEARING THE "PRINZ EUGEN" CUFFBAND.



NOTE ALUMINUM-PIPED ODALRUNE COLLAR PATCH PLUS SS RUNES ON THE LOWER LEFT BREAST.



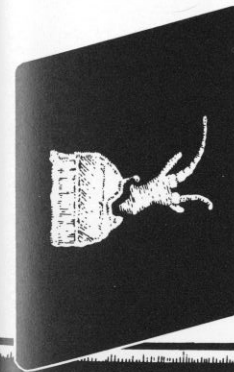
ARTUR PHELEPS WEARING THE CIRCULAR ODALRUNE PATCH ON HIS UPPER LEFT ARM.

Artur Phleps

(2) Members of SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 13, "Artur Phleps" wore the "Artur Phleps" cuffband in block lettering once this honour name had been bestowed on November 13, 1944. Before then, the "Prinz Eugen" cuffband was worn by members of this Regiment (19). Other insignia was as for the whole Division.

(3) Members of the SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 14 "Skanderbeg" should have worn the "Skanderbeg" cuffband in block lettering, but as the name had not been adopted as late as March 1, 1945, it is doubtful if this in fact was done. Any members of the disbanded "Skanderbeg" Division who were eventually incorporated into this Regiment may have continued to wear the "Skanderbeg" cuffband of that Division, and even the collar patch with the "Skanderbeg" helmet. It is most probable, however, that all members of this Regiment continued to wear the divisional insignia as described in Section 1 on page 19 until the end of the war.

METAL HEADQUARTERS STAFF FLAG FOR SS-GE-BIRGS-JÄGER-REGIMENT 2 (LATER RETITLED, SEE (3) ABOVE).



Skanderbeg

¹⁶Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, November 1, 1942.

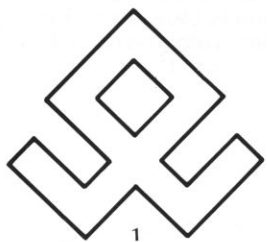
¹⁷The SS Mountain Cap (SS-Bergmütze) was ordered for "Prinz Eugen" in September 1942 (Ref.: *Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS*, v. 1. 9. 42).

¹⁸Not oval-shaped as illustrated in war-time Allied intelligence manuals.

¹⁹SS-FHA Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22. 10. 43.

DIVISIONAL VEHICLE SYMBOLS

(1) an Odalrune



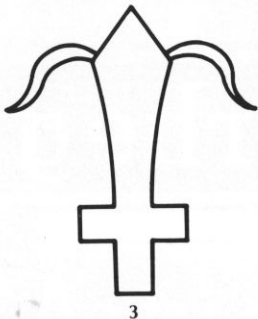
AN AIRCRAFT OF THE DIVISION'S FLIEGERSTAFFEL



NOTE POSITIONING OF THE ODALRUNE WITHIN A CIRCLE, ON THE MOTORCYCLE SIDECAR BELOW.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

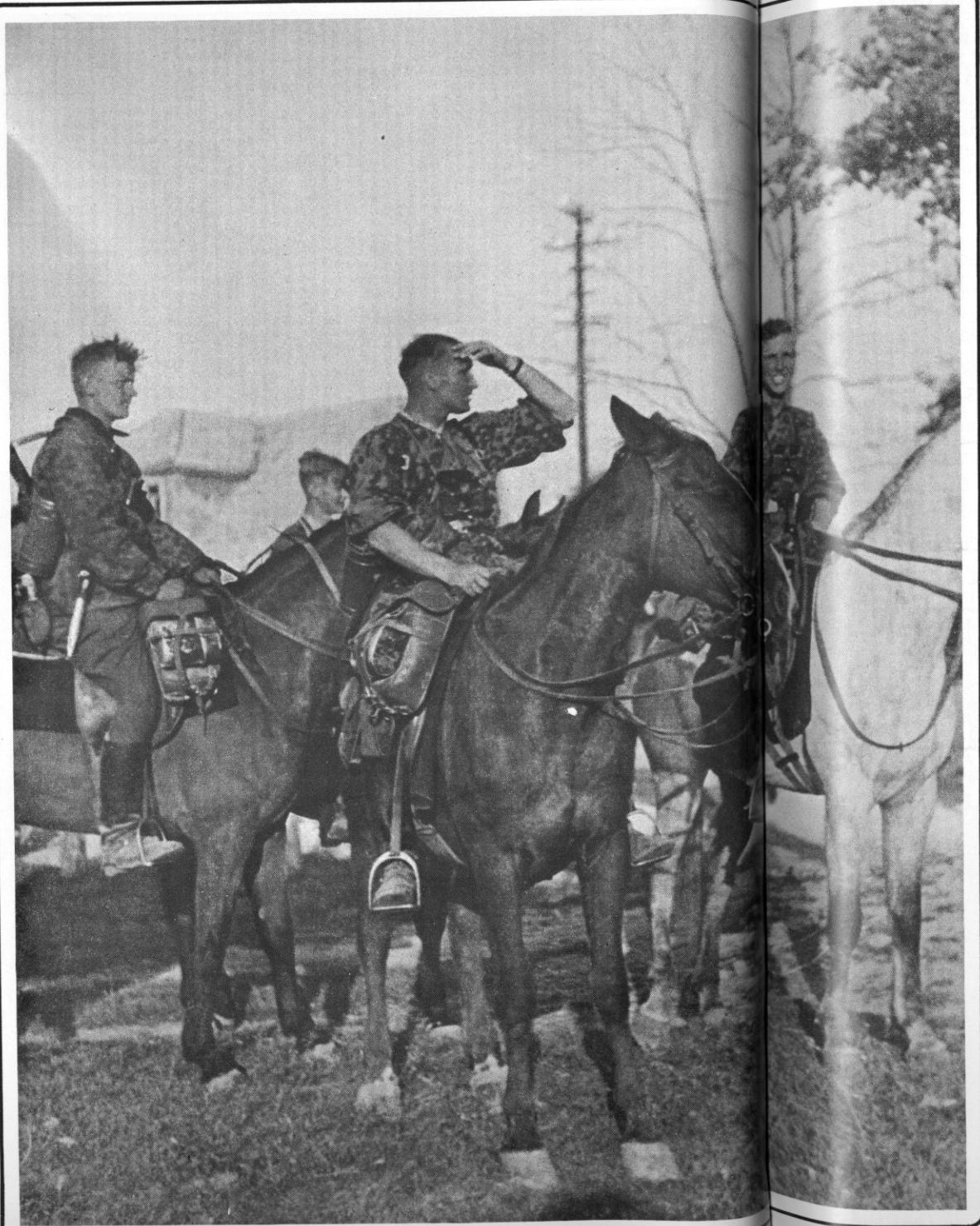
NOTE:
Two other symbols ((2) and (3) below) have also been reported as having been used by this Division. They are unconfirmed and should be viewed with suspicion.



SOURCES:

1. - photographic evidence.
2. - "Wiking-Ruf" Nr. 1, 1951.
3. - H. I. A. G. chart.





MEMBERS OF THE SS-CAVALRY BRIGADE
NEAR MINSK IN 1941.



8. *W*-Kavallerie-Division
"Florian Geyer"

EVOLUTION AND TITLES OF 8. SS-KAVALLERIE-DIVISION "FLORIAN GEYER"

August 2, 1941 - June 1, 1942 _____ SS-Kavallerie-Brigade¹
June 1, 1942 - October 22, 1943 _____ SS-Kavallerie-Division²
October 22, 1943 - March 12, 1944 _____ 8. SS-Kavallerie-Division
March 12, 1944 - February 12, 1945 _____ 8. SS-Kavallerie-Division
"Florian Geyer"



History

The 1st SS Totenkopf³ Cavalry Regiment (1. SS-Totenkopf-Reiterstandarte) was formed in September 1939, the month that Germany invaded Poland and the Second World War began. SS-Standartenführer Hermann Fegelein took command of the Regiment on November 1, 1939, and in early May 1940⁴ it was stationed in Poland. Its overall address was at Aleja Ujazdowska 3a, Abholpoststelle C1, Warsaw, with the Regimental Staff and Signals Section in the Polish capital, twelve squadrons in various Polish towns, and the 9th Reserve Squadron at the SS Main Riding School in Munich.

SS-STANDARTENFÜHRER
HERMANN FEGELEIN



¹Also referred to as "SS-Reiter-Brigade"... in both forms it was unofficially named "Fegelein" after its commander.

²Unofficially named "Fegelein" (after its first commander) and "Ost" ("East"... after its principal combat zone).

³"Death's Head" - the German term will be used throughout this study.

⁴Der Reichsführer-SS, Der Generalinspekteur der verst. SS-Totenkopfstandarten Oranienburg-Geheim - Verzeichnis über Standorte und Führerbesetzung der verst. SS-Totenkopfstandarten und der Ersatz-Truppenteile der SS-Totenkopf-Division - Stand vom 5. 5. 1940.

At about this time,⁵ it was ordered that the Cavalry Regiment be expanded with the view that later it would be split up into two new cavalry regiments. The order referred to the latter as simply "1st and 2nd Cavalry Regiments" (1. und 2. SS-Reiterstandarte) without the word "Totenkopf", but this change in designation did not come about until later (see below).

The split had still not been made by the end of July 1940, and a statement of strengths of the SS Totenkopf Regiments⁶ gave the 1st SS Totenkopf Cavalry Regiment Warsaw (1. SS-T. Reiterstandarte Warschau) as being made up of 54 officers, 190 NCOs and 1,585 men... a total of 1,829. The reorganization was brought about during the remaining months of 1940 and by November, two separate SS Totenkopf Cavalry Regiments were in existence (1. und 2. SS-Totenkopf-Reiterstandarte). Also in November 1940, the first step was taken towards the creation of the SS Cavalry Brigade, for an order⁷ was given stating that these two SS Totenkopf Cavalry Regiments should be merged... although no mention of a brigade, as such, was made at the time.

The terms "SS-Totenkopfverbände" and "SS-Verfügungstruppe" were ordered to be discontinued in April 1941, and it was about this time that the word "Totenkopf" was officially dropped from the titles of the two Cavalry Regiments⁸. In addition, the more political term "Standarte", which brought to mind the pre-war para-military organizations of the Nazi Party, was replaced by the more military-sounding, though synonymous, "Regiment". The resultant unit designations were thus "1st and 2nd SS Cavalry Regiments" (1. und 2. SS-Kavallerie-Regimente), which no longer reflected their unmilitary origins. But unlike other military SS elements, this change did not reflect the units' incorporation into the fighting forces of Germany. These two former SS Totenkopf Cavalry Regiments, along with the former 4th to 14th Totenkopf Infantry Regiments, were not available for subordination to the Wehrmacht and had to remain under the personal command of the Reichsführer-SS. On June 21, 1941,

⁵Kdo. der Waffen-SS, 15. 5. 1940.

⁶Inspektion der SS-Totenkopfstandarten, Ia/28. 7. 40/Kr./Sa., Tgb. Nr. 466/40 geh. W., Oranienburg den 28. Juli 1940, Stärkemeldung der SS-Totenkopfstandarten vom 28. 7. 1940.

⁷SS-FHA, Ia/Tgb. Nr. 155/40 g. Kdos., v. 12. 11. 1940, Umgliederung der SS-T. -Reiterstandarten.

⁸Verordnungsblatt der affen-SS, v. 15. 3. 1941, ziff. 135. A reliable source states that the word "Totenkopf" was eliminated in February 1941.

both regiments were placed under Himmler's Headquarters Staff (Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS) in preparation for the invasion of the Soviet Union.

An order-of-battle document of July 16, 1941⁹, shows both regiments (SS-Kav. Rgt. 1 und SS-Kav. Rgt. 2) under the "Kommando-Stab-RF SS", each with the following composition:

- 1 cavalry unit (r. Abt.)
- 1 heavy squadron (1 schw. Schw.)
- 1 cavalry gun squadron (1 Kav. Gesch. Schw.)
- 1 horsed battery (1 rtd. Battr.)
- 1 cyclist squadron (1 Radfahr-Schw.)

In July 1941, the 1st Regiment was attached to the 87th Infantry Division, then to the 253rd Infantry Division. The two Regiments, on August 2, 1941, together with one SS cyclist battalion (SS-Radfahrer-Abteilung) and one SS artillery battery (SS-Artillerie-Abteilung), were ordered to form the SS Cavalry Brigade (SS-Kavallerie-Brigade), which unofficially bore the name "Fegelein" after its commander.¹⁰ Still under Himmler's HQ Staff, while under the 9th Army, Army Group "Centre" (9. Armee, Heeresgruppe "Mitte"), the Brigade began mopping-up operations behind the central sector of the eastern front and continued to do so for the rest of the year. The German advances were so rapid that countless Russian troops were left behind the German front, and the SS Cavalry Brigade helped to round them up. In June and July, these operations continued, as well as attacks against partisans and so-called "pacification operations". One of the Regiments reported shooting 259 Russian soldiers near the Pripet marshes as well as the execution of 6,504 civilians.

From September 1941 until the end of the year, this Brigade was under the orders of the C-in-C of the area rear of Army Group "Centre", and continued to serve behind the eastern front. The opening of 1942 saw the SS Cavalry Brigade in reserve of the 9th Army, Army Group "Centre", and it continued the defensive actions that had begun in the previous December in this Army's winter positions near Rshew. Certain elements withdrew from this defensive warfare on the Rusa-Volokolamsk line in mid-January 1942, but others under the 9th Army continued it through the winter and until mid-April.

⁹SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt der Waffen-SS, Abt. Ia/Be/Oe, Tgb.Nr. 2825/41 geh., v. 16. Juli 1941, Zusammensetzung der Waffen-SS.

¹⁰SS-Standartenführer Hermann Fegelein officially took command of the Brigade on August 5, 1941 (Ref.: Fegelein's "Personal-Nachweis für Führer der Waffen-SS").

In February 1942, it was placed under the 9th Army's XXXXVIth Corps (XXXXVI. Armeekorps). Between February and April, most elements were part of the XXIIIrd Corps, 9th Army, Army Group "Centre", fighting defensive battles in the Olenino-Nelidovo area. The SS Cavalry Brigade was reinforced by the addition of a group of ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche) in March 1942.

SS Battle Group (SS-Kampfgruppe) "Zehender" was formed in April 1942, and consisted of four squadrons, an anti-aircraft battery, a battery of horsed artillery and a signals company. From April 19 to June 26, it fought static actions in the area of the XXIIIrd Army Corps, Army Group "Centre"... fighting behind the lines from May 27 to June 15, and then in action with the occupation forces (Besatzungstruppe) of Poland from June 16 until the end of August. The Battle Group was then disbanded and its elements reincorporated into what had become the SS Cavalry Division.



SS-STANDARTENFÜHRER FEGELEIN AND HIS STAFF DURING THE MOPPING-UP OPERATIONS IN LATE 1941.

Meanwhile, in May and June of 1942, steps had been taken to expand the Cavalry Brigade into a division. On June 1, Hitler authorized that SS Cavalry Brigade "Fegelein" should be enlarged to an SS Cavalry Division (SS-Kavallerie-Division).¹¹ This was brought about under the SS-FHA during the months of July and August, while tactically the Battle

¹¹SS-FHA, g.Kdos., v. 9.9.42, Gliederung der SS-Kavallerie-Division



**IM NAMEN
DES DEUTSCHEN VOLKES
VERLEIHE ICH
DEM 11-OBERFÜHRER
HERMANN FEGELEIN
DAS EICHENLAUB
ZUM RITTERKREUZ
DES EISERNEN KREUZES**

**FÜHRERHAUPTQUARTIER
DEN 22. DEZEMBER 1942**

**DER FÜHRER
UND OBERSTE BEFEHLSHABER
DER WEHRMACHT**

**THE CITATION TO FEGELEIN'S OAKLEAVES TO THE KNIGHT'S CROSS OF THE IRON CROSS,
AWARDED TO HIM WHILE COMMANDING AN SS BATTLE GROUP.**

Group was still under the C-in-C of Army Group "Centre". The reorganization was carried out at the SS Training Area (SS-Truppenübungsplatz) Debica in the General Government, and by mid-August the new Division was combat-ready. It then fought under the 9th Army, Army Group "Centre" for the remaining months of 1942, forming part of the LIXth

Corps for September/October, in reserve in November and in the XXXth Corps in December.

The SS Cavalry Brigade/Division had been used primarily against partisans during 1942, and with some success thanks to its high mobility. A notable action was the defence of the Vjasma-Briansk-Rjev salient.

Another SS Battle Group was formed from the Division in January 1943, with the designation "Z" (SS-Kampfgruppe "Z")¹². It was stronger than the previous SS Battle Group "Zehender" and contained SS Cavalry Regiment 16, SS Artillery Regiment 8 and support elements. It was disbanded in April 1943 and the elements returned to the Division.

The SS Cavalry Division was fighting alongside the 1st SS Brigade (1. SS-Brigade) at the beginning of 1943. From January, the Division was in Army Group "Centre". January and part of February were spent under the 9th Army's XXXXIst Armoured Corps. It was then placed under the 2nd Armoured Army's XXXXVIIth Armoured Corps (also referred to as "Korps Lemelsen" after its commander), fighting south of Orel in February. The Division was refitted northwest of Bobruysk in April and May while in reserve for the 2nd Armoured Army, and then waged guerrilla warfare under the SS and Police Leader (SS-u. PF) for Partisan Warfare in June and August.

The SS Cavalry Division left Army Group "Centre" for Army Group "South" in July 1943, with which it was to remain until early the following year. In July, it was still under the orders of the SS and Police Leader for Partisan Warfare and saw action against Russian troops and partisans in the Reschitza-Mostir area between the Dnieper River and the Pripet marshes. From August until the end of 1943, the Division fought defensive actions and was forced to retreat to the Dnieper and then to Kirovograd. The Division's commander, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Hermann Fegelein, was wounded on September 9, south of Charkov, and consequently received the Silver Wound Badge (Verwundetenazeichen Silber) four days later. The Division's higher formations were the 8th Army's XXXXIInd Corps in September, the 1st Armoured Army's LVIIIth Corps during October and November, and the 8th Army's XXXXVIIth Armoured Corps in December. It transferred to Croatia and was refitted at Esseg in December 1943.

¹²"Z" is believed to have been the abbreviation for "Zehender"...
... August Zehender commanded both Battle Groups and this was a means of giving a different title to each.

The year 1943 saw a number of important changes to this Division's order-of-battle. In August, a fourth regiment was added, made up of ethnic Germans from Russia. Later in the year, the four cavalry regiments were renumbered from "1, 2, 3 and 4" to "15, 16, 17 and 18", and the Division itself was numbered the 8th.¹³ Also in late 1943, the decision to reduce German cavalry divisions from four to three cavalry regiments was implemented, and the SS Cavalry Division lost its 17th SS Cavalry Regiment (originally numbered the 3rd),¹⁴ as well as its Engineer Battalion (SS-Pi.-Btl. 8).



MEMBERS OF THE SS-HAUPTAMT VISITING THE SS-CAVALRY DIVISION IN RUSSIA IN THE SPRING OF 1943.

The SS Cavalry Division engaged the partisans in Croatia, in early 1944, and elements of the Division are reported to have continued this activity

¹³Renumbering of Regiments: SS-FHA Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12.11.43, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

Numbering of the Division: SS-FHA Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22.10.43, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

¹⁴It was planned to use the 17th SS Cavalry Regiment as the basis for a new SS cavalry division. This plan was delayed when the regiment was used for SS Battle Group "Gille", but eventually in the summer of 1944, it was renumbered and used as the nucleus of a second SS cavalry division, which was later numbered the 22nd. Some time later, the number "17" was restored after a decision had been made to perpetuate it.

until March. A Battle Group spent the first three months of 1944 in Hungary under XXIIInd Corps. Elements were also reported at Derica in February. At this time, the Russians were drawing closer and closer to Hungary, and fearing defection, the Germans decided to occupy their former ally's territory. Operation "Margaret" (Unternehmen "Margarethe") was the code word for the occupation and between the middle and end of March, the 8th, 16th and 18th SS Divisions had taken up their positions in Hungary. There followed a confusing period with parts of the Division serving in different locations. Between March and August of 1944, for example, only the Division's 15th SS Cavalry Regiment and the Ist Battery (I. Abteilung) of the Artillery Regiment were in Hungary.

The Division received the name "Florian Geyer"¹⁵ on March 12, 1944, and as being numbered the 8th division of the Waffen-SS thus assumed its final designation: 8th SS Cavalry Division "Florian Geyer" (8. SS-Kavallerie-Division "Florian Geyer"). "Florian Geyer" was under Army Group "Southeast" in April 1944, as a component of the XXIIInd Mountain Corps. It saw action on the southern and central sectors of the eastern front.

Refitting began in May while in OKW reserve under Army Group "F" (another name for Army Group "Southeast"). Part of the Division was still in OKW reserve in June and was refitting in Hungary under the local SS C-in-C (Bfh SS Ungarn). Another component was fighting fierce rearguard actions in an attempt to protect elements of Army Group "Centre" after the collapse of the German front in White Russia. Elements of "Florian Geyer" were integrated into Gille's IVth SS Armoured Corps and took part in the successful counter-attack which contained the Russian troops on the Vistula. There followed several months of hard fighting against the Soviets at Baranov, but with little success for the Germans.

The refitting of the remainder of the Division continued under the OKW, Army Group "Southeast" in July 1944. The following month, the Division was under Higher Field HQ 937 (O. F. K. 937), C-in-C Western Hungary, Army Group "Southeast"*. In September, it transferred to the Transylvanian sector of the eastern front under Group Transylvania (Gruppe Siebenbürgen), 6th Army, Army Group "South Ukraine". War-time American Intelligence listed "Florian Geyer" under the XXIXth Corps, 2nd Army, Army Group "South" in October 1944, whereas other reports have it

*Also reported as under the SS C-in-C, Hungary.

¹⁵Florian Geyer (1490 - 1525) was a knight from Franconia who supported Luther and led the peasants in the Peasants' War (Bauernkrieg) of 1522-1525. Duden Lexikon, Band 2, p. 890.

under the 8th Army, Army Group "Ukraine". In November, it was under the 6th Army, Army Group "South", before being transferred (against Guderian's better judgement) to Hungary on Hitler's orders.

It was transferred to Hungary along with the other SS Cavalry Division (by then numbered the 22nd) and with other elements was to make up the IXth SS Corps under von Pfeffer-Wildenbruch. The Army's 13th and "Feldherrnhalle" Armoured Divisions were also sent to Hungary to fight alongside the Waffen-SS against the advancing Soviet forces. These troops, numbering some 50,000, became completely encircled at Budapest by New Year's eve 1944 and were fighting desperately for their lives. For a time the garrison managed to hold back the might of the Soviet forces. Hitler ordered the "Totenkopf" and "Wiking" Divisions of Gille's IVth SS Armoured Corps away from the defence of Warsaw to the relief of Budapest, but after two weeks of fighting the attempt had to be called off. The odds had been impossible. The garrison weakened, shrunk in area by mid-January, and finally fell on February 12, 1945. At that time, approximately eight hundred of the survivors broke the encirclement and reached the German lines. Amongst them were 170 soldiers of the Waffen-SS, all that remained of the 8th and 22nd SS Cavalry Divisions.¹⁶ The Division's youthful commander, Joachim Rumohr, committed suicide after being wounded while attempting to escape from the Hungarian capital.¹⁷

The "Florian Geyer" Division thus ceased to exist after the fall of the Budapest garrison and no longer appeared on German orders-of-battle. Yet elements described as belonging to this Division are reported as having been thrown into the defence of Vienna along with "Sepp" Dietrich's 6th SS Armoured Army. When the two SS Cavalry Divisions (the 8th and 22nd) were destroyed at Budapest, their survivors were gathered into an SS Cavalry Group (SS-Kavallerie-Gruppe - SS-Kampfgruppe "Ameiser") which formed the nucleus of the 37th SS Cavalry Division "Lützow".

Hermann Fegelein, the Division's first and most notable commander, was appointed Himmler's liaison officer to Hitler (Verbindungs-Offizier des Reichsführers-SS beim Führer) on November 1, 1943, and so gave up his divisional command.¹⁸ In spite of his service record and personal connection to Hitler himself (by marrying Margarete Braun on June 3, 1944,

¹⁶The Engineer Battalion had in fact not been trapped at Budapest. It had been detached and assigned to the 37th SS Division "Lützow".

¹⁷Reitlinger, *The SS - Alibi of a Nation 1922-1945*, p. 369.

¹⁸Fegelein's "Personal-Nachweis für Führer der Waffen-SS".



SS-GRUPPENFÜHRER UND GENERALLEUTNANT DER WAFFEN-SS FEGELEIN AS HIMMLER'S LIAISON OFFICER TO HITLER.

he became Eva Braun's brother-in-law), Fegelein was to fare no better than his old Division. In the last desperate days in Berlin, as the Third Reich was collapsing, Hitler had Fegelein shot on April 29, 1945, for alleged desertion.

Order-of-Battle

(COMPOSITE)

Stab der Division

Div. -Kartenstelle

Inf. -Schallmesstrupp (infantry sound ranging troop)

Hundesstaffel

Kraderkundungszug (motor-cycle platoon)



- SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 15 (previously SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 1/SS-Reiter-Regiment 1/1. SS-Reiterstandarte/1. SS-Totenkopf-Reiterstandarte)
- SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 16 (previously SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 2/SS-Reiter-Regiment 2/2. SS-Reiterstandarte/2. SS-Totenkopf-Reiterstandarte)
- SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 17 (previously SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 3... it was detached from the Division on April 15, 1943, first to make up SS-Kampfgruppe "Gille", then to form the nucleus of the second cavalry division of the Waffen-SS, later designated 22. SS-Freiwilligen-Kavallerie-Division)
- SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 18 (ordered as "4. Reiter-Regiment für die SS-Kavallerie-Division" on August 9, 1943, to be formed from 1,200 ethnic Germans from Russia)
- SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 8 (reorganized in the autumn of 1944, its Fla-Kp. had 3.7cm rather than 2cm guns)
- SS-Sturmgeschütz-Batterie/Abteilung 8 (this "Batterie" became an "Abteilung" by early 1944... it disappeared by the autumn of 1944 and two of its self-propelled companies went to the Pz. Jäg. Abt.)
- SS-Artillerie-Regiment (mot) 8
- SS-Flak-Abteilung 8
- SS-Nachrichten-Abteilung (mot) 8
- SS-(Panzer) Aufklärungs-Abteilung 8
- SS-Radfahr-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 8
- SS-Pionier-Bataillon (mot) 8 (detached from the Division on April 15, 1943, and later went to the 37th SS Division "Lützow")
- SS-Ski-Bataillon (ad hoc)
- SS-Verwaltungstruppen 8
- SS-Sanitäts-Abteilung 8 (possibly existed in the summer of 1944... at other times the medical elements were independent)
1. und 2. SS-Sanitäts-Kompanie 8
- 2 KrKw.-Züge
1. und 2. SS-Veterinär-Kompanie 8
- SS-Feldpostamt
- SS-Kriegsberichter-Zug (mot) 8
- SS-Feldgendarmarie-Trupp 8
- SS-Feldersatz-Bataillon 8

NOTE:
In late 1943/early 1944, the Division absorbed a Volksdeutsche cavalry regiment of at least three squadrons.

DIVISIONAL STRENGTHS*

Date	Officers	NCOs	Men	Total
31. 12. 42	310		10,569	10,879
4. 2. 43 ¹⁹	-	-	-	-
31. 12. 43 ²⁰	168	1,082	3,932	5,182
30. 6. 44	258	1,538	11,099	12,895
20. 9. 44	258	1,597	12,185	14,040

*Actual strengths (including men in hospitals, on detachment or on leave)/Iststärke.

Brigade and Divisional Commanders

- May 15, 1940 - May 1, 1942 _____ SS-Standartenführer Hermann Fegelein (21)
- May 1, 1942 - February 15, 1943 _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Wilhelm ("Willi") Bittrich
- February 15, 1943 - April 20, 1943 _____ SS-Standartenführer Fritz Freitag
- April 20, 1943 - November 1, 1943²² _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Hermann Fegelein
- January 1, 1944 - April 1, 1944 _____ SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei und Waffen-SS Bruno Streckenbach
- April 1, 1944 - February 1945 _____ SS-Obersturmbannführer (at first in temporary command... promoted on April 20, 1944 to SS-Standartenführer, on November 11, 1944 to SS-Oberführer and on January 15, 1945 to SS-Brigadeführer) und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Joachim Rumohr (committed suicide)

¹⁹At this date, the SS Cavalry Division was undermanned by approximately 3,000 men.

²⁰These figures are inclusive of the Field Replacement Battalion but exclude SS Cavalry Regiment 17 and the Hound Detachment (SS-Kav.-Rgt. 17 + Hundesstaffel = 38 officers, 209 NCOs and 1,573 men with a total of 1,820). At this time, the SS Cavalry Regiment 18 was not ready and is also not included (10 officers, 149 NCOs and 1,412 men with a total of 1,581).

²¹Not to be confused with his brother, Waldemar Fegelein. Hermann held SS Number 66 680.

²²Fegelein's "Personal-Nachweis für Führer der Waffen-SS".

SS-BRIGADE-FÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS "WILLI" BITTRICH



SS-STANDARTENFÜHRER FRITZ FREITAG (HERE AN SS-BRIGADE-FÜHRER)



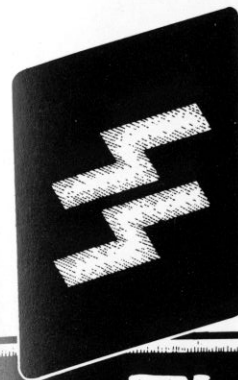
SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS HERMANN FEGELIN

NOTE:

It is possible that SS-Standartenführer Gustav Lombard took over temporary command of the Division in the period between November 1 and December 31, 1943. On January 30, 1944, he was in command of the 1st Cavalry Regiment of the 8th SS Cavalry Division. (23)

²³Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP (SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer - SS-Standartenführer), Stand vom 30. Januar 1944.

Divisional and Unit Insignia



- (1) After the naming of the Division on March 12, 1944, all elements wore the "Florian Geyer" cuffband which was originally in Gothic script (RZM pattern), then in block lettering (Bevo pattern).⁽²⁴⁾ The SS runes were originally worn on the right collar patch.

Florian Geyer



- (2) The order establishing the "4. Reiter-Regiment für die SS-Kavallerie-Division" dated August 9, 1943, stated that its members were to wear the cornflower on the collar patch⁽²⁵⁾. This Regiment later became SS-Kavallerie-Regiment 18.

²⁴A cuffband "SS Kavallerie Division" is illustrated and described as being of Czech manufacture in *Waffen-SS - Its Divisional Insignia*, p. 32. Such bands are known to exist and another known example has in fact been found in Prague. It was almost certainly not an official issue (in fact, it lacks the required hyphens: "SS-Kavallerie-Division") and was probably not intended for or worn by the "Florian Geyer" Division. Evidence for this is that no trace of such a cuffband appears in original documents so far examined. On the contrary, the following two sources state explicitly that (at the time they appeared) no cuffbands were worn by the Division:

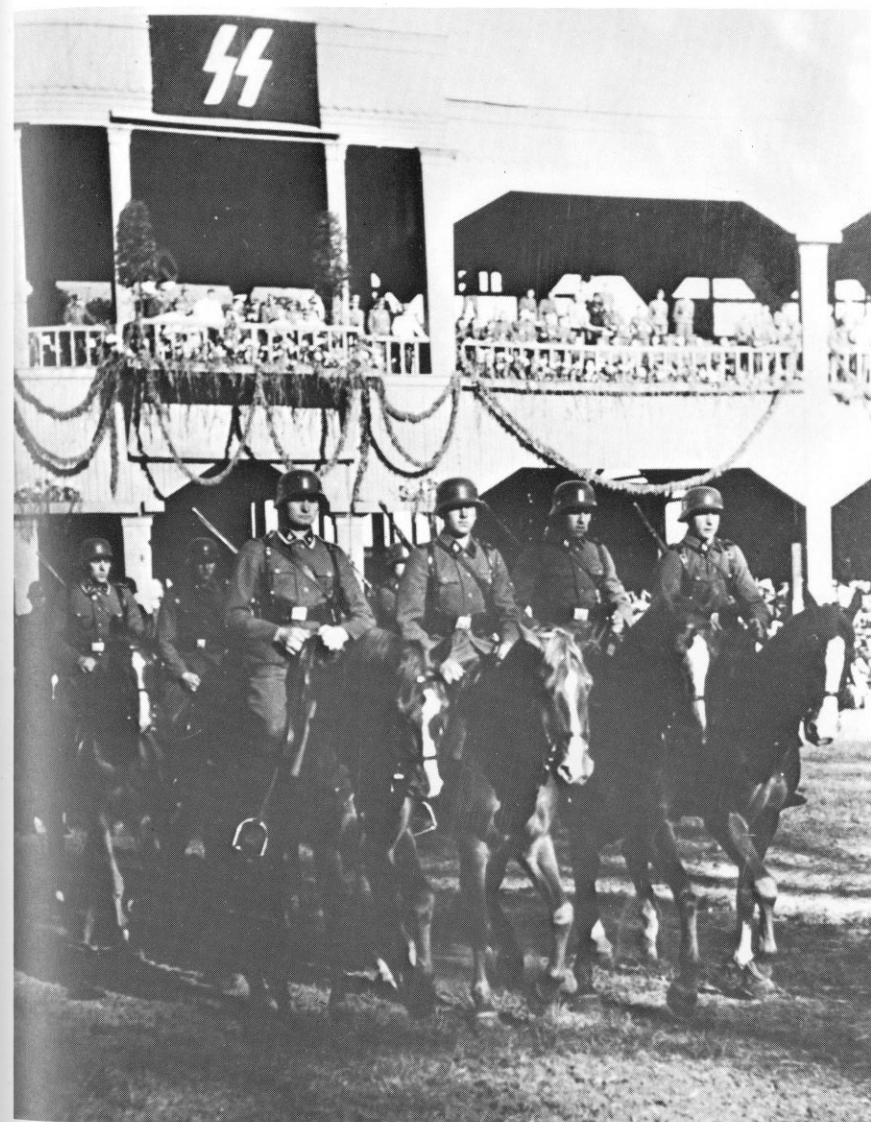
- (a) SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12. 11. 43, *Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS*;
 (b) *Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS*, 5. Jahrgang, Berlin 15. 2. 44, Nr. 4, Z. 64.

²⁵Der RFSS, Tgb. Nr. 35/116/43 geh., v. 9. 8. 1943.

AN SS-HAUPTSTURM-FÜHRER FROM "FLORIAN GEYER" (NOTE CUFFBAND).



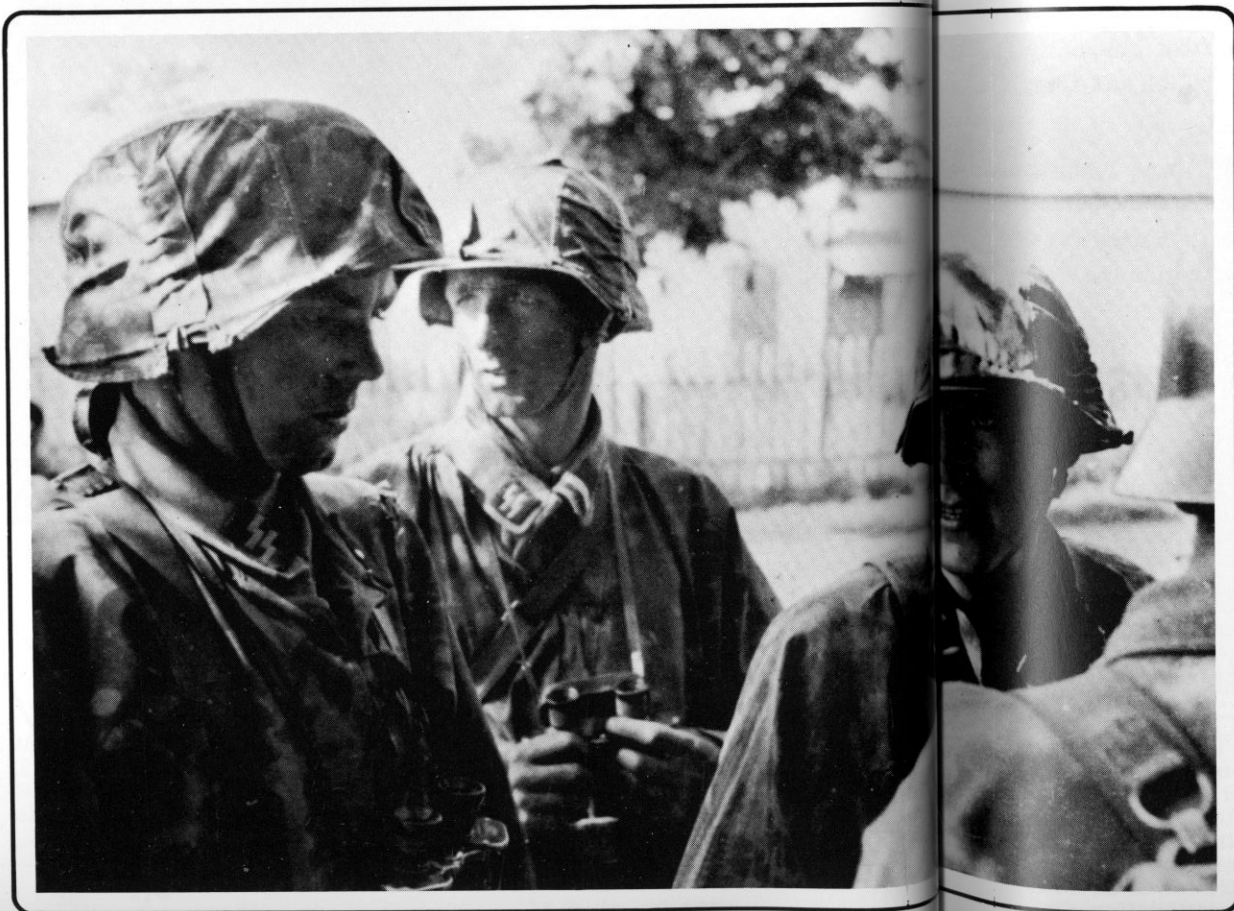
(3) Members of the original SS Totenkopf Cavalry Regiments wore the Totenkopf on the collar patch until early 1941 (26), then the SS runes. Regimental numbers "1" and "2" were also worn by these Regiments on the shoulder straps for a time.



DIVISIONAL VEHICLE SYMBOL

The tilted sword of the SS Cavalry Brigade with the addition of a horse's head in profile.





9. **H**-Panzer-Division
"Hohenstaufen"

EVOLUTION AND TITLES OF 9. SS-PANZER-DIVISION "HOHENSTAUFEN"

December 31, 1942 - March 1, 1943¹ (9.) SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division (2)
March 1, 1943 - October 22, 1943 SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Hohenstaufen"
October 22, 1943 - October 26, 1943³ 9. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Hohenstaufen"
October 26, 1943 - May 1945 9. SS-Panzer-Division "Hohenstaufen"

History



On New Year's Eve 1942, Hitler agreed to the creation of two new divisions for the Waffen-SS. These were in fact to be sister divisions, the future and fortunes of which were to be similar in many ways and for much of the war. They were both formed as armoured divisions, but originally designated as mechanized infantry divisions, numbered the 9th and 10th, and named after two heroes of German military history.

The division which was later to be called "Hohenstaufen" was formed without a name in January 1943, during which month cadres were established in Berlin-Lichterfelde and a formation staff began gathering various elements. This division-to-be was the ninth formed within the Waf-

¹A study of field post numbers indicates that the Division was named on March 1, 1943.

²This Division was identified by the number "9" as it was the 9th Division of the Waffen-SS to be formed. This number was in use as early as January 1943 (see *Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS*, March 1, 1943, z. 80), which disproves the theory that the Division was first numbered on February 1, 1943.

³The effective date of this renaming has been variously reported as October 26, October 15, October 3 (from field post numbers) and even as early as September. In any case, it would be logical for the change-over to have taken place some days before the publication of the order: SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 1633/43 g.Kdos., v. 26.10.1943, *Umgliederung der 9. SS-Panz. Gren. Div. "Hohenstaufen" in 9. SS-Panz. Div. "Hohenstaufen"*. The designation "SS-Panzer-Division "Hohenstaufen"" (i. e. as a "Panzer-" division but unnumbered) had been used in an order signed by Hitler at his FHQ on October 3. This order had brought "Hohenstaufen" together with SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Reichsführer-SS" (see under the 16th Division in Volume 4 of this series) to form the IVth SS Armoured Corps (IV. SS-Pz.-Korps). The change-over in designation was repeated in SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt., Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12.11.1943, *Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS*,

fen-SS, and thus the number "9" appeared before its title to simplify identification.⁴ On February 8, 1943, those elements available for the new division were assembled at the training area (Truppenübungsplatz) Mailly-le-Camp, east of Paris between Châlons-sur-Marne and Troyes. In February, two contingents of men for the Division arrived from the LSSAH Replacement Battalion in Berlin-Lichterfelde, and in mid-February, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Wilhelm ("Willi") Bittrich took command.

NOTE:

"Hohenstaufen" was the name of a noble German family that provided German kings and emperors in the periods 1138 - 1208 and 1214 - 1254. The earliest known member of the family was Frederick, Count of Büren. He died in 1094, but his son, also named Frederick, built himself a castle at Staufen near Lorsch in Swabia. This was called Hohenstaufen and Frederick decided to adopt the name himself. When Conradin Hohenstaufen was beheaded in Italy in 1268, he left no heir and the male line of the Hohenstaufens became extinct. The 9th Division of the Waffen-SS was almost certainly named after Frederick Barbarossa, whom Hitler considered a great hero.



FRIEDERICK II DE HOHENSTAUFEN (1194-1250)

⁴This numbering before naming should not be confused with the overall numbering of Waffen-SS divisions in October 1943. The pre-naming number "9" was usually placed before the Division's title, but has also been found following it. German documents were not always accurate in so far as military designations were concerned.

The shortage of available manpower was a grave obstacle to this Division's formation and development. It had become so hard to recruit suitable volunteers that the SS Main Office⁵ actually forced men to volunteer, particularly from those undergoing their compulsory term in the National Labor Service (R. A. D.). Originally, as much as 70% of the Division's manpower were conscripts.

"Hohenstaufen" was a very young Division, with from 60% to 70% of its men coming from the years 1925/26... that is to say that almost three quarters of the Division's manpower were about 18 years of age. In the search for men, resort was also made to ethnic Germans, notably from Hungary.

All of 1943 was spent in France, training and preparing for action under Army Group D, O. K. W. Under the capable command of Wilhelm Bittrich, this formation was training in all forms of combat. As fate would have it, "Hohenstaufen" was especially well trained for operations against air-landings... training which would serve some members of the Division well the following year at Arnhem.

"Hohenstaufen" was placed under the 15th Army in May and sent to the Ypres area. In June, it was transferred to the Amiens area to take the place of a departing armoured division of the Army. The months of July until the end of the year were spent in further training, and in October a number of changes were made in the Division's order-of-battle. The SS-FHA ordered⁶ the detachment of a battery of artillery (Art. Abt.), the introduction of Panther tanks, and some other less important modifications. On the same day, the SS-FHA ordered that the Division be redesignated from a mechanized infantry (Panzergrenadier-) division to an armoured (Panzer-) division.⁷ This was mainly a change in name only as the Division had had sufficient tanks from the beginning to warrant being called a "Panzer-Division". On October 26, "Hohenstaufen's" two infantry regiments were renumbered from "1" and "2" to "19" and "20".

In early October, the IVth SS Armoured Corps (IV. SS-Panzer-Korps) had been formed with SS-Panzer-Division "Hohenstaufen" and SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Reichsführer-SS", controlled by a corps HQ staff (Gen. Kdo. IV. SS-Pz.-Korps).⁸

⁵As seen in Volume 2 of this series, the SS-Hauptamt controlled Waffen-SS recruiting.

⁶SS-FHA Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 1632/43 g. Kdos., v. 26.10.43.

⁷SS-FHA Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 1633/43 g. Kdos., v. 26.10.43. Umgliederung der 9. SS-Panz. Gren. Div. "Hohenstaufen" in 9. SS-Panz. Div. "Hohenstaufen".

On November 12, the 15th Motor-Cycle Company of the Division's second infantry regiment was detached and used as a cadre for the Reconnaissance Unit (Aufklärungs-Abt.) of the new 16th SS Mechanized Infantry Division "Reichsführer-SS". Other elements were also detached, including an anti-aircraft company (Fla-Kp.) and a survey troop (Messbatterie). December 1943 was spent in reserve under the 15th Army, Army Group D, and "Hohenstaufen" was under the ISt SS Armoured Corps in January 1944. In mid-February, it was transferred to the Nîmes/Avignon area, just inland from the Mediterranean coast, to take the place of the Panzer-Lehr-Division (Tank Demonstration Division). At that time, "Hohenstaufen" was still forming, with a view of being combat-ready by the 1st of March. Together with its sister Division, "Frundsberg" it made up Paul Hausser's IInd SS Armoured Corps, in O. K. W. reserve.

This was a grave period for the German forces in the east, and in March the situation was nearing disaster with the German 1st Armoured Army trapped in a Russian encirclement at Tarnopol. By the middle of the month, the Russians were at the Polish border and Hitler ordered four of his Panzer divisions to the eastern front. These were the Waffen-SS Divisions "Hohenstaufen" and "Frundsberg" (making up the IInd SS Armoured Corps⁹) and the Army's Panzer-Lehr-Division and the 349th Division. "Hohenstaufen" moved eastwards to Poland, then from Lvov (Lemberg) further east to Tarnopol. A counter-attack was launched, but was hindered by the mud of the spring thaw. The tanks were bogged down and severe losses sustained. On April 5, the 4th Armoured Army (in which "Hohenstaufen" was under the XXXXVIIIth Army Corps) attacked in force, with the IInd SS Armoured Corps attacking on the flank. In a violent attack, "Hohenstaufen" penetrated the Russian front held by the 1st Soviet Tank Army. On the 9th, the Division's forward tanks met up with the beleaguered German 1st Armoured Army, which was finally freed.

The Division was refitting in the north Ukraine in preparation for a new offensive near Kovel when the Allies landed at Normandy on June 6, 1944. On the 11th, Hitler cancelled the planned offensive in the east and ordered the transfer of the IInd SS Armoured Corps to France. The Third Reich was now trapped between two fronts. On the 12th, after four months of service in the east, the first men of the Division left Poland under

⁸FHQ, den 3.10.1943 (T-175/111/2635150).

⁹Another report shows that it was under the XXXXVIIIth Army Corps at this time.

the IInd SS Armoured Corps for France, there to serve under Armoured Group "West", Army Group B.

The Division is reported to have reached the Franco-German border on June 16. It was harassed en route by Allied air attacks and when Paul Hausser reported the arrival of his Corps on June 23, he determined that it would not be operational until the 25th. Hausser's task was to spearhead an offensive which would divide the Allied invaders. It was not to prove an easy task as the German divisions had arrived too late. The Allies had established a firm foothold, and from then on it was just a matter of time before the Germans were forced northwards and out of France.

"Hohenstaufen" was in action on June 28 along the Odon River, and the following day it fought fiercely against the British troops southwest of Caen. The battle for the small town was a bitter one, but the Germans



(LEFT) "HOHENSTAUFEIN" IN THE BATTLE NEAR CAEN.

(RIGHT) THE PANZERSCHRECK PROVED HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST ALLIED ARMOUR AT NORMANDY.



were unable to hold out and it eventually fell to the invaders. In July, the Division effectively cooperated in blocking the Anglo-Canadian offensive, particularly towards the end of the month when "Hohenstaufen" pushed General Dempsey's forces back at Villers-Bocage. Another action in this period was the American breakthrough at Avranches.

By mid-August, nineteen German divisions (five of which were Waffen-SS armoured divisions) found themselves trapped between the U. S. 3rd Army and the Canadian Army. This was to be known as the "Falaise Pocket". The only possible escape lay through a narrow gap between Falaise and Argentan, and the IInd SS Armoured Corps ("Hohenstaufen" plus "Das Reich"...under the 5th Armoured Army) managed to get

through to safety. By counter-attacking on August 21, the Corps managed to free a few more men, before the jaws of the pincer closed near Chambois...trapping some 60,000 German troops. The German forces began to retreat by August 22, on which day the IInd SS Armoured Corps was ordered to withdraw northwards to safety across the Seine, with "Hohenstaufen" engaging in bitter hand-to-hand combat while covering the rear. This fighting is reported to have been particularly fierce near Amiens.

"Hohenstaufen" had fought continuously and without replacements in Normandy since its arrival there in late June until its withdrawal on August 21. The divisional commander, SS-Oberführer Sylvester Stadler, who had taken over upon Bittrich's promotion on June 28 to command the IInd SS Armoured Corps, was wounded in late July, and being left behind in a hospital was temporarily replaced by SS-Oberführer und Oberst der



Schutzpolizei, Friedrich Wilhelm Bock. Field-Marshal Walther Model, commanding the 6th Armoured Army, Army Group B, ordered the IInd SS Armoured Corps northwards to join him in Holland on September 3. The battered Division was to come under Model's orders, rest and refit for its next engagement.

Retreating northwards through France, the Division provided a battalion to defend the line along the

GENERALFELDMARSCHALL WALTHER MODEL

river Meuse. Up to Rouen in the northwest above Paris, it skirted south of Brussels, crossed the Dutch border and arrived at the Veluwe area north of Arnhem on September 7.

On September 10, the order went out that the remnants of the Division, estimated at only 2,500 men or 20% of its original strength, were to be transferred to Germany for a complete refitting, handing over their weapons (including two batteries of field howitzers), vehicles and equipment to the sister division "Fruntsberg", which would stay at Arnhem and regroup. The men were on the point of leaving for the Reich by rail on September 17 when troops of the British 1st Airborne Division landed in the outskirts of Arnhem and near Nijmegen. This was part of "Operation Market Garden", in which the British air-landing at Arnhem took the unsuspecting Germans by surprise. It was intended to be the opening of a new offensive, which if successful, would cut all the German troops on the coast, at the V2 launching sites and the ports of Antwerp, Amsterdam and Rotterdam from their supplies from Germany. Further, it would have liberated northern Holland and by allowing the Allies to penetrate northern Germany would have shortened the war by months.

Under Model's orders, SS Battle Group (Kampfgruppe) "Harzer" was formed from the remnants of the "Hohenstaufen" Division. On the eve of the battle, Bittrich gave the following orders:

1. Division to reconnoitre in the direction of Arnhem and Nijmegen;
2. Division to go into action at once, taking the Arnhem bridge and destroying the enemy forces which have landed to the west of Arnhem at Oosterbeek. Immediate attack is essential. The aim is to seize and firmly hold the bridge at Arnhem."

SS Battle Group "Harzer" moved on Arnhem and two battalions of the "Hohenstaufen" Division with two battalions of the 6th Parachute Regiment took on the Guards Armoured Division behind Eindhoven.

On September 18, the Allies began to tire under the Axis attacks. On the 20th, the Division's Armoured Reconnaissance Unit (Pz.-A.A. 9) crossed the Arnhem bridge, the northern end of which had been held by British paratroopers under Colonel Frost. So ended four days of fierce fighting, with the lightly armed Allied defenders being overwhelmed by the numerically superior elements of the "Hohenstaufen" Division. The Waffen-SS troops, some of whom had been trained for operations against air-landings by Bittrich in France in 1943, took the decidedly upper hand on the 21st, and opened an all-out attack to destroy the 1st British Airborne Division. Many British soldiers fell into the hands of the Waffen-SS on the 25th and 26th, and on the 29th the Allies surrendered. This was con-

sidered a great victory for "Hohenstaufen", and especially for the commander of the Battle Group, SS-Standartenführer Walter Harzer, who was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on the 28th of September.

Elements of "Hohenstaufen" were transferred to western Germany to rest and be brought up to strength, and in October 1944, were located at Münster, Hamm, Paderborn, Gütersloh and probably Siegen. While in Germany, numbers were made up with Luftwaffe personnel and other remnants. In October, the last remaining elements of SS Battle Group "Harzer" were reintegrated and the Division was sent to an assembly area at Müntstereifel, near Aachen. There, it rested and refitted under the 6th Armoured Army in preparation for the coming Ardennes offensive. This Armoured Army, originally made up of SS Divisions "Hohenstaufen", "LSSAH", "Das Reich" and "HJ", later became the 6th SS Armoured Army, and was commanded by SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer und Generaloberst der Waffen-SS Josef ("Sepp") Dietrich. This was to be the strongest army participating in the offensive, and it was given the task of advancing along the northern flank of attack and to take Antwerp... the Allies' principal supply port.

The Ardennes offensive ("Battle of the Bulge") was launched on December 16, 1944, and "Hohenstaufen" took part alongside the 2nd SS Armoured Division "Das Reich" and the Army's 560th Division under the IInd SS Armoured Corps. The plan was for "Hohenstaufen" to exploit the Corps' attack, and on December 18, "Hohenstaufen" and "Das Reich" were fighting in the dense forests between Malmédy and St. Vith. The defences held and St. Vith only fell to the Germans when the LXVIth Corps (18th and 62nd Divisions) attacked from the east and "Hohenstaufen" and the Führer Escort Brigade (Führerbegleitbrigade) came in from the north. Fighting followed around Vielsalm, and "Hohenstaufen" was forced back, leaving the St. Vith/Laroche road clear.

At first, the overall advance was strong, and after only two days some 50 German divisions were on the move in the Ardennes offensive. But Hitler's gamble was doomed from the beginning, and the last German offensive of the war on the western front failed. Heavy road congestion and shortages of fuel had slowed the progress of the élite armoured divisions, who rather than winning the battle had hardly a chance to take part in it. The advance petered out by January 18, 1945, at which time "Hohenstaufen" was under the XIIIth Corps, 6th Armoured Army, Army Group B. In February, having been badly battered in the Houffalize bottle neck, it was in O.K.W. reserve, and on March 3, was transferred to Hungary by rail where it came under the XXIInd Corps, 2nd Armoured Army, Army Group "South".

The German offensive against the massed Soviet forces in Hungary fared no better than the Ardennes offensive, and "Hohenstaufen" suffered severe losses in the area west of Budapest. By the middle of March, the offensive ground to a halt, with "Hohenstaufen" nearly reaching the Danube but being forced back. It was at the news of this defeat that an enraged Hitler ordered that the men of the 1st, 2nd, 9th and 12th Divisions of the Waffen-SS should be deprived of their hard-won decorations and prized cuffbands. Remnants of the Division were formed into two battle groups, which in April fought their way back to Austria. In Vienna, the Division was under the orders of SS-Pz.-A. O. K. 6, but on April 13, the 6th SS Armoured Army left the Austrian capital after fierce fighting. "Hohenstaufen" fought on in Austria, and in early May surrendered to the Americans near Steyr.

NOTE:

While under the 6th Armoured Army in 1945, "Hohenstaufen" took on the assumed name "Ausbildungsgruppe Süd" to try and confuse enemy intelligence.

Order-of-Battle

(COMPOSITE)

Stab der Division
 Div.-Kartenstelle (mot)
 Musikzug
 Div.-Begleit-Kompanie (mot)

Schnelles Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment der 9. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division(10)/Kradschützen-Regiment d. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division 9(11)
reorganized into SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9 in August of 1943

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 19 (previously SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 1 d. 9. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division)

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 20 (previously SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 2 d. 9. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division)

SS-Panzer-Regiment 9

SS-Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung 9 (established on February 1, 1943 and listed in KTB/OKW of February 9, 1943)

SS-Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 9 (existed for a short time in 1943)

SS-(Panzer-) Artillerie-Regiment 9

SS-Flak-Abteilung 9

SS-Fla-Kompanie (detached)

¹⁰KTB/OKW.

¹¹From field post numbers.

SS-(Panzer-) Nachrichten-Abteilung 9

SS-Beobachtungs-Batterie 9 (formed in 1944 - later disbanded)

SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9 (formed from I./Schnelles Pz.-Gren.-Rgt. d. 9. SS-Pz.-Gren.-Div.)

SS-(Panzer-) Pionier-Bataillon 9

SS-Nachschubtruppen 9

SS-(Panzer-) Instandsetzungs-Abteilung 9

SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 9/SS-Verwaltungstruppen-Abteilung 9

2 SS-Sanitäts-Kompanien 9

SS-Feldlazarett (existed for a period)
 1. u. 2. SS-KrKw.-Züge 9/KrKw. Kolonnen

SS-Feldpostamt 9

SS-Kriegsberichter-Zug 9¹²

SS-Feldgendarmerie-Trupp 9

SS-Feldersatz-Bataillon 9

SS-Ausbildungs-Bataillon 9 (formed in 1944)

DIVISIONAL STRENGTHS*

Date	Officers	NCOs	Men	Total
6. 4. 43				13, 718
3. 5. 43				18, 770
2. 6. 43				19, 177
31. 12. 43	485	2, 684	16, 442	19, 611
1. 1. 44	466	2, 587	15, 181	18, 234
1. 2. 44	466	2, 577	14, 369	17, 412
1. 3. 44	450	2, 730	14, 487	17, 667
1. 6. 44	458	3, 350	13, 804	17, 612
30. 6. 44	433	2, 539	12, 926	15, 898
10. 12. 44	434	3, 251	15, 920	19, 605
1. 45	444	3, 261	15, 757	19, 462
3. 45	489	3, 089	13, 701	17, 279

*Actual strengths (including men in hospitals, on detachment or on leave)/Iststärke.

¹²This unit may have become either a "Trupp" or a "Kompanie" during its existence. It may also have been called "Propaganda" rather than "Kriegsberichter". It had ceased to exist by 1945.

Divisional Commanders

February 15, 1943 - July 10, 1944 ¹³	SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS (promoted on May 1, 1943 to SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS) Wilhelm ("Willi") Bittrich
July 15, 1944 - July 31, 1944 ¹⁴	SS-Oberführer Sylvester Stadler
August 1, 1944 - October 10, 1944 ¹⁵	SS-Oberführer und Oberst der Schutzpolizei Friedrich Wilhelm Bock
October 10, 1944 - May 1945	SS-Oberführer (promoted on to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS) Sylvester Stadler



SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS "WILLI" BITTRICH

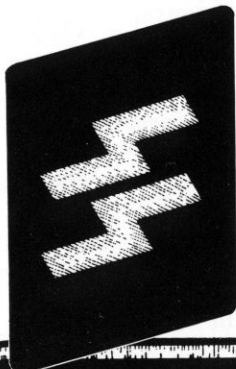


SS-OBERFÜHRER SYLVESTER STADLER (HERE AN SS-STURMBANNFÜHRER)



SS-OBERFÜHRER UND OBERST DER SCHUTZPOLIZEI FRIEDRICH WILHELM BOCK (HERE AN SS-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER)

Divisional and Unit Insignia

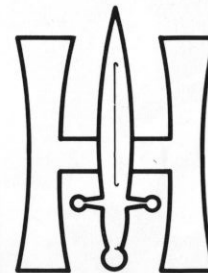


- (1) After the naming of the Division in 1943, all elements wore the "Hohenstaufen" cuffband in block lettering (Bevo pattern)(16). The SS runes were worn throughout on the collar patch.

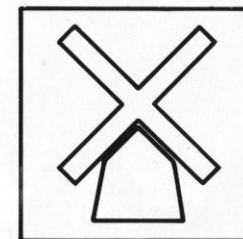
Hohenstaufen

DIVISIONAL VEHICLE SYMBOLS

- (1) An upright sword superimposed on a capital letter "H".
- (2) A red windmill on a yellow square (possibly adopted after the victory at Arnhem in September 1944).



(1)



(2)

¹³ Stadler took over Bittrich's command on June 28, when the latter took command of the IInd SS Armoured Corps. SS-Standartenführer Thomas Müller, commander of the Division's 2nd Infantry Regiment, took over temporarily from July 10 to July 15.

¹⁴ Wounded at Normandy in late July, his command passed temporarily to Bock.

¹⁵ SS-Standartenführer Walter Harzer commanded SS Battle Group "Harzer" in September.

¹⁶ Believed to have been introduced the day the Division was formed.



"YOU WILL LAUGH! TODAY IS SUNDAY!"



10. SS-Panzer-Division
"Frundsberg"

EVOLUTION AND TITLES OF 10. SS-PANZER-DIVISION "FRUNDSBERG"

January 15, 1943¹ - April 19, 1943____ 10. SS-Division
April 19, 1943² - November 20, 1943__ (10.)³ SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Karl der Grosse",⁴
November 20, 1943⁵ - May 1945_____ 10. SS-Panzer-Division "Frundsberg"

History



The division which finally received the name "Frundsberg" was a sister division of "Hohenstaufen", and in many respects its history was the same and can be found in the previous section of this book. For this reason, and to avoid duplication, the story of "Frundsberg" will be simplified where it paralleled that of "Hohenstaufen".

Hitler authorized this Division in December 1942 and its date of creation can be taken as January 15, 1943, when its armoured regiment was ordered. Just as with "Hohenstaufen", it was to have sufficient armour to justify the designation of a "Panzer-Division", but was as first called a "Panzer-Grenadier-Division".

¹The date taken for the formation of the Division is that on which its armoured regiment was ordered. A study of field post numbers indicates that the Division was formed on February 1, 1943.

²The words "Panzer-Grenadier-" are thought to have been included in the title in April, and the form "10. SS-Division "Karl der Grosse"" has also been encountered. Tassin shows the name "Karl der Grosse" as having been introduced on June 1, 1943, whereas in fact it appeared officially earlier (e.g. in the *Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der N. S. D. A. P.*, Stand vom 15. Mai 1943).

³The Division was identified by the number "10" as it was the tenth division of the Waffen-SS to be formed.

⁴The name "Frundsberg" was used by the Division when still "Panzer-Grenadier" (10. SS-Panz. Gren.-Div. "Frundsberg"... Ref.: SS-FHA, Amt II, Org. Abt. Ia/II Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12. 11. 1943, *Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS*).

⁵Hitler ordered this last change in designation (i.e. from a "Panzer-Grenadier" to a "Panzer" division, as well as the introduction of the name) on October 3, 1943 (FHQ, den 3. 10. 1943 - T-175/111/2635151). The corresponding SS-FHA order followed on October 22, 1943. In spite of the dates of these orders, however, the change-over was effective from November 20, 1943.

Cadres were established in East Prussia and the Division was built up under Army Group D, O. K. W., in southwestern France during 1943. Its infantry regiments (Pz. -Gren. -Regimenter) and other elements were formed in February and placed under the 1st Army for the summer. It was further developed while in the Charente Département around Angoulême, inland from the Bay of Biscay, then in the Pyrénées under the 15th Army. In the last months of the year, the Division was in reserve of the 19th Army on the Mediterranean coast and in Normandy.

Thus 1943 saw the creation, establishment and training of this new Waffen-SS Division. At first, it had no name and was identified by the number "10"⁶, simply as it was the tenth division of the Waffen-SS to be formed. In spite of the fact that Hitler did not like the name, the Division was called "Karl der Grosse"⁷ in April 1943. This was official for a time and appeared in official documents of the period. It had been dropped by October 3, 1943, however, when from his Field H. Q. Hitler named the Division after a historical figure more to his liking, "Frundsberg"⁸.

⁶Usually placed before, but sometimes after its title. Quoted examples include "10. SS-Division" and "SS-Pz. Gren. Div. (10. SS-Div.)".

⁷"Charles the Great", i.e. Charlemagne. Berger had been recruiting for a regiment by this name (SS-Standarte "Karl der Grosse") in February 1943, and later in the war the French division of the Waffen-SS was named "Charlemagne". The original was no favourite of Hitler's and he disliked the name.

⁸Named after Georg von Frundsberg (1473 - 1528). A famous soldier and military hero, he fought with bravery and skill under the Hapsburgs against the Swiss, French, Venetians and in Holland.



GEORG VON FRUNDSBERG

On October 3, Hitler ordered from his FHQ that the VIIth SS Armoured Corps (VII. SS-Panzer-Korps) should be formed. This consisted of SS-Panzer-Division "Fruntsberg" and SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Götz von Berlichingen" (see under the 17th Division in Volume 4) controlled by a corps HQ staff (Gen.Kdo. VII. SS-Pz.-Korps).⁹

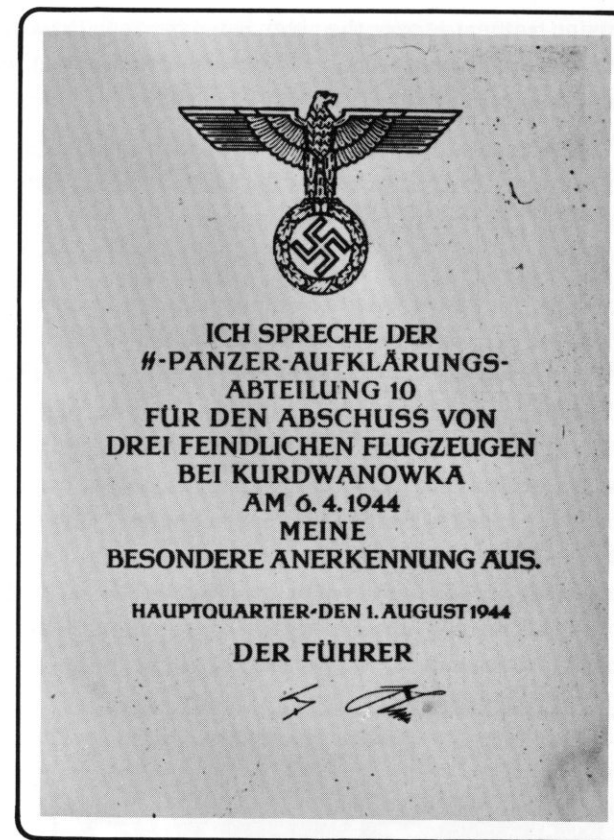
On October 22, the Division and its elements were numbered "10" in the overall re-numbering of the Waffen-SS, while its two remaining infantry regiments were re-numbered from "1" and "2" to "21" and "22".¹⁰ Hitler's order of October 3 and that of the SS-FHA of October 22, were put into effect on November 20, when the Division was re-designated from a mechanized infantry (Pz.-Gren.-) to an armoured (Panzer-) division and named "Fruntsberg".

The fact that this change was in name only can be borne out by the fact that the Division was weakened, rather than strengthened, by Hitler's order. The IIIrd Battery of SS Artillery Regiment 10 and the motor-cycle (15. Kradschützen-) companies of the two infantry regiments were detached and used for the formation of a new Waffen-SS division, later to be named "Götz von Berlichingen". The Division's survey troop (Beobachtungs-Batterie) was also detached and all the Division received was a searchlight detachment (Scheinwerferstaffel) and an extra bridging column (Brückenkolonne).

In January 1944, the Division was still in France and peacefully deployed under the IInd SS Armoured Corps, Army Group D. But the situation in the east was becoming critical as the great Russian offensive launched on the previous December 13 had rolled over the German Army Group "Centre" and reached as far as the pre-war Polish frontier. During this highly successful Russian advance, considerable German forces were trapped, including the "Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler" and the 2,500 strong SS Battle Group from the "Das Reich" Division. Hitler was forced to commit the last of his Waffen-SS armoured reserve, and in March Paul Hauser's IInd SS Armoured Corps, with its armoured divisions "Fruntsberg" and "Hohenstaufen", was rushed from France to the eastern front. The Corps reached Lvov (Lemberg) and from March 28 until April 2, "Fruntsberg" was in the process of being transferred and assembling in the area of Army Group "North Ukraine" (Heeresgruppe "Nordukraine"). Bitter fighting followed, with a successful breakthrough

⁹ FHQ, den 3.10.1943 (T-175/111/2635150).

¹⁰ SS-FHA, Amt II, Org. Abt. Ia/II Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g.Kdos., v. 22.10.1943, *Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS*.



HITLER SENT SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THREE ENEMY AIRCRAFT BY SS-PANZER-AUFKLÄRUNGS-ABTEILUNG 10, NEAR KURDWANOWKA ON APRIL 6, 1944.

on April 6 at Buchach (Buczacz) which allowed the Division to link-up with the encircled German 1st Armoured Army. Fierce fighting continued south of Tarnopol, mainly near Buchach and on the Strypa River.

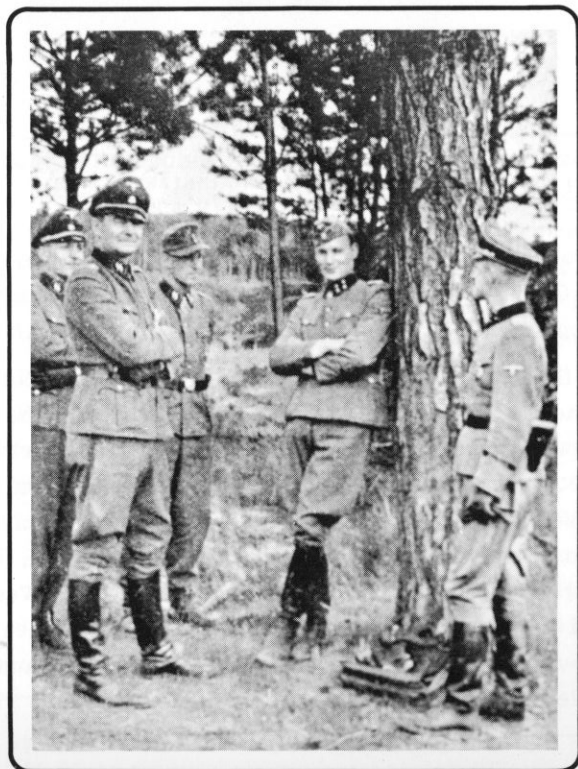
"Fruntsberg" then waged static warfare under Army Group "North Ukraine", refitting in June when the Allies landed at Normandy. On the 12th of June, "Fruntsberg" was withdrawn from the eastern theatre and transferred under the IInd SS Armoured Corps to meet the Allied invaders in France. As was the case with its sister division, "Fruntsberg" arrived too late and was unable to force the Allied troops back into the sea. Under the IInd SS Armoured Corps (in turn under Armoured Group "West", Army Group B¹¹), it sustained heavy losses at Caen and Avranches. Trapped in the Falaise-Argentan pocket, it was almost annihilated and only remnants were able to escape and make their way to the north. What was

¹¹ In August 1944, the Division is also reported under Panzergruppe Eberbach, and under the LXXXIVth Corps, 7th Army.

left of the Division retreated over the river Seine between Rouen and Paris, fighting near Compiègne, where but a few years before a victorious Germany had humiliated the French in surrender.

In August and early September, the Division passed through St. Quentin, Péronne, Cambrai and Arras. It fought defensive actions through Belgium in September, and finally the remnants stopped for rest and refitting in the area between Arnhem in the north, and Nijmegen in the south.

All that remained of its sister division "Hohenstaufen" was also resting in this area, and the plan was to send "Hohenstaufen" back to Germany for a complete refitting, passing its vehicles, equipment and weapons to "Fruntsberg", which was to reform in Holland. Before much of this had been accomplished, however, the British 1st Airborne Division landed in the Arnhem area on September 17, taking part in an operation code-named "Market Garden" (see under history of "Hohenstaufen" Division). While remnants of its sister division were formed into an SS battle group, part of "Fruntsberg" also joined in the battle. The lightly armed British troops were overwhelmed by the numerically superior German forces, and were forced to surrender on September 29.



THE FIRST 1a OF THE DIVISION (CHIEF OF STAFF) SS-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER H. LINGNER WITH OFFICERS OF THE II. SS-PANZER-KORPS.

The "Fruntsberg" Division had been reduced by this time to a battle group (SS-Kampfgruppe "Fruntsberg"), and was reported under the IInd SS Armoured Corps, 1st Parachute Army (Fallschirmarmee Student), Army Group B in October/November. In November¹², it was transferred to Germany under the VIth SS Armoured Corps, Army Group D, where it fought the Allies to the north (near Linnich and Geilenkirchen) and to the northeast (near Jülich) of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). This fighting continued into December and January 1945 under the 5th Armoured Army.

Towards the end of January 1945, "Fruntsberg" was sent to the Upper Rhine front to take on the ever-advancing U.S. forces. During this period, it was part of Army Group "Upper Rhine". It then fought in the Saar and in February to the southwest in Alsace around Strasbourg.

The war was drawing to its inevitable close for the Axis and "Fruntsberg" was transferred to the eastern front in February under the XXXIXth Army Corps¹³, 11th Army, Army Group "Vistula" in an attempt to keep the Russians away from Berlin. Towards the end of the month and into March, the Division fought in Pomerania (under the 9th Army, Army Group "Vistula"). In April, it was placed under Army Group "Centre", and saw action in the Lausitz area. The Russians moved closer and closer to Berlin and "Fruntsberg" tried in vain to hold them off at various towns close to the capital... Stettin (Szczecin) and Stargard to the northeast, and Fürstenwalde on the very outskirts to the southeast. Hitler is said to have inspected some survivors of the Division at the bunker on his last birthday, April 20, 1945. The Division was under the 4th Armoured Army, Army Group "Centre", in May, fighting near Cottbus and further south in Saxony. The "Fruntsberg" Division moved to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under Army Group "Centre" ("Schörner") and entered Russian captivity at Schönau.

¹²Field post numbers show the Division under the LXXXVIIIth Army Corps, 15th Army, Army Group B in November 1944.

¹³"Fruntsberg" is reported as having been under the XXXIIth Corps alongside the Polizei-Division in early 1945.

Order-of-Battle

(COMPOSITE)

Stab der Division

SS-Div. -Kartenstelle (mot)

Musikzug

SS-Div. -Begleit-Kompanie (mot)

SS-Schnelles Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 10/SS-Kradschützen-Regiment 10 (disbanded in the summer of 1943 and its IInd Battalion used to form SS-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 10)

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 21 (previously SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 1 d. 10. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division... its motor-cycle company (15. Kradschützen-Kompanie) was detached and used for "Götz von Berlichingen")

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 22 (previously SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 2 d. 10. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division... its motor-cycle company (15. Kradschützen-Kompanie) was detached and used for "Götz von Berlichingen")

SS-Panzer-Regiment 10 (its Ist (Panther) Battalion only served with the Division for a short time)

SS-Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung

SS-Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung 10 (formed for the battle of Normandy)

SS-Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 10

SS-(Panzer-) Artillerie-Regiment 10 (IIIrd Battery detached and used for "Götz von Berlichingen")

SS-Flak-Abteilung 10

SS-Panzer-Nachrichten-Abteilung 10

SS-(Panzer-) Aufklärungs-Abteilung 10/SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 10

SS-Nachschubtruppen 10

SS-Instandsetzungs-Abteilung 10/SS-Panzer-Instandsetzungs-Abteilung 10

SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 10/SS-Verwaltungsgruppen-Abteilung 10

SS-Sanitäts-Abteilung 10 (the medical elements were thus grouped for a time)

2 SS-Sanitäts-Kompanien 10

SS-Feldlazarett (existed for a period)

1.-3. SS-KrKw.-Züge/1.-3. KrKw.-Kolonnen (grouped into an SS-KrKw Kompanie for a time)

SS-Feldpostamt 10

SS-Kriegsberichter-Zug/Kompanie 10

SS-Feldgendarmerie-Trupp/Kompanie 10

SS-Feldersatz-Bataillon 10

DIVISIONAL STRENGTHS*

Date	Officers	NCOs	Men	Total
10. 4. 43				13,882
2. 5. 43				18,551
5. 6. 43				18,846
5. 8. 43	485	2,515	16,498	19,498
18. 9. 43	502	2,738	15,848	19,088
1. 11. 43	497	2,621	15,238	18,356
5. 12. 43	488	2,612	15,273	18,373
31. 12. 43	487	2,722	16,104	19,313
1. 1. 44	499	2,627	15,807	18,933
5. 3. 44	483	2,666	15,316	18,465
5. 4. 44	474	2,619	15,164	18,257
1. 6. 44	426	2,432	14,165	17,023
30. 6. 44	374	2,266	10,912	13,552
8. 12. 44	341	2,713	12,488	15,542
1. 2. 45	432	3,470	16,202	20,104
25. 3. 45	369	2,670	12,028	15,067
13. 4. 45	369	2,670	12,028	15,067



THE I/O OF THE DIVISION (CHIEF SUPPLY OFFICER) SS-STURMBANNFÜHRER RÖSCH.



THE ADJUTANT OF THE DIVISION SS-STURMBANNFÜHRER REINECKE.

Divisional Commanders

- (1943 _____) SS-Standartenführer Michel Lippert (14)
- 1943 - November 15, 1943¹⁵ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Lothar Debes
- November 15, 1943 - May 1, 1944¹⁶ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS (promoted on January 30, 1944, to SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS) Karl von Treuenfeld
- May 1, 1944 - May 1945 _____ SS-Standartenführer (promoted in May 1944 to SS-Oberführer and on September 7, 1944, to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS) Heinz Harmel (17)



SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS
LOTHAR DEBES

¹⁴Lippert is believed to have helped organize the new division in 1943, prior to Debes' appointment.

¹⁵Also reported as December 13, 1943.

¹⁶Also reported as April 28, 1944.

¹⁷Harmel was nick-named "Der Alte Frundsberg".

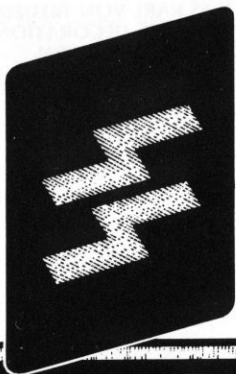


SS-GRUPPENFÜHRER UND
GENERALLEUTNANT DER WAFFEN-SS
KARL VON TREUENFELD
AWARDING DECORATIONS TO
MEN OF HIS DIVISION.



SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS
HEINZ HARMEL

Divisional and Unit Insignia



- (1) After the naming of the Division in 1943, all elements wore the "Frundsberg" cuffband in block lettering (Bevo pattern)(18). The SS runes were worn throughout on the collar patch.

Frundsberg



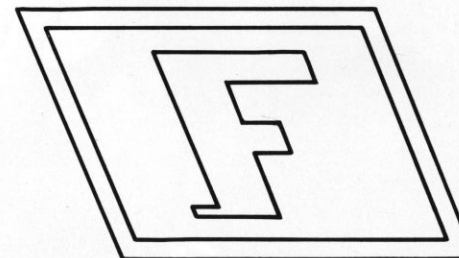
THE FIRST GENERAL STAFF OFFICER, SS-STURMBANNFÜHRER STOLLEY WITH THE DIVISION'S ORDNANCE OFFICER.

DIVISIONAL VEHICLE SYMBOLS

- (1) A Gothic letter "F", having a small parallelogram(19) as its cross bar, superimposed on a slanting oak-leaf....all within a shield. Known to have been in use in December 1944, it also appeared on the divisional stationery.
- (2) Allied Intelligence in 1945(20), provided a variation which had been reported in October 1944. This was a block capital letter "F" in various colours (denoting unit) on a yellow parallelogram(19).



(1)



(2)

¹⁸Believed to have been introduced the day the Division was formed.

¹⁹The tactical symbol denoting a tank company.

²⁰German Divisional Emblems, MIRS(D) - EMB - 1/45, London.



11. **W**-Freiwilligen-
Panzer-Grenadier-Division
"Nordland"

EVOLUTION AND TITLES OF
11. SS-FREIWILLIGEN-PANZER-GRENADIER-DIVISION "NORDLAND"

Kampfverband "Waräger"¹

Germanische-Freiwilligen-Division (2)

11. (germ.) SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division (3)

March 17, 1943 - November 12, 1943— (11.)⁴ SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Freiwilligen-Division "Nordland"

November 12, 1943 - May 3, 1945— 11. SS-Freiwilligen-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Nordland"



History

The first phase in employing north and west European volunteers in the SS followed the German occupation of the respective countries in 1940⁵. SS-VT regiments were formed with non-specific names, so as to allow a mixture of "Germanic" races to serve in each. The Germans occupied Norway and Denmark, and on Hitler's birthday (April 20, 1940), he ordered the foundation of SS Regiment "Nordland". Five weeks later, on May 25, the "Westland" Regiment was formed from volunteers from occupied Holland and Flanders

The "Nordland" and "Westland" Regiments, in December 1940, were grouped with the almost exclusively German SS Regiment "Germania", a regiment of artillery and the required support elements to form a "Germanic Division", which later received the name "Wiking". This first method proved satisfactory to a certain extent, for it attracted the avid national socialists and those advocating pan-Germanism from among the "Germanic" countries. There were drawbacks, however, such as the aversion on the part of some to serve with and under Germans and the fact that their German masters treated them extremely bad which created considerable ill-feeling and discontent.

¹Designation used in a document dated February 10, 1943. This name is believed to have been used before any men were in fact gathered together for the new division.

²Designation used in a document dated February 8, 1943.

³Designation used in a document dated March 22, 1943.

⁴Initially the number "11" was not always included in the title. It was in use by March 22, 1943.

⁵There were, in fact, some volunteers from these countries in the SS-VT before the war.

In an attempt to solve these problems and tap the nationalists and anti-Communists from the "Germanic" countries, agreement was finally given that closed national elements should be formed, made up of, and commanded by volunteers from each of the west European countries under German occupation⁶. This decision was made a few days after June 22, 1941, the fateful day on which Germany invaded Russia and opened the second phase of Waffen-SS employment of "Germanic" volunteers. Himmler's Waffen-SS was to have authority over the contingents raised in the "Germanic" countries, while the others (e.g. from France and Wallonia) fell under the auspices of the Wehrmacht.

Himmler and his recruiting chief, Gottlob Berger, had high hopes in these new "Legions", for not only did they meet the prospective volunteers' demands for a closed national unit, but also the time had come when intensive recruiting drives could be launched on the theme of the real or imaginary "Bolshevik-Asiatic threat to Europe". A hurdle to recruiting had been eliminated, and with Germany now at war with Russia the so-called "European crusade against Bolshevism" could be used as an effective propaganda device to draw in large numbers of west European volunteers.

The theory was for the Waffen-SS to form volunteer legions from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Holland and Flanders. In fact, Legions⁷ from all these countries were formed during the summer of 1941, with the exception of Sweden. The legionnaires were not to be members of the SS, were not to wear the SS runes on the collar patch⁸ and took a revised oath. They were, however, subject to the privileges and obligations that membership of the SS entailed⁹.

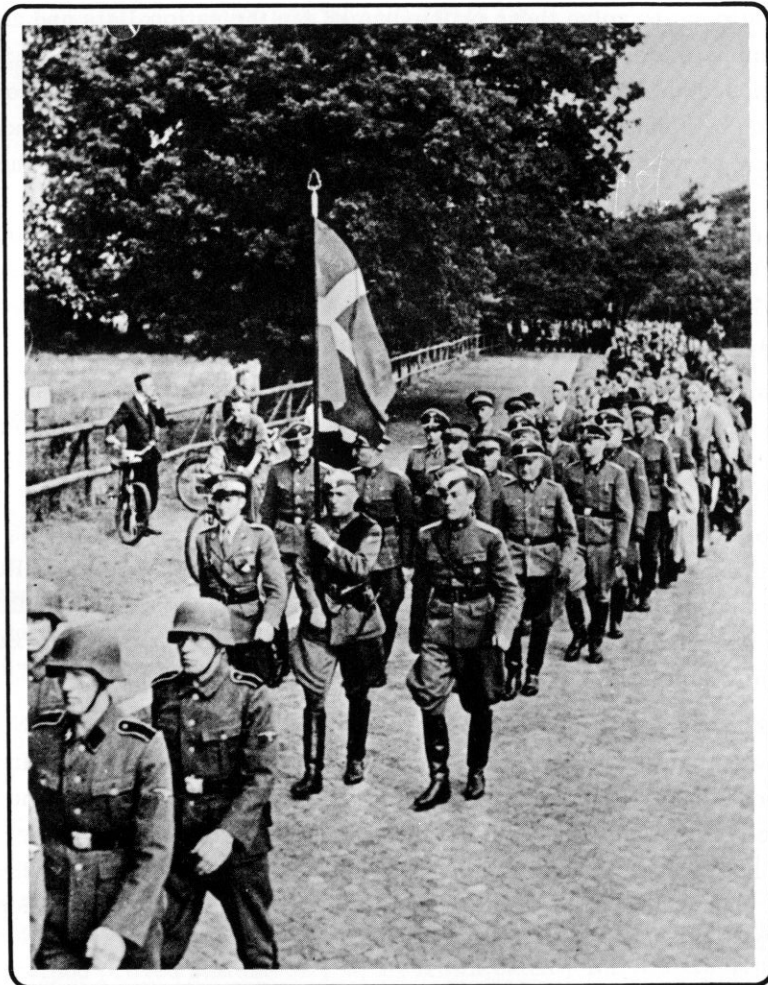
Although the legions fought well on the Russian front, it soon became apparent that they were not such a good idea after all. In the first place, they had to be manned, and for more than one reason the promising initial surge of volunteers slowed down to sub-requirement level. The men were far from happy and the heart of the matter was again the total

⁶A legion was in fact planned from Sweden... a neutral country.

⁷All were called "Legions" except for the Danish contingent, which was designated a "Free Corps" (Freikorps Dänemark/Frikorps Danmark) to commemorate a similar anti-Bolshevik Danish element dating back to 1918 (see article "Germanische Freiwillige" in Das Reich, April 25, 1943).

⁸Some did... see under "Hermann von Salza" in Nordland's Divisional and Unit Insignia section.

⁹As they joined the Waffen-SS for only a limited period, they did not qualify for full Waffen-SS retirement privileges.



1st BATTALION, "FREIKORPS DÄNMARK" . . .NOTE COLUMN OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE BACKGROUND.

lack of understanding on the part of the Germans. The legions were mis-managed, promises were not kept, and the volunteers soon had a very different picture of the "crusade" upon which they had embarked to "save their homelands from Bolshevism". In spite of the appalling moral conditions under which the legionnaires had to serve, they fought well and bravely and shared the courageous recklessness which characterized their full Waffen-SS comrades. The losses were very high and therefore the already dwindling flow of new volunteers simply could not keep pace with the casualties.

So it was that in the spring of 1943, the SS-FHA decided to dissolve the "Germanic" legions and use their personnel to form larger and more efficient formations. The legionnaires themselves were not in fact consulted over their transfer to the Waffen-SS and some with time left

to serve, refused to do so. Many did, however, agree to the transfer and took the full version of the oath. So opened the third and final phase in the use of west Europeans in the Waffen-SS, in which the idea of closed national formations was partly discontinued. It was to lead to the creation of the "Germanic (SS) Corps" (Germanisches (SS) Korps... later the III. (germanisches) SS-Panzer-Korps), and its principal component, the "Nordland" Division.

Upon Himmler's request, Hitler authorized a second Waffen-SS division of west Europeans¹⁰ before the end of 1942. What was more in their minds, however, was the greater project of grouping all the "Germanic" members of the Waffen-SS into a single corps. The "Germanic Corps" was being planned in early 1943, with the hope that the formation would be under way on March 1. Himmler issued an order¹¹ in this respect on January 30, and Berger wrote to him about it on February 4 and 10. In the latter¹², he urged the Reichsführer-SS that no time be lost and submitted a detailed breakdown of all the men available... both foreigners and Germans, which totalled some 20,000 men.

According to a letter to Himmler from the SS-FHA dated February 8¹³, it appears that at first the new division was expected to consist of Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Estonian and Norwegian volunteers. These were to be drawn from the "Wiking" Division and the legions, as well as from the relevant replacement units¹⁴. By February 10, it had been decided not to include the Flemings, for not only were they few in number but also political expediency was against grouping them with the Dutch. The Flemish legion was consequently converted into an assault brigade (SS-Sturmbrigade "Langemarck"). Later the Estonians were also dropped from the plan, but a few individuals did eventually find their way into the ranks of the "Nordland" Division. Now only the Dutchmen, Danes and Norwegians remained for the new division. When Berger drew up his memorandum on February 10, 1943, the plan was to disband the Dutch and Norwegian legions on March 1, 1943, and gather their men at a military training area. The Danish Free Corps was also to be dissolved, but

¹⁰The first division was, of course, "Wiking". See Volume 2.

¹¹Befehl RF-SS 36/39/43 g., v. 30.1.1943.

¹²Berger to RF-SS, VS-Tgb.Nr. 698/43 geh. VI-Tgb.Nr. 333/43 geh. Dr. R/Ni "Germanisches Korps", v. 10.2.1943.

¹³SS-FHA, Ia, Tgb.Nr. II/845/43 geh. "Germanische Freiwilligen-Division", v. 8.2.1943.

¹⁴All the foreign infantry replacements for "Wiking" were found in Replacement Battalion (Ersatz-Bataillon) "Westland".

its men were to provide a regiment within "Battle Formation (Kampfverband) "Waräger""...an early designation for the division-to-be.

During February 1943, the method of forming the division was decided upon. The "Nordland" Regiment was to be detached from the "Wiking" Division, disbanded, and its men added to those coming from Legions "Niederlande" and "Norwegen" and Free Corps "Dänemark".

Himmler wrote a memorandum to his staff department on February 11, in which he laid out his plans for the division¹⁵. Basically these were that it should consist of three national infantry regiments (not to be mixed as were "Nordland" and "Westland", and to be named in their native spelling... "Nederland", "Norge" and "Danmark"), and should make up the Germanic Corps along with the "Wiking" Division. Looking for a suitable name to go with "Wiking" (Viking), he chose "Waräger" (Varangians), the name of another ancient and warlike nordic race¹⁶. The plans were made and the necessary preparations put into action. On March 17, 1943, the day before Regiment "Nordland" was detached from "Wiking", Hitler ordered that the name "Nordland" be taken up by the new division¹⁷. Thus, the Regiment's tradition was to be perpetuated, and Himmler's suggestion of the name "Waräger" ignored.

On March 18, Himmler issued a memorandum ordering the detachment of Regiment "Nordland" from Division "Wiking" and its use as a cadre for the new Division "Nordland"¹⁸. The legions were to be added two months later. Himmler's feelings on the project are worthy of note, and can be summarized as follows¹⁹. The legions were to be combined with the "Nordland" Regiment for "practical, military reasons". "Nordland" was not to be a division of the SS, which fact was to be shown as its members wore the Sun Wheel emblem (Sonnenrad) on the collar patch instead of the SS runes. It was to consist of three infantry regiments named "Nederland", "Norge" and "Danmark", any of which could, provided sufficient volunteers came forward, one day be expanded into a complete division of its own. There was to be a fourth, artillery, regiment

¹⁵Der Reichsführer-SS, Adjutantur, Nr. 127/43, v. 11.2.1943.

¹⁶The name had been suggested before in connection with a "Battle Formation" and appeared in Berger's letter of February 10 (footnote 12). The Varangians were Norse rovers who ravaged the Baltic coasts in the 9th century.

¹⁷"Northern land", implying Scandinavia.

¹⁸Der Reichsführer-SS, RF/V/40/24/43, v. 18.3.1943.

¹⁹See RF-SS to Dr. Werner Best, Tgb. Nr. 44/44/43g. RF/V, v. 17.4.1943.

containing a variety of nationalities. On May 20, 1943, Legions "Niederlande" and "Norwegen" and the Free Corps "Dänemark" were disbanded at the Grafenwöhr training area in southern Germany, and their men placed at the disposal of the new division²⁰. Whereas the Norwegians were to pose relatively few problems, both the Dutch and the Danes were extremely troublesome to the Waffen-SS organizers and almost brought the building of the division to a halt.

Anton Mussert, the leader of the Dutch Nazi Party (N. S. B.), objected violently to the idea of his fellow Dutchmen (many of whom were members of his Party) serving in a formation named after Scandinavia, and insisted on it being changed to "The Netherlands" (Nederland). The problem was solved by a change in plan... "Nordland" was no longer to contain Dutch volunteers, who were organized into an SS brigade which was to serve alongside the Division under the Germanic Corps. This change not only provided another formation for the Germanic Corps but also conformed to the ruling that Panzer-Grenadier divisions were to be reduced from three to two infantry regiments. With the Dutch gone, "Nordland" was left with the Norwegians and the Danes, and thus took on its final form, that of a German-Scandinavian formation. Its name was now a true description of its composition.

On May 20, 1943, the survivors of the Danish Free Corps arrived at Grafenwöhr from the eastern front, and the Free Corps was disbanded²¹. The intention was to add these Danes to those from Regiment "Nordland", and organize those willing to serve on into the Danish regiment of the new division. But the Danish volunteers were far from happy about the idea, for they were very much against serving in anything but a closed unit, and objected to a German, SS-Obersturmbannführer Graf von Westphalen, being appointed their regimental commander. The situation was serious and held up the establishment of the Danish regiment. Felix Steiner, Commanding General of the Corps, did his best to pacify the Danes, but it was not until July that a solution was found. On July 28, the Danish ambassador, Mohr, visited his fellow-countrymen in Grafenwöhr and urged them to participate in the "fight against Bolshevism" in the names of both the Danish and German governments. The matter was eventually resolved... the Danes agreed to serve in the new regiment, and the situation returned to normal. SS-Grenadier-Regiment 1 "Danmark" was established with an original composition of 40% Danes, 25%

²⁰III. (germ.) SS-Pz.-Korps, Korpsbefehl v. 17.5.1943.

²¹Tieke, W., Tragödie um die Treue, p. 11.

German nationals and 35% ethnic Germans from Rumania. Its strength at that time was some 3,200 men.

Meanwhile, SS-Grenadier-Regiment 2 "Norge" was formed without difficulty by adding ethnic Germans from Hungary to the Norwegian survivors of Regiment "Nordland" and Legion "Norwegen", who wished to soldier on. To be more precise, the regiment was formed as follows:

- Staff - from the Norwegians of Regiment "Nordland"
- Ist Battalion - from the 600 or so survivors of Legion "Norwegen"
- IInd Battalion - from the cadre of the IInd Battalion, Regiment "Nordland"
- IIIRD Battalion - by redesigning the Ist Battalion, Regiment "Nordland"



SS-REGIMENT "NORGE" RECRUITING POSTER

In addition to staff and three battalions, the regiment also contained the following independent companies:

- 13th infantry gun company (13. Infanteriegeschütz-Kompanie)
- 14th anti-aircraft company (14. Fla-Kompanie)²²
- 15th motor-cycle company (15. Kradschützen-Kompanie)
- 16th engineer company (16. Pionier-Kompanie)

So far it has been shown how the Norwegian and Danish volunteers came to be in the "Nordland" Division, and how their two respective regiments were established. It is now time to follow the development of "Nordland" as a whole. As previously shown, a "Germanic Volunteer Division" was being discussed in early 1943, and on March 22 of that year, the 11th (Germanic) Mechanized Infantry Division "Nordland" (11. (germ.) SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Nordland" was formed²³. This was done

²²2cm guns... see page 50 of Volume 2.

²³SS-FHA, g.Kdos., "11. (germ.) SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division", v. 22.3.1943. Note the absence of the word "Freiwilligen" (volunteer) from the title.

by merging the three "Germanic" legions (the Dutch and Norwegian legions and the Danish Free Corps) with the "Nordland" Regiment and adding fresh west European volunteers, German nationals and ethnic Germans from the Balkans.

It was planned for "Nordland" to form at Mława in Poland, but it was in fact formed at Grafenwöhr, with its Divisional H.Q. being established there under SS-Sturmbannführer Vollmer²⁴. On May 1, the commander of the former "Nordland" Regiment, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Fritz von Scholz, was appointed divisional commander.

In addition to the Danish and Norwegian infantry regiments, the Grafenwöhr training area was also used for the establishment of the Division's artillery regiment (of mixed nationalities), armoured battalion (which should have formed the basis for an armoured regiment), anti-tank battalion, armoured reconnaissance battalion, engineer battalion and supply elements. Its signals battalion and repair unit were formed near Munich, anti-aircraft battalion at the Arys-Nord training area in East Prussia, and field replacement battalion from replacements from the Sennheim training camp. Once its elements had been created, the Division entered training, but since many of the men were hardened veterans of the eastern front the training was completed by the beginning of August 1943.

While "Nordland" was being organized, the need for tactical leadership and control for the "Germanic" elements in the Waffen-SS was met by the creation of the H.Q. Staff IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps. Hitler ordered this H.Q. on March 30, 1943²⁵, and the Corps itself began forming at Grafenwöhr on April 15. Felix Steiner was relieved of his command of the "Wiking" Division and became Commanding General of the Corps on February 30, 1943. At first, the intention was for the Corps to consist of all the "Germanic" volunteers of the Waffen-SS, but it was reduced to the "Wiking" and "Nordland" Divisions and the "Nederland" Brigade. Before the end of the war, it was to contain at one time or another, a great variety of Waffen-SS and other elements²⁶.

The "Nordland" Division, in mid-August 1943, was fully integrated into the Corps, with its engineer battalion and the engineer companies of its infantry regiments being incorporated with the engineer elements of

²⁴Tieke, W., op.cit., p. 10.

²⁵Gen.Kdo. III. (germ.) SS-Pz.-Korps, IIa, Tätigkeitsbericht vom 15.4.1943 - 31.3.1944, p. 1.

²⁶See Volume 2, p. 34.

both Corps and the "Nederland" Brigade. "Nordland" and the IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps were then ready for their first engagement, but before moving on to provide a brief combat history, the Division's subsequent structural changes should be examined.

In spite of Himmler's wish that this Division should be called "Waräger", Hitler named it "Nordland" on March 17, 1943, and it thus took on its first official designation: (11.) SS-Panzer-Grenadier-(Freiwilligen-)Division "Nordland"²⁷. The exact date of numbering is not known, but it was before March 22 and was confirmed by an SS-FHA order dated October 22, 1943²⁸. The order of November 12, 1943²⁹, which re-numbered its infantry regiments also altered the position of the word "Freiwilligen" (volunteer) in its title, the latter thus taking on its final form: 11. SS-Freiwilligen-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Nordland".

The creation of the Division's infantry regiments has previously been examined in detail. Originally formed as:

SS-Grenadier-Regiment 1 "Danmark" and
SS-Grenadier-Regiment 2 "Norge",

they soon became:

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment "Danmark" and
SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment "Norge".

On November 12, 1943²⁹, they were renumbered in the overall sequence of Waffen-SS infantry regiments, and the sequence was reversed to comply with the requirement that regiments should be numbered in chronological order of formation:

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 23 "Norge" and
SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 24 "Danmark".

In conformity with Himmler's order of January 22, 1944³⁰, that all volunteer regiments of the Waffen-SS should carry in brackets after their

²⁷The SS-FHA order founding the Division named it "11. (germ.) SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division". Its title varied from document to document in the first month or so. The name "Nordland" had in fact been used by Himmler on March 3, 1943.

²⁸Originally it was identified by the number "11" as it had been the eleventh division formed. The following order numbered all Waffen-SS divisions into a single series: SS-FHA, Amt II, Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22.10.1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

²⁹SS-FHA, Amt II, Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12.11.1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

³⁰SS-FHA, Amt II, Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 166/44 g. Kdos., v. 22.1.1944, Bezeichnung der SS-Freiw.-Rgt'er.

title their nationality and a progressive number within such nationality, the following final titles appeared:

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 23 "Norge" (norwegisches Nr. 1) and
SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 24 "Dänmark" (danisches Nr. 1).

The 1st battalions of both these regiments were reorganized in 1945 and detached from the Division to serve under the 5th SS Armoured Division "Wiking".

"Nordland" was planned as a Panzer-Grenadier formation and so should have contained an armoured regiment of two battalions. Such a regiment was formed in name only in the autumn of 1943, but could not be brought up to strength and had to be redesignated as a battalion in October 1943. This was the 1st Battalion, which received the name "Hermann von Salza"³¹ in December 1943³². The 2nd Battalion was in fact formed, but shortly after the Division reached Croatia it was taken over by the Corps, becoming the 103rd heavy SS Armoured Battalion (schw. SS-Pz.-Abt. 103). The old identity discs associating the battalion with the imaginary armoured regiment of the "Nordland" Division had to be destroyed³³, but the battalion did in fact serve alongside "Nordland" for much of its existence. In February 1945, another attempt was made to form an armoured regiment for the Division, by merging SS-Pz.-Abt. 11 "Hermann

³¹Hermann von Salza (1170 - 1239). Grand Master of the Teutonic Order (Grossmeister des deutschen Ordens) and friend of emperor Frederick II. He helped Conrad I against the Prussians, in return for which he received the province of Kulm.



HERMANN VON SALZA

NOTE:

The name was probably intended for the planned armoured regiment. . . battalions were not usually named and rarely had special cuffbands.

³²The title was given in December 1943 and the cuffband in existence by February 1944 (Ref.: Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, February 15, 1944, Nr. 4, Z. 64).

³³They were inscribed "II/Pz.Rgt. 11". The order that they should be destroyed was in Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, January 15, 1945, Nr. 2, Z. 41.

von Salza" with the Corps' armoured battalion (by then renumbered as "SS-Pz.-Abt. 503"), but this was never achieved.

The "Nordland" Division was created to be a part of the "Germanic (SS) Corps", which was renamed the IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps (III. (germanisches) SS-Panzer-Korps). It remained under this higher formation from its establishment in 1943 until early 1945, when the Corps was separated in the overall chaos prevailing in a Germany on the brink of defeat.

In early September 1943, the Division's theoretical training was at an end and "Nordland" was sent to Croatia to engage Tito's partisans. On September 8, Italy capitulated and tanks of "Nordland" joined forces with those of "Wiking" to disarm the Italian Division "Lombardia"... capturing two generals and some useful tanks in the process.

Fighting the partisans was renewed, with the Division serving in northern Croatia around Sisak, Glina, Petrinja and Bosanski Novi. Such warfare was continued into November, when on the 27th, "Nordland" and the Corps Staff left Yugoslavia for the Leningrad sector of the Russian front. The Division arrived in early December (followed a few weeks later by the other component of the Corps, Brigade "Nederland"), and was engaged in the "Oranienbaum Pocket" (Oranienbaumer Kessel). It held the central sector and an SS Battle Group "Coast" (SS-Kampfgruppe "Küste") was formed in December from members of the "Danmark" Regiment and other Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht personnel.

It was a losing battle, however, and having held in spite of heavy losses, the Corps had to pull out of the Oranienbaum area on January 14, 1944. "Nordland" fought rearguard actions during January, past Kingisepp and westwards to Narva. This was to be the scene of hard defensive fighting until April, when the Narva bridgehead was established and static warfare continued until July. On July 28, divisional commander SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS von Scholz was killed and his command taken over by SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Joachim Ziegler. Von Scholz had been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on January 18, 1942, while an SS-Oberführer and commander of the "Nordland" Regiment of the "Wiking" Division. While commanding "Nordland" as a division, he had been awarded the Oakleaves on March 12, 1944. Hitler decorated him posthumously with the Swords on August 8, 1944.

Under the IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps, "Nordland" retreated westwards to Reval (Tallinn), and to the south through Pernau (Pärnu) to Riga. It fought three major battles in its westerly retreat through

Courland to the Baltic Sea port of Libau (Liepāja). During this period, Ziegler was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

What remained of the Division and its equipment was embarked at Libau and sailed to the south for Pomerania on January 28, 1945. When it arrived in Germany, the Corps finally separated and "Nordland" left it after two years of continuous attachment³⁴. The Division was in turn separated into two parts... the main part disembarked at Stettin (Szczecin), while Armoured Battalion "Hermann von Salza" landed at Gotenhafen (Gdynia) and was reorganized south of Danzig (Gdansk) at Landeck. The Battalion had lost all of its tanks and had to be sent back to Grafenwöhr in late January, and returned to the Division in Pomerania shortly thereafter.

"Nordland" joined a variety of elements under Army Group "Steiner"³⁵ in a desperate offensive begun in Pomerania on February 16. The aim was to thrust to the northwest against the northern flank of Marshal Zhukov's 1st White Russian Front. The initial success in driving the Russians out of Arnswalde soon faded, with the Waffen-SS troops being forced to retire from Reetz on the 17th. By the following day, the offensive had ground to a halt. Fighting followed around Stargard, but "Nordland" was forced to leave that town on March 3. Defensive battles followed in the Altdamm bridgehead for the first half of March, until the Division was withdrawn on the 20th and was sent into reserve for refitting to the Schwedt-Angermünde area, west of the river Oder and some 70 kilometers northeast of Berlin. Ziegler established his staff quarters at Angermünde, some 50 kilometers south of Stettin, where the H. Q. of the IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps was based.

It was during this period of relative calm that Britons were added to the already considerable number of foreign volunteers within the Division's ranks. On March 22, the dozen or so members of the British Free Corps had been sent from Stettin to join "Nordland" at Angermünde, and reported to SS-Sturmbannführer Rudolf Saalbach, commander of

A BRITON FROM THE
BRITISH FREE CORPS.



³⁴An official German document shows "Nordland" still under the Corps at March 1, 1945, and it would appear that the separation was either not complete nor permanent.

³⁵See Volume 2, p. 24.

SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 11. This battalion already contained a variety of nationalities and possibly the arrival of Britons in Waffen-SS uniform complete with Union Jack on the sleeve, did not surprise its commander unduly. Be as it may, they were attached to one of Saalbach's companies based at Schoenberg, in Brandenburg. Another eight Britons under a sergeant joined the battalion on April 4 and were attached to the 3rd company. The British Free Corps stayed with "Nordland" for a short and peaceful time, for when the Division was ordered into Berlin, Corps Commander Steiner decided to leave the British traitors behind in northern Germany and had them move westwards to Templin on April 15, 1945.

April had opened with the "Nordland" Division fighting on the Oder front, desperately trying to stem the Russian drive to Berlin. The final Russian offensive against the German capital was opened on the 16th. On the next day in the Strausberg area, the Division was forced westwards through Hoppegarten and towards Berlin. On April 18, "Nordland" was ordered into the city, where only a shadow of its former self fought in small, isolated battle groups. Falling back through Mahlsdorf and Biesdorf on the 22nd, the survivors were faced with fierce fighting on the 25th around Neukölln and the Tempelhof airfield.

The Germans and their foreign volunteer comrades continued to try to contain the Russian troops, but in the face of vastly superior numbers were forced towards the government quarter of the capital. Plans had been made for the Division to escort Hitler in a desperate break-out from Berlin through Grunewald, and thus allow him to escape capture by the Russians. But the situation had become so grave towards the end of April that even the crazed Hitler had to face the fact that it was impossible. All hopes of his escaping from the encircled Berlin were gone. Enraged, Hitler relieved Ziegler of his command on the 26th and placed the Knight's Cross holder under arrest in his bunker. Dr. jur. Gustav Krukenberg, previously Inspector of the "Charlemagne" Division, took over command of what remained of "Nordland" but naturally could do no better than his predecessor. By April 30, his men had their backs to the Reich Chancellery. Entombed below, Hitler saw that the end was at hand, married his mistress, Eva Braun, and committed suicide.

The news of Hitler's death "fighting for Germany against Bolshevism" reached the 100 or so survivors on the 1st of May, 1945, who were fighting to the death above the bunker. It was the moment of truth for the men of the "Nordland" Division, and now the thought foremost in their minds was to fall into American rather than Russian hands. Under cover of night, some tried to break out and for two days made their way through the Charlottenberg area. Many were killed or forced back, and only a

few men remained of the once formidable "Nordland" Division³⁶. Once Hitler was dead, Ziegler escaped from the bunker and tried to negotiate a truce but he was killed near the "Stettiner" railway station on the night of May 1/2.

During April, Regiment "Danmark" had been reformed and brought up to strength with the help of 200 men from SS-Panzer-Abteilung 11 and a naval replacement battalion. The Ist battalions of "Danmark" and "Norge" were detached from the Division for the remainder of the war and served under the "Wiking" Division³⁷.



³⁶ See Werner Haupt, Europäische Freiwillige beim Endkampf in Berlin 1945.

³⁷ The Ist battalions were serving under "Wiking" on March 1, 1945.

Order-of-Battle

(COMPOSITE)

Aufstellungsstab/Stab der Division

- SS-Btl. z. b. V. (38)
- SS-Div. -Kartenstelle (mot)
- SS-Div. -Begleit-Kompanie

SS-Kradschützen-Regiment (possibly existed for a time but had disappeared by June 28, 1943)

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 23 "Norge" (norwegisches Nr. 1)(previously SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 23 "Norge"; SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment "Norge"; SS-Grenadier-Regiment 2 "Norge"; Grenadier-Regiment "Norge". It was planned to have been the Division's schnelles/leichtes/Kradschützen-Regiment. In 1945, the 1st Battalion was detached and spent the rest of the war under the "Wiking" Division)

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 24 "Danmark" (dänisches Nr. 1)(previously SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 24 "Danmark"; SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment "Danmark"; SS-Grenadier-Regiment 1 "Danmark"; Grenadier-Regiment "Danmark". Reformed in April 1945 with 200 replacements coming from SS-Panzer-Abteilung 11 and others from a naval replacement battalion. The 1st Battalion was detached in 1945 and spent the rest of the war under the "Wiking" Division)

Grenadier-Regiment "Nederland" (left the Division in 1943...enlarged to brigade and eventually divisional status)

SS-Jäger-Regiment 11 (38)

SS-Panzer-Regiment (existed in name only in the autumn of 1943...became the I. SS-Panzer-Abteilung and then SS-Panzer-Abteilung 11 "Hermann von Salza")

I. SS-Panzer-Abteilung/SS-Panzer-Abteilung (Sturmgeschütz) 11 "Hermann von Salza" (named in December 1943)

II. SS-Panzer-Abteilung (became SS-Panzer-Abteilung 103/503)

SS-Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung 11 (formed from SS-Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 11)

SS-Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 11 (became SS-Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung 11)

SS-Artillerie-Regiment/SS-Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 11

SS-Flak-Abteilung 11 (formed in the summer of 1943 at Tr. Üb. Pl. Arys-Nord...joined the Division on December 1, 1943)

SS-Werfer-Bataillon 521 (38)

SS-Nachrichten-Abteilung (mot)/SS-Panzer-Nachrichten-Abteilung 11

SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 11 (formed from SS-Kradschützen-Regiment...contained a company of Swedes)

SS-Pionier-Bataillon (mot)/SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 11

SS-Divisionsnachschiebtruppen 11

- 1. - 4. SS-Kraftfahr-Kompanie
- 5./7./8. grosse SS-Kraftwagen- und Nachschub-Kompanie
- SS-Instandsetzungs-Abteilung 11
- SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 11 (renamed SS-Verwaltungstruppen-Abteilung 11 in August 1943)
- SS-Verwaltungstruppen-Abteilung 11 (until August 1943, SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 11)

SS-Sanitäts-Abteilung 11

1. u. 2. SS-Sanitäts-Kompanie 11

SS-Feldlazarett 11

SS-KrKw. -Züge

SS-Kriegsberichter-Zug 11

SS-Feldgendarmerie-Trupp 11

SS-Feldersatz-Bataillon 11

SS-Bewährungs-Kompanie 11 (38)

Although it was planned to consist of Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Estonian and Norwegian volunteers, "Nordland" became principally a German-Scandinavian formation. Other nationalities were present, however, and the following is a brief summary of some of the nationalities found in "Nordland".

Denmark:

Concentrated in Regiment "Danmark" (which at first was 40% Danish), but also found throughout the Division. In December 1943, there 41 officers, 193 NCOs and 1,123 men. On May 25, 1944, there were 37 officers, 220 NCOs and 832 men, totalling 1,109. On September 15, 1944, there were 33 officers, 162 NCOs and 1,191 men, totalling 1,386. Those recruited in 1945 for the reformed 1st Battalion of Regiment "Danmark" in fact served in the "Wiking" Division.

Estonia:

A few Estonians were reported in the Division.

Finland:

Some Finns were scattered throughout the Division. The remnants of The Finnish Volunteer Battalion used in 1945 for the reformed 1st Battalions of Regiments "Norge" and "Danmark", in fact served in the "Wiking" Division.

Flanders (Belgium):

In December 1943, there was 1 officer, 9 NCOs and 15 men. Flemings were also reported in SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 11.

France:

A French SS volunteer assault battalion (französisches Freiwilligen (Sturm-) Bataillon) under the command of SS-Hauptsturmführer Henri Joseph Fenet reached Berlin in April 1945. It was this Battalion, not the remnants of the "Charlemagne" Division, that joined-up with the survivors of the "Nordland" Division (39).

Germany:

German nationals were present throughout the Division. Originally 25% of the infantry regiments were German. In December 1943, there were 232 officers, 1,496 NCOs and 2,403 men.

Great Britain:

About a dozen Britons served in SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 11 in late March and during the first half of April 1945. Eight men under a sergeant served in the battalion's 3rd company.

³⁹The remainder of the "Charlemagne" Division did not fight in Berlin and was certainly never attached to the "Nordland" Division as some reports suggest.

Holland:

In December 1943, there was 1 officer, 19 NCOs and 24 men. Dutchmen were also reported in SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 11.

Norway:

Concentrated in Regiment "Norge", but also found throughout the Division. In December 1943, there were 29 officers, 62 NCOs and 705 men. On May 25, 1944, there were 21 officers, 48 NCOs and 269 men, totalling 338. On September 15, 1944, there were 20 officers, 50 NCOs and 464 men, totalling 534. Those recruited in 1945 for the newly reformed Ist Battalion of Regiment "Norge", in fact served in the Wiking" Division.

Sweden:

A company of Swedes is reported in SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 11, but this report seems unlikely in view of the small number of Swedes known to have served in the Division. Others were scattered throughout the Division. In December 1943 there was 1 officer, 5 NCOs and 33 men. On May 25, 1944, there were 2 officers, 8 NCOs and 19 men, totalling 23, and on September 15, 1944, there were 3 NCOs and 39 men, totalling 42.

Switzerland:

Some Swiss are reported in SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 11. Those recruited in 1945 for the reformed Ist battalions of Regiments "Norge" and "Danmark", in fact served in the "Wiking" Division.

Volksdeutsche (ethnic Germans):

Ethnic Germans from Hungary were used with native Germans and Norwegians to form Regiment "Norge". 35% of the original strength of Regiment "Danmark" were ethnic Germans from Rumania. Many others were added as replacements during the war and they came from Belgium, Denmark, Croatia, Estonia, Holland, Latvia, Lithuania and the Ukraine.

DIVISIONAL AND REGIMENTAL STRENGTHS

- (1) Divisional (actual strengths, including men in hospital, on detachment or on leave):

Date	Officers	NCOs	Men	Total
31. 12. 43	304	1, 734	9, 355	11, 393
30: 6. 44	355	1, 875	8, 788	11, 000
30. 9. 44	328	1, 818	8, 334	10, 889
1945				8, 300

- (2) Regiment "Norge":

On May 25, 1944, it contained 1, 379 men, 810 of whom were combat troops. On June 30, 1944, there were 9 officers, 33 NCOs and 327 men, totalling 369*.

- (3) Regiment "Danmark":

On May 25, 1944, it contained 1, 503 men, 1, 175 of whom were combat troops. On June 30, 1944, there were 6 officers, 50 NCOs and 324 men, totalling 380*.

*These figures refer to reforming of the regiments.

Divisional Commanders

- May 1, 1943 - July 28, 1944 _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Fritz von Scholz
- July 28, 1944 - April 26, 1945 _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS (promoted as such on August 1, 1944) Joachim Ziegler.
- April 26, 1945 - May 3, 1945 _____ SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr. jur. Gustav Krukenberg

CHIEFS OF STAFF:

- SS-Hauptsturmführer Kille
SS-Sturmbannführer Ziemssen
SS-Obersturmbannführer von Bockelberg
SS-Obersturmbannführer von Bock und Pollach
SS-Sturmbannführer d. R. Herbert Wienczek



SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS FRITZ VON SCHOLZ ◆

SS BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS DR. JUR. GUSTAV KRUKENBERG (HERE AN SS-OBERFÜHRER) ◆

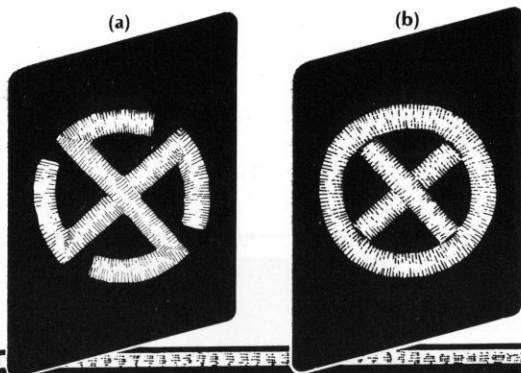


SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS JOACHIM ZIEGLER



Divisional and Unit Insignia

- (1) After the naming of the Division, all elements except those listed below wore the "Nordland" cuffband in block lettering (40). The sun wheel (Sonnenrad) was worn on the collar patch throughout (41). This is known to have been worn in pattern (a) below... pattern (b) is also a sun wheel and may possibly have been worn by this (42) or another foreign formation of the Waffen-SS. It is conceivable that a few former members of the "Nordland" Regiment continued to wear a block letter "N" on their shoulder straps. This was not, however, official divisional insignia.

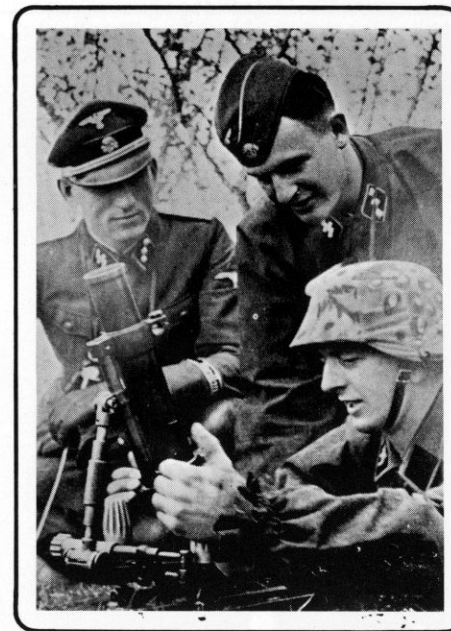


Nordland

⁴⁰ Former members of the "Nordland" Regiment would merely have continued wearing their old regimental cuffbands (see Volume 2, p. 144).

⁴¹ Himmler insisted that "Nordland" was not an SS division and therefore forbade the wearing of the SS runes on the collar patch (the runes were worn on the left breast by actual members of the SS). The sun wheel had been the vehicle symbol of the "Wiking" Division and was probably adopted because the "Nordland" Division grew out of one of "Wiking's" infantry regiments. See RF-SS, Aufstellung des Germanischen Korps, RF/Bn, v. 3.3.1943 and RF-SS to Dr. Werner Best, Tgb. Nr. 44/44/43g. RF/V, v. 17.4.1943. The Germans (both national and ethnic) and Scandinavians who came to the "Nordland" Division from Regiment "Nordland" and other elements of the Waffen-SS, were full members of the Waffen-SS and are believed to have arrived wearing, and in many cases to have retained their collar patches with the SS runes.

⁴² No evidence has yet been found to substantiate Beadle and Hartmann's theory (C. Beadle and Theodor Hartmann, Divisions Abzeichen der Waffen-SS Its Divisional Insignia, Key Publications, 1971, p. 38)



- (2) Members of SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 23 "Norge" (norwegisches Nr. 1) wore the "Norge" cuffband in block lettering (43). The sun wheel was worn on the collar patch (see under (1)). The Waffen-SS pattern sleeve shield was worn on the left upper (or occasionally lower) sleeve.

Norge

that pattern (a) was for Regiment "Danmark" and (b) for Regiment "Norge". The intention was for the collar insignia to have a political meaning while the sleeve shield had a national one (Note: (b) should not be confused with the St. Olav Cross of Quisling's political Nasjonal Samling). The emblem in (a) was worn, at different angles, by both the Norwegian and Danish branches of the Germanic (i. e. political) SS. (a) was confirmed for Danes in the Waffen-SS on February 1, 1945. (b) may have been intended for another non-German element of the Waffen-SS. (For meanings of collar patches and sleeve shields, as well as confirmation of (a) for Danes, see, Die Armschilde mit den völkischen Sinnbildern und die Kragenspiegel mit den politischen Sinnbildern der aussen- und nichtdeutschen Einheiten der Waffen-SS, Stand vom 1.2.1945, SS-Hauptamt, Amtsgruppe D hereafter referred to as the "1.2.1945 map").

⁴³ Photographs show that the divisional cuffband was, in fact, often worn.



SS-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER
FRITZ KNÖCHLEIN, COMMANDER
OF REGIMENT "NORGE".

- (4) Members of SS-Panzer-Abteilung (Sturmgeschütz) 11 "Hermann von Salza" wore the "Hermann von Salza" cuffband in block lettering (44). The SS runes are reported as having been worn on the collar patch (45).

Hermann von Salza

- (5) National or other insignia may have been worn by any of the various nationalities serving in the Division. For the few weeks that the British Free Corps was attached to "Nordland", for example, its members continued to wear their special collar patch, sleeve shield and cuffband. (The insignia of all the nationalities encountered in the Waffen-SS will be dealt with in detail later in this series).

DIVISIONAL VEHICLE SYMBOL

- (1) An upright sun wheel within a circle⁴⁶.



Danmark

- (3) Members of SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 24 "Danmark" (dänisches Nr. 1) wore the "Danmark" cuffband in block lettering. The sun wheel was worn on the collar patch (see under (1)). The Waffen-SS pattern sleeve shield was worn on the left upper (or occasionally, lower) sleeve.



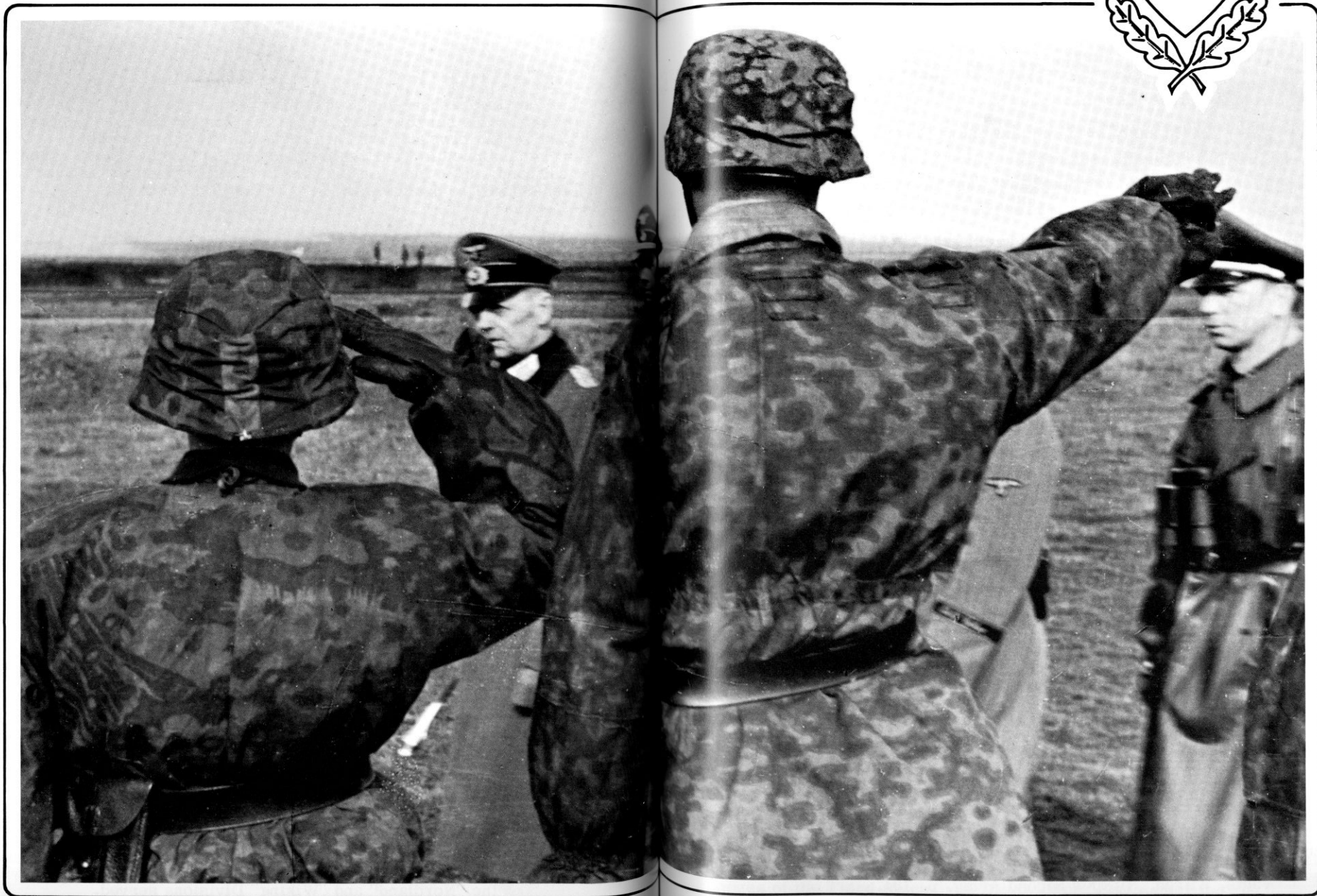
⁴⁴Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, February 15, 1944, Nr. 4, Z. 64.

⁴⁵Reported to have been piped in red. An unusual practice under any circumstances and one would have expected the pink Waffenfarbe of armoured troops.

⁴⁶See photograph between pp. 16 and 17 of *Tragödie um die Treue* for this sign painted in black on a lightly coloured scout car (registration number: "SS-901366"). To avoid confusion, the "Wiking" symbol may have been placed in a mobile position (see Volume 2, p. 145). Alternatively, the distinction between the symbols of "Nordland" and "Wiking" may have been the circle around the former's. An upright sun wheel was the symbol of the entire IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps... within which both the "Nordland" and "Wiking" Divisions served.

12. SS-Panzer-Division "Hitlerjugend"

GENERALFELDMARSCHALL V. RUNDSTEDT (COMMANDER OF ARMY GROUP WEST) AND DIVISION COMMANDER FRITZ WITT INSPECTING THE MEN AND BOYS OF THE "HJ" DIVISION.



EVOLUTION AND TITLES OF 12. SS-PANZER-DIVISION "HITLERJUGEND"

June 24, 1943 - October 21, 1943¹ SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division
"Hitlerjugend"
October 21, 1943 - October 22, 1943² (12.) SS-Panzer-Division
"Hitlerjugend"
October 22, 1943 - May 8, 1945³ 12. SS-Panzer-Division
"Hitlerjugend"

History



In early 1943, plans were put in motion to form a twelfth division of the Waffen-SS. Unlike some which had been formed previously, it was not based on ethnic Germans, foreigners or a mixture of the two. After three years of war and now facing a serious manpower shortage, the Waffen-SS fell upon a vast and highly acceptable pool of recruits... the Hitler Youth.

The Hitler Youth (Hitler-Jugend or H-J) was, as its name implies, the Nazi Party's youth organization. As early as 1922, a Youth League of the NSDAP was in existence⁴ and in 1925 a student named Kurt Gruber was leader of the Saxon National Socialist Youth (Sächsische Nationalsozialistische Jugend) in Plauen. Early in 1926, Gruber formed the Hitler Youth and this embryo organization was given official recognition at the 2nd Reich Party Congress at Weimar on July 4, 1926. It was at this Congress, that Hitler appointed Kurt Gruber as Reich Leader of the Hitler Youth (Reichsführer der Hitler-Jugend). It was also on this occasion

¹The change-over to a "Panzer-Division" had been planned before and was mentioned in an O.K.H. document dated September 24, 1943 (OKH/Ge. St. d. H. Org. Abt. 4449). Whereas the Division was referred to as a "Panzer-Division" earlier, October 21, 1943, was the day on which Hitler ordered its transformation (FHQ, den 21. 10. 1943 - T-175/111/2635155). The change was officially recognized on October 30, (the day given by Dr. Kliemann - op. cit., pp. 181 and 182). It was repeated on November 12, 1943 (SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12. 11. 1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS), and on November 15 (RFSS Adjutantur, v. 15. 11. 1943 g. Kdos., Aufstellung der Verbände der Waffen-SS, RFSS/T-175/111/2635237 and Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, November 15, 1943, Nr. 22, Z. 440).

²SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22. 10. 1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

³The Division entered captivity on May 8, 1945, but one report states that it was disbanded three days earlier.

⁴Vagts, Alfred, Hitler's Second Army, p. 191.

that the very name "Hitler-Jugend" was coined by the notorious Gauleiter, Julius Streicher. By the time the 4th Reich Party Congress was held at Nuremberg on August 4, 1929, the H-J had grown to approximately 2,000 members.

The overworked Gruber fell ill and when his health forced him to retire, Hitler replaced him on October 30, 1931 with Dr. Theodor Adrian von Renteln. On May 13, 1932, when the H-J numbered about 35,000 members, the former leader of the National Socialist Association of German Students (Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund), Baldur von Schirach, was named Reich Youth Leader (Reichsjugendführer). On June 15, 1932, the National Socialist School Children's Association (NS-Schülerbund⁵) was taken over by the H-J and its members incorporated.

The first Reich Youth Congress (1. Reichsjugendtag der NSDAP) was held at Potsdam on October 1 and 2, 1932, when 110,000 members of the H-J took some seven hours to march past Hitler.

In 1933, von Schirach staged a coup with the help of elements of the SA and took over the Reich Committee of German Youth Associations. As this controlled the majority of the German youth movements, the H-J gained tremendous influence and a vast number of additional members. Hitler appointed von Schirach as Youth Leader of the German Reich (Jugendführer des deutschen Reiches) on June 17, 1933, and consequently the leader of the Party's youth became leader of the German youth. The remaining independent youth groups were gradually absorbed or disbanded and it is not surprising to note that those with religious backgrounds held out the longest. On December 1, 1936, the German Cabinet passed a Reich Youth Law which entrusted the H-J with the task of organizing the entire German youth within the territory of the Reich.

A Youth Service Order (Jugenddienstverordnung) was passed, in April 1939, making membership in the H-J compulsory for all German boys and girls aged between ten and eighteen years. To preserve the élite within the enlarged and less select H-J, the Stamm-HJ was formed. Membership in this élite cadre was voluntary yet highly selective and the same racial requirements were demanded as for acceptance into the Party itself.

So it was that from humble beginnings in the early 1920s, the H-J had grown with the Party and by the year the Second World War broke out

⁵Founded by von Renteln. Its insignia has often been incorrectly identified as "an early SS civilian badge" (see Rudolf Kahl, Uniforms and Badges of the Third Reich, vol. II: SA-NSKK-SS, p. 95).

had a total monopoly of the youth of Germany. With war becoming imminent, its vital new rôle was being planned. The Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, O.K.W.) and the Reich Youth Leadership (Reichsjugendführung, R.J.F.), in early 1939, agreed that the H-J should receive military training from the Wehrmacht and the latter provided a liaison officer for attachment to every HJ-Bann⁶. The fateful and almost total involvement of the H-J in Nazi Germany's war effort had begun.

At first, H-J boys and to a lesser extent girls, were used on the home front. They attended to behind-the-lines duties such as assisting the state services, undertaking fire-fighting and air-raid protection duties and acting as messengers between the various military offices and establishments scattered throughout Germany. In September 1939, the opening month of the war, over a million H-J members were reported as helping the war effort.

Later, H-J boys became more directly involved with the actual job of fighting by becoming auxiliaries in the Navy and Air Force. Boys from seafaring backgrounds and/or those who had been in the H-J Marine Service (Marine-HJ) became naval auxiliaries (HJ-Marinehelfer). Those with flying experience or members of the H-J Flying Service (Flieger-HJ) served as Luftwaffe auxiliaries (HJ-Luftwaffenhelfer) and anti-aircraft auxiliaries (Flakhelfer). The H-J was thus helping at home by fulfilling essential duties and allowing German men to fight at the front. Nearer to the front, they also helped the armed forces as auxiliaries. From the outbreak of the war, however, the older boys also joined the fighting services as true soldiers.

First to join, having completed the compulsory Labour Service, were the H-J leaders and by 1943 no less than 95% of the pre-war H-J leadership had joined the armed forces. Many had followed Baldur von Schirach's example by entering the Army's élite "Grossdeutschland" Infantry Regiment, which later became a division and then a corps.

The need for a more intensive pre-military training for these H-J boys was met in the summer of 1942⁷, by the establishment of a number of special training camps (Wehrertüchtigungslager). These were set up by

⁶An element of 3,000 members.... there were 453 of them immediately before the war.

⁷According to Vagts, op. cit., p.214. The TM-E 30-451 of March 15, 1945, gives 1943 as the year of their establishment.

the H-J in conjunction with the Wehrmacht or Waffen-SS and were identified by numbers and the location⁸. Each camp appears to have been preparatory for a given service.... for example, Marine-HJ camps existed for the training of future sailors. This would also appear to have been the case for the Army, Luftwaffe and Waffen-SS.

These camps provided the 17- and 18-year-old H-J boys with the essential preparatory training required before they could be turned over to the Labour Service. They were taught to handle military weapons and were instructed by Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS soldiers with front-line experience. These instructors were often picked from ex-members of the Hitler Youth for the obvious propaganda reasons. In 1943, about 150 such camps were reported and at least twice that number are believed to have been formed before the war ended.



AN ARMY KNIGHT'S CROSS HOLDER EXPLAINS TO H-J MEMBERS, ON A TERRAIN TABLE, THE BEST WAY OF COMBATTING AN ARMoured ATTACK (NOTE TANK-DESTRUCTION BADGES ON HIS UPPER RIGHT ARM).

⁸e.g. Wehrertüchtigungslager III/35, Krombach.

The Waffen-SS was therefore receiving a flow of former H-J boys through the pre-military training camps by late 1942. Needless to say, they were more than welcome to Waffen-SS recruiting chief Gottlob Berger, for young Germans devoted to the cause of National Socialism were ideal material. Brought up since the age of 10 (in the DJ from 10 to 14 and then in the H-J proper from 14 to 18) in blind devotion and obedience to the person of Adolf Hitler, his Third Reich and the "struggle for the survival of the German race" (as they considered the war), they could not have been better suited. On top of the ideological training, they formed part of a complicated para-military organization which had been carefully planned to produce soldiers for the future. They had para-military ranks and uniforms and a profusion of insignia. Their training was based on marching and included map reading and small calibre rifle shooting. In certain areas, boys could choose a speciality and apart from the Marine-HJ and Flieger-HJ (both of which were barred from joining the Waffen-SS and had to enter the Navy and Luftwaffe respectively) boys could become junior engineers, motor mechanics and drivers, signallers, medical orderlies... in fact, all the trades so necessary to the running of an army. It was for these reasons that the Waffen-SS recruiting officers courted the H-J so intensely. With their ever-present shortage of manpower, the Waffen-SS looked to the vast⁹ H-J organization as an ideal and virtually unlimited means to replacement and expansion.

It is of interest to note the requirements set by the Waffen-SS for the entry into its ranks of a member of the H-J. In 1942¹⁰, the boy had to have reached his 17th birthday and be over 1,68 meters in height (the limit was lowered from 1,70 meters for the under 20s). He had to be eligible for military service, be in possession of the necessary document proving his Aryan descent, be without a criminal record and be physically fit to serve. The only cases of exclusion once these requirements had been met were boys coming from a seafaring or flying background or members of the Marine-HJ and Flieger-HJ (who had to become auxiliaries or join the Navy or Air Force respectively) and those who had already enrolled or been accepted by the Wehrmacht. All H-J boys meeting the above requirements were acceptable but members of the Patrol and Land

⁹In 1939, it numbered some 7,000,000 members and may have reached as many as 10,000,000. The H-J was the largest Party organization as membership in it was compulsory.

¹⁰This information is taken from a Waffen-SS recruiting booklet aimed at members of the H-J, Deutscher Junge komm zur Waffen-SS, 1942.

Services were especially welcome. It would be well at this point to examine these two services briefly and see why they should have been held in such high esteem by the Waffen-SS.

The Patrol Service of the H-J (Streifendienst der Hitler-Jugend) was an élite patrol service which acted as a junior police force and generally supervised all members during and after service hours. It can be likened to a pre- or junior SS and in fact was intended to provide future generations of SS leaders. The HJ-Streifendienst often trained with the SS and courses (Streifendienst-Lehrgänge) were held with such notable elements as the Leibstandarte-SS "Adolf Hitler".

The H-J Land Service (Landdienst der Hitler-Jugend) was a service whereby H-J boys and girls were put to work on the land. Started before the war, the original intention was to try and counteract the move of the German landworker from the fields and into the more lucrative industries. With the advent of war, the need for increased agricultural production clashed with the demand for able-bodied labourers to fight at the front and the H-J members' year of service in the Landdienst helped to lessen the problem.

Once the year's service had been completed, it was hoped that the H-J boys and girls would choose to stay on the land, eventually marry and so become and help to produce a breed of "new" or "military peasants" (Wehrbauer). The latter concept so appealed to Reichsführer-SS Himmler that in 1939 he had reached an agreement with the then Reich Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach that the HJ-Landdienst should provide members for the SS.

On May 28, 1942, the Landdienst was opened to non-Germans of so-called Nordic blood and young people from Holland, Flanders, Norway and Denmark served in the "Germanic Land Service" (Germanische Landdienst).

It can now be seen why preference was given to the members of the Patrol and Land Services of the Hitler Youth... both were considered as training grounds for the SS itself.

Waffen-SS propaganda played on the glamour of the uniforms and stressed that service in the Waffen-SS counted as fulfillment of the compulsory military service. It gave the impression that the men of the Waffen-SS were soldiers like all the others¹¹ and stressed that the H-J volunteers would be fighting "shoulder to shoulder with soldiers of the Army". To

¹¹A phrase favoured by post-war apologists. Technically, it was not true as the Waffen-SS was not a branch of the Wehrmacht, although its members actually performed normal military duties.

attract the much-needed specialists, attention was drawn to the fact that although smaller than the Army, the Waffen-SS was also made up of a number of arms of the service (Waffengattungen). Therefore, a boy could continue in the Waffen-SS that specialist training he had begun in the H-J. The SS propagandists added that by having freedom of choice as to the arm of the service, a boy could follow the "military tradition of his family".

An H-J boy interested in joining the Waffen-SS was invited to contact his local Waffen-SS Replacement Bureau (Ergänzungsstelle der Waffen-SS). Alternatively, he could collect a recruiting brochure at any office of the General SS, Police or Gendarmerie and complete the enrollment form this contained. The boy then entered pre-military training (Wehrtüchtigung¹²) at one of the special camps set up by the H-J in collaboration with the Waffen-SS. The day this course ended, he could join the Waffen-SS, although permission could be given to cut these courses short. H-J boys volunteering for the Waffen-SS were permitted to bypass the compulsory Labour Service, whereas conscripts usually had to serve their time in the R. A. D.

Other schools also existed through which former H-J boys could pass into the Waffen-SS. Of particular note in this respect was a Motor Driving School (Kraftfahrerschule) at Schönbrunn near Vienna¹³. Here, regular six weeks' courses were held for groups of 300 16- and 17-year-old H-J boys, some of whom naturally came from the Motor-HJ. Once the course was over, the graduates were expected to enroll in the Waffen-SS. Another school worthy of mention was that located at Eipel in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia which produced H-J leaders and Waffen-SS NCOs (HJ-Führernachwuchs- und Ausbildungsschule der Waffen-SS).

The H-J boy had therefore been a prime target for the Waffen-SS recruiters and a considerable number over the age of 17 had joined in the early years of the war. But they joined as individuals and were incorporated piecemeal into the Waffen-SS. In that way, they were diffused and perpetuated nothing of their former organization. . . . the Hitler Youth.

¹²Contemporary Allied Intelligence translated this word as "special final course of military training for the H-J". Its literal meaning is "defence toughening-up".

¹³An "SS Motor Driving School" (SS-Kraftfahrerschule) is quoted by Vagts (op. cit. p. 216). This was certainly not a school of the Waffen-SS, nor does it appear to have been one of the General SS. It is believed to have been a school of the H-J itself.

In early January 1943, the Reich Youth Leader, Artur Axmann¹⁴ entered into discussions of mutual interest with the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police, Heinrich Himmler. These discussions concerned the use the H-J could be put to for the war effort and one agreement was that H-J boys of 15 years and over could be called upon by the police to help put out fires caused during air raids. In the same month as this agreement was reached, Axmann suggested to Himmler that H-J boys should not merely serve in the Waffen-SS as before but that a full division should be formed from those born in 1926. Axmann's motives are unrecorded but were probably mixed. In the first place, such an offer would undoubtedly curry favour with the Reichsführer-SS and Hitler himself. In addition, his organization would have its name perpetuated by what could only turn out to be an élite division of the Waffen-SS.

The Reichsführer-SS, always pleased at any opportunity to extend his private army, was delighted with the idea and promptly took it to Hitler. The Führer was also enthusiastic and gave his blessing that "his" boys should be given the privilege of donning the Waffen-SS uniform and sacrificing their lives for the Fatherland in a division of their own.

On February 16, 1943, Axmann and members of the R. J. F. had a discussion with members of the SS-FHA, which was the first of many such meetings about the formation of the new division. The following day, Himmler told Axmann that his plan had been accepted and suggested that he should take the matter up with the recruiting chief of the Waffen-SS, SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Gottlob Berger¹⁵. Axmann lost no time and arranged the meeting without delay, which Berger was to sum up for Himmler in his memorandum dated February 18, 1943¹⁶.

Berger had been faced with manpower shortages for some time and had been extremely skillful in drawing all kinds of volunteers into the Waffen-SS. . . . including ethnic Germans and foreigners. He was therefore overjoyed at the prospect of having an increased input of former H-J boys and a whole division formed exclusively of young German Nazis.

¹⁴Obergebietsführer Axmann had replaced von Schirach as Reich Youth Leader on August 8, 1940. Von Schirach became Reich Leader for Youth Training of the NSDAP (Reichsleiter für Judenerziehung der NSDAP) and joined the Army.

¹⁵Reichsführer-SS to Axmann, Geheim, RFSS Tgb. Nr. 45/3/43 v. 13. 2. 1943.

¹⁶Berger to Reichsführer-SS, Aufstellung der Division Hitler-Jugend, v. 18. 2. 1943 (Bezug 45/3/43 geh., v. 13. 2. 1943).

Berger's past successes with ethnic Germans and foreigners were overshadowed by the possibility of raising a new élite all-German division. . . a second Leibstandarte.

Berger was so carried away by the idea that he immediately suggested that he should become the new division's commander. He wrote to Himmler on February 9¹⁷ but received a tactful refusal¹⁸ a week later on the grounds that he was of more value to the cause in his capacity as Chief of the SS Main Office, and more particularly as Waffen-SS recruiting chief. This was certainly true but Berger was naturally disappointed at his heroic offer being turned down and at losing a chance of becoming the commander of such an élite formation. He would no doubt have preferred leaving his desk at the SS-HA to become another Sepp Dietrich, for in fact the new division was to have more in common with the Leibstandarte than just the Führer's surname in its title. But this was not to be and the command was given to a young regimental commander of the Leibstandarte itself, Fritz Witt. Berger's interest in the division returned from dreaming of his leading it into battle to the routine procedure of his office. On March 21, he wrote a memorandum to the SS-FHA about it¹⁹.

The original intention was for the new division to be established on June 1, 1943. Recruiting began in the spring of that year and H-J boys were assembled at the Beverlo military training area (Tr. Üb. Pl. Beverloo) in eastern Belgium, just 20 kilometers from the Dutch border. The boys had come from the upper age group of the H-J. Many came from the Patrol and Land services of the H-J and practically all had been through a course at one of the pre-military training camps. The average age of the division is said to have been just 18. . . officers included. . . and this would not appear to have been an exaggeration. By mid-summer 1943, the required 10, 000 boys had been gathered at Beverlo in preparation for the forming and training of the division. According to one of the division's most notable commanders a number of them had in fact been forced to join²⁰ and other evidence exists to this effect.

On June 24, 1943, the SS-FHA put into effect Hitler's order that the Division should start forming at once²¹. It can be taken as having been

¹⁷Berger to Reichsführer-SS, Aktenvermerk, Geheim, v. 9. 2. 1943.

¹⁸Reichsführer-SS to Berger, Geheim, v. 16. 2. 1943.

¹⁹Berger to SS-FHA, Aufstellung der SS-Division "Hitler-Jugend", g. Kdos., v. 21. 3. 1943.

²⁰Meyer, Kurt, Grenadiere, p. 205.

²¹SS-FHA, Kdo-Amt d. Waffen-SS, Org. Abt. Nr. 784/43

established on this date, when its designation was: "(12.)SS-Panzer - Grenadier - Division "Hitlerjugend"²². It was being referred to as a "Panzer-Grenadier-Division" five days later.

It seems to have been a forgone conclusion that the new Division's name should have been "Hitlerjugend"²³. It was not, however, without its critics for many felt that such a name would show to the world that Germany was reduced to using children at the front in the Waffen-SS. Dr. Goebbels emphasized the poor propaganda value of such a name²⁴. In spite of such senior protest, the name was adopted and it is interesting to note that by late 1944 the propagandists' minds had changed to such an extent that the German press was talking proudly of the "Crack Babies" of the "Hitlerjugend" Division²⁵.

The vast resources of the H-J had provided the soldiers, what was then urgently required were the leaders, experienced specialists, weapons and equipment. In mid-1943, these were hard to come by in Germany, especially in the Waffen-SS with its high loss ratio in men and material.

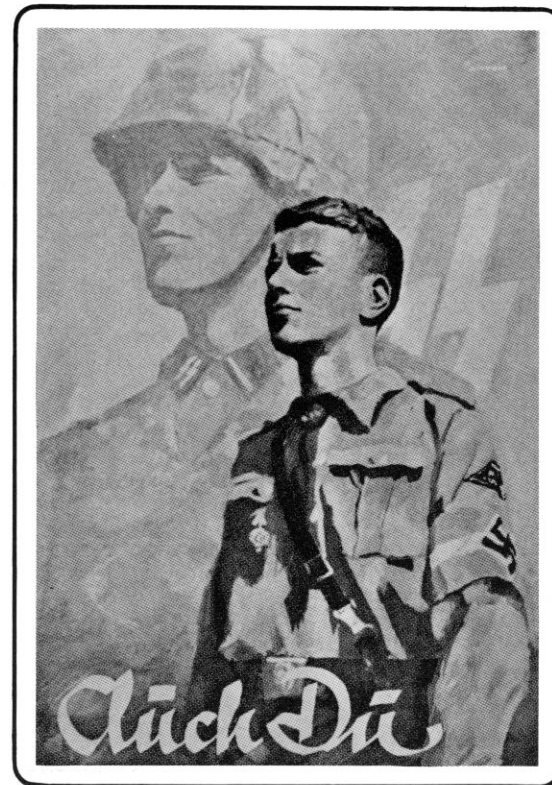
The decision was taken that both commander and cadre for the Division should be provided by the premier division of the Waffen-SS, the Leibstandarte-SS "Adolf Hitler". Despite the heavy casualties suffered by

²²It was known by the number "12" as it was the twelfth Waffen-SS division to be formed. . . it was officially numbered as such on October 22, 1943.

²³The name was in use as early as February 1943. . . see footnote 16. The spelling of the Waffen-SS division was normally as a single word, whereas the original "Hitler-Jugend" was hyphenated.

²⁴Lochner, Louis P., editor, The Goebbels Diaries, p. 262.

²⁵Signal (German edition), Nr. 19, 1944, pp. 12-17.



"YOU TOO!"



REICHSFÜHRER-SS HIMMLER AND REICHSJUGENDFÜHRER AXMANN AT KAISERSLAUTERN IN AUGUST 1944. (OPPOSITE PAGE) TAKING THE SS OATH.



this formation at Charkov in March, the Leibstandarte was to give officers, NCOs and specialists to the new Division. Personnel of the Leibstandarte's armoured regiment, tank repair unit, medical unit, military police company and other elements were detached and used as a basis for the counterparts of the "HJ" Division

In addition, the Leibstandarte gave up the commander of its 1st Infantry Regiment (SS-Pz.-Gren.-Rgt. 1). This was SS-Oberführer Fritz Witt, whose youthfulness as commander was paralleled by that of the boys he was to lead. Born on May 27, 1908, Witt was just 35 when he took command in July 1943. His youth, however, was certainly made up for by experience and the Knight's Cross which he had been awarded. It had been bestowed on September 4, 1940, when Witt had been an SS-Sturmabannführer and commander of the 1st Battalion of SS-Regiment "Deutschland" of the SS-Verfügungsddivision. The Oakleaves had been added on March 1, 1943, when he had been an SS-Standartenführer and commander of the 1st Infantry Regiment of the Leibstandarte. When promoted to the rank of SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS on July 1, 1943, he became the second youngest general in the German armed forces²⁶.

So it was that Witt, a regimental commander of the Leibstandarte with the prized Oakleaves only recently added to his Knight's Cross, was given the task of forming, training and then leading into battle this new Waffen-SS division. He was assisted in these tasks by young yet capable officers... one of particular note being Kurt Meyer, who later took over command of the Division upon Witt's death.



KURT MEYER, FRITZ WITT AND MAX WÜNSCHE

²⁶Meaning the Wehrmacht plus the Waffen-SS. See Krätschmer, op. cit., p. 25.



SEPP DIETRICH, ARTHUR AXMANN, FRITZ WITT AND SS AND H-J LEADERS OBSERVING THE DIVISION IN TRAINING.

Witt, helped by his experienced cadre²⁷ of officers²⁸, NCOs and specialists, began forming the Division at Beverlo and elsewhere in July 1943. First to be formed, on July 20, were the HQs of the Division's two infantry (Pz.-Gren.) regiments. Certain regimental elements were also established at this time but in fact were most formed piecemeal at Beverlo until early November. Supply elements were also formed in July. Hitler appears to have taken an interest in this second division of the Waffen-SS to carry his name even at such an early stage. He is reported as having praised the young soldiers to Himmler on July 26, 1943.

Next to be raised was the reconnaissance battalion (Aufklärungs-Abteilung) at Turnhout in Belgium between September 4 and December 1. It consisted of five companies and received drafts from A. u. E. units with 420 H-J boys from Standortverwaltung Unna²⁹. The elements of the artillery regiment were formed on September 5 and November 13, at Mol, Retie and Beneschau, while the medical unit was raised on September 5 and the armoured regiment on November 3.

Weapons and equipment were to form an obstacle to the Division's development. Both were hard to come by and tanks were in such short

²⁷One unsupported report states that there were 1,000 ex-members of the Leibstandarte in the "HJ" Division.

²⁸Fifty army officers were added during training, most of whom had been members of the H-J.

²⁹Tessin, op. cit. The H-J boys arrived on November 17, 1943.

supply that the armoured regiment, forming at the Maily-le-Camp training area near Reims in France, at one time had only four each of the Mark IV and V (Panther) tanks it was supposed to be equipped with. Supply from German sources proved impossible and resort was made to French, and possibly even Italian vehicles.

The Division was placed under Army Group "D", O. K. W., in August 1943, and it was to remain under this higher formation until the beginning of the following April³⁰. On December 31, 1943, it was together with the Leibstandarte under the Ist SS Armoured Corps. The intention was for "HJ" to be a Panzer-Grenadier-Division and on October 3, 1943, Hitler had ordered the creation of the Ist SS Armoured Corps. Controlled by an HQ staff (Gen.-Kdo. I. SS-Pz.-Korps), it was to be made up of the Leibstandarte and "HJ" Divisions³¹. Hitler then countermanded this order on October 21,³² and specified that the Ist and IInd SS Armoured Corps were each to be composed of two Panzer divisions. This second order consequently re-designated the "HJ" and "Totenkopf" Divisions as Panzer divisions. In fact "HJ", like the other Panzer-Grenadier divisions of the Waffen-SS, already had an armoured regiment and so the change to a Panzer division was nominal. Some additional personnel were transferred from the Leibstandarte and "HJ" was in activation as an armoured division two days later. It was officially recognized as such from October 30.³³ Having been numbered "12" on October 22, when its infantry regiments were renumbered from "1" and "2" to "25" and "26", the Division's new and final designation thus appeared: "12. SS-Panzer-Division "Hitlerjugend"".

An Allied invasion of Europe had been on Hitler's mind for some time and on November 3, 1943, he ordered the "HJ" and other divisions to be

³⁰MID, Manpower Study, states the "HJ" was forming under Army Group "D", O. K. W., from September to December 1943, when formation stopped. It is then given as being under the IInd SS Armoured Corps (almost certainly an error for the Ist SS Armoured Corps), Army Group "B"/"D" from January to March 1944.

³¹FHQ, den 3. 10. 1943 - T-175/111/2635150. In fact, even in this order "HJ" was described as a Panzer-Division.

³²FHQ, den 21. 10. 1943 - T-175/111/2635155.

³³See footnote 1 to this chapter. Dr. Kliemann, op. cit. p. 182, states that the Division was ordered to become a Panzer-Division on this date, when in fact Hitler had ordered the change nine days before. Naturally there was always some delay between Hitler signing an order and the SS-FHA, or any other agency, repeating it. The overall order re-designating the Panzer-Grenadier divisions of the Waffen-SS as Panzer-Divisionen was: RFSS Adjutantur, Aufstellung der Verbände der Waffen-SS, g. Kdos., v. 15. 11. 1943.....it appeared in Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS of the same day, under Item 440.

brought up to full strength. The establishment and individual training of the divisional elements concluded at the end of 1943 and in January 1944, the Division began to train as a body. It remained in Belgium for the first three months of the year receiving further training and acting as a training element for other Waffen-SS divisions.

In early April 1944, "HJ" left Belgium and its period of refitting under the 1st Armoured Army, Army Group "D", and transferred to the Dreux-Évreux-Bernay-Vimoutiers area west of Paris and south of Rouen, just in case the inevitable Allied invasion happened to come on the nearby coast. In May, the Division was in special use under the O. K. W. in the Eure department south of Rouen and when inspected by Generaloberst Heinz Guderian, Inspector of Armoured Troops (Inspekteur der Panzerwaffe), was found to be fully operational. Later it moved to occupy the area between Trun and Chambois, about ten kilometers to the northeast of Argentan, where but a few months later it was to be virtually destroyed³⁴. Here it was in combat reserve (Einsatz-Reserve) under Sepp Dietrich's Ist SS Armoured Corps with the Leibstandarte. It continued to wait for the inevitable Allied invasion of Europe.



DIETRICH WITH MEMBERS OF "HITLERJUGEND" DURING TRAINING.

Although the Germans were well aware of the impending invasion, they could not determine which of the possible landing points in Europe would be chosen. Consequently, divisions could not be concentrated in any

³⁴In fact, the familiarity of this area gained by members of the Division was to help a few of them break out of and survive the Falaise-Argentan pocket.

given area before the landing beaches could be identified. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was convinced that Montgomery would choose the Normandy beaches and tried in vain to have armoured divisions transferred to that area. At last he decided to visit Hitler at Berchtesgaden and try to convince the Führer to have at least the "HJ" Division moved to the St. Lô-Carentan area in the Cherbourg peninsula. But this planned visit to Hitler on June 6 was called off when his fears were confirmed... the Allies had landed on the Normandy beaches and D-Day was on. All that faced the greatest invasion force in history was the LXXXIVth Corps under General Erich Marcks.



GENERALFELDMARSCHALL ROMMEL

GENERAL DER ARTILLERIE MARCKS

On the morning of June 6, the "HJ" and Panzer-Lehr Divisions were ordered to engage the enemy on the Normandy beaches. The Chief of Staff Western Command issued an order at 16.55 hours stating that the Supreme Command wished that the enemy bridgehead be destroyed before the day was out. This was a highly optimistic request but as time was to show it was directed at the only division which came anywhere close to carrying it out. The fanatical young soldiers of the "HJ" Division would do their utmost to obey the impossible order, and many would lose their lives in the process.

The Division, with Fritz Witt in command, was on the march by 16.30 hours on Tuesday the 6th of June 1944, and having come under the orders of the LXXXVth Corps became the German spearhead and moved on Lisieux. "HJ" was the first Waffen-SS formation to go into action in the battle for Normandy and reached the western outskirts of Caen in the early hours of June 7. The first move was to form a battle group with the minimum of delay under the commander of the Division's first infantry regiment (SS-Pz.-Gren.-Rgt. 25), Kurt Meyer. This SS Battle Group consisted of ninety Mark IV tanks and three infantry battalions and fighting alongside General Feuchtinger's 21st Armoured Division, took on the advancing 27th Canadian Armoured Regiment. The German attack was pressed forward with immediate success but Meyer was forced to break off the assault when enemy armoured formations deployed on his flanks. It had proved a success, however, for keeping the Canadians from the Carpiquet airfield had prevented the Allies from establishing an all-important air base. It was to postpone the inevitable fall of Caen for a few bloody weeks. On June 8, Meyer led another attack but this proved unsuccessful in breaking the strong Allied forces between Bayeaux and Tilly.



"HJ" IN CAEN.



It was on the 8th of June that Meyer is believed to have been responsible for the murder of 45 Canadian prisoners of war at Authie³⁵. This was the most publicized of a series of cases where members of the Division shot unarmed prisoners of war after interrogation. In the ten day period between June 7 and June 16, 64 Canadian and British prisoners were killed. It was rumoured at the time that orders had been given to the "HJ" Division to dispose of prisoners in this way, but although many atrocities were committed it is felt that these were more the result of fanatical young soldiers under stress acting without official sanction. On the other hand, it is possible that officers and NCOs did little or nothing to prevent these murders and that they were committed with the unwritten approval of the authorities

³⁵After the war, he was found guilty of this crime by a Canadian tribunal and condemned to death. The trial and verdict were widely criticized (cf. B. J. S. Macdonald, The Trial of Kurt Meyer, passim) and the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. In September 1954, Kurt Meyer was released. He died on December 23, 1961, having been a senior and active leader of the Waffen-SS old comrades' association, H. I. A. G.

On the 12th of June, a Battle Group managed to thwart an assault by Dempsey's 2nd Army at Villers-Bocage. As a result of this success, the "HJ" was able to stem an attack by the British 7th Armoured and 50th Infantry Divisions.

Just as the "HJ", the 21st Armoured and Panzer-Lehr Divisions were preparing for a full-scale attack against the British bridgehead near Caen, the Allies attacked a number of positions causing the Germans to change over to defensive tactics. While holding their ground in the Putot-Brouay area, the men of the Division were being attacked fiercely by the British 49th Division. On June 16, concentrated fire from British naval guns wrought havoc on the divisional HQ located some seventeen miles southwest of Caen. It was at this time that divisional commander Fritz Witt was killed³⁶. He was replaced by Kurt Meyer, commander of SS-Pz.-Gren.-Rgt. 25.

³⁶Some doubt surrounds the exact date of Witt's death. The report of the S. H. A. E. F. Court of Inquiry gives June 10. Krätschmer(op.



"HJ" held the Canadians at Tilly-sur-Seulles and on June 26 managed to hold a general offensive launched by the British 2nd Army (VIIth and XXXth Corps) on the River Odon. The Allies, however, managed to break through on the 27th after heavy fighting. The following day the "HJ" Division staged a counter-attack but was unsuccessful and this foundered with heavy losses.

On July 4, the Division managed to hold another Canadian attack on the important Carpiquet airfield. This success was short-lived, however, for having been softened-up by heavy bombing the "HJ" Division was attacked by the 1st British Corps (3rd and 59th Infantry Divisions) and Caen fell at last on July 9. The "HJ" Division had held the small town for 33 days and the ordeal had not only reduced Caen to rubble but also cost the Division no less than 60% in casualties. 20% were dead and 40% were wounded or missing. In addition to this terrible loss in men, "HJ" was left with only half of its tanks and armoured personnel carriers. A shadow of its former self, "HJ" was withdrawn from the line on July 11 to the Potigny area for a rest and refit.

The invaders' plans were to allow the shattered Division little time for rest and on July 18, an offensive code-named "Operation Goodwood" was launched by the British VIIIth Corps to the east of Caen. The Division had been alarmed on the 17th and was rushed to the front to try and stem the Allied breakthrough between Malotot and Vendes. "Operation Goodwood" was but a preparation for "Operation Cobra", which was launched on July 25 by General Bradley's 1st Army. Starting from St. Lô, the plan was to penetrate the German lines in Brittany and push on to the very centre of France. Then on July 30, General Dempsey's 2nd British Army (VIIIth and XXXth Corps) attacked

cit. p. 23) gives June 12 when discussing Witt and yet says "8 days after the beginning of the invasion", i.e. June 14, when discussing Meyer's career (p. 33). June 12 is supported by v. Seemen, *Die Ritterkreuzträger 1939-1945*, p. 27, and Henri Landemer, *Les Waffen-SS*, whereas June 14 is given by Duprat (op.cit. p. 351) who states that Witt was killed when his Division successfully halted the attack by the British 7th and 50th Divisions. *Der Freiwillige* favours June 16 (cf. issues of June 1960, November 1968 and February 1969) and is supported by Meyer himself (op.cit. p. 236) and Dr. Kliemann (op.cit. p. 185), who gives this as the date that the command passed from Witt to Meyer. Through further research, the authors feel that June 16, 1944, is indeed the date of Witt's death.



Paul Hausser's 7th Army in "Operation Bluecoat"... an offensive which was to drive the German troops back until August 4. In the meantime, the "HJ" Division had managed to escape an Allied mopping-up operation staged on August 1 and proceeded to guard the Falaise road... its flanks being protected by the 272nd and 89th Infantry Divisions.

In early August, the "HJ" and Leibstandarte Divisions, together formed the 1st SS Armoured Corps under Armoured Group West. This Corps held the line from the Falaise plateau towards Caen, expecting an assault by the 1st Canadian Army at any moment. It was at this critical stage of the battle, on August 3, 1944, that orders were given for these two armoured divisions to take part in an offensive against the Americans with the aim of re-taking Avranches. The order came from Hitler who, far away from the front and reality, was practically alone in believing that anything other than a tactical withdrawal was possible in Normandy. Hitler was still thinking of an offensive which would bring victory, while his generals and even the dedicated soldiers hoped for nothing more than a means of escaping from an inevitable defeat.

Sepp Dietrich, commanding general of the 1st SS Armoured Corps, contested the order violently and pointed out bluntly that moving his two armoured divisions from their static positions south of Caen would leave Falaise wide open to attack and capture by the enemy. He knew that it was only a matter of choice between having Falaise or Avranches. At last a compromise was reached and Dietrich conceded to having his old Division, the Leibstandarte, lead the offensive on Avranches while the "HJ" remained in front of Falaise. It was at this time that the Allies decided to try and trap all the German troops in one large pocket. In the night of August 7/8, the 1st Canadian Army launched "Operation Totalize" with the intention of penetrating the German front, south of Caen in the direction of Falaise. While its two supporting infantry divisions disintegrated, "HJ" took the brunt of the attack and managed to hold fast. This was to last for only a short time, however, for with heavy losses in men and with only 48 tanks left out of the original 218, even the fanatical soldiers of the "HJ" Division began to weaken.

The 8th U. S. Air Force then tried to bomb the crippled Division and the 4th Canadian Armoured, the 3rd Canadian Infantry and the 1st Polish Armoured Divisions were sent in to attack and finish off the job. But Meyer had anticipated this second phase in "Operation Totalize" and moved his remaining men and vehicles away from their positions in the villages before the bombing began. Dividing his troops into two groups he attacked and successfully took Cintheaux and subsequently halted the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and delayed the inevitable fall of Falaise.

Shortly thereafter, the Canadians struck again and Cintheaux fell to the South Alberta Regiment. The 2nd Polish Armoured Regiment attacked the survivors of the "HJ" Division and six of the remaining twenty "Tiger" tanks were destroyed³⁷.



MAX WÜNSCHE

On August 11, SS-Obersturmbannführer Max Wünsche, commander of the Division's armoured regiment (SS-Panzer-Regiment 12), was decorated with the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. The 30-year-old regimental commander, who shared Hitler's birthday, had led a unit responsible for the destruction of no less than 250 enemy tanks in a period of about two months. He was soon to fall prisoner when, badly wounded, the last of his tanks were destroyed.

By August 12, Sepp Dietrich was facing Montgomery's troops in the northern sector of the Normandy front. Under his command were the survivors of the "HJ" Division and the IInd SS Armoured Corps.

Two days later, Kurt Meyer had only 500 infantrymen under his command and was holding Hill 159 to the northeast of Falaise against the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division. His men's reported "very high morale" was put to the test when they were subjected to a heavy and continuous artillery barrage which lasted for two days. When the shelling stopped on the 16th, Typhoon fighter-bombers supported an assault by the Regina Rifle Regiment. Meyer received a head wound and his Division was forced to abandon Hill 159 and move to a defensive position on the River Ante.

Falaise eventually fell on August 16, but a stubborn group of some 60 members of the "HJ" Division continued to hold out in a school with two "Tiger" tanks. When the firing had stopped in Falaise, only four of them... all wounded... fell into British hands. The remainder had all been

³⁷The Division's armoured regiment was not supposed to have had any "Tigers"... only the Mark V "Panther" in the 1st Battalion and the Mark IV in the IInd. References to "Tigers" in connection with the "HJ" Division in Normandy probably apply to Michael Wittmann's tanks of the Heavy SS Armoured Battalion 501 (SS s.Pz.-Abt. 501) which fought with the Division.

killed in what could only have been a suicide mission³⁸. The discouraged survivors of the Division had meanwhile retreated to the southwest, between the River Dives and Nécý.

August 19, 1944, saw the exhausted and beaten survivors north of the Normandy front facing the Canadians from Brieux to Magny. The Allies' plan of trapping the German forces in Normandy was nearing completion and the jaws of the pincer movement were closing rapidly. The fate of 19 German divisions was being sealed. The situation was obviously impossible and having decided to abandon the Normandy front, the most pressing matter remained to try to get as many German troops out as possible. "HJ" and other armoured divisions were employed to try and keep the jaws open for as long as possible, allowing the maximum number of troops to escape. Kurt Meyer received orders from the commander of the 7th Army (Paul Hausser) to hold the northern flank until General Eugen Meindl's IInd Parachute Corps could break out of the trap over the River Dives and to stop the Canadians from reaching Chambois. Then Meyer was to follow over the Dives and get as many of his own men to safely as he could. The battle-worthy elements of the Division were gathered into SS Battle Group (SS-Kampfgruppe) "Mohnke", under the command of SS-Obersturmbannführer Wilhelm Mohnke³⁹. Escaping under heavy Canadian and Polish artillery fire, this Battle Group succeeded in escorting the remainder of the Division out of the Falaise pocket and over the Seine.

The jaws of the pincer finally closed near Chambois on August 20 and those German troops caught in the Falaise pocket were either dead or fell into Allied hands. The survivors of the "HJ" Division, grouped with those of the 3rd Parachute Division and the staff of Hausser's 7th Army under Meindl's IInd Parachute Corps, had managed to escape and "HJ" regrouped at Beauvais and then passed Hirson and proceeded to the east.

Towards the end of August, SS Battle Group "Mohnke" rejoined the remnants of the Division and all survivors were transferred hurriedly to Kaiserslautern where the divisional training and replacement battalion had

³⁸In fact, two are said to have returned to the Division shortly before the end of the fighting in Falaise.

³⁹Commander of the Division's second infantry regiment (SS-Pz.-Gren.-Rgt. 26). Mohnke had won the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross on July 20. After the break-out from the Falaise pocket, during which he is reported to have been heavily drugged as a result of his wounds, he took command of the Leibstandarte on August 20, 1944, as an SS-Standartenführer. He was promoted to the rank of SS-Oberführer on November 4, 1944, and ended the war as an SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS.

been established⁴⁰. At this time, the Division had no tanks at all and only about 600 men. After only a few days of refitting, the Division was sent off to the front again, but in this case to the bitter withdrawal from France. It passed Trilon, Solre and Hestrud to the Franco-Belgian border. On September 3, it reached Philippeville and the following day the River Meuse. On September 6, Kurt Meyer was captured near Amiens and his command passed temporarily to SS-Sturmbannführer Hubert Meyer... the Division's chief of staff⁴¹.

The Division then took on the advancing Americans and was at Durbuy on the 7th of September. In mid-September, listed officially as being only an SS Battle Group⁴², it was sent to the Sauerland and Westerwald areas to the northeast of Cologne and was under the ISt SS Armoured Corps, 7th Army, Army Group "B". It then transferred southwards to the Eifel plateau and in October was under the LXVIth Corps. In November, it joined its training and replacement battalion at Nienburg on the River Weser, some 60 kilometers to the south of Bremen⁴³.



GENERAL DER FALLSCHIRMTRUPPEN MEINDL AT THE INVASION FRONT.

⁴⁰This was in fact the second training and replacement battalion of the "HJ" Division (SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Ausbildungs- and Ersatz-Bataillon 12 - SS-Pz.-Gren.-A.- u. E.-Btl. 12). It had been established at Kaiserslautern just before the Division's arrival. Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, September 1, 1944, Nr. 17, Z. 506.

⁴¹Hubert Meyer was not related to Kurt Meyer.

⁴²KTB/OKW 16.9.1944, Schramm, KTB des OKW, Bd. IV, p. 1879.

⁴³The training and replacement battalion had been transferred from Kaiserslautern (see footnote 40) to Nienburg just before the Division's arrival. Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, November 15, 1944, Nr. 22, Z. 699.

The Division, in December 1944, came under Sepp Dietrich's 6th Armoured Army and was assigned to special duties. The 6th was the strongest of the three armoured armies committed to the imminent counteroffensive in the Ardennes. The "HJ" Division was intended to play an important rôle in the "Battle of the Bulge" and was on the northern sector. It was supposed to cross the Elsenborn Ridge and then thrust to Malmédy, Spa and Verviers. The offensive opened with "HJ" protecting the right flank east and north of Bullingen and northeast of Laroche, but adverse conditions and American resistance denied the Division its planned objectives. They had attacked the American positions near Bütgenbach some 12 kilometers east of Malmédy but met strong resistance and could not break through. On December 17, the 1st U. S. Infantry Division arrived on the scene, counter-attacked and slowed down the "HJ" Division's progress even further. It was impossible to break through as planned and the rapid advance which was so essential to a successful offensive was not achieved. Plans were changed and the Division swung around and followed the route taken by the Leibstandarte.

On December 31, 1944, two weeks after the Ardennes offensive had begun, the "HJ" Division was listed as being "held available for further employment" (zur Verfügung) under the 6th Armoured Army. The 2nd and 9th SS Divisions as well as the 560th Infantry Division formed this Army's IInd SS Armoured Corps and the 18th and 62nd Infantry Divisions formed its LXVIth Corps. New Year's Day 1945, saw the "HJ" Division forming part of the German ring around Bastogne. The German front was subjected to heavy pressures from the flanks of the salient and the troops, including those of the "HJ" Division, were forced to withdraw. By January 18, 1945, the German armies had returned to the positions they had held before the offensive had begun.

The "Battle of the Bulge" was lost and Hitler turned his attention to the critical situation in the east and planned yet another desperate offensive. On January 20, the Commander-in-Chief West was ordered to prepare the immediate transfer of the entire 6th Armoured Army to Hungary. "HJ" was withdrawn from the Ardennes and assembled west of Cologne in late January.

Before the end of the month, the Division was transferred by rail to western Hungary under the disguised designation "Replacement Detachment Wiking" ("Ers.-Staffel Wiking") and being under Army Group South was one of the first elements of the 6th Armoured Army to arrive. In early February, before the offensive itself was launched, "HJ" and elements of the Leibstandarte attacked and successfully destroyed a Russian bridgehead which had been established some time before on the River Gran⁴⁴.

After this action, the main offensive was opened on March 6 and "HJ" advanced along the northern side of Lake Balaton (Plattensee) under "Sepp" Dietrich's 6th SS Armoured Army⁴⁵. As had been the case with the previous offensive in the Ardennes, this one in the east met with only limited success. It was short-lived, for the Germans not only had to cope with the strong Russian resistance but also the spring mud which made progress difficult for both men and machines. The advance soon lost momentum and eventually ground to a halt at the Danube. The situation was impossible and by the middle of March, the "HJ" Division was on the retreat again. A forced march to the west was necessary to prevent capture by the Red Army and throughout the withdrawal, the Division was subjected to repeated attacks.

An official document dated April 12, 1945, shows the "HJ" Division tactically grouped with the Leibstandarte, Battle Group "Keitel" and a battle group formed from the 356th Infantry Division under the ISt SS Armoured Corps. This in turn came under the orders of Dietrich's Army HQ staff (SS-Pz.-A. O. K. 6).

The retreat to the northwest continued and on April 13, the 6th SS Armoured Army was driven out of Vienna. The "HJ" Division had been forced back into Austria passing Odenburg and Hirtenberg but eventually managed to establish a strong defensive position in the mountainous Wienerwald area to the southwest of the Austrian capital. This was not to last long, for the position weakened and after only a matter of days, the Division was forced to pull out. It proceeded to move over 100 kilometers west towards Linz and the Americans. Even the fanatical "Hitlerjugend" Division realized that the war was over and its officers and men thought of little but falling into American rather than Russian hands. Field post numbers showed the Division as being "available for further employment" under the 6th SS Armoured Army as late as May 7, but in reality nothing remained of the Army. On May 8, "HJ" crossed the demarcation line near the town of Enns, southeast of Linz, and entered American captivity. Proud and stubborn even in defeat, they had refused to comply with the American order that their vehicles should be draped with white flags as a token of surrender. Just before crossing the demarcation line... and at less than a mile from it... SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Hugo Kraas inspected the remnants of his Division in one last review. 455 men and one tank were all that remained of what had been one of Germany's foremost armoured divisions.

⁴⁴KTB/OKW 18.2.1945 Schramm, op.cit., p. 1104.

⁴⁵The 6th Armoured Army had been taken into the Waffen-SS and thus became the 6th SS Armoured Army (see Volume 2, p. 26).

Order-of-Battle

(COMPOSITE)

Stab der Division

SS-Kartenstelle (mot) 12

SS-Musikzug

Sicherungs-Kompanie (term used for less than three weeks)/SS-Div.-Begleit-Kompanie (mot) (formed at Turnhout in Belgium on November 1, 1943)

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 25 (until October 22, 1943 (46): SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 1 d. 12. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division. Formed at Beverlo between July 20 and November 5, 1943... with the exception of the Staff Company which was formed on January 1, 1944. This was a motorized (motorisiert) regiment. Its Ist Battalion provided SS-Kampfgruppe "Waldmüller (47) for a time).

SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 26 (until October 22, 1943 (46): SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Regiment 2 d. 12. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division. Formed at Beverlo between July 20 and October 4, 1943. This was a partly armoured (teilgepanzert) regiment in that one of its battalions was armoured (gepanzert).

SS-Panzer-Regiment 12 (formed at Mailly-le-Camp on November 3, 1943, with its Panther Werkstattzug (workshop platoon) being formed at Beverlo on January 25, 1944. The Regiment's original Ist and IInd battalions were intended to have had Mark V ("Panther") and Mark IV tanks respectively. Later, the remnants of both battalions were brought together to form a new Ist Battalion with both Mark IV and V tanks. In 1945, the Army's s. Pz. Jg. Abt. 560 substituted for the new IInd Battalion which was being formed at Fallingbommel).

SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 12 (although intended for the Division since June 1943, it appears to have never been completed).

SS-Sturmgeschütz-Abteilung 12 (shown in the Division's proposed order-of-battle of June 1943. It existed from time to time).

SS-Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 12 (elements were formed at Mol, Retie and Beneschau on September 5 and November 13, 1943).

SS-Flak-Abteilung 12 (formed in the autumn of 1943).

SS-Werfer-Abteilung 12 (formed in March 1944)

SS-Panzer-Nachrichten-Abteilung 12 (formed in the autumn of 1943)

SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 12 (formed at Turnhout between September 4 and December 1, 1943)

SS-Pionier-Bataillon 12/SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 12 (formed in the autumn of 1943 and renamed in September 1944)

SS-Divisionsnachschiebtruppen 12

1. - 4. SS-Kraftfahr-Kompanie

5., 6. u. 7. gr. SS-Kw.Kol.

Versorg.-Kompanie

SS-Waffenm. Werkst.-Kompanie

⁴⁶SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 1574/43g. Kdos., v. 22. 10. 1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

⁴⁷SS-Obersturmbannführer Hans Waldmüller commanded this Battalion and Battle Group for a time and was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross as an SS-Sturmbannführer on August 31, 1944. He was killed near Basse-Bodeux by Belgian guerrillas on September 8, 1944.

SS-Panzer-Instandsetzungs-Abteilung 12 (formed at Turnhout on November 1, 1943 and January 1, 1944)

SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 12/SS-Verwaltungsgruppen-Abteilung 12 (formed at Beverlo on July 20, 1943, and renamed on August 15, 1944)

Bäck.-Kompanie (formed on July 3, 1943)

Schläch(erei)-Kompanie (formed on July 3, 1943)

Verpfl.-Abteilung (formed on July 20, 1943)

SS-Sanitäts-Abteilung 12 (formed on September 5, 1943)

1. SS-Sanitäts-Kompanie 12 (formed on September 5, 1943)

2. SS-Sanitäts-Kompanie 12 (formed on October 26, 1943)

SS-Feldlazarett 12 (existed for a time)

1. - 3. SS-Kr. Kw. - Züge/SS-Kr. Kw. - Kompanie (an SS-Kr. Kw. - Zug was formed on January 18, 1944)

SS-Tr. Eg. - Zug (formed on January 18, 1944)

SS-Feldpostamt (mot) 12 (formed at Weimar on September 10, 1943... .. it was part of SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 12)

SS-Kriegsberichter-Zug (mot) 12

SS-Feldgendarmarie-Kompanie/Trupp (mot) 12 (formed on November 1, 1943)

SS-Feldersatz-Bataillon 12 (formed in April 1944)

SS-Unterführer-Lehr-Kompanie

SS-Kampfschule

SS-Feldersatz-Einheiten 12 (formed in April 1945)

Waffengruppe Panzer

Waffengruppe Artillerie

NOTE:

Two Army regiments are reported as having been attached to the Division in Normandy, which was probably a tactical arrangement to provide "HJ" with additional infantry.

DIVISIONAL STRENGTHS*

Date	Officers	NCOs	Men	Total
1. 10. 43	183	808	11, 481	12, 472
1. 11. 43	231	1, 068	12, 722	14, 021
1. 12. 43	422	14, 540		14, 962
1. 1. 44	373	1, 547	17, 901	19, 821
1. 2. 44	398	1, 711	14, 990	17, 099
1. 3. 44	430	1, 870	13, 839	16, 139
1. 4. 44	463	1, 970	10, 329	20, 109
1. 6. 44	520	2, 383	17, 637	20, 540
30. 6. 44	461	2, 281	15, 116	17, 858
1. 11. 44	309	2, 553	18, 349	21, 211
8. 12. 44	484	3, 174	19, 586	23, 244
31. 12. 44	439	2, 647	16, 571	19, 657
1. 3. 45	457	2, 538	14, 428	17, 423
13. 4. 45	281	1, 401	6, 049	7, 731

*Actual strengths (including men in hospitals, on detachment or on leave)/Iststärke.

Divisional Commanders

- July 1943 - June 16, 1944⁴⁸ SS-Oberführer (promoted as such on July 1, 1943... promoted before January 31, 1944 to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS) Fritz Witt
- June 16, 1944 - September 6, 1944 SS-Standartenführer (promoted on August 1, 1944 to SS-Oberführer) Kurt Meyer (49)
- September 7, 1944 - November 1944⁵⁰ SS-Sturmbannführer (promoted on November 9, 1944 to SS-Obersturmbannführer) Hubert Meyer (temporary command)
- November 1944 - May 8, 1945 SS-Standartenführer (promoted on January 30, 1945 to SS-Oberführer and subsequently to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS(51)) Hugo Kraas (52)

NOTE:

SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Fritz Kraemer is reported to have been in temporary command in November 1944.



REICHSJUGENDFÜHRER AXMANN AND
SS-OBERFÜHRER FRITZ WITT

⁴⁸There is some doubt as to the exact date of Witt's death... see footnote 36.

⁴⁹Known as "Panzermeier".

⁵⁰Probably November 9 as Kraas was in command on that day and his promotion may have coincided with his taking command.

⁵¹Meyer, op.cit., p. 341.

⁵²Disappeared after the war.



SS-STANDARTENFÜHRER KURT MEYER

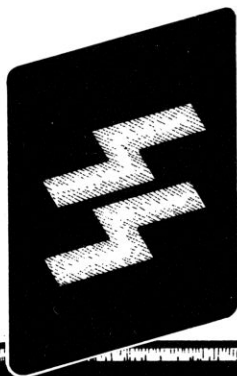


HUGO KRAAS (HERE AN SS-OBERSTURMBANNFÜHRER)

CHIEF OF STAFF:

SS-Obersturmbannführer Hubert Meyer (known to have been as such in July 1944 and at March 1, 1945)

Divisional Uniforms and Insignia



- (1) All elements should have worn the "Hitlerjugend" cuffband in block lettering (Bevo pattern)(53). The SS runes were worn throughout on the collar patch.

Hitlerjugend

Hitlerjugend

⁵³Probably introduced at the date the Division was formed, this band was in use by February 1944 (*Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS*, February 15, 1944, Nr. 4, Z. 64). Although well-worn and definitely genuine examples are to be found in collections, photographs indicate that it was not widely worn... possibly as a result of the widespread use of camouflage clothing.

Two variations of the "Hitlerjugend" cuffband are listed and illustrated in Beadle/Hartmann (op.cit., pp. 40 and 129). Both are said to have been made in Bruges, Belgium, but no confirmation has been found that either was in fact ever issued:

- (a) in the same German script (Sütterlin) as the "Adolf Hitler" cuffband (see Volume 2, p. 73). Examples of this type are known to the present authors and a slight variation to that shown by Beadle/Hartmann is illustrated. No evidence has yet been found to confirm that this variation was worn, issued or even manufactured during the Second World War.
- (b) in Gothic lettering. No evidence has yet been found, except for the photograph supplied by Beadle/Hartmann (op.cit. p. 129), to support the validity of this variation.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOGRAPH



THIS "HITLERJUGEND" SS-STURMMANN WAS TAKEN PRISONER AT BASTOGNE IN EARLY JANUARY 1945 (NOTE CUFFBAND).

- (2) Photographs show that certain recruits entering the Division from the Hitler Youth wore the basic Waffen-SS uniform but retained H-J rather than Waffen-SS forage caps and wore H-J armbands rather than Waffen-SS sleeve eagles. This mixture of Waffen-SS and H-J insignia could be explained by the theory that raw recruits had to pass through a probationary period during which H-J caps and armbands were retained. Photographs suggest that if such a rule did exist it was either flexible or not always adhered to, for some boys wore the H-J armband with a Waffen-SS forage cap. Alternatively, this mixture could have been caused by a temporary shortage of the correct uniform parts.



(3) Photographs on pages 42 and 43 of Beadle/Hartmann (op. cit.) show leather U-Boat clothing being worn with shoulder straps. These had previously been issued to Italian troops but were withdrawn and issued to members of the "HJ" Division (54). The photo below is of members of the IInd Battalion of SS-Panzer-Regiment 12 wearing leather U-Boat clothing.



(4) It is surprising that the diamond-shaped emblem of the Hitler-Jugend was not used by the Division in any way. A lozenge in black and white cotton does exist but whereas its colours suggest some association with the SS no evidence has been found. It is most probably a sleeve badge to denote former membership of the H-J, or alternatively for Waffen-SS personnel who had been commandeered to the H-J. (see illustration in Volume 1, p. 101, #1 of Former Service Badges).

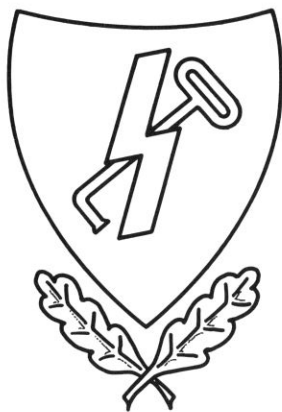
(5) Camouflage clothing was widely worn.

(6) Short marching boots and gaiters were usually worn by the combat troops of this Division (see photo at left).

DIVISIONAL VEHICLE SYMBOLS

(1) A single runic "S" superimposed over a tilted skeleton key⁵⁵.

(2) As (1) above, but over crossed oakleaves⁵⁶.



(2)

NOTE:

The emblem used today by the old comrades' association of the 1st SS Armoured Corps (57) for the "HJ" Division should not be taken as a variation of this Division's vehicle symbol. It consists of a diamond (reminiscent of the H-J badge) cut horizontally in the middle and with the two parts off-set. It was chosen instead of the original symbol for fear of repercussions arising from the use of the "S" rune in post-war Germany (58).

⁵⁵The "S" rune was the symbol of the DJ (the junior section of the H-J with boys between 10 and 14 years of age) and the key (a "Dietrich" in German and thus a play-on-words with Sepp Dietrich) the vehicle symbol of the Leibstandarte-SS "Adolf Hitler" (see Volume 2, p. 76). Thus the combined emblem reflected the dual origins of the "HJ" Division.... the H-J and the Leibstandarte.

⁵⁶This variation was in use during the Normandy battle (Germaneren-Kamporgan for Germanske SS Norge, July 8, 1944). The oakleaves are thought to have been added to reflect the fact that divisional commander Fritz Witt was holder of the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. Alternatively, it could have applied to Sepp Dietrich's holding the same decoration.

⁵⁷Kameradschaftsverband der Soldaten des I. Panzer Korps der ehem. Waffen-SS e. V. im Verband Deutscher Soldaten e. V.

⁵⁸Statement by Herbert Walther.



"HJ" SUPPORT UNITS RUSHING TO THE INVASION FRONT ON JUNE 10, 1944 (NOTE DIVISIONAL SYMBOL IN LOWER LEFT CORNER OF PHOTO).



REVIEW OF THE DIVISION BY REICHSFÜHRER-SS HIMMLER AND SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS SAUBERZWEIG.



13. Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS
"Handschar" (kroatische Nr. 1)

EVOLUTION AND TITLES OF
13. WAFEN-GEBIGS-DIVISION DER SS "HANDSCHAR" (KROATISCHE NR. 1)

March 1, 1943 ¹ - July 2, 1943	_____	Kroatische SS-Freiwilligen-Division (2)
July 2, 1943 - October 9, 1943 ³	_____	(13.) Kroatische SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Division (4)
October 9, 1943 - October 22, 1943 ⁵	_____	(13.) SS-Freiwilligen-b.h. Gebirgs-Division (Kroatien)
October 22, 1943 - May 15, 1944 ⁶	_____	13. SS-Freiwilligen-b.h. Gebirgs-Division (Kroatien) (7)
May 15, 1944 - May 7, 1945	_____	13. Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS "Handschar" (kroatische Nr. 1) (8)

¹Ordered by Hitler on February 10, 1943, the Division's official formation date was March 1, 1943 (SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt d. Waffen-SS, Org. Tgb. Nr. 589/43 g. Kdos., v. 30. 4. 1943, Aufstellung der Kroatischen SS-Freiwilligen-Division).

²At first the Division was referred to unofficially by a number of titles, including "Kroatische Division" and "Muselmanen-Division".

³SS-FHA, v. 9.10.1943 g. Kdos., "13. SS-Freiw. b.h. Gebirgs-Division (Kroatien)" - T-175/108/2631269. The substitution of the word "Kroatische" by "Kroatien" in brackets was confirmed by an SS-FHA order dated November 12, 1943, but in this the letters "b.h." were omitted (SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12. 11. 1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS).

⁴The Division was identified by the number "13" as it had been the 13th division of the Waffen-SS to be formed. It was officially numbered as such on October 22, 1943 (see following footnote).

⁵The Division was numbered by : SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22. 10. 1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

⁶The final designation has also been reported as having been introduced in April 1944 (by Allied Intelligence), June 1, 1944 (an unsupported source) and simply "June 1944" (P. H. B.). Although the word "Waffen" appeared in the Division's title in a strength return dated June 30, 1944, it was not stipulated in Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS until August 15, 1944.

⁷The letters "b.h.", standing for "Bosnien-Herzegowina", have also been found expressed in capital letters and in SS-FHA/12. 11. 1943 (see footnote (3)) were omitted. Unofficial and erroneous versions of the title using these letters/words in one form or another include: SS-Division "Bosnien-Herzegowina" (SS-Div. BH); 13. SS-Bosniaken-Gebirgs-Division; Bosnisch-Herzegowinische SS-Gebirgsdivision "Kroatien" (SS-Leitheft, Heft 2, 1944).

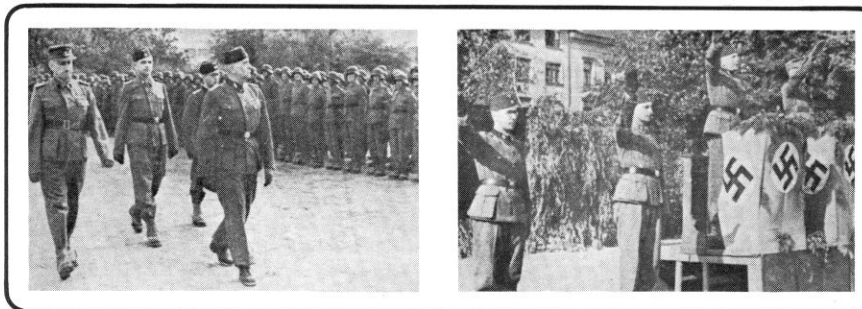
⁸German contemporary documents were not always completely accurate when describing this Division. On September 16, 1944, field post number lists showed it as: 13. SS-Geb. Div. "Handschar"; and in an SS-FHA order dated October 11, 1944: 13. Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS

History



Zagreb, 1943. The streets of the capital of Ante Pavelic's puppet "Independent State of Croatia" are filled with the sound of marching soldiers. The column, wearing the Waffen-SS uniform and steel helmets but with neither collar patches nor shoulder straps, is led by officers wearing hitherto unseen SS headgear, fezzes with Waffen-SS cloth insignia. The column comes to a halt in the Festival Square and the band of the German Area Command Zagreb (Musikkorps der Feldkommandantur Zagreb) strikes up the march "Deutschland heiliges Vaterland"⁹. The music over, a thick-set SS-Standartenführer wearing the "old campaigners'" chevron¹⁰ and an SS fez takes the swastika-bedecked rostrum, backed by a large SS flag, and speaks to the men gathered in the large square:

"SS officers, NCOs and men, I hereby solemnly accept you into the ranks of the Waffen-SS. You are the sons of a people that has been soldierly and battle-ried through the centuries.... you are the first in southeast Europe to wear the uniform of the victorious Waffen-SS. You have thus entered the front-line of the European peoples who wish to free themselves from the menace of Bolshevism and Jewry. You are the glory of your forefathers as brave, proud and far-reaching soldiers.... more so because as the first Croat SS Volunteer Division (11) you are worthy to conquer alongside the other divisions of the Waffen-SS. We salute the Führer and the Poglavnik (12)!"



"Handschar", i.e. without the required national identification in brackets (SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 3614/44 g. Kdos., v. 11. 10. 1944, Bezeichnung der Feldeinheiten der Waffen-SS). The Chief of the Security Police and Security Service, Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, was so out of touch that he actually referred to it as an "SS Legion".

⁹"Germany holy Fatherland".

¹⁰See Volume 1, p. 80.

¹¹kroatische SS-Freiwilligen-Division.

¹²Ante Pavelic's title as head of the Independent State of Croatia.

The ceremony ended with a chorus of "Sieg Heil!" and the playing of the two national anthems... the German and Croat. It was the swearing-in ceremony of a new and unprecedented Waffen-SS division, one which was later to be named "Handschar". The SS-Standartenführer was the man in charge of its formation, Herbert von Obwurzer¹³.

German troops had been tied down in Yugoslavia fighting Tito's Partisans for some time and as has been seen in a previous chapter, the "Prinz Eugen" Division was formed from ethnic Germans in Serbia and Croatia in early 1942 with the primary purpose of combatting them. But guerrilla activity continued, grew and in early 1943 the situation was almost uncontrollable, especially in Bosnia. It was at this stage that the need for another locally-recruited division was appreciated and plans put into action to form one.

Himmler and his aides knew that there was a large number of Moslems in the Bosnia and Hercegovina¹⁴ regions that traditionally so hated the Christian Serbs that they would volunteer en masse to fight Tito's partisans if given the opportunity of doing so¹⁵. But for such an opportunity to be extended to them by the Waffen-SS would mean a radical change in racial and ethnic thinking, for such considerations had hitherto been all-important when considering men for acceptance into the Waffen-SS. Scandinavians, Dutchmen, Flemings, "German" Swiss and even Volksdeutsche could be fitted into Himmler's membership rules for the exclusive SS, but Moslems were another matter entirely.

¹³Von Obwurzer was in charge of "Formation Staff Agram" (Aufbaustab Agram) in April 1943.

¹⁴Before 1941, Bosnia-Hercegovina (Bosna i Hercegovina in Croat and Bosnien-Herzegowina in German... hereafter referred to as "B. H.") was a province of the Yugoslav Kingdom, today it is a constituent republic of Yugoslavia. Bordered by Croatia on the north, northwest and southwest and by Serbia on the east, it had undergone a troublesome history which produced an inbred hatred of the Christian Serbs by the Moslems. The Turks had seized Hercegovina in the 15th century and there followed four hundred years of Moslem rule and supremacy but in 1875 the Christians in B. H. staged an uprising and were supported the following year by the Serbs and Montenegrins. In 1877, Russia declared war on Turkey and the following year B. H. came under Austria, the latter annexing the provinces in 1908. This move was opposed by the Serbs but supported by the Croats on religious grounds. A Bosnian student murdered the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, Austria declared war on Serbia and the result was the First World War. With defeat and the fall of the Austrian empire, B. H. was incorporated into Yugoslavia. At the time of the Second World War, about sixty per cent of the population of B. H. were Christians and forty percent Moslems.

¹⁵Tito was in fact a Croat but his guerrillas were mainly Christian Serbs. The communists amongst them may not, of course, have been Christians.

After much deliberation, it was decided to proceed and the plan was brought before Hitler. The Führer ordered the establishment of this new division on February 10, 1943, which was to be recruited within the Independent State of Croatia and was to combat, eventually contain and even destroy the partisans in their own lands. Three days later Himmler gave the task of forming the "Croat SS Volunteer Division"¹⁶ to the commander of the "Prinz Eugen" Division, SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Artur Phleps. It was to be formed, Himmler told Phleps, from as many Moslems of the Mohammedan religion as possible. Phleps set to work and on February 19, 1943, reported that the Pavelic regime had agreed to the division, which they felt should be called "SS-Ustascha-Division Kroatien" (the Ustascha were Pavelic's militia). Agreement or no agreement, Pavelic's administration was to do nothing but hinder the development of the new division.

The Waffen-SS recruiting officers launched a propaganda campaign which capitalized on the Moslem's hatred for the Christian Serbs and thousands of young Moslems volunteered¹⁷. But not long after, and certainly before the required number had stepped forward, the flow of volunteers began to slacken and eventually came to a virtual standstill. Investigations were made and Artur Phleps reported at length on April 19, 1943, that Pavelic's regime was reacting against the entry of its Moslem subjects into the German forces and had adopted such blocking tactics as sending any Moslems willing to join the Waffen-SS to Croat concentration camps or prisons or forcing them to join the Croat armed forces.

Himmler was enraged that such an upstart puppet should even consider obstructing the development of the Waffen-SS (not to mention the will of the Führer himself) and decided on firm action. On July 1, 1943, he wrote to his representative in Croatia, SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei Konstantin Kammerhofer¹⁸ and ordered him to settle the highly unsatisfactory situation forthwith¹⁹. Kammerhofer was told that the new

¹⁶Kroatische SS-Freiwilligen-Division.

¹⁷The Moslems' pro-Nazi religious leader, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husaini (also spelled Hadji Amin el Hussein) toured Croatia in April 1943 making propaganda for the Division. He had taken up exile in Berlin after the failure of the pro-German Iraq rebellion of May 1941 and will be heard of again in the story of this Division.

¹⁸Kammerhofer's title was "Beauftragter des Reichsführers-SS in Kroatien", which was in addition to his appointment as "Higher SS and Police Leader Croatia" (Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer Kroatien).

¹⁹RFSS to Kammerhofer, geheim, v. 1.7.1943 g. Kdos. - T-175/111/2635371.

division was to be ready and with its required 26,000 men within just one month of the date on the letter, which meant by August 1, 1943. But Himmler was apparently not ill-disposed towards his man in Croatia, for not only had he promoted him on the very same day he wrote the letter, but two days later he told Berger to provide Kammerhofer with two million Reichsmarks to assist the recruiting campaign²⁰.

Kammerhofer apparently experienced little difficulty in persuading the Pavelic regime to stop harassing Moslems wishing to join the Waffen-SS and the flow of volunteers soon increased. Yet even without the resistance of the local authorities, the number of volunteers began to slacken again and conscription had to be introduced to bring in the required number of men for the "volunteer" division²¹. The Waffen-SS proceeded to press-gang for men in the most ruthless manner and even dragged unwilling Moslems away from their worship in the Mosque at Travnik. They also sought to take over many Moslems from the Croat armed forces and Allied Intelligence reported that many Moslems and some Christians from the Croat National Army were forced into the Division when recruiting of volunteers lagged. The unwise inclusion of the Moslem's arch-enemy...the Christians...was to contribute shortly thereafter to a full-scale mutiny.

In the end, the required number of men would be found but the Croat puppet government was never to be wholly cooperative and so it was decided to transfer the men to France and form and train the Division there.

Meanwhile, the Division was progressing, at least on paper. One report gives its date of formation as February 15, 1943, but when the SS-FHA amplified the Führerbefehl²² on April 30, it gave March 1, 1943²³ as the formation date (Tag der Aufstellung). This order dealt with various matters of interest in connection with the Division and is worthy of closer examination. In short, it stated as follows:

²⁰RFSS to Berger, geheim, v. 3.7.1943 g.Kdos. - T-175/111/2635386.

²¹SS-Freiw.-Geb.-Division "Prinz Eugen", Kommandeur-Notiz, v. 31.7.1943 g.Kdos., "Abgabe von Muselmanen aus der kroat. Wehrmacht" - T-175/108/2631276; Berger to RFSS, v. 4.8.1943 geh., "Muselmanen-Division" - T-175/108/2631142.

²²"Führer order", i. e. Hitler's order of February 10, 1943.

²³Theoretical in any case. The order was: SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt d. Waffen-SS, Org. Tgb. Nr. 589/43 g.Kdos., v. 30.4.1943, Aufstellung der Kroatischen SS-Freiwilligen-Division.

- (a) active and reserve Volksdeutsche officers from Croatia as well as Moslem active and reserve officers were available for further employment;
- (b) a number of Moslem officers were provided to look after racial education;
- (c) the Volksdeutsche, Croat and Moslem officers were guaranteed the same pay and dues which they were then receiving in the Croat Army. During a six months' trial period, however, they would carry a rank one lower than they had previously held, especially in the cases of senior officers. The trial period over, they would be appointed as officers for the duration (Führer auf Kriegsdauer). Another restriction was the fact that the retention of the Croat Army rank did not make them immune from police arrest. Those considered morally or physically unfit would be discharged (in fact the physically unfit were transferred to Police units).

The order went on to describe the uniform and insignia to be worn²⁴ and stated that whereas German had to be used on duty and as the language of command, Croat could be used for training and normal conversation. Finally it provided that SS-Standartenführer Herbert von Obwurzer was to be entrusted with the task of forming the Division.

It is not felt that von Obwurzer can really be considered as the Division's first commander and most post-war writers do not credit him so. Apart from the mission of establishing the Division entrusted to him at the end of April 1943, he appears generally to have been concerned with propaganda in Yugoslavia on Himmler's behalf. Just how well he engineered the formation of the Division is unrecorded but his propaganda activities certainly did not meet with the approval of the Reichsführer-SS. On June 15, 1943, Himmler wrote a secret letter to the chiefs of the SS-FHA and SS-PHA and to the commander of the "Prinz Eugen" Division, Artur Phleps, criticizing von Obwurzer in the severest of terms and threatening to block his further advancement in the SS. He was accused of being vain and of having behaved like "an elephant in a china shop". The Standartenführer's crime would appear to have been acting totally against Himmler's instructions in that he was aiming his propaganda at the Croats. The letter ended by saying that von Obwurzer would be sent off to command a Latvian or Estonian regiment as soon as possible and be replaced in Croatia by SS-Standartenführer Otto Kumm²⁵.

²⁴See pp. 156-159 of this book.

²⁵RFSS to chiefs of SS-FHA and SS-PHA and to Phleps, dated June 15, 1943, T-175/55/0057. Von Obwurzer's career did not end as a result of this reprimand and having been promoted to the rank of SS-Oberführer on June 21, 1944, he took command of the 15. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS. SS-Standartenführer Otto Kumm returned from Yugoslavia and having served on the staff of the V. SS-Gebirgs-Korps in early 1944, took command of the "Prinz Eugen" Division on August 1, 1944.

While the required number of men were being gathered in Yugoslavia, in far away Berlin, Heinrich Himmler was busily involved in preparing a special version of the standard SS oath which would be suitable for the Moslems²⁶. The final text was agreed and ordered on June 23, 1943. It read as follows:

"I swear to the Führer, Adolf Hitler, as Supreme Commander of the German Armed Forces to be loyal and brave. I swear to the Führer and to the leaders whom he may designate, obedience unto death.

I swear to God the Almighty, that I will always be loyal to the Croat State and its authorized representative, the Poglavnik, that I will always maintain the best interests of the Croat people and always respect the state constitution and laws of the Croat people."

By July 1943, there were sufficient men available for the Division to be formally established and for training to begin. But the uncooperative attitude in Yugoslavia had not improved and with the threat of partisan attacks the task had been rendered so difficult that on July 2, 1943, the SS-FHA decided to follow a common practice and form the Division far away from Croatia and that country's inherent disadvantages. The location chosen was the Army Rear Area Southern France²⁷ with the divisional HQ to be based at Le Puy. This order also stated that the Division was to be named a mountain division and that the HQ staff of the Vth SS Mountain Corps²⁸ was responsible for its formation²⁹.

The men (some 20,000 Moslems from B. H. and a few hundred Albanians) were in an ugly mood and Allied Intelligence reported them as being "very unreliable and subject to desertion"³⁰. The change of air could not have come at a more propitious time but all was not to be well with the new Division as will be seen later.

In early July, the embryo division began to be transferred from Yugoslavia under the Vth SS Mountain Corps to south-central France, near the town of Le Puy in the Haute Loire, about 60 kilometers to the southwest of St. Étienne. To provide a sound basis to what otherwise looked like a decidedly unstable group of men, a cadre of Reichs- and Volksdeutsche officers and NCOs was supplied by the "Prinz Eugen" Division.

²⁶Variations on the standard SS oath had already been worked out and one of these had been introduced previously for "Germanic" volunteers in the SS and for the Legions.

²⁷rückwärtiges Heeresgebiet Südfrankreich.

²⁸Gen. Kdo. V. SS-Geb. Korps.

²⁹SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt d. Waffen-SS, Org. Tgb. Nr. 747/43 g. Kdos., v. 2. 7. 1943, Aufstellung der Kroat. SS-Freiw. Div.

³⁰MID, German OB, March 1945.

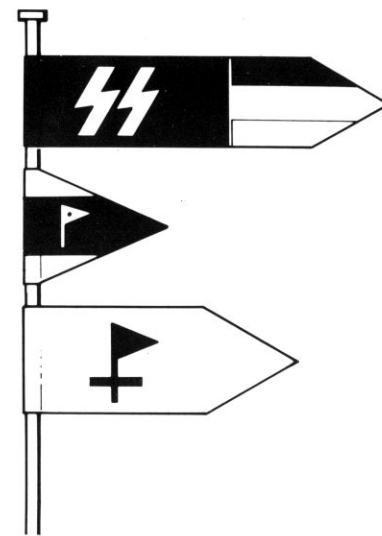
It was around this small group of hardened, reliable Germans and ethnic Germans that the new Division was to be formed. By the end of July, the transfer had been completed and the Recruit Depot at Wildflecken in Germany was transferred to Mende, 65 kilometers to the south/southwest of Le Puy. Allied Intelligence's first reference to the Division was in August 1943, when it showed that formation had begun under Army Group "D".

It has already been seen how the SS was obliged to lift its normal racial and ethnic barriers to allow for the establishment of a Moslem formation within its ranks. The theory had been agreed upon by Hitler and Himmler in Berlin but there was no accounting for the human weakness of the officers and NCOs who

actually commanded and came into contact with the Moslems. It is perhaps unfortunate that the majority of the leadership corps should have been Volksdeutsche from Yugoslavia itself for as time was to tell, many showed themselves totally unsuitable for the task. Not only did a number speak only poor or no German at all, but their background led to dislike and even hatred of the men they were to command.

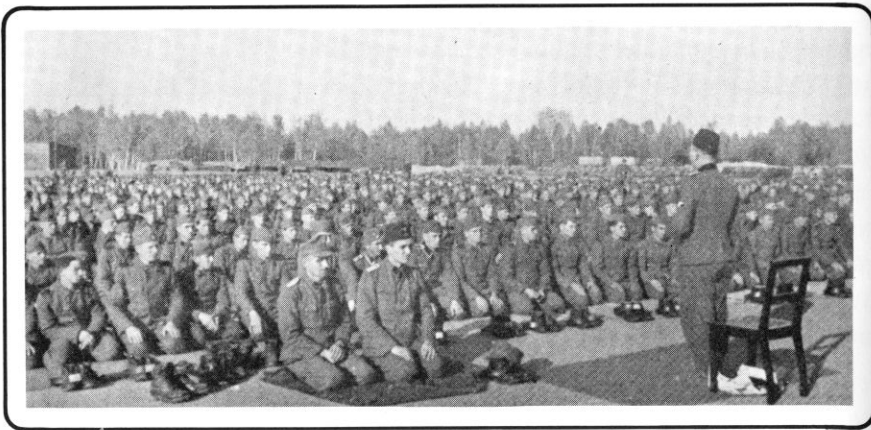
Catering for Moslem members, the SS not only had to lower racial and other barriers but also had to bend its strict rules and regulations. It has already been seen that an acceptable variation to the standard SS oath had to be worked out in June 1943... other concessions also had to be made to comply with the demands of Islam³¹ and in some quarters these were rightfully or wrongly considered as privileges.

The religion of Mohammed requires, for example, that Moslems worship collectively before sunrise, after midday, in the late afternoon, at sunset and when the night is dark... an unwise tactical move in the field of battle as anyone faintly interested in military matters will appreciate. But it was a concession which had to be given and so the Moslem members of the Division were to be seen five times a day kneeling bare-footed towards Mecca, bending forward and touching their foreheads three times on their Waffen-SS camouflage quarters which were spread out as



ACCORDING TO A FRENCH INTELLIGENCE REPORT DATED SEPTEMBER 20, 1943, THE ABOVE PENNANTS WERE REPORTED AT LE PUY.

³¹A Moslem is a believer in Islam, the religion of Mohammed.



prayer mats before them³². In addition to allowing for their communal worship, the Waffen-SS also had to look after their diet...for Moslems are forbidden to eat pork or drink alcohol. Himmler realized all of this and agreed to it. Although personally at best an atheist, he supported Islam for by promising heaven to those killed in battle it had the making of a good religion for soldiers. The Moslems, or "Mujos" as they were called by the Germans, were consequently organized along the lines of the old Bosnian regiments of the Austro-Hungarian Army.

As a result of all these concessions, there were those both inside and outside the Division who took a violent dislike to the "Mujos". To try and keep this natural reaction in check, Himmler wrote the following letter on August 6, 1943, to the SS-HA, SS-FHA, Artur Phleps (then commanding general of the Vth SS Mountain Corps - which controlled the Division), his representative in Croatia, SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei Konstantin Kammerhofer and a certain SS-Obersturmbannführer Wagner³³.

"All Moslem members of the Waffen-SS and police are to be afforded the undeniable right of their religious demands never to touch pork, pork sausages nor to drink alcohol. In all cases, a diet of equal value will be assured to them.

I hold all commanders, company commanders and other SS officers, especially those officers and NCOs involved with economic administration, responsible for the most scrupulous and loyal respect for this privilege especially granted to the Moslems.

³²In time of war, as well as on a journey or under other special circumstances, the prescribed form of worship could be modified in accordance with appointed rules. Consequently, the number of times the Moslems of the Division actually worshipped in the field may have been reduced from five times per day.

³³RFSS to SS-HA, SS-FHA, Kammerhofer and Wagner, geheim, v. 6.8.1943 - T-175/70/7128-9.

They have answered the call of the Moslem chiefs and have come to us out of hatred for the common Jewish-Anglo-Bolshevik enemy and through respect and fidelity for he who they respect above all, the Führer Adolf Hitler.

I do not wish that through the folly and narrowness of mind of an isolated person, a single one of the tens of thousands of these brave volunteers and their families should suffer from ill humor and feel deprived of the rights which have been granted to them. The meddling frugality of administration... which there is in so many cases... can only do more harm than good.

I therefore command that every breach of my order shall be taken up with neither compromise nor consideration, punished and reported to me.

Moreover, I forbid the jokes and facetious remarks about the Moslem volunteers which are so much enjoyed in groups of comrades. There will no longer be the least discussion about the special rights afforded to the Moslems in these circles.

Heil Hitler!

(signed) H. Himmler."

Returning to the divisional history, we find it newly arrived in the Haute Loire, France. The divisional HQ was set up at the "New Hotel" on Boulevard Alexandre Clair in Le Puy, with other elements also in the town. The HQ of the anti-tank battalion³⁴ as well as the first and second medical companies were reported. A motor instruction company³⁵ was stationed at the girls school³⁶ while other elements were spread over the surrounding area. The elements in Le Puy itself were reported to have been under the orders of a certain Oberstleutnant³⁷ Husiin - Beg Biscevic but no trace of such an officer has been found and it remains uncertain whether he was an Army officer as the report suggests or in fact an SS-Obersturmbannführer³⁸.

Detachments arrived and departed alternately and on September 17, 1943, about 800 newly-equipped soldiers were seen to leave Le Puy by rail in the direction of Nice and, according to statements made by the men to the French inhabitants, they were bound for Italy.

³⁴Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung.

³⁵Kraftfahr-Lehr-Abteilung.

³⁶École Normale de Filles.

³⁷Oberstleutnant is the German Army rank equivalent to Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Army and SS-Obersturmbannführer in the Waffen-SS.

³⁸If Husiin - Beg Biscevic was in the Waffen-SS, he does not seem to have enjoyed a particularly successful career. By November 9, 1944, there is no mention of him in the SS Officers' List (Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP) which covered all ranks from SS-Standartenführer up. He could have been the senior Moslem officer in the Division.

The French intelligence report of September 20³⁹ from which the foregoing is taken confirmed that the "Mujos" were far from happy with their lot and that the main reason for their discontent was maltreatment by their superiors. A latent tension was said to be present between the German (Reichs- and Volksdeutsche) ranks and the troops and the latter told the local Frenchmen that they would turn on their masters and kill them at the first opportunity. They confided that rather than volunteering they had been forced to join the Division (which was true in many cases) and that whereas some of them had volunteered to fight the Italians they had no desire to be incorporated into the Waffen-SS. There was no doubt some truth in all of this and the Moslems were all the more ill at ease by being so far from their homes and families. With the war and the growing partisan activity in Bosnia, they had just cause for concern.

The unhappy situation came to a head on September 16/17, 1943, when 1,000 men of the Division stationed about 160 kilometers southwest of Le Puy at Villefranche-de-Rouergue, mutinied and killed a number of their tormenting officers and NCOs. The crisis was soon overcome when other, better disciplined elements of the Division moved in on the town. A number of the mutinous "Mujos" were killed and many more executed after conviction by an SS court. The Moslem chaplains, the Imans, of which there was one in every battalion, helped calm down the situation and even the Mufti of Jerusalem visited the Division from his new home in Berlin to restore calm and order.

When formation and formal training were completed, the Division was transferred in September/October for further training of its constituent elements to the Neuhammer training area in Silesia, where its training and replacement battalion was based⁴⁰. In November, Allied Intelligence confirmed its presence in Lower Silesia and stated that it was under the orders of the C-in-C Replacement Army⁴¹. In December 1943, it was given as stationed in Austria and on the 16th of that month the front page of the Kölnische Illustrierte Zeitung was given over to a photograph of members of the Division described as "Stabsjäger der SS-Freiwilligen aus Bosnien und der Herzegowina"⁴². As the old year turned into the

³⁹Location de Troupes SS en Haute-Loire, 20.9.1943.

⁴⁰SS-Gebirgs-Jäger-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 13. It was later transferred from Neuhammer to Leoben, north of Graz in Styria, Austria and was at one time at Tuzla, northern Bosnia.

⁴¹Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres, BdE.

⁴²HQ Company riflemen of the SS volunteers from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

new, German strength returns showed the formation as a newly-formed division and stated that it consisted of a total of 21,065 men... 360 officers, 1,931 NCOs and 18,774 men.

The last three months of 1943 brought about a number of changes in divisional terminology. On October 9, it received the designation "13. SS-Freiwilligen-b. h. Gebirgs-Division (Kroatien)"⁴³ and on October 22, the Division and all its elements other than the two mountain infantry regiments were numbered "13" in the numerical sequence adopted on that day by all Waffen-SS divisions⁴⁴. On November 12, the SS-FHA ordered that the Division's title be changed from "13. Kroat. SS-Freiw. Geb.Div." to "13. SS-Freiw. Geb.Div. (Kroatien)". In this respect, it was merely confirming the order of October 9, but it went on to re-designate and re-number the two mountain infantry regiments thus:

SS-Freiw. Geb. Jäg. Rgt. 1 (Kroat. Div.) - SS-Freiw. Geb. Jäg. Rgt. 27,
and
SS-Freiw. Geb. Jäg. Rgt. 2 (Kroat. Div.) - SS-Freiw. Geb. Jäg. Rgt. 28.⁴⁵

An unsupported report states that during October 1943, the Division received men from the Légion Nord-Africaine, which had been recruited in France by that country's Higher SS and Police Leader, SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei Carl-Albrecht Oberg⁴⁶. The presence of these Arabs in the Division is viewed with suspicion for not only would it have been more logical for them to have entered the German-Arab Battalion but also the Waffen-SS had not accepted Indian Moslems for the Division.

A further change was made to the divisional mountain infantry regiments in January 1944. In line with the practice for all non-German "volunteer" regiments to be numbered in a single sequence within the nationality concerned, the regiments had "Croat Nr. 1 and 2" added after their titles respectively and thus took on their final form⁴⁷:

SS-Freiw. -Geb. -Jäg. -Rgt. 27 (kroatisches Nr. 1) and
SS-Freiw. -Geb. -Jäg. -Rgt. 28 (kroatisches Nr. 2).

⁴³SS-FHA, v. 9.10.1943 g. Kdos., "13. Freiw. b. h. Gebirgs-Division (Kroatien)" - T-175/108/2631269.

⁴⁴SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22.10.1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

⁴⁵SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh., v. 12.11.1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

⁴⁶Duprat, op. cit., pp. 353 and 408.

⁴⁷SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 166/44 g. Kdos., v. 22.1.1944, Bezeichnung der SS-Freiw. -Rgter.

The Division came under the 2nd Armoured Army, Army Group "F" in February 1944, and from its HQ at and around Brčko on the River Sava in northern Bosnia, it took on Tito's guerrillas. The majority of the Division was to be engaged in this bloody conflict until the end of September and during this period it is reported to have committed numerous atrocities. The Division was under the Vth SS Mountain Corps in the Vinokovci area about 40 kilometers north of Brčko in March and during that month more Moslem volunteers stepped forward to join the Waffen-SS. As will be seen later, these were organized into a second Croat division.

During April and May 1944, the Division was under the orders of the C-in-C Sylvania⁴⁸, 2nd Armoured Army, Army Group "F". On May 15, it received the name "Handschar"⁴⁹ and with the letters "b. h." dropping out of the title and the word "Waffen" replacing the previous "Freiwilligen"⁵⁰, it assumed its final designation:

13. Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS "Handschar" (kroatische Nr. 1).

The partisan warfare continued and "Handschar" remained under the Vth SS Mountain Corps. A German document dated September 16, 1944, shows this Corps (then called the Vth SS Mountain Army Corps) composed of the "Handschar" and "Prinz Eugen" SS Divisions as well as the 369th (Croat) Infantry Division and the 118th Rifle Division⁵¹.

In late September, the additional Moslem recruits were organized into a second Croat division which was numbered the 23rd⁵². On the 24th, the SS-FHA ordered that these two Croat divisions be grouped together to form the IXth Croat Non-Germanic Mountain Corps of the SS⁵³ which

⁴⁸ Befehlshaber (Bfh.) Sirmien.

⁴⁹ Conflicting reports have been encountered as to the exact origins of the word "Handschar". Some contend that it is a German word meaning literally "hand share", whereas others state that it is an Arabic word meaning "knife" or "dagger". In any event, it was used by the Waffen-SS to describe the curved dagger of the Balkan Moslems and was chosen as a symbol of the warlike spirit of Islam. It is of interest to note that among Islamic weapons the curved blade for sabres and daggers only became common after 1500... before then, all blades had been straight.

⁵⁰ This was not merely to show that the Division's volunteer status had changed but to follow a re-naming programme which showed at a glance the national content of any given Waffen-SS division. Whereas "Freiwilligen" became used to denote a Volksdeutsche or "Nordic" formation, "Waffen" was reserved for those composed largely of "non-Germanic" personnel.

⁵¹ 118. Jäger-Division.

⁵² 23. Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS (kroatische Nr. 2) - later named "Kama", which will be dealt with in a later volume in this series.

⁵³ IX. Waffen-Geb. Korps der SS (kroatisches).

was to be controlled by a Corps HQ Staff⁵⁴. "Handschar" was in fact to be reorganized and essentially lost its reconnaissance unit, anti-tank battalion, mountain artillery regiment and mountain engineer battalion which became Special Troops of the SS High Command⁵⁵ thus:

Aufklärungs-Abteilung became SS-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 509
 Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung -"- SS-Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung 509
 Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment -"- SS-Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment 509
 Gebirgs-Pionier-Bataillon -"- SS-Gebirgs-Pionier-Bataillon 509

The Division's anti-aircraft battery (Flak-Abteilung) was also converted and took on the designation "SS-Flak-Abteilung 509". These elements formed the basis of the corps troops of the new Corps. It was at about this time that "Handschar" was further stripped of personnel, for all its Albanians had to be handed over to man a recently formed Albanian division of the Waffen-SS (21. Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS "Skanderbeg" (albanische Nr. 1).

It was the autumn of 1944 and the great withdrawal of German forces from the southeastern theatre had begun. Himmler had observed that even under more favourable times the Moslems were not the best-disciplined or trusted soldiers and he was wary of what would follow another, and perhaps more permanent withdrawal of these men from their home lands.



"HANDSCHAR" DURING MOUNTAIN OPERATIONS AGAINST TITO'S FORCES.

⁵⁴ Gen. Kdo. IX. Waffen-Geb. Korps der SS (kroatisches). The order was: SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 3253/44g. Kdos., v. 24. 9. 1944, Umgliederung der 13. Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS "Handschar" (kroatische Nr. 1) und Aufstellung der 23. Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS (kroatische Nr. 2) unter Gen. Kdo. IX. Waffen-Geb. Korps der SS (kroatisches).

⁵⁵ Sondertruppen der Reichsführung-SS - see Volume 2, p. 27.

The prospects were far from good and it was therefore decided to release the Bosnians from the Division before it pulled out of Bosnia and this was carried out in late September and early October. The 6,000 or so German and ethnic German personnel were to be joined by a further 3,000 German troops pulling out of Crete. It was intended that these 9,000 men, having taken over all of the Division's equipment, should fight on in the northeast. An SS Battle Group (SS-Kampfgruppe), named "Hanke" after its commander, was formed in mid-October⁵⁶.

SS-Kampfgruppe "Hanke", also known as "Regimental Group 13th SS Mountain "Handschar"⁵⁷, fought in southern Hungary and engaged the advancing Russian forces east of Pécs to the south of Lake Balaton near the Yugoslav border and further south in the Batina and Apatin bridge-heads on the Danube in Yugoslavia. At the end of October, it fought fierce defensive warfare and under the LXIXth Corps carried this through into November. It then retreated to the so-called "Fortress Margaret" (Margarethe-Stellung) between the River Drau and Lake Balaton. Early in December, what remained of the "Handschar" Division was concentrated on the Yugoslav/Hungarian border near Barcs on the Drava⁵⁸, holding out in "Fortress Margaret", and it was in that month that it came under its final higher formation, the LXVIIIth Corps of the 2nd Armoured Army. The heavy defensive fighting continued in the area between Budapest and Lake Balaton until the end of March 1945, when the front

⁵⁶The 13. Waffen-Geb.Div. der SS "Handschar" was still part of the IX. Waffen-Geb.Korps (kroatisches) on October 11 (SS-FHA, Amt II Org.Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 3614/44 g.Kdos., v. 11.10.1944, Bezeichnung der Feldeinheiten der Waffen-SS) but field post numbers on November 26, 1944, show no trace of either the Corps or its Division. It is generally believed that the Division as such no longer existed after October and merely a regimental group made up of its German and Volksdeutsche personnel carried the war to its bitter end. On paper, however, it was still referred to as a division and order-of-battle charts and strength returns published in 1945 showed it as such.

The commander of the 28th Regiment, SS-Standartenführer Helmuth Raithel, left "Handschar" in June 1944 to command the new 23rd Croat Division and his place was taken by SS-Sturmbannführer Hans Hanke. When the 23rd Division "Kama" was disbanded on September 26, 1944, Raithel returned to command his old regiment which he is known to have commanded on November 9, 1944. But he was to leave it again and Hanke, having been promoted to SS-Obersturmbannführer on January 30, 1945, retook command early in the new year. It was a theoretical command for by then the 28th Regiment contained no battalions and in fact he was leading a battle group composed of the remnants of the "Handschar" Division.

⁵⁷Rgt. Gr. 13. SS-Gebirgs (-Div.) "Handschar".

⁵⁸A tributary of the Danube, this river is known as the Drau in Austria and the Drava in Yugoslavia.

to the north of the Lake collapsed. "Fortress Margaret" had to be abandoned and the men fell back towards Austria.

From mid-April until the end of the war, the remnants of "Handschar" fought on in Austria. At first in Lower Styria south of Klagenfurt and east of Marburg an der Drau, they moved northwards, passed Klagenfurt and on May 7, 1945 surrendered to the British south of St. Veit an der Glan*.

While fighting the partisans in Yugoslavia, the officers and NCOs as well as the "Mujos" themselves are reported to have followed the example of the "Prinz Eugen" Division in committing atrocities. The natural savagery of the Moslems' fighting tactics, which on occasion included the cutting-out of the hearts of their enemies, can be considered atrocious though possibly not criminal. They did not, however, stop at this and acted most cruelly against civilians as well as partisans. After the war, Tito demanded that a number of the Moslems as well as 38 national German officers and NCOs of the former "Handschar" Division be handed over to Yugoslavia for war crimes trials⁵⁹. An unsupported report has it that the British handed the Moslems over to Tito's forces after the capitulation and that they were virtually all executed at Maribor on the Drava, just south of the Austrian border⁶⁰.

*According to Tessin, the Division surrendered at Villach.

NOTE:

In early 1945, the 16. SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Reichsführer-SS" was transferred from northern Italy to the Hungarian front disguised as the "Handschar" Division. This security ploy should not lead one to the erroneous assumption that it was the entire "Handschar" Division complete with Moslems which transferred to Hungary and fought between Budapest and Lake Balaton and on the River Drava.

⁵⁹Hausser, op. cit., p. 108.

⁶⁰Duprat, op. cit., p. 355.

Order-of-Battle

(COMPOSITE)

Stab der Division

SS-Div. -Kartenstelle (mot)/SS-Kartenstelle (mot) 13
SS-Musikzug

SS-Waffen-Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 27 (formed in the summer of 1943 as: Kroatisches SS-Freiw.-Gebirgs-Jäger-Rgt. 1. The word "Kroatisches" was later dropped and on October 22, 1943(61) it was numbered thus: SS-Freiw.-Geb.-Jäg.-Rgt. 27. On January 22, 1944(62), it became: SS-Freiw.-Geb.-Jäg.-Rgt. 27 (kroatisches Nr. 1) and later that year assumed its final title. It lost its IIIrd Battalion in September 1944).

SS-Waffen-Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 28 (formed in the summer of 1943 as: Kroatisches SS-Freiw.-Gebirgs-Jäger-Rgt. 2. The word "Kroatisches" was later dropped and on October 22, 1943(61) it was numbered thus: SS-Freiw.-Geb.-Jäg.-Rgt. 28. On January 22, 1944(62) it became: SS-Freiw.-Geb.-Jäg.-Rgt. 28 (kroatisches Nr. 2) and later that year assumed its final title. None of its three battalions were in existence by March 1, 1945)

kroatische SS-Panzer-Abteilung/Kompanie (planned but never formed)

kroatische SS-Panzer-Jäger-Abteilung/SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 13 (formed in August 1943, it became a Special Troop of the SS High Command on September 24, 1944, as: SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 509(63). On March 1, 1945, an SS-Pz.Jg.Abt. 13 appeared as a divisional element)

kroatische SS-Kavallerie-Abteilung (formed in the summer of 1943 and was merged into SS-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 13 in March 1944)

kroatisches SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment/SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment 13/SS-Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment 13/SS-Waffen-Artillerie-Regiment 13 (formed in August 1943, it became a Special Troop of the SS High Command on September 24, 1944, as: SS-Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment 509(63). On March 1, 1945, an SS-Waffen-Artillerie-Regiment 13 was listed as a divisional element)

kroatische SS-Flak-Abteilung/SS-Freiwilligen-Flak-Abteilung 13/SS-Flak-Kompanie 13(64) (formed in August 1943, it became a Special Troop of the SS High Command in 1944 as: SS-Flak-Abteilung 509)

kroatische SS-Nachrichten-Abteilung/SS-Nachrichten-Abteilung 13 (formed in the spring of 1943, it was reduced to an HQ company in September 1943)

SS-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 13/SS-Gebirgs-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 13 (formed in August 1943, it became a Special Troop of the SS High Command

⁶¹SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22. 10. 1943, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

⁶²SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 166/44 g. Kdos., v. 22. 1. 1944, Bezeichnung der SS-Freiw.-Rgt.

⁶³SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb.Nr. 3253/44 g. Kdos., v. 24. 9. 1944, Umgliederung der 13. Waffen-Geb.Div. der SS "Handschar" (kroatische Nr. 1) und Aufstellung der 23. Waffen-Geb.Div. der SS (kroatische Nr. 2) unter Gen. Kdo. IX. Waffen-Geb.Korps der SS (kroatisches).

⁶⁴This is an unusual designation as normally neither anti-aircraft nor artillery companies existed in the German Army, see Klietmann, op. cit. p. 191.

on September 24, 1944 as: SS-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 509(63). On March 1, 1945, an SS-Geb.-A.A. 13 was listed as a divisional element)

SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Zug (existed in the spring of 1944 but had disappeared by March 1, 1945)

kroatisches SS-Radfahr-Bataillon (planned but never formed)

kroatisches SS-Pionier-Bataillon/SS-Pionier-Bataillon 13/SS-Gebirgs-Pionier-Bataillon 13 (formed in August 1943, it became a Special Troop of the SS High Command on September 24, 1944 as: SS-Gebirgs-Pionier-Bataillon 509(63). On March 1, 1945, an SS-Geb.-Pi.-Btl. 13 was listed as a divisional element)

kroatisches SS-Kradschützen-Bataillon (planned but never formed)

SS-Divisionsnachschruppen 13

SS-Divisions-Nachschubführer 13/Versorgungs-Rgt. Stab 13 (redesignated in September 1943)

SS-Verwaltungs-Bataillon 13

SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 13 (formed in August 1943 and disbanded in September 1943)

SS-Sanitäts-Abteilung 13 (65) (formed in August 1943)
1. SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Sanitäts-Kompanie 13
2. SS-Freiwilligen-Gebirgs-Sanitäts-Kompanie 13
SS-Kr. Kw. -Züge

1. SS-Freiw.-Geb.-Veterinär-Kompanie 13/SS-Veterinär-Kompanie 13

2. SS-Freiw.-Geb.-Veterinär-Kompanie 13

SS-Feldpostamt 13

SS-Kriegsberichter-Zug 13

SS-Feldgendarmarie-Trupp 13

SS-Feldersatz-Bataillon 13 (no longer in existence by March 1, 1945)

SS-Krafftahr-Lehr-Abteilung 13

NOTES:

1. Some of the divisional elements listed above appeared on contemporary Waffen-SS charts but were never in fact formed.
2. Religious leaders were spread throughout the Division with an Imam(66) in every battalion and a Mullah(67) in every regiment.

⁶⁵Referred to as "SS-Sanitäts-Bataillon 13" in Klietmann, op. cit., p. 191.

⁶⁶Literally "he who stands in front", it refers to the officiating priest of a mosque and can be used to mean "leader".

⁶⁷The Arabic word "mawla" comes from a root meaning "to be near" and is generally used to mean "master". Refers to a Mohammed-an learned in theology and sacred law and has become to be used to denote any Moslems who are not Arabs.

DIVISIONAL STRENGTHS*

Date	Officers	NCOs	Men	Total
31. 12. 43	360	1, 931	18, 774	21, 065
30. 6. 44	391	2, 244	16, 501	19, 136
20. 9. 44**	346	1, 950	16, 224	18, 520
1. 45	259	1, 638	8, 625	10, 522
2. 45	272	1, 597	8, 009	9, 878
3. 45	247	1, 538	8, 095	9, 880

*including men in hospitals, on detachment or on leave/Iststärke.

**In September 1944, the Division contained 6, 015 German officers, NCOs and men.

Divisional Commanders

1943(68) _____ SS-Standartenführer Herbert von Obwurzer(69)

1943 - June 1944 _____ SS-Oberführer (promoted on October 1, 1943 to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS) Karl G. Sauberzweig(70)

June 1944 - May 1945 _____ SS-Standartenführer (promoted after November 9, 1944, to SS-Oberführer and on January 30, 1945, to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS) Desiderius Hampel(71)

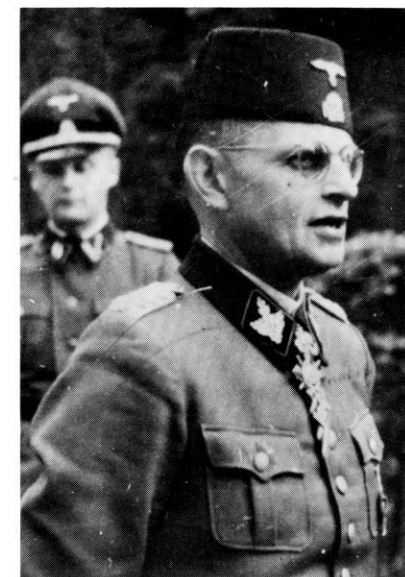
NOTES:

1. SS-Obersturmbannführer Jakob Hauser is reported to have commanded the "Muselmanische Freiwilligen-Division"(72).
2. Oberstleutnant (SS-Obersturmbannführer?) Husiin -Beg. Biscevic was given as the commander of the "Kroat. SS-Freiw.-Div." by French Intelligence in September 1943 (73).
3. SS-Sturmbannführer (promoted on January 30, 1943, to SS-Obersturmbannführer) Hans Hanke effectively commanded the remnants of the Division in the last months of the war (although Hampel was still in titular command).

⁶⁸ Photographs of the swearing-in ceremony in Zagreb, 1943, show the commander of the Division holding the rank of an SS-Standartenführer (see page 137), who was presumably Herbert von Obwurzer.

⁶⁹ He had been entrusted with the establishment of the Division (SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt d. Waffen-SS, Org. Tgb. Nr. 589/43 g. Kdos., v. 30. 4. 1943, Aufstellung der Kroatischen SS-Freiwilligen-Division) and was in charge of Formation Staff Agram (Aufbaustab Agram) in April 1943.

SS-BRIGADEFÜHRER UND GENERALMAJOR DER WAFFEN-SS KARL G. SAUBERZWEIG



CHIEFS OF STAFF:

SS-Sturmbannführer Eberhardt (circa March 1943)

SS-Sturmbannführer Siegfried Sander (as of March 1, 1945)

⁷⁰ He was certainly in command on January 30, 1944 (Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP (SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer - SS-Standartenführer), Stand vom 30. Januar 1944). Sauberzweig gave up his command when he was appointed Commanding General of the IX. Waffen-Geb.-Korps der SS (kroatisches). The exact date of his change is uncertain but two factors indicate June 1944. Firstly, the Corps was ordered with effect from June 1, 1944. Secondly, Sauberzweig's promotion to SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS on June 21 probably coincided more or less with his assuming command of the Corps.

⁷¹ Hampel's command appears to have been interrupted during the latter half of 1944 and was probably only theoretical from October 1944 until the end of the war. Although listed as an SS-Standartenführer and divisional commander on September 24, 1944 (see SS-FHA order of this date in footnote 63 above), he appears as only the commander of the 27th Regiment of the Division on November 9, 1944 (Dienstaltersliste der SS der NSDAP of that date) and no divisional commander is in fact listed at all. It would not appear that this Regiment was then all that remained of "Handschar" and thus Hampel was still really overall commander for on the same date, SS-Standartenführer Helmuth Raithel is given as commander of the Division's 28th Regiment. Hampel appears as divisional commander again in an order-of-battle chart of March 1, 1945.

⁷² This report appeared with Hauser's in memoriam in Der Freiwillige, 1957 (he died on January 26, 1957). It is not only unconfirmed but does not state which of the Moslem divisions he was supposed to have commanded. As Raithel appears to have commanded "Kama" throughout its short life, there is a possibility that Hauser commanded "Handschar" for an unknown period of time between unknown dates.

⁷³ Location de Troupes SS en Haute-Loire, 20. 9. 1943.

Divisional Uniforms and Insignia



(1) Ranks under SS-Standartenführer of all elements at first wore the SS runes on the right collar patch, followed after its introduction by a forearm holding a curved sword with a female mobile swastika beneath it(74). The chequered red/white shield of Croatia was worn on the upper left arm(75). No cuffband was worn by the Division(76).

A soft field grey fez with black tassel was worn by all personnel with the service uniform and a taller, firmer red fez with black tassel was worn with the parade and walking-out uniform(77). Officers, however, had the option from the beginning to wear the SS Mountain Cap when walking-out(78). SS members of the Division wore the SS runes on the left breast of the tunic(79).

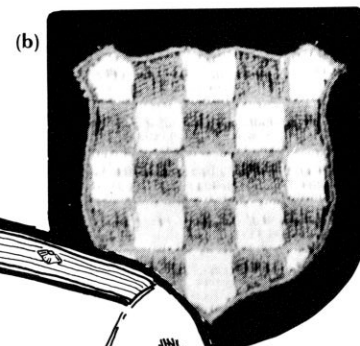
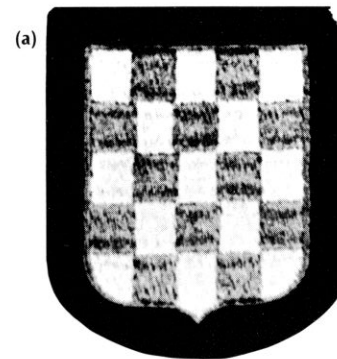
⁷⁴The SS-FHA order of April 30, 1943 (see footnote 69) stated that the emblem on the collar patch had yet to be decided upon and photographs of the swearing-in ceremony in Zagreb in 1943 show all officers below SS-Standartenführer wearing the SS runes. The special divisional collar patch is believed to have been introduced in October or November of 1943. It is to be noted that the sword has no cross-guard. . . . as has sometimes been incorrectly shown in illustrations. Members of this Division are known to have worn plain black right-hand collar patches which could either have been a provisional measure adopted before the introduction of the divisional collar patch or a practice adopted by elements outside the "Handschar" Division (e.g. Moslem S. D. elements). An argument against the former hypothesis is the fact that the SS runes were generally worn on the collar before the introduction of the special pattern. The blank collar patch, however, was often ordered for non-German divisions in order to stop them from wearing the SS runes before the introduction of a special collar patch.

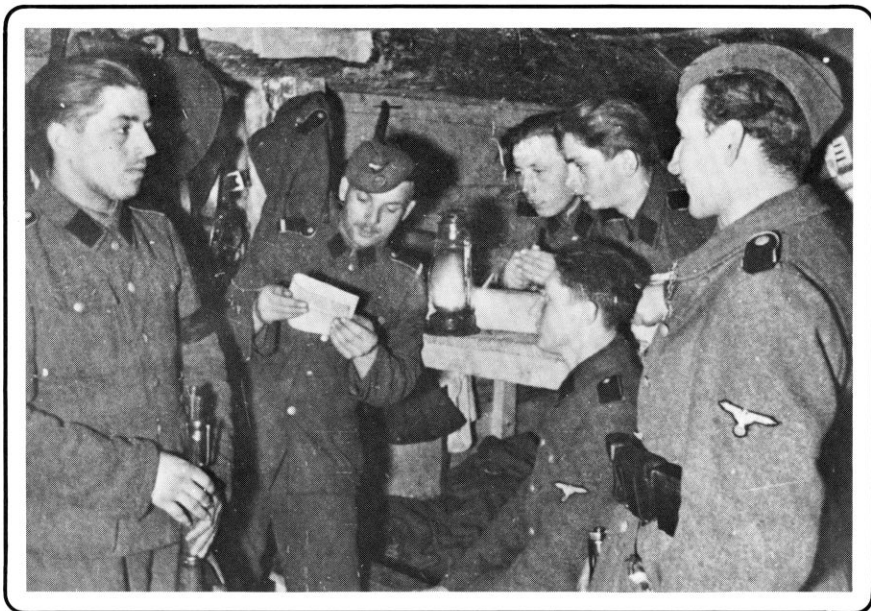
⁷⁵The SS-FHA order dated April 30, 1943 (see footnote 69) stated that the shield was to be worn on the right upper arm but in all recorded cases it was worn on the left upper arm, just below the SS sleeve eagle. Although this order spoke of a standard pattern authorized by the Reichsführer-SS, two patterns are known to have been worn and are illustrated on the next page:

- (a) with a straight top to the chequered shield;
- (b) with an ornately curved top to the chequered shield.

Both were worn, but (a) seems to have been the authorized version (it is shown in colour on "Tafel 5" of what is believed to have been the 1945 edition of *Der Soldatenfreund - Taschenjahrbuch für die Wehrmacht - Ausgabe D: Waffen-SS. . . .* courtesy J. van Fleet Collection).

⁷⁶Reports of cuffbands inscribed "Handschar", "B. H. ", "Bosnien-Herzegowina", "Kroatien" or even "Freies Kroatien" are almost certainly unfounded. If they were ever considered (which is most unlikely as "Handschar" came a long way from deserving the "honour" of a cuffband) they were certainly never worn. The absence of any reference to a divisional cuffband in original documents (the SS-FHA order of April 30, 1943





MEMBERS OF "HANDSCHAR" WEARING BLANK RIGHT COLLAR PATCHES.



THE SPECIAL DIVISIONAL COLLAR PATCH WAS WORN AFTER NOVEMBER 1943.

NOTE THE SS RUNES COLLAR PATCH WORN BY THIS SS-OBERSCHARFÜHRER.



GREEN FEZ WITH TASSEL



(see footnote 69), *Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS*, February 15, 1944, Nr. 4, Z. 64) and the fact that one has never been seen in the countless photographs which are available for scrutiny, tend to confirm that there never was, or even intended to be, any form of cuffband for this Division.

⁷⁷The fez, which takes its name from the town of Fez in Morocco where they were once made, can be defined simply as a brimless felt cap, usually red with a black tassel, formerly worn by the Turks. It seems to have been the first item of special uniform parts made available for this Division. They were being worn complete with cap eagle and Totenkopf by officers at the Zagreb swearing-in ceremony in 1943... at a time when the SS runes were being worn on the collar. Possibly these first fezzes were of local manufacture and merely required the application of the cloth Waffen-SS insignia.

The SS-FHA order of April 30, 1943 (see footnote 69) was clear on the distinction between the two colours of fez and it should be noted that they were to be worn by Germans, ethnic Germans and Moslems alike. But in addition to colour, a number of variations are known to have existed of which the following is as complete a listing as possible:

- (a) the standard green fez but with the tassel removed (leaving a short "tail");
- (b) a smaller sized and "soft" red fez with tassel;
- (c) as (b) but with no tassel (leaving a short "tail");
- (d) a pale green fez;
- (e) a conical skull-cap with insignia;
- (f) as (e) but without insignia;
- (g) grey/white sheeps' wool skull cap (worn by the Albanians in the Division.... see Volume 1, p. 35).

A dark green cloth SS cap eagle on a lighter green backing was manufactured and may have been intended for (or used on) SS fezzes. In some cases, probably due to shortage of the correct cloth insignia, metal SS cap insignia was worn on the fez (see photograph of this being done in Beadle/Hartmann, op.cit., p. 45).

⁷⁸SS-FHA order of April 30, 1943 (see footnote 69). For details on the SS Mountain Cap, see Volume 1, pp.27-30.

⁷⁹SS-FHA order of April 30, 1943 (see footnote 69). For illustration see Volume 2, p. 126.



UNIFORM NOTES:

- (1) Being a mountain formation, the SS versions of the Edelweiss cap and sleeve insignia were worn after their introduction in the autumn of 1944 (80).
- (2) German steel helmets were issued from the beginning and were either without insignia or with the SS and swastika transfers (decals) reversed (i. e. the SS transfer on the left side and the swastika transfer on the right side). It should be noted that this was a breach of regulations rather than a general rule for the Division.
- (3) SS overcoats with either field green or dark green collars were worn with the SS-Edelweiss on the upper right sleeve after its introduction (see (1) above). The sleeve shield does not appear to have been worn on the overcoat.
- (4) An SS collar patch with the Ustascha emblem (81) is believed to have been worn but not by members of this Division.

⁸⁰Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, November 1, 1944, Nr. 21, Z. 651. See Volume 1, pp. 27-30 and 47.

⁸¹A silver capital letter "U" containing a small chequered shield within its uprights. Possibly worn by Croat SS-Polizei elements or extermination battalions.



NOTE POSITIONING OF THE SS RUNES HELMET TRANSFER (DECAL).

DIVISIONAL VEHICLE SYMBOLS

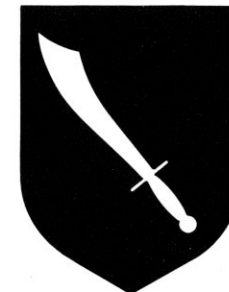
- (1) an upright sword superimposed upon a capital letter "G" (82);
- (2) a Handschar (scimitar) superimposed over the lower half of two large "S" runes (83);
- (3) a Handschar (scimitar) placed diagonally across a shield (84).



(1)



(2)



(3)

⁸²Reported in June 1944 and published in German Divisional Emblems, Military Research Section, London, MIRS (D) - EMB-1/45, January 1945. The "G" was believed to have stood for "Gebirge".

⁸³Courtesy Egon Alois Bartetzko.

⁸⁴Der Freiwillige.

Appendix

(CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS)

VOLUME 1

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11. Lines 12/13: Another style of camouflage helmet cover was held in place by elastic and had neither a fold in the front nor the metal retaining hooks at the back and at either side.
14. SS-Police helmets: The Polizei-Division originally wore the helmet of the German Police as illustrated on page 15 of Volume 1. SS helmets were also worn, however, with the insignia as shown on page 11 of Volume 1.
66. Camouflage Jacket: Later issues (1943/1944) of the camouflage jacket were collarless and had a hood. A variation is reported with zip fasteners throughout.
A knee-length, reversible camouflage smock was issued to SS parachutists, which had two slant pockets. It was also being worn by other Waffen-SS troops in the autumn of 1944.
67. Camouflage Uniform: As can be seen in the lower photograph, standard field-grey trousers were also worn with the camouflage tunic. A reversible waist-length camouflage tunic is said to have been issued in limited quantities during the summer of 1944. It was unlined and had two breast pockets.
83. Waffen-SS Brassards: A variation to the "Jm Dienst/der/Waffen-SS" brassard exists, i. e. "Jm Dienst der/Waffen-SS" in two lines.
A white brassard with the black lettering "Streifendienst/der Waffen-SS" was worn by Waffen-SS men on patrol service. This being the case, it is entirely possible that the "SS-Streifendienst" gorget, illustrated on page 89 of Volume 1, was not worn with the Waffen-SS uniform.
89. Top Illustration: See under note on page 83 in this appendix.

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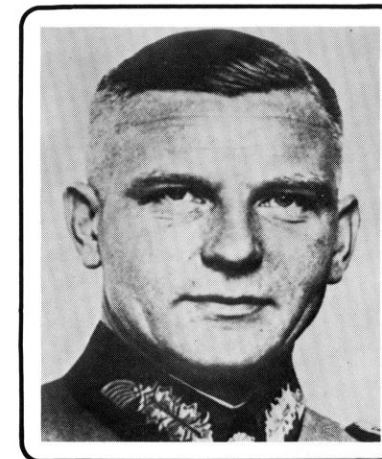
5. Acknowledgements: Apologies to Herr Hartvig Fleege and Dr. André Mathias for incorrectly spelling their names.
9. The SS Main Office: There was a Walloon Staff Company attached to the SS Main Office (Wallonische Stabskompanie b. SS-HA).
10. The SS Main Office: In January and November 1944, Heinrich Jürs, then an SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei, was Chief of Branch B (1).
10. The SS Main Office: For "SS-Brigadeführer Karl Zenner" read "SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Polizei Carl Zenner".

¹Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP (SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer - SS-Standartenführer), Stand vom 30. 1 and 9. 11. 1944.

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11. SS-FHA:²
11. Line 14: For "SS" read "Waffen-SS".
12. For "Section/Abteilung Ie" and "Id" under Office/Amt II, read "Section/Abteilung Ie" and "Id" respectively.
12. For "Section/Abteilung VI" and "II" under Office/Amt VI and VII, read "Section/Abteilung 4" and "2" respectively.
15. Office/Amt VIII: For "Gartner" read "Gärtner".
16. Lines 5/7: Read as "... by his Personal Staff/Main Office (Hauptamt/Persönlicher Stab RF-SS...)".
20. SS-PHA: It would appear that the offices of this Main Office were grouped into Branches (Amtsgruppen) and at first designated by Roman numerals and later by letters. Consequently, there must have been more than the two offices mentioned. In January of 1944, SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Dr. Adolf Katz was Chief of Branch II and in November of 1944 of Branch B(3).
20. SS-PHA: The SS-PHA was first located at Berlin S. W. 11, Prinz-Albrechtstrasse 9, then at Wilmersdorfer-Strasse 98-99 (not "98-89").
20. SS-RuSHA: The out-stations (Pflegestellen) were controlled by the Marriage Office (Heiratsamt) at Burghof-Kyffhäuser, Post Rossla/Harz.
20. SS-RuSHA: SS-Gruppenführer Otto Hofmann was Chief of SS-RuSHA in September 1942, so must have held this post between Pancke and Hildebrand.
24. Army Group "Steiner": For "Army Group "Steiner"" read "Army Detachment "Steiner"". It was always smaller than an army and should therefore appear after the 6th SS Armoured Army. Unlike a true Army Group (Heeresgruppe), the Armeegruppe/Armee-Abteilung "Steiner" was not a staff controlling armies. In April 1945, it was part of the 21st Army under General der Infanterie von Tippelskirch.

GENERAL DER INFANTERIE
KURT V. TIPPELSKIRCH



²In view of the importance of the SS-FHA, a completely revised and much expanded coverage will appear as an appendix to a future volume. What follow for pages 11 to 15 are therefore corrections, not additions.

³Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP (SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer - SS-Standartenführer), Stand vom 30. 1 and 9. 11. 1944.

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24. Line 12: According to Steiner, at the end of the war his Army Detachment was made up of six battalions, including some men from the SS Police Division plus the 5th Armoured Division and the 3rd Marine Division.
24. Army Group "Schörner": It is believed that Göring gave Schörner the 2nd Parachute Division.
25. Army Group "Upper Rhine": More precisely, this Army Group included the HQs of the XIVth and XVIIIth Army Corps, the 19th Army, Military District V, frontier defence troops (Zollgrenzschutz), Eastern Battalions (Ostbataillonen), Home Guard (Volkssturm) and anti-aircraft units (Flakeinheiten).
25. Army Group "Vistula": In January 1945, the Russian Army was on the point of breaking through the Polish front and in order to hold it Guderian suggested the formation of this Army Group, under Feldmarschall Freiherr von Weichs. The Army Group was formed, but under the inept command of Heinrich Himmler, who allowed his sector to collapse and left Berlin in grave danger. The command then passed to Generaloberst Heinrici, who took over at Zossen on March 22, 1945, with orders to stop the Red Army at the River Oder and to save the German capital. This Army Group is reported to have contained the 1st Marine Infantry Division of some 12,000 sailors. This Army Group's armoured troops were eventually transferred to Army Group "Schörner". Colonel Hans Georg Eismann was this Army Group's Chief of Operations. The ranks and full names of the last three Chiefs of Staff were as follows:

Generalleutnant Eberhard Kinzel (who had previously been Lammerding's deputy)

Generalmajor Thilo von Trotha

General Erich Dethleffsen



GENERAL FERDINAND SCHÖRNER



FELDMARSCHALL FREIHERR V. WEICHS



GENERALOBERST HEINRICI

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26. 6th SS Armoured Army: In March 1945, this Army contained:
Ist Cavalry Corps with the 3rd and 4th Cavalry Divisions
Ist SS Armoured Corps with 1st and 12th SS Armoured Divisions
IIInd SS Armoured Corps with 2nd and 9th SS Armoured Divisions
Reichsgrenadierdivision "Hoch- und Deutschmeister"
IIIrd Armoured Corps (Army - under Breith) with two armoured divisions
27. 4th Paragraph: "(der... SS-Korps)" in line 2 to read "(des... SS-Korps)". The method of numbering corps troops by adding their corps' number to a base of 100 and expressing the result in Arabic numerals was ordered by SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22.10.43, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.
29. Ist SS Armoured Corps "Bodyguard Adolf Hitler":
Lines 1/2: Following the order of July 27, 1943, the following were formed simultaneously:
- Corps Staff (Korpsstab) at Berlin-Lichterfelde
- Corps troops (Korpstruppen) at the Beverloo SS Training Area, except for the heavy armoured battalion (schw. Pz.-Abt.) which was formed at the Army's training area at Mailly-le-Camp in France.
On October 21, 1943, Hitler ordered that this Corps be made up of two SS armoured divisions (4).
31. IIInd SS Armoured Corps:
As stated, the Corps' HQ was authorized on May 28, 1942 (5), and was to be formed at the (Bergen) Fallingbostal training area. This was altered to the Bergen-Belsen training area by a further order issued in June (6).
365 officers and 11,154 other ranks of the Corps were lost in the Kharkov battle of March 1943.
32. On October 21, 1943, Hitler ordered that this Corps be made up of two SS armoured divisions (7).
32. Line 7: The IIInd SS Corps was sent from northern Italy to Alençon in northern France at the end of 1943, at which time it contained the 9th and 10th SS Armoured Divisions. It transferred to Lemberg in the General Government in March 1944, from whence it returned to Tarnopol on the eastern front the following month. The IIInd SS Armoured Corps also contained for a time the 12th and 17th SS Armoured Divisions.

⁴FHQ, den 21.10.43 (T-175/111/2635155).

⁵The order's complete title: SS-FHA, Org. Tgb. Nr. 3110/42 geh., v. 28.5.42, Aufstellung eines SS-Generalkommandos.

⁶SS-FHA, Org. Tgb. Nr. 3411/42 geh., v. 10.6.42, Aufstellung des SS-Generalkommandos.

⁷FHQ, den 21.10.43 (T-175/111/2635155).

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- Corps Troops: For "SS-Art. -Abt. 102" read "(schw.) SS-Art. -Abt. 102."
33. Corps Troops: For ".../SS-Werfer-Abt. 102" read ".../SS-Werfer-Abt. 102/502".
Add "schw. SS-Pz. -Aufkl. -Abt. 502" to the list of corps troops.
SS-Führungs-Nachr. -Rgt. 502 may have been an element of this Corps.
"Replace SS-Werkstatt-Kp. 102 by SS-Pz. -Werkstatt-Kp. 102"

For "SS-San. -Abt. 102" read "Korps-San. -Abt. (mot)/SS-San. -Abt. 102".
33. Note: This note should appear under the list of the commanders of the IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps on page 35.
34. IIIrd (Germanic) SS Armoured Corps:
With its HQ and corps troops formed at the military training area at Grafenwöhr, this Corps was in action in Croatia from September until the end of 1943, and then on the Oranienbaumer front in December 1944. On the Latvian coast in January 1945, it was transferred by sea to Pomerania where under Army Group "Vistula" it fought its last battle.

The Corps numbered some 25,000 men at the end of 1944, some 10,000 of whom were either ethnic Germans or West European volunteers. At a later stage, about 12,000 Luftwaffe personnel and 5,000 sailors were added.
34. Corps Troops: schw. SS-Pz. -Abt. 103/503 contained a staff company (Stabskompanie) and a supply company (Versorg. Kp.).
Replace "SS-Vielfachwerferbatterie 521" by:
"SS-Vielfach-Werfer-Btr. 103
SS-(Vielfach-)Werfer-Btr. 521 (with this Corps in the fighting around Narva, Peipussee and Courland)"

Add: SS-Nachschub-Trupp 103
34. Footnote 13: The order's complete title: SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt der Waffen-SS, Tgb. Nr. 529/43 g. Kdos., v. 19. 4. 43, Aufstellung des Germ. SS-Panzerkorps.
35. Commanders: Steiner was still in command on November 9, 1944, at which time Keppler was in command of the Ist SS Armoured Corps.
Chiefs of Staff: SS-Obersturmbannführer (promoted on November 9, 1944, to SS-Standartenführer) Hans Sporn.
36. IVth SS Armoured Corps:
3rd paragraph: It should be noted that:
(a) the 96th and 711th were infantry divisions of the Army;
(b) the Magyar troops were in fact Hungarian cavalry;
(c) the following should be included:
6th Armoured Division (Army)
Battle Group (Kampfgruppe) Pape
....and possibly the 1st and 3rd Armoured Divisions (Army) at Budapest in January 1945.

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36. Corps Troops: Add: I-Staffel 504
SS-Nachschub-Trupp 504
36. Footnote 15: The order's complete title: SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt der Waffen-SS, Org. Tgb. Nr. 1051/43 g. Kdos., v. 5. 8. 43, Aufstellung des Gen. -Kdo. IV. SS-Pz. -Korps.
37. Commanders: Alfred Wünnenberg took command on June 1, 1943, not June 10.
SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Walter Krüger commanded this Corps in January 1944 (8).
38. Vth SS Volunteer Mountain Army Corps etc.:
The Staff of this Corps was formed in Berlin, while its corps troops were formed at the Milowitz military training area.
The HQ moved from Berlin to Prague in the summer of 1943, and the Corps' first action was at Mostar in October 1943.
38. Corps Troops:
SS-Werfer-Abt. 500 served with this Corps at Dömitz, Ludwigslust, Döberitz, Wittenberge, Perleberg and Lenzen.
Replace "s. SS-Beob. -Btr. (mot)" by "(s.) SS-Beob. -Btr. (mot) 505"
Add: SS-Nachschub-Trupp 505
2 Kraftf. Kp.
38. Footnote 17: The order's complete title: SS-FHA, Kdo. Amt der Waffen-SS, Org. Tgb. Nr. 683/43 g. Kdos., v. 8. 7. 43, Aufstellung des Gen. -Kdo. V. SS-Geb. -Korps.
39. Corps Troops: Replace "SS-Korps-Pferdelazarett 105" by "SS-Korps-Pferdelazarett 105/505"
Add: SS-Pferde-Park 505
39. Commanders: Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger was an SS-Obergruppenführer and General der Waffen-SS und Polizei. He was still in command on November 9, 1944.
Chiefs of Staff: SS-Standartenführer Otto Kumm was the Chief of Staff in the summer of 1943 (9).
40. Vith SS Volunteer Army Corps etc.:
This Corps saw action in northern Russia in 1943.
40. Corps Troops: SS-Werfer-Abt. 506 was formed by the SS-FHA on February 25, 1945.
the final designation of the signals unit was "SS-Nachr. -Abt. 506"
the SS-Sich. -Kp. (mot) was numbered "106" and possibly "506"
40. Commanders: von Pfeffer-Wildenbruch was promoted to SS-Obergruppenführer and General der Waffen-SS und Polizei on November 9, 1943.

⁸Dienstaltersliste der Schutzstaffel der NSDAP (SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer - SS-Standartenführer), Stand vom 30. Januar 1944.

⁹Krätschmer, Die Ritterkreuzträger der Waffen-SS, p. 87.

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41. Commanders: Delete "und Polizei" from Walter Krüger's rank.
41. VIIth SS Armoured Corps:
Hitler ordered the formation of this Corps' HQ from his FHQ in October 1943 (10).
42. IXth Croat Non-Germanic Mountain Corps of the SS etc.:
The order transferring units from the "Handschar" Division to provide corps troops is: SS-FHA Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 3253 g. Kdos. v. 24.9.44, Umgliederung der 13. Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS "Handschar" (kroatische Nr. 1) und Aufstellung der 23. Waffen-Geb. Div. der SS (kroatische Nr. 2) unter Gen. Kdo. IX. Waffen-Geb. Korps der SS (kroatisches).
The units taken from "Handschar" in this way are listed below, with their new designations as corps troops:
- | <u>From "Handschar" Division:</u> | <u>Corps Troops:</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| SS-Aufkl. -Abt. 13 | SS-Aufkl. -Abt. 509 |
| SS-Pz. -Jäg. -Abt. 13 | SS-Pz. -Jäg. -Abt. 509 |
| SS-Geb. -Art. -Rgt. 13 | SS-Geb. -Art. -Rgt. 509 |
| SS-Geb. -Pio. -Btl. 13 | SS-Geb. -Pio. -Btl. 509 |
42. Corps Troops: The SS-Korps-Nachr. -Abt. (mot) was finally numbered "509".
43. Commanders: Sauberzweig's first name was Karl.
Add "und Waffen-SS" to von Pfeffer-Wildenbruch's rank.
It is considered unlikely that Kammerhöfer was the Corps' first commander.
43. Xth SS Army Corps:
The date of formation of this Corps' HQ is given as February 1945 in Der Freiwillige, Heft 9, September 1967, page 12.
44. XIth SS Armoured Corps etc.:
The 78th was an Assault Division (Sturm-Division). This Corps also controlled the troops of the Küstrin Fortress (Festung Küstrin) and Division "Döberitz".
44. XIIth SS Army Corps:
Towards the end of 1944, the Army's XXXXVIIth Armoured Corps was placed under the XIIth SS Army Corps, bringing the following elements under the latter (11):
- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 9. Pz. -Div. | - 9th Armoured Division |
| 176. J. D. | - 176th Infantry Division |
| 183. V. G. D. | - 183rd People's Grenadier Division |
| Volks-Art. -Korps 388 - People's Artillery Corps 388 | |
| 15. Pz. Gren. Div. | - 15th Mechanized Infantry Division |
45. Commanders: SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Waffen-SS und Polizei Curt von Gottberg was still commanding this Corps on November 9, 1944.

¹⁰FHQ, den 3. 10. 43 (T-175/111/2635153).

¹¹Gen. Kdo. XII. SS-A. K., Abt. Ia, Nr. 443/44g. Kdos., v. 17. 11. 44.

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46. XIVth SS Army Corps:
The HQ of this Corps built up the "Oder Corps" (Oderkorps) along the line from Freienwalde to Gartz from Army, anti-aircraft, naval and static SS elements.
51. For "Pferd-Laz." read "Pferde-Laz.".
54. Whereas the "Adolf Hitler" Division carried the number "1", it was not in fact the first SS division to be formed (the SS-V. T.-Division (mot) which later became the 2nd SS Armoured Division "Das Reich", was formed earlier).
57. Collar Patches:
(c): The question of non-German personnel not wearing SS runes on the right collar patch is more complicated than indicated, as:
- (1) the first Nordic volunteer elements of the Waffen-SS were Regiments "Nordland" and "Westland", whose members wore SS runes.
 - (2) the Viking ship, which is believed to have been introduced for the 5th SS Armoured Division "Wiking" was non-Runic.
58. Numbering: Divisions:
Following Himmler's instructions, the SS-FHA ordered on October 22, 1943 that the divisions of the Waffen-SS were to be numbered in a single numerical series according to their sequence of formation (12). A subsequent order (13), dated November 12, listed the 17 divisions so numbered.
59. Infantry Regiments:
Two groups of non-German volunteer regiments are listed. Although planned, not all of those listed in the second group were formed (e.g. not all of the six proposed Russian regiments and only two of the three Flemish regiments were formed... the two Albanian regiments were never completed). There were also 3 Walloon regiments.
69. Lines 1 and 2: Rather than being committed to the battle "...two months after the Normandy invasion...", it would appear that "LAH" arrived at the front on June 28 and joined the battle on June 29 (14).
74. Regulations stated that the detachable strap should have been placed in the centre of the shoulder strap thus, although in many cases it was worn as illustrated.



¹²SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. 1574/43 g. Kdos., v. 22. 10. 43, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

¹³SS-FHA, Amt II Org. Abt. Ia/II, Tgb. Nr. II/9542/43 geh. v. 12. 11. 43, Bezeichnung der Feldtruppenteile der Waffen-SS.

¹⁴Panzer Meyer, Grenadiere.

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76. Photo: As pilots were members of the Luftwaffe, the Waffen-SS NCO was probably the observer of the aircraft.
85. Lines 21 - 23: The Division which came within sight of the Meuse River by Christmas Eve was in fact not 2. SS-Panzer-Division "Das Reich" but the Army's 2. Panzer-Division.
86. Order-of-Battle:
Add: SS-Wirtschafts-Btl. 2
SS-San.-Abt. 2
90. (1): The "Reich" cuffband is mentioned in an edition of the SSClothing Office (SS-Kleiderkasse) catalogue, but was almost certainly never manufactured, let alone worn.
95. (6): The Trifos (3-legged swastika) collar patch was originally worn by SS-Standarte "Nordwest", then by the Legion Flandern, and finally by the "Langemarck" Division (15). It was probably not worn by the "Langemarck" Regiment.
- 96/97: The official vehicle symbol of the "Das Reich" Division from 1941 until the end of the war was the "Kampfrune" as shown on page 97 in lemon yellow (16). The symbol illustrated on page 96 was used to confuse the enemy in preparation for the operation begun on July 5, 1943, to recapture Kursk (Unternehmen Zitadelle). This confirms the date of the larger photograph.



"DAS REICH" IN RUSSIA (NOTE "KAMPFRUNE").

- 105/106. Order-of-Battle:
Add: SS-Kradschützen-Btl. 3
SS-Pz.-Inst.-Abt. 3
SS-San.-Abt. 3
SS-Feldgendarmerie-Kp. 3
Div. Begleit-Kp.
SS-Bewährungs-Kp. 3
107. For Hellmuth Becker read Helmuth Becker.

¹⁵The Flemings were not alone in wearing this collar patch... the Danes also wore it for a time.

¹⁶Introduced by Divisional Order of March 13, 1941 (Ref.: Weidinger, Division "Das Reich", Band II, pp. 321-323. Also SS-FHA Ia/G/Keu v. 29.3.41.).

PAGE:

- 110/111. To illustrate the many variations of the collar patches of this Division, a standard design of Totenkopf was chosen (i. e. the Bevo pattern). Consequently, these illustrations should not be taken as being exact likenesses of the various types.
112. Note 5: "Thule" was the Greek and Roman name for the most northerly land in the world.
113. (4): SS-Heimwehr Danzig was a military SS organization and not a political one. The "SS-Heimwehr Danzig" cuffband was being worn as early as August 1939 and therefore is assumed to have been the only pattern worn (17).
115. (5): These cuffbands have still to be confirmed. In view of the fact that these were merely replacement battalions (which normally had no special insignia) it may well be that they never existed.
121. Order-of-Battle: For "SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 4" read "SS-(Panzer-)Aufklärungs-Abteilung 4".
Add: "SS-Kraftfahr-Abteilung"
123. Fritz Schmedes was an SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS und Polizei.
124. Lines 1 and 2: The basic uniform of the Polizei-Division was Army with Police and SS insignia.
124. Lines 2 and 3: The collar patches of the Polizei-Division were of the Army pattern and not those of the Ordnungspolizei. This can clearly be seen in photographs as they lacked the outer piping.
124. Photo caption: Having been promoted on April 20, 1942, Kurt Daluege was an SS-Oberst-Gruppenführer und Generaloberst der Polizei when this photograph was taken. "Griese" for "Greise".
126. Line 2: For "... SS generals holding a similar rank in the police" read "for generals in the Police (all Police generals received this combined rank)."
126. Lines 4 - 6: The backing for collar patches and shoulder strap underlay for Administrative Officials holding generals rank (Verwaltungsbeamte im Generalsrang) was light grey.
126. Photo caption: The photo shows (left) SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei Karl Hermann Frank and (right) SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Polizei Heinz Reinefarth.
127. All buttons should be gold, not silver, and the pips on the shoulder straps of SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Polizei and SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Polizei should be larger.
128. (2): Both cuffbands should have hyphens thus:

44-Polizei-Division

¹⁷Mollo, Uniforms of the SS - Volume 4 - SS-Totenkopfverbände 1933-1945, p. 18.

SS-Polizei-Division

132. Evolution and Titles etc.: According to the Stammtafel (record sheet showing the formations to which a unit has belonged) of Regiment "Nordland", the title "SS-Division "Wiking"" was adopted on January 1, 1941.
- The change in designation from "SS-Division "Wiking"" to "SS-Panzer-Grenadier-Division "Wiking"" would appear to have been on November 9, 1942 (18).
132. Line 26: The Division's battle honours at Tarnopol were marred just days later by the shooting of some 600 Jews in Galicia as a reprisal for Soviet "crimes".
135. Order of Battle: Finnisches-Freiwilligen-Battalion der Waffen-SS was not considered a separate element of the Division and in fact served as the IIIrd Battalion of Regiment "Nordland".
- SS-Sturmbrigade "Wallonien" was only temporarily attached to this Division.
140. (1): Some experts doubt that the Viking ship collar patch was ever worn by this Division. It was also authorized for the Norwegian Volunteer Legion.
144. (4): Whereas the round mobile swastika collar patch is confirmed for the "Nordland" Division, there is some doubt as to its being worn by the "Nordland" Regiment.
151. Order-of-Battle: SS-Infanterie-Regiment 9 was never an integral part of the 6. SS-Gebirgs-Division "Nord", merely attached to it (unterstellt). It left Finland in December 1941 and arrived at the Volkhov front in January 1942.
- For "SS-Ski-Jäger-Bataillon" read "SS-Schi-Jäger-Bataillon" (see Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, August 15, 1942, Nr. 16, Z. 281).
- SS-Polizei-Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 18 was another element attached to the "Nord" Division.
- Add: Div. - Vermittlung 6. SS-Geb.-Div. "Nord" (divisional telephone exchange)
- SS-Gebirgs-Sanitäts-Abteilung 6
152. SS-Gruppenführer und Generalleutnant der Waffen-SS Karl Demelhuber is shown wearing the Finnish Cross of Freedom, 1st Class (Suomen Vapaudenristi Ilk).
154. (3) The name "Michael Gaissmair" was granted to this Regiment by Hitler in June 1944 (19).

¹⁸Verordnungsblatt der Waffen-SS, December 1, 1942, Nr. 23, Z. 428.

155. Divisional vehicle symbols: Symbol No. 3 (the "Hagelrune" or "Hail Rune") was introduced in April 1941, has been confirmed in photographs, and appears to have been the only sign used by this Division (20).
164. Page 107: As Führer und Unterführer im Sonderdienst did wear insignia, the double collar patches remain a mystery. All that is known is that they were worn against Himmler's wishes.
165. Page 112: For "Oberfähnrüche" read "Oberfähnruch".
166. Page 120: The caption to the illustration should read "SS-ANWARTER". It is possible that this insignia was also worn by the ranks "Staffelanwärter" and later "Staffelmann".
167. Page 128: Delete - see note on page 164 (above).
169. Page 136: Black and White: While no black and white twist piping was worn in the Waffen-SS as a Waffenfarbe, the statement on the Army's piping is incorrect. As the black Waffenfarbe piping of Army engineer units would not be clearly seen on black shoulder straps, a black and white twist was worn (more black strands than white strands). The black and white cord of Kapitulanten-Anwärter was only worn in the Prussian Army of 1914.
169. Page 137: Light Green: The grass green (Wiesengrün) Waffenfarbe of Mountain Infantry was not the same as the ivy or toxic green (Giftgrün) Waffenfarbe of the S. D.
- 174/175 Bibliography: New books covering subjects described in Volumes 1 and 2 may be found in the bibliography of this and future volumes.

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¹⁹6. SS-Gebirgs-Division "Nord" Ic, Div. Gef. Std., den 25. Juni 1944, folge 16 "Verleihung des Namens Michael Gaissmair an des SS-Gebirgsjäger-Regiment 12".

²⁰SS-FHA Ia/G/Keu, v. 18. 4. 41, and Schreiber, F., Der Kampf unter dem Nordlicht.

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"12. SS-PANZERDIVISION "HITLERJUGEND"", 1945 (?).

NOTES ON SOURCES:

Readers wishing to study the original SS orders, letters and documents may do so by consulting the microfilm files held by and available from the National Archives in Washington, DC. The most pertinent to this subject are the rolls of film making up the "Records of the Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei". This is prefixed by the code "T-175" and in certain cases the roll and frame numbers will be found referred to in the footnotes of this book. In some isolated cases, however, the roll number is shown followed by the page in the appropriate volume of the "Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, Virginia.



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15. Photo: In fact shown are men of the "Wiking" Division during the campaign in northern Russia in the Caucasus mountain area.
17. Order-of-Battle: Contemporary documents referred to SS-Pz.Abt.7, but this was an Abteilung in name only since it had no HQ and consisted of merely: 1. Pz.Kp. and SS-Panzer-Werkstatt-Zug.
- Similarly SS-Kav.Abt. "Prinz Eugen", or SS-Kav.Abt. 7, was listed but this had no HQ and only consisted of the 1. and 2. SS-Reiter/Kavallerie-Schwadron.
- Add:
- SS-Instandsetzungs-Abt. 7
 - SS-Feldgendarmerie-Trupp (ber.) 7
 - SS-Feldgendarmerie-Trupp (mot.) 7
 - SS-Feldpostamt 7
 - SS-Zweigfeldpostamt 7
- 35/36. Order-of-Battle: 1943 field post number list showed SS-San.Abt. 8, 3 (not 2) SS-Kr.Kw.-Züge and an SS-Kriegsberichter-Kompanie (not Zug). Delete "SS-Verwaltungstruppen" and replace with "SS-Wirtschafts-Bataillon 8/SS-Verwaltungstruppen-Abt. 8".
- Add:
- SS-Sicherungs-Kp. 8
- 37/38. Brigade and Divisional Commanders: The note on p. 38 raised the possibility of SS-Standartenführer Gustav Lombard assuming temporary command of the Division in the period between 1 Nov. and 31 Dec. 1943. In a letter to HPT dated 20. 10. 1975, Herr Lombard corrects this as follows: "General Bittrich was the first commander of the "first SS-Kav.Div." The Division was formed in June, July and August 1942 by Bittrich. In November 1942, Bittrich was ordered to headquarters and I commanded the Division temporarily until late in January or even the beginning of February, when Freitag arrived as Bittrich's successor. Fegelein commanded the Division from May or June 1943..."
53. Order-of-Battle: Tessin, op.cit., Vol. 3, p. 158, gives the two medical companies as forming SS-Sanitäts-Abt. 9.
54. Divisional Commanders: Sylvester Stadler was promoted to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS after 9.11.1944.... the exact date is still unknown.

64. Order-of-Battle: Delete "SS-(Panzer-) Aufklärungs-Abteilung 10/SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 10" and replace with:

SS-(Panzer-) Aufklärungs-Abt. 10
SS-(Panzer-) Pionier-Abt. 10

Add:

SS-Sicherungs-Kp. 10

66. Divisional Commanders: SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Lothar Debes was commander of SS-Pz. Gr. Div. "KdG" on 15.5.1943.

89. Top right photo: Shown is Felix Steiner and not Joachim Ziegler of whom no clear photograph has been found to date.

126. Divisional Commanders: Fritz Witt was still listed as an SS-Oberführer on 30.1.1944 and so may have been promoted to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS after 31.1.1944.

126. Note: SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Fritz Kraemer was a staff officer of the 6. SS-Pz. Armee on 9.11.1944.

127. Chief of Staff: Hubert Meyer was Chief of Staff of the 12th SS Division "Hitlerjugend" from July 1943 until the surrender on 8.5.1945 (letter from Hubert Meyer dated 2.9.1972).

154. Divisional Commanders: The authors are grateful to Herr Jost Schneider for the constructive and very interesting criticism of coverage of the "Handschar" Division contained in his letter dated 13.7.74. The most salient points require comment:

1. Herr Schneider's view that von Obwurzer never actually commanded the Division may be true but he was certainly entrusted with its establishment (see fn. 69 on p. 154 of Vol. 3).
2. Sauberzweig assumed command of the Division in October 1943. This was possibly on 1.10.1943, the date of his promotion to SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS.
3. Obersturmbannführer Jakob Hauser's command of the "Müselmanische Freiwilligen-Division" is absolutely unknown to Herr Schneider and other veterans of the Waffen-SS with whom he discussed this point. Yet such is stated in Hauser's obituary appearing with a photograph on p. 24 of *Der Freiwillige*, 2. Jahrgang, März 1957.
4. Herr Schneider and those with whom he has consulted claim that Hussin-Beg. Biscevic never belonged to the "Handschar" Division. It is, however, unlikely that the French Intelligence report (see fn. 73 on p. 155 of Vol. 3) should have invented him. If he did hold Waffen-SS rank then it would have had the "Waffen-" rather than the "SS-" prefix.
5. Hans Hanke, promoted to SS-Obersturmbannführer on 30.1.1945, is said never to have commanded the Division or its remnants. Hampel remained in command until the end of the war. Refer to 2nd paragraph of fn. 56, p. 150, Vol. 3.

155. Chiefs of Staff: Herr Schneider (see above) claims that four former staff officers of the "Handschar" Division had no recollection of either SS-Sturmbannführer Eberhardt or SS-Sturmbannführer Sander being the formation's Ia. They consequently contradict contemporary evidence, for example Sander is confirmed in SS-Personalhauptamt, Personalamt der Waffen-SS Amt VII/I: Kommandeurstellenbesetzungsliste - Stand vom 1.3.1945.



FRITZ WITT AND
HUBERT MEYER,
THE DIVISIONAL Ia,
LATE SPRING 1944.

170. Pages 96/97 and fn. 16: An earlier order introducing the "Kampf-rune" for SS-Div. "Germania" was dated 18.12.1940 (SS-Division Germania, Ia/V, v. 18.12.40, Taktische Kennzeichen an Kraftfahrzeuge - T-354/161/3806698).

171. Illustration: The dot is missing from the first "i" in "Division".

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- 29 Photo caption: This, in fact, shows Fegelein and members of his staff south of Kharkov in 1943. Gustav Lombard is to Fegelein's left with cigar in hand (Gustav Lombard, letter of 14.1.1976).
- 53 Order-of-Battle: For the history of the SS Divisional Battle School "Hohenstaufen" (SS-Divisionskampfschule "Hohenstaufen") - formed 5.6.1943 & disbanded in early March 1944 - see Wolfgang Vopersal in Der Freiwillige, 21. Jahrgang, Heft 11, November 1975, pp. 18-23.
- 55 footnote 16: read "have" for "habe."
- 72 read "badly" for "bad" in penultimate line of text.
- 84 line 28: Hitler relieved SS-Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen-SS Joachim Ziegler of his command of "Nordland" at noon on 25.4.1944 according to Krukenberg/Militärarchiv (Lennart Westberg, letter of 20.3.1981).

88 Sweden: There never was, in fact, a full company of Swedes in SS-Pz.-A.A. 11, but within its 3rd company there was a platoon of Swedish SS men (mortar crews). The commander of the 3rd company from the summer of 1944 was a Swede, SS-Obersturmführer Hans-Gösta Pehrsson. He was awarded the Ehrenblattspange on 25.12.1944, survived the fighting in Berlin, and died in Stockholm in 1974 (Lennart Westberg, letter of 20.3.1981).

109 line 5: read “mostly” for “most.”