



Foreign Legions of the Third Reich

DAVID LITTLEJOHN

4

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М.М. КОНОНОВ

В.Д. КОНОНОВ

by
DAVID LITTLEJOHN
M.A., A.L.A.



Foreign Legions of the Third Reich

**Vol. 4: Poland, the Ukraine, Bulgaria
Romania, Free India, Estonia, Latvia
Lithuania, Finland and Russia**

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INTRODUCTION

The final volume of this series deals with Germany's eastern allies, her Russian mercenaries and the peoples of the Baltic states.

Thanks to the generous help of a number of Latvian and Estonian veterans, among whom special mention must be made of Indulis Kažocinš, Arnis Keksis and Henry Rūūtel, it has been possible to achieve a wide and accurate coverage of the contribution of the Baltic peoples to the struggle against Communism.

For Bulgaria, Rumania and Finland general summaries of their principal uniforms, insignia and decorations are given. A complete coverage of these countries' armed forces and national awards was not contemplated or attempted.

A large part of this volume is devoted to the so-called *Ostvölker*--those former Soviet citizens who elected to fight not so much for Germany as against the hated Communist tyranny of Josef Stalin. Coverage of these "eastern peoples" is as full as can be achieved. Possibly no final and definitive account of their organization, uniforms and insignia could ever be compiled. This is simply because, at least in the opening stages of the Russo-German conflict, many eastern volunteers were recruited locally (and illegally) by German commanders who kitted them out with rank, and other, insignia of their own devising and even with military "decorations" of their own invention! However, what is known is here-in recorded, but the author would be very pleased to receive from veterans (or others) any further information on this, or any, of the countries covered.

Although this is the last of the current series, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a second revised edition might some day be undertaken which could collate all the information now dispersed throughout the several Addendums and add any new material received after the publication of this final volume.

The Addendum at the end of this work covers additional material relating to all three previous volumes of the series. It is regretted that not all the information which readers have kindly supplied can be incorporated. For example, the Italian Social Republic falls without the compass of the present series and merits a volume, or volumes, of its own!

In addition to the three individuals mentioned above, the author would also like to express his gratitude to Adrian Forman of London for his help in research and loan of illustrations; and to Pierre C.T. Verheye not only for help in research but also for invaluable guidance on the languages of the Soviet peoples.

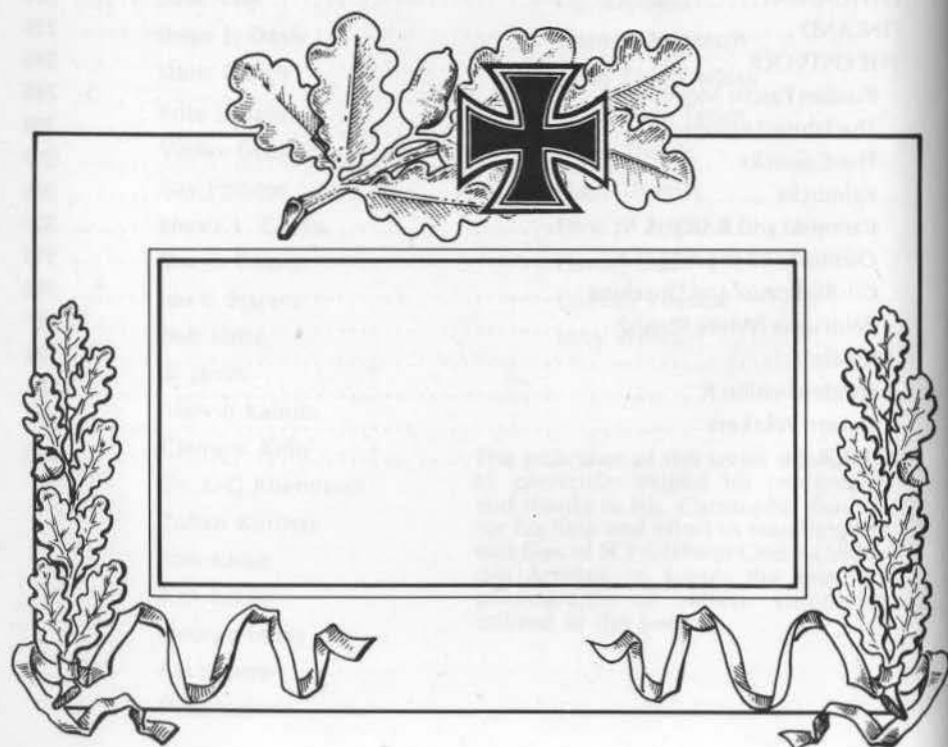
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The publisher of this series would like to personally extend his recognition and thanks to Mr. Christophe Blanluet for his time and effort in searching the vast files of ECPA (Photo Cinéma Vidéo des Armées) to supply the excellent photographs of eastern volunteers utilized in this book.

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SCHUTZMANNSCHAFT

Hitler's initial achievements in Russia in the summer and autumn of 1941 were staggering. Nearly four million Red Army men were taken prisoner, over 400,000 square miles of Soviet territory was occupied along with an estimated population therein of some 65 million. But these successes brought in their train a vast security problem. The rapid advance of the Wehrmacht had smashed whole Red Army divisions but this also meant that hundreds of fugitive soldiers roamed the countryside or went into hiding in the forests. They were often joined by local resisters and formed themselves into armed Partisan units. Not at first a serious threat, the Partisans were later to become a permanent thorn in the side of the German occupation authorities.

The task of policing the occupied East and protecting the army's lines of communication was beyond the strength of those German security formations assigned to the work. The Wehrmacht welcomed voluntary help when this was forthcoming from among the anti-communist elements in any local community. Indigenous "self defense" units were established everywhere in the German rear. These went under a wide variety of designations: *Ortsmiliz* (local militia), *Ordnungsdienst* (Order service - in the sense "public order service"), *Bürgerwehr* (citizens defense), and *Heimwehr* (Home defense) and *Selbstschutz* (Self defense), etc. These were locally based static defense forces - little better than an auxiliary constabulary. More effective were the mobile units raised by the Germans which were intended to carry the offensive into the Partisan lair. These units were originally known as *Sicherungs-Bataillone* but this name was changed to *Sicherungs-Abteilungen* (Security Detachments) in order to avoid any possible confusion with the German Army's own Security Battalions. The *Sicherungs-Abteilungen* operated in an Army Rear Area (*Rückwärtiges Armeegebiet*). In the wider Army Group Rear Area (*Rückwärtiges Heeresgebiet*), these mobile security units were known as *Schutzmannschaft* *Abteilungen*. The word *Abteilungen* was appended to distinguish these army formations from the *Schutzmannschaft der Ordnungspolizei*. Created in November 1941, they were police units under the com-

mand of the Higher S.S. and Police Leader of the region in which they operated. References are sometimes encountered to a "*Schutzmannschaft der Sicherheitspolizei*," but this may only have indicated that these were *Schutzmannschaft der Ordnungspolizei* on a temporary secondment to the *Sicherheitspolizei*, but not a separate body of security troops.

In the beginning, "uniforms" were simply what was available locally. This normally meant ex-Red Army stripped of its insignia or civilian clothes with an appropriate brassard ("In the Service of the German Wehrmacht," etc.). The first officially approved rank insignia for the "eastern units" was established under a secret Wehrmacht order of August 1942. This stated that rank would be indicated on the collar patch which would be "artillery red" for the *Sicherungsverbände*, and "dark green" for the *Schutzmannschaften*. However, these proved to be too visible, especially the red type, and, under a further order of 17 November, they were abolished. The N.C.O. silver tress from which they were made was now applied directly to the collar.

Gradually, a more regular pattern of organization, nomenclature, uniform and rank insignia was evolved, although nothing like standardization was ever achieved.

Active units were issued with field grey uniforms. N.C.O. rank insignia was theoretically worn on the collar by the active units and on the cuff by the "home guard" formations but, in practice, a mixture of both was often employed. The static unit's uniform was usually black since they were kitted out with surplus *Allgemeine S.S.* parade uniform. Early in 1939 the S.S. had started a changeover from its traditional all-black uniform to a more "active service" type of grey-green. The once revered black garb tended to be seen as that of mere "asphalt soldiers," and consequently was relegated to the Quartermaster's stores! Since uniforms were, generally speaking, in short supply, it was decided to "donate" the unwanted black uniforms, suitably adapted, to the non-active *Schutzmannschaft*. This "adaptation" usually involved the removal of the two breast pockets and the addition of colored flaps to the two lower pockets, colored cuffs and colored collars. The color here was either light green or light blue (both appear to have been used). Black or Police green forage caps were worn. Active service units usually had field grey ski caps.

The principal emblem of the Ukrainian *Schutzmannschaft* (or Schuma) was an elongated swastika. This, in an oval wreath of laurel leaves, was the cap badge. It also featured, in the appropriate color (see below) on the shoulder strap and formed the centerpiece of the arm badge. This badge, worn on the left upper arm, has the elongated swastika surrounded by the German words *Treu, Tapfer, Gehorham* (Loyal, Brave and Steadfast) within an oval wreath of laurel leaves.

In April 1943, "*Waffenfarbe*," patterned on that of the German Police, was introduced to distinguish the different sub-formations, as follows:

Schutzpolizei	Light green
Gendarmerie	orange
Fire Brigade units	crimson

The piping round the shoulder strap and (sometimes) the swastika on it were in the appropriate *Waffenfarbe*, but in some cases the swastika was white and did not correspond to the *Waffenfarbe* of the piping. The motif and wording on the arm badge could also be in *Waffenfarbe* (on a dark green background). Some versions of the arm badge and the shoulder strap swastika are simply white on black. This was a later standardization.



Schutzmannschaft cap badge. (left) Flat grey machine-woven silk thread on black for enlisted personnel. (right) Machine-woven aluminum thread on black for officers.



Schuma officer arm badge in machine-woven aluminum thread on black. Insignia for enlisted personnel were in appropriate *waffenfarbe*.



Schuma enlisted ranks arm badge in machine-woven orange thread on grey.



Schuma enlisted ranks' shoulder strap with orange swastika and piping on field grey (Gendarmerie).

Manion-Foxhole Col.

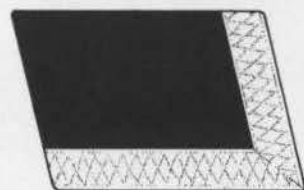


Schuma NCO's shoulder strap with silver-grey swastika and light green piping Schutzpolizei).

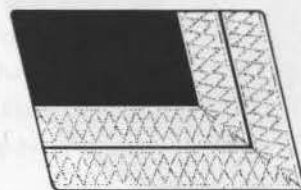


Schuma officer's shoulder strap with aluminum thread swastika and aluminum twist cord piping on black.

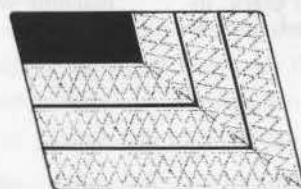
COLLAR INSIGNIA FOR NCO RANKS



Korporal

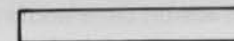


Vize-Feldwebel

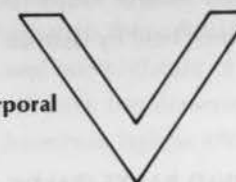


Kompanie-Feldwebel

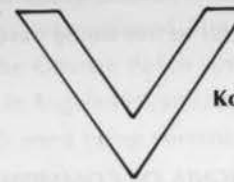
CUFF INSIGNIA FOR NON-COMMISSIONED RANKS



Unterkorporal



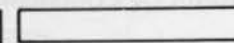
Vizekorporal



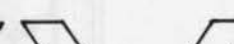
Korporal



Vizefeldwebel

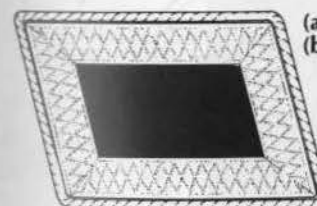


Kompaniefeldwebel

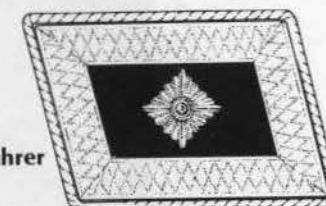


All the above are in aluminum tress, worn 10.5cm above the end of the cuff.

COLLAR INSIGNIA FOR OFFICER RANKS



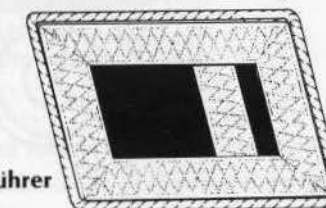
(a) Zugführer
(b) Leytenant



(a) Oberzugführer
(b) Starshiy
Leytenant



(a) Kompanieführer
(b) Kapitan

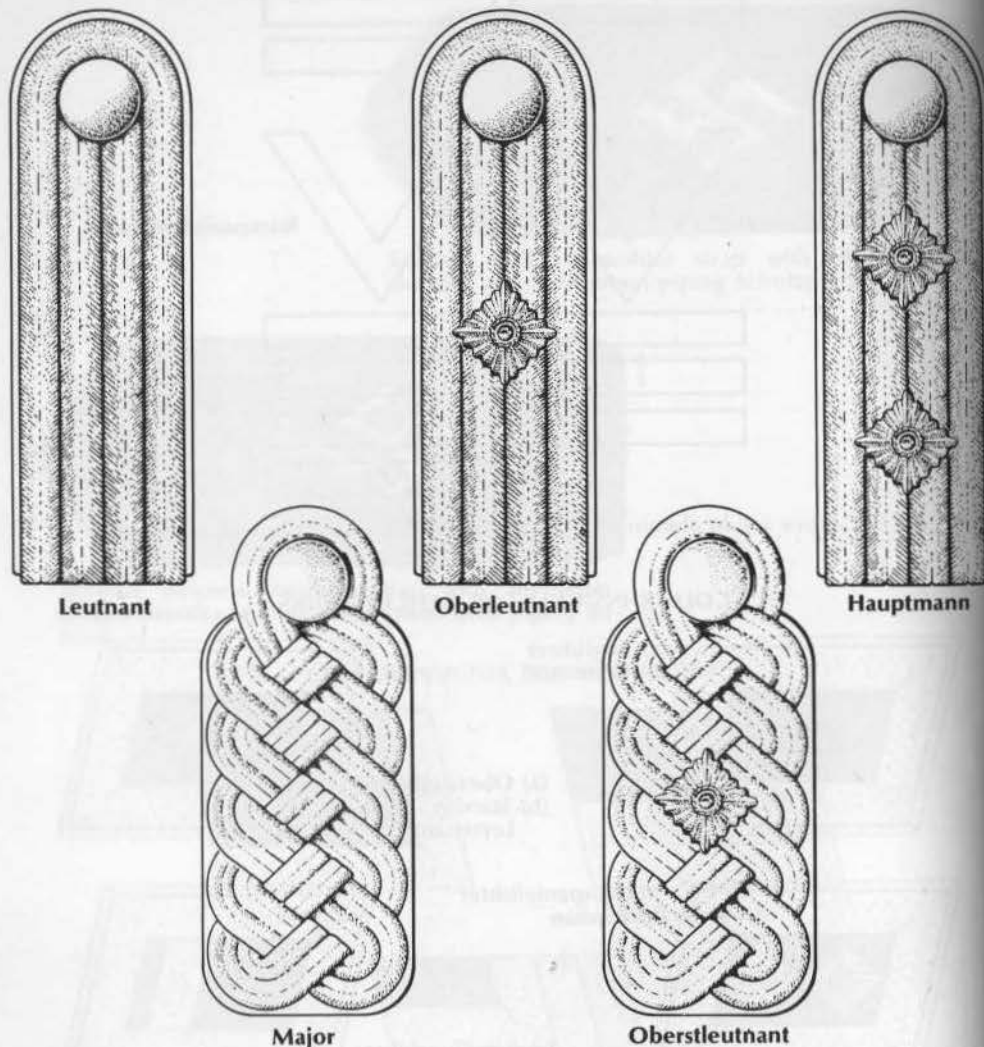


(a) Bataillonsführer
(b) Mayor

(a) is first designation, (b) is second type. Consists of silver tress/stars.

The illustrated insignia for Bataillonsführer (Mayor) on previous page is something of a conjecture on the part of the author, but it would appear logical and in line with the type of insignia worn by the legionary security units at this time. It is also doubtful if there was any native *Schuma* grade above that of Mayor (Major) since in all probability ranks senior to this would have been held by German Police or S.S. personnel.

RANK INSIGNIA OF COMMISSIONED RANKS (BALDIC STATES)



NOTE:

The above shoulder boards worn on the appropriate *Waffenfarbe* by *Schuma* officers from Estonia/Latvia/Lithuania. Cords are aluminum, stars are gilt.

The above insignia was not used by *Schuma* units in the Baltic states where such formations tended to be much more closely integrated into the German "Front Police" than their counterparts in the rest of the *Ostland* or the Ukraine. Indeed, the term *Schutzmannschaft* was abandoned in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in May 1943. Thereafter the designation *Police Battalion* was employed. The Baltic states also used the rank insignia and nomenclature of the German Police whereas the others, had their own scheme of ranks, first drawn up in August 1942 and approximating closely to that devised for the ethnic legions which were being constructed at this time. The ranks were:

Schutzmann	Non-commissioned ranks
Unterkorporal	
Korporal	
Vize-Feldwebel	
Kompanie-Feldwebel	
Zugführer	Commissioned ranks
Oberzugführer	
Kompanieführer	
Bataillonsführer	

Later the commissioned ranks were renamed Leytenant, Starshiy Leytenant, Kapitan, Mayor (these being straight translations of the Army/Police ranks of Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant, Captain and Major into Russian).

Auxiliaries employed on non-combatant administrative work wore field grey without insignia of any sort but with a brassard *Im Dienste der Sicherheitspolizei* (In the Service of the Security Police).



Printed black on green "Im Dienste der Sicherheitspolizei" brassard, instituted on 18 August 1944.

Service in the *Schuma* was voluntary and enlistment was, nominally, for six months, although in practice most of the volunteers found themselves in "for the duration" and often ended up, whether they wished it or not, in the ranks of the *Waffen S.S.* - for example, the wholesale incorporation of the Belorussian *Schuma* into the 30th Division of the *Waffen S.S.*

The normal composition of a Schuma Battalion was three companies, each of 460 men, plus a Headquarters Company. Later this was changed to four companies, each of 124 men, plus, in addition to the usual Headquarters Company, three rifle platoons and one machine gun platoon. A Schuma Battalion varied in strength from place to place and at different periods of the war, but its average strength was between 500 and 700 men. The Commanding Officer and his deputy would normally be Germans. Each company was supposed to have two German officers and 18 German N.C.O.s (two of whom were to be senior N.C.O.s and one able to act as an interpreter). The German cadre were a mixture of Police, S.D. and Waffen S.S. It has been estimated that by the summer of 1942 the numerical composition of the *Schutzmannschaft* was:

In the Ostland	31,652
In the Ukraine	14,452

Individual developments of the Schuma in the Ukraine and Belorussia are dealt with in detail under the sections devoted to these two regions.



M 43 cap with cloth Schuma badge on front.

POLAND



Dr. Hans Frank takes over his office of Generalgouverneur of the Polish territories in early November of 1939. His office was located in the historical city of Cracow.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT: 1 POLAND

Poles today like to point with pride to the fact that theirs was the only country in occupied Europe without a party of collaboration. This is true, but it has to be said that this was due more to Hitler's absolute refusal to have anything to do with the Poles than to their unwillingness to cooperate with him. Certainly fascist parties had existed in pre-war Poland (as everywhere else) and doubtless some members of these would not have been disinclined to work with, if not for, the Germans, but all such cooperation was categorically ruled out. In the new Europe which Hitler intended to create, there would be no place for Poland, even its name was to disappear. After the defeat of that country in October 1939, large areas of northern Poland were incorporated into the Reich as Gau Danzig-West Prussia and Gau Posen (this latter was renamed Gau Wartheland after the River Warthe which flows through it). Himmler ordered the expulsion of some one-and-a-half million Poles from the two new *Reichsgaue*. The expelled were to be replaced by Volksdeutsche from the Baltic states, and elsewhere. The rest of pre-war Poland was renamed "The General Government" and placed under the control of Hans Frank as Governor General.*

Before the war there had been a fairly large German minority in Poland. Most of these had resided in the areas now designated as *Reichsgaue*, but there were still sizable Volksdeutsche communities in the General Government as well. It was to these, not to the Poles, that Governor General Frank turned for assistance in the running of the country - along with an army of officials imported from the Reich. In May 1940 a uniformed *Sonderdienst* (literally "Special Service") was set up, drawing on male Volksdeutsche volunteers between the ages of 18 and 40. It was described as "a formation designed to carry out administrative and technical work, but which can also be called upon to perform police duties when sufficient regular forces are not available." Uniform was, so far as supplies allowed, field grey of the army type - jacket, trousers, and forage cap. Collar patches were black. Its belt buckle was an "S" surrounded by the word GENERALGOUVERNEMENT. When uniform was not available, a red brassard with:

*From October 1939 to June 1941 almost half of eastern Poland was occupied, with German agreement, by the U.S.S.R.

GENERALGOUVERNEMENT POLEN SONDERDIENST

in black was worn on the left lower sleeve.



Governor Hans Frank reviews a guard unit dressed in the basic NSKK uniform but with S.S. style cap eagles. This could possibly be the NSKK Einheit Generalgouvernement, or Sonderdienst after its absorption into the German Police.



Illustrated is a special cuff title with the inscription "Generalgouvernement Sonderdienst." The coloring of the lettering and top and bottom edges is not known. This cuff title was possibly worn by the Sonderdienst after being placed under the control of the S.S.

Frank imagined that he could transform the *Sonderdienst* into his own private police service with which he could counteract the incursions of the S.S./S.D., but Himmler would not countenance this challenge to his authority. In August 1942 he ordered the *Sonderdienst* to be placed under the direct control of the Higher Police and S.S. Leader "Ost," S.S. *Obergruppenführer* Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger.



Belt buckle of the *Sonderdienst*.

Prior to the outbreak of war, young male members of the *Bund der Deutschen in Polen* (Union of Germans in Poland - the pro-Nazi movement formed in August 1938 after the *Jungdeutsche Partei* had been banned) often crossed into the Reich to take part in S.A. training at a special camp run for this purpose at Rummelsburg in Pomerania. Thus a potential S.A. leadership for Poland already existed by the time Governor General Frank took over. Nineteen new S.A. *Stürme* had been formed before the end of 1939. Early the following year the term *Stürme* was replaced by the word *Hunderschaften* ("companies of one hundred"). In January 1942 there was yet another change of nomenclature and these were redesignated S.A. *Wehrschützen-Bereitschaften* (approximate: S.A. Armed Defense Ever-ready Companies). This reflected the more active role that the S.A. was being called upon to play in dealing with Polish resistance. On the occasion of Hitler's birthday (20 April 1942), this rather cumbersome name was shortened to S.A. *Wehrbereitschaften*. All male Volksdeutsche between the ages of 18 and 45 were, under an order signed by the S.A. Chief Viktor Lutze, required to serve in this formation.

The N.S.K.K. also established an *Einheit Generalgouvernement* (General Government Unit), which, by September 1942, had sixteen *Stürme* (Companies), in various parts of occupied Poland. There were also General Government units of the Hitler Youth.

An armed Forestry Protection Service (*Forstschutzkommando*), was set up among German or Volksdeutsche forestry workers in the General Government in 1942 to protect valuable forests from sabotage or being used as a refuge by Polish resistance groups. The uniform of the *Forstschutzkommando* was possibly green or Luftwaffe



Governor Hans Frank emerges from a building guarded by Sonderdienst men. The unidentified badge on men's left breast is probably a police badge.



Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra director Hans Knappertbusch (right) and Governor Wächter in the Cracow main railway station on 18 December 1939.



Sonderdienst as auxiliary police. Note arm badge.



Arm badge of the Sonderdienst as auxiliary police. This badge is for Warsaw but other place names may also have been used.



Arm badge of Hitler Youth units Ost (East) and Generalgouvernement in yellow on black (examples also exist in silver-grey on black).

blue. A significant feature was the wearing of an eagle and swastika badge on the left upper arm in the manner of the S.S. (although the eagle was not the S.S. type).



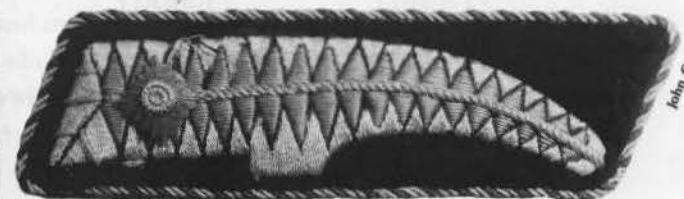
Hans Frank observes rifle training of the Forestry Protection Service in 1942.

All Polish citizens, other than Volksdeutsche on the one hand or Jews on the other, between the ages of 18 and 65 had to register for compulsory labor service in the German-run *Baudienst im Generalgouvernement* (Construction Service in the General Government). The Polish workers wore only an approximate uniform with cloth caps, but the German cadre had a formal uniform. This was brownish-green with black collar patches on which was a device symbolizing an axe head. The peaked cap had a black band on which was a red/white/black national cockade and, above this,

the large and ornate open-winged eagle worn by German State Officials. The *Baudienst* carried out roughly the same tasks as the R.A.D. in Germany.



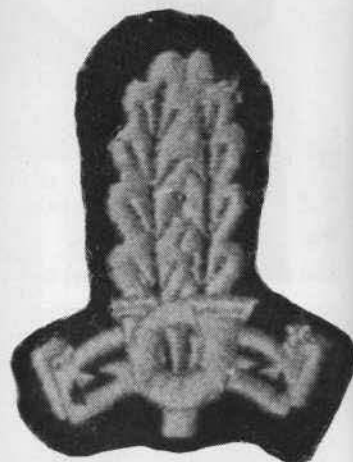
Feldmeister Schülte, an Oberinspektor in the Baudienst, wearing the peaked cap with German State Official's insignia and tunic with special Baudienst collar and sleeve insignia. The photo is dated July 1944.



Collar patch of high-ranking Baudienst officer (title of rank unknown).

(Left) Four views of Baudienst personnel.

Polish citizens were also employed on the *Ostbahn* (the railway services running through the eastern territories) and in the Postal Service of the General Government - possibly about 70,000 were employed in the former and 7,000 in the latter.

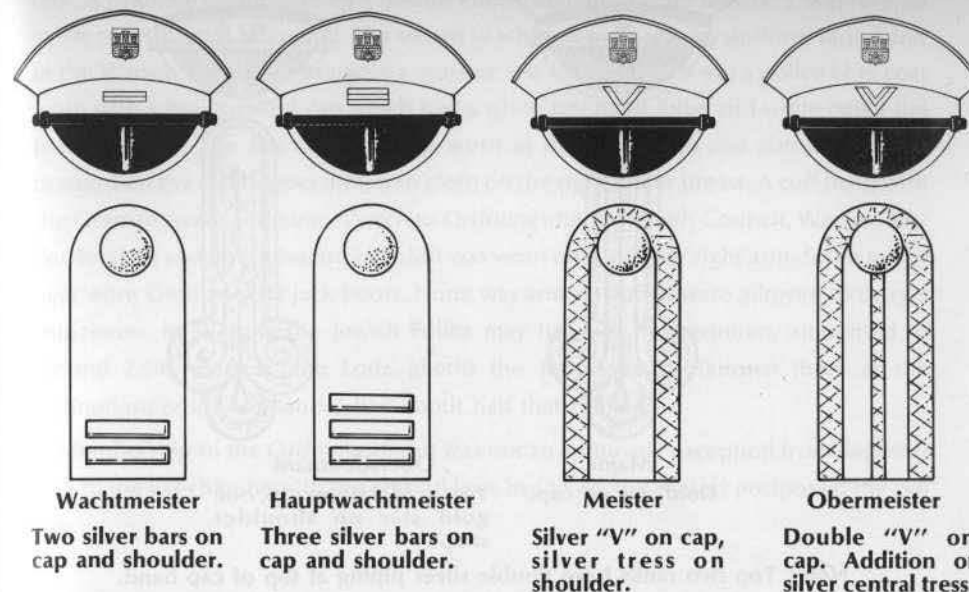


Postal Service in the General Government (a) arm badge; (b) cap badge.

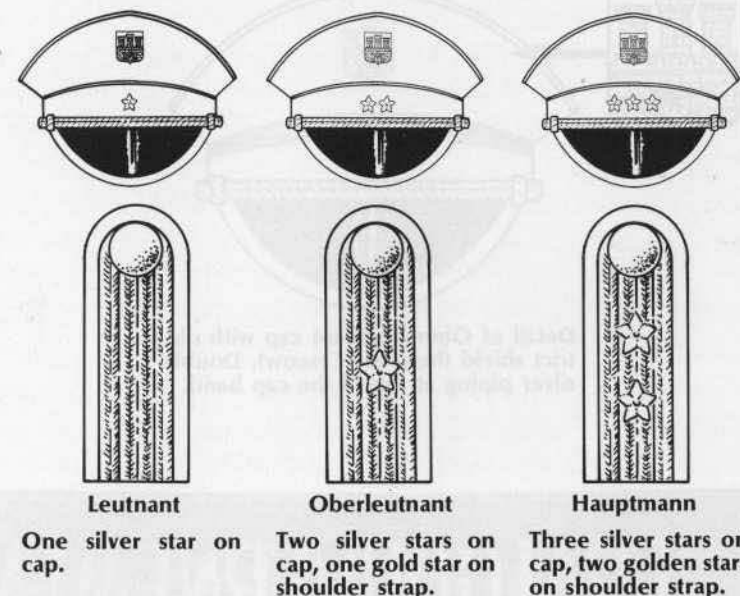
Uniform of a non-German postal official in the General Government.

When the Flak Helper movement started in the early months of 1944, a *H.J. Kriegseinsatzkommando Polen* (Hitler Youth War Action Commando, Poland), was set up, but it was shortly thereafter disbanded since it had had virtually no success in recruiting Polish youths.

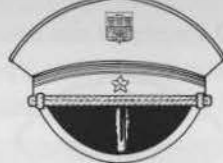
The German Police and the S.D. were responsible for the security and surveillance of life in the General Government but were assisted in this work by an indigenous police force. This was made up of "reliable" elements from the former Polish Police. They retained much of their previous uniform including the characteristic Polish peaked cap. Rank was indicated on the shoulder straps, or epaulettes (for officers) and also on the cap band at the front (in traditional Polish fashion). The former Polish eagle on the peak of the cap was replaced by a shield with the coat of arms of the city, or district, to which the officer belonged. A cuff title with *GENERALGOVERNEMENT* was worn on the left lower arm. For officers, this was in silver wire on red with silver wire edges, and, for others, white cotton on red with green edges. In addition to normal constabulary duties, the Polish Police could be called upon to participate in the round-up and deportation of Jews.



Officers



Officers shoulder straps are silver with dark blue underlay.

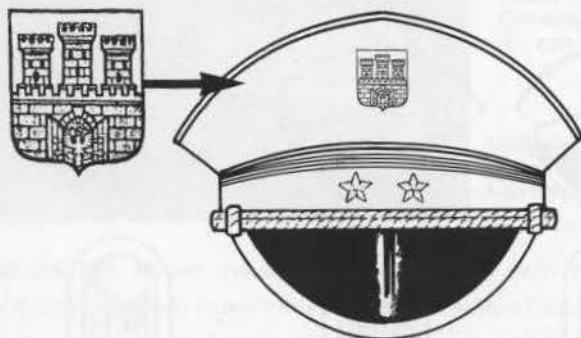


Major
Gold star on cap.



Oberstleutnant
Two gold stars on cap, one
gold star on shoulder
strap.

Note: Top two ranks have double silver piping at top of cap band.



Detail of Oberstleutnant cap with district shield (here for Cracow). Double silver piping at top of the cap band.

Manion-Fothole Coll.



Cuff title: NCOs have white word on red with green edges, officers have silver wire word on red with silver wire edges. Note that the illustrated cuff title has yellow lettering on dark blue with orange-yellow edges for which no regulations have been found to date.

Even more strangely, the Jews themselves provided a police force to assist in this task. A *Jüdische Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish Police, literally "Order Service"), was formed in the main ghettos of Poland. The extent to which it wore regular uniform varied, but in the Warsaw ghetto for example a more or less standard garb was a police blue coat worn with a blue peaked cap which had a white cap band (blue and white being the Jewish colors). The Star of David was worn as the cap badge and also either on a brassard on the right upper arm or in cloth on the right upper breast. A cuff band with the German words *Judenrat Warschau Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish Council, Warsaw, Order Service) and its equivalent in Polish was worn on the lower right arm. Some members wore German style jack boots. None was armed, but all were allowed to carry a truncheon. In Warsaw the Jewish Police may have, at its maximum, amounted to around 2,500 men. In the Lodz ghetto the Jewish Police (known there as the *Ordnungsdienst Kommando*) had about half that number.

Membership in the *Ordnungsdienst* was not an automatic exception from deportation to the gas chambers. In the end, all Jews had to go, this merely postponed the evil day.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT: 2 GALICIA

That part of the Western Ukraine known as Galicia was under the crown of Austria from 1772 until the end of the First World War. Its mixed population comprised Poles, Ukrainians (sometimes called Ruthenians), Russians and (at one time) Germans. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in November 1918, Galicia declared itself an independent republic. In January 1919 it joined the Ukrainian Republic (established as a breakaway from the Czarist empire in June 1917) to form the "Independent Ukrainian Republic." In May of that year, however, the Poles seized most of Galicia on the grounds that this was properly Polish territory since more than half its population was Polish. (This was true. Out of a pre-1914 population of eight million, over four and a half million "Galicians" were classed as Poles.) The hopefully proclaimed "Independent" Ukrainian Republic was short-lived. Lenin seduced it back into the Russian orbit with a promise that it would enjoy equal status with the other three "Soviet-Socialist Republics" (Russia, Belorussia and Transcaucasia). By the Treaty of Riga in March 1921, Eastern Galicia and Volhynia were accorded to Poland. After the secession of Galicia, the Ukraine joined the Federation of Soviet-Socialist Republics. Its "equal status" did not survive long once Stalin came to power, by 1928 it had lost any semblance of independence.

Under the Stalin-Hitler Pact of Friendship of August 1939, it was agreed that Galicia belonged to the Russian sphere of influence, and when a defeated Poland was partitioned in September between the Soviet and German leaders, Galicia was among the Polish territories handed over to U.S.S.R. For the following twenty-one months, Galicia was under Stalinist rule with all that that implied. It was, therefore, with something approaching relief that the "Galicians" and other Ukrainians welcomed the arrival of Hitler's armies in June 1941. In August '41, Galicia was made a fourth district of the General Government, although, under Governor Dr. Otto Wächter, it enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy. S.S. *Brigadeführer* Wächter was one of the more enlightened of the German administrators of the eastern territories who sought to win

the cooperation of the local population rather than bludgeon them into submission. The result was that Galicia was to remain one of the most peaceful regions of the occupied *Ostgebiete*. It was Wächter who suggested to Himmler that the people of Galicia should be allowed to take up arms in the struggle against Bolshevism. In March 1943 he obtained approval for the raising of a "Police Regiment Galicia." Disaster at Stalingrad had made the *Reichsführer* S.S. more receptive to the idea of recruiting Slavs for the Waffen S.S., and he proposed that the Police Regiment be transformed into a combat division. He stressed, however, that its members must be referred to as Galicians, not Ukrainians - a distinction comprehensible only to those who had succeeded in convincing themselves that 150 years of Austrian rule had had the salutary effect of "Germanizing" the population of this part of the Ukraine. A further circumscription was that all volunteers must be of the eastern Catholic (Uniate) faith. This denominational restriction, unique in the S.S., was a convenient device to exclude "non-Galicians" since, in its intermingled religious population, Roman Catholic could be assumed to mean Polish and Greek Orthodox, either Eastern Ukrainian or Russian. Lutheran or Catholic Austro-Germans were not affected since, as Volksdeutsche, they had been eligible all along for the "honor" of serving in the Waffen S.S.

An appeal for volunteers was made on 28 April 1943, and the participation of "Galicia" in the European crusade against Asiatic Bolshevism proclaimed. Henceforth "Galicia" was to be numbered among Germany's allies! The response to the call surprised everyone. Figures of the numbers of young men who presented themselves vary, but it was certainly not less than 70,000. One German source claimed that it was as high as 100,000. This was vastly more than the 13,000 or 14,000 required to form a division. The surplus volunteers were absorbed into the German Police to form five new Police regiments. Training was carried out at the Heidelager Camp at Debica in the General Government. Three hundred and fifty officers and around two thousand N.C.O.s were sent to training establishments in Germany to bring them up to S.S. standards. Although many of the officers were native, most of the senior posts were held by Germans or Volksdeutsche. This applied to the division's two consecutive commanders - S.S. *Brigadeführer* Walter Schimana, who was succeeded on 20 November 1943 by S.S. *Brigadeführer* Fritz Freitag, an East Prussian, described by a fellow German as "self-seeking, unpleasant and bureaucratic."

Originally known as the S.S. *Schützen-Division 'Galizien'* (S.S. Rifle Division "Galicia") it joined the ranks of the numbered divisions of the Waffen S.S. on 30 June 1943 as:

14.S.S. *Freiwilligen-Division 'Galizien'*



Volunteers from the Lvov District in May 1943.



Governor of Galicia, Dr. Otto Wächter (center), walking with his 1a, S.S.-Stubaf. Heinke, and German and Ukrainian officials.



Fritz Freitag

Even Governor Wächter protested against the use of the term "Galician," arguing that although this might be a valid geographic distinction, it was, ethnically speaking, meaningless. Himmler was unmoved. Indeed, as if to emphasize its "Galician" nature, he ordained that its arm shield should take the form of the lion and three ducal crowns emblem of Galicia and that the lion on its own should be its collar device. (Prior to this, a plain black collar patch had been worn by all ranks other than those entitled to the S.S. runes.) The arm shield (yellow lion and three yellow crowns on light blue) was supposed to be worn on the right upper arm, but in fact it was worn on either arm (according to contemporary photographic evidence). Some of the members of the division did not wait for the arrival of the official lion rampant collar patch (machine embroidered white on black), but stitched a cut-out lion (not always of exactly the same pattern as the "official" one) onto their existing plain black patch. Chaplains were permitted to attend the religious needs of the division, although normally the S.S. had none. They may possibly have worn a Christian cross on both collars.

In April 1944, the division was moved to Neuhammer in Silesia for further training. In May Himmler paid it a visit and unexpectedly referred to its members for the first



Arm shield of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division.



14th Waffen Grenadier Division. Machine woven collar patch for non-commissioned personnel.

A Waffen-Sturmman from the division.



RFSS Himmler, Dr. Wächter, and SS-Brigadeführer Freitag review troops of the Galician Division in June 1944.

time as "Ukrainians" (although the official designation of *galizische* was not, as yet, changed). In mid-June the inadequately armed and not fully trained division was thrown across the path of the advancing Red Army at Brody in the Western Ukraine. They were encircled and, in action with lasted nineteen days, virtually annihilated. Of the 14,000 officers and men who took part in the battle, only 3,000 got back to the German lines. The others were either killed, made prisoner or escaped eastwards to join anti-Soviet partisan groups in the rear of the Red Army, there to continue the struggle for Ukrainian independence for years after the official end of the war in Europe.

Despite its decimation at Brody, the division was fairly rapidly brought up to strength once more. There were some 8,000 men still available in its Replacement Regiment and further volunteers were secured from the Police Regiments which had been formed out of the "left overs" from the appeal of April 1943. Between August and November 1944 the division was rebuilt at Neuhammer. On 12 November its correct ethnic composition was acknowledged when its title was altered to:

14. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S. (ukrainische Nr. 1)

After the Brody debacle, the Ukrainians never served in the front line again. One regiment was detached from the division in the autumn of '44 to assist in the suppression of the Slovak National Uprising and later, in January '45, the whole Division was moved to northern Yugoslavia with the intention of its being deployed against the local Partisans, but it saw scarcely any action. Instead, on 25 April, it was handed over

to Pavlo Shandruk to become the 1st Division of the Ukrainian National Army (see chapter on the Ukraine).



14th Division vehicle sign.

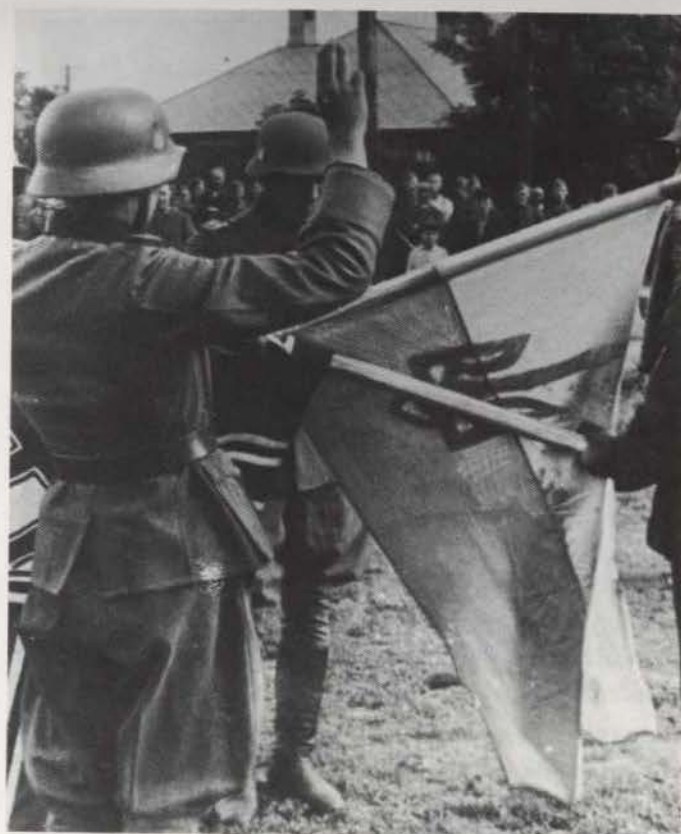
The Police and Security forces in Galicia consisted of, in addition to German regulars, (a) The Ukrainian *Schuma*, (b) The Ukrainian Civil Police, and (c) The "Galician" Police Regiments.

The *Schuma* wore field grey uniforms with black forage caps on the front of which was an oval cockade with the yellow trident emblem on light blue with a yellow surround. The Civil Police (Ukrainian) wore dark blue uniforms with red piping (silver for officers). Rank was indicated on the shoulder straps which were red for officers and blue for others. On their ski caps all ranks wore a round cockade with a blue trident on yellow. On the lower left arm all ranks wore a cuff title with GENERAL-GOUVERNEMENT of the same type as was worn by the Polish Police. The zigzag sided collar patch was an echo from the days of the 1919-21 Ukrainian Republic's armed force.



Ukrainian trident cap badge worn by *Schuma* and U.N.A.

The five Police regiments were categorized as *galizisches S.S. - Freiwilligen-Regiment (Polizei)* - Galician S.S. Volunteer Regiments (Police), and were numbered 4-8 inclusive. They belonged to the German Order Police ("Orpo"), and wore its Police green uniform, although later this was exchanged for field grey. Regiments 4 and 5 were formed in July 1943 but disbanded a year later when their personnel were absorbed into the 14th Division. Regiments 6 and 7 were created in August '43 and disbanded in January 1944. Again most of the personnel of both were remustered into the division at Heidelager. Regiment 8 would appear to have been still-born, disbanded shortly after its formation in November 1943. It is not clear if the S.S. Volunteer



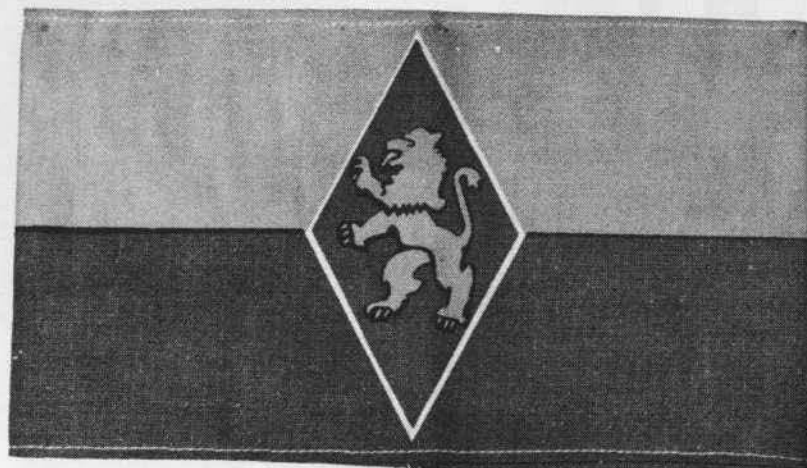
Flag of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division. (Dark blue trident emblem on yellow and blue background - the colors of the Ukraine.)



Short-lived first design of a flag for the 14th Waffen-Grenadier Division yellow and blue with a black swastika on a white circle.

Police Regiments had any special Ukrainian or "Galician" arm badge. According to evidence at the Nuremburg Trials, they wore a yellow brassard with DEUTSCHE WEHRMACHT in black.

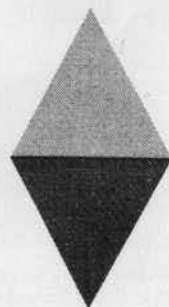
Although the spurious distinction between "Galicians" and other Ukrainians was dropped by the S.S. in November 1944, it was still sustained in the Flak Helpers movement until the end of the war. Both Ukrainian and "Galician" Flak Helpers wore a half yellow (upper) and half blue (lower) brassard, but in the blue rhombus in the center the Ukrainians had a yellow trident and the "Galicians" a yellow lion. The Ukrainian cap diamond was yellow/blue, the "Galician" one the yellow lion rampant of Galicia on blue.



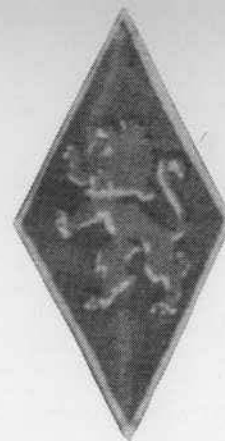
Galician Flak-Helfer brassard.



Cap badge of male Galician Flak helpers.



Cap badge for Ukrainian Flak helpers.



Arm badge for female Galician Flak helpers.

Ukrainian girl Flak Helper (note cap badge as shown above).



Ukrainian Flak helpers at a religious service in Germany.

THE UKRAINE

THE UKRAINE

The map of Europe has changed a great deal in the course of the 20th century. The Ukraine, the vast southern region of the U.S.S.R., has different borders now from those of either 1914 or 1939. Much of what is now the western part of the Ukraine (Galicia) was, until the end of the First World War, under the crown of Austro-Hungary. With the collapse of that great European empire, the Ukraine enjoyed a brief period of independence as a People's Republic until 1921 when the victors of the 1914-18 conflict accorded Austro-Hungarian Galicia to Poland; Bucovina and Bessarabia to Romania; while the rest fell prey to the Soviets (although not without a struggle). Ukrainian nationalism was not extinguished, neither then nor since. Until the time of the Russo-German "Pact of Friendship" in August 1939, the Nazis had been inclined to support any Russian emigre movement hostile to the Soviets. ROND (see chapter on "Russian Fascist Movements") had an active Ukrainian section. After the clamp-down on anti-Soviet activities in the Reich (consequent on this Pact) ROND was officially dissolved, but its Ukrainian section was taken under the wing of Admiral Canaris, head of German Military Intelligence (*Abwehr*). It was absorbed into an amorphous unit known at that date as *Lehr und Bau Kompanie z.b.v. 800* (Training and Construction Company for Special Purposes No. 800), which later, greatly enlarged, was to win fame as the Brandenburg Division. It was a combined commando and espionage formation which embraced a score or more different nationalities.

The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsiia Ukrainskykh Natsionalistiv* or O.U.N.), formed in 1929, secretly cooperated with the *Abwehr* and by 1940 the Brandenburg Division (at that time Brandenburg Regiment) had a Ukrainian company (of about 150 men) under training at Baden bei Wien in Austria. It went under the code-name "Roland." With the German conquest and occupation of Poland in 1939 disaffected Ukrainians from Polish Galicia were recruited for a second company, popularly known as *Nachtigall* ("Nightingale" - the epithet derived from the

celebrity of its male voice choir!) By the time of the invasion of Russia, both companies had been expanded to battalion strength by the acquisition of further volunteers and both were used actively during the opening phases of the campaign.

Ukrainian nationalism was, however, far from straight forward. There were, in fact, two rival Organizations of Ukrainian Nationalists. For convenience in distinguishing between them, the initial letter of the leader of each was appended, to become thus:

O.U.N. (B) after Stepan Bandera

O.U.N. (M) after Andrei Melnyk

With the German advance into the Ukraine meeting with no resistance - the Germans were indeed welcomed as liberators - both Bandera and Melnyk claimed to be the rightful heir to the leadership of a revived Ukrainian People's Republic. On 30 June 1941 (little more than one week after the start of the invasion), Bandera announced in the town of L'vov* the formation of a Sovereign Ukrainian State, while in Kiev his rival Melnyk proclaimed himself head of a resurrected Ukrainian Republic. Such precipitate declarations had not been foreseen, much less approved, by the Germans who promptly reacted by arresting both claimants and suppressing their would-be "governments." Eastern (i.e., Soviet) Galicia** was later incorporated into the General Government. Bukovina and Bessarabia (which in 1939 had been accorded to the Soviet Union) were restored to Romania who also acquired Transnistria (the Romanian eastern frontier was now extended slightly beyond Odessa on the Black Sea).*** What remained became *Reichskommissariat Ukraine* with its administrative center in the city of Kiev. To govern this large and strategically important region, Hitler selected one of his most brutal minions, Erich Koch, currently Gauleiter of East Prussia (an office which he continued to fill even after taking up his new appointment). Koch shared his Führer's opinion of "sub humans." "These people" (the Slavs), Hitler had once declared, "have only one justification for their existence - that is to be useful to us." Koch acted on this principle and mercilessly exploited the Ukraine. In face of his callous behavior, the extent of Ukrainian cooperation with the Germans is perhaps surprising. Some became resistors, some active collaborators; a few even contrived to have it both ways, like the U.P.A. (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) which sometimes aided the Germans in actions against Soviet partisans, and sometimes fought against them in revenge for Koch's inhuman treatment of their compatriots.

*Also known as Lwow or, in German, Lemberg.

**The General Government had originally comprised only four districts - Krakov, Lublin, Radom and Warsaw. Galicia had been included in that part of Poland handed over to the U.S.S.R. when Stalin and Hitler parceled out the country between them in September 1939 (the "Pact of Friendship" still being operative at that time). In August 1941, Distrikt Galizien under S.S. Brigadeführer Otto Wächter as Governor was made a fifth district of the General Government.

***It is not clear if it was Hitler's intention that Transnistria should go permanently to Romania. At this time it was merely classed as being "under Romanian military government."

The "Roland" and "Nightingale" Battalions, after being purged of "unreliable elements" were reformed as *Schutzmannschaft Bataillon 201*. During the four years of German occupation, eleven more Ukrainian *Schuma* battalions were raised (numbered 202-212). They wore German uniform with *Schuma* insignia and ranks as described in the chapter on the *Schutzmannschaft*. An indigenous Ukrainian Peoples Self-Defense (*Ukrainska Narodna Samoobrana*, or U.N.S.) was formed as a sort of locally based home guard. There was also a Ukrainian *Werkschutz* (Factory Guard), known in Ukrainian as the O.P.V. (*Okhoronni Promyslovi Viddily*).

UKRAINIAN POLICE IN THE "GENERAL GOVERNMENT" (POLAND)



Wachtmeister



Hauptwachtmeister



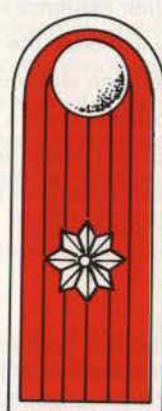
Meister



Obermeister



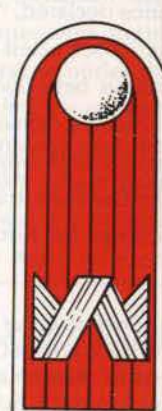
Leutnant



Oberleutnant



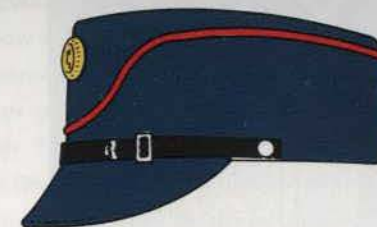
Hauptmann



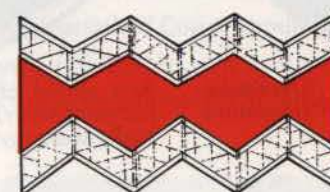
Major



Metal cap badge. Gilt with blue Ukrainian trident.



Blue cap with red piping.



Collar patch (for an officer).

The Volksdeutsche of the Ukraine (393,924 in all according to the 1924 census) were granted a special status and were eligible for the "honor" of serving in the Waffen S.S., although no special unit was created for them.

Under German decrees dated 29 March and 21 April 1943, *Polizei-Schützen-Regimenter* (Police Rifle Regiments) were to be raised from among the indigenous populations of the Occupied Eastern Territories. These, it was stated, were to consist of three battalions, only the 1st would be German, the 2nd and 3rd would be *Ostvolk*, preferably Ukrainians, but with a cadre of 130 German officers and senior N.C.O.s each. Six regiments were ultimately formed (actually eight were raised, numbered 31 to 38, but 31 and 32 were disbanded almost immediately). In addition, Ukrainians served as guards in German concentration camps, as members of the *Einsatzkommando* groups which liquidated Jews, and as *Hiwis* in various divisions of the German army and air force. The "self-defense" forces in the east were reckoned (in mid 1942) to contain not less than 180,000 Ukrainians.

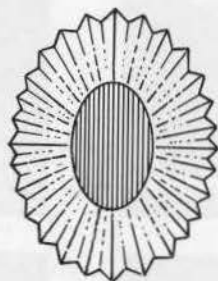
In 1943 the Germans created a Ukrainian equivalent of, or possibly more correctly, counterbalance to, the R.O.A. This was known as the U.V.V. (*Ukrainske Vyzvolne Vijsko* - Ukrainian Liberation Army). It was, like the R.O.A., an "army" in name only. It had only a spiritual cohesion. Its members were scattered throughout a multitude of German units along the front. All they had in common was a Ukrainian arm shield. This arm shield is in the Ukrainian colors - yellow over blue, upon which is the Ukrainian trident symbol. At the top of the shield, in white, U.V.V. (but, being in Cyrillic, this resembles Y.B.B.). The whole is on a field grey background. The only other con-



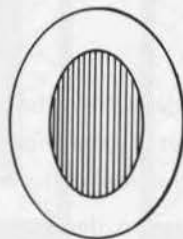
Arm shield of the U.V.V. (Ukrainske Vyzvolne Viysko) Ukrainian Liberation Army.



Arm shield of the U.N.A. (Ukrainian National Army), but doubtful if ever actually worn.



Officer cap cockade.



Cap cockade for non-commissioned ranks.

cession to nationalism was a cockade - a yellow (outer) and blue (inner) oval, but there is no certainty that this was worn by all personnel.

As the war situation deteriorated, the Ukrainians became, at least to outward appearances, more willing than before to cooperate with the Germans. This did not result from any increased love of their new masters (Koch's methods had destroyed any prospect of that), but arose from the fact that they saw the imminent collapse of Germany and the military exhaustion of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to assert their independence of both. But to be able to do so, the Ukraine would have to have at its disposal an armed force of its own. Prominent Ukrainians suddenly manifested a readiness to cooperate with the Germans in the setting up of armed units, ostensibly to fight alongside them against the advancing Red Army, but in reality prepared to fight *both* sides should the need arise.

Early in 1945 the Germans agreed to the creation of an independent Ukrainian National Army (*Ukrainska Natsionalna Armiia*, or U.N.A.). The U.N.A. was doubtless envisaged by Hitler as a counterweight to the K.O.N.R., and, coincidentally or

otherwise, both armies were of roughly equal strength. To command "The Army and Navy (sic!) of the Ukrainian Republic," to quote the wording of the official proclamation, the Ukrainian National Committee, now virtually a provisional government, appointed Lt. General Pavlo Shandruk. A veteran soldier of the Ukrainian Republic of 1918-1921, and former General Staff officer of the Polish army, Shandruk was entrusted with the command of the 14th "Galician" Division which was now rechristened the 1st Ukrainian (*Halychyna*) Division. A second division of the U.N.A. was brought into being by the amalgamation of various Ukrainian units within the Wehrmacht - an antitank brigade quartered outside Berlin, a Ukrainian Reserve Regiment from Denmark, a couple of Ukrainian infantry regiments from Holland, plus assorted police, security and unattached Cossack bodies - a grand total of some 38,000 men. But the Germans were reluctant to turn over the entire U.V.V. to Shandruk even though he was given vague assurances that he would be entrusted with the command "of all Ukrainian Forces."

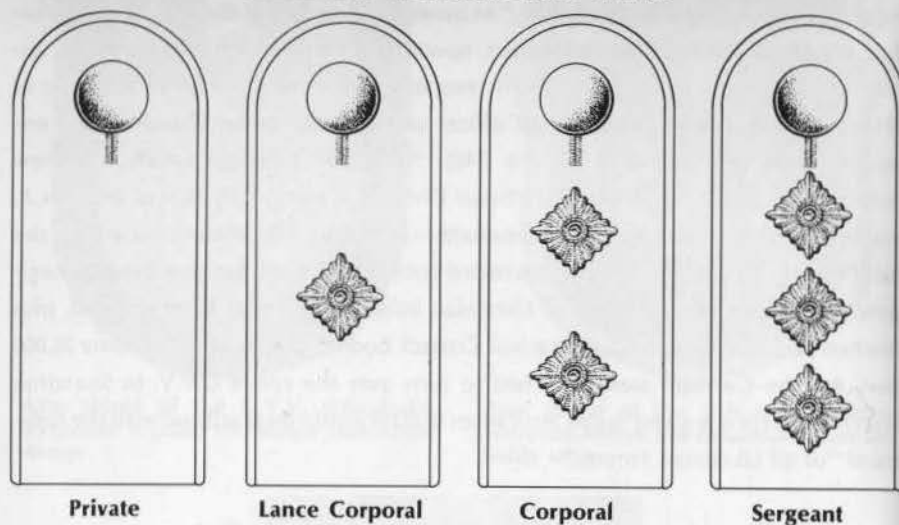


Lt. General Pavlo Shandruk.

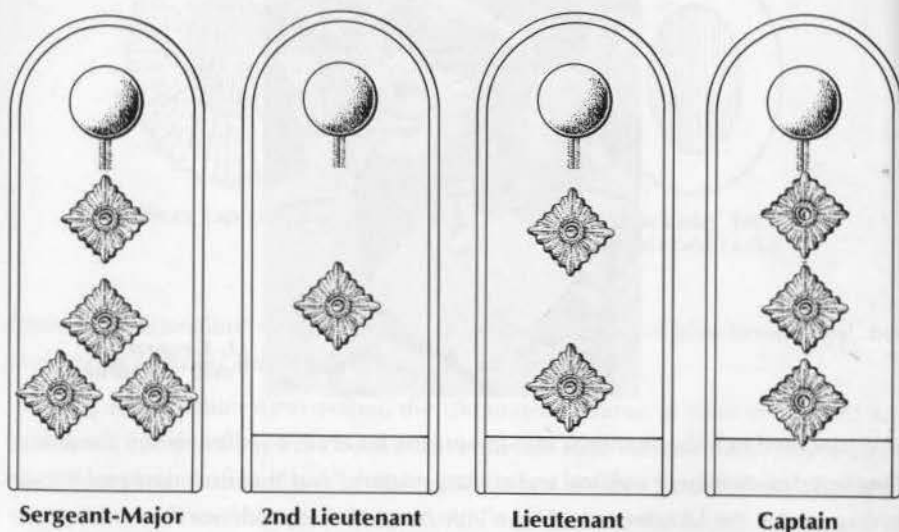
Vlasov tried to bribe Shandruk into joining the K.O.N.R. by offering him the post of "my first deputy in both political and military matters," but Shandruk declined. He appreciated that the Ukraine would have little hope of independence if he made its armed forces subservient to a Russian.

The U.N.A. was, in theory, to have its own uniforms based, it was said, on "traditional designs from the days of the original republic." The army of the Ukrainian People's Republic of 1919-21 had had rank insignia in the form of ornamental braid bars worn on the lower cuff, also ornamental collar patches (both of increasing complexity with increasing rank). The materials for such an elaborate scheme of grades proved impossible to find and the U.N.A. was obliged to settle for a simplified system improvised from available (largely German) sources. They continued to wear field grey with rank indicated by stars and "bars" on the shoulder strap. It is possible that

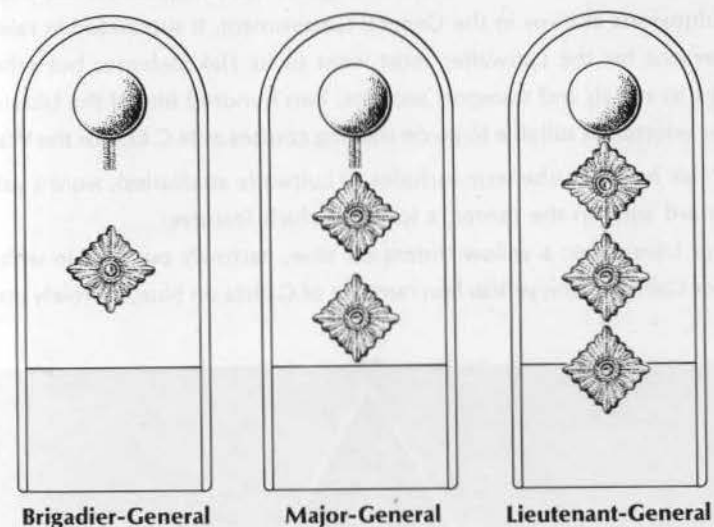
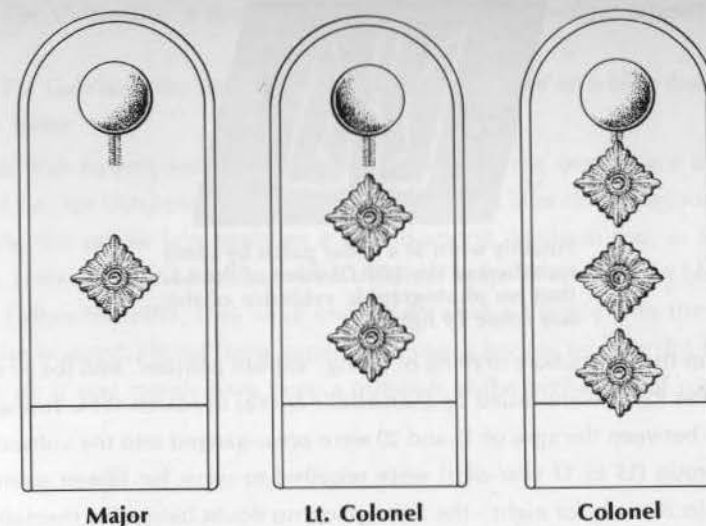
UKRAINIAN NATIONAL ARMY RANKS



Field grey shoulder straps with gilt stars.



Officers have silver braid at base of shoulder strap and gilt stars.



Silver braid as base of strap (which is field grey), gilt stars.

some senior officers were able to provide themselves with the full "official" uniform, but there is no doubt that the bulk of the U.N.A. wore either those (German) uniforms that they already possessed, or modified versions of the same. A cap badge in the form of a Ukrainian trident on a blue background within a yellow surround was designed and may have been worn. Less likely to have been worn is an arm badge which is a yellow trident on blue surmounted by the word UKRAINE in blue on white. (This badge may, indeed, exist only in theory.) The S.S. map of February 1945 shows a collar

patch with a white trident on black as being for the Ukraine. The existence of such a collar patch (albeit the appearance of several examples *after* the war), is in some doubt. No photographic evidence to substantiate the wearing of such a collar device has come to light. The distinction once drawn by the German authorities between "Galicians" and Ukrainians appears to have been abandoned in the closing stages of the war, with the exception of youthful Flak helpers.



Possibly worn as a collar patch by some members of the 14th Division of the S.S. (but no photographic evidence of this has come to light).

Orders for the compulsory drafting of young "eastern peoples" into the air defense system of the Reich were issued by *Dienststelle Nickel* in March 1944. Youngsters of both sexes between the ages of 15 and 20 were press-ganged into the Luftwaffe. The younger group (15 to 17 year-olds) were required to serve for fifteen months, the others (18 to 20) only for eight - the assumption no doubt being that thereafter they would "graduate" into an active service unit.

The Ukrainian youths came under the aegis of *H.J. Kriegseinsatz-kommando Süd* with headquarters at L'vov in the General Government. It succeeded in raising 5,933 young persons for the Luftwaffe; most went to its Flak defenses but others were utilized by its signals and transport sections. Two hundred fifty of the Ukrainian lads were later selected as suitable to go on training courses as N.C.O.s for the Waffen S.S.

Male "Flak helpers" (the term includes all Luftwaffe auxiliaries), wore a yellow and blue brassard with, in the center, a lozange which features:

(a) For Ukrainians: a yellow trident on blue, narrowly outlined in white.

(b) For Galicians: the yellow lion rampant of Galicia on blue, narrowly outlined in white.



Brassard for Ukrainian Flak helpers.

The cap badge (worn on a Hitler Youth type ski cap) was:

(a) For Ukrainians: a diamond divided equally into yellow (upper) and blue (lower).

(b) For Galicians: the lion rampant of Galicia in yellow on a blue diamond, outlined in white.

Female Flak helpers wore as their arm device, only the centerpiece of the male brassard, i.e., for Ukrainian girls, the yellow trident on a blue cloth diamond; for Galician girls, the yellow lion again on a blue diamond. Uniform was, as for all Flak helpers, Luftwaffe blue with *Flieger H.J.* shoulder straps (black with sky blue piping). As *S.S. Luftwaffenhelfer*, they were entitled to wear a triangle with the S.S. runes above the brassard. Photos show some of the young people wearing this S.S. device, but not all. It may merely have been a question of the availability of supplies.



Illustration by [illegible]



BULGARIA

BULGARIA

Probably the least willing and least effectual of Germany's allies, Bulgaria was officially at war only with Great Britain and the United States; pro-Russian sentiment in the country ruled out any declaration of war on the Soviet Union.

Bulgaria entered the First World War in October 1915 on the German side, but paid for this miscalculation by the loss of her Macedonian possessions. Like other vanquished countries which had been compelled to forfeit territories they regarded as rightly theirs, Bulgaria suffered from nationalistic resentment which, after the advent of dictatorships in Italy and Germany, caused some to turn to Nazi/fascism as a possible source of redress. But the pro-fascist factions were fissiparous, ineffective and, for the most part, short-lived. A Bulgarian National-Socialist Workers' Party (N.S.B.A.P.) was founded in 1932 by Christo Kuntscheff, a Bulgarian medical student studying in Berlin. It slavishly adopted the program of the N.S.D.A.P. along with its brown shirt and swastika arm band.* Its only claim to originality lay in the fact that its emblem was the lion of Bulgaria (upon a swastika) holding up, incredibly, a *hammer and sickle*! After less than a year, the party split in two, each "half" claiming to be the sole authentic N.S.B.A.P. This dilemma was resolved when *both* were banned under a governmental decree of May 1934. The same decree also outlawed the pro-Nazi Union of the Young National Legion which had been founded in 1928 by General Mikola Jekoff. At the time of its enforced dissolution, it had a membership of some 35,000. The Italian oriented N.Z.F. (National Organization of Fascists) of Dr. Alexander Stalinski was also proscribed at this time.

*This is red with a white swastika on a green circle white/green/red are the national colors of Bulgaria.

Badge of the National Socialist Bulgarian Workers' Party (N.S.B.A.P.). It combines the lion of Bulgaria with (very odd for a Nazi emblem) a hammer and sickle!



Three troopers of the Union of the Young National Legion.



Bulgarian Home Defence
(Rodna Zashchita)



National Fascist Rally
(Nationale Zadruga Faczisti)
of Alexander Stalinski.



Brassard of the National-Socialist Bulgarian Workers' Party (N.S.B.A.P.). Colors are the national colors of Bulgaria: white swastika on green circle, red brassard.

In January 1941, the government established the Brannik ("Defender") Youth Organization. Its uniform was a brown tunic, khaki shirt and green tie, brown trousers and a brown forage cap. The main emblem of the Brannik Youth was a Cyrillic B on a shield. The lion of Bulgaria was worn on the front of the forage cap. A "Sam Browne" belt and cross strap completed the ensemble. In summer when the tunic was not worn, a B on a shield was worn on the left breast pocket of the shirt. The girls uniform would appear to have been the more or less standard white blouse and black, or dark blue, skirt. Boys carried a dagger, or camp knife, of the Hitler Youth *Fahrtenmesser* type with the Brannik emblem replacing the H.J. diamond badge. A "foreign" branch of the Brannik Youth was formed among young Bulgarians studying at German universities.



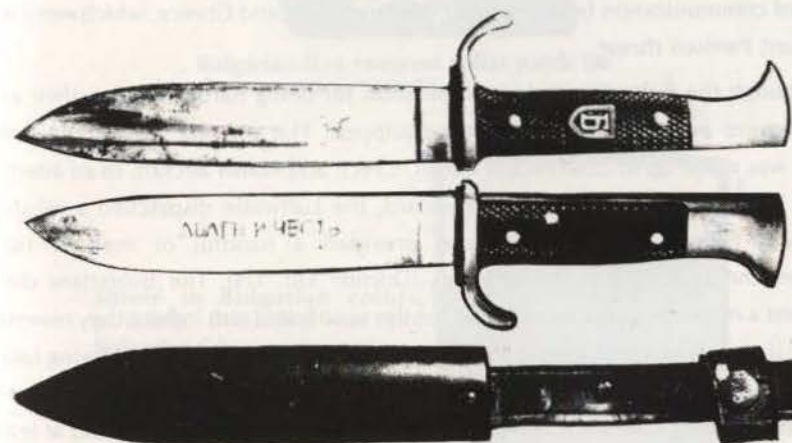
Brannik Youth on a brisk march. Uniform is brown with a green tie. At first voluntary, service in the Brannik Youth was later made compulsory. Age limits were 8-21 but extended to 25 for university students.



Lion of Bulgaria worn by the Brannik Youth on the front of their forage caps. The same lion was worn on the front of the army forage cap. Rank was indicated on shoulder straps.



Emblem of the Brannik State Youth: white B on brown with red surround. It was worn on left upper arm of tunic, left breast of shirt (when tunic was not worn), and on left side of the forage cap. Civil lapel badge is the same but is gold B on red shield with gold frame.



Dagger of the Brannik Youth (obviously modeled on that of the Hitler Youth). The motto on the blade means "Duty and Honor."



Brannik students at a German university, May 1942. The officer (extreme right) appears to have an H.J. Leader's dagger.

On 1 March 1941, Bulgaria was coerced into joining the Tripartite Pact (formed between Germany-Italy and Japan in September of the previous year). This placed her, morally, in the Axis camp. When Hitler invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941, the Bulgarians allowed the German 12th Army to launch its attack from their country and permitted the Luftwaffe the use of Bulgarian airfields. The Bulgarian army also put one of its divisions at Hitler's disposal, but stipulated that this be employed "only in a reserve capacity." As it transpired, the Yugoslav campaign was over so quickly that no call was made on the Bulgarian force. Although it had contributed virtually nothing, except the use of its bases, to the Axis victory, Bulgaria was rewarded by the restoration of Macedonia (or, as the Yugoslavs call it, "South Serbia"). This region has a mixed Bulgarian and Serbian population. Thereafter Bulgaria's main contribution to Hitler's war effort was the combating of insurgency in that former region of Yugoslavia. The Bulgarians tried to expell all Serbs who had settled there since 1918 and this, naturally enough, only contributed to the unrest and resistant activity in the region. Seven Bulgarian divisions, under German operational control, policed the vital lines of communication between southern Yugoslavia and Greece, which were under constant Partisan threat.

Although the Bulgarians enjoy a reputation for being hardy warriors, their armed forces were poorly and inadequately equipped. The pre-war Royal Bulgarian Air Force was made up of obsolescent Italian, Czech and Polish aircraft. In an attempt to bring it up to a more acceptable standard, the Luftwaffe dispatched a mission of specialist officers in 1940, and also provided a handful of modern fighters (Messerschmitt Bf 109Es) and bombers (Dornier Do. 17s). The Bulgarians did not manifest a marked degree of gratitude for this unsolicited aid, indeed they resented it, seeing it merely as a ploy to involve them more deeply in Hitler's war. Having failed to induce the Bulgarians to join in the "European crusade against Bolshevism," the Germans had to be content with ensuring that the Bulgarian Air Force would at least be capable of defending its own, and its neighbor Romania's, air space (this latter, of course, on account of the need to protect the vital Romanian oil fields against aerial

attack). In 1943, the Luftwaffe supplied the Bulgarians with 120 ex-French Air Force Dewoitine D 520 fighters and 150 Messerschmitt Bf 109Gs to bolster its air defenses in the face of an increasing weight of USAF daylight raids.

As the Red Army approached its frontier, Bulgaria tried desperately to extricate itself from the conflict. On 26 August 1944, the Government announced that it had "withdrawn from the war," and ordered the expulsion of all German troops. On 5 September it proclaimed Bulgaria neutral. Neutrality, however, was not considered good enough by the Soviets who on the same day declared war on Bulgaria. This was a technical formality since it was followed immediately by an armistice, which it, in its turn, was followed by a state of co-belligerency. The Bulgarians then placed their army under Russian command and took up arms against their erstwhile Axis partner. This was not *entirely* the end of Bulgarian-German collaboration. Ever since December 1942, Himmler had been urging the Bulgarians to create an S.S. Legion on the lines of other foreign volunteer units in their service. This had always been politely, but firmly, resisted on the grounds that it would mean splitting up the small Bulgarian land forces. But with the Russians now in occupation of their homeland, hundreds of pro-German, or perhaps more correctly anti-communist, Bulgarians fled to Germany. In the autumn of 1944, Himmler again raised the question of a Bulgarian contribution to the Waffen S.S., suggesting that this might be in an initial strength of a Grenadier (infantry) regiment which could, hopefully, form the basis for a projected *Waffen-Grenadier Division der S.S. (bulgarische Nr. 1)*. This turned out to be overly optimistic.



Bulgarian lion rampant collar patch (as shown on S.S. "map").



Shield in Bulgarian colors, possibly intended for the Bulgarian S.S.

At Dollersheim in Austria, the S.S. was able to muster only 25 officers, 56 non-commissioned officers and around 500 other ranks. They were joined there by some Brannik Youth students from German universities. By April 1945 an antitank regiment - S.S. Panzer-Zerstörer-Regiment (bulgarisches) - had been formed. Its contribution to Hitler's war effort is unrecorded. It may, possibly, have seen some minor action before the war in Europe ended one month later. The commander of this regiment was Colonel Rogosarof, one-time Minister of Labor in the Bulgarian government and also leader of the Bulgarian Labor Service.

The only other Bulgarian unit which continued to serve on the German side was a Regiment (Polk) of the Bulgarian Air Force which, equipped with Junkers Ju. 87 D ground strafing aircraft, carried on the fight against the Yugoslav Partisans.

UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

The Bulgarian army uniform was brown except for the armored units who wore black and the technical troops who had olive green. The air force wore blue-grey. Rank was indicated by Czarist style shoulder boards and was the same, except for the *Waffenfarbe*, for army, air force and navy (the navy had the addition of the more-or-less international scheme of "rings" around the cuff above these the royal Bulgarian crown). The army cap badge was a Russian style cockade in the national colors - white/green/red.

Veterans testify to the existence of the S.S. lion of Bulgaria collar patch although unfortunately no photograph of its actually being worn is available. A white/green/red arm shield exists which may have been worn by Bulgarian S.S. volunteers or by fugitive Bulgarian soldiers pressed into service as *Hiwis* by the Wehrmacht.

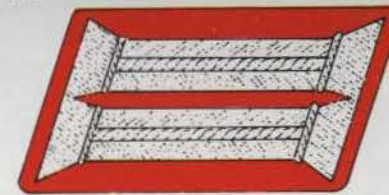


This white/green/red arm shield variant may have been worn interchangeably with the pattern on previous page by Bulgarian S.S. volunteers or by *Hiwis*.

ARMY INSIGNIA



(i)



(ii)

Collar patches for (i) Generals (army have gold bullion oak leaves on red, air force have gold oak leaves on light blue). Officers have silver collar patch (as (ii) above). Background color is "*Waffenfarbe*."



(a)

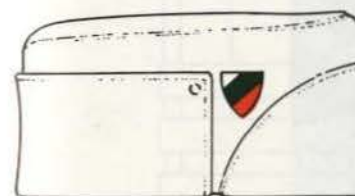


(b)

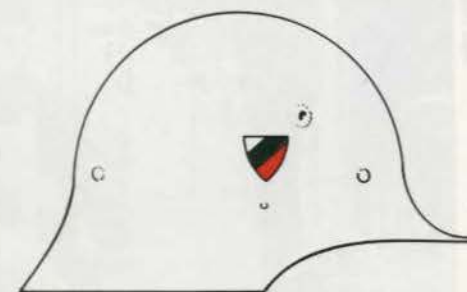


(c)

Non-commissioned ranks collar patches: (a) Infantry (red), (b) Artillery (yellow center), (c) Armoured forces (silver death's head on red). Cavalry are like (b) but with white instead of yellow center.



Army forage cap. On right side the white/green/red shield of Bulgaria. On front is the lion rampant.



Steel helmet. Slightly "deeper" than its German counterpart. White/green/red shield on right side only.

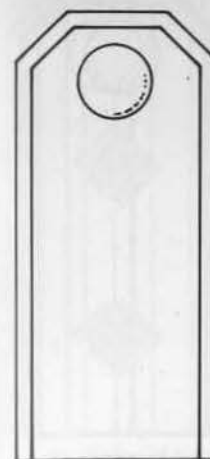


Cap badge of officer's peaked cap.

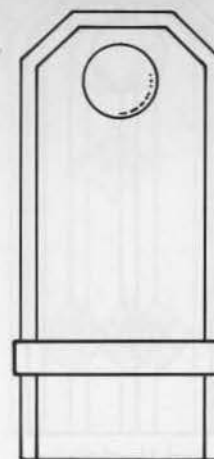


Hitler greets the Bulgarian War Minister, General Michoff. Just behind Michoff is Field Marshal Keitel. On the extreme left another Bulgarian officer (unidentified).

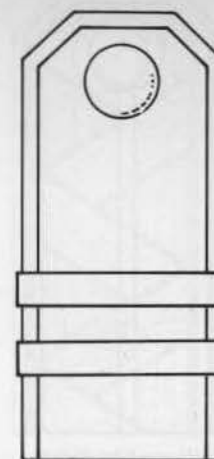
ARMY AND AIR FORCE RANKS Non-Commissioned Ranks:



Private
(Rednik)

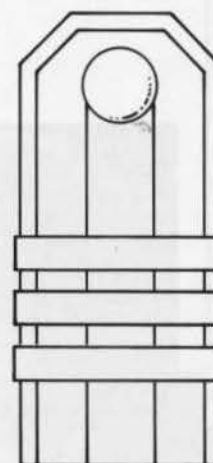


Lance Corporal
(Yefreytor)

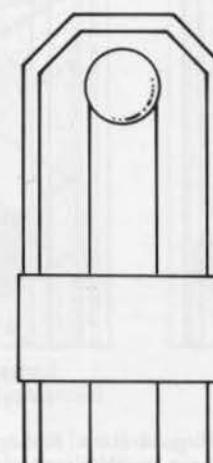


Corporal
(Kandidat Podofitser)

Yellow "Bars"



Sergeant
(Posofitser)



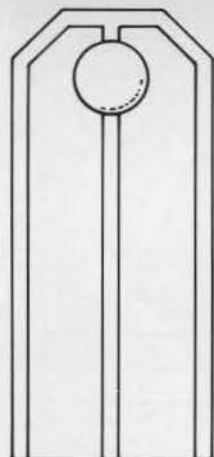
Staff-Sergeant
(Feldfebel)

Gold lace

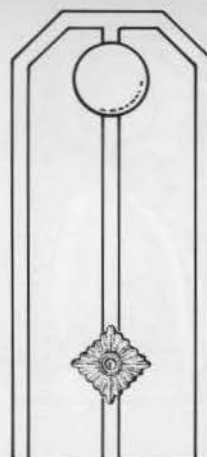


Bulgarian infantry unload machine gun ammunition.

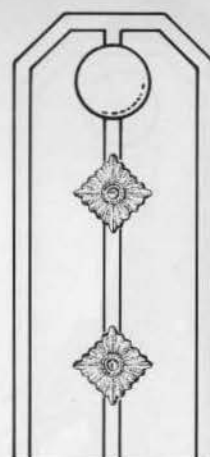
Officers:



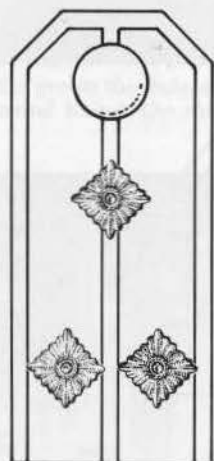
Officer Candidate
(Ofitserski Kandidat)



2nd Lieutenant
(Podporuchik)



1st Lieutenant
(Poruchik)



Captain
(Kapitan)



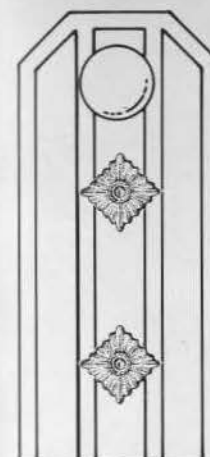
Major
(Mayor)

Gold lace and gold stars. Piping and central "bars" are in "Waffenfarbe."

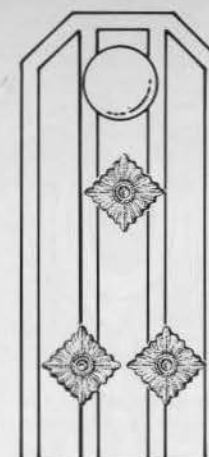
A Bulgarian 2nd Lieutenant of the Air Force. Note that Air Force personnel carried a winged propeller, surmounted by a royal crown, on their shoulder boards.



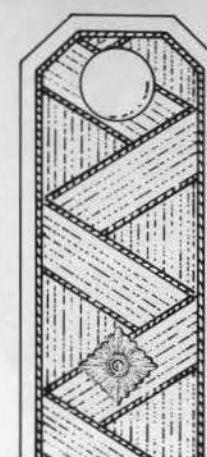
G. Petersen



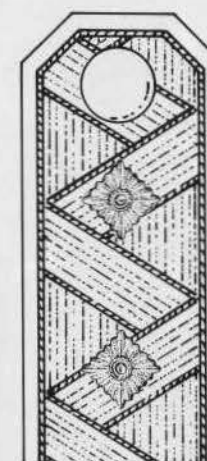
Lt. Colonel
(Podpolkovnik)



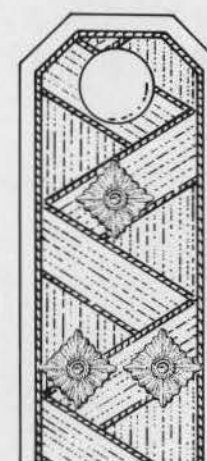
Colonel
(Polkovnik)



Major General
(General-Mayor)



Lt. General
(General-Leytenant)

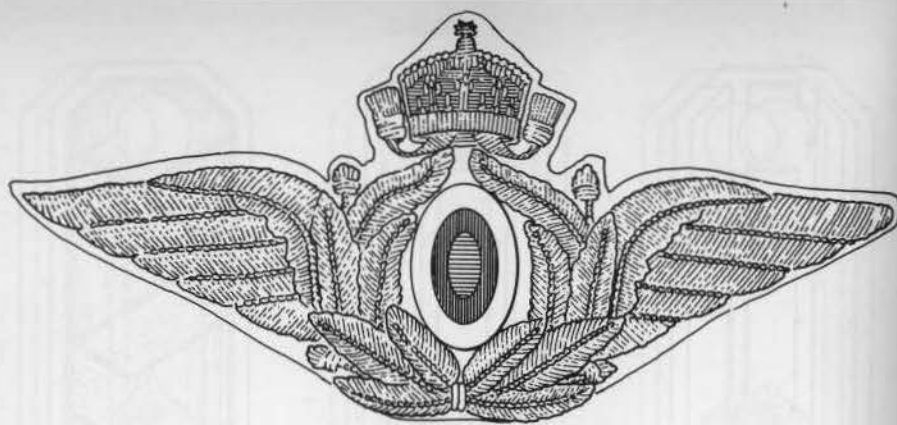


General
(General)

Gold lace and gold stars



King Boris II wears the shoulder boards of a full general.



Air force general's cap badge. Other officers have silver bullion.



Göring and Bulgarian Air Force officers. Note the Bulgarian general's cap badge, collar insignia and Air Force branch badge on his right breast. The officer to his left wears the Transport Pilot's badge plus the German and Croatian Pilot's badge.



Pilot's badge. This was originally intended for "sports fliers" at a time when Bulgaria was forbidden by treaty from having a military air force, but later it was used as the pilot's insignia of the Royal Bulgarian Air Force.

G. Petersen



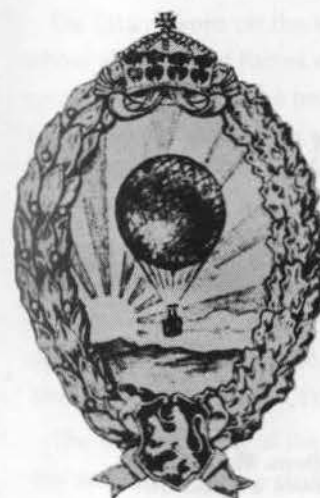
This Luftwaffe Knight's Cross holder and bomber pilot wears the Bulgarian Pilot's badge.



Transport Pilot's badge (instituted in 1935).



Observer's badge (instituted in 1935).



Balloon Pilot's badge.

Transport pilots, observers or balloon pilots who were no longer on active duty could continue to wear their appropriate badge, but in this case it was without the crown.

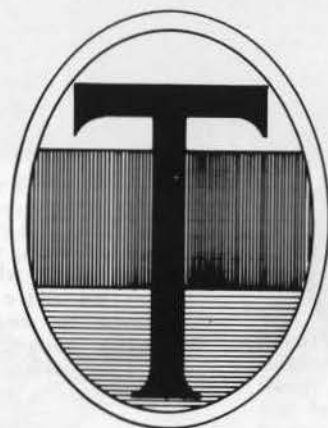
Bulgaria had a fairly large number of Orders, Decorations and Medals, the most common being, perhaps, the Military Order for Bravery in War, rather similar in design to the French *Croix de Guerre*. This device (in red) had been used as the wing and fuselage marking of aircraft of the Royal Bulgarian Air Force before the start of the Second World War, but, presumably in order to avoid confusion with the red star of the Soviet air force, this was changed to a plain black saltire on a white square. The tail colors were white/green/red (white was sometimes omitted).



Wing and fuselage marking of Bulgarian aircraft.

Bulgaria had a State Labor Service, known as Trudovaks, which was formed after the 1st World War as a means of evading the prohibition (under the Treaty of Neuilly) on the training of military reserves. The Labor battalions, although unarmed, were able to provide at least a partial equivalent of military service. The term of duty was five months, two of which were given over to para-military training, the other three to manual labor. Uniform consisted of a khaki military style tunic without side pockets (except for officers), closed at the neck (but open with collar and tie for officers). On the left arm was an oval badge with a black "T" (for Trudovaks) on the background of white/green/red.

After May 1941, Jews were called up into special Labor battalions.



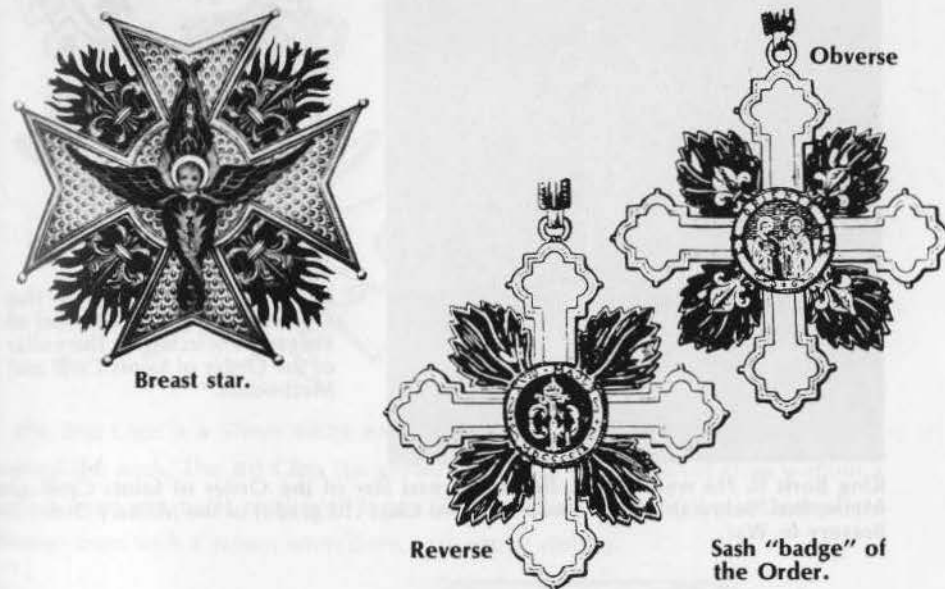
Badge worn on left upper arm by Labor Battalions. Black T (for Trudovaks) on white/green/red oval. They wore a khaki uniform with black collar patches.

BULGARIAN ORDERS AND DECORATIONS

ORDER OF SAINTS CYRILL AND METHODIUS

The Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius, named in honor of the two most important patron saints of the Slavs, was created on 18 May 1909. It was (and, surprisingly, despite the Communists' takeover, still is) the highest Bulgarian distinction. It is in one class only and restricted to a mere fifteen recipients.* It comprises a breast "star" (a cross actually), a sash and sash "badge" and, for the head of the Order only, a neck chain or collar.

*Von Ribbentrop, Germany's Foreign Minister, was a recipient of this Order.



The "star," worn on the left breast, is a Maltese cross, measuring 85mm, between whose arms are red flames with gold (or, in some versions, silver) fleur-de-lys. In the center of the cross is the head of a cherub with a golden halo and six red wings. The sash is 105mm wide and is salmon pink. The sash "badge" is a 72mm cross treflee (a type of cross common in the Greek Orthodox church) in light blue enamel with gold edges. As with the breast star, red enamel flames each charged with a fleur-de-lys emanate from the angles of the cross. The obverse centerpiece shows the two saints. Around this is a gold band upon which is the Latin inscription *Ex oriente lux* (Light from the east). The reverse features the crowned cypher of King Ferdinand I in gold upon a red background. This is encircled by a blue band with the date of institution: XVIII Majus MDCCCCIX (18 May 1909).

The collar consists of the same type of cross as the sash "badge" but much larger and suspended from a chain comprised of alternate links of lions rampant and fleur-de-lys.



King Boris II. He wears the collar and breast star of the Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Below the star he wears the 3rd Class (1st grade) of the Military Order for Bravery in War.



Lion of Bulgaria with the crossed batons of a Marshal of Bulgaria encircled by the collar of the Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

MILITARY ORDER FOR BRAVERY IN WAR

This, the oldest Bulgarian Order, was instituted on 1 January 1880 to commemorate Prince Alexander of Battenberg's elevation to Prince of Bulgaria the previous year (14 May 1879). The Order is in seven grades:

Grand Cross

1st Class

2nd Class

3rd Class (1st grade)

3rd Class (2nd grade)

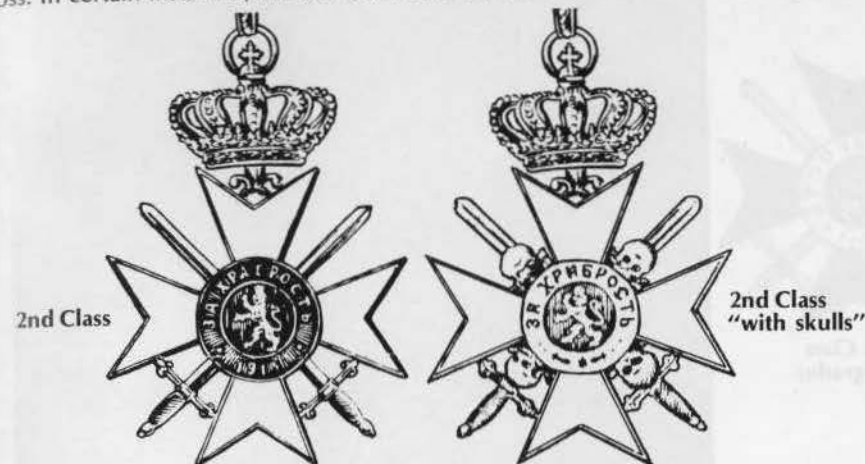
4th Class (1st grade)

4th Class (2nd grade)

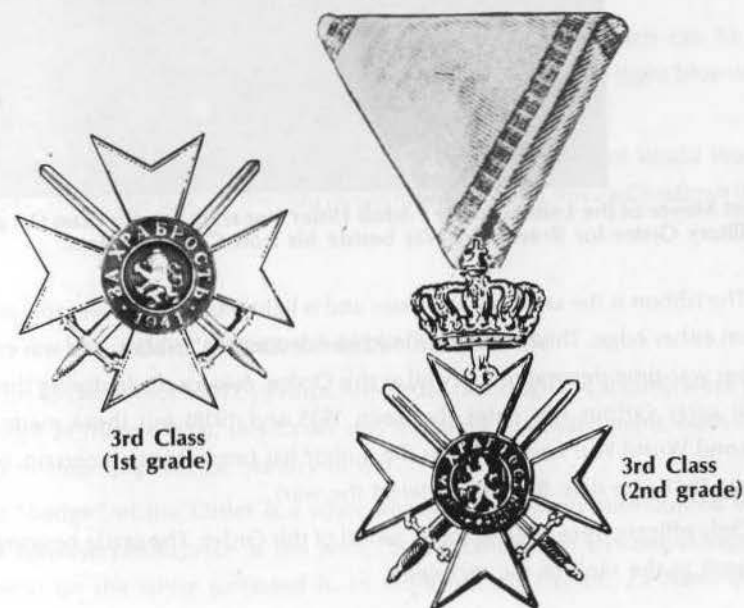
The basic "badge" of the Order is a white enamel maltese cross with, as the obverse centerpiece, a golden lion rampant on a red background within a green circlet upon white, in Cyrillic, is *Za Chrabrost* (For Bravery). The reverse centerpiece is the crowned royal cypher. All grades have gilt crossed swords between the arms of the cross.

The Grand Cross, worn only by the monarch, is a 95mm breast star worn with a 100mm sash and 72mm sash badge.

The 1st Class is an eightpointed silver breast star with, in the center, the "badge" of the Order and a 63mm neck cross (surmounted by a crown). During the First World War two higher distinctions were added to the 1st Class (a) "with diamonds" and (b) "with skulls." The diamonds are a circlet of brilliants added to the centerpiece of the breast star. The skulls are small iron death's heads placed between the arms of the cross. In certain instances, the diamonds and the skulls could be awarded together.



The 2nd Class is a 57mm white enamel cross with a crown worn from a ribbon around the neck. The 3rd Class (1st grade) is a 55mm white enamel cross without a crown, worn, pin-back, on the left breast. The 3rd Class (2nd grade) is a 42mm white enamel cross with a crown worn from a triangular ribbon.



The 4th Class (1st grade) is a red enamel pin-pack cross worn on the left breast. The 4th Class (2nd grade) is a red enamel cross, without a crown, worn from a triangular ribbon.



4th Class
(1st grade)



Kurt Meyer of the Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler" wearing the 4th Class (1st grade) of the Military Order for Bravery in War beside his Iron Cross 1st Class.

The ribbon is the same for all classes and is light blue with a silver thread stripe inset from either edge. This is the so-called "war decoration" ribbon and was employed for other war-time decorations as well as this Order. Awards made during the First World War carry various war dates (between 1915 and 1918) but those made during the Second World War have, as far as the author has been able to ascertain, only the one date: 1941 (the date Bulgaria entered the war).

Only officers were eligible for an award of this Order. The grade bestowed normally related to the rank of the recipient.

SOLDIERS' CROSS FOR BRAVERY IN WAR

At the same time as the Military Order for Bravery in War was instituted for officers, a Soldiers Cross was brought into being as its counterpart for non-commissioned ranks. It is in five classes:

1st Class: a gilt cross from a 26mm ribbon with a transverse "bar" of fish-tailed ribbon (of same width).



1st Class: gold cross from bow-type ribbon. The 2nd Class has same type ribbon but the cross is silver.

2nd Class: as above but without the transverse "bar."

3rd Class: a silver cross with ribbon with transverse "bar."

4th Class: as above but without the transverse "bar."

5th Class: a bronze cross from a normal 26mm wide ribbon which can be in triangular form. In all cases the ribbon is of the "war decoration" type (light blue with silver edges).

The awards of World War I have dates from 1915 onwards, those of World War II have only 1941. The centerpiece is the lion rampant with around this *Za Chrabrost* (For Bravery).

ROYAL ORDER OF SAINT ALEXANDER

Founded on 25 December 1881 by Prince Alexander (although the statutes were not published until 24 March 1883), this Order was intended to reward merit, both civil and military in time of peace or bravery in war.

The basic "badge" of the Order is a white enamel cross *formy* surmounted by a crown. The obverse centerpiece is red with "St. Alexander" in stylized elongated Cyrillic letters; on the white surround is, in more normal Cyrillic, *Za Nami boga*

(roughly, God is with us). On the reverse is the date of foundation of an independent Bulgaria: 19 August 1878.

The above was the original design, but with the change of dynasty to that of the House of Coburg in 1887, new grades were added which have green enamel in place of white and a centerpiece which features the lion rampant of Bulgaria with, on its side, the shield of Saxony. However, the original grades remained unaltered with their white enamel arms and "St. Alexander" centerpieces. The final grading was as follows:

- Grand Collar
- Collar
- 1st Class (Grand Cross)
- 2nd Class (Grand Officer)
- 3rd Class (Commander)
- 4th Class (Officer)
- 5th Class (Knight) Grade I
- 5th Class (Knight) Grade II
- 6th Class Grade I
- 6th Class Grade II.

3rd Class with lion of Bulgaria center-piece, and swords.



Due to the somewhat confusing alterations resulting from the change of dynasty, a detailed description of these classes is difficult. The 3rd Class (Commander) is a green enamel neck decoration. The 5th Class Grade I is a white enamel cross with crown above, the Grade II of the same is also white enamel but is without the crown. The 6th Class Grade I is a silver cross without enamel work, surmounted by a crown, the Grade II being without the crown.

"Swords" were added in 1888 and these appear, for the 3rd and lower classes, as part of the suspension above the medal but below the crown. In the highest grades the swords appear between the arms of the cross. On the breast star with the "St. Alexander" centerpiece, the swords (in this case slightly curved) are affixed to the uppermost ray of the star (as illustrated on the next page), but on the breast star with the lion of Bulgaria centerpiece the swords are placed, more conventionally, along the two transverse rays of the star, behind the centerpiece itself.



Breast Star with "St. Alexander" center-piece and swords.



Breast Star with "St. Alexander" center-piece (without swords).

The ribbon is the same, apart from width, for all the classes, and is purple. The only exception is the sash of the Grand Cross which has edges of black. For bravery in time of war the "war decoration" ribbon was substituted.

For royal recipients of some of the highest grades, diamonds were added to the crown and around the centerpiece.



5th Class (Knight) Grade I with Swords.

ORDER OF CIVIL MERIT

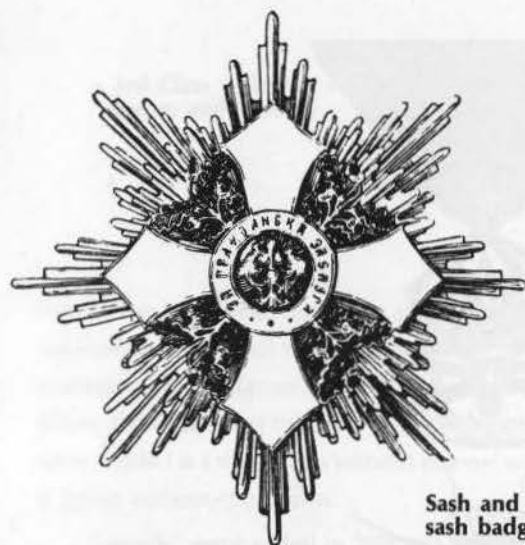
Instituted on 24 March 1883 by Prince Alexander I and known at this time simply as the Order of Merit, it was intended to reward either bravery or merit on the part of military officers. It was then in only two classes - a gold and a silver decoration.

On 2 August 1891, the Order was completely revised by King Ferdinand. It was now in six grades and became a national, rather than a simply military, award. With the creation in May 1900 of a companion Order of Military Merit, the award was now renamed the Order of Civil Merit and covered the whole compass of civilian merit either in time of peace or war.

The basic "badge" of the Order is a gilt outlined white enamel cross *urdee*, between whose arms are green enamel oak leaves on golden stocks and with golden acorns. The obverse centerpiece is the royal cypher of Ferdinand I on a red background enclosed by a green band upon which, in Cyrillic, is *Za Grashdanska Zasluga* (For Civil Merit). The reverse centerpiece is a golden lion rampant on red within a circle carrying the date 2 August 1891. All grades, except the two lowest, are surmounted by a royal crown.

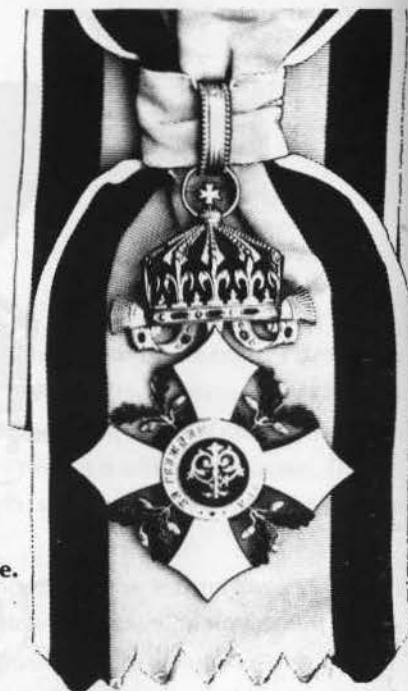
There are six classes plus a Grand Cross (added in May 1936). They are as follows:

Grand Cross: an eight-pointed silver breast star with an 85mm sash and sash badge (but no rosette).



Star to the Grand Cross
of the Order of Civil Merit

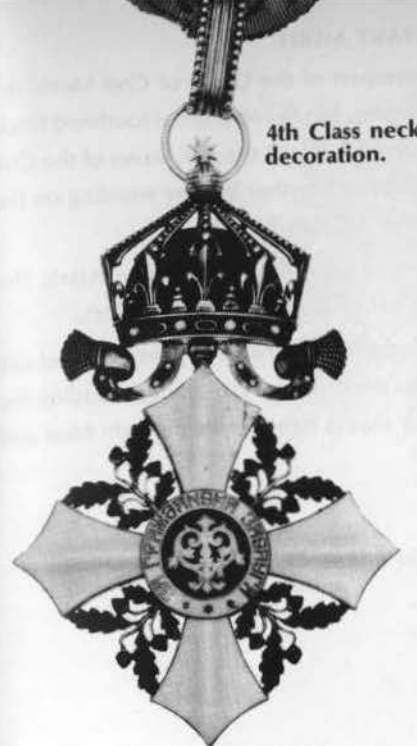
Sash and
sash badge.



2nd Class: a four-pointed silver star with an 85mm sash and sash badge.

3rd Class: a four-pointed breast star and neck cross.

4th Class: the neck cross only.



4th Class neck
decoration.



6th Class (2nd grade) silver cross.

5th Class (1st grade): cross in full colored enamel with a crown worn from a triangular ribbon.

5th Class (2nd grade): as above but without the crown, worn from a triangular ribbon.

6th Class (1st grade): a silver cross (no enamel work) with a crown, worn from a triangular ribbon.

6th Class (2nd grade): as above but without the crown. The ribbon is the same (apart from width) for all grades - it is white with dark red (or purple) and green borders, the red being the outer color. When awarded for merit in time of war, the light blue silver edged "war decoration" ribbon was used in place of the normal type.

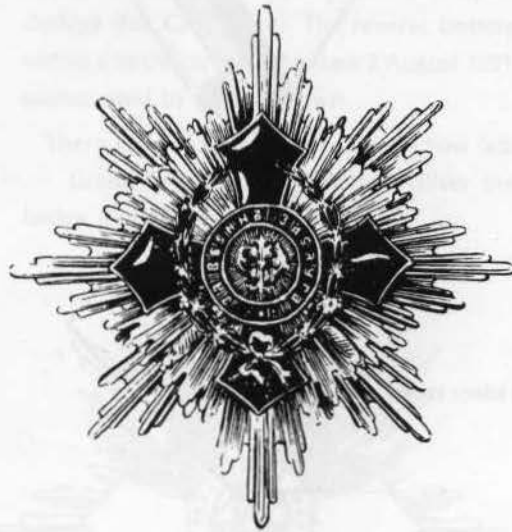
The four highest grades could, in special circumstances, be awarded "with diamonds."

ORDER OF MILITARY MERIT

Instituted in May 1900 as the military counterpart of the Order of Civil Merit, the basic "badge" of this Order is the same cross *urdee*, but in red enamel (outlined finely in gilt). Between the arms of the cross, gold swords replace the oak leaves of the Civil Order. The centerpiece is, as before, the Ferdinand I cypher but the wording on the green surround is now *Za Voenna Zasluga* (For Military Merit).

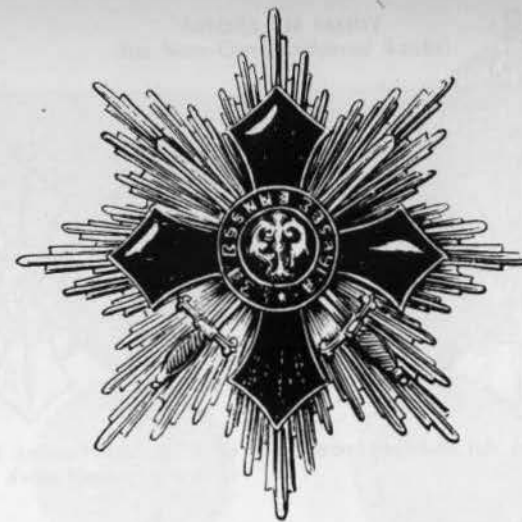
The six grades of this Order are exactly the same as for the Order of Civil Merit. The ribbon is yellow with black and white edges (white being the outer color).

When awarded for bravery in war, a "war decoration" wreath of green enamel oak (left) and laurel (right) leaves could be added to the center of any grade, including the breast stars. When so awarded the decoration always hangs from the light blue and silver "war decoration" ribbon.



Star to the Grand Cross of the Order of Military Merit.

Grand Cross of the Order of Military Merit.



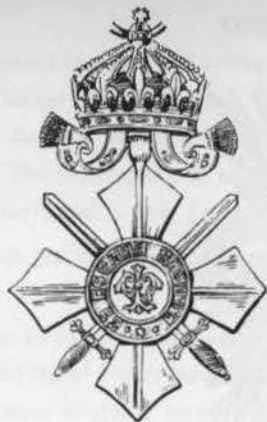
1st Class Star of the Order of Military Merit.



4th Class. Neck decoration with "war decoration" wreath and "war decoration" ribbon.



5th Class (1st grade) on normal peace-time ribbon.



6th Class (1st Grade). An all-silver cross with crown.



6th Class (2nd Grade). An all-silver cross with no enamel work (reverse).

ORDER OF MERIT (for Junior Officers)

Instituted on 24 March 1883 by Prince Alexander of Bulgaria as an award for merit in peace or bravery in war on the part of junior officers, it ranks immediately below the Royal Order of St. Alexander and was worn from the same ribbon as the Order. In time of war the special "war decoration" ribbon was employed.

The Order is in two classes - gold and silver and takes the form of a round medal with a non-contiguous wreath of laurel leaves through which pass two crossed swords. The obverse shows the monarch's head, the reverse has the lion of Bulgaria with the King Ferdinand Saxon shield on its side and the words, in Cyrillic, *Za Zasluga* (For Merit).



Obverse
(with head of Ferdinand I)



Reverse

MEDAL OF MERIT (for Non-Commissioned Ranks)



Obverse
(with head of King Boris III)



Reverse

Adrian Forman

Instituted at the same time as the foregoing Order of Merit (24 March 1883), the Medal of Merit was awarded, as before for merit in peace or bravery in war, but given only to those below commissioned grade. It is 20mm in diameter and features on the obverse the monarch's head with appropriate inscription followed by "King of Bulgaria." The reverse has the words *Za Zasluga* (For Merit) within a wreath of oak (left) and laurel (right) leaves. There are three grades - bronze, silver and gold, each of which can be with or without a crown. When "with crown," a royal Bulgarian crown forms part of the suspension above the medal. The peace-time ribbon is like that of the St. Alexander Order, in war-time, however, this was replaced by the "war decoration" light blue ribbon with silver inset edges (as in above example).

ORDER OF CHARITY

Medal (original type, 1908)



Obverse

Sometimes erroneously described as the Order of the Red Cross, this decoration is, in fact, quite distinct from those awarded by the Bulgarian Red Cross. It is properly known as the "To inspire charity" Order and was instituted on 15 October 1908 when it was simply a medal in three classes - bronze, silver and gilt. This medal has, on the obverse, the head of King Ferdinand with, in Cyrillic, Ferdinand I King (Czar) of Bulgaria. On the reverse is "To inspire (or encourage) charity" within a wreath. All three grades are surmounted by the royal crown and were worn from a red ribbon with green/white/green edges. On 30 June 1916 (with Bulgaria now at war) the Order was altered and enlarged in the following manner:

- 1st Class: an eight-pointed breast star and neck cross
- 2nd Class: the neck cross only
- 3rd Class: fully enameled cross worn from a ribbon
- 4th Class: as above but only the centerpiece is enamel, the rest is silver.



3rd Class (1916)
obverse



3rd Class (1916)
reverse

The basic "badge" of the revised Order is a white enamel cross with red edges narrowly outlined in silver. Between the arms of the cross are crowned cyphers of King Ferdinand I. The obverse centerpiece is a red cross on a white background within a green band upon which is "To a friend of mankind 1916" on the upper half and, below this, "Bulgaria's gratitude." The reverse centerpiece shows the crowned Bulgarian lion rampant.

The ribbon, the same for all grades, is white edged in red with two inset green stripes which are separated from one another and the red edge by narrow white stripes.

DECORATIONS OF THE BULGARIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

In October 1939, the Bulgarian Red Cross Society instituted a number of awards. These consisted of a Large Decoration, a Small Decoration and two medals (one silver,

Large
Decoration



Small
Decoration



one bronze). The Large Decoration is gold and measures 65mm by 38mm. It is a red cross within a scroll surmounted by a royal crown. The Small Decoration is 52mm by 35mm and is, like the above, a pin-back award featuring a red cross in the center but with a rather more elaborate surround and surmounted by a crown.



Obverse



Reverse

Medal

The medals are both 30mm in diameter and are as illustrated above. The date 1915 which appears on the obverse is the date of the foundation of the Bulgarian Red Cross Society.

LIFE SAVING MEDAL

Obverse



(with head of Boris III)

Reverse



A round medal whose obverse design is identical to that of the Medal of Merit was instituted by King Ferdinand I in 1908 (and continued under King Boris). The reverse has, in Cyrillic, the words "For Life Saving" within a laurel wreath. The medal is in one class only, silver with a crown. The ribbon is in the national colors - green with a central red stripe flanked by white.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL OF 1st WORLD WAR

Bulgaria entered the First World War on the side of the Central Powers in October 1915 with an attack on Serbia, but a medal to commemorate her participation in that conflict was not struck until December 1933. It is bronze gilt with, on the obverse, the arms of Bulgaria, swords and oak and laurel wreath. The reverse has the dates 1915-1918 within a wreath.



For combatants the ribbon is red with white/green/white edges; for non-combatants the ribbon has the addition of a narrow white stripe down the central red; for relatives of the fallen, there is a narrow black stripe down the center of the red.

In addition to her own forces, Bulgaria liberally awarded this medal to her erstwhile allies which is why it is so frequently found among German and Austro-Hungarian mounted groups and medal ribbon bars.

WOUNDED BADGE

A badge for those wounded on active service was instituted in 1941. It is a wreath of laurel (left) and oak (right) leaves within which is a lion holding a shield. On the shield is a number which indicates the number of times wounded. Behind the lion is a cross. One of the lion's paws rests on a Bulgarian type steel helmet. At the base of the badge

Dr. K.-G. Kietmann



is a cross with (in Cyrillic script) "For Bulgaria." The badge for those wounded more than once has the Royal Bulgarian crown at the apex of the wreath.

BADGE OF HONOR OF THE BULGARIAN INFANTRY

Awarded by the Bulgarian Inspector General of Infantry, for distinguished conduct in the field, this badge features a helmeted Bulgarian soldier within a wreath of oak leaves at the apex of which is a shield in the Bulgarian colors - white/red/green, upon this is a crowned B (for Boris). At the base of the badge is a facsimile of the Bulgarian Bravery Cross.

This badge could also be awarded to German personnel. Bulgarian and German forces took part in joint operations against partisan bands in the Balkans.



An officer of the Prinz Eugen Division wears the Bulgarian Infantryman's Badge of Honor below his War Merit Cross with swords. Most of the Prinz Eugen's active service was against Balkan partisans.

Dr. K.-G. Kietmann

POLICE BADGE OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Awarded by the Inspector General of the Bulgarian Infantry between 1941 and 1944, this badge could be given to German as well as Bulgarian police and security units for active service operations against Partisans in Bulgaria or in the Bulgarian occupied areas of Yugoslavia.

In the center is the arms of Bulgaria, above which the word *Zasluga* (Merit).

Dr. K. G. Kleimann



F. J. Stephens Collection

Rare and interesting Bulgarian "honor dagger." Note the use of the Bravery in War Cross on the reverse side of the hilt.

F. J. Stephens Collection



ROMANIA

ROMANIA

In the First World War, Romania had been on the side of the victors and had, as a result, acquired various territories at the expense of her defeated neighbors. Under the peace settlement she had gained Bessarabia, Bucovina, Transylvania and parts of the Banat. This was not an unqualified blessing since it brought with it sizable non-Romanian minorities. Some twenty-eight percent of the new enlarged Romania's citizens were of non-Romanian origin. Of these, over four percent were German. The 1930 census gives the following breakdown of figures relating to the distribution of the German minority in various regions of the country:

In Romania proper	112,206 Germans
In the Banat	223,167 Germans
In Transylvania	253,426 Germans
In Bessarabia	81,089 Germans
In Bucovina	75,533 Germans
Total	745,421 Germans

There was also a large Hungarian minority (around eight percent). This did not make for political stability and the inter-war period was one of upheaval and violence which spawned several fascist or Nazi-type parties, both native and foreign.

THE ROMANIAN FASCISTS

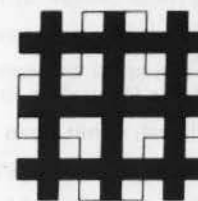
Octavian Goga's blue-shirted National Christian Party belied its name since it was distinctly fascist in character and used the swastika as its emblem. The swastika was also part of the emblem of Stefan Tatarescu's "Steel Shield" Movement, a party modeled with servile exactitude on Hitler's N.S.D.A.P.

There was even an "official" quasi-fascist movement, the *Straja Tarii* (Guards of the Fatherland), founded in 1934 by no less a personage than the Romanian monarch, King Carol. In December 1938, this was rechristened *Frontul Renasterii Nationale* (Front of National Regeneration).



Emblem of the Romanian National-Socialist Organization "Steel Shield."

But neither of the above commanded a fraction of the popular support won by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's "Iron Guard," first formed in June 1927 under the name "Legion of the Archangel Michael." It proved so successful that it came to be seen by the government as a challenge to its authority and was banned in 1933, only to reappear as *Totul Pentru Tara* (All for the Fatherland) Movement. In April 1938 Codreanu was arrested along with several other prominent persons in the movement and given ten years' imprisonment on a charge of high treason. In November Codreanu and thirteen of his fellow Guardist prisoners were "shot while trying to escape." (Such was the official version of his death - no one in Romania actually believed this story!)



Badge of the Iron Guard.



National Christian Party of Octavian Goga and I.C. Cuza.

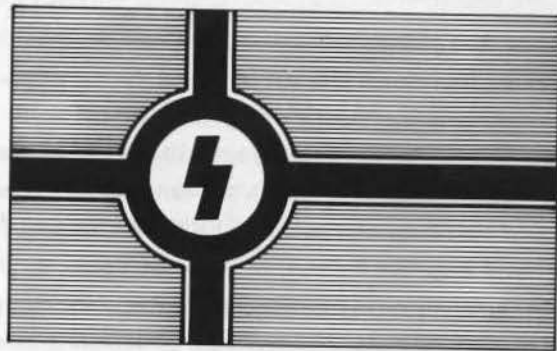
The leadership of the Iron Guard (this still remained the name by which it was best known) passed to Horia Sima. During the years that followed, the Romanian authorities alternately treated the Iron Guard as an ally and an adversary. When King Carol was deposed, in September 1940, and his 19-year-old son Michael became king, a military dictatorship was set up with Field Marshal Ion Antonescu as Prime Minister. Horia Sima was brought in as Vice Premier. The Germans constantly intrigued against both army and Iron Guard, trying to play the one off against the other. After an abortive coup by the Guardists, many of its leaders were carried off to camps in Germany, ostensibly as prisoners of state, but in practice as a threat which could be held in reserve to ensure good behaviour on the part of the Romanian government.



King Carol II shakes hands with Hitler on the steps of the Berghof on 28 November 1938. Crown Prince Michael is at the far right.

THE VOLKSDEUTSCHE

Since as far back as 1921, there had been a *Verband der Deutschen in Rumänien* (Union of Germans in Romania), but this was a cultural rather than a political organization. The first manifestation of Nazi influence was Fritz Fabritius's *Nationale Selbsthilfebewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien* (National Self-help Movement of



Flag of the Volksgemeinschaft der Deutschen in Rumänien (German Racial Community in Romania).

the Germans in Romania) set up in 1933. The following year this was renamed *National-Sozialistische Erneuerungsbewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien* (National-Socialist Renewal Movement of the Germans in Romania). Its youth branch was known as the *Deutsche Jugendbund in Rumänien* (D.J.R.). The *Volksgruppenführer* (Racial Group Leader) was Fritz Fabritius. It would seem that his masters in Berlin did not regard him as a sufficiently dedicated Nazi for, in 1940, he was replaced by Andreas Schmidt who enjoyed the not inconsiderable advantage of being the son-in-law of S.S. *Brigadeführer* Gottlob Berger, head of the S.S. Main Office for Germans Abroad. On 20 November 1940, the *Volksgruppe* was granted by the Romanian government the status of a semi-independent community within the national state. The party was now redesignated the *N.S.D.A.P. der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien* (The Nazi Party of the German Racial Group in Romania). The D.J.R. became the *Deutsche Jugend* (a name common to other "Hitler Youth" formations outside the Reich).

The N.S.D.A.P. of Romania was a replica of the N.S.D.A.P. of the Reich with only slight changes of name for its sub-formations. The *Einsatz Staffel* and *Deutsche Mannschaft* were the Romanian-German equivalents of the *Allgemeine S.S.* and *S.A.* The *Deutsche Arbeiterschaft in Rumänien* (D.A.R.) was the counterpart of the *D.A.F.* (German Labor Front). The *Frauenwerk* in Romania mirrored the *Frauenschaft* of the Reich (the women's section of the Party). The *N.S. Volkswohlfahrt* (Welfare Organization) was a name common to both. Uniforms were also virtually identical to those of Hitler's Reich. The Romanian N.S.D.A.P. used the same swastika as in Germany, not the "sun cross" variety often associated with Volksdeutsche Nazis. The eagle which holds this swastika is slightly different from any in the Reich and would appear to have been influenced to some extent by the national eagle of Romania.



Semi-open winged eagle as used by the Volksdeutsche community in Romania.

After the defeat of Yugoslavia in April 1941, the Yugoslav Banat was placed under a German military governor. This multi-racial region (its population was a mixture of Serbs, Germans, Romanians and others) posed a problem for Hitler. He had tentatively promised it to both Hungary and Romania. Which promise should he honor? He solved this dilemma in characteristic fashion by giving it to neither! Next to the

Serbs, the Germans formed the largest racial minority in the Banat and it was clear that Hitler envisaged this region as being one for future German settlement. Its status was, therefore, deliberately left vague. In June 1941 a German Vice-Governor (needless to say a Nazi) was appointed. Theoretically the Banat was still part of occupied Serbia but in practice it was run by, and for, its local Volksdeutsche minority. Since the largest part of the Banat is in Romania, the Yugoslav Banat will, for the purposes of this study, be considered along with Romania. The same Nazi organizations existed in both (as they did also, to a large extent, in "German" Croatia). The *Einsatz Staffel* (E.S.), the *Deutsche Mannschaft* (D.M.), and the *Deutsche Jugend* (D.J.), were common to both sections of the Banat and to the Volksdeutsche region of Pavelic's supposedly Independent State of Croatia (see Vol. 3). These Germanic formations were to provide a rich vein for the recruiting agents of the *Waffen S.S.* to tap.

According to the 1943 *Jahrbuch* (year book) of the German *Volksgruppe* in Romania, the E.S. and the D.M. had, between them, 31,000 members. They were the active para-military units of the Party, but all males (up to the age of 60) were expected to belong to the home-based *Heimat Dienst* (if they were not already enrolled in either the E.S. or D.M.). This static "Home Guard" had, in 1943, a strength of 36,640 members.

Both the E.S. and the D.M. had their own leadership school: E.S. officers were trained at the Heinrich I *Führerschule*, while D.M. leaders went to the Horst Wessel Leaders' School. Instruction at both was based on the tests leading to an award of the *Wehrsportabzeichen* (or *Leistungsabzeichen* - Achievement Badge - as it is sometimes called in German documents). This was the Romanian-German equivalent of the S.A. *Wehrabzeichen*. It is an upward pointing sword piercing a wreath which has as its center a swastika (rather incongruously for Romania, this is of the "sun cross" variety).



Military Sports Badge of the Romanian Volksdeutsche Community.

Around this is the motto *Vorleben-Vorkämpfen* (which might be very roughly rendered as "Set an example in life and in battle") within an oakleaf wreath. Up to 1943 a total of 1,039 awards of this badge had been made. Any German could enter the tests required for an award irrespective of whether or not he was a member of the E.S. or D.M. (just as in Germany one did not have to belong to the S.A. to be eligible to enter for the S.A. *Wehrabzeichen*).

The *Deutsche Jugend* was subdivided into the Regular, or Basic cadre (*Stamm D.J.*) and the general membership (*Allgemeine D.J.*) had 17,268 male and 65,502 female members. This, it was claimed, represented over ninety percent of the Volksdeutsche youth of Romania. The D.J. also had its leadership school - the Hermann von Salza School at Hermannstadt. As with their elders, training was geared towards the winning of an "achievement badge." This is also in the form of a sword and swastika ("square" in this case) around which in sham runic script is *Deutsche Jugend*. This was the counterpart of the H.J. *Leistungsabzeichen* of Germany and was in the same three classes. But unlike the Hitler Youth badge, the Romanian one *could* be worn on military uniform, as, of course, could the adult "achievement badge."



E.S. officer at the "Herman von Salza" Hitler Youth School in the Banat. Note the cap badge which would appear to be as right. On his right breast pocket he wears the Youth Achievement Badge.



Youth Achievement Badge of the D.J. in Romania and the Banat.





Black and silver arm badge worn by officers of the Romanian Einsatz-Staffel.



Officer of the Romanian Einsatz-Staffel in the Banat. Note his cuff title "BANAT."



Badge of the D.J.R. (Deutsche Jugend in Rumanien). Colors unknown, but possibly white on red.

Although a signatory of the Axis Tripartite Pact, Romania stayed out of the war until Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. Unlike Hungary, she took no part in the attack on Yugoslavia. Himmler did not, however, wait for Romania to join the belligerents before attempting to lure Romanian Volksdeutsche into the Waffen S.S. A so-called "1,000 Mann Aktion" was begun in Romania in the winter of 1940-41. The desired

thousand volunteers were raised only with some difficulty. Most of these ended up in the "Das Reich" Division. With the German occupation of the Yugoslav Banat, the local Nazi *Volksgruppenführer*, Sepp Janko, ordered the immediate registration for military service of all male Volksdeutsche up to the age of fifty. As has already been mentioned in the chapter on Croatia (Vol. 3 of this series), the "Swabians" (the Volksdeutsche of the Danube Basin) were less than enthusiastic in their response to the blandishments of the S.S. recruiting officers. It was suggested to Himmler that they might be more forthcoming if they were permitted to serve in a specially created Division of their own. For this purpose the 7th S.S. Division "Prinz Eugen" was brought into being. Its history is detailed in Vol. 3 and does not require recapitulation here. Sufficient to say that many of its volunteers came from the two parts of the Banat (i.e., the Romanian Banat and the former Yugoslav province) as well as from Croatia.

After Romania entered the war (June 1941), efforts to entice her Germanic youngsters into the Waffen S.S. were intensified. Various devious schemes were employed by the Germans to further this end. For example, Volksdeutsche lads would be invited to come to the Reich and avail themselves of the vastly superior facilities for sports and athletics training which existed there. These were real enough, but once in Germany, removed from the possible restraining influences of home and family, the young men were put under moral pressure to "do their bit" by joining their racial comrades in that most elite of military units - the Waffen S.S. Having placed himself under an obligation by accepting the benefits of the athletic instruction provided free by the Reich authorities, it took an act of moral courage on the part of a young lad to refuse to sign the "voluntary" enlistment paper that was placed before him! But the Romanian Volksdeutsche recruit, whether a genuine volunteer or otherwise, did at least enjoy one great advantage denied his counterpart from Hungary - he did not suffer loss of citizenship; under a law passed by the Romanian government in May 1943, any Volksdeutsche lad on completing his 17th year could enlist in the Wehrmacht or Waffen S.S. without forfeiture of his Romanian citizenship.



A group of Romanian Volksdeutsche recruits on 13 June 1943. Note arm badge worn by the S.S. officer escorting them.

By the end of that year there were more than 60,000 enlistments of Romanian Germans in the Waffen S.S. and around 15,000 in the Wehrmacht. These volunteers served in every kind of unit without any sort of special insignia to indicate their country of origin. Apart from the "Prinz Eugen" were not found in a large concentration in any single Division.

UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

The E.S. appears to have had an all black uniform (apart from a white shirt). This consisted of tunic, trousers and ski cap - with the ES monogram in sham runic letters.

The D.M. wore khaki shirts, black (or possibly dark blue) breeches with top boots, a black tie and the S.A. type of kepi. They did not wear a brassard.

The D.J. wore, to start with, a sort of "civilian uniform" consisting of white shirt and black trousers (sometimes with a black forage cap), but later they adopted standard Hitler Youth type uniform except that, like the D.M. and E.S., they did not wear a brassard.

ROMANIA AT WAR

At the start of "Barbarossa" (Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union), the Romanian armed forces comprised an army of fifteen divisions, an air force of 672 planes (219 fighters, 146 bombers, the rest being made up of reconnaissance, training and communication aircraft), and a small navy of three destroyers, two submarines, and an unascertainable number of small craft (torpedo boats, minesweepers, etc.).

Romania declared war on the Soviet Union at once but only months later on Great Britain and the United States (on 7 and 12 December 1941, respectively). The Romanian 4th Army, consisting of some 160,000 men, made a notable contribution to the campaign by capturing Odessa, although at a terrible cost in human suffering (some 110,000 Romanian soldiers were killed, wounded or posted missing in the course of this one action). In less than one year's fighting on the Russian Front almost one-quarter of Romania's 700,000 strong army had perished. Romania, unlike Hungary, threw her whole weight into the war. Despite losses, the size of the army was, by dint of rigorous conscription, increased to 18 divisions by the end of 1942 and all were committed to the front. Between 22 June 1941 and 23 August 1944 (when Romania quit the war), her losses amounted to:

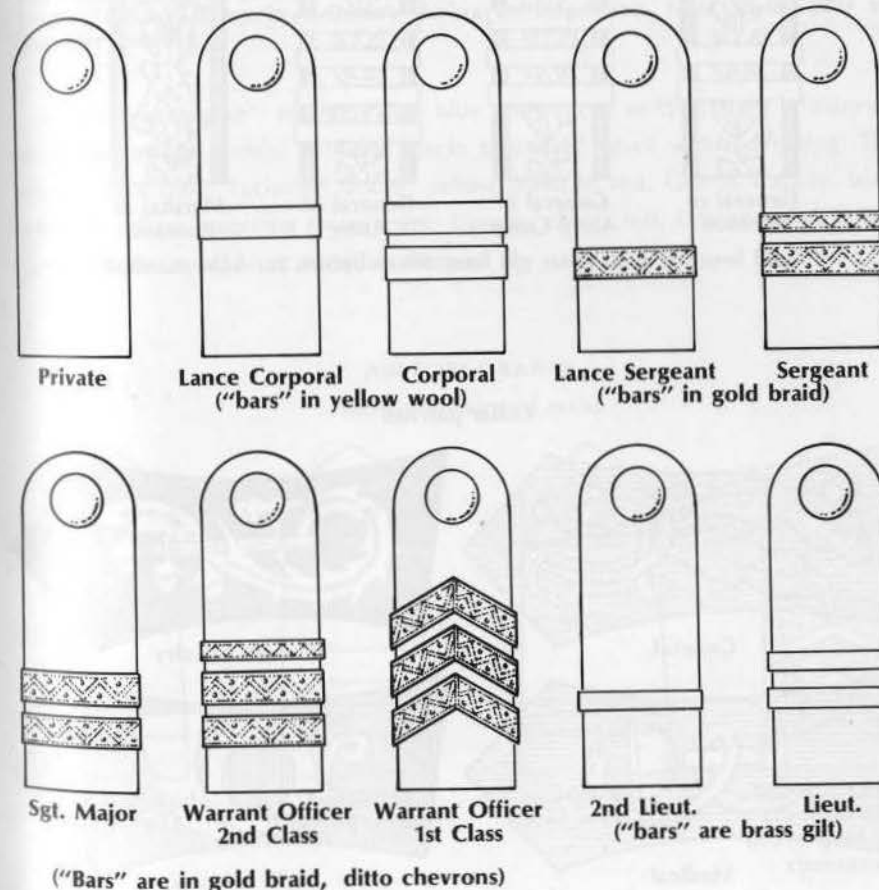
71,000 killed
234,000 wounded
310,000 missing
615,000 Total

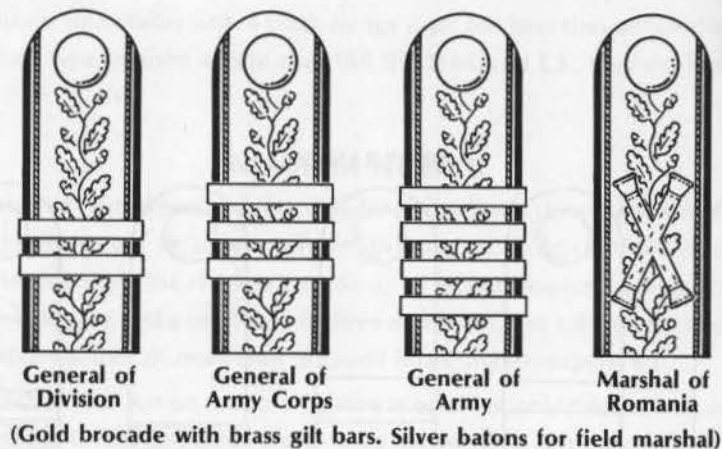
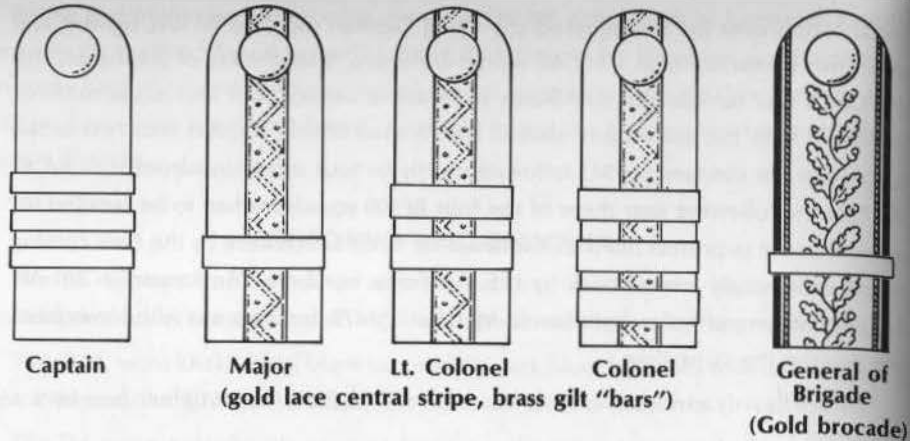
The Romanians served with Army Group South and participated in the disaster at Stalingrad where the 20th Romanian Infantry Division and the 1st Romanian Cavalry Division perished in the general debacle. The Romanian 1st Air Corps took part in the

aerial battles over the beleaguered city flying German supplied Bf 109E fighters and their own Romanian-built I.A.R. 80 fighter-bombers. After the fall of Stalingrad, the Air Corps was temporarily withdrawn from active service, but four squadrons re-equipped with the more up-to-date G type Messerschmitt fighters returned to the Ukraine in the summer of 1943 followed shortly by four more squadrons with I.A.R. 80s.* By the following year three of the four Bf 109 squadrons had to be recalled for home defense to protect the vital Romanian oil fields which were by this time coming under increasingly heavy attack by U.S. Air Force bombers. The Romanian 3rd Air Corps consisting of Italian built Savoia-Marchetti SM79 bombers was withdrawn from the front at the same time.

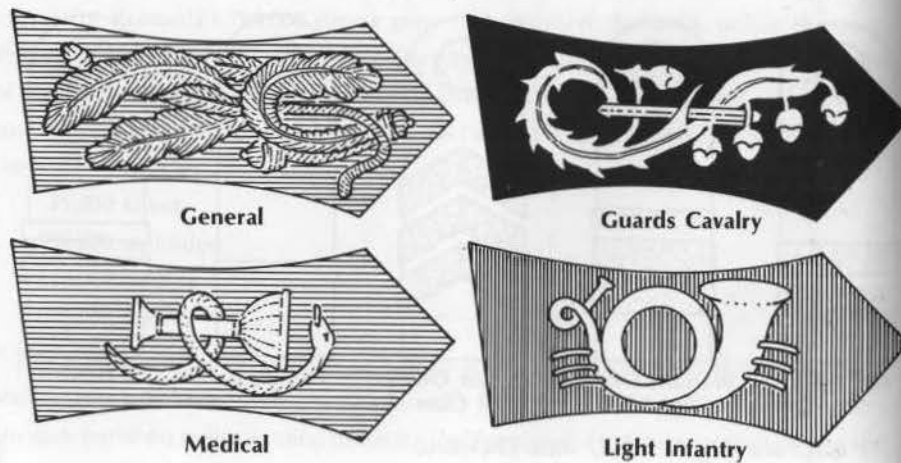
**More heavily armored versions, known as the I.A.R.81, flew as fighter-bombers.*

ARMY RANKS





Collar patches

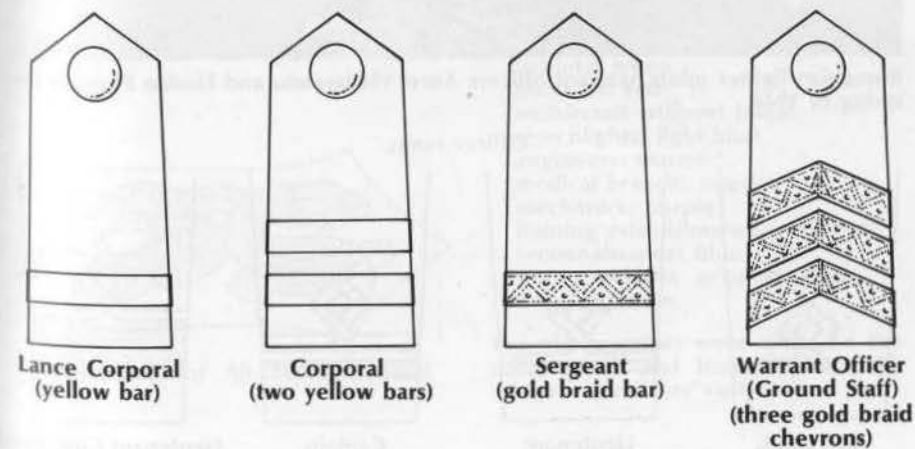


The Romanian major general and colonel above share a meal with the staff of a Hitler Youth Training Camp in Germany during an inspection. Note their collar and shoulder insignia.

Army "Waffenfarbe": Infantry: dark blue (introduced in 1941; Light Infantry and Mountain troops: green; Artillery: black; Engineers: black with red piping; Tank troops: light blue; Technical troops: yellow piped in red; Guards Cavalry: black, white or yellow according to regiment; Cavalry: cherry red; Commissariat: brown; Gendarmerie: royal blue; Medical: maroon

AIR FORCE RANKS

Non-commissioned ranks





Junior
Warrant Officer



Warrant Officer



Senior
Warrant Officer



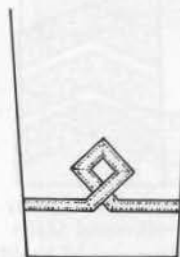
Chief
Warrant Officer

(These are for aircrew personnel)
(Gold "birds" on light blue shoulder strap)

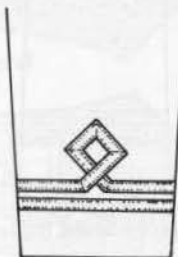


Romanian fighter pilots, warrant officers Aurel Vladareanu and Florian Budu in the spring of 1944.

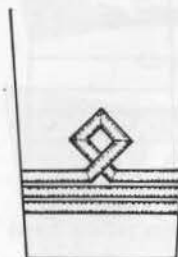
Officer ranks



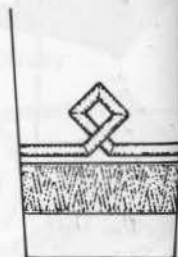
2nd Lieut.



Lieutenant

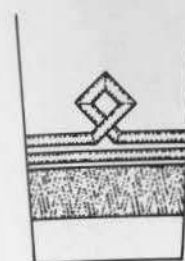


Captain

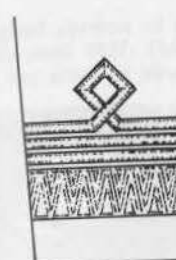


Lieutenant Commander

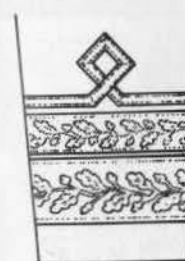
Note the sleeve rank insignia on the tunic of this Romanian fighter pilot.



Captain Commander



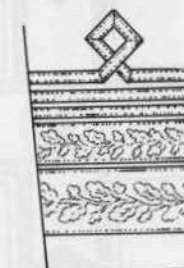
Commander



General of
Air Squadron



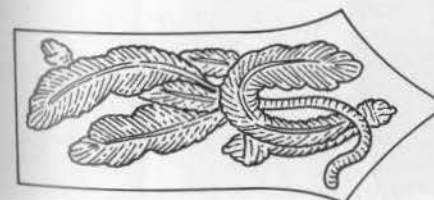
General Inspector
of the Air Force



General of the Air
Force (worn by King
Michael)

"Waffenfarbe" for the Air Force is:

fighters: green
bombers: red
antiaircraft artillery: black
searchlights: light blue
engineers: mauve
medical branch: maroon
mechanics: purple
training establishments: russet red
reconnaissance: blue
non-specialist ground staff:
light brown.



Collar patch for Air Force General.

The above colors were worn on the collar patch and between the rank "rings" on officers' cuffs.

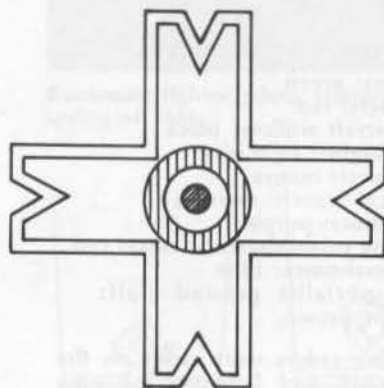




Air Force officer's cap badge (gold wire on dark blue cloth).



1st Design



2nd Design



A Luftwaffe Sergeant talks to a Lt. Colonel (right) of the Romanian Air Force. The German wears a Romanian pilot's badge on his right breast pocket.



(a)



(b)

(a) Original version of Pilot's badge with the monogram of Ferdinand 1st, King of Romania until 1927. This badge has also been found with, superimposed upon the center, the arms of King Michael (b).



The variant above consists of the Ferdinand era badge with an early emblem depicting Michael, the grandson of King Ferdinand I. It consists of a blue enamel "M" and "I" (Michael I), within a gilt circle surmounted by a royal crown. This Michael era badge was probably authorized from 1927-1930.



In 1925, King Carol renounced his right to the Romanian throne and moved to Paris with his mistress. After his father, King Ferdinand, died in 1927, Carol's 9-year-old son ascended to the throne. In 1930, however, Carol returned to Romania and supplanted his son, Michael. During his reign from 1930-1940, the above pilot's badge was authorized (note mirror-image "C," representing King Carol II).



Romanian Air Force General Emanoil Jonescu wearing the 1940 pattern pilot's badge.



Pilot's badge
(1940-1945)



Parachutist's badge. The first parachute unit was formed in 1941 and eventually became 1st Parachute Battalion with ten companies.

WAR BADGES

On 17 June 1943, the Romanian Official Gazette announced the creation of seven naval "war badges." They were for:

- (i) Submarines
- (ii) Torpedo-boat destroyers (*Vedete Torpiloare*)
- (iii) Battle cruisers
- (iv) Destroyers
- (v) Monitors
- (vi) Minelayers
- (vii) Minesweepers and MTBs.

The design of each follows a common pattern: a round badge with oak leaves at the base (laurel leaves in the case of the first two), and an appropriate designation at the top (e.g., *Monitoare* for Monitors), the whole being surmounted by a Romanian royal crown. The central motif is usually a representation of the vessel in question, but the Submarine badge has a dolphin because the first Romanian submarine was named "Dolphin."

Badges were awarded for periods of active service at sea (varying between 40 and 60 days, according to the type of vessel), but this could be reduced where actual combat with the enemy had been involved or where the individual concerned had been wounded.

Officers received the badge in gilt metal, petty officers in silvered metal, and ratings in grey "war metal."



Observer's badge
(1927-1930)



Observer's badge
(1930-1940)



Observer's badge
(1914-1927)



Observer's badge
(1940-1945)



(i) Submarines



(ii) Torpedo-boat destroyers



(iii) Battle Cruisers



(iv) Destroyers



(v) Monitors (ironclad gun ships).



(vi) Minelayers



(vii) Minesweepers and MTBs.

On 23 August 1944, a coup organized largely by young King Michael himself succeeded in pulling Romania out of the lost war. She signed an armistice with the Soviet Union on 12 September under the terms of which she was obliged to take up arms against her former Axis partner. If, by this act of tergiversation, King Michael hoped he might spare Romania a Soviet occupation, it proved a sad miscalculation. The armistice agreement allowed the Red Army to remain in his country "until a peace treaty with Austria has been concluded." This provided the Soviets with ample time in which to establish their presence and install a government favorable to themselves. In the end, King Michael lost his throne.

The Germans were not prepared to allow the Romanians off the hook quite so easily. A chimerical "Romanian Government-in-exile" was set up in Vienna under Horia Sima and plans were laid for the creation of a "National Romanian Army." The Iron Guardists who had been held in custody in Germany since their abortive coup of the previous year were fetched out hopefully to constitute the nucleus of a reborn motherland. The projected "national army," the brainchild of Heinrich Himmler, was merely a device for procuring further manpower for the Waffen S.S. Apart from the fact that its nominal commander-in-chief was a Romanian officer (General Chirnoaga), the "army" was entirely an S.S. affair. With the blessing of the "government" of "Prime Minister" Horia Sima, Himmler drew up a plan in November 1944 for the formation of a *Waffen-Grenadier* (i.e., Infantry) Regiment to consist of Iron Guardists. The *Reichsführer S.S.* even entertained the hope that this could, without great difficulty, be expanded into a division - the *Waffen-Grenadier Division der S.S. (rumänische Nr. 1)*. Volunteers were assembled at the training camp at Dollersheim in Austria, and, by the early months of 1945, two Romanian regiments (each with two battalions) were pronounced battleworthy.

In March the 1st *Waffen-Grenadier-Regiment* was rushed north to Stettin to assist the Germans' desperate efforts to stem the Red Army's advance into Pommerania. It was virtually destroyed in the ensuing battle. At Dollersheim work had already commenced on the formation of a third Romanian S.S. regiment, but by this time the fighting front had moved so close to the camp that the German S.S. officers and senior N.C.O.s who acted as cadre personnel had to be used as combat replacements for the hard-pressed battle units. Hitler, who did not share Himmler's enthusiasm for entrusting foreigners with arms, ordered the Romanians to hand over their weapons and equipment to German S.S. formations. The idea of creating a Romanian S.S. division was jettisoned, the Romanian unit was downgraded to an antitank regiment - S.S. *Panzer-Zerstörer-Regiment (rumänisches Nr. 2)*, but by now the war in Europe was virtually over, and it is doubtful if this projected regiment was ever fully activated.

It is not clear if the Romanian S.S. men were allowed to wear any special insignia. An arm shield in the Romanian national colors - blue/yellow/red - is shown on the S.S. map of February 1945 and a similarly colored shield surmounted by the word



(a)

Two Romanian arm shields. (a) is in the style of the German army shields and has the name in its Romanian form. (b) has the name in its German form and would appear to be another in the series produced by the BeVo firm of Wuppertal and consequently most unlikely ever to have been worn. There is no photographic evidence to prove that either type was actually worn although both were certainly produced.



Emblem of the
Romanian M.T.R.



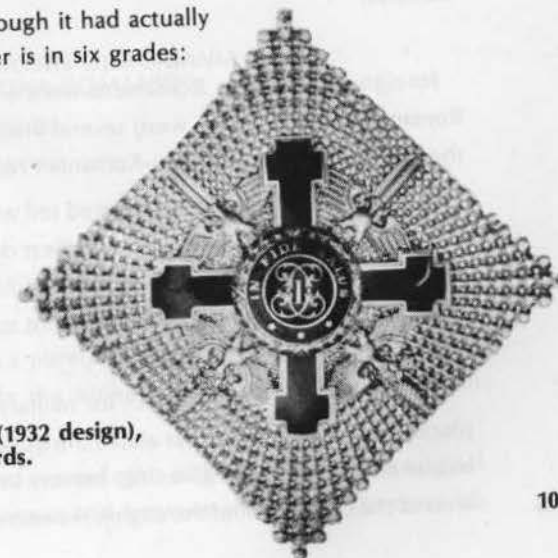
General Palageanu (second left) with members of the Romanian Labor Service and German R.A.D. liaison staff in November 1942. The Romanian Labor Service (M.T.R.) was obligatory for males between the ages of 17 and 20 (at which age they were liable for military service). The period of service for conscripts was five months, but there were regular cadre personnel who were trained by the R.A.D. in Germany. A Labor Service company might be attached to an army division and took the number of that division. The scheme of ranks is not known but would seem likely either to have been that of the Romanian army (indicated on the shoulder straps) or closely modelled on it. General Palageanu was the Commander-in-Chief of the M.T.R.

ROMANIAN ORDERS AND DECORATIONS

ORDER OF THE STAR OF ROMANIA
(ORDIN "STEUA ROMANIEI")

Officially instituted in May 1877 (although it had actually been in existence since 1864), this Order is in six grades:

- Grand Cross
1st Class (created in 1937)
Grand Officer
Commander
Officer
Knight



1st Class (1932 design),
with swords.

Any of the above can be "with" or "without swords."

The basic "badge" of the Order is a blue enamel "cross crosslet." In the first design the centerpiece featured a Napoleonic style eagle, but when the Order was redesigned in 1932 this was replaced by the monogram of King Carol, while, between the arms of the cross, the former rays are replaced by curved winged eagles (rather "Roman" in appearance).



Knight (1932 design) without swords. Obverse.



Knight (1932 design) without swords. Reverse.

Foreigners as well as Romanians were eligible. During the 1st World War (when Romania was allied to the west) several British and French officers received it. During the 2nd World War, the non-Romanian recipients were mainly Germans.

In peace-time the ribbon is watered red with a silver stripe inset slightly from either edge. In 1938 the use of the so-called "war decoration" ribbon was authorized. This is the normal peace-time ribbon with the addition of golden outer edges. These vary in width according to the grade from 7mm on the Grand Cross sash to 3mm on the Knight grade.

When awarded "with swords" for military merit in time of peace, the swords are placed on the suspension bar above the upper arm of the cross and below the crown, but when "swords" are given for bravery in the field, they are placed between the arms of the cross (behind the eagle). However, if the recipient of "swords" for bravery

already possessed the same grade of the Order with swords for merit in peace, he could wear swords in both places. (Such cases must, however, have been fairly rare!)

The Order could be awarded as a "unit citation" which could be worn on the regiment's (or ship's) flag.

The motto of the Order is "In fide salus" - In faith (lies) salvation.

G. Petersen



This Luftwaffe general wears the neck decoration with crossed swords given for bravery in the field.

ORDER OF THE CROWN OF ROMANIA (ORDIN "CORONA ROMANIEI")

Instituted on 14 March 1881 in five classes:

- Grand Cross
- Grand Officer
- Commander
- Officer
- Knight,

This order was originally intended as a purely civilian award. It was not until 1938 that a Military Division was created. In the Military Division all grades are "with swords."

The basic "badge" of the Order is a red enamel cross with white edges. The original centerpiece design was the King Carol crown and, between the arms of the cross, his



Knight grade with swords (the Officer grade is the same but with a rosette).



General Erich Abraham, commander of the German LXIII Army Corps, wearing the Commander grade of the Order of the Crown of Romania below his Knight's Cross.

monogram, but in 1932 this was reversed, and the monogram of King Carol became the centerpiece while crowns were placed between the arms of the cross.

The civil ribbon is blue with a wide central white stripe. For the Officer and Knight grades, this ribbon is 40mm across with a 7mm central white stripe. When awarded "with swords" (either for military merit in time of peace or bravery in war), the ribbon has the addition of gold edges which vary in width from 7mm for the Grand Cross sash to 3mm for the Officer/Knight grade.

In all cases "with swords," the swords are placed between the arms of the cross. The motto of the Order is *Prin noi insine* (By ourselves alone). On the front is the date of institution 14 Martie 1881.

ORDER OF MICHAEL THE BRAVE (ORDIN "MIHAI VITEAZUL")

Although not the oldest of Romanian awards (it was created only in December 1916), the Order of Michael the Brave is certainly the most prestigious. As a war decoration it was conferred (on officers only) equally for leadership in battle or bravery in the field. So highly esteemed was it, that in 1937 its holders were granted the right to wear a special white cloak with the insignia of the Order upon it.



1st Class
(actual size)

It is in three grades:

- 1st Class: a 61mm pin-back cross in blue enamel worn on the left breast.
- 2nd Class: a similar cross but worn from a 37mm ribbon on the left breast.
- 3rd Class: a similar but smaller cross (40mm) worn from a 30mm ribbon on the left breast.

breast.



3rd Class with King Michael I
monogram (the ribbon here is
incorrect).

In December 1938 "swords" were authorized for addition to any grade, but this was canceled by a decree published only a couple of months later in February 1939. "Swords" were, however, again authorized in 1944.

The ribbon for the 2nd and 3rd Classes is the same (apart from width) and is watered crimson with a 3mm wide gold stripe inset by about 2mm from either edge.

In the center of the cross is a royal monogram. From 1916 to 1941 this was the double F and crown of King Ferdinand, the creator of the Order, but from 1941 this was replaced by the M and 1 monogram and crown of King Michael I. The date 1941 appears on the lower arm of the cross. The Ferdinand monogram along with the date 1916 appears on the reverse of the 1941 design, 2nd and 3rd Class. The reverse of the 1st Class is, of course, plain, but there are two versions of its obverse - one has 1916, the Ferdinand monogram, royal crown, M1 monogram and 1941. In the other there is only the crowned M1 monogram (in the center of the cross) and the date 1941 on the lower arm.



Von Manstein wearing the 2nd Class decoration.

G. Petersen



Von Manstein, here a field marshal, wears a 1st Class Cross as a neck decoration below his Knight's Cross.



Marshal Antonescu wearing the 3rd Class Order of Michael the Brave.

In 1944 there was a new issue of the Order with the addition of swords (which appear between the arms of the cross). This version, in slightly lighter blue enamel, has the King Michael I monogram on the obverse, and the date 1944 in the center reverse.

Some measure of the prestige of this award may be gained from the status of its foreign recipients. In the 1st World War (when Romania was an ally of the Western powers) it was given, among others, to Field Marshal Haig and Crown Prince Alexander of Serbia. In the 2nd World War, Field Marshals von Rundstedt and von Manstein were invested with the 2nd and 3rd Classes, while Field Marshal von Brauchitsch and Hermann Goering were both honored with all three classes (as with many foreign decorations, an award of a high grade presupposed possession of any, or all, lower grades but, in exceptional circumstances, two or more grades could be conferred simultaneously in order to circumvent this requirement).

**ORDER OF AVIATION MERIT
(VIRTUTEA AERONAUTICA)**

Instituted by King Carol II in July 1930, this new Order is in four classes:

- (i) Commander
- (ii) Officer
- (iii) Knight
- (iv) Gold Cross

- (i) is a 58mm blue enamel decoration with a green enamel wreath worn at the throat.
- (ii) is a 43mm blue enamel decoration and green enamel wreath worn from a ribbon with a rosette on the left breast.
- (iii) is as above but without the rosette.
- (iv) is a bronze-gilt decoration without a wreath (no enamel) and very slightly smaller (42.5mm).



Generaloberst Dessloch of the Luftwaffe on a tour of inspection of Romanian air force units on the eastern front (July 1944) wears at his throat the Commander grade of the Romanian Order of Aviation Merit.

The ribbon for the Commander grade is 65mm, that for the other three classes is 35mm. All grades have a light blue (violet) ribbon with 3mm silver borders (4.5mm in the case of the Commander), slightly inset and a central silver stripe.

In December 1937 "swords" could be added to any grade. It may be noted that decorations "with swords" normally have both the wreath and the swords, but in some cases the wreath is omitted. One year later (in December 1938) the use of the so-



Officer Grade with Swords, a "war decoration" ribbon and "bar" for second award.



Knight Grade without Swords but with "war decoration" ribbon.

called "war decoration" ribbon was authorized. The "war decoration" involves adding a 3mm wide gold stripe to each outer edge of the normal peace-time ribbon.

"Bars" for second or third awards of the three lower grades may be added to the ribbon. These are silver for the Officer and Knight, and bronze-gilt for the Gold Cross.

In the center of all grades is a white enamel shield (except in the case of the Gold Cross which is without enamel), with the eagle of Romania. On the eagle's chest is a royal monogram. This can be either:

King Carol (two linked Cs); 1930-1940

King Michael I (M and I): 1940-1945

The same applies to the "bars."

Any airman who was decorated with the Order of Michael the Brave was automatically invested at the same time with a corresponding grade of the Order of Aviation Merit.

MEDAL OF AVIATION MERIT (MEDALIA VIRTUTEA AERONAUTICA)

Instituted in February 1931 by King Carol, this 33mm medal is in three classes: bronze, silver and gilt. In December 1937, "swords" and a royal crown were added to the suspension. The following December the Medal, like the Order, was raised to the status of a bravery award which could be conferred on the "war decoration" ribbon.



Obverse



Reverse

The normal peace-time ribbon is similar to that of the Order. When ribbons alone were worn, the various grades were distinguished by having a facsimile of the medal itself on the ribbon.

On the reverse of the medal is *Pentru Aeronautica*.

MEDAL FOR MARITIME BRAVERY (MEDALIA "VIRTUTEA MARITIMA")

Instituted in November 1936 in three classes: bronze, silver and gilt, it was then known simply as the Maritime Medal. It was redesignated, under a decree of 5 August 1938 "Medal for Maritime Bravery." On 19 December of the same year "swords" were added, but these could only be awarded in time of war. The ribbon is 35mm wide, unwatered silver with three equally spaced mid-blue stripes (each 3mm wide). In time of war the "war decoration" ribbon was used, that is to say, 3mm gold edges were added to the normal peace-time ribbon.

Dr. K.-G. Kleemann



Obverse



Reverse

Dr. K.-G. Kleemann

LOYAL SERVICE CROSS (CRUCEA SERVICIUL CREDINCIOS)

Instituted in October 1906 in two classes - silver and gold - a third class, bronze, was added in 1932 and "swords" in 1937, making it an award for both civilians and military personnel. Under a decree of 1932, the number of civilian awards was limited to 2000 of the 1st Class, 5000 of the 2nd Class, and 8000 of the 3rd Class.

The civil ribbon is light blue, 35mm wide, with a 3mm yellow central stripe. When awarded in time of war the so-called "war decoration" ribbon was used instead, that is to day, a similar ribbon but with the addition of a 3mm wide gold edge.

During the Second World War this decoration was fairly widely awarded "with swords" to both German and Romanian servicemen.



**LOYAL SERVICE MEDAL
(MEDALIA "SERVICIUL CREDINCIOS")**

The Loyal Service Medal pre-dates the Loyal Service Cross, having been instituted in two classes (silver and gold) in 1878. In 1932 a third class, bronze, was added and, as with the Loyal Service Cross, "swords" in 1937. The obverse features the royal arms of Romania with lion "supporters" (this is identical to the centerpiece of the Loyal Service Cross). The reverse has the words *Serviciul Credincios* (Loyal Service) within a wreath of laurel (left) and oak (right) leaves.



The civil ribbon is exactly the same as that of the Loyal Service Cross and likewise in war the "war decoration" ribbon was substituted.

As with the Loyal Service Cross, the Medal was frequently bestowed on German military personnel as well, of course, as Romanian civilians and soldiers.

**MILITARY BRAVERY MEDAL
(MEDALIA "VIRTUTEA MILITARA")**

Instituted in November 1880 in two classes - gold (silver-gilt or bronze-gilt) and silver (silvered bronze), this medal was the highest award for bravery in the field that could be awarded to N.C.O.s and other ranks.

The obverse is as illustrated, the reverse bears the words *Virtutea Militara*.

The ribbon is watered red with, on either side, 5mm light blue edges. The width of the ribbon varies from 30mm to 38mm.



**Military Bravery Medal
Obverse Reverse**

**MEDAL FOR HARDIHOOD AND LOYALTY
(MEDALIA "BARBATIE SI CREDINTA")**

Instituted in November 1903 and originally conceived as an award for Police service (at this time it was without swords), it was later distributed with a date bar to military personnel during the Balkan War of 1913.

In August 1916 Romania entered the First World War on the side of the Allies, and in December of that year the medal "with swords" was awarded as the lowest ranking decoration for bravery in the field for non-commissioned ranks.

On 30 June 1941, the Medal was again authorized as a military decoration in three classes - bronze, silver and gilt. The obverse features a profile of Carol I, King of Romania, the reverse has the words *Barbatie si Credinta* (Hardihood and Loyalty) above a palm branch. The ribbon, yellow with edges of red and blue (red being the outer color), was the same for all three grades.



Obverse Reverse



A German soldier (extreme right) receives the Romanian Medal for Hardihood and Loyalty from Marshal Antonescu. The NCOs in the center of the photo appear to have been decorated with the Romanian Military Bravery Medal.

A widely distributed decoration in both world wars, German personnel (non-commissioned ranks only) were also commonly awarded it during the Second World War.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL FOR THE CRUSADE AGAINST COMMUNISM

Instituted on 1 April 1942, this medal was awarded to all branches of the Romanian forces engaged in the struggle in the east. Bars were added for front-line service. Fourteen bars in all were awarded. They were:

- Bucovina, Basarabia, Dobrogea, Mistru, Odesa, Bug, Nipru,
- Azow, Crimea, Donet, Marea Neagru (Black Sea)
- Caucaz (Causaccas), Calmucia (Kalmuck), Stalingrad.

The ribbon is dark red with white edges, in the center is a "ladder" effect in the Romanian national colors - red/yellow/blue.

This medal is frequently found among German groups since it was liberally bestowed on Romania's allies.



Obverse

Reverse

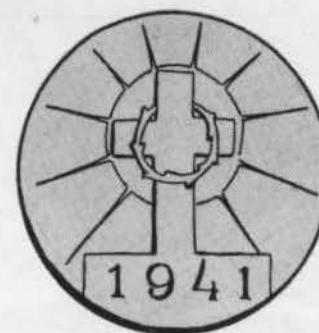
BADGES OF HONOR FOR WAR DISABLED AND RELATIVES OF THE FALLEN

Following a precedent of World War I, King Michael created a badge of honor for those disabled on active service. It is 43mm in diameter and shows a helmeted soldier and the date of Romania's entry into the war, 1941. It was worn as a pin-back award on the left breast.

At the same time as he created the above (February 1942), King Michael also instituted a badge of similar size for award to the next-of-kin of those killed in action. It is known as the "Fallen Hero Badge." It shows a Christian cross with wreath of thorns against a background of sun rays. At the base is the date 1941.



War Disabled Badge



Relatives of the Fallen

Both the above illustrations are courtesy of Dr. K.G. Klietmann. The "Fallen Hero" may not be entirely accurate since it is based on an indistinct illustration which appeared in the Romanian press at the time of institution. The verbal description is how it was described in the text that accompanied the announcement.

QUEEN MARIA CROSS (CRUCEA REGINA MARIA)

A decoration for merit on the part of medical personnel (male or female), was instituted in March 1917 and could be conferred either in war or peace. Normally the ribbon is plain orange, but when awarded in time of war the so-called "war decoration" ribbon was employed - this involves the addition of a 3mm wide gold stripe to the outer edges.

It is in three classes:

1st Class: a 50mm white enamel cross worn at the throat from a 35mm wide ribbon.

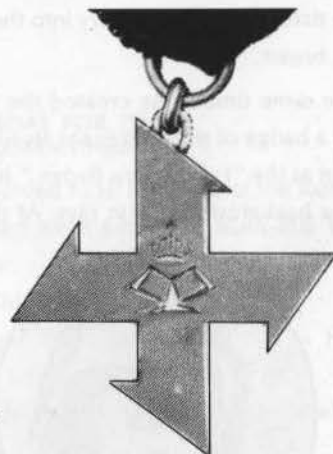
2nd Class: a similar cross but only 40mm across, worn from a 35mm ribbon on the left breast.

3rd Class: a similar cross to the above but in bronze (either brown colored or olive) worn from a 35mm ribbon on the left breast.

The decoration could be awarded to allied medical personnel as well as Romanian, but is included here mainly because of its swastika-like design, which might result in it being mis-identified as German.



1st Class (obverse)



3rd Class (reverse)



This Romanian Army general wears, on his right breast pocket, the Honor Badge of the Romanian Military Academy.



Von Ribbentrop with the Romanian foreign minister who wears the uniform of the "Guards of the Fatherland" movement.



King Carol of Romania in full dress uniform.

FREE INDIA

FREE INDIA

During the campaign in North Africa, several hundred Indian prisoners were taken by the Axis forces. The Italians were the first to attempt to exploit anti-imperialist sentiment among their Indian and Arabic captives. Three centers were set up in Italy between September 1941 and January 1942 for the indoctrination of prisoners. These were known as *Centro A* (for Arabs), *Centro I* (for Indians), and *Centro T* (for Tunisians). At *Centro I* a *Battaglione Hazad Hindoustani* (Free Indian Battalion) was formed which the Italians kitted out with Italian army tropical uniform with an arm shield in the Indian national colors (orange/white/green), and collar patches in the same color combination. The experiment was not a success. The Indians refused to serve under Italian officers, and the battalion had to be disbanded.

A later German venture into the same field was slightly more successful due largely to the propaganda carried out on its behalf by a well-known Indian politician, Subhas Chandra Bose, a lawyer from Calcutta. Openly committed to Axis victory, Bose had already organized an "Indian National Army" (of three divisions) in Burma, which was fighting alongside the Japanese forces in that country. When he arrived in Germany in the summer of 1943, he had no difficulty in obtaining permission to tour the P.O.W. camps for the purpose of inducing Indian prisoners to join his "Free India" Movement. The response was sufficiently good to allow for the formation of "Indian Infantry Regiment 950" with three battalions (each with four companies). Its personnel were about two-thirds Moslem and one-third Hindu. All officers were German. It was not until October 1943 that Indians graduated to commissioned rank (these were usually senior N.C.O.s promoted after a short training course). Language proved to be something of a problem. Officially, word of command was Hindi, but not all the Indian volunteers were familiar with the tongue - to say nothing of the German cadre! However, after two or three years in captivity, many of the volunteers knew some German. The Germans, for their part, were more at home with English than with any of the languages of the Indian sub-continent. The result was that communication was as often in English as in any other tongue!

Although properly "Indian Infantry Regiment 950," the volunteer formation was much more frequently referred to simply as "The Indian Legion," or, more fancifully, "The Tiger Legion." After completion of training, it was sent on guard duty to the Bay of Biscay area of Occupied France. Following the D-Day landings (June 1944), the Indians saw some action against the local resistance in the south of France, but were withdrawn to Holland in the autumn. On 8 August 1944, Indian Infantry Regiment 950 became *Indische Legion der Waffen S.S.* It had at this time a strength of around 2,300 men. Its three battalions were equipped only with rifles and machine pistols. There was an antitank company with six guns. Transport comprised 81 motor vehicles and 700 horses. Hitler is reputed to have said, "The Indian Legion is a joke." He ordered that its weapons be handed over to the newly created 18th "Horst Wessel" Division of the S.S. The commander of the Indian Legion was S.S. *Oberführer* Heinz Bertling.

Subhas Chandra Bose was killed in an air crash in the closing days of the war. The "Free India" Movement disappeared with his death. The British elected not to institute legal proceedings against former members of the Indian Legion, partly as a gesture of conciliation to Indian anti-imperialism, partly, one may conjecture, because they regarded the whole Indian flirtation with Hitler as too absurd to merit serious concern. Bose's "Free India" seems to have left only one lasting legacy - a large number of Vienna manufactured medals and decorations!



Members of the "Indian Legion."

UNIFORMS, INSIGNIA, DECORATIONS

Uniforms for the Indian Legion were standard Wehrmacht field grey or, for summer wear, German or Italian tropical khaki. Where the demands of religion required, a turban (in the appropriate color) could be worn. Unlike the Indian National Army in Burma, the Legion did not have special rank insignia of its own. Normal German army ranks were worn. The arm shield was a springing tiger across an orange/white/green background (the Indian national colors), surmounted by the German words FREIES INDIEN (Free India). On the left side of the steel helmet an orange/white/green transfer shield could be worn.



This NCO in the "Indian Legion" wears the arm badge illustrated above on his right sleeve. Note the tropical issue uniform.

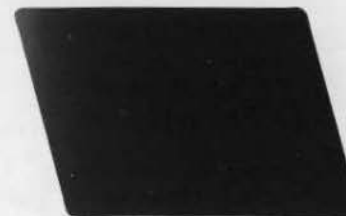


Arm badge - springing tiger on orange/white/green (the Indian colors).



Orange/white/green shield worn on side of steel helmet.

When taken over by the Waffen S.S., the Legion probably wore a plain black collar patch. A stylized tiger's head is shown on the S.S. map of February 1945 as being for the Indian Legion, but it is highly improbable that this was ever worn, or even manufactured, before the end of the war. Since the Germans had a low opinion of the fighting qualities of the Indian Legion, it is questionable whether they even required them to exchange their army uniforms and insignia for corresponding items of S.S. apparel.

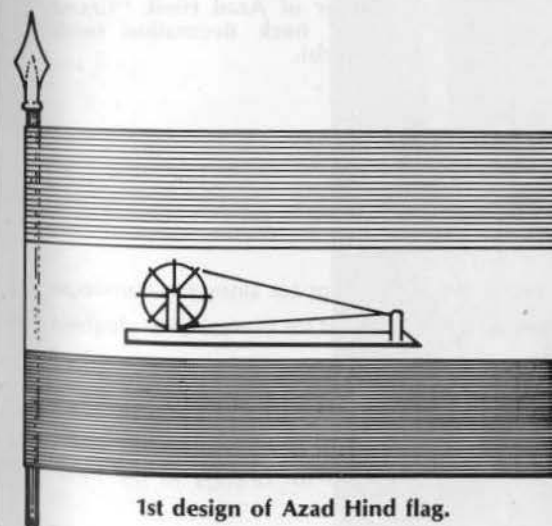


Plain black collar patch.



Tiger head collar patch. Certainly never worn, possibly never actually manufactured.

While it was still a regiment of the army, the Legion was honored with the presentation of a flag. At first it had employed the flag of the "Indian National Army" - horizontal orange/white/green with a spinning wheel in the center. The German presentation banner is similar to the arm shield, that is to say, a springing tiger in black and orange upon an orange/white/green background with (above) AZAD, and (below) HIND.



1st design of Azad Hind flag.



2nd design of Azad Hind flag.

In 1942 Bose instituted a special "Azad Hind" Decoration which was lavishly awarded - almost half the members of the Legion received it in one or other of its several grades! The grading is as follows:

I (a) Grand Star "Tiger of India" (Sher-e-Hind): an eight-pointed silver star measuring 60mm across. In the center a golden lion's head on white with, around this, also in gold, the words AZAD HIND (separated by sprigs of laurel). It was worn from a 60mm wide ribbon as a throat decoration and was given for the highest merit in, or to, the Indian Legion.



Grand Star neck decoration
(without swords).



Order of Azad Hind. "Grand
Star" neck decoration (with
swords).

(b) As above "with swords." The swords are gilt and appear along the transverse arms of the star and behind the centerpiece. It was awarded for bravery of the highest degree.

II (a) 1st Class Star "Leader in Battle" (Sardar-e-Jang). This is a pin-back version of the above but with a silver, instead of gold, lion's head. It was awarded for merit.

(b) As above "with swords" (gilt colored), awarded for bravery in the field. Roughly equivalent to the Iron Cross 1st Class.

III (a) 2nd Class Star "Hero of India" (Vir-e-Hind). This is the same type of star as above but worn from a ribbon. Awarded for merit.

(b) As before "with swords" (these appear in the same place as for the other stars and are also gilt). Awarded for bravery.



der Provisorischen Regierung

AZAD HIND

Subhas Chandra Bose,

verleihe ich

dem

Oberleutnant Till Mutzenbrecher

2./Ind.Freiw.Leg.1.d.Waffen SS

den Orden

Sardar-e-Jang

mit Schwertern

Berlin, den 12. Dezember 1944

Ausgehändig:
Der Chef des
Hauptamtes
Adjutant
A. B.



Subhas Chandra Bose
Staatsminister

Award certificate of the Azad Hind decoration, 1st Class with swords. It reads: "In the name of the President of the Provisional Government of Free India, Subhas Chandra Bose, I award Oberleutnant Till Mutzenbrecher, 2nd (Battalion) of the Indian Volunteer Legion in the Waffen S.S., the Order "Sardar-e-Jang" with Swords. Berlin. 12 December 1944."



2nd Class Star "Hero of
India" (with swords).

IV (a) Medal "Martyr of the Fatherland (Shahid-e-Bharat). This is a round medal with, as the obverse design, a lion's head above AZAD HIND and a fleur-de-lys. On the reverse are the German words "Indiens Freiheits Kampf" (India's fight for

had fallen in battle and was in bronze, silver or gilt - presumably the grade related to the rank of the man involved.

(b) As above "with swords." The swords appear above the medal as part of the suspension. Also in three grades and awarded for bravery.



Order of Azad Hind. Medal in bronze with swords (obverse).



Reverse.

The ribbon is the same, apart from width, for all types and is green with white and orange edges (orange being the outer color). The decoration was produced by Rudolf Souval of Vienna and his name plus Wien VII appears on the reverse of all the star grades.

Germans as well as Indians were eligible for an award of any grade. The presentation case was light brown with a gold lion's head on the lid.

BALTIC STATES.

A Historic Introduction

THE BALTIC STATES

It is protocol to refer to the Baltic states in the following sequence: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania - if named individually. National flags are also carried and placed in this sequence: first to last; top to bottom; left to right.

Only the Latvians and Lithuanians are "Baltic" peoples. Estonians, on the other hand, are closely related to Finns and Hungarians. Estonia is called "Baltic" only because of its geographic location.

There were historically six groups of "Baltic" people: Latvians, Lithuanians, Prussians, Jatvingians, Galindians, and Dorians. Prussians were germanized, thus East Prussia. Jatvingians and Galindians were Russified, thus Belo-Russia (White Russia). In Sanskrit "balts" means "white" and so does Belo in Russian. Consequently, a translation from Sanskrit means "white people or countries by the White Sea" - including "White-Russia" as Russians themselves have called it since time immemorial.

Out of the original six groups of Baltic people - only two have survived and retained the oldest form of *living* Sanskrit language - Latvian and Lithuanian. Some linguists hold the latter to be the older.

Tacitus (c. 56 - c. 120 AD) wrote of the Baltic countries: "the happy clearers of forests" (laetus), which Germans changed to Letten, lettish, Lettland - thus Latvia; "people with highly developed sense of beauty" (aesthetic or esthetic people, thus - Estonia.

Origins of Livonia come from Livs, who lived along the eastern shore of the Baltic sea and are closely related to Finns and Estonians. The music of the national anthems of Finland and Estonia is the same, their legendary heroes are "Kalevala" and "Kalevipoegs" respectively. Nevertheless, Finland is neither Scandinavian, nor Baltic.

Balts arrived in their present area some 4,000 years ago and have a very long history of wars and occupation by foreign powers.

Estonia has been, at various times, occupied by Swedes, Germans and Danes from whose king in 1248 her three lions emblem derives (the Danes, frequent raiders of other peoples' lands, bequeathed this same heraldic device to England). Finally in the 18th century Estonia, along with Latvia and Lithuania, was swallowed up by Imperial Russia. This domination lasted for nearly two hundred years until the disintegration caused by the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and the German military collapse of the following year afforded the Baltic peoples an opportunity to assert their claim to independence. This claim was challenged by both the Russian and the German armies with the result that between 1918 and 1920 a confused war situation existed in that part of Europe. The Baltic peoples had to fight off both the Red Army and a marauding corps of German free-booters under Rüdiger von der Goltz who had announced his intention of "reclaiming the Baltic States for Germany." The British and French sent a naval task force to assist the freedom fighters and the Finns contributed a contingent of military volunteers.

The German and Bolshevik invaders were driven out of Estonia and a treaty was concluded with the Soviet Union in February 1920 which recognized its independence.

Much the same happened in Latvia except that the situation was complicated by the fact that the Rüdiger von der Goltz *Freikorps* on occasions fought alongside the Latvians and on occasions against them. In fact it was a combined Latvian and German force which finally turned the Bolsheviks out of the capital, Riga, in May 1919. The Soviets conceded Latvian independence under the same treaty which guaranteed Estonian autonomy.

Lithuania, being closest to Germany, had an even more chequered path to independence (which is detailed at the start of the section dealing with that country).

On 23rd August 1939 Germany and the Soviet Union astounded the world by concluding a Treaty of Friendship and Non-aggression. Secret protocols to this Treaty accorded the USSR the right to take over, at some unspecified date in the near future, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Eastern Poland and, from Rumania, her eastern province of Bessarabia. Germany was to receive what remained of Poland. The Soviet Union also undertook to supply Hitler with various strategic materials and fuels. The Russians kept their word. These deliveries continued to the very eve of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 - ironic that Stalin who made it a principle of conduct never to trust anyone, should have trusted, of all people, Adolf Hitler!

The Second World War broke out on 1st September 1939 with Germany's attack on Poland. At the close of this brief campaign (it lasted a mere four weeks) the Russians moved in to occupy "their" half of that unfortunate country.

In June 1940 Stalin seized the three Baltic states and announced their "voluntary incorporation" into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There followed a year of terror and repression during which thousands were tortured, killed or deported.

JUNE 14, 1941

In memory of those, who died a thousand deaths -
Their blood, and tears, and agonizing screams.
In memory of them . . .

In memory of those, who did endure torture -
The kind of torture that man can do to man.
In memory of them . . .

In memory of men: our fathers, brothers, husbands -
Who went to death - so we may yet be free.
In memory of them . . .

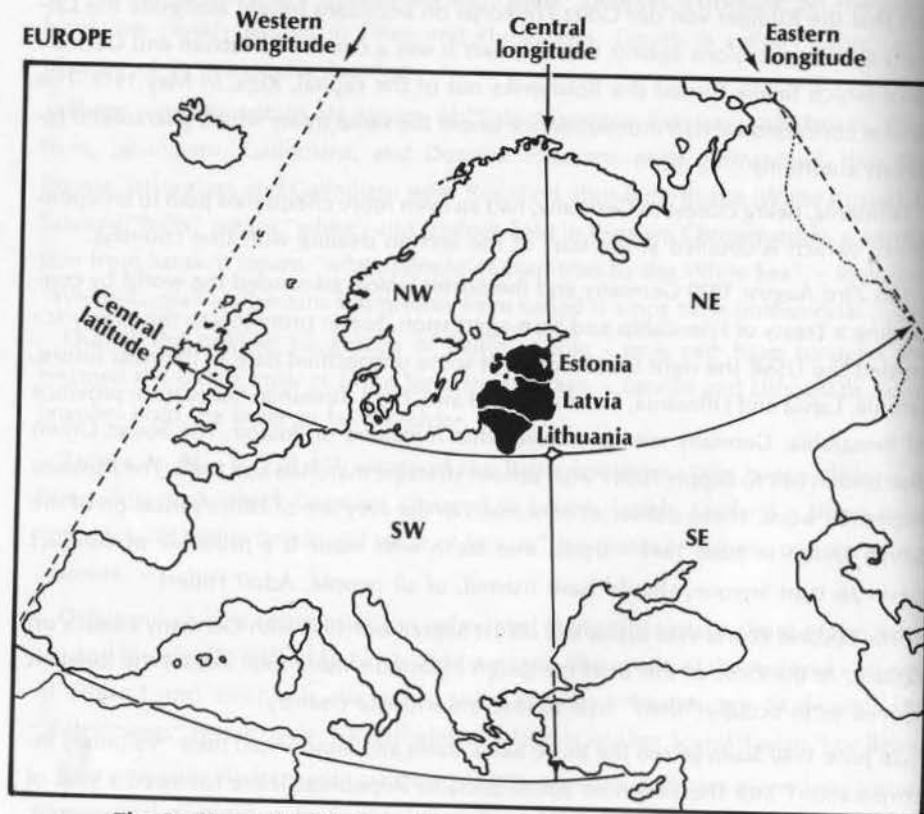
In memory of women: our mothers, sisters, wives -
The violence - which I do not dare to say.
In memory of them . . .

In memory of children, and infants only born -
With faces peaceful - or in utmost horror.
In memory of them . . .

In memory of those, who lived a thousand lives -
Their blood, and tears, and liberating deaths.
In memory of them . . .

In memory of all of them . . .

Metimne



The Position of Baltic States in Europe - Central (NW Quadrant)

Small wonder that the arrival of the German forces in June 1941 seemed to many more like a liberation than a conquest. There is a saying "My enemy's enemy is my friend." To the Baltic peoples after their "Year of Terror" anyone who took up arms against the Stalinist regime and all it stood for, had to be regarded, if not as "a friend," at least, in that phrase which the Anglo-Saxons coined some years later for their anti-fascist Italian mercenaries "a co-belligerent." Baltic, and other "eastern"* cooperation with the German forces must be seen in this light.

*Although often popularly referred to as being in "eastern Europe," the Baltic states are in fact in North West Europe (as the map shows).

ESTONIA

SECURITY FORCES

During the time of the Soviet occupation, many patriots went into hiding in the wooded and marshy areas of the country and formed themselves into armed companies. Thus, when the Germans opened their assault on the Soviet Union, there already existed in Estonia an active anti-Russian resistance movement which at once set about harassing the Red Army's lines of communication. Two Estonian units which made a notable contribution in this field of action were the Talpak Company and the Hirvelaan Battalion. (Both took their names from the Estonian regular officers who commanded them.) Another successful group was the intelligence and sabotage squad which sent under the codename ERNA. This had been formed from Estonian exiles in Finland and was parachuted into Estonia in July 1941. ERNA was, in fact, the first Estonian resistance group to make contact with the advancing German army (on 4 August 1941). It consisted of three officers and 28 other ranks (all in Finnish army uniform), plus around 30 locally recruited Estonian resistance fighters. In place of the normal Finnish army cap badge, the ERNA volunteers wore on the front of their caps a shield with an "E" pierced by a dagger.

After Estonia had been cleared of the Soviet forces, it was placed under a German civil administration headed by *Generalkommissar* Litzmann. The military authorities began to organize a number of self-defense (*Selbstschutz*) and police formations, basing these, in many cases, on already existing Estonian resistance units. It has to be stressed that the initiative here came from the German army (or Police), and not, at this stage, from the S.S. The first such military unit raised in Estonia was in the university town of Tartu. Created on 29 August 1941, it was known as the *Estonische Sicherungsabteilung* 181 (Estonian Security Detachment 181). Five others, numbered 182 to 186 inclusive, were formed shortly thereafter. Each was, theoretically, a battalion, but due to battles losses and voluntary departures (the initial engagement was

for only 12 months, after which some of the volunteers availed themselves of the option to quit), it proved impossible to maintain this level of strength. The six were therefore reformed as three so-called Ost (East) battalions and given the number 658, 659 and 660. It may have been felt that the term Ost was inappropriate since it was normally applied to "Russian" units. The designation of the three battalions was changed to *Estonische Bataillone* shortly afterwards (the numbering remained as before). The three Estonian battalions were part of the German army and wore its uniform with only an arm shield in the national colors (blue/black/white) to distinguish them.

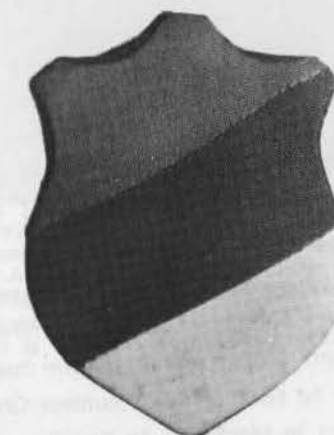
The army battalions were combat formations, but in addition, the Germans created Estonian police units for service in the rear. The designations and numbering of these police and security units were frequently altered (a typical Nazi practice which does not make the work of the historian any easier). At first the term *Schutzmannschaften* was applied to the police formations and they were known not by a number but by the name of the town or district in which they served. For example, *Estonische Schutzmannschaft Bataillon Pleskau*. This practice was dropped and numbers were allocated. These ran from 29 to 45, inclusive, and from 286 to 293, inclusive. In May 1943 the word *Schutzmannschaften* was replaced by *Polizei* (Police). The same numbers as before were retained but the letter "F" (Front) was added to indicate a unit employed in an active service capacity and "W" (Wach - Guard) for units whose function was static. There was even a Pi (Pioneer) Police Battalion (No. 42). In the summer of 1944 there was an attempt to combine Battalions No. 37, 38 and 40 into a 1st Estonian Police Regiment, but the exigencies of the war made this impossible.

In addition to these formations, there were six *Grenzschutz* (Frontier Guard) regiments, first raised in February 1944. The Police battalions and the *Grenzschutz* regiments wore, in the course of the war, a great variety of uniform, mainly Germany army or German police but some S.S. uniforms were issued. In the early days Estonian uniforms were used; for example, in one battalion each of the three company commanders had a different uniform - Estonian infantry, Estonian navy and Estonian air force! Even some ex-Latvian army uniforms were issued as these were in more plentiful supply. Later German police uniform (with the emerald green *Waffenfarbe* of the *Ordnungspolizei*) became standard. An Estonian arm shield was worn. The authorized version of this has the three yellow lions (or leopards) of Estonia on a background of sloping blue/black/white; the whole being in a rather ornamental "frame." But less ornate versions, without the lions, and on a plainer type of shield were also worn. Some items of Estonian military dress were occasionally worn with German uniform - for example, the graduates badges of military academies.

It is difficult to see in what respects the Police "Front" battalions differed in function from the normal infantry battalions of the German army since they were combat rather than constabulary formations. Indeed, many of their personnel were eventually absorbed into the Legion (see below) or Waffen S.S.



Arm shield intended only for Police and Grenzschutz units, although also later used by Reserve Regiment of the 20th S.S. Division.



Light blue/black/white arm shield worn by some Grenzschutz. This same type of shield later also worn by some Estonian Flak helpers.

A member of the Grenzschutz on watch near Estonia's coast on 14 May 1944. Note the arm shield and swastika on the shoulder strap.



Estonian army cap badge sometimes worn with Grenzschutz uniforms.

The *Selbstschutz* (or, in Estonian, *Omakaitse*) was, until Estonia was invaded again by the Red Army in 1944, a purely static and non-combatant formation, the equivalent of the British "Home Guard." Units were raised in every town and village in Estonia. Their purpose was to protect bridges, factories and agricultural produce, etc., against possible sabotage. The official date for the creation of the *Selbstschutz/Omakaitse* was 2 August 1941, but, in fact, some of its units were already in existence before that time, having been formed (as we have already seen), as a spontaneous local resistance while the Red Army was still in occupation. *Selbstschutz/Omakaitse* companies were not numbered but took the name of the town, village, etc., where they were raised. They wore Estonian army uniform, sometimes with a brassard with *In Dienst der Deutschen Wehrmacht* ("In the service of the German armed forces.") They were under the command of an Estonian regular officer, Colonel Jaan Maide.

WAFFEN S.S.

A call for volunteers to join an "Estonian Legion" to fight alongside the Germans in the common struggle against Bolshevism was made by *Generalkommissar* Litzmann on 28 August 1942 (the first anniversary of the liberation of the Estonian capital, Tallinn). The announcement did not embody the term S.S., but implied that, like other volunteer legions, this would be a "national" force. The response was not discouraging.

Volunteers were sent to the former training camp of the Polish cavalry at Debica in the "General Government" (known to the S.S. as the Heidelberg Training Establishment). Enough recruits to form three battalions were found and the "Legion" became the 1st Estonian S.S. Volunteer Grenadier Regiment (*1. Estnischen S.S. Freiw. Gren. Rgt.*). In March the 1st Battalion of the new regiment was detached for active duty with the 5th S.S. "Wiking" Division. While serving with this division it was commonly referred to as the Estonian Volunteer Battalion "Narwa."

By May 1943, despite the temporary loss of one of its battalions, the Legion had acquired sufficient numerical strength to constitute a brigade. As the 3rd Estonian S.S. Volunteer Brigade, it was employed at first only on antipartisan operations in its homeland, but later was put into the frontline to deal with a threatened Red Army breakthrough.

By the beginning of 1944, Himmler decided that it would be possible to further increase the Estonian contribution to the Waffen S.S. by taking over the existing Estonian battalions in the German army and the more active of the Estonian police formations and, by combining these with the brigade, create an Estonian division.

To the brigade's two existing regiments (*S.S. Freiw. Gren. Rgt 45* and *S.S. Freiw. Gren. Rgt. 46*) was added *S.S. Freiw. Gren. Rgt. 47*, which consisted of an amalgamation of two of the Estonian volunteer battalions serving with the Germany army, now transferred, without reference to their personal wishes, to the Waffen S.S. These two

battalions were the 658 and the 659; the former was commanded by a distinguished Estonian officer, Major Alfons Rebane, who had won the Knight's cross of the Iron Cross on 23 February 1944.

Henno Uus



Major Alfons Rebane is the guest of honor at a reception held in the Kadriorg Palace in Tallin on 24 February 1944 to celebrate his becoming the first Estonian recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (23.2.1944). At left in dark civilian suit is Dr. Hjalmar Mae, Leader of the Estonian Self-Administration (*Der Erste Landesdirektor*). To Rebane's left is Legions-Oberführer Johannes Soodla, Inspector General of the Estonian Waffen-SS, and the bald figure at right is SA-Obergruppenführer Karl Sigismund Litzmann, Governor-General of Estonia.

On 24 January 1944, the newly created division was listed as 20 S.S. *Estnische Freiwilligen Division* (20th Estonian Volunteer Division). In April 1944, the "Narwa" Battalion was pulled out of the "Wiking" Division and added to the 20th Division under the designation of *S.S. Fusilier Bataillon 20*. On 26 May 1944, the name of the division was altered to *20 Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S. (estnische Nr. 1)*. The division included an artillery regiment and a pioneer battalion in addition to Signals, Flak and Antitank companies. The divisional commander was an Austrian, *S.S. Brigadeführer und Generalmajor der Waffen S.S.* Franz Augsburg. On his death, in action, on 19 March 1945, his place was taken by *S.S. Oberführer* Berthold Maack.

The division participated in the celebrated "Battle of the European S.S." at Narwa (on the Estonian-Russian border), in the autumn of 1944. Despite their courageous stand, the defenders were driven from their homeland and forced to retreat, along with the rest of Germany's collapsing forces, into Silesia and, ultimately, to Czechoslovakia, where in May 1945 its less fortunate members fell into the hands of the Red Army - some units of the division were able to make their way further west and surrender to the Anglo-Saxons.



Brian L. Davis

Major Alfons Rebane as Commander of the 658th Estonian Volunteer Battalion. He was awarded the Knight's Cross on 23 February 1944. Later Rebane became deputy divisional commander of the 20th Volunteer Grenadier Division of the S.S. (Estonian No. 1).



Alfons Rebane as deputy divisional commander of the 20th Volunteer Grenadier Division of the S.S. Note the first pattern, official German-made collar patch.



Unterscharführer Harald Nugiseks. Awarded Knight's Cross on 9 April 1944 as a platoon N.C.O. with the 1st Company of the 46th Volunteer Grenadier Regiment of the 20th Volunteer Grenadier Division. He wears as his collar patch the last official version of the arm and sword and E emblem.



Hauptsturmführer Paul Maitla. Knight's Cross awarded on 23 August 1944 when he was commanding officer of 1st Battalion of the 45th S.S. Volunteer Grenadier Regiment within the 11th S.S. Volunteer Panzer-Grenadier Division "Nordland."

Estonian Combatants Association in Great Britain



Estonian Combatants Association in Great Britain

Obersturmbannführer Harald Riipalu. He wears Police tunic (note larger number of buttons), with, as his collar patch, the metal arm, sword and E emblem. Knight's Cross awarded on 23 August 1944 when Riipalu was commanding officer of the 45th Volunteer Grenadier Regiment of 20th Volunteer Grenadier Division.



Hauptsturmführer Harald Riipalu at Heidelager. Note he wears a police tunic, also the plain black collar patch.

Jost Schneider



S.S.-Brigadeführer Franz Augsberger

Shortly before he fell in battle, Augsberger was awarded the Knight's Cross in recognition of the fortitude of the division he commanded. *Obersturmbannführer* Rebane, promoted to Deputy Divisional Commander, had the Oak Leaves added to his Knight's Cross in May 1945 - a rare distinction for a foreigner. In addition to Rebane, three other Estonians in the 20th Division were invested with the Knight's Cross.

There were also individual Estonian volunteers in the "Nordland" Division, but these probably numbered less than one hundred.

UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

All members of the Legion, Brigade and 20th Division wore standard Waffen S.S. uniform with the addition of an arm shield. The first type of shield was that worn by the Estonian battalions in the Germany army - that is to say, the Estonian national colors at a slope on a heraldic shield with a narrow black outline. However, the Police/*Grenzschutz* type, with the three yellow lions on a more ornamental shield with a yellow border, was worn by the Reserve Regiment of the division. The Official S.S. arm shield intended for the 20th Division is horizontal blue/black/white on a plain shield with a broad black frame. The positioning of the arm shield varied - sometimes left upper arm, sometimes right upper arm. According to regulations, the shield should have appeared just below the S.S. eagle on the left arm.

The collar patch was subject to an even greater number of variants. Originally the Legion wore only a plain black collar patch. When the "Narwa" Battalion was detailed to join the "Wiking" Division, it was issued with standard S.S. runes. As the Estonians



Official S.S. arm shield:
blue/black/white with black surround.



Plain black collar patch.



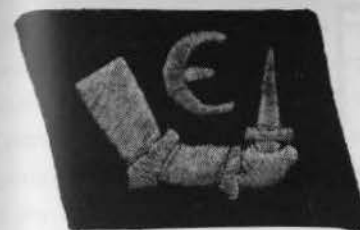
Standard S.S. runes



Plain black patch worn until autumn of
1943.



S.S. runes worn first by "Narwa" Bat-
talion, but later made official for
Legion.



Unofficial arm-and-sword design. This
is one of several variants.



Official German made design.



Unofficial Estonian arm-and-sword
design. Home made. Innumerable
variants!



Official German issue. Unpopular with
troops. This is one of the metal, locally
made variants.



The last officially approved version of
the arm-and-sword type.



Last official pattern.

wished to have some patriotic emblem to distinguish their unit, they started, without official sanction, to paint on their vehicles a mailed arm holding a sword; within the crook of this arm was a stylized "E." This device derived from the centerpiece of the Estonian "Cross of Freedom" decoration. Since no strong objection had been raised



Vehicle sign of the 20th Division.

by the Germans to the use of this device as a vehicle sign, some enterprising individuals began to fabricate metal versions out of the aluminum cases of used rockets or flares. They then attached these to their plain black collars. This, the Germans felt, was going too far! They tried to ban the wearing of these home-made badges and insisted that only S.S. runes should be worn. However, as there were not sufficient runic patches to go round, the unofficial "arm and E" patch continued to be used. In February 1944, when the 1st Battalion of the 45th Regiment (of the Estonian Division) was quartered in Tartu, after having been recently engaged in heavy fighting at the front, the mayor of that city presented the entire battalion with finely worked examples of the "arm and E" badge in silvered metal (made at the local surgical instrument factory in Tartu). These were so well received by the Estonian S.S. men that the factory-made badges were issued to the other components of the 45th Regiment, and soon the practice spread to the rest of the division. This unauthorized action annoyed the Germans, and in mid-June 1944, the 45th Regiment was ordered to remove their unsanctioned collar patches and replace them with a new "official" German design - a large "E" with a sword at a 45-degree angle through it. This proved highly unpopular



Recruitment poster for the Estonian Legion.

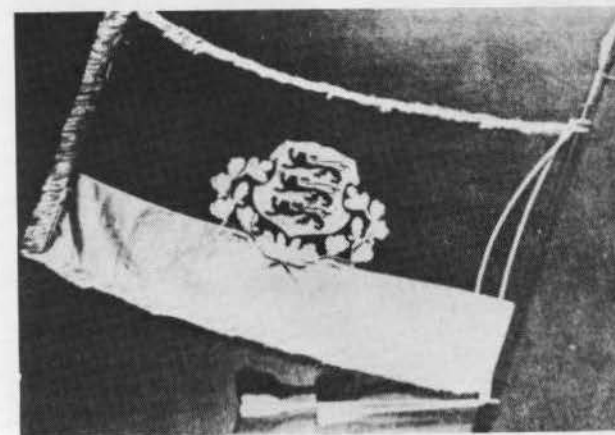
with the Estonians and the result was a heated exchange of correspondence with S.S. headquarters. In the end Himmler relented and allowed the Estonians to retain the original "arm and E" patch. By this time some of the division had adopted the official German type and some people had been issued with S.S. runes. Thus, the division sported what must surely have been the most widely assorted variety of collar insignia of any Waffen S.S. division - plain black (these were still worn up to the end of the war), standard runes, unofficial factory-made "arm and E" and finally, in the last days of the war, unofficial hand-woven "arm and E" patched produced for them when the division was stationed in Czechoslovakia!

The E with the sloping sword emblem was later the official vehicle sign of the 20th Division. There was no divisional cuff title.

On the side of the steel helmet normal S.S. runes were worn; only the Police/*Grenzschutz* wore the blue/black/white shield on the left side of the German steel helmet.



Flag of the 1st Grenadier Regiment of the Estonian Legion, obverse.



Reverse, Estonian national colors and emblem.

LUFTWAFFE VOLUNTEERS

The aircraft of the Estonian air force were, at the time of the Soviet evacuation of that country in the face of the German attack, either destroyed or carried off for use by the Red air force. All that remained were four dismantled PTO 4 monoplanes, the property of the Aero Club of Estonia. These locally produced training/reconnaissance aircraft (PTO standing for Post, Tooma & Org, the Estonian designers), were made air-worthy by the Chief Flying Instructor of the Aero Club, Gerhard Buschmann, who suggested to the Germans that these might form the basis of an Estonian air unit. It was the Germany navy, rather than the Luftwaffe, that took up the offer. *Sonderstaffel Buschmann* with its PTO-4 aircraft, first flew in March 1942. Its principal duty at this point of time was patrolling the Gulf of Finland in order to detect Red navy submarines. But Goering had once declared, "Everything that flies comes under my command," so it was not long before the Luftwaffe was demanding that Buschmann's squadron be handed over to them. Renamed *Fliegergruppe 127*, the Estonian fliers were provided with Heinkel He. 50 single-engine, twin open cockpit biplanes and Arado AR 66 single-engine, high wing monoplanes. After further training the unit was reorganized as a night bomber formation under the designation *Nachtschlachtgruppe 11* (*estnisch.*). It consisted of three squadrons, the first two being equipped with the He. 50s and the third with the Arado Ar 66 aircraft. It operated mainly from airfields in its homeland.



Estonian volunteers in the Luftwaffe.



Estonian arm shield of the type used only by volunteers in the Luftwaffe. Blue/black/white with white Estland on black.

All members of the *Gruppe* wore standard Luftwaffe uniform with, on the right upper arm, a shield in the Estonian colors. This was of a different type from that worn by the other Estonian volunteers. It is horizontal blue/black/white surmounted by the word ESTLAND (German spelling of Estonia). The flying badge of the Estonian air force could be worn by those who were former qualified Estonian air force pilots or observers. This badge, an eagle with a sword and the colors of Estonia in triangular form (as used on pre-war Estonian military aircraft as a wing and fuselage marking), was sometimes worn on the left pocket, sometimes above it.



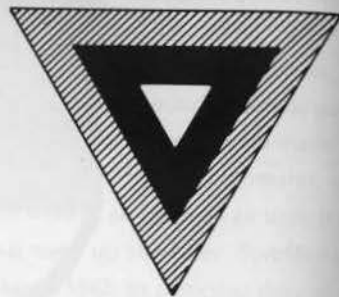
Major General Jaan Soots, in the mid-1930s, wearing a pilot-observer badge which is identical to the pilot badge except that the lightning bolts protrude below the triangle.



Estonian Pilot's badge. (1923/24-1940)



An Estonian Luftwaffe aircrew volunteer. Note the Estonian Pilot's badge worn above his *Frontflugspange*.



Wing and fuselage marking of pre-war Estonian air force.

At one of the airfields used by the Estonian *Gruppe* there was an Estonian Police Guard unit (popularly known as Captain Maripuu's Company), who wore Luftwaffe uniform with, on the left upper arm, the Police/*Grenschutz* arm badge of the three yellow lions on a sloping blue/black/white background. The use of this form of arm badge on Luftwaffe uniform was unique to this company; all other Estonian Luftwaffe volunteers wore the ESTLAND type as described above.



Estonian as a sergeant in a Police company at Pskow. The three lions arms shield was worn only by this company. It was also the only Police company to wear Luftwaffe uniform.

There was a flying training school near Liepaja* for aircrew volunteers from the Baltic states (*Erganz, Fliegergruppe Ostland*), at which Estonian and Latvian fliers were brought up to the standards required by the Luftwaffe. The Estonian squadrons flew under German colors without any special Estonian insignia to distinguish them.

*To the Germans this town was called Libau.

ESTONIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT

A uniformed youth movement, the *Eesti Noored* (Estonian Youth), or E.N., was formed in 1943 by Lt. Gustav Kalkun, a regular army officer and distinguished Olympics sportsman. (He had, at one stage in his career, been ski instructor to Prince Philip of Greece - now H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh.)

Five leadership courses were started, and observers were sent to Germany to study the methods of the Hitler Youth. Although the E.N. was not originally intended to be a paramilitary body, it was inevitably drawn into the conflict as the war situation deteriorated. About 75 percent of its leadership cadre left to join the Estonian S.S. brigade (later division). The boys and girls of E.N. found themselves having to act as air raid wardens, Red Cross helpers, fire guards and *Selbstschutz* auxiliaries. Indeed, after August 1944, all young Estonians (whether or not they were members of E.N.) had to perform obligatory state service of some form. Boys between the ages of 16 and 18 had to join their local unit of the *Selbstschutz*, while those under that age, and girls from 14 to 20 years, had to assist the police, fire brigades, Red Cross, etc., in whatever non-combatant capacity was required. In the capital, Tallin, some 1,250 young people were enlisted for auxiliary military service. The most important contribution of the E.N. to the German war effort was to the so-called "Flak helper" movement (see below).



Enamel badge of the Eesti Noored (Youth Movement). The actual size is slightly smaller - 41 x 28mm.

The E.N. wore a Luftwaffe blue type of uniform with the E.N. badge in colored enamel on the left breast pocket. This is a diamond-shaped badge combining a sword with an ear of barley (the E.N. had started as a sort of *Landdienst*), across this is a ribbon, or scroll, in the Estonian colors blue/black/white. This badge was occasionally worn on the left breast pocket of Waffen S.S. uniform by volunteers who were former E.N. members. The scheme of ranks is not known. It may have been indicated on the shoulder straps. Kalkun himself wore oak leaves on both collars, but this was more in the nature of ornamentation than an indication of rank - since oak leaves of the same sort were worn in the same place by all grades of the pre-war Estonian police.



Boys of the Eesti Noored. The white metal lion on side of cap indicates the unit.

FLAK HELPERS

On 1 July 1944 in Tallin, a meeting was held between the German authorities, the Estonian civilian administration, and the leaders of the E.N. The purpose was to raise, hopefully by voluntary persuasion, a corps of young people between the ages of 15 and 20 who would act as auxiliaries in the anti-aircraft branch of the Luftwaffe. Volunteers, it was stated, would be required to serve only within Estonia and be under the exclusive control of the Luftwaffe. Neither promise was, in reality, honored.

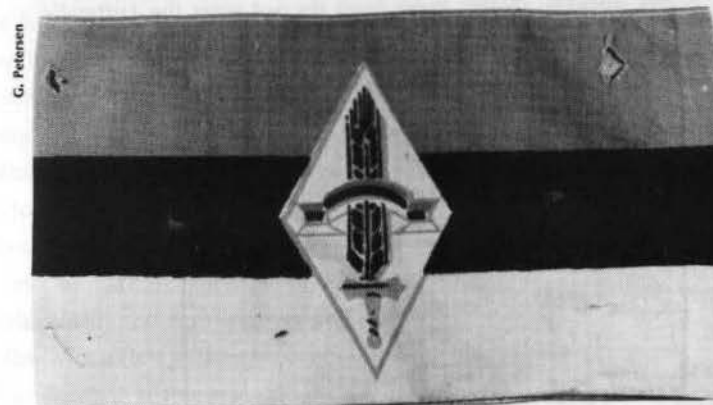
The *Luftwaffenhelfer*, as they were properly called, were a curious, although typically Nazi, amalgum of three organizations: the Hitler Youth, the Luftwaffe, and the S.S. The moving force behind the "Flak helpers" (the popular term by which they were known), was in fact the Hitler Youth. Since January 1943, German boys between the ages of 15 and 20 had been required, under an emergency war decree, to perform paramilitary duties in the Flak defenses of the Reich as the Allied air offensive intensified. The meeting at Tallinn was merely an extension of this concept to the young men of Estonia. In June 1944, a *H.J. Kriegseinsatzkommando Nord* (Hitler Youth War Operations Command North), had been set up to supervise the youth of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with a view to mobilizing them for the German war effort. This was one of five *Kriegseinsatzkommando* offices established to coordinate this work in the German occupied and Axis-allied countries of Europe. It was under the direction of *Dienststelle Nickel* - taking its name from H.J. *Hauptbannführer* Siegfried Nickel, the man entrusted by Hitler with the mobilization of European youth for Germany's military defense. It was a directive from Nickel dated 4 March 1944 which prompted the authorities in Estonia to launch this appeal. Since the bombs which were falling on Estonian cities were those of the Red Air Force, not of the Anglo-Saxons, it was possible to represent this as a patriotic, rather than a pro-German, gesture. Estonians were



Flak helper cap badge.

An Estonian Flak helper. Uniform is Luftwaffe blue with black shoulder straps which have light blue piping. Brassard as shown below. The wearing of the Luftwaffe eagle-and-swastika above the right breast pocket is unofficial.

being asked only to take an active part in their homeland's defense. But after September this pretense could hardly be maintained. The country was now largely in enemy hands. The Flak helpers had to withdraw with the retreating German forces and assist in the defense of the Reich. Of the three thousand or so who had been mobilized, around one thousand were transferred to camps in Germany, Czechoslovakia and, ultimately, Denmark. The majority (around 800) were sent to Wismar (in Mecklenburg on the Baltic coast near Lubeck), where they were known as *Flak Ersatz Abteilung 60*.



Estonian Flak helper brassard (half actual size). National colors of Estonia with, in the center, the Eesti Noored emblem. This brassard was only worn on parade (otherwise an arm shield was worn).

There were 478 female Flak helpers in Estonia, exactly how many of these came with the others to Germany is not clear. Only three weeks was allowed for basic training, after which the young people were assigned to active duties - some serving the guns, others were employed on searchlight batteries, smoke generator units, barrage balloon companies, Luftwaffe transport and supplies, and some even on menial work in the kitchens.



Four Estonian Flak helpers on a day out in Copenhagen in 1945. Two wear the "walking out" brassard, but the boy in the coat wears an Estonian arm shield of (it would seem) the Luftwaffe type. Flak helpers were not normally issued with this type of greatcoat. They were usually given a half length coat with two breast pockets. (Note: these boys do not wear the Luftwaffe eagle which was worn above the right breast pocket by some Estonian Flak helpers.)

Name: _____	
Geburtsdatum: 10.10.1927	
Farbe der Haare: hellblond	
Farbe der Augen: braun	
Besondere Vermerke: _____	
Geburtsort: Riga	
Geburtsdatum: 10.10.27	
	
Der Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe. Ort und Tag: Wismar 10.1.45 Truppenteil: 8./Flak-Ers.-AM. 60 Wismar Unterschrift des Oberbefehlshabers: _____ Unterschrift des Einzelnen: _____ Raul L...	

Pay-book of an Estonian Flak helper at the camp at Wismar.

Of the original batch of Flak helpers raised in Estonia, 346 were transferred to the German Navy as *Marinehelfer* (but were re-absorbed into the Luftwaffe when the Estonians had to leave their homeland).

As from 4 December 1944, the designation *Luftwaffenhelfer* was changed to S.S. *Zögling*.

The uniform of the Flak helpers was Luftwaffe blue and consisted of a "battle dress" type blouse (worn open at the neck), and trousers, both of a rather better quality than was normally issued to non-German Flak helpers. Khaki shirts were worn with black ties. The shoulder straps were of the *Flieger H.J.* type, that is to say, black with sky blue piping. The cap badge was a cloth version of the E.N. badge. A brassard with this same device on a horizontal blue/black/white background was issued. But, the brassard tended to be worn only on formal occasions or for "walking out." Otherwise, an arm shield, like that of the Legion, was worn in its place. When the brassard was worn, it covered the arm shield. The belt buckle was the Luftwaffe type. Although not officially part of the uniform, some boys wore the Luftwaffe eagle and swastika above the right breast pocket.

Even after they became S.S. *Zöglingen*, the Estonian boys did *not* wear the S.S. arm triangle (as issued to some other non-German Flak helpers), nor any other item of S.S. insignia.

Female Estonian Flak helpers wore, on the left upper arm, only the centerpiece of the boys' brassard, i.e., the diamond-shaped E.N. badge. The use of the E.N. emblem by the Flak helpers did not imply that all were former members of the E.N. Indeed, only a minority were, since, after the introduction of the national call-up, or draft, in August 1944, young people could be directed into the Flak helpers irrespective of previous E.N. affiliation.

At the main camp at Wismar, the cadre was almost 100 percent German. There was only one Estonian liaison officer and even he wore standard Luftwaffe uniform (Flak branch with red *Waffenfarbe*), without an Estonian arm shield. Some of the older boys were given the rank of *Hilfusbilder* (Assistant Instructor), and wore a single silver cord round each sleeve (a unique rank). Also at Wismar, a training course for non-commissioned officers was started, but due to the advance of the Red Army, it was not possible to carry this through to completion. From Wismar the Estonian Flak helpers were transferred to Denmark. They were now categorized as *Kanonier* (gunners). At Odense in Denmark in March 1945, they were informed that they were to join the 20th Replacement and Training Regiment of the S.S. (*20 Ers. und Ausb. Rgt. der S.S.*), presumably with a view to their incorporation into the Estonian S.S. Division. But there were no uniforms available and with the war over in a matter of weeks, the question of their transfer to the *Waffen S.S.* remained academic. As prisoners-of-war in British hands, they were regarded as having belonged to the Luftwaffe, not the *Waffen S.S.*



Flak helper recruiting posters such as the above were printed in Russian, Ukrainian, Latvian, Estonian, Lithuanian, etc. Here the boys are shown in German uniforms.

ESTONIAN ORDERS AND DECORATIONS

THE CROSS OF FREEDOM

Perhaps Estonia's best known decoration, the Cross of Freedom is in three categories:

- For (i) Military leadership
- For (ii) Bravery in the field
- For (iii) Civilian merit in time of war.

Each of the above is sub-divided into a 1st Class, a 2nd Class and a 3rd Class decoration. The gradation is as follows:

Military Leadership

1st Class: a cross measuring 45 by 39mm worn round the neck from a 39mm wide ribbon.

2nd Class: a cross measuring 39 by 34mm worn from a 34mm wide ribbon from the second buttonhole of the tunic.

3rd Class: a cross measuring 36 by 30mm worn from a 30mm ribbon, made up in the Austrian "inverted triangle" form, on the left breast.

All grades have basically a white cross with, as the centerpiece, a mailed arm holding a sword; in the crook of the arm is a stylized "E". The ribbon is the same (except for width) for all grades and is black with light blue/white edges (blue being the outer color).

Bravery in the Field

The three grades correspond exactly in size of cross and width of ribbon to the three grades of the above, but in this case all three are worn from the inverted triangle ribbon on the left breast. The basic color of the cross in this case is black, and the ribbon is light blue with black/white edges (black being the outer color). The centerpiece is the same as the previous category.



Cross of Freedom, Bravery in the Field category. 3rd Class.

CIVILIAN MERIT IN TIME OF WAR

The three grades here correspond in size of cross, width of ribbon and manner of wearing to the Military Leadership category, the difference being in the color of the cross, light blue, and the ribbon, white with light blue/black edges (black being the outer color) and the design of the centerpiece. In this category it is simply a large "E".

The reverse of all grades in all three categories have: 24 III 1919 (the date of institution of the decoration).

The Cross of Freedom was intended as a war decoration. It was given principally for actions during Estonia's struggle for freedom in 1918-20. After 1936 no further awards were made, although the statutes allow for it to be revived in the event of an outbreak of war with an external enemy.



Civil Merit in time of War category. 1st Class.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL OF ESTONIA'S WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Instituted on 14 December 1920 and awarded to all who had participated actively in the war, this is a 28mm round bronze medal worn from a 30mm wide inverted triangle ribbon which is in the Estonian national colors - light blue/black/white (in equal proportions of each). The obverse shows an Estonian soldier with a rifle and the words *Kodu Kaitseks* (For Defense of the Homeland). The reverse has crossed sabers, a laurel



branch and a scroll with *Eesti Vabadussoja Malestuseks* (To commemorate Estonia's War of Independence) with, at the top, the dates 1918 - 1920.

Those wounded in the course of the war were allowed to wear a 50mm wide bow in the same colors as the ribbon attached to it just above the suspension loop.

ORDER OF THE ARMS OF ESTONIA

This Order, instituted on 7 October 1936, is in five grades: Collar, Grand Cross, 1st Class, 2nd Class and 3rd Class. There is also a Medal of the Order (in five grades).

The Collar is an ornamental chain from which hangs a representation of the coat of arms of the Republic of Estonia, worked in precious metals and stones. It was, in reality, not so much a grade of the Order as a badge of office reserved exclusively for the President of the Republic. With this collar was worn an eight-pointed gold breast star with, as its centerpiece, the arms of Estonia.

The Grand Cross has the same type of gold breast star, but instead of the collar, a sash and sash badge was worn. The sash is 105mm wide in cornflower blue with 5mm wide gold edges. The sash badge is the coat of arms of Estonia.

The 1st Class is as above, but the breast star is slightly smaller (55mm versus 58mm) and is in silver, not gold. The sash and sash badge are as before.

The 2nd Class has the same type of breast star as the 1st Class but there is no sash; instead, a "decoration" (again the coat of arms) was worn from a 41mm wide ribbon round the neck.

The 3rd Class is the neck decoration only.

The 4th Class is the decoration worn on the left breast from a 35mm ribbon with a 22mm rosette on it.

The 5th Class is as above, but without the rosette.

The Medal of the Order is as follows:

1st Class: a gold medal, 42mm in diameter, worn on a 41mm wide ribbon round the neck.



Medal (obverse)



Medal (reverse)

The obverse of the Medal shows the three lions of Estonia on a shield above a wreath. The reverse has the date 24 - II - 1918 (the day of the declaration of Estonian independence). All grades of the Order and the Medal have a plain cornflower blue ribbon with the exception of the Grand Cross which, as mentioned above, has gold edges.

2nd Class: a large gold medal (37mm in diameter) worn from a 35mm ribbon on the left breast.

3rd Class: a small gold medal (31.5mm in diameter) worn from a 30mm wide ribbon on the left breast.

4th Class: a large silver medal (same dimensions as large gold) worn from a 37mm ribbon on left breast.

5th Class: a small silver medal (same dimensions as small gold) worn from a 30mm wide ribbon on the left breast.

ORDER OF THE WHITE STAR

This Order, instituted on 7 October 1936, is in the following classes:

Collar: a neck chain and breast star

Grand Cross: gold breast star with sash and sash badge

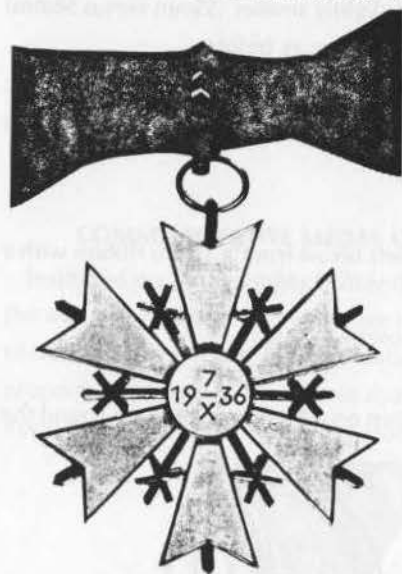
1st Class: a smaller breast star, sash and sash badge

2nd Class: breast star and neck decoration

3rd Class: neck decoration only

4th Class: cross with ribbon and rosette

5th Class: cross with ribbon but without rosette.



3rd Class (reverse)

Medal (obverse)



Medal (reverse)



There is also a Medal in three classes: Gold, Silver and Bronze. The ribbon for all grades of the Order and the Medal is red; the only exception is the sash of the Grand Cross which has 5mm wide gold edges.

All the crosses are in white enamel; all reverses bear the date 7-X-1936. The Order and Medal were awarded for civil merit, generally the recipients were civil servants.

ORDER OF THE EAGLE-CROSS

Actually, the oldest Estonian Order, although it did not rank as the most senior, it was instituted on 17 February 1928 and at that time had only semi-official status. It was granted recognition as an official award under the Orders and Decorations Act of 7 October 1936.

It is in eight classes:

1st Class: eight-pointed silver breast star with 105mm wide sash and sash badge.

2nd Class: the same type of breast star as above but without a sash. A neck decoration was worn in its place.

3rd Class: neck decoration only.

4th Class: cross worn on breast from ribbon with a rosette.

5th Class: as above but without the rosette.

There are, in addition, three medals - gold, silver and iron.



4th Class
(without swords)

All the crosses have black enamel on both sides, but the three medals (actually crosses) are without the enamel. Any grade can be with swords. The ribbon is the same for all categories (except for width) and is orange with slightly inset cornflower blue edge stripes.

ORDER OF MERIT OF THE ESTONIAN RED CROSS

This Order is in five classes plus three medals:

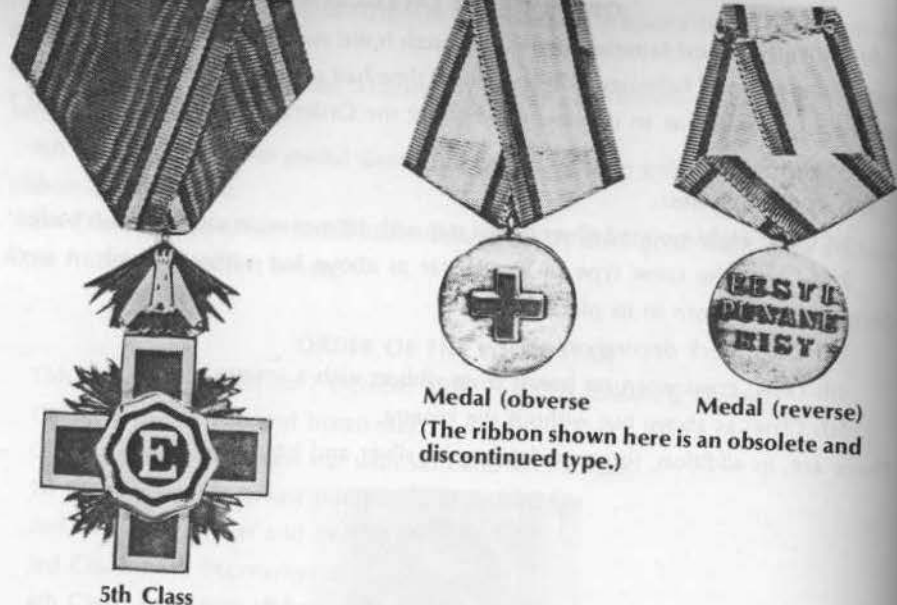
1st Class: an eight-pointed silver breast star, sash and sash badge.

2nd Class: same type of breast star but without sash; in its place a neck decoration.

3rd Class: neck decoration only.

4th Class: cross worn on left breast from ribbon with rosette.

5th Class: as above but without the rosette.



Medal (obverse)
(The ribbon shown here is an obsolete and discontinued type.)

Medal (reverse)

5th Class

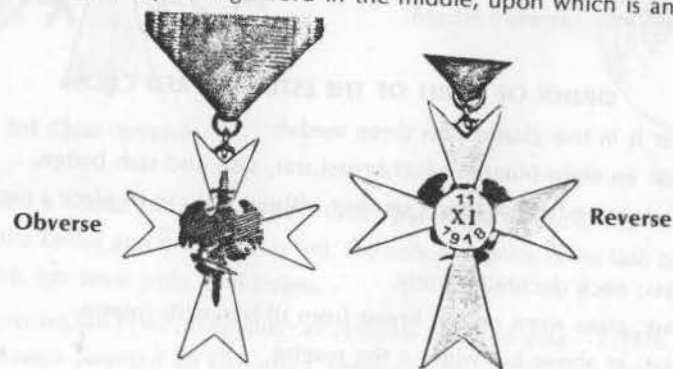
The medals are in gold, silver and bronze.

Instituted privately by the Estonian Red Cross Association in August 1920, the Order was granted official status under the Orders and Decorations Act of 7 October 1936. It is a red enamel cross with white edges. The obverse centerpiece is an E. The reverse has the date 1919 (the year in which the Estonian Red Cross Association was founded), and the Latin motto *Inter arma caritas* (Care in time of war).

The Medal is 29mm in diameter and has on the obverse a red cross and on the reverse, *Eesti Punane Rist* (Estonian Red Cross). The ribbon is the same for all classes of the Order and the Medal and is sky blue with blue/black/white/black edges.

WHITE CROSS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

Instituted on 19 June 1929 for merit in, or to, the National Guard, it is a white enamel cross with a downward-pointing sword in the middle, upon which is an eagle and



Obverse

Reverse

sword, similar to that of the Eagle-Cross Order. On the reverse is 11 - XI - 1918, the date of the creation of the Estonian National Guard. The 37mm wide ribbon is cornflower blue with narrow orange/white/orange inset edge stripes. The Cross is in three classes, each worn from a ribbon on the left breast, but the manner in which the grades are distinguished is now known (possibly by a rosette on the ribbon or the color of the centerpiece: gold, silver, bronze).

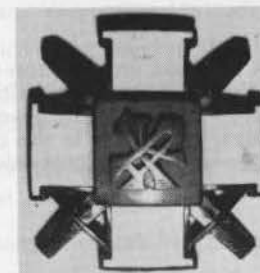
MILITARY ACADEMY BADGES



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

- (a) Graduates of the Military Academy (highest grade)
- (b) Cadets Class
- (c) Aspirants Class
- (d) Artillery officer graduates (infantry has crossed rifles in place of the crossed cannons).

These badges, worn on the left breast pocket (sometimes with German uniform) are not to be confused with decorations for bravery or German style *Kriegsabzeichen*.



Obverse

Reverse



A rare and unusual non-portable medallion awarded by the German General Commissioner for Estonia Litzmann for the struggle against Communism. The obverse shows a man slaying a wolf (communism). The reverse has, in both German and Estonian, "For merit in the common struggle against Bolshevism." Around this is "Der Generalkommissar in Reval."* (Example in collection of VK. Ager.)

ESTONIA

ESTONIAN VOLUNTEERS IN THE FINNISH ARMED FORCES

The Finns and the Estonians are a racially related people and a tradition of friendship exists between the two countries. When Estonia was fighting for her independence immediately after the First World War, the Finns sent a 2,700 strong regiment under Colonel Hans Kalm to assist her. The Estonians felt under a debt of gratitude to Finland and during the Winter War (November 1939 to March 1940), about 70 Estonians volunteered to join what amounted to an "international brigade" (formed mainly from men from the nordic countries), which had come together to help the Finns resist the Russian invasion. The SISU, as the brigade was called, was too late into action to be of any effective use. On 17 June 1940, as we have seen, the Soviet Union invaded an occupied Estonia and all contact with Finland was at an end. For an entire year Estonia was subjected to the terrors of a Soviet occupation.

After the Germans had driven the Soviet forces out, many Estonians had, as has already been noted, signed up in German military formations of one sort or another, but some Estonians turned to their old friend Finland. Young Estonians began to enlist in the Finnish armed forces, although this was strictly illegal. Most of these were mustered as the 3rd Battalion of the 43rd Infantry Regiment of the 18th Division. The commander of the battalion was Major Claes Gripenberg, a nephew of the Finnish leader, Field Marshal Mannerheim. By November 1943 there were 1,800 Estonians in the battalion, 21 of these being officers. In February 1944, the Estonians were reformed as Infantry Regiment 200 under the command of Lt. Col. Eino Kuusela. Some 180 of their number were selected for officer training at the Finnish Military Academy. Of these, 147 had by July 1944 graduated as *Vanrik* (Ensign, or 2nd Lieutenant). But by this time the Red Army was already across the Estonian frontier and the Estonians were keen to take their place in their country's defense. The 1st Battalion of Infantry Regiment 200 was sent to join the 10th Division defending the Karelian Isthmus; the 2nd Battalion was dispatched to Viborg. At this point of time there were about 2,600 Estonians in the two battalions of Infantry Regiment 200, with about a further 100 in other units of the Finnish army, and around 250 in the Finnish navy.

*Reval is the German name for Tallin, the Estonian capital.



Colonel Eino Kuusela, a Finn, Commanding Officer of Infantry Regiment 200. He wears, at the neck, the Commander grade of the Finnish Order of the White Rose.



Col. Vaino Savonen, Deputy Commander of Infantry Regiment 200. Although also a Finn, he was a graduate of the Estonian Military Academy (whose badge he wears on his right breast pocket).



One version of the arm shield worn by the Estonians in Infantry Regiment 200.

With the coming of autumn, Finland was trying to disengage from the war and the presence of Estonian volunteers in her armed forces was now something of an embarrassment. It was suggested to them that they might like to return to their homeland and form themselves into an independent volunteer unit. On 19 August, 168 officers, 162 N.C.O.s and 1,422 men quit Finland (still in Finnish uniform but unarmed). They placed themselves at the disposal of the German authorities but asked that (a) they might be allowed to continue as a single unified formation, and (b) they be permitted to retain their Finnish army uniforms (on which, as in Finland, they wore on the left upper arm and armshield in the blue/black/white national colors). Once Finland quit the war (September 1944), it was clearly impossible for the Germans to comply with this latter request, but they did at least try to keep the veterans of the 1st Battalion together as a unified whole. They were sent into action against the Red Army on the Targu Front where they suffered heavy losses and were awarded 44 Iron Crosses. Members of the former 2nd Battalion, however, were simply dispersed among whatever S.S. or Police units required replacements. Thus, the Estonians who had gone to Finland to avoid German service ended up in field grey after all.



Estonian officers of Infantry Regiment 200. Only one (third from left) wears an arm shield which, in this case, is the Estonian national colors placed horizontally.



Obverse of the flag of Infantry Regiment 200.



The reverse of the same flag. The motto is "For the honor of Estonia; For her safety in days to come."

LATVIA

POLICE BATTALIONS AND REGIMENTS

Once Latvia had been cleared of the communist invaders, the Germans disarmed and disbanded the various Latvian anti-Soviet partisan groups. In their place they set up voluntary Latvian police units under overall German command. The first of these was established in July 1941 by Voldemars Veiss, a Latvian officer who was later to become a Knight's Cross winner.

Initially the Police battalions, which consisted of some 500 to 550 men each, were assigned security duties in the rear mainly concerned with the safeguarding of the lines of communication to the front. Then, in September 1941, the first Latvian Police combat battalion was formed. This was the celebrated 16 Zemgale Battalion.



Official photograph of the 16th Zemgale Battalion in Riga, Latvia, in October 1941. A number of these Latvian soldiers would become famous in the war years that followed.

The Red Army's winter offensive of 1941/42 took the Germans by surprise and there was a hasty creation of further active police units. On 1st August 1943, the first Latvian Police Regiment was formed by combining Battalions 277 (now the 1st Bn), 278 (IInd Bn), 312 (IIIrd Bn) and 276 (IVth Bn). The official designation was Latvian Volunteer Police Regiment Riga (*Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga*). On 20th September, the regiment and other units were transferred to an area 35km south of Daugavpils in Poland (called White Russia after the Russian occupation in 1939). There they engaged in a police action against Red partisans. In late October the regiment moved 70km, by forced march, until it reached Lithuania where its members boarded railway cattle cars and were transported to Idrice. The next morning the regiment advanced along a 10km wide sector towards the Necherdo and Yasno Lakes, about 45km west of Nevel, and was to halt an unopposed Russian advance which had been moving west from the Nevel area. It was here, on 7th November, that the two forces met head-on at advantageous, defensive positions the regiment had taken. The regiment was attacked by strong Russian units but the line was held. During the next two months, the remnants of the regiment, as well as Police Battalions 313 and 316, were shifted from position to position in the fluid front, halting all enemy attempts to expand their wedge which extended west from Nevel. The unflinching defense of these vital positions prevented the Russians from reaching the Gulf of Riga and the Baltic Sea during the winter of 1943/44.

On 12th January 1944 the Russians launched another offensive at the Nevel front. From mid-January to mid-March the regiment was again shifted from position to position, as the need arose, to help stem the Russian advance. The Russians, again, were denied any significant breakthrough. The battered regiment was relieved in mid-March 1944 and sent to Latvia for rest and reinforcements. There, in May 1944, the regiment was honored with a "*Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga*" cuff title in recognition of its heroic sacrifices during the winter battles of 1943/44. To this day, the survivors of the regiment stand proud of their efforts to blunt the Russian wedge at Nevel, thus, preventing Soviet access west and the entrapment of Army Group North in Estonia, and in allowing thousands of Latvian and Estonian civilians the time to escape west in the summer, a feat impossible during the brutal winter of 1943/44.

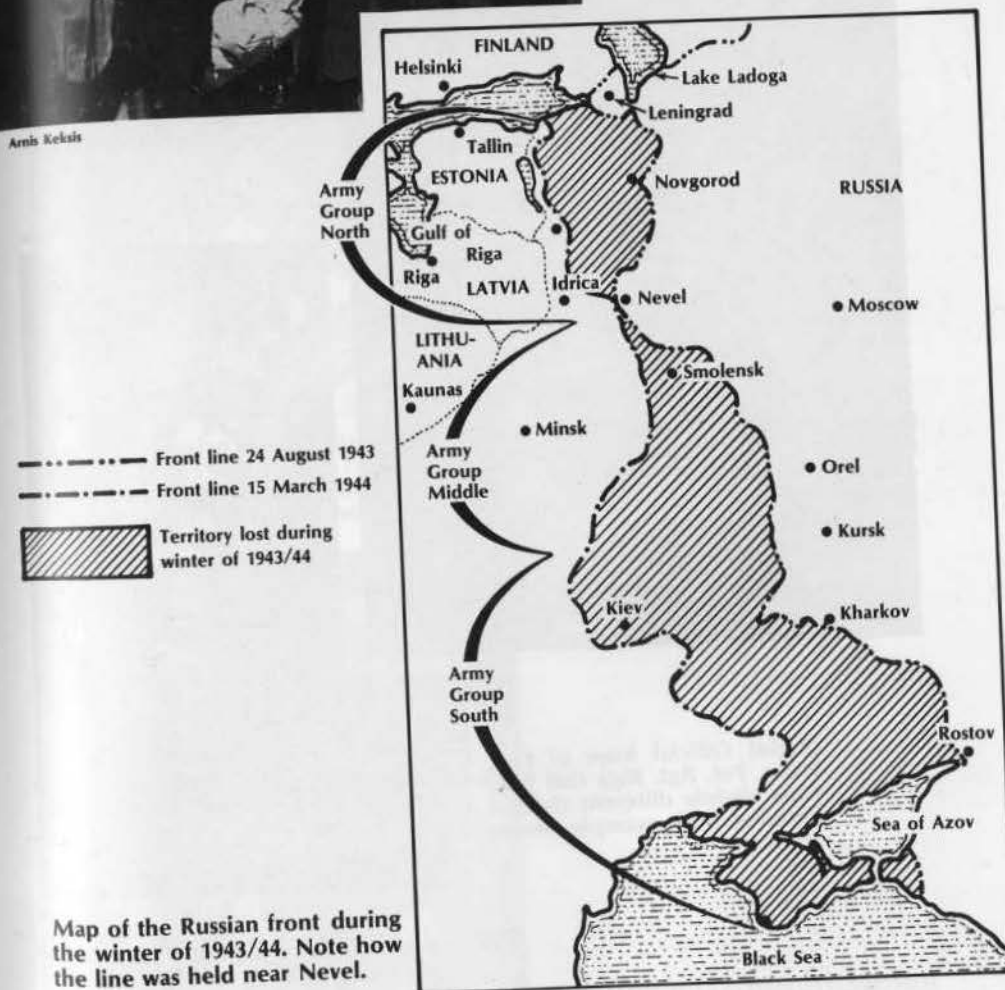
In February 1944 and September 1944 two further Police Regiments, made up by combining Latvian Police Battalions, were formed. The 2nd "*Kurland*"* Regiment comprised the 22, 25, 313 and 316 Battalions. The 3rd Regiment comprised the 317, 318 and 321 Battalions. There was also a Frontier Guard Regiment made up of Battalions 1 to 6 inclusive.

Most of these Police formations were later either destroyed in the course of defending their homeland or were incorporated into the Waffen SS.

*Kurland is the German form of the name, the Latvian word is Kurzeme.



Latvian high school graduates at the railway station in Cēsis, on 16th April 1943, waiting for their "recruit" train which would take them to a police unit training camp.



Map of the Russian front during the winter of 1943/44. Note how the line was held near Nevel.

Uniforms and Insignia of the Police Battalions/Regiments

The German-raised Latvian Police units should, properly, have worn German "Police green" (a darker shade of green than the "field grey" of the army), but initial

Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga

J. Lehtens



(Left) A Latvian NCO in the Latvian Volunteer Police Regiment Riga. Note his cuff title on the left arm of the German Police uniform, including (just discernible) the German Police arm badge (left upper arm).

Arnis Keksis



(Right) Official issue of Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga cuff title. Note slightly different style of lettering from example shown above.

shortages resulted in a variety of uniforms and insignia being worn. Latvian army khaki was sometimes employed but without collar tabs - officers wearing their five-pointed Latvian rank stars directly on the collar. Later (in January 1942) Latvian collar tabs (red with a white, or silver, transverse bar) were permitted to be worn with German Police uniform. A dark blue uniform of unidentified origin was also issued in some instances.

A rare hand-embroidered variant of the "Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga" cuff title (white coarse cotton thread on black). Note spelling Regt. instead of Rgt. as on the official version of this cuff title.



Members of Latvian Police Battalion 266E at Bolderaja (Riga) in April 1943. All received dark blue tunics and forage caps, black breeches and black puttees. Only those destined for the Police Mounted (Cavalry) units received German Police uniforms. Note the mixture of Police and Latvian collar tabs and armshields.

Arnis Keksis



In camp at Bolderaja (Riga) in May 1943, right after the swearing-in ceremony. Tunics are German Police, collar tabs (with one exception) Latvian infantry.



Latvian Police Battalion at the 266E swearing-in ceremony in May 1943. They wear German Police tunics with Latvian collar tabs. The M16 helmets are probably ex-Latvian army. Belts and buckles are S.S.



Latvian Police unit, June 1943. Clearly shown are the Latvian collar tabs worn on German Police tunics. The Latvian cap badge can also be made out, as can the red/white/red Latvian arm shield.

The traditional Latvian "sunburst and stars" badge was allowed to be worn on the front of the Police forage cap. In October 1943 the removal of the Latvian collar tabs, and their replacement by German Police collar patches, was ordered. However as the German collar patches distinguished only between commissioned and non-commissioned status and, as Police shoulder straps (with rank insignia) were not always available, considerable confusion ensued! Finally full German Police uniforms were provided. The Latvians did not wear the German Police arm badge* nor the *Tapfer-Treu-Gehorsam* device, but instead a shield in the red/white/red Latvian colors. On duty a steel helmet was worn. This could be ex-Czech Army or German M16 (that is to say the type worn by the Germans in the First World War, but also by the Latvian Army up to its destruction by the Soviets after 17 June 1940). Eventually, the correct German Police steel helmet (somewhat lighter in weight than the army type) was issued.

*Due to the somewhat confused insignia situation, it would appear that some, at least of the Latvians, did wear the German Police arm badge.



Latvian army sunburst and stars badge worn on front of Police forage cap.



Latvian Police Battalion in June 1943. Note the curious mixture of armament - British Vickers and Lewis machine guns, Russian rifles, and German/Russian mortars.



Group photograph of members of this Police Regiment taken in Latvia in April 1944. (Note the Latvian arm shield worn by several members of this group on the right upper arm.)

(a)



(a) This member of the Latvian Police Cavalry, Edgars Sprincis, wears the correct shoulder straps, collar tabs and spurs of a Police Cavalry EM. Note the correct dark brown collar; (b) Although an NCO in a Latvian Police unit ("Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga"), this man (Arnis Keksis) wears an army-style NCO tunic, but made of police cloth with no breast or sleeve eagle. Note the police shoulder straps (on emerald green).

Both photos were taken at the same time (May 1944) and illustrate the intermingling of uniform parts which was characteristic of the period.



The "Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga" choir in Dundaga shortly before the regiment was sent to the port of Ventspils for departure to Danzig, October 1944.

Although still a member of the Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga, Arnis Keksis now (July 1944) wears the insignia of an Unterscharführer (Note: cuff title "Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga" should, properly, have been worn with this uniform, but its owner returned it with his police uniform. Note also that the S.S. sleeve eagle is missing. Arnis Keksis never received a police uniform with police sleeve eagle, or a Waffen-S.S. uniform with S.S. sleeve eagle).



Oberwachtmeister Janis Leitens in Thorn, occupied Poland, in the fall of 1944.



Latvian Armed Forces Ranks (Worn on Both Collars)

Collar patch colors of the Latvian Army were:

Infantry: Cherry red (this was the only color allowed by the Germans to be used by the Latvian Police Battalions)

Artillery: blue

Cavalry: yellow

Technical (armored units, Air Force): black

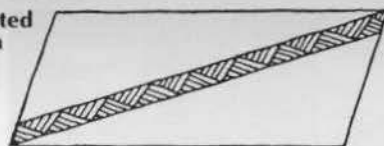
Headquarters Staff: white

With all the above, a diagonal stripe in silver bullion and cross stripes in gold bullion were worn except in the case of non-commissioned ranks working uniform, in which case the stripe was white cotton and cross stripes in yellow cotton.

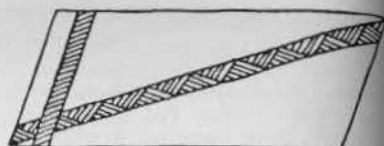
Rank stars were gilt metal for grades up to, and including, Captain. Above this rank they were gold bullion. Administrative officers had special six-pointed stars.

Because of the small size of the pre-war Latvian Army, it had far fewer grades than is the case with major armies, so that a precise comparison of ranks is not possible. The equivalents given on the following pages must, therefore, be regarded as only approximate.

Enlisted Men

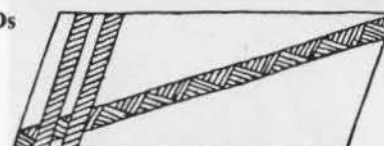


(1) Private

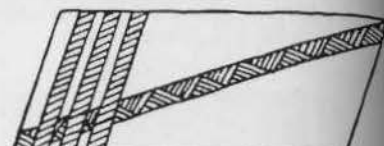


(2) Corporal

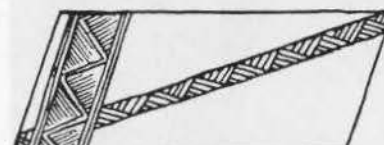
NCOs



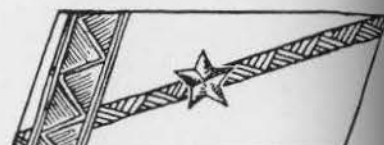
(3) Sergeant



(4) Staff Sergeant



(5) Battalion Sgt. Major (1st Sergeant)

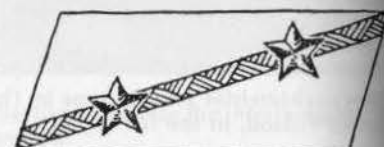


(6) Regimental Sgt. Major (Master Sergeant)

Officers



(7) 2nd Lieutenant



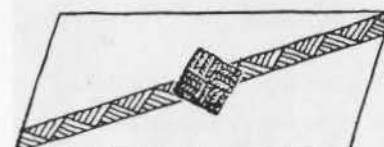
(8) 1st Lieutenant



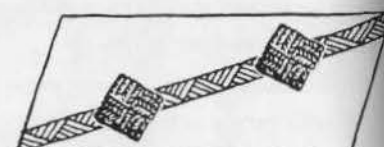
(9) Lieutenant-Captain



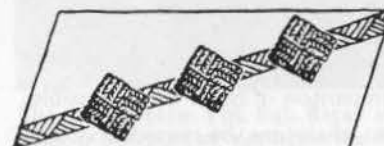
(10) Captain



(11) Lt. Colonel



(12) Colonel

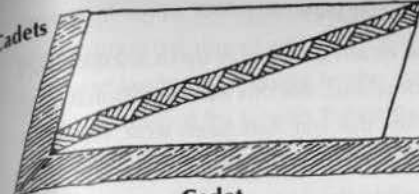


(13) General

Diagonal bars are silver, vertical ones and stars, are gold.

(6) Latvian title is *Virsnieka Vietnieks*, literally "Officer Replacement"

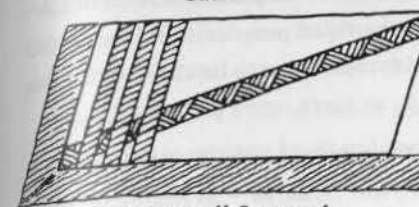
Cadets



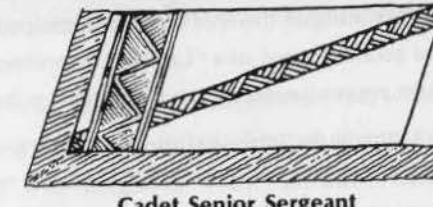
Cadet



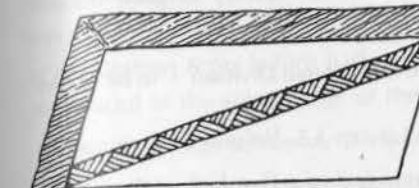
Cadet-Sergeant



Cadet Staff Sergeant



Cadet Senior Sergeant



Cadets wore gold braid around the base of their collars with the exception of one year (1930) when it was worn around the top of the collar.

(9) During the Latvian War of Liberation (1918-1920) some individuals were made officers, even though they had minimal training and academic education. Although not qualifying to be a captain, many still in service in the 1930s, served as 1st Lieutenants. Therefore, the Latvian government created a new rank of Lieutenant-Captain for those deserving more than a 1st Lieutenant's rank but not that of a Captain. Those veterans of the 1918-1920 War of Liberation who qualified, were thus granted this rank.



Note that this Latvian aviation colonel wears the embroidered square rank stars.

Janis Leitens, here a member of the 20th Battalion in the fall of 1942, wears the Latvian Army collar insignia (dark red/white) of a private.



J. Leitens

THE "LATVIAN LEGION"

The Latvian civil administration offered to raise an armed force of up to 100,000 men to voluntarily participate in the defense of the homeland, but this was conditional on a German guarantee of Latvian independence after the war had been won. Not surprisingly Hitler turned this down flat. However the inexorable demands of the war in the east with its constant drain on manpower did allow for a modification in Germany's attitude towards military participation by the Baltic peoples. In February 1943 the establishment of a "Latvian Legion" was authorized. It has to be stressed that this term encompassed *all* Latvian units - police, S.S., air force, army and navy.*

At this point in time (February 1943), and shortly thereafter, six Latvian Police Battalions (Nos. 16, 19, 21 - as Regiment Nr. 1) and (Nos. 18, 24, 26 - as Regiment Nr. 2) were currently serving as part of the 2nd Waffen-SS Infantry Brigade outside Leningrad,** Volchow, etc.

It was ordained that *volunteers* should form the first Latvian Division - to be known as:

15. Lettische S.S. Freiwilligen Division (15th Latvian S.S. Volunteer Division).

The announcement of the creation of this division led to a flood of applications - according to the Germans, 32,000 requests to join were received in the first few days. On 9th March, 1943 General Rudolf Bangerskis, a former Latvian Minister of War, was granted the rank of *Gruppenführer* and placed in charge of the "Latvian Legion." Arthurs Silgailis, another senior Latvian officer, was his Chief of Staff.



The Inspector General of the Latvian Legion, Rudolf Bangerskis.

The creation of the 15th Division followed conventional practice. Its various components were brought together in training areas in the rear. With one exception, a con-

*There were individual Latvian volunteers in both the German Army and German Navy, although there was no Latvian unit as such in either.

**This 2nd Waffen-SS Brigade, by an order dated 22nd March 1944, was destined to become the core of the 19th (Latvian Nr. 2) Division.

tingent of some 1000 young Latvian volunteers were sent to the front without any prior military training of any sort! Only the furious intervention of Bangerskis prevented these lambs from going to the slaughter. It was arranged that the new recruits would be trained by Latvian Police Battalion instructors - this training to be carried out, not in the homeland, but a mere 10 kilometers behind the front line.

The term "Latvian Legion" applied equally to other active service Latvian Police Battalions and Latvian Legion Regiments. The two regiments were now brought together and named the 2nd Latvian Volunteer Brigade.

Conscription of a kind had been applied in Latvia as early as September 1942 when any young man wishing to attend the University in Riga (or any German university) was required to have served his time first in the RAD (German Labor Service). It was not, however, until the Spring of 1943 that "universal mobilization" (i.e., conscription) was applied in Latvia. The task of dealing with the draftees was taken out of the hands of the German Army (which had some 50 recruiting stations throughout the country) and placed in the sole charge of the S.S.

15th Latvian S.S. Volunteer Division

Rgt. 32 formed by order dated 3rd May 1943 at Paplaka (Latvia)

Rgt. 33 formed by order dated 15th June 1943 at Vainode (Latvia)

Rgt. 34 formed by order dated 25th April 1943 at Cēsis (Latvia), actually the commander was appointed on this date.

The 15th Division saw its first action in November 1943 when it was dispatched to the front at Novo Sokolniki, to deal with the Red Army's winter offensive which had been launched that month. The Russian assault continued until February 1944 with ferocious fighting on both sides. It was contained, but it was clear that a new offensive was being prepared and that before long the Baltic states would be in mortal danger. "Mobilization" in Latvia was intensified. The draft age was raised to 37 and only those physically unfit or in essential war industries were exempted.

In March 1944 the 2nd Latvian Volunteer Brigade was expanded to divisional strength (the 19th Division) by an infusion of new draftees. There were now two Latvian divisions. They were:

15. Waffen-Grenadier Division der S.S. (Lett. Nr. 1) (Rgts. 32, 33, 34)

19. Waffen-Grenadier Division der S.S. (Lett. Nr. 2) (Rgts. 42, 43, 44)

Collectively they were referred to as the VI Latvian Army Corps. The strength of the two Divisions (as on 30th June 1944) is given by Dr. K-G Klietmann in his detailed study, "Die Waffen S.S.: eine Dokumentation," as:

15th Division: 541 officers, 2322 non-commissioned officers and 15,550 other ranks (Total: 18,412).

19th Division: 329 officers, 1421 non-commissioned officers and 8,842 other ranks (Total: 10,592).



General Bangerskis and Arthur Silgailis at the Sophienwalde railway station on 24 October 1944.

The new Soviet offensive never lost its initial momentum; from then on German forces were in continuous retreat on this, as on all other fronts. By July the Red Army was on Latvian soil. In the defense of its homeland the 15th Division suffered heavy losses and was pulled back to Konitz in West Prussia to regroup.* Tallin, the capital of Estonia fell on 29th September, the Latvian capital, Riga, on 13th October. The 19th Division was engaged in Courland where, as part of *Festung Kurland*, it fought on until the end of the war in Europe, its members falling into Russian captivity.

The 15th Division was returned to front line duty in January 1945 but was carried back by the tide of the Russian advance to such an extent that many of its members were able to surrender to the American forces in the west - a happier fate than that of their compatriots in the east.

One other Latvian S.S. unit remains to be mentioned. This was the S.S. *Wach. Btl. Riga*. The unit began as Guard Company 15 in the Latvian capital under the command of a Latvian officer, Capt. Juraidis. It was later expanded to battalion strength and thereafter filled the role of a training unit for NCOs destined for the Latvian Legion. The commander, Major Rubenis, was Latvian as were most of his staff with the exception of the Senior Training Officer, a German, *Hauptsturmführer* Hans Pomrehn.

NOTE:

For additional information see "Uniforms, Organization and History of the Waffen-S.S.," Vols. 4 and 5, as well as "Latvian Legion" by A. Silgailis - all published by R. James Bender Publishing.

*After suffering grievous losses, three battalions of Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga were sent to Konitz, a fourth remained in Courland as a distinct unit until eventually being incorporated into the 19th Division.

Uniforms and Insignia of the "Latvian Legion"

The creation of the "Latvian Legion" resulted in a transformation from Police, to S.S.-style, uniforms (although, for propaganda reasons, the use of the term S.S. was deliberately avoided).^{*} Plain black collar patches were worn; only German personnel being (officially) entitled to the S.S. runes. On 11th March 1943 a special collar patch was authorized "for the Latvian Legion." As previously mentioned this term embraced all the Latvian land and air forces. Naturally, as part of the "Latvian Legion," the 15th Division adopted this collar patch which took the form of a swastika; but so did the Latvian Volunteer Brigade! Many non-German members of the 15th Division in defiance, or ignorance, of the official ruling *did* wear the S.S. runes prior to the adoption of this special patch (and even after it). This appears to have been tolerated possibly because a plain black patch might have resulted in confusion with the SD.

In the autumn of 1944 a collar patch for exclusive use by the 15th Division was created. This took the form of a stylized version of the sunburst and stars emblem of Latvian Army tradition. The swastika collar patch was now confined to the 19th Division (whose members, as former Latvian Volunteer Brigade veterans were, of course, already wearing it). But, to make a confused situation more confused, the Germans allowed members of the 15th Division who were currently wearing the swastika collar patch to continue to do so until the sunburst and stars patches became available for issue! Thus we have a situation in which members of the 15th Division could be found wearing:

- (a) plain black patch (all new recruits had to wear this)
- (b) Swastika collar patch
- (c) S.S. runes
- (d) Sunburst and stars (after early 1945)

Members of the 19th Division could be found wearing:

- (a) Plain black collar patch
- (b) Swastika collar patch
- (c) S.S. runes

To add yet further to this already chaotic situation, *another* Latvian collar patch exists!

Diligent students of the insignia of the Third Reich will be aware that there are certain items which, even to this day, remain the subject of mystery and controversy -

^{*}As in Estonia, the Germans sought to sustain the illusion that "the Legion" was some sort of "national" body and not a mere adjunct of their own armed forces.



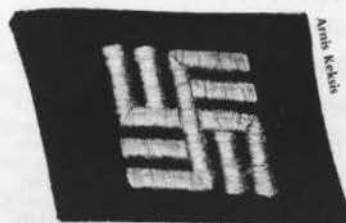
S.S. runes



Single Swastika



Sunburst and stars



(a)



(b)

(a) and (b) two versions of the "double swastika" collar patch. (b) is a bullion version (a prototype never produced or issued) for, presumably, officers.



Obersturmbannführer Nikolajs Galdins wearing the swastika collar patch of the 19. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S.

This Latvian Waffen-Hauptscharführer wears the double armed swastika issued to him on 29th August 1944 in Latvia or by the 15th Division in Germany.



one need only cite the celebrated (or notorious) Danzig Flak Badge. The "double swastika" collar patch belongs to this enigmatic category. What is known is that some members of the 15th Division *did* wear it.

What is a possible explanation of these seeming contradictions? A double swastika would make sense as a successor to the single swastika of the 19th Division if the Germans were planning a *third* Latvian Division. There is evidence that it was contemplated since the Germans had reason to be impressed by the fighting qualities of the Latvians (who had won no less than 13 Knight's Crosses of the Iron Cross - the highest "score" of any non-German "legion"). These double swastika collar patches were prepared in anticipation of a *Lettische Nr. 3* becoming a reality. Since October 1942, a large group of Latvians was being trained by the Germans (RAD) and on 13th November 1943, 240 of them were selected for Panzer-Grenadier NCO training at Arnhem, Holland. During a spring 1944 inspection of this course, General Demelhuber announced to the participants that a "36. Panzer-Grenadier-Division der Waffen-S.S. (lett. Nr. 3)" will be formed in Dundaga, Kurland, Latvia. (Arnis Keksis was stationed at Riga headquarters during the summer of 1944, and states that the for-

mation target date was 1st July 1944, and that the collar insignia was to be the double swastika).

The Pz. Gr. NCO course was completed on 3rd June 1944, but upon arrival in Riga, Latvia (8th June 1944), all of these highly-trained Pz.Gr. NCOs were sent to the eastern front (due to "pressing engagements" with the Russians) instead of Dundaga. This event ended the plans for a 3rd Latvian Division, in this instance, a Panzer-Grenadier-Division.

Thus, the produced, double swastika collar patches found other uses, such as substitute insignia for the 19th Division with its single swastika.

An arm shield in the red/white/red Latvian colors was worn by members of the "Latvian Legion" (again in the broadest sense of this term). This shield is found in various forms, some with the word LATVIJA at the top, others without. Properly it was worn on the *left* upper arm, but it was often worn on the right upper arm and even, quite incorrectly, on the cuff below the elbow. The final, *official*, shield is somewhat smaller than the others and has a thick black edge.

The 19th Division, despite its higher number, was regarded by the Germans as the more senior of the two Latvian formations, doubtless on account of the fact that the



These Latvian volunteers wear the national arm shield (variant "a") on their lower left sleeve.



Above and on previous page: four variants of the Latvian arm shield. (d) is the final official version which is in the style of other S.S. "foreign volunteer" arm shields of this period. (c) is an example of a locally produced shield.

majority of its personnel were from the erstwhile Latvian Volunteer Brigade which had been on continuous front-line service and was the more combat-experienced. It was held to be superior in infantry, but the 15th was regarded as having the better artillery.

The 19th Division consisted of three "grenadier" (i.e., infantry) regiments, Nos. 42, 43 and 44. In January 1945 Grenadier Regiment 42 was granted the name "Voldemars Veiss" in honor of its commander and creator of the first Latvian Police units who died of wounds on 17th April 1944. Veiss was the first Latvian to have been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross (9th February 1944). Grenadier Regiment 43 was given the name "Hinrich Schuldt," the Brigade's German commander who was fatally wounded on 15th March 1944 and awarded posthumously the Oakleaves to the Knight's Cross which he had won in May 1942. It was not unknown for S.S. Regiments, as well as S.S. Divisions, to receive named cuff titles, but this was not the case with the two aforementioned. The only Latvian (in fact, foreign legion) unit to be honored with a battle cuff title was "Lett. Freiw. Pol. Rgt. Riga" for its heroic stand during the winter of 1943/1944 at the Nevel front, when it denied to the Red Army the encirclement of German Army Group "North" and Latvian civilians.

It should be noted, however, that any soldier who participated in any three battles in Kurland was entitled to receive the award of cuff title "KURLAND." This was made in a variety of materials and locally produced at the time. One is illustrated below.



S.S.-Staf. Sommer, Obf. Silgailis, Gruf. Bangerskis, and S.S. Ogruf. Krüger, commander of the VI S.S. Army Corps, at Tirza in Vidzeme on 20 August 1944.



32nd Regiment
(white band)



33rd Regiment
(red band)



34th Regiment
(yellow band)

Colored bands worn at base of shoulder strap by members of the 15. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S. to indicate regiment.



White cotton badge sometimes worn on front of forage cap by members of the 15th Division.



Two stages in the career of a former N.C.O. in Latvia's only tank regiment who, as a volunteer in the Latvian Legion, was accepted for officer training by a German Panzer school. On graduation he wore the black Panzer uniform and S.S. runes and white-outlined arm shield. Since the Legion had no tanks, he was sent (around Christmas 1944) to the 15th Division where he wore field grey with the sunburst Latvian collar patch and black framed arm shield. The breast badge (on black Panzer uniform) is that of the Latvian tank regiment.



Vehicle sign of the 15th Division.



Vehicle sign of the 19th Division.

LATVIAN AIR LEGION

An Air Legion had existed in Estonia since 1941, but it was not until July 1943 that Lt. Col. Janis Rucels of the Latvian Air Force was contacted by a representative of *Luftflotte 1* about the possibility of raising a similar Air Legion in Latvia. German tardiness in this respect may have been due to their annoyance that an earlier request on their part that pilots with a knowledge of Russian should offer themselves for service as potential saboteurs had met with a totally negative response.

Arnis Kekulis



Janis Rucels, here a captain, wears (from left to right) the Badge of the Aviation Regiment, the Estonian Pilot's badge, the silver wing on the shoulder straps depicting pilots, the Aviation School badge on the pocket flap, and the 2nd pattern Latvian Aero Club badge on the breast pocket.

By September 1943 some 1,200 young Latvians had come forward as volunteers for the Air Legion. Training was carried out entirely in the homeland, the Luftwaffe supplying three additional instructors as well as additional aircraft (Arado 66s and Gotha 145s, neither very up-to-date types). The Air Legion formed part of the Latvian Legion and thus came under the jurisdiction of General Bangerskis.

Two Latvian night bomber squadrons had been formed by March 1944. They served as part of *Nachtschlachtgruppe 12 (Ostland)*. Lt. Col. Rucels was appointed commander of the *Luftwaffe Legion Lettland* on 10 August 1944. All members of the Legion, with the exception of one German liaison officer (Oberleutnant Bindhak), one German Quartermaster and three German N.C.O.s were Latvian.

With the Red Army at the gates, the Air Legion was removed from Latvia in September 1944 and sent to Bruesterort in East Prussia. The following month it was officially disbanded. Its members were then redistributed among other Luftwaffe formations.

The largest group of ex-Air Legion men was sent to Nymindagab, near Esbjerg, in Denmark where they were joined by some members of the Estonia Air Legion. Most of the Latvian personnel ended up in Flak units; only a few continued to serve as aircrew. At the Flying Training School at Bromberg, a handful of the best Latvian pilots were retrained on Focke-Wulf Fw 190 fighters. After completing the course they went back on active duty as part of the 54th Fighter Group of the Luftwaffe operating from Spilve airfield outside Riga. But in October 1944 when this fell to the Russians, the Latvian pilots were transferred to Alt-Damm near Stettin. Later they joined the air defenses of Berlin as part of *Jagdgeschwader 1*.

A small number of Latvian pilots saw active service against the western allies, and four were shot down in the course of these actions (which included one killed during the New Year's Eve attack by the Luftwaffe on R.A.F. airfields in Belgium - 1 January 1945).

Several Latvian pilots received the Iron Cross, 1st and 2nd Class; one, Lt. Teodors Abrams, was recommended for the German Cross in Gold but did not actually receive it (whether the citation was lost or turned down by higher authority is not known). The Latvians flew under German colors and in German aircraft which did not carry any distinguishing (Latvian) insignia.

Some Latvians served in the Parachute divisions of the Luftwaffe - by this time used only as infantry. Ironically these included young men called up under the "total mobilization" of July/August 1944 who had been previously rejected as "medically unfit" by an earlier draft board!

Lt. Col. Rucels was officially relieved of his post as commander of the Latvian Air Legion only in February 1945 (four months after it had ceased to exist).



A Latvian pilot after his 1000th flight. Note that the small deer was the squadron mascot.

Uniforms and Insignia of the Air Legion

Members of the Air Legion wore standard Luftwaffe uniform and rank insignia, a red/white/red arm shield being the only distinguishing feature. Qualified pilots of the former Latvian Air Force continued to wear their pre-war aircrew badge as well as its German equivalent.



A group of Latvian Air Legion volunteers are decorated with the Iron Cross by their German commander. The red/white/red Latvian arm shield appears to be worn on both left and right arms. Man, second left, wears Latvian Pilot's badge below his Luftwaffe eagle.



Badge of the Aviation Regiment: silver falcon and red enameled swastika. Bestowed upon visiting foreign airmen, especially from Lithuania, Estonia and Poland.



Latvian Air Force Pilot's badge: silver wreath and falcon, red elongated swastika at top, and scroll with monogram A.S. (Aviation School) in yellow.

Senior Lieutenant J. Rucels in 1927 wearing the Aviation School badge awarded for completing the flying course. The two lower badges are infantry regiment badges.



Latvian Observer's badge: similar to the Pilot's badge but with the falcon facing right instead of left, and with a gold propeller instead of a silver propeller. Bestowed on observers who graduated from the Army Observer School.

LATVIANS IN THE R.A.D.

Some Latvian lads did volunteer to serve in the German Labor Service, but these were for the most part young men wishing to gain admittance to a German university or the Latvian University at Riga.

With the mobilization of Latvian youth, young men, and later girls, were simply drafted into the R.A.D. and sent piecemeal to camps in Germany. There were all-

Latvian units up to company strength. In January 1944 the Latvian R.A.D. was recalled to his homeland and two or three Latvian R.A.D. companies set up under German officers. Most of the N.C.O.s were also German, only a few were Latvian. The work consisted entirely of the construction of defenses against the impending Red Army assault. After their obligatory six months' R.A.D. service, all fit males were automatically drafted into the 15th Division. By August 1944, all the male Latvian R.A.D. personnel, irrespective of length of service, were pulled out of Latvia and sent to the S.S. Training Camp at Konitz, where they were transformed into *Panzergranadiers*. After one month there, the better educated were selected for officer or N.C.O. training, the others were downgraded to railway guards or pioneers (the latter became the *Lett. Pi. Btl.* 15). They were united with the 15th Division only in February 1945.



Front cover of the magazine "Latvju Jaunatne" showing Latvian volunteers in the German R.A.D. It does not appear that Latvians in the R.A.D. wore any distinguishing insignia to indicate their nationality.

L.J.O., LANDDIENST AND FLAK HELPERS

An active Boy Scout movement had existed in Latvia before the war, but under the brief and bloody Soviet occupation of 1940/41, most of its leaders, along with leaders of other Latvian youth organizations, were arrested, tortured, and in many cases, killed. The Germans conceived the idea of forming a "unified" Latvian youth organization early in 1942, but the Latvian civil authorities resisted the concept when it became clear that it was to be little better than an extension of the Hitler Youth to Latvia. In June 1942 the Germans recalled Capt. Aleksandrs Mateass, a former Latvian Scout leader, from the front where he was serving in a Latvian Police battalion (he was the first Latvian to win an Iron Cross while in a Latvian unit). It was hoped that he would prove a suitable puppet leader for the projected Latvian youth. Mateass was, however, not so maleable a character as the Germans supposed. Indeed, he pursued a very independent line while accepting the post of Chief of the Leadership and Advisory Staff of the newly created "Latvian Youth Organization" (*Latvju Jaunatnes Organizacija*, or L.J.O.).

The L.J.O. was officially inaugurated on 1 April 1943. It was, theoretically, a voluntary body, but since some headmasters simply enrolled their pupils *en masse*, it cannot be said to have been entirely so. By the end of the year it had a membership of between six and seven thousand. Mateass fought resolutely for its independence, but the struggle was an up-hill one and it wore him down. In December 1943 he asked to be allowed to return to duty at the front. His successor, Eriks Rullis, also a former Scoutmaster, was a more diplomatic character who spoke fluent German. He did his best to limit German influence in the L.J.O., but was no more successful than Mateass.

Rullis was at once faced with German demands that the L.J.O. be put to military or para-military use. By July 1944 all pretense of "consultation" between the German command and the leadership of the L.J.O. was abandoned and direct conscription applied. The boys (and girls) of the L.J.O. were utilized in two para-military capacities:

- (a) as *Landdienst* workers
- (b) as *Luftwaffe* (or *Flak*) Helpers.

The *Germanischer Landdienst*, run by the Hitler Youth, had for the past two years been taking on young people from "nordic" Europe for training as future colonizers of a conquered Russia. This concept was now extended to Latvia, ironically at the very time when the *Landdienst* volunteers from western Europe were being hastily shipped home in the face of the Red Army's reconquest of the territories they were expecting to farm! The Latvian *Landdienst* was supplied with uniforms by the Hitler Youth and indulged in some training of a para-military nature, but on the whole its work was peaceful (such as assisting with harvesting).

The *Luftwaffe*, or *Flak*, Helpers, on the other hand, were entirely military. This organization was run conjointly by the Hitler Youth, S.S. and *Luftwaffe*. Its object was to augment the air defenses of the Reich and generally act as unskilled auxiliaries in whichever branch of that service (transport, catering, administrative, medical, etc.)

was in need of help. The Latvian youths were at first known as Luftwaffe Helpers (*Lw.-Helfer*), but in November 1944 this was changed to *S.S. Zölingen* (literally, "S.S. pupils," or "cadets"). The customary German assurances that the boys and girls would be used "only in the homeland" were, inevitably, disregarded. In October 1944 the majority were moved out of Latvia, mainly to the S.S. training establishment at Eger in Gau Sudetenland. They were told that their education would not suffer as a result of their service. They were accompanied by a number of Latvian school teachers. Predictably, the adolescent boys found the prospect of soldiering more attractive than study. As one German N.C.O. jocularly told them, "You can do what you like, you are S.S. men now." Bookwork tended to be neglected! In April 60 boys were moved in Eger to Aussig (also in Sudetenland), where an Antitank Company "Riga" (*Panzer-Jagd-Kompanie "Riga"*) was formed by Major Rullis. This make-shift unit consisted of three platoons of 20 boys each. Platoon leaders were mainly ex-Latvian Legion N.C.O.s who



Indulis Kažocinš

had become separated from their parent unit. Its commander was Lt. Indulis Kažocinš. No antitank armament was available, however, making it impossible for the company to engage in tank battles. The company would supposedly act in support of a regular formation of some kind (hopefully the 15th Latvian Division), but the war was over before any use could be made of it. On 6 May the company left Aussig and marched west to surrender to the U.S. forces.

Uniforms and Insignia of L.J.O., Landdienst and Flak Helpers

The L.J.O., a civilian formation, was in fact controlled by H.J. Gebiet "Ostland" and much of its uniform was supplied by that organization. Its rank insignia, however, was entirely its own.

Leaders wore on the left upper arm a red/white/red brassard with, in the center, a white rhombus on which is the sunburst and three stars emblem in yellow and red. This brassard was a German-inspired copy of that worn by the Hitler Youth. The colors are those of the Latvian flag. (The "red" is closer to maroon.)

The cap badge is also a rhombus with a white saltire on red. In the center is a red elongated swastika on yellow; the outer edge of the badge is also yellow. This device was *not* used on the brassard either of the L.J.O. or, later, the Latvian Flak helpers. This has to be emphasized because it is often wrongly shown as such - based apparently on faulty original German illustrations of the respective brassards of their foreign Flak helpers! Leaders wore, above this rhombus on their Hitler Youth style peaked caps, the sunburst and three stars badge. Boys wore a grey shirt with a red and white cravat, known in Latvian as a *Prievite*. In summer, grey shorts were worn by the boys, in winter the dark blue winter uniform of the Hitler Youth. Girls wore either a white blouse and dark skirt or a grey shirt and grey skirt. Both sexes had as their left arm device a white cotton rhombus with the sunburst and stars in full color. All ranks wore the rhombus in metal, on the left breast pocket. Belts and belt buckles were Hitler Youth.

The Landdienst took over most of the features of L.J.O. uniform, including its rank insignia (worn on grey shoulder straps even with the dark Hitler Youth winter garb). The grey shirt and *Prievite* were retained. A cuff title GERMANISCHER LANDDIENST was issued and worn. The L.J.O. brassard was replaced by a red/white/red arm shield surmounted by a yellow LATVIJA on black. All ranks wore either black forage caps (piped in white for officers), or standard H.J. ski caps. Belts and buckles were Hitler Youth and the H.J. *Fahrtenmesser* (camping knife) was issued to all ranks, including officers. The L.J.O. rhombus was retained on the cap, and left breast pocket, badge.

◀ An officer of the L.J.O., wears above his right breast pocket a "bar" with the word STABS (Staff). Note the luftwaffe belt buckle (non-commissioned ranks type!)



Members of the L.J.O. stamp travel documents. Note the girl's arm shield.

The Landdienst, in its turn, was very largely absorbed by the Luftwaffe, or Flak, Helper scheme. The *Luftwaffen-Helfer* uniform should properly have consisted of a "battle dress" type of blouse and trousers in Luftwaffe blue-grey with *Flieger H.J.* shoulder straps (black piped in light blue), a black belt with a Luftwaffe other ranks buckle, black shoes and a Luftwaffe blue-grey colored ski cap of the Hitler Youth variety with, on the front, the L.J.O. rhombus badge. With this uniform an L.J.O. brassard (red/white/red with the three stars and sunburst emblem) should have been worn. In practice, all manner of unofficial variations were tolerated. Not enough brassards were available, and those that were tended to be incomplete, that is to say, they were simply red/white/red without the L.J.O. emblem. These "economy" brassards were flimsy and quickly became crumpled. They were soon discarded and some boys elected to wear instead the red/white/red arm shield of the Latvian Legion. Another deviation was that the flying eagle of the Luftwaffe was sometimes worn above the right breast pocket; it was also occasionally sported as a cap badge above the L.J.O. metal badge. A few boys wore the Latvian army sunburst and three stars metal cap badge in preference to the official L.J.O. metal badge. No one appears to have raised any objection to these innovations!

The Germans were unwilling to second any personnel from the Latvian Division to act as officers for their young Flak helper compatriots. Only two Latvian officers, Capt. Edgars Rempe and Lt. Indulis Kažociņš, were granted Luftwaffe commissions and attached to *Luftflotte I*, given charge of about 5,000 boys. Some L.J.O. leaders and



Officer with boys of the Latvian Flak-Helfer corps.



Arnis Kēkulis



Officers cap badge. Two parts, both colored enamel.



The Chief of Staff of the L.J.O. inspects Landdienst Leaders at the successful conclusion of their training course.

teachers also accompanied the lads, but these had no military status. One Latvian Sergeant, serving as an individual volunteer in the Luftwaffe, was also seconded to help out. That was the sum total! The two officers wore the red collar tabs of the Flak artillery with standard Luftwaffe uniform with a red/white/red Latvian arm shield.

In November 1944, the Latvian Flak helpers were given new identity papers as S.S. Zölingen and were issued with a black triangular arm badge with the S.S. runes in white. There were not enough of these to go around and only a minority of the Latvian boys ever received one.*

Latvian girls were also conscripted as Luftwaffe-Helferinnen and were issued with Luftwaffe uniform. On the left upper arm they wore the L.J.O. rhombus of the design used as a cap badge; that is, a white saltire on red with an elongated red swastika in the center. This was cloth, but the same badge in metal was used as their cap badge (on a ski cap of the Luftwaffe type). Some cloth versions of this cap badge do exist, but these seem to have been the exception rather than the rule.

Official uniform as Flieger HJ with Luftwaffe belt buckle and L.J.O. cap badge.



Latvian girls as Flak Helferinnen. Note that the arm badge appears to be a large cloth version of the L.J.O. emblem.

*No record can be found of a "bar" with Kara Atbalstītājs sometimes reported as being worn below the runic triangle. These two words are supposed to mean "War Helper" but this must have been a German invention as they did not make sense in Latvian!



Indulis Kazociņš



Brassard worn by the Latvian Flak-Helfer.



The above illustrated brassard is shown in one German war-time publication as "for Latvian Flak helpers." Such a brassard was never in fact worn by Latvians (as testified by several veterans) and although examples have appeared after the war, they are either fabrications or of an unissued design.



Indulis Kazociņš

Unofficial uniform with Luftwaffe eagle on cap and shirt. Note the Latvian Legion arm shield.



Arnis Kēkals

This 15-year-old Latvian Air Force Helper engaged in land battles in "Festung Kurland," single-handedly destroyed a Russian T-34 tank in close combat. (Note the respective "Single-handed Destruction of a Tank" Badge on his right sleeve). He is shown receiving the Iron Cross 2nd class from an officer.

WAR ORDER OF LACPLESIS

Arnis Kekišs



3rd Class

This Order, Latvia's only award for bravery, was instituted on 11th November 1919. It is also known as the Order of the Bear-slayer ("Bear-tearer" literally). This name derives from the Latvian legend of Lacplesis, a boy brought up by a she-bear who acquired the strength of a bear. Later when his adoptive father was attacked by a bear, the boy tore it apart with his own hands.

The Order is in three classes:

1st Class: a breast star, sash and 60mm sash badge. Awarded only to senior commanders for distinguished leadership in war.

2nd Class: a 50 mm cross worn from a ribbon around the neck and awarded only to Colonels and above for leadership in battle.

3rd Class: a 40mm cross from a ribbon awarded for personal bravery in the face of the enemy.

The "cross" of the Order is a semi-swastika in white enamel with gold/red/gold edges. The centerpiece is the encounter between Lacplesis and the bear. The ribbon (and sash) have four white and three red stripes each of equal width.

It could be awarded to foreigners as well as Latvians.

Instituted on 25th March 1924, this is Latvia's second highest award. The grading is:

1st Class: 44mm star, 110mm sash and 54mm sash badge. The star is worn on the left breast.

2nd Class: 41mm star (worn on right), no sash but a 49mm cross worn from a 52mm ribbon around the neck.

3rd Class: the neck decoration only.

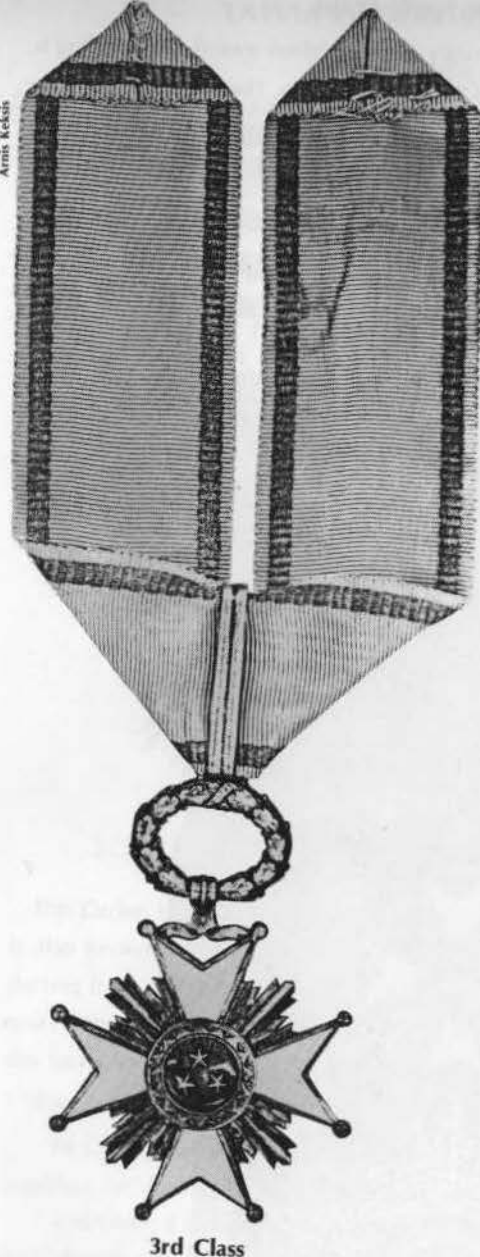
4th Class: a 40mm cross on a 32mm ribbon with a rosette.

5th Class: as above but without the rosette.

Kai Meyer Collection



1st Class with sash and sash badge.



3rd Class



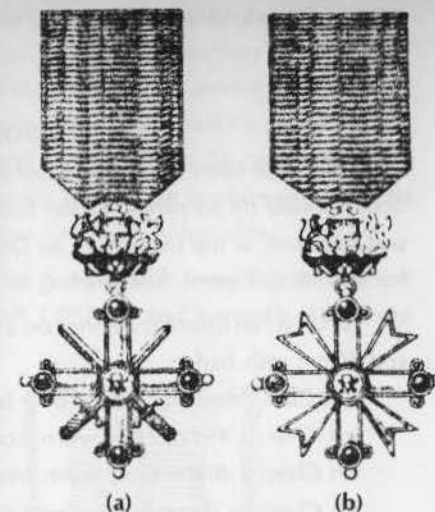
4th Class



Medal of Honor. The reverse has *Par Teviju* above an oak leaf sprig. Diameter of Medal is 35mm.

There are also three Medals of Honor: bronze, silver and gilt. These hang from a 32mm triangular ribbon.

The basic "badge" of the Order is a white enamel, gilt outlined cross. The ribbon is light blue with two gold thread stripes.



5th Class of the Order
(a) Military (b) Civil

Detailed photo of the military version of the order.

Instituted on 12 July 1938, this Order is named after Viesturs (or Vesthardus) ruler of Zemgale (part of modern Latvia) who defeated a force of invading Teutons.

It is in five classes plus three Medals of Honor.

1st Class: a 44mm star (worn on left) with a 110mm sash and 54mm sash badge.

2nd Class: a 41mm star (worn on the right) with a 49mm decoration worn around the neck from a 32mm ribbon.

3rd Class: the above neck decoration only.

4th Class: a 40mm cross worn from a 32mm ribbon with a rosette.

5th Class: as above but without the rosette.

The Medal of Honor (Bronze, Silver and Gilt) is 30mm in diameter and worn from a 32mm triangular ribbon. The ribbon is, apart from width, the same for all grades and is plain red.

The basic "badge" of the Order is a white enamel cross with a gold outline. At the end of each arm is a red disc.

The military grade has gold crossed swords between the arms; the civil grade fish-tailed rays. As part of the suspension both types have the coat of arms of Latvia in full color.

The Medal of Honor has a facsimile of the "badge" of the Order on the front and on the reverse the Latin words *Confortamini et pugnate* (Be strong and fight), below this is a sprig of oak leaves.

The Order was given mainly for merit in the developing or training of the armed forces of Latvia, or in safeguarding its frontiers.

CROSS OF MERIT

The Cross of Merit (*Atzinības Krusts*), also known as the Cross of National Recognition, is based on an extinct Order founded in Courland in 1710, but revived in 1938 and awarded, in the manner of an Order, in five grades and four Medals of Honor, for acts of civil merit. The grading is:

1st Class: an 85mm cross (not on a star) worn on the left breast with a 110mm sash and 49mm sash badge.

2nd Class: the 85mm cross only but worn on the right.

3rd Class: a 49mm cross worn from a 32mm ribbon around the neck.

4th Class: a 40mm cross worn from a 32mm ribbon with a rosette.

5th Class: as above but without the rosette.

The Medal of Honor is in four grades: a Large gold (46mm), Small gold (36mm), Silver (36mm), and Bronze (36mm). All hang from a 30mm triangular ribbon.

The ribbon is the same, apart from width, for all classes and is red with a silver stripe slightly inset from each edge.

The basic "badge" of the Order is a white enamel cross with a gilt outline and gilt balls on the extremities of the arms. Between the arms, and as part of the suspension, are gold rings. The center piece of the cross features the arms of Latvia in color above the date 1938.

The Medal of Honor has a facsimile of the "badge" on the obverse. The reverse has a falcon in flight holding a ring.



5th Class



Medal of Honor

CROSS OF MERIT AND MEDAL OF THE AIZSARGI ORGANIZATION

The Aizsargi Organization was the Latvian equivalent of the British Territorial Army or the American National Guard, that is to say, a part-time voluntary citizens army reserve (in Latvia it also acted as a Special Constables Reserve). It awarded two decorations: a Cross of Merit, and a Medal. The cross is white enamel with a semi-swastika, 40mm across, with a red lozange with a hand and sword in gilt in the center. Between the arms of the cross is a wreath of green enamel. The ribbon is white with two red stripes near the center. There is an outer yellow stripe on either side.

The Medal is 28mm with a 30mm ribbon which is green with two white stripes near the edges. On the reverse of the Medal is PAR CENTIBU and a wreath of oak and laurel leaves.



Cross of Merit
(Obverse)



Medal of Merit
(Obverse)

LATVIAN FREEDOM FIGHTER'S COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL

Latvian Freedom Fighter's Commemorative Medal was instituted on 13 January 1923 and was awarded to all those who had taken part in the fight for independence between 1918 and 1920. It features a silver arm and sword on a red shield-shaped background with three gold stars (a variant also exists with silver stars). Above this is a scroll with 1918 PAR TEVZEMI 1920 (1918 FOR THE FATHERLAND 1920). The reverse is plain. The ribbon is 30mm wide and is dark red with a narrow white central stripe (like the national flag of Latvia).

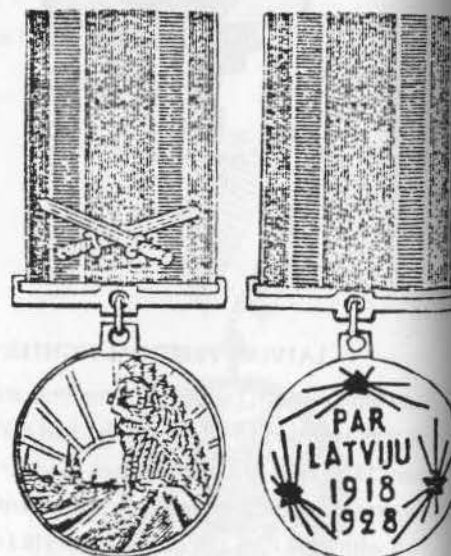


Latvian Freedom Fighter's Commemorative Medal

Note swastika on hilt of sword.

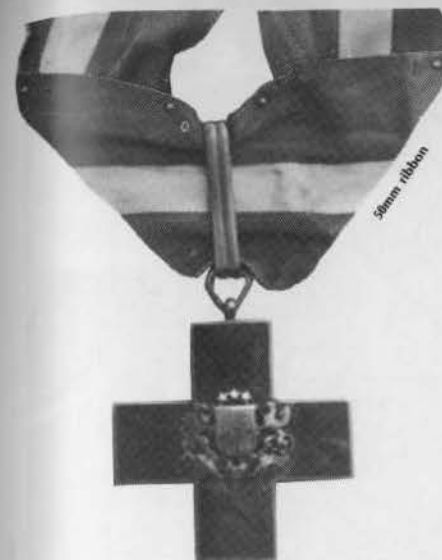
COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL OF THE 10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Instituted on 13 October 1928 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the war of independence, it is a 35mm bronze gilt medal. Obverse shows a file of soldiers behind which is a rising sun. The ribbon is red with two light blue stripes each narrowly outlined in yellow. Civilians were awarded the medal without swords, military veterans with crossed swords on the ribbon.



Obverse

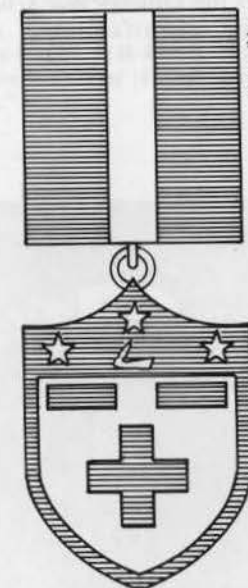
Reverse



Cross of Honor



Medal of Honor



Medal of Merit.

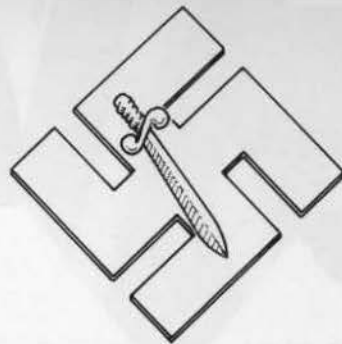
Founded on 11 January 1927, in four classes:

- (i) Cross of Honor (worn around neck)
- (ii) Medal of Honor (worn on chest)
- (iii) Medal of Merit (worn on chest)
- (iv) Badge of Honor (worn on lappet)

The first two are both 55mm crosses. The Medal of Merit is a 38mm shield-shaped badge worn from a ribbon. The Badge of Honor is similar to the Medal of Merit but is without a ribbon - it is a pin-back award. The ribbon is the same, apart from width, for the first three grades, and is red/white/red.

Awards were made for service in, or substantial contributions to, the Latvian Red Cross Society.

Special recognition goes to Mr. Zanis Grundmanis for his assistance in this Orders and Decorations section.



Commemorative badge of the Independent Students' Company of Col. Kalpaka's Battalion in War of Independence, 1918-1919. Swastika is made of amber.

Senior Lieutenant Augusts Keksis, wearing marksman's awards for rifle and pistol. On his left breast pocket he wears the Officers War School badge.



Arnis Keksis



Arnis Keksis

Graduates Badge of the Officers War School. The motto around the outer edge varied each year.



Knight's Cross winner, Roberts Ancans (19th Division). On his right breast pocket he wears the Latvian Platoon Commanders Course graduates badge.



Arnis Keksis

Platoon Commanders Course Graduates Badge. It is 40mm by 30mm. Motto means "For Fatherland and Freedom."



Arnis Keksis

Marksmanship Badge: Rifle. The same type of badge was used for marksmanship with other weapons; in each case the appropriate weapon is featured in the center. It came in three grades: bronze, silver and gold. There are variations of this badge due to different manufacturers.



Arnis Keksis

Badge of Latvian Army Veterans Association

LITHUANIA

Lithuania's history has been dominated by her more powerful neighbors. Once dynastically linked with Poland, Lithuania was absorbed into the Russian Empire in the 18th century and was to remain so until the end of the First World War.

A nationalist movement first surfaced in the 1880s and by the start of the 20th century demands for autonomy were becoming increasingly strident.

In September 1915 German armies entered Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, and allowed a "National Congress" to be set up with powers virtually amounting to those of a provisional government. In March 1918 the German Foreign Office proposed that an independent Lithuania "be linked in a perpetual alliance with the Reich." This was carried one stage further when the crown of Lithuania was offered to the Duke of Württemberg. The collapse of Germany in November 1918 put an end to the whole project but not to the concept of an independent Lithuania. For the next five years the Lithuanians had to fight off would-be invaders - Russian, German and Polish. The Soviet troops and the German free-booters (under Rüdiger von der Goltz) were driven out by the end of 1919, but the conflict with Poland over their respective frontier claims was not resolved until March 1923, and that with East Prussia (over the future of Memel) not until the following year. Memel, once a stronghold of the Teutonic Order, was a particular thorn in the side of the Lithuanian government. Nearly sixty percent of the population of Memel and its surrounding district was German. After Hitler's accession to power in Germany, Nazi influence in Memel predominated. In the City's *Landtag* local Nazis had 25 out of the 29 seats. A Memelland equivalent of the *Allgemeine S.S.* (known as the *Ordnungsdienst*, literally, "Order Service") was set up. It wore an all-black uniform almost identical to its German counterpart except that a black ski cap was worn in place of a peaked cap, and on the left side of this was a white metal badge in the form of elk's antlers (the emblem of Memel). On 20 March 1939 Hitler demanded the immediate return to Germany of the Memel district. Unsupported by any ally or by the League of Nations, Lithuania was

forced to yield. Memel "went home" to the Reich two days later. Before war broke out in September 1939, Memel was fully integrated into the German Reich.



Members of the Memel Ordnungsdienst which, after the incorporation of Memel into the Reich, became S.S. Standarte 105. Note the elk's antler (the local emblem) worn on the side of the ski cap.

Oberführer Dr. Neumann, leader of the Memel Ordnungsdienst, is greeted by Hitler at the time of the "liberation" of Memel. (Both pictures are from the S.S. organ "Das Schwarz Korps" of 30 March 1939.)



After the incorporation of Memel into the Reich, Standarte 105 was granted the right to this special collar patch with the elk's antlers.





Since its commander, Dr. Neumann, wore his rank on both collars, he was allowed to wear the antlers as a sleeve badge.



The above badge (which also exists in a form without the wreath) has not been positively identified, but would certainly appear to have been the civil lapel badge (or honor lapel badge) of the Memel Ordnungsdienst.



Civil lapel badge of the Memeldeutscher Kultur Verband (Memel-German Culture Union). An organization for spreading Nazi propaganda among the Volksdeutsche of Memel. (Green wolfhook on white within a red circle - the colors of Memel.)

In Lithuania, fascism of a native variety was not unknown. Augustinas Voldemaras, first Prime Minister of an independent Lithuania, was also leader of a fascist party popularly called the Voldemaras Movement, but correctly as "The Iron Wolf."

At the start of hostilities on 1 September 1939, Hitler tried to incite the Lithuanians into joining him in his assault on Poland, ostensibly to settle their long-standing grievances against the Poles over the frontier question, but in practice merely to furnish Germany with a pretext for occupying their country. Lithuania rejected Hitler's offer, but this did not save its precarious independence for long. On 10 October 1939, Stalin pressured Lithuania into signing a Mutual Assistance Pact under the terms of which Soviet army garrisons would be stationed in Lithuania and the Red Air Force granted the use of Lithuanian airfields. This was but the prelude to a full-scale Russian occupation - which took place on 15 June 1940. On 3 August Lithuania was formally declared an integral part of the Soviet Union.

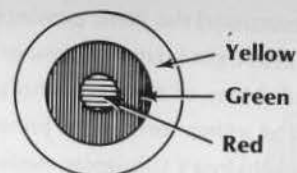
The entire Lithuanian land forces were absorbed into the Red Army as the 29th Light Infantry Corps. About 45,000 "unreliable" Lithuanian citizens were deported to the U.S.S.R.

Shortly after the launching of "Operation Barbarossa" (Hitler's invasion of Russia), in June 1941, Lithuania was overrun by German troops. On 25 July it was declared a part of the *Ostland*. A German *Zivilverwaltung* (Civil Administration), under Adrian von Renteln was set up to run the country.

When the Red Army evacuated the Baltic provinces in the face of the German advance, it took with it the 29th Light Infantry Corps, or at least those members of it who had not already deserted. Many of the Red Army's unwilling Lithuanian conscripts had fled to the forests and either formed, or joined, resistance groups. Prominent among these was Colonel Shkirpa's Lithuanian Activist Front. Some of these patriotic marauders succeeded in liberating towns (Vilnius and Kaunas are examples), before the arrival of the Wehrmacht. After the country had been cleared of Soviet troops, the Germans mustered the disparate resistance bodies into so-called "Self-Defense Battalions," each of around 500 to 600 men. There were twenty-four such battalions (all light infantry with the exception of one classed as "cavalry"). The overall strength amounted to 250 officers and 13,000 men - all Lithuanians. Only a small German liaison staff was maintained, usually a Captain and half-a-dozen senior N.C.O.s for each battalion. Armament was of German or Russian origin. There was, of course, no heavy weaponry or armor. Uniform was, at first, Lithuanian army,* but later this was replaced by Germany army or police field grey. Until this transformation was accomplished, a mixture of both was often worn! An arm shield in the Lithuanian colors and a cap cockade (again in the national colors) was authorized. The generic term *Schutzmannschaften* (or *Schuma*) replaced the original designation of Self-Defense Battalions. The Lithuanian *Schuma* were used mainly either in the homeland or in neighboring Belorussia, although a few were sent as far south as the Ukraine. Normally their role was defensive - the protection of supply depots and lines of communication - but occasionally they were used operationally against Partisan strongholds. Sometimes, such was the "fluid" nature of the "front," they would find themselves caught up in actions against the Red Army. Casualties, up to July 1944, totaled some 400 killed and more than twice that number wounded. The Lithuanian *Schuma* was commanded by Lt. Col. A. Spokevicius, a regular officer of the pre-war Lithuanian army, but in reality his authority was largely nominal, more in the nature of an Inspectorate. His principal function was that of liaison with the German security forces.

In May 1943 the term *Schuma* was abandoned in Lithuania, thereafter the designation Police Battalions was employed. The Lithuanian Police Battalions were numbered 1 to 15, 251 to 265, and 301 to 310. Their total strength was around 8,000 men. By combining four battalions, Police Regiments were created. The 1st Lithuanian Police Regiment was formed between 3 and 14 July 1944 in Kaunas (southwest Lithuania). By this time Lithuania was well within the war zone. The Police Regiments were now fighting to defend their homeland, not against Partisans, but against the full might of the Red Army.

*On their Lithuanian caps they often had a large white "D" standing for DRAUGOVININKAS (Volunteer Helper).



Cap cockade
possibly worn by
Schuma.

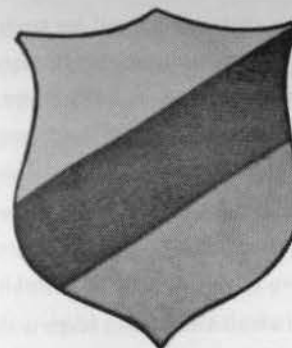


Nigel Thomas

Left and below:
Lithuanian Schuma.
Note the variety of
headgear in lower
picture.



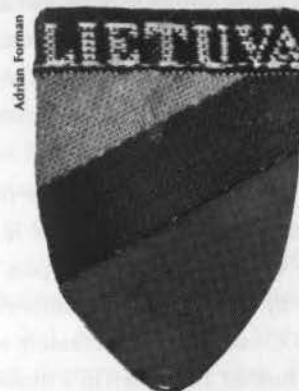
Nigel Thomas



(a)



(b)



Adrian Forman

(c)



Hitz

(d)

Examples of Lithuanian arm shields. All are in the national colors of yellow/green/red. (a) and (b) are the official German made type. (c) and (d) would appear to be home made with the Lithuanian word for Lithuania at the top.

"S.S. LEGION" AND THE L.T.C.

An attempt was made in January 1943 by the Higher S.S. and Police Leader in Lithuania, Major-General Wysocki, to raise a Lithuanian S.S. Legion on the lines of those already existing in Estonia and Latvia. It met with total failure. No volunteers presented themselves. The Germans reacted by closing all institutions of higher learning and arresting a large number of intellectuals whom they blamed for sabotaging the scheme by advising their pupils and students not to volunteer. As a warning of what they might expect in the future, the Lithuanians were informed that a new Higher S.S. and Police Leader would replace the "too indulgent" Wysocki. The new man was S.S. Major General Harm, formerly Higher S.S. and Police Leader in the Ukraine. He brought with him a reputation for pitiless severity. His arrival appears to have had the anticipated intimidating effect. The Lithuanian civil authorities suggested a compromise - an appeal would be made by them for young men to come forward "to fight Bolshevism," but no mention would be made of the words "S.S." or "Legion." The Lithuanians wanted a Lithuanian officered force which would serve

only within the bounds of its homeland. There was certainly a need for such a force. Resistance within the country had greatly increased although this was not necessarily of native origin. Soviet Partisan units were being infiltrated in large numbers into Lithuania (by parachute and by sea). A "Committee for Guerrilla Movements in Lithuania" had been established in the U.S.S.R. the previous December. This Soviet-backed insurgency was not entirely welcomed by the Lithuanians, partly because it resulted in harsh German reprisals, but much more because it was seen (no doubt correctly) as a pretext for, and possible prelude to, Soviet intervention in Lithuania.

The German authorities rejected the concept of an all-Lithuanian force with its own officers. They insisted that it must at all times be subordinate to the German S.S. and Police. The wrangling over this point lasted almost a year. Only the imminent arrival of the Red Army on Lithuanian soil resolved the conflict. The Germans now accepted the original proposal. In February 1944 they agreed that a "Lithuanian Territorial Corps" (L.T.C.)* with its own native officers should be raised and that this would be used only in the internal defense of the homeland.

On 16 February 1944 an appeal was broadcast for 5,000 volunteers. The response surprised both the Germans and the Lithuanian authorities. No fewer than 19,000 applications were received! The Germans unwisely tried to draft the "surplus" 14,000 into the Wehrmacht. This was fiercely opposed by the Lithuanian authorities who suggested that instead the strength of the L.T.C. should be increased to, they proposed, 13 battalions, each of 750 men, with a further 1,500 men in a Reserve Battalion. The Germans reluctantly agreed and promised to supply uniforms and arms, but stipulated that no weapons would be handed over until such time as, in their opinion, the L.T.C. was "battleworthy." The Germans never fully trusted the Lithuanians not to turn their weapons against them.

On 22 March 1944, Field Marshal Model, commander-in-chief of Army Group North, ordered the raising of 15 extra Lithuanian battalions to defend German airfields. On 6 May a "general mobilization" was ordered in Lithuania. It was a fiasco. On 9 May the Germans reneged on their agreement regarding the independent status of the L.T.C. It was now placed under the direct control of the German military authorities. The result was a virtual mutiny on the part of the L.T.C. staff. They were at once placed under arrest and the L.T.C. declared disbanded. Those who tried to resist were shot (83 Lithuanians were killed in the course of this action and a further 110 were dispatched to concentration camps in the Reich). About 3,000 former L.T.C. men were forcibly drafted into the Flak batteries of the Luftwaffe.

FATHERLAND DEFENSE FORCE

During the summer of 1944 with the Red Army advancing across eastern Lithuania, numerous small armed groups of Lithuanians fell back with the German army. At the

suggestion of two Lithuanian officers (Captains Jatulis and Cesna) these miscellaneous units were amalgamated into a single combat formation under the title, Fatherland Defense Force (*Tevynes Apsaugos Rinktinė*, or T.A.R.), popularly referred to as the Zemaiciu Defense Force. The T.A.R. consisted of two Regiments, both commanded by Lithuanian officers, the whole force being under the charge of a German officer, Colonel (later General) Mäder. The T.A.R. was assigned defensive positions near Papilės. On 7th October 1944 a new Russian offensive smashed the German line and a general retreat ensued. The two T.A.R. Regiments were heavily engaged and sustained crippling casualties. The survivors, less than one thousand men, were regrouped in East Prussia as the Lithuanian Engineer Battalion (*Lietuvos Statybos Pionierviu Batalionai*) consisting of eight Companies. Some of the T.A.R. soldiers quit their unit in the course of the retreat preferring to remain behind in Lithuania to form anti-Soviet partisan bands and carry on the fight in the rear of the Red Army.*

The Lithuanian Engineer Battalion was given the job of strengthening the defenses along the Baltic coast where the bulk of its members were cut off and annihilated by the Russian forces - only a few were rescued by the German Navy and ended in Lubeck in Germany.

POLICE BATTALIONS

The closing days of 1944 also witnessed the end of the Lithuanian Police Battalions. The 1st, 2nd, 6th, 9th, 253rd and 257th Battalions, which had accompanied the retreating German forces, were disarmed and disbanded. Their members were redistributed among various Luftwaffe ground units (mainly the Flak defenses) although a few of the more experienced combatants were assigned to German army units and took part, along with other foreign nationals, in the defense of Berlin in the last days of the war.

The 5th, 13th and 256th Battalions remained on active duty in Latvia and were trapped in the Courland Pocket. Along with the rest of Field Marshal Schörner's Army Group, they fought on until the final capitulation in May 1945.

The other Police Battalions had been disbanded and their personnel reallocated to the remaining Battalions to make up numbers. It is said that two Lithuanian Police Battalions were dispatched to the Balkans to fight Tito's Partisans (but this is unconfirmed).

There is no doubt that the Lithuanians suffered heavy losses in the defense of their homeland.

CONSTRUCTION BATTALIONS

After the abortive attempt to raise a Lithuanian S.S. Legion, the Germans settled for the creation of Lithuanian Engineer, or Construction, companies (*Litauische Bauabteilungen*). Recruitment for these was helped by the fact that the Germans let it

*This struggle, seldom mentioned in western histories (and never in Soviet ones!) continued until well into the 1950s.

be known that any young man of military age who failed to do his duty and "volunteer" might end up by being deported to Germany for compulsory labor. Some success was, in this manner, achieved. The first companies were raised in April and May 1943 and consisted of some 600 to 700 men each. Three companies plus a "transport company" (horses only!), constituted a *Bau Bataillon*, of which five were eventually formed. These were then attached to German Pioneer Battalions of Army Group North. The officers commanding the Construction Battalions were all ex-Lithuanian army regulars - four were Majors, one a Lt. Colonel. The work of the battalions was mainly road and railway construction and the building of defensive bunkers to protect the lines of communication. At first the Lithuanians were unarmed, but with the increase in Soviet Partisan activity, rifles and light machine guns were issued for self-protection. Appeals were made for the men of the *Bauabteilungen* to volunteer for the *Waffen S.S.* A promise of "several months of training in your homeland" was offered as an inducement. These blandishments proved quite successful. Some forty percent of the non-commissioned ranks availed themselves of the option, despite strong advice not to do so by their officers.

When (later) the L.T.C. was brought into being, there was some talk of merging the *Bauabteilungen* with it, but this came to nothing. After the L.T.C. was dissolved, the men of the construction companies were drafted into pioneer battalions of the *Wehrmacht* with only one Lithuanian of commissioned rank left to act as a liaison with the Germans.

Lithuanians served as individual volunteers in the *Waffen S.S.* and as guards in concentration camps, but there was no all-Lithuanian *S.S.* unit, and it is highly unlikely that a Lithuanian arm shield was ever worn on *S.S.* uniform. The Lithuanian *Schuma* did not wear the *Treu, Tapfer Gehorsam* arm badge. A shield in the Lithuanian colors (yellow/green/red) exists in various patterns and this may well have been worn in its stead. A cockade in the same national colors is shown in German documents as being for Lithuanian volunteers, but it is not clear if this was ever worn. Locally produced arm shields with *LIETUVA* (the Lithuanian spelling of Lithuania) also exist and may have been intended for (or actually worn by) the L.T.C. or *Bauabteilungen*, or as an alternative to the "official" German produced arm shield.

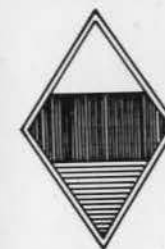
Mention must be made of the 1,012 young Lithuanians drafted by *Dienststelle Nickel* as *S.S.-Luftwaffen-Helfer* in the late summer and autumn of 1944. Youngsters of both sexes were conscripted to serve in the Flak, Signals, Transport and Searchlight branches of the *Luftwaffe*. They were issued with standard Flak Helper uniform - *Luftwaffe* blue with *Flieger H.J.* shoulder straps. On the left upper arm the boys wore a brassard in the colors of the Lithuanian flag (horizontal yellow/green/red in equal proportions). In the center of this on a white outlined red lozange is a white *Vytis* (Knight) - an emblem common to both Lithuania and neighboring Belorussia. The girls worn on their upper left arm only the centerpiece of this brassard, that is to say, the

white *Vytis* on a red lozange. Both sexes wore on the front of their ski caps a cloth yellow/green/red diamond outlined in white.

Lithuania was overrun by the Red Army between July and October 1944. It was incorporated into the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War.



Brassard for male Flak helpers.



Cap badge for Flak helpers.

Lithuanian female Flak helpers. They wear the uniform of the German *Luftwaffe* with, on the left upper arm, the centerpiece only of the male brassard as illustrated below.



BALTIC STATES: UNISSUED INSIGNIA



(a)



(b)



(c)

Three arm shields for (a) Estonia, (b) Latvia, and (c) Lithuania, all made by the BeVo firm of Wuppertal in Germany and apparently part of a series of "national" arm shields which were never adopted for use. These have two things in common: (i) they are highly colored - far too much so for active service use; (ii) the name of the country is given in its German form.

FINLAND

FINLAND

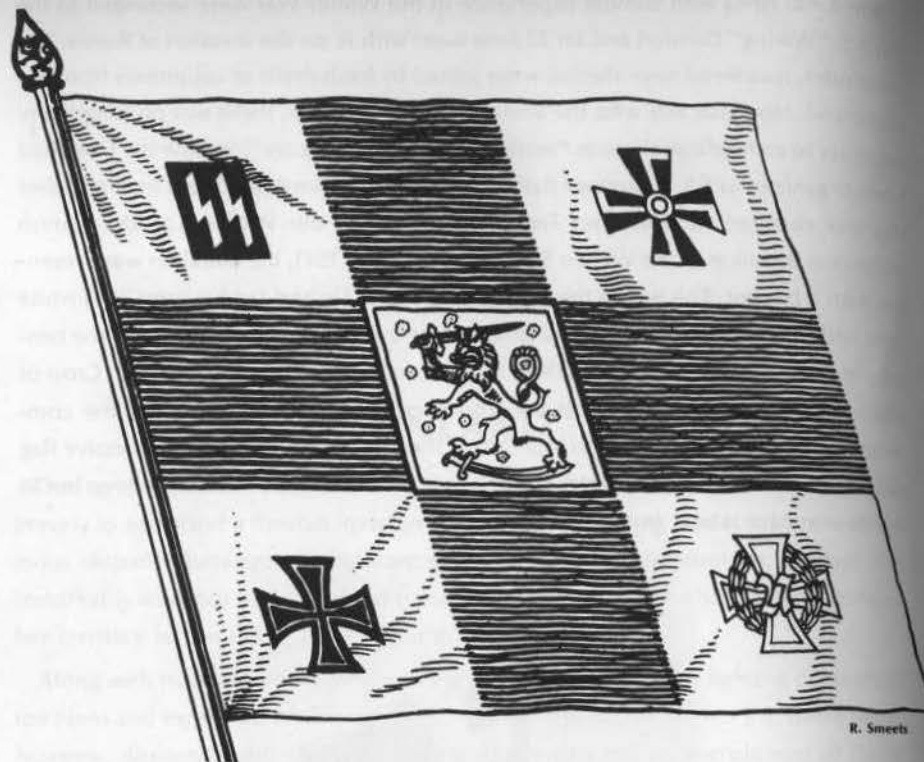
During the "Winter War" of November 1939 to March 1940, Finland had fought bravely to withstand a Russian invasion of her territory. Taking into account the enormous disparity between the military strengths of the two countries, Finland did remarkably well, but in the end was forced to sue for peace. She had to cede some of her territory to the U.S.S.R. but was not, herself, occupied.

Along with many others, Himmler was greatly impressed by the fighting qualities of the Finns and expressed an interest in recruiting them for his Waffen S.S. There were, however, diplomatic difficulties in the way of German military recruitment of Finns. Finland was Russia's recently defeated foe and Russia was currently Germany's "friend" - at least since the celebrated, or notorious, Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of August 1939. Any attempt by Germany to entice ex-enemies of the Soviet Union into her armed forces could only be interpreted as an unfriendly act. Recruitment had, therefore, to be circumspect. In February 1941 the German Embassy in Helsinki was instructed to select 1,000 Finns, half of whom had to have had military experience, and arrange for them to come to Germany under the cover of "workers for the German war industry." The Finnish government made the curious stipulation that no Finnish volunteer was to fight against the British or the Greeks (the only two enemies of Germany actually engaged in the war at that time), "or any other state at war with Germany except the Soviet Union." Since war with Russia did not break out until 22 June, it would seem that the Finns were anticipating future developments! They also raised an objection to the form of oath required of volunteers in the Waffen S.S. As a consequence of these, and other, prevarications, the Finnish volunteers did not begin to arrive in the Reich until May, and it was not until 5 June that the full complement arrived on Germany soil. It consisted of 125 officers, 109 N.C.O.s and 850 other ranks - sufficient to form a battalion. It was suggested that this should be called the *Jägerbataillon* (Light Infantry Battalion) in commemoration of the 27 *Jägerbataillon* which, in the First World War, had been formed from Finnish volunteers in the German service.

Some 400 Finns with combat experience in the Winter War were seconded to the 5th S.S. "Wiking" Division and on 22 June went with it on the invasion of Russia. The remainder, quartered near Vienna, were joined by fresh drafts of volunteers from the homeland. Now that war with the Soviet Union had begun, there was no longer any necessity to camouflage these as "workers for the war industry"! In June the Finns had been organized as S.S. Volunteer Battalion "Nordost" (North East), but in September this was changed to *Finnisches Freiwilligen Bataillon der Waffen S.S.* (the Finnish Volunteer Battalion of the Waffen S.S.) On 15 October 1941, the battalion was presented with a banner. This was in the form of the flag of Finland (a blue cross on a white field with the national emblem of a gold lion and swords on a red square in the center); in the upper left quarter was the S.S. runes, in the upper right the Finnish Cross of Liberty, in the lower left quarter the Iron Cross, and in the lower right the commemorative cross of the 27 *Jägerbataillon* of the First World War. This impressive flag did not survive the war. Its precise fate is uncertain, but it appears to have been lost in the course of a retreat in the spring of 1943.



Colonel Horn, Finnish military attaché to Berlin, presents the unit flag on 15 October 1941.



Flag of the Finnish Volunteer Battalion of the Waffen S.S. It is the national flag of Finland decorated with (top left) S.S. runes; (top right) the Cross of Liberty; (lower left) Iron Cross; (lower right) Cross of 27th Battalion of the Royal Prussian Light Infantry - this battalion consisted of Finnish riflemen in the German service in the First World War. This flag was presented to the Volunteer Battalion of the Waffen S.S. by Colonel Walter Horn, the Finnish Military Attache in Berlin on 15 October 1941.

The Finns wore standard Waffen S.S. uniform which included the S.S. runes on the collar - no special collar device was ever designed for them. But they were allowed to wear, on the left cuff, a black and silver cuff title with *Finnisches Frw. Bataillon der Waffen S.S.* and, above this, a shield with the Finnish national lion and swords emblem. This latter was sometimes in full color (yellow lion, white swords, and white roses on a yellow edged red shield), or in the more sober official "issue" variety which is simply a white lion and swords (the roses were omitted) on a white outlined black shield.

**Finnisches Frw. Bataillon
der Waffen**

Cuff title "Finnish Volunteer Battalion of the Waffen S.S."



"Unofficial" locally made arm badge. In the correct heraldic colors. Yellow lion on red field with white roses. Outer edge yellow. Blade of both lion's sword and the scimitar upon which it stands are white. Lion's right arm is white and black.



Official issue arm badge worn on lower left arm just above cuff title. Colors: black and white.

D. Delich



The war correspondent above wears the "S.S.-Kriegsbericht" and "Nordland" cuff title below the arm badge illustrated at left.

Volunteers signed on for a two year engagement. In February 1942 the battalion was declared fully trained and was dispatched to the Caucasus to join the "Wiking" Division where, united with those Finns who were already battle-tested veterans, it became the 3rd Battalion of the Nordland Regiment (one of the three constituent regiments of that division). In the battles that followed, Finnish losses, like those of other foreign volunteers, were heavy but were made good by further arrivals of young men from the homeland. In June 1943 the two year engagement of the original volunteers expired and the bulk of the battalion was sent on leave. The Finnish government had never been whole-heartedly behind the idea of sending volunteers to Germany and were by now entertaining doubts about Hitler's ability to win the war. They therefore discouraged re-enlistment. This would have left the Finnish unit so depleted that it would no longer have been a battalion. Himmler briefly toyed with the idea of creating a special winter fighting Finnish ski and sled unit and had even



This Finnish NCO holds a placard pertaining to "Jägerstandarte 1." At this time he was in Germany being trained at S.S.-Junkerschule Tölz (note cuff band).

selected for it the grandiloquent name "Kalevala" (after the Finnish epic saga), but this fanciful notion came to nothing. Rather than face the mortification of having to admit that the Finnish contribution to the S.S. had shrunk to less than company size, the *Reichsführer S.S.* decided to disband the battalion altogether. On 1 June 1943, it was officially stood down and its members were re-enlisted in the Finnish army. The gap left in the ranks of the Nordland Regiment by its removal was made up by drafting in an Estonian battalion (see chapter on Estonia). The German cadre personnel from the former Finnish battalion were transferred to the "De Ruyter" Regiment of the 23rd S.S. Volunteer Panzer-Grenadier Division "Nederland."

Finland opted out of the war in September 1944 by concluding a separate peace with the Soviet Union. Only a handful of Finns (certainly less than a hundred) elected to fight on with the Waffen S.S. as individual volunteers in various frontline formations. Casualty figures for the Volunteer Battalion were 222 killed and 557 wounded.



Commemorative badge for the North Front.



Commemorative badge for Lapland Front.



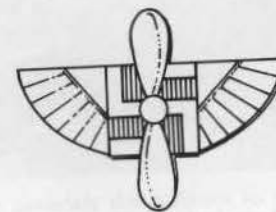
Pilot's badge. Silver with, in the center, a black swastika on a blue circle. First instituted in 1918.



Wireless-Operator/Air Gunner's badge. Same design as Pilot's badge except that crossed lightning flashes are substituted for the top "wing" and the swastika in the center is replaced by a black gunsight on blue. Instituted in April 1942.



Lt. Kyosti Karhila, Finland's 10th ranking ace with 29-1/2 air victories.



Air Force shoulder strap badge.



Air Force officer's cap badge.

The Air Force officer's cap badge, shoulder strap badge and pilot's badge are clearly shown being worn.



Andrew Mollo



A group of Finnish Air Force officers in front of an Me. 109 in Finnish markings (blue swastika). Man in the middle wears his Finnish Pilot's badge above a Luftwaffe Pilot's badge.



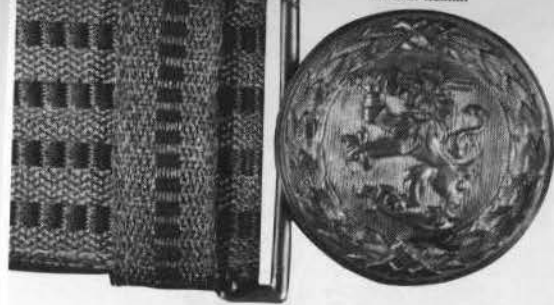
Air Force wing and fuselage marking (blue swastika on white). The Finnish swastika was not "tilted" as was the Latvian and German swastika.



FINNISH ARMY



Field Marshal Mannerheim presents decorations to members of the Finnish armed forces. Most of these are army officers, but the man whose hand he is shaking is in the dark blue uniform of the Finnish Air Force. His Pilot's badge can just be distinguished above his belt.



Army officer's belt and buckle.



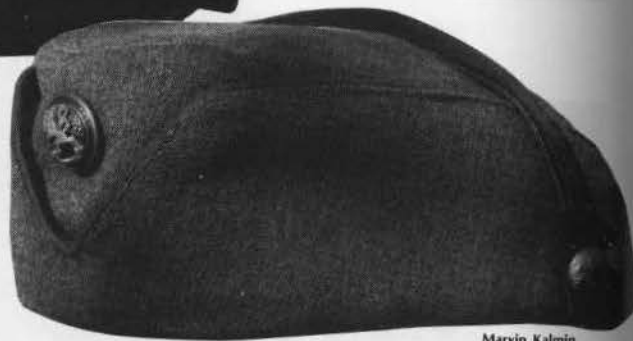
Army non-commissioned rank's belt and buckle



Army officer's peaked cap.

Marvin Kalmin

Army officer's forage cap.



Marvin Kalmin



Two versions of the Finnish army vehicle marking. (Black swastika with shortened arms or "normal" size blue swastika.)

ORDERS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS

ORDER OF THE CROSS OF LIBERTY

Instituted in March 1918 as simply the Cross of Liberty, it was revived and enlarged in December 1939 as the Order of the Cross of Liberty. Finland's highest military distinction, it can also be conferred upon civilians provided they have made a significant contribution to the national war effort. It can be given as a "unit citation" to any suitably distinguished military or naval formation. (In this case it is attached to the flag of the unit so honored.) The Order can be given to foreigners - in the Second World War this meant largely Germans.

The grading is as follows:

(i) Grand Cross: a five-pointed silver breast star with, as its centerpiece, the white rose of Finland upon a swastika, around this the words *Isanmaan Poulesta* (For the Fatherland), worn with a sash and sash badge. There is a special grade of the Grand Cross "with diamonds."

(ii) 1st Class with Star: a breast star as above but without the sash and sash badge. A white enamel cross is worn on a ribbon at the throat.

(iii) 1st Class: the white enamel neck cross only.



Star for the Order of the Cross of Liberty.



1st Class neck decoration with Oak Leaves and Swords (on Military Division ribbon).

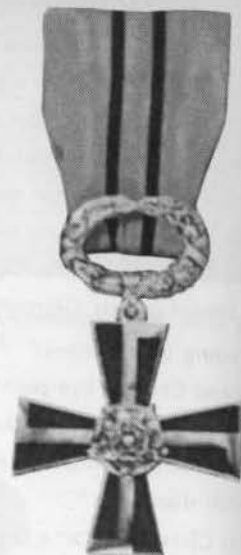
(iv) 2nd Class: a black enamel cross with gold ornamentation, worn from a ribbon on the left breast.

(v) 3rd Class: a smaller black enamel cross from a ribbon on the left breast.



3rd Class with Swords on Military Division ribbon.

4th Class without Swords on Civil Division ribbon.



(vi) 4th Class: a blue enamel cross with silver ornamentation worn on the left breast from a ribbon.

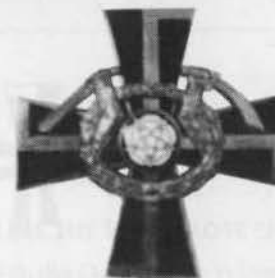
The Military Division of the Order has "swords" added to the wreath - these are two mailed arms, the one on the left brandishing a sword, that on the right a scimitar (the eternal conflict between East and West). The ribbon of the Military Division is red with two white stripes. For the sash of the Grand Cross, the neck ribbon of the 1st Class (with or without Star) and the 2nd Class, the white stripes are inset slightly from the outer edges of the ribbon, but for the 3rd and 4th Classes the two white stripes are placed centrally. The ribbon of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes of the Military Division is in the form of a semi-bow. This is not a true bow (as often used for decorations given to female recipients), but is a horizontal ribbon added behind the lower part of the normal vertical ribbon.

The ribbon of the Civil Division is yellow with two red stripes. The positioning of these stripes corresponding to that of the white stripes of the Military Division.

When the decoration is awarded "with Oak Leaves," these are attached to the top of the wreath in the case of the 1st Class, but for the 2nd to 4th Classes, they are worn on the ribbon (just above the wreath).

Two special grades, known as the Mannerheim Cross of the Cross of Liberty 1st Class and 2nd Class, were introduced on 16 December 1940 for outstanding bravery or exceptional merit in the conduct of a military operation. The 1st Class is similar to the normal 1st Class (neck decoration), but in this case it is in black enamel, not white (possibly intended to be Finland's equivalent of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross).

The 2nd Class is a similar type of black enamel cross but worn as a pin-back decoration on the left breast pocket (inspired perhaps by the Iron Cross 1st Class?). The 2nd Class is exceptional in that the wreath and mailed arms with sword/scimitar is superimposed upon the center of the cross and not worn above it as it is in other grades of the Order. If a second award of the 2nd Class was made, a pair of miniature crossed Field Marshal's batons (black with gold tips) was worn above it.



Mannerheim Cross 2nd Class

The Order of the Cross of Liberty 3rd and 4th Classes could be awarded with a small Red Cross ("Geneva Cross") superimposed upon the rose in the center when the recipient was a member of a medical unit. If this was a military medical unit, the ribbon was that of the Military Division, if a civilian unit, the ribbon was that of the Civil Division.

There was also a so-called Cross of Liberty Cross of Mourning. This version of the cross was given to the next-of-kin of members of the armed forces killed in action. It is the same as the 3rd Class except that it has a silver rose, wreath and swastika (instead of gold) and hangs from a black ribbon. Felix Steiner, commander of the Wiking Division, was awarded the 1st Class in October 1942.

MEDAL OF LIBERTY

Associated with the above Order is (a) Medal of Liberty, and (b) Medal of Merit of the Cross of Liberty.

The Medal of Liberty is in two classes: 1st Class, a round silver medal which hangs from a light blue ribbon with a narrow white stripe inset from either edge. 2nd Class: a similar medal but in bronze which hangs from a red ribbon with a broad yellow stripe inset from either edge.

The obverse of both features the head of the Finnish lion brandishing a sword with, around this, *Ur Heudesta för Tapperhet* (From the nation for bravery). This medal is awarded only in wartime. The 1st Class with rosette ranks as a high military decoration.

The Medal of Merit of the Cross of Liberty: This is the civilian equivalent of the above. It is in three classes: bronze, silver and gold. The obverse design is the same

Medal of Liberty 2nd Class



Im Namen des Oberbefehlshabers der
finnischen Wehrmacht,

Feldmarschall Freiherr Mannerheim,

verleihe ich Ihnen

Scharführer Strein, Georg

1./SS-I.R.7

heute für Ihre Verdienste die

Freiheitsmedaille 2. Klasse

Sobald Ihr Name im Tagesbefehl des
Oberbefehlshabers veröffentlicht ist,
wird Ihnen die Verleihungsurkunde,
unterschrieben vom Feldmarschall
Mannerheim, übersandt werden.

Den 10. Oktober 1941.

Der kommandierende General
Generalmajor

Hj. Lohman

Provisional award citation for the Medal of Liberty 2nd Class to a German Waffen S.S. man. It says that once the award is gazetted, the holder will receive the official Finnish citation signed by Field Marshal Mannerheim.

lion's head and sword, but the wording on the surround reads *Isanmaan Poulesta* (For the Fatherland). The ribbon is the same for all three grades and is green with a broad black center stripe and a narrower red stripe slightly inset from either edge. The Gold Medal appears to have been awarded only once and that to someone who was neither a Finn nor a civilian! On 13 June 1944, General W. Erfurth, the German Military Plenipotentiary in Finland was invested with the gold Medal.

The Silver Medal can be awarded on an all-black ribbon to the next-of-kin of Finnish servicemen who have died on active service (as distinct from being "killed in action").

In wartime all grades of the Order which have been awarded can be worn simultaneously, but in peace time only the highest grade awarded is actually worn on uniform.

ORDER OF THE WHITE ROSE OF FINLAND

Instituted on 28 January 1919, the Order of the White Rose, Finland's second highest Order, is in five classes:

(i) Grand Cross: a five pointed breast star with alternate silver and gold rays with, in the center, the white rose of Finland on blue surrounded with the motto *Isanmaan hyvaksi* (For the glory of the Fatherland) in gold on black. With this a sash and sash badge was worn. The Grand Master of the Order was allowed to wear a special "collar" which is the cross of the Order suspended from a double chain linked by alternate roses and swastikas (these later being replaced by stylized spruce branches in 1963, due no doubt to the unfortunate association that the swastika had acquired since the time of Hitler). This "collar" could, under special circumstances, be awarded to heads of foreign states.



Grand Cross breast star
(without swords)



RFSS Heinrich Himmler and Gen. Eduard Dietl. Note that Dietl wears the Grand Cross breast star with swords.

(ii) Grand Commander (or Commander 1st Class): a similar breast star to the above but all silver and slightly smaller. There is no sash, but instead the badge of the Order (a white enamel cross with a gold frame and gold lions-and-swords between its arms) is worn on a ribbon at the throat.

(iii) Commander: the neck decoration only.

(iv) Officer (or Knight 1st Class): the badge of the Order worn from a ribbon with a rosette on the left breast.



Knight's grade.



Medal of the Order of the White Rose, 1st Class (gold).

(v) Knight: a similar cross but in this case the frame, or outline, is silver not gold and the lions-and-swords are likewise silver in place of gold. The ribbon has no rosette.

All grades of the Order have a plain cornflower blue ribbon. In June 1944 it was decreed that "swords" could be added to any grade for military merit. The first award was made to Field Marshal Mannerheim on the occasion of his 77th birthday. The swords are gilt and are placed between the arms of the cross. Any grade may be awarded as a special distinction "with diamonds." These are added around the rose in the case of the crosses and around the centerpiece inscription for the breast stars.

Associated with the above Order are:

(a) Badge of the White Rose: an all silver version of the Knight's badge. This was awarded only to women, but a special version in bronze with swords could be conferred as a high military decoration in time of war.

(b) Medal of the White Rose: this is a round medal with, on the obverse, a fascimile of the cross of the Order. It is in three grades:

1st Class: the cross and its centerpiece are gold, the rest, including the lions-and-swords between the arms, silver.

2nd Class: all silver.

3rd Class: all bronze.

Each of the above is worn on the same plain cornflower blue ribbon as the Order itself.

ORDER OF THE LION OF FINLAND

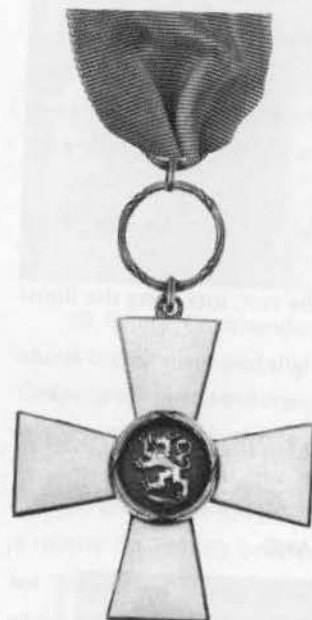
Instituted on 11 September 1942, the Order could be awarded "with swords" for military merit, or without swords for civil distinction. The basic badge is a white enamel cross with, as its centerpiece, the lion and sword national emblem of Finland in gold on a red background within a gold wreath. It is in six classes plus a Medal which was added later (on 10 December 1943):

(i) Grand Cross: a breast star, sash and sash badge.



Grand Cross breast star

- (ii) Grand Commander (or Commander 1st Class): a smaller breast star, no sash, but a cross worn on a ribbon round the neck.
- (iii) Commander: the neck decoration only.
- (iv) Officer: a cross worn from a ribbon with a rosette on the left breast.
- (v) Knight: as above but without the rosette. In this case the outline of the cross and the wreath above it are silver not gold as for the higher grades.
- (vi) Cross of Merit: the same style of cross as Knight, but all silver (no white enamel).



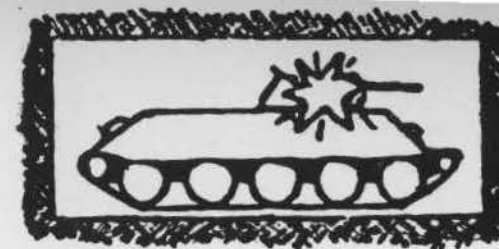
Knight
(without swords)

The lowest grade is a round silver gilt medal with the lion and sword on the front and "Pro Finlandia" and recipient's name on reverse. This was a purely civil award.

The ribbon for all grades is plain red. The Cross of Merit was given only to non-commissioned ranks of the forces or to civilians. The Order of the Lion of Finland ranks third in order of precedence of Finnish Orders. When awarded "with swords," these are placed between the arms of the cross.



Commemorative Medal of Winter War of 1939-1940. Black ribbon with two red stripes, campaign bar and swords (indicating a combatant).



Very obviously inspired by the German example, the Finns introduced their own Tank Destroying Badge. This was given for single-handed destruction (with infantry weapons) of three enemy tanks and was worn on the right upper arm. The badge shows a Russian T 34 tank facing right (the German award it may be noted faces left) on a white background. This badge appears to have been introduced in 1944 and could be given (by a senior officer) on the recommendation of the man's Company Commander. If a further two tanks were destroyed by the recipient of this award, this fact was signified by a white bar above the badge. An additional white bar could be added for every five tanks (or other armored fighting vehicles) destroyed. It will be seen, then, that conditions of award were higher than those for the German badge (which was given for knocking out only one tank). The above sketch is only tentative (based on a photo) and may not be entirely accurate.



The above photographs (kindly supplied by Mr. B.E.G. Bremer of Stockholm) are of commemorative items worn by veterans of the Finnish Waffen S.S. Battalion. They are entirely Finnish made and, although not official awards, are freely permitted to be worn in public. The medal, which is numbered on the reverse, is basically an Iron Cross with a gold eagle with mobile swastika affixed. The lapel badge (actual size is 15mm) features a Totenkopf upon S.S. runes against a background of the blue and white flag of Finland. At the base are the dates 41 - 43 (1941-1943). The Wiking and Nordland S.S. ring has an eagle and swastika emblem on either side of the centerpiece.

THE 1950S

AN FASCIST MOVEMENT

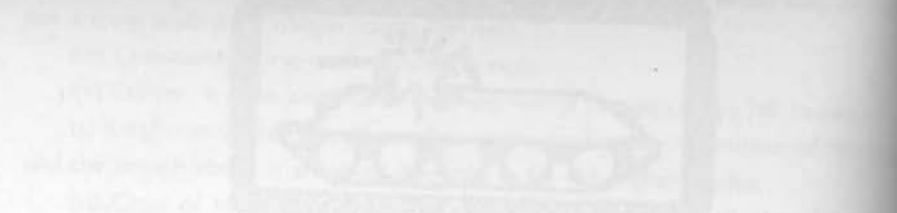
The Italian Fascist movement was a political movement that emerged in the early 20th century. It was led by Benito Mussolini, who became the Prime Minister of Italy in 1922. The movement was characterized by its emphasis on nationalism, authoritarianism, and the use of violence to achieve its goals. It was a response to the social and economic problems of the time, and it offered a vision of a new, more unified and powerful Italy.

The movement was initially a small group of people, but it grew rapidly as it gained support from the Italian people. It was a response to the social and economic problems of the time, and it offered a vision of a new, more unified and powerful Italy. The movement was eventually suppressed by the Allies during World War II.

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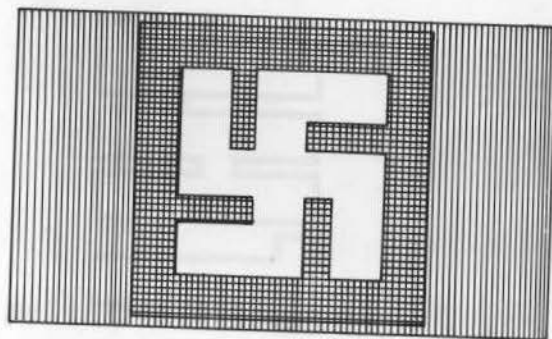


RUSSIAN FASCIST MOVEMENTS

As a consequence of the October Revolution and the unsuccessful civil war which tried to suppress it, approximately two million people of various nationalities had to emigrate from their homeland, the former Imperial Russia. The emigres settled all over the world, but in Europe the largest concentrations were to be found in Paris, Belgrade, Prague and Berlin. Outside Europe the most numerous were, rather oddly, in Manchuria and China.

ROND - *Rossiiskoye Natsionalno-Sotsialisticheskoye Dvizheniye* (Russian National-Socialist Movement),* was founded in Berlin by A.P. Svetozarov in February 1933, within weeks of Hitler's coming to power. Svetozarov was replaced fairly soon after by Prince P.M. Bermond-Avalov, a veteran of the 1919 Baltic campaign which had driven the Bolsheviks out of Latvia. ROND members would parade alongside Hitler's Stormtroopers in their own version of Nazi uniform - a white shirt with black breeches and top boots. On the left upper arm they wore a red brassard with a white swastika on a blue square (the old Czarist colors).

*Originally known as the RNSD in its Russian version, or RNSB in its German translation.



Brassard of ROND (Russian United National-Socialist Movement). White swastika on blue square on red brassard (red, white and blue were the colors of Imperial Russia).

ROND opened branches in Paris, Prague, Belgrade and London in an attempt to form a united anti-Soviet front among the many exiles resident in those cities. In this it was wholly unsuccessful. The Nazis had been willing enough to accept support from the emigres in the early days when anyone prepared to fight against the Red Front was welcome in their ranks. After 1933 and established in power, they tended to look down on these Slavonic caricatures of themselves. It was, after all, part of the Nazi ethos that all Slavs belong to an inferior breed. The ROND-Nazi relationship continued along uneasy lines until the German-Soviet Pact of August 1939 brought all anti-Russian activities within the Reich to an abrupt halt - at least in their public manifestations. ROND was closed down, but one part of it, its Ukrainian Section, continued to function clandestinely under the patronage of the *Abwehr*. It was to play an important role in later operations in that part of the Soviet Union after Hitler's invasion of Russia. (See chapter on the Ukraine.)

The other important Russian anti-communist movement was the N.T.S. (*Natsionalno Trudovoy Soyuz* - National Workers Union) which predated ROND by some months (having been founded in Belgrade in 1932 under the title of National Union of the New Generation).* It aimed at attracting the sons and daughters of the emigres rather than their parents - a fact indicated by the ruling that no one over 35 could be a member. N.T.S. had branches in various European countries, but its main strength was in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. In September 1933 the N.T.S. signed "a pact of friendship" with ROND. Little practical cooperation resulted. N.T.S. wound up its operations in Germany even before the ban of August 1939, but this was not the end of its influence. After the German invasion of Russia, the N.T.S. was accepted by the German Foreign Ministry as being the sole representative of Greater Russian interests among the emigres. N.T.S. officials were enrolled into Rosenberg's *Ostministerium*; some were accorded relatively responsible positions. At the Ministry's training camp for "converted" Russian prisoners-of-war at Wustrau (about 30 miles outside Berlin, N.T.S. men predominated among the Russian-speaking staff. In the occupied regions of the Soviet Union, over forty cities and towns had N.T.S. mayors or other senior officials. The N.T.S. may have been behind Kaminski's (unsuccessful) attempt to form a Russian Nazi Party in the Lokot District. They were also active in their sponsorship of Vlasov. This influence was by no means regarded as benign by all Nazi agencies. Himmler looked askance at the activities of these "sub-humans" and the S.D. kept them under continuous surveillance. By 1943 the Gestapo came to the conclusion that the N.T.S. had become too big for its boots and arrested 62 of its leading lights (of whom 28 were later executed). There was a further purge the following year. This time nearly two hundred were rounded up and sent to concentration camps. It finally broke the N.T.S. and robbed it of its last vestiges of authority. The N.T.S. did not, by any means, fade away. It is still active today in the struggle against Soviet communism.

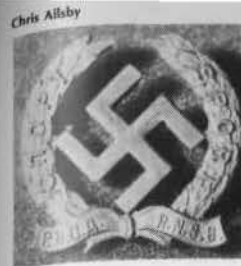
*N.T.S.N.P.

Of the other Russian fascist movements, few had any great significance. There was some activity in the Far East where 150,000 Russians had resided before the revolution - their number doubling as a result of it. In Harbin, in Manchuria, a Russian Fascist Party was formed in May 1931 by an elderly Czarist officer, General Vladimir Kosmin, but the moving spirit behind it was a 25-year-old emigre, Konstantin V. Rodzaevsky, who shortly afterwards assumed the leadership. In 1934 the Russian Fascist Party (R.F.P.) merged with the All Russian Fascist Organization (founded by A.A. Vonsiatsky in the United States the previous year), to become the Russian Fascist Union (R.F.S.). The uniform of the R.F.S. was all black - cap shirt, riding breeches and top boots with, on the left upper arm, a black swastika on a bright orange circle with a white outline. The R.F.S. badge was a black swastika on a yellow square (tilted at a 45-degree angle) with, at the top, the old double-headed eagle of Imperial Russia. Their flag was a black swastika on a yellow field with a white border. The Party greeting, accompanied by an outstretched right arm in the Nazi fashion, was *Slava Rossii* (Heil Russia). It is not difficult to guess from whence the R.F.S. drew its inspiration! After Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, the R.F.S. begged to be allowed to participate in the "crusade," but it was edged out by the combined efforts of ROND and the N.T.S.



Arm badge of the Russian Fascist Party - a black swastika on orange within a white circle (the old Czarist battle colors).

Anastase A. Vonsiatsky, leader of the Connecticut-based All Russian Fascist Organization.



Sports badge of ROND with "SPORT" on right side and same on left side, but in Russian. On scroll is RNSB (right) and RNSD (left).



Badge of K.V. Rodzaevsky's Russian Fascist Party founded in May 1931.*

*The author apologizes that this badge was wrongly described as the Young Cossacks Badge in the first volume of his "Orders, Decorations, Medals and Badges of the Third Reich."

Even in its far eastern homeground things went no better. The Japanese, despite their membership in Hitler's Tripartite Pact, signed a mutual non-aggression treaty with Russia in the spring of 1941 and, anxious not to antagonize Stalin, clamped down on R.F.S. activity.

About 40,000 Russian emigres lived in Paris at the time of Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. The event deeply divided the community. Some saw it as a liberation of their homeland from communist rule and the prelude to their own triumphant return. Others, more realistically minded, appreciated that Hitler, no friend to the Slavs, was unlikely to shed German blood in their liberation, and that he would merely replace a native dictatorship by an alien one. Some thousand members of the Paris group were taken into custody at this time, either as overt opponents of the Nazis or, at the other extreme, as "potential leadership material." All were incarcerated in a special camp at Compiègne. All offers of military assistance, such as Prince Trubetsokoi's proposal that he be allowed to raise a Russian *Freikorps*, were turned down flat by Hitler, who had no time for emigres other than as instruments of propaganda. When he discovered that some former Czarist officers were trying to slip back with their old ranks into his fighting forces, he issued a summary order that all emigres must quit the battle zone forthwith. Some aged ex-White Army generals were, later, allowed to lend the prestige of their illustrious names to the cause of recruitment of Red Army prisoners or deserters to the German side, but they were never permitted to hold a military command. Some, like General Peter Krasnov, wore Wehrmacht uniform, but their rank was purely nominal and they had no influence in policy or part in decision making. Hitler calculated, probably correctly, the emigres would be politically embarrassing and militarily incompetent.

THE ETHNIC LEGIONS

When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, they often found themselves welcomed by the local population. Two reasons lay behind this unexpected behavior: (i) they were seen as liberators from the hated Bolshevik yoke by the Russians, and (ii) as liberators from the hated Bolshevik and Russian yoke by the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union. These latter had, therefore, a stronger reason not only for welcoming the invaders but also for actively assisting them. This applied especially to the Moslem peoples of the southwestern region of Stalin's vast empire.

In the autumn of 1941, Hitler was visited at his East Prussian headquarters by General Erkilet of the Turkish General Staff who urged him to intercede on behalf of the Red Army prisoners-of-war of Turkic nationality. Hitler was sympathetic. He hoped to win Turkey to the Axis camp (an aspiration he never abandoned until, in February 1945, Turkey declared war on Germany!). He therefore granted permission, in November 1941, for the formation of a Turkistani Legion. Before the end of the year, three more legions had been created. Under a top secret order from the German army dated 30 December 1941, the following were set up:

- Caucasian Moslem Legion
- Georgian Legion
- Armenian Legion

These were further expanded when the Caucasian Moslem Legion was split in two to create:

- North Caucasian Legion
- Azerbaidjan Legion

By the middle of 1942 two further legions were added:

- Crimean Tartar Legion
- Volga Tartar Legion

This latter also goes under the name Idel-Ural Legion (Idel being the Tartar word for Volga). Cossacks and Kalmucks were also allowed to form military units at this time.

Parallel with the formation of these armed units was the establishment of "national committees"; generally speaking these had no real power and were tolerated only for their propaganda value. Each, however, maintained a liaison staff at Rosenberg's Eastern Ministry where they were known as *Leitstellen* (Leadership offices). Little by little the committees adopted a semi-autonomous role. Some held "national congresses" and spoke with the voice of a provisional government although invested with no such authority. Since Nazi policy was dedicated to the principle of "divide and

conquer," the activities of these mutually contradictory national committees were neither encouraged nor suppressed. Thus, when the Caucasian National Committee declared, "This is not a united struggle against Bolshevism, but a struggle of all non-Russians against the Russians," no German agency was moved to contradict them!

Despite his approval of the creation of ethnic legions, Hitler was determined that they should never be allowed to become a threat to German security by accruing genuine power. He ordered that no single unit was to be larger than a battalion, and that the individual battalions be distributed as widely as possible among the various divisions of the army. Thus we find ethnic battalions in such diverse places as Croatia and the Channel Islands. (The 823rd Georgian Battalion, for example, was stationed in Guernsey.)

The 162nd Turkic Infantry Division (formed in May 1943) later acted as a parent unit to the various Moslem legionary battalions. Legionary camps were established behind the front in the Ukraine and in the "General Government" of Poland.

In addition to the Caucasian Moslem Legion, there was another Caucasian unit, but under a different command. This was *Sonderverband Bergmann*, created by Admiral Canaris, chief of German Military Intelligence, in December 1941, along somewhat similar lines to the existing "Roland" and "Nightingale" Ukrainian battalions. It was a special service unit commanded by Captain Theodor Oberländer, with its headquarters at Mittenwald in Bavaria. It was recruited from Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaidjani and other Caucasian prisoners-of-war but also included a nucleus of prewar anti-Soviet emigres from that region. The unit was unique in that it took its oath of allegiance not to Hitler (as army units normally did), but to the Army itself. Its Georgian component was the most pro-German, possibly because at the end of the First World War, Germany had aided the short-lived Georgian Republic.

It had been the original intention that *Sonderverband Bergmann* would be employed only on special assignments such as dropping by parachute behind Red Army lines to carry out acts of sabotage, but the number of volunteers was such that it was possible to create from them two full strength infantry battalions (known as Batl. Bergmann I and II). The two battalions were then used in a normal infantry capacity in land fighting in the Caucasus. They suffered heavy losses, especially in actions along the Terek River. Oberländer, a former Professor of Eastern European Studies at the University of Königsberg, was an outspoken critic of Nazi occupation policies in Russia. This resulted in *Reichskommissar* Koch using his influence with Hitler to get him not only removed from his command but also dismissed from the army.* The two battalions were not, however, disbanded but continued to serve with the German forces in the East.

*Only in the closing stages of the war was Oberländer allowed back into the forces. He was granted a commission in the Luftwaffe where he once again worked with Caucasian volunteers.

In August 1942, General Ernst Köstring was appointed "Inspector General of Turkic and Caucasian Forces." A former Military Attache in Moscow, Köstring spoke Russian fluently. His "staff" consisted of: one captain, one clerk-orderly, and one driver!

The Statistical Department of the German Army quoted the following figures for non-Russian volunteers in the German armed forces as of September 1944:

In the Legions and Replacement Battalions:

Armenians	11,600
Azerbaidjanis	13,000
Georgians	14,000
North Caucasians	10,000
Total	48,600

In Pioneer and Transport Units:

Armenians	7,000
Azerbaidjanis	4,795
Georgians	6,800
North Caucasians	3,000
Total	21,595

In the German Army Battalions 25,000

In the Luftwaffe and Waffen S.S. 7,000

Grand Total 102,195

The figures relating to the Turkistanis are not included, possibly, because by this time, contrary to Hitler's express wishes, the 162nd Division had creased to be a mere holding unit and had been transformed into a combat division. In 1943 it had seen a brief period of frontline service in Russia, but most of its active duty thereafter was against the Partisans of Yugoslavia. The divisional commander, Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, a German convert to the Moslem faith, had, before the war, been Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies in Berlin. In 1944 he was relieved of his command on the grounds that he lacked experience at divisional level and was replaced by General von Heygendorff. The term "Turkistani," or "Turkic," when applied to the 162nd Division was rather inaccurate since other ethnic groups besides those from Turkistan were included in it, notably men from Azerbaidjan.

An interesting feature of the above statistics is the reference to the Waffen S.S. The S.S. had already made one not altogether successful experiment with the employment of Turkistani troops. Major Meyer-Mader, an Army officer with a colorful background (he had once served on the staff of Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist Army), raised a battalion of Turkistani troops in November 1941, drawing them from prisoner-of-war camps in the General Government. The battalion (480 Turkistani Battalion) acquitted itself well in actions against the Soviet Partisans, but it was an ill-disciplined body which indulged in looting and rape to such an extent that the army had to

remove Meyer-Mader from his command. Piqued by this, Mayer-Mader then offered his services to the Waffen S.S. who agreed to allow him to try his hand at raising a Turkistani S.S. regiment. In the closing months of 1943, Meyer-Mader again toured the P.O.W. camps and was successful in enlisting a fair number of volunteers. Not content with this achievement, he then proceeded to entice away from the army some of its own Turkistani personnel. He did so by promising them that in the Waffen S.S. they would get higher rates of pay and greatly accelerated promotion. Meyer-Mader handed out commissions freely which was good for recruiting but bad for discipline. The new officers were inefficient and lax. When the regiment (94th S.S. Infantry Regiment) went into action, Meyer-Mader lost control of his men who took off on a rampage of murder, arson and looting on a vast scale. This was too much even for the S.S. Some of the Turkistani officers were court-martialed and shot. Meyer-Mader was reported "killed in action during a Partisan ambush," but a strong suspicion must exist that he was shot on orders of the S.S. command.

In July 1944 Amt III (*Freiwilligen Leitstelle Ost*) was established under Dr. Fritz Arlt at S.S. Headquarters in Berlin for the purpose of dealing with eastern volunteer units in the Waffen S.S. The late Meyer-Mader's regiment, purged of its unruly elements, was amalgamated with the Crimean Tartar Legion and a Turkistani battalion (both from the Army) to become the *Waffen-Gebirgs-Brigade (tartarische Nr. 1)*.

By February 1945, the S.S. had assembled its eastern formations into two main ethnic groupings. These were:

(i) *Osttürkischer Waffenverband der S.S.*

This comprised the two Turkistani battalions and Idel-Ural *Waffengruppe* and a Crimean Tartar *Waffengruppe*.* In March 1945 an Azerbaidjani *Waffengruppe* was added. The whole was under the command of an Austrian convert to Islam who went under the adoptive name of Harun-el-Rasheed. Prior to this, Harun-el-Rasheed, a one-time colonel on the Turkish General Staff, had been liaison officer between the *Reichsführer S.S.* and the Mufti of Jerusalem.** It was Himmler's intention that the *Osttürkischer Waffenverband* should act as a parent unit and that, eventually, regiments, or hopefully, whole divisions, would be created out of its individual components. The war was over before this dream had even begun to be translated into reality.

(ii) *Kaukasischer Waffenverband der S.S.*

Also formed in February 1945, this group comprised the North Caucasians, Georgians, Armenians and some Azerbaidjanis. At Paluzza, near Tolmezza in Northern Italy, work had already started on the creation of a Caucasian Cavalry Division for the Waffen S.S. It did not get very far. As with the other projected expansions, the vision was extinguished by the collapse of the Nazi Reich. In practice, the S.S. never succeeded in

*Originally projected as a Tartar Mountain Brigade but never completed training.

**German propaganda referred to him as the Grand Mufti, but this was pure invention.

getting its hands on more than a fraction of the Army's multitude of eastern volunteers. Often what authority it did exercise was only nominal (as in the case of the Cossack Cavalry Corps). The S.S. often employed its eastern volunteers merely as *Hiwis*. There were, for example, hundreds of eastern batmen, drivers, cooks, bakers, etc., with the 9th S.S. Panzer Division in Normandy (rather to the surprise of the British troops who took these strange "S.S. men" prisoner!).

Most of the ethnic legions remained under army command. Others, like the Armenian Legion, had shrunk to such an extent that they had to be disbanded. Some were caught up in the D-Day landings. The North Caucasian Battalion 800 was among the enemy troops trapped in Brest by the Americans. Others were involved in the fighting in Italy. The 162nd Division capitulated at Rimini in September 1944, preferring to do so to the Italian Partisans rather than to U.S. troops because of a ludicrous, but widely believed, rumor that the Americans would mistake them for Japanese volunteers in German uniform and run them over with their tanks! The Turkomans were later handed over to the British and eventually repatriated to the Soviet Union dressed, incongruously, in British army battle dress!

In addition to the combat units, the ethnic legions also furnished sizeable numbers of rear echelon formations - Road and Rail Construction battalions, Ordnance, Depot and Supply companies, as well as transportation units of all sorts. There were over two hundred independent ethnic companies engaged in these duties. Of these, 30 were Georgian, 22 Armenian, 21 Azerbaidjani, 15 Volga Tartar and 3 North Caucasian. The largest concentration (some 111 companies) was, however, Turkoman. The Reinforced Turkoman Labor Battalions comprised five Pioneer battalions with a total strength of around 20,000.

The contribution of the ethnic legions and their support units was of considerable use to the German army, but their loyalty could not always be counted on. There were instances of mutiny. An Armenian unit revolted in Lyons, a Georgian battalion (No. 797) simply refused to fight. The two most serious incidents took place in Albania where a Turkoman battalion murdered its German officers and defected *en masse*, and on Texel Island off the Dutch coast. This latter episode is, perhaps, the best documented of all. The 822 Georgian Battalion consisted of some 1,200 men of whom only about 400 were Germans. At the time of the Allied landings, the battalion had been stationed at Zandvoort near Haarlem, but in February 1945 it was sent to garrison the island of Texel - well out of the line of action. The following month, however, it was ordered back to the mainland to fight the Allies now advancing through southern Holland. It refused to go. The leader of the rebellion was a Georgian officer, Captain Loladse Schalwa. The mutineers killed most of the German cadre personnel except the commanding officer, Major Breitner, who, by a lucky chance, happened to be away from the island at the time. It cost the Germans a week's hard fighting to put down the mutiny and retake the island.

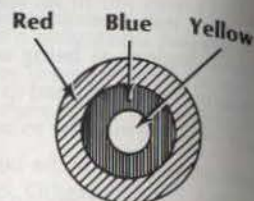
UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

There was a considerable reluctance on the part of the German army to regard its ethnic legions as being on equal terms with its own soldiers. These "foreign mercenaries" were obliged to travel, like Jews in the Reich, in special compartments at the rear of trains in order to avoid contact with Germans. Recognition of their status came only unwillingly. In the beginning they had no special insignia - indeed, like the Penal battalions of the German army, no insignia of any sort, not even shoulder straps. Hitler insisted that no foreigner be allowed to wear the revered *Hoheitsabzeichen* (the Nazi eagle-and-swastika emblem worn by all ranks of the army above the right breast pocket), but since tunics were normally issued with this badge already sewn on, it was an order difficult to enforce (and, it would seem, widely ignored).

It was not until June 1942 that regulations were issued regarding the rank insignia to be worn by members of the ethnic legions and Cossack units. Grade was indicated on collar and shoulder, the shoulder cords being of the narrow variety worn by *Sonderführer* of the German army. Apart from this, the insignia of rank bore little relation to that of the German forces - a distinction no doubt intentional! Various changes and expansions were introduced during the course of the war. By the summer of 1942 arm shields in the "national colors" were approved and began to be issued. The Armenian Legion had an arm shield with horizontal red/blue/yellow (red uppermost), these being the colors of the flag of the short-lived Independent Armenian Republic (1918-1921). At the top of this shield was the word ARMENIEN in yellow. A cockade in red/blue/yellow (red outer color) is shown in German publications as being that of the Armenian Legion, but like other cockades described below, it appears to have been hypothetical rather than actual; no evidence of special cockades (except for Russian and Cossack units) has come to light. The Armenian arm shield, aside from very slight manufacturers variants ("BeVo" or printed), remained unchanged in design, unlike some of the other ethnic shields which are to be found in a number of different variants.



Armenian Legion arm shield.



Armenian Legion
cap cockade.

A senior N.C.O. in the Ar-
menian Legion.



Mufti of Jerusalem (in white fez), talks to Islamic volunteers. Note first design Azer-
baidjan arm shield worn by N.C.O.

The Azerbaidjani arm shield is an example of the way in which the design of a badge could be altered since this is to be found in three different types with two different spellings. Introduced in the spring of 1942, its first form was simply horizontal blue/red/green (blue uppermost) - the national colors of that region of the Soviet empire. This is surmounted by the word ASERBAIDSCHAN in red. The second design, introduced in September 1943, has the Moslem star and crescent in the central section. This is found in two variants: one has a small white star and crescent; the other a large yellow star and crescent. Both types have, at the top, the word ASERBAIDSCHAN, but in some issues of the first type this is spelled ASERBEIDSCHAN.



Arm badge, 1st design, 1942-43



Forman Collection

Official BeVo first design of the Azer-
baidjan shield to which a "home made"
star and crescent has been "privately"
added.



Arm badge, 2nd design, 1943-45.



Arm badge, 2nd design, variant. Note
that the spelling here is Aserbeidschan
and that the star and crescent emblem
is smaller and silver, not yellow as
before.

A special distinction in the form of a small facsimile dagger (or *Kindjal*) to be worn on the left side of the mountain cap was granted to the two Bergmann battalions. German cadre personnel wore the *Kindjal* on their collars - sometimes directly on the collar patch, sometimes behind it.

The cockade for the Azerbaidjanis is blue/red/green (blue outermost), and their shoulder strap piping is light green.



Cap cockade



"Sonderverband Bergmann" wore a "Kindjal" (dagger) on the side of cap.

Dr. K.-G. Kleimann



Shoulder strap for Azerbaidjani units. Waffendarbe is light green.

Pennant of the 1st Battalion of the Azerbaidjan Infantry Regiment 804 at Fedosa in Russia (July 1943).

The Georgian Legion arm shield is dull red with, in the left upper quarter, black over white. At the top is GEORGIEN in white. Their cockade is given as red/white/black (red outermost). In 1944 a number of special flags were designed by the Georgian Liaison Staff of the German Army to honor certain distinguished Georgian field battalions. In November 1944 these were approved by the High Command and work on them commenced. In January 1945 the Berlin flag manufacturing company to which the contract had been allocated was bombed out during an Allied air raid on the German capital. As the war was over a few months later, the contract was never completed. The five flags which had been approved all had designs based upon historic (or quasi-historic) events from the "Golden Age" of Georgian history (in the 11th and 12th centuries A.D.).



Georgian Legion arm shield.

Dr. K.-G. Kleimann



Cap cockade of Georgian Legion.

Private in Georgian Legion.



Georgian officer in the Bergmann Battalion with "Kindjal" on side of cap.

Bundesarchiv

Junior non-commissioned officer of the Georgian Legion.



A German officer of the Luftwaffe serving with the Bergmann Battalion. Note the "Kindjal" worn on top of his major's collar patch.

The Crimean Tartars' arm badge features a three-legged device known as a Tamga, in red on a light blue background. There is no wording at the top. The S.S. map shows a slightly different form of Tamga (the centre leg being longer than the other two) with KRIM (Crimea) at the top, but there is no evidence for the actual existence of such a variant.

The North Caucasians had two quite different versions of their arm shield:

(a) a shield which is two-thirds red and one-third green. On the upper (green) third is a white crescent and seven small white stars. At the top in white is NORDKAUKASIEN (North Caucasus). Introduced in 1942.

(b) three yellow horse heads conjoined in a rotating pattern on a sky blue background with, at the top BERGKAUKASIEN (Caucasus Mountains). Introduced in 1943. The cockade for the North Caucasians is given as white/brown/white.



G. Petersen

1st design of arm badge.



D. Glöster

2nd design of arm badge.



Cap cockade



Non-commissioned officers of the North Caucasian Legion. Note second design arm badge.

Dr. K.-G. Kletmann

The Volga Tartars had three changes of design of their arm shields. The order of change would appear to have been:

(i) A blue and green shield (blue the upper color) within a dark frame. In the center a white arrow crossed with a white dagger (or bayonet). At the top, in white, IDEL-URAL.

(ii) As before a blue and green shield but with a bright yellow border. In the center an upward pointing white arrow and two crossed white sabres. At the top IDEL-URAL in bright yellow.

(iii) A light blue oval with a narrow yellow border. In the center an upward pointing bow and arrow with, around this, IDIL-URAL TARTAR LEGIONI in yellow.

The SS map does not feature any of these but substitutes what would appear to be two "inventions" of its own, both surmounted by IDEL-URAL. One would seem to be a rose crossed with a fern on light blue, the other an unidentifiable device also on light blue.

G. Petersen



Volga Tartar Legion
1st design (1942)

(i)



Volga Tartar Legion
2nd design

(ii)



Volga Tartar Legion
3rd design.

(iii)



Cap cockade
(green and blue).



Shoulder strap with blue and green
piping.

The cockade for the Volga Tartar Legion is given as green with a blue center; the piping for the shoulder straps as alternate green and blue twist.

When young Volga Tartars were conscripted as Flak Helpers they wore with their Luftwaffe uniform a green/blue brassard (green being the upper color) in the center of which is a white diamond with a blue/green shield. On the green half of the shield is a white star and crescent; on the blue part a white T.



Brassard of Volga and Crimean Tartars
as Flak Helpers.



Flak Helper's
cap badge.



Arm badge of the Crimean Tartars. A
red "Tamga" on light blue.

G. Petersen



A corporal in the Volga Tartar Legion reads the German published "Idel-Ural" newspaper. This was the newsheet for the Volga-Tartar Legion.

The Turkistani Legion had, consecutively, three different arm badges. They were:

- (i) A large oval (100mm by 68mm) with a white mosque with a blue and white dome. Across the base is TURKISTAN in blue. The background color to the mosque is dark green. At the top is *Biz Alla Bilen* which the Germans appear to have believed was the Arabic equivalent of *Gott mit uns* ("God with us" - the German army's



Turkistan Legion
1st design (1942)



Turkistan Legion
2nd design (1943)

This NCO from the Turkistani Legion wears the first pattern, oval arm badge.



motto, even under Hitler!). Correctly this should have been *Allah biz bilen*. There may have been some objection to this both as a grammatical error and to the fact that although five languages* are spoken in the Turkistan region of the USSR, Arabic is not one of them!

- (ii) Possibly because of above the second design was much simpler. Issued the following year (1943) it is a white bow and arrow upon a red (upper) and blue (lower) shield with a black frame. At the top in light blue: TURKISTAN.

- (iii) By the middle of 1944 the language experts came up with a solution to the problem of the motto for a revised version of the first issue. As, apparently, a compromise between the five spoken languages of the region they opted for a

*They are Kazakh, Kirgiz, Turkmen, Uzbek and Tajik. The first four are related to Turkish, the fifth to Persian.



G. Petersen

Turkistan Legion
3rd design (1944)

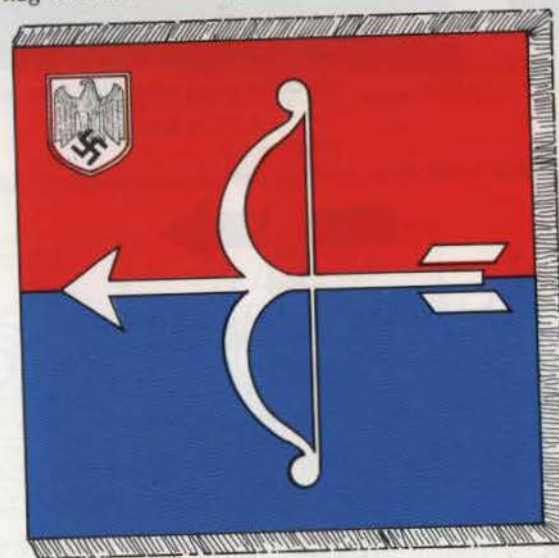
"traditional" (although no longer actually used) tongue, ancient Turkic (*Jagatai*). In this obscure language the "God with us" motto comes out as *Tanri biz menen!* and this now appears above a slightly more colorful version of the mosque (which is now complete with minarets - a feature absent from the first version). As before TURKISTAN appears in blue at the base. The narrow surround is also blue but this version is smaller than the first in that it is only 80mm by 60mm.

The flag presented to the Turkistani Legion in May 1942 closely resembles the second version of the arm shield. It is the same white bow and arrow upon a red over



Members of the Turkistani Legion with German staff officers during training.

blue field. There are two versions of this flag. In the first the closed wing eagle and swastika emblem of the German army appears on a shield in the left upper quarter. The use of this Nazi symbol was greatly resented by the Turkistanis and in the second version of their flag it is omitted altogether.



Flag of the Turkistan Legion, first form. The second form is as above but with the German army shield (top left hand corner) omitted.





Cap cockade
(blue/red)



Shoulder strap with blue/red piping.



Vehicle sign of 162 (Turkoman) Division
- red T on blue arrow. This was discontinued after June 1944.

The cockade of the Turkistani Legion is given a blue with red in the middle.

When the *Osttürkischer Waffen-Verband* was formed a special collar patch was devised. It is a white wolf's head (a traditional Turkistani emblem) on black. There was also a cuff title *Osttürkischer Waffen-Verband der S.S.* This is different from the normal type of SS cuff title in that it is lime green with pale grey lettering (not the more usual silver on black).



Wolf's head collar patch.

Osttürkischer Waffen-Verband der S.S.

Cuff title. Light grey lettering and borders on lime green.

There was no cuff title for the *Kaukasischer Waffen-Verband*, but they did have (at least in theory) their own collar patch. This is a white dagger behind a shield at a 45 degree angle across a black patch. Whether either of the above collar patches was actually issued is open to doubt, but genuine examples do exist.



Collar patch of the Caucasian Waffen-Verband der S.S.

"Turkish Peoples" insignia worn by the Legions as detailed in an order of 29th May 1943.



Freiwilliger



Gefreiter



Unteroffizier



Feldwebel



Leutnant



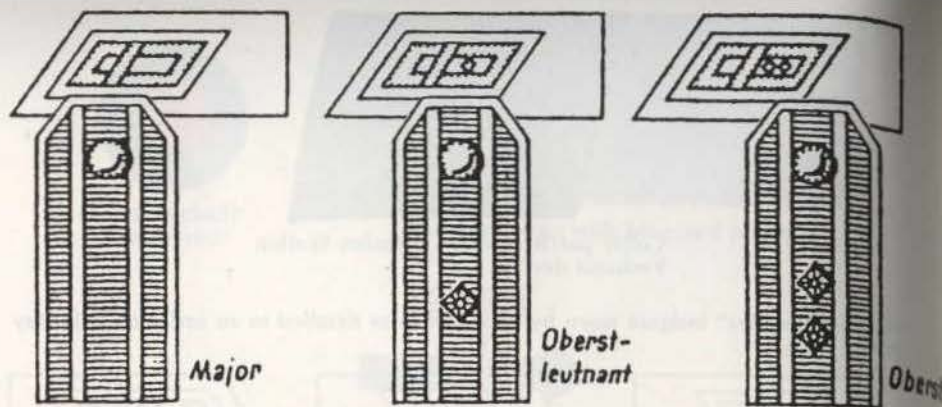
Oberleutnant



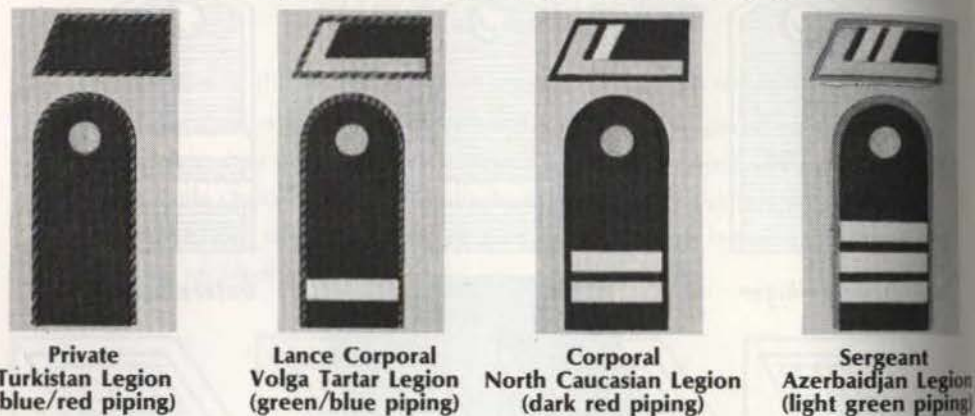
Hauptmann

The *Waffenfarbe* worn with these ranks was:
Turkistan: light blue
Azerbaidjan: light green
Georgian: "Panzer pink"
Armenian: "Cavalry yellow"
North Caucasian: brown.

Hauptfeldwebel rank was the same shoulder strap as Feldwebel but (in the German army manner) two silver "rings" were worn round each cuff. The "nationality shield" was worn on the right upper arm.



Rank Insignia for Turkistan, Caucasian and Tartar Legions



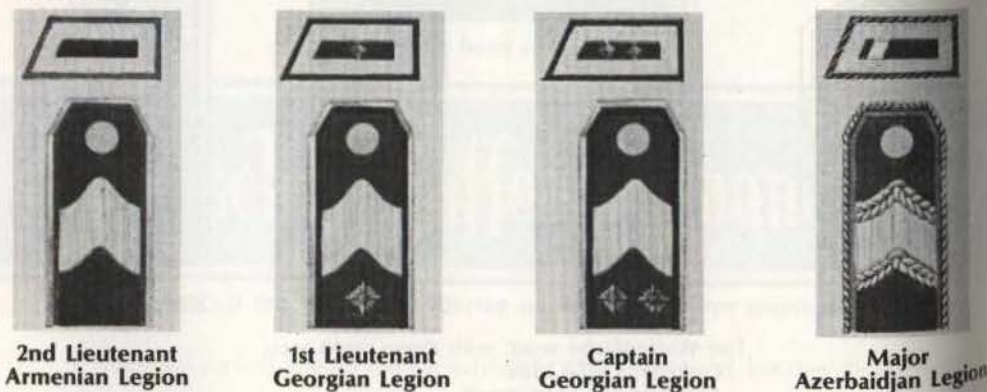
Private
Turkistan Legion
(blue/red piping)

Lance Corporal
Volga Tartar Legion
(green/blue piping)

Corporal
North Caucasian Legion
(dark red piping)

Sergeant
Azerbaijan Legion
(light green piping)

OFFICERS:

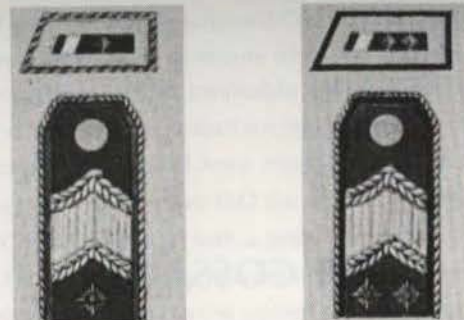


2nd Lieutenant
Armenian Legion

1st Lieutenant
Georgian Legion

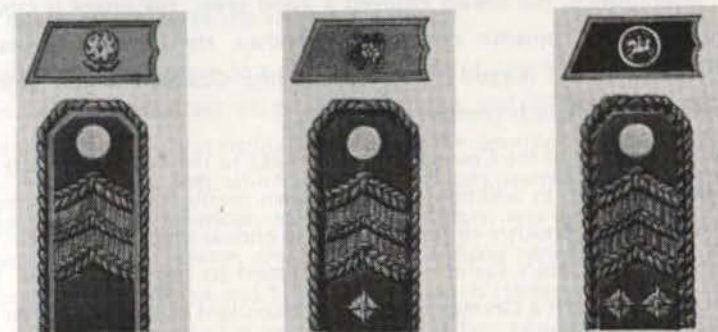
Captain
Georgian Legion

Major
Azerbaijan Legion



Lieutenant Colonel
Armenian Legion

Colonel
Georgian Legion



Major General
Azerbaijan Legion

Lieutenant General
Armenian Legion

General
Turkistan Legion

These last three ranks probably never actually existed.

The above is as shown in "Signal" of December 1943.

NOTE:

Almost all the arm shields worn by the various "eastern" volunteers can be in both a machine-woven or a printed version. There are often slight differences in design and coloring between the two. Also, more finely executed designs were produced for wear by officers, while, at the other end of the scale, crude "home-made" versions were sometimes fabricated locally when the official issue was not available. All this means that there can be differences between the same arm shield, but both can be equally authentic. However, it also has to be said that post-war copies of these (as indeed of so much else relating to the insignia of the Third Reich) do exist and that these are in some cases not only inaccurate but sometimes pure "inventions," that is to say, "reproductions" of something which never existed in the first place!

THE COSSACKS

Of all the eastern volunteers, the Cossacks were allowed to muster the largest single concentration. The Cossack, like the cowboy of the American West to whom he bears a certain resemblance, has always enjoyed a good press. His image is familiar, his military bearing and romantic costume well-known. He enjoys a reputation for physical hardihood and rugged independence (the Cossacks fought determinedly against Sovietization) which commands respect.

The martial qualities of the Cossacks appealed alike to the Eastern Ministry and the Army High Command. In addition to their known merits, the Cossacks were now revealed as possessing another virtue calculated to endear them to the Nazis. Diligent researchers at Rosenberg's Eastern Ministry claimed to have discovered that the Cossack is not a Slav, but a Germanic being, a descendant of the Ostrogoths who, of old, had overrun the Ukraine and penetrated as far east as the Crimea. This remarkable "discovery" lent an air of respectability to the recruitment of these warriors. With, or without, the blessing of the *Ostministerium*, Cossacks had, in fact, been operating as part of the Wehrmacht from virtually the start of the Russian campaign. Sometimes this came about in an almost accidental way. The XL Panzer Corps, for example, acquired its Cossacks in the following fortuitous manner. In the summer of '42 the corps had captured such a vast host of prisoners that the provision of an escort for them to the rear posed something of a problem. Men could simply not be released from active duty for a task of this nature. Someone at Corps Headquarters suggested the idea of separating the pro-German Don and Kuban Cossacks from the rest, furnishing them with horses, and allowing them to act as an escort for their compatriots. This was approved, and a Cossack Squadron under a certain Captain Zagorodnyy formed for the purpose. As they departed with their long column of prisoners, no one at Corps Headquarters ever expected to see any of them again. But that September the worthy Captain Zagorodnyy reappeared, saluted smartly and requested his next assignment! Generals are no more willing to turn away volunteers than lawyers are fees, so Zagorodnyy and his men were given four weeks' training and transformed into 1/82 Cossack Squadron of the German Army.*

*The squadron continued to serve actively with the Wehrmacht on the eastern front until May 1944 when it was transferred to France. It was destroyed at St. Lô in Normandy shortly after the D-Day landings.

In the same casual way other units acquired Cossack auxiliaries. The armored divisions found them especially useful as scouts while the security divisions welcomed them as anti-Partisan fighters with an invaluable knowledge of the terrain. The summer of '42 marked the high tide of German success in the East. The Cossack lands (the area around the Crimea and the Sea of Azov, roughly the south-eastern Ukraine), had been cleared of the enemy. In October 1942 the Germans established in the Kuban a semi-autonomous "Cossack District" with a population of some 160,000 persons. A Cossack Nationalist Party (K.N.D.) was formed under Vasili Galzkov. It called on its members to "recognize Adolf Hitler as the supreme defender of the Cossack nation." The Cossacks were allowed to form *Sotni* (the plural of *Sotna* - a hundred men: the traditional Cossack military unit). One *Sotna* was supposed to be attached to each German Security Division in the rear of the front.

The German Army was now in a position to recruit Cossacks from three sources: (i) the "liberated" Cossack areas, (ii) the P.O.W. camps, and (iii) defectors from the Red Army. Of these last, the most significant had been the desertion of an entire Red Army regiment (Infantry Regt. 436), which, with all its officers, went over to the Germans on 22 August 1941. Its commander, Major I.N. Kononov, was a Don Cossack. He was given command of a volunteer unit, *Kos. Abt. 102* (later renumbered *Kos. Abt. 600*), which comprised 77 officers and 1,799 men (although classed as a "Cossack" formation, only about 60 percent of its personnel were, in fact, genuine Cossacks). Kononov had a distinguished career in the German service, ending the war was a Major-General.

Two German cavalry officers in Army Group South, Lt. Colonels Jungschulz and Lehmann each formed a Cossack regiment which, in the German fashion, was named after its respective commander. In Army Group Center, Lt. Colonel Freiherr von Wolff raised a third Cossack regiment (again this took its leader's name). Cossack Regiment "Platov" (yet another early Cossack unit within the German army), did not, in this case, derive its title from its commander, instead it was named in honor of Count M.I. Platov (or Platoff), a celebrated Cossack officer who harassed Napoleon's troops during the famous "retreat from Moscow" in 1805. Each of these regiments comprised around 2,000 men with a German cadre of 160 or less. There were also about 650 Cossacks in *Reiterverband Boeselager* (the Boeselager Mounted Unit), which had been formed as an additional security troop in the rear of Army Group Center.

The Cossacks fought as dragoons rather than cavalry, that is to say, although they rode to battle, they normally fought dismounted. Horse-handlers, often quite young boys, were employed to hold their steeds while the riders fought on foot. In addition to these dragoon Cossacks, there was also a Cossack *Plastun* (Infantry) Regiment in the German service. This was Lt. Colonel von Renteln's *Kos. Rgt. 6*. It was later reconstructed as two separate battalions (numbers 622 and 623), plus an independent company (No. 638). Later still, it was reconstituted as Grenadier Regiment 630 (it took this num-

ber from a former, but now disbanded, German regiment). Von Renteln, born in Estonia, was a former officer in the Czarist Cavalry Guards.

The German officer most closely associated with the Cossacks of the Wehrmacht is Lt. Colonel (later Major General) Helmuth von Pannwitz. Born in Silesia, close to the Russian border, in 1898, the son of a cavalry officer, Pannwitz was a keen horseman. As a 16-year-old cadet, he joined the army at the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, in the course of which he was awarded the Iron Cross 1st and 2nd Class. On active service again in the Second World War, he was awarded "bars" to his previous decorations and in August 1941 was invested with the Knight's Cross. (He received the Oakleaves a year later.)



Helmuth von Pannwitz, here a colonel.

Pannwitz struck up a close friendship with Nikolai Kulakov, the *Ataman* (or Clan Chief) of the Terek Cossacks, who promised the active cooperation of his people in the struggle against Soviet communism. Pannwitz took this up with the Chief of the General Staff, General Zeitzler, and suggested that it might be possible to raise a regiment of Terek Cossacks. Zeitzler approved and promised that Pannwitz would be placed in command of such a regiment were it ever formed. But when Pannwitz asked where the troops he was to command were, Zeitzler simply answered, "You'll have to find them for yourself." The enterprising Pannwitz then toured the front in his Fieseler "Storch" aircraft and, by methods which cannot be described as entirely orthodox, managed to "find" about 1,000 men and six tanks!

The Pannwitz Cavalry Unit (*Reiterverband von Pannwitz*) proved its worth in battle. In an action in support of Romanian troops, it distinguished itself and Pannwitz was awarded the Romanian Order of Michael the Brave. Convinced of the value of the Cossacks as a fighting force, Pannwitz urged the creation of a Cossack Cavalry Division. The terrible losses in the East made the Army welcome any addition to its overstretched manpower. The raising of such a division was approved, and in April/May 1943 the 1st Cossack Cavalry Division was formed at Kherson (or Cherson) in the Ukraine. It comprised Don, Terek and Kuban Cossacks. The army also sent to Kherson a regiment of Kalmuks!* Over 12,000 men were assembled. They were then moved to Mława (or, in German spelling, Mielau), north of Warsaw, to what had once been the largest depot of the pre-war Polish cavalry. There was, consequently, ample accommodation for both men and horses as well as a spacious training area. It has to be assumed that by this time the Germans had discovered the distinction between Cossacks and Kalmuks since the latter did not accompany the others to Mława.

More than half of the new division consisted of men recruited directly from the Cossack areas, the rest were volunteers from the prisoner-of-war camps or from among the *Ostarbeiter* in Germany. The troops at Mława included the German-commanded Jungschulz, Lehmann and Wolff regiments as well as Major Kononov's *Kos. Abt. 600*. The volunteers were then grouped into two brigades, of three regiments each, as follows:

1st Brigade

1st Don Cossacks Cav.Regt. (Commander: Lt. Col. Graf zu Dohna)

2nd Siberian Cossack Cav.Regt. (Commander: Major Freiherr von Nolcken)

4th Kuban Cossack Cav.Regt. (Commander: Lt. Col. Freiherr von Wolff)

2nd Brigade

3rd Kuban Cossack Cav.Regt. (Commander: Lt. Col. Jungschulz)

5th Don Cossacks Cav.Regt. (Commander: Lt. Col. Kononov)

6th Terek Cossacks Cav.Regt. (Commander: Major H-D von Kalben).

Of the six regimental commanders, Kononov was the only non-German. The two brigades were supported by a reconnaissance company, two mounted artillery *Abteilungen*, a pioneer battalion, a supply column, and a medical section. Each of these had the number 55. For example, the first mentioned was:

Divisions-Aufklärungsabteilung 55.

There was, in addition, a Volunteer Training and Replacement Regiment (*Freiw. Lehr- und Ersatz-Regiment*) under Col. von Bosse with its headquarters at Mochovo. This training and replacement regiment had some ten to fifteen thousand men and boys, since it included a Young Cossacks School - a sort of Cadet Corps of Cossack orphans between the ages of 14 and 18 who were, figuratively speaking, "adopted" by the division. There was also at Mochovo an Officers Training School.

*Traditionally, the Kalmuks formed part of the Don Cossacks army.

On 1 June 1943, Pannwitz was promoted to Major-General and made *Kommandeur aller Kosakenverbände* (Commander of all Cossack Units). Not all the army's Cossack units were incorporated into the new division; some continued to function independently. The division was without question the most thoroughly "Russianized" in the entire Wehrmacht. Its only all-German component was Motorcycle Reconnaissance Section 55. The majority of the officers were Russian, and in the 5th Don Cossack Cav. Regt. entirely so. Most of the technical specialists were German, as were most of the senior commanders, but it was Pannwitz's intention that as many of these posts as possible would eventually be taken over by Russians. Word of command was, throughout the division, Russian not German. Naturally interpreters had to be engaged since not all the German officers were conversant with the language.

The division boasted its own Trumpet Corps impressively mounted on white horses.* There was also a general's *Konvoi* (personal escort) to accompany Pannwitz on official excursions.

Each regiment consisted of six squadrons, subdivided into *Gruppen* of twelve horsemen apiece. There were, however, not quite enough horses to go round and about half of the members of the 2nd Siberian Cossack Cav. Regt. were mounted on bicycles! Each of the brigades had a "Heavy Squadron" equipped with eight 80mm mortars and eight heavy machine guns. There was a divisional antitank squadron with five 50mm antitank guns in addition to its light machine guns and mortars. The two mounted artillery *Abteilungen* (one Don, the other Kuban Cossack), had six batteries of field guns plus a Headquarters Battery (each battery of around 200 men and horses). At a later stage a howitzer battery was added.

All-in-all, the division could have been a formidable addition to Germany's frontline strength, but during the course of its creation two significant developments had taken place. Firstly, the Red Army had passed over to the offensive and retaken the German-occupied Cossack lands, secondly, there had been a major shift in policy with regard to the deployment of Russian volunteer units. Hitler had ordained that they be removed from the East and sent either to France or the Balkans. Both these events had an injurious effect on the morale of the division. As the Germans withdrew from the Crimea and Kuban, thousands of Cossack families fled with them. A Cossack settlement was established at Novogradok in Belorussia under Timofey I. Domanov as "Field Ataman." At Novogradok the Cossacks organized their own self-protection militia without waiting for German instructions to do so. When Novogradok itself came under threat by the advancing Red Army, the Cossack families were allocated a new "home" at Tolmezzo in Northern Italy. A report by General V. Naumenko of October 1944 estimated the population of this home, or *Stan*, as being 15,590 men, women and children.

*Equestrians will no doubt point out that correctly these should be referred to as "greys"!

The division was not, as it had hoped, sent to fight the Red Army, but instead it was ordered, in September 1943, to proceed to Yugoslavia and deal with the increasing vexation of Partisan activity in that part of the world. This order had a very adverse effect on the enthusiasm and zeal of the troops. What had the Partisans of Yugoslavia to do with the hoped for liberation of their homeland from the throes of Soviet Communism? General Pyotr N. Krasnov, ancient and venerated former leader of the Cossacks in their resistance to the Reds at the time of the Civil War, was asked to address reassuring words to the men and to hint that this was merely a "bleeding" of the division in preparation for its return to the front line. After this patriotic allocution the division set off, via Czechoslovakia, to northern Yugoslavia. The Volunteer Training and Replacement Regiment, including the Young Cossack School, was removed to France.

The Cossack Cavalry Division took part in several major offensives against the Partisans including "Operation *Rösselsprung*" (Knight's Move), the attack on Tito's headquarters in Bosnia from which the Partisan leader evaded capture only by the narrowest of margins. During the summer of 1944 the two brigades were upgraded to become the 1st and 2nd Cossack Cavalry Divisions. In November 1944 the S.S. announced its intention of taking over both and creating a larger formation to be known as the XVth Cossack Cavalry Corps. Pannwitz, although certainly no friend to the Nazis, did not try to resist, arguing that it was the only way to ensure a regular supply of modern arms and equipment for his troops. It was, in any case, the logical outcome of the fact that Himmler had come to regard the S.S. as the natural custodian of all foreign volunteers in the German service (no longer just those of "nordic" origin). Also, the S.S. was responsible for the conduct of anti-guerrilla operations and it was on this task that the Cossacks were currently engaged. Himmler was ready to concede that the Cossacks need not adopt Waffen S.S. ranks or insignia and that S.S. officers would not be seconded to the Corps. He envisaged that the final strength would be three, not two, divisions. The projected 3rd Cossack Cavalry Division was to be based on von Renteln's Cossack Regiment (currently designated *Festungs Grenadier Rgt. 360*), and was to include the Kalmuck Cavalry Corps. But the transaction remained largely theoretical. The 3rd Division was never activated. A similar hypothetical exercise was the supposed transfer of the entire corps to the army of the K.O.N.R. But as this was sanctioned by Himmler only on 28 April 1945 (a week before the end of the war in Europe), it is hardly necessary to add that it never took place.

Not all Cossack units, even in the last days of the war, were incorporated into Pannwitz's Corps. For example, in the Ukraine four *Schuma* battalions (Nos. 68, 72, 73 and 74), raised in the early months of 1944, were classed as *Kosaken-Reiter-Front-Abteilungen* (Cossack Mounted Frontline Companies). At the Cossack *Stan* in Northern Italy there were four *Plastun* regiments (two Don, one Terek, and one Kuban), as well as a cavalry formation of 962 men, a Reserve Regiment (376 men from

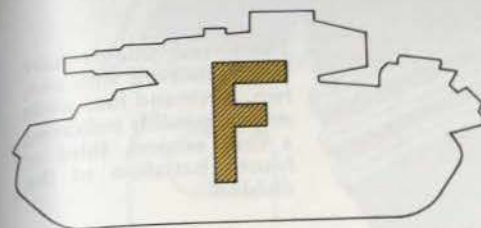
various regions), and an Escort Squadron of 386 men. (All the foregoing as of October 1944.) Overall responsibility for the Cossacks in the northern Italian settlement area rested with the Higher S.S. and Police Leader, Adriatic Coast, S.S. *Gruppenführer* Odilo Globocnik in Trieste.

UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

The first Cossack units were, as we have noted, employed by the Panzer divisions and they adopted the death's head of the German armored forces as their own, wearing it as a cap and arm badge. It also featured on their flags. Before the introduction of standard ranks, German commanders often devised rank schemes of their own invention for the "unofficial" auxiliaries. Even special "decorations" were created to reward merit at a time when granting German medals and *Kriegsabzeichen* was expressly prohibited. An interesting example of this sort of "award" is a facsimile of a German Panzerkampfwagen Ausf. III in white metal with a large golden F upon it, which was given by von Renteln to men of his Cossack Regiment in recognition of their bravery in an action against Red Army tanks. This unit's insignia takes the form of a red shield with a white outline. The red and white theme was employed on other Cossack arm shields of their period as well. For example, a red shield with a transverse broad white "bar" and "bend" (alternatively four narrow white "bars"), was worn by one unit whose exact identity the author has been unable to establish (possibly it was either the Jungschulz or Lehmann Regiment). There was also a triangular red arm shield with a white outline worn by another (as yet) unidentified Cossack formation.



Two officers of this regiment. Regimental arm badge: red shield with white outline. Above this a metal facsimile of a Panzerkampfwagen Ausf. III with a golden F which appears to have been an (unofficial) honor badge. Some photos show von Renteln himself wearing this badge above his arm shield on the tunic but below it on his greatcoat.



An impression of the tank badge with golden F.



The above photo of von Renteln must have been taken later in the war when his unit was incorporated into the ROA. He no longer wears the tank badge but retains the red and white arm shield.



Red/white/red arm shield as (apparently) worn by Cossack officer at right.





These red shields have been observed with one, two, three and four white stripes, possibly indicating a first, second, third or fourth battalion of the division.

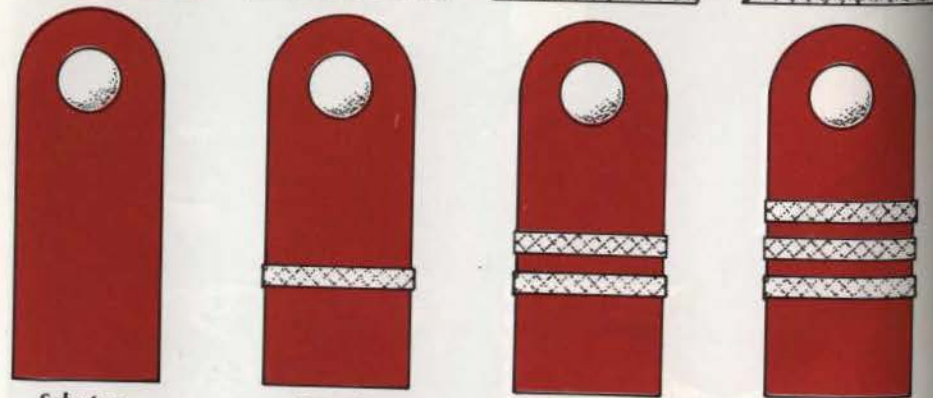
These are very definitely not Latvian (the Latvian colors slope in the opposite direction).

On 1 April 1942, official approval was obtained from Hitler for the employment of Cossacks "on security duties in the rear." A formal scheme of ranks was introduced shortly thereafter. This scheme was modified from time to time and, because of this and that fact that the official "issue" items were not always readily available, a wide diversity of insignia was worn. No one, therefore, need be surprised if photographic evidence appears to contradict published regulations.

It was laid down that no Slav was to wear German insignia or receive German awards. For this reason unique insignia had to be devised for the eastern volunteers. The first unit to be granted its own, officially approved, rank insignia was the Kosaken-

Non-commissioned ranks

Platov Cossack Regiment in German Army
(Army Order of 13 June 1942)



Schutze

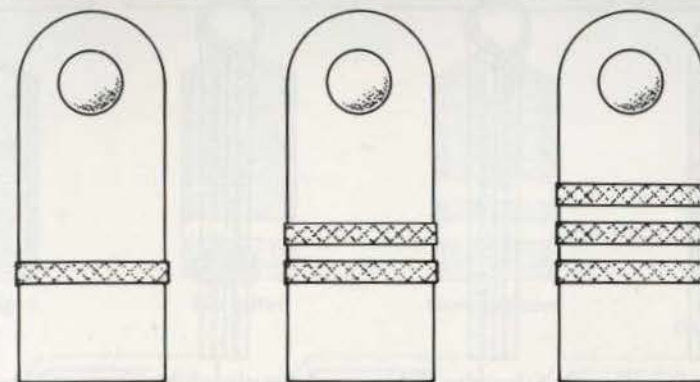
Deputy Gruppenführer

Gruppenführer

Deputy Zugführer

Red collar patches and red shoulder straps, silver braid bars, etc.

Commissioned ranks



Zugführer

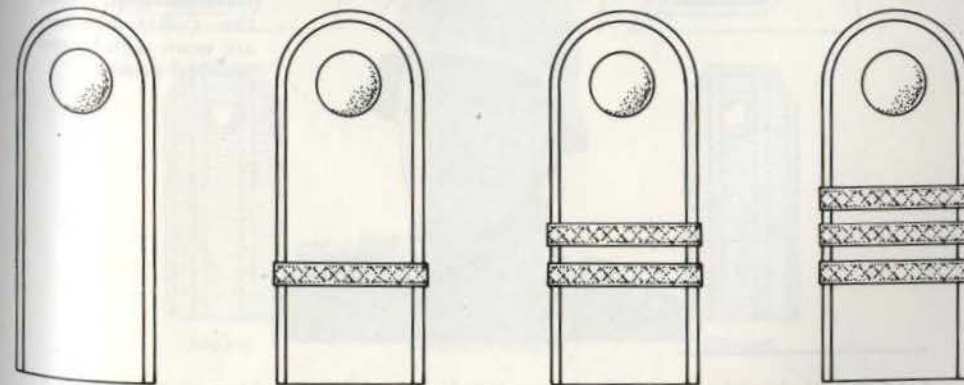
Deputy Schw. Führer

Schw. Führer

Red collar patches but white shoulder straps, silver braid bars, etc.

Reiter-Rgt. "Platov." An Army Order of 13 June 1942 specified three officer, and four non-commissioned, grades. Officers had white shoulder straps with one, two or three silver tress bars; non-commissioned personnel, red with, again, one, two or three silver tress bars. All ranks had red collar patches which were outlined, for officers, on four sides by silver tress, but for others on the front and lower edge only.

All Cossack Units Ranks (as detailed in Army Order dated 11 November 1942)



Private

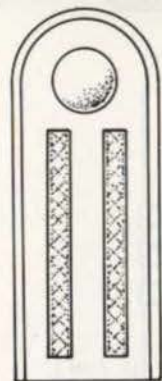
Deputy Gruppenführer

Gruppenführer

Deputy Zugführer

Above straps are green with red piping and silver braid "bars."

NOTE: Ranks in parentheses are for non-mounted units.



Zugführer



Deputy Schwadronführer
(Deputy Kompanieführer)



Schwadronführer
(Kompanieführer)



Abteilungsführer
(Bataillonsführer)

Narrow silver shoulder cords with gold "bars."

On 11 November 1942 a second Army Order modified and enlarged the above. Collar patch and shoulder strap color was changed to green. A higher commissioned grade, that of *Abteilungsführer* (Unit Commander), was created and officers received new narrow silver shoulder straps of the sort worn by army *Sonderführer*.

A third revision, this time a major one, was announced on 29 May 1943. All Cossack collar patches now bore white crossed lances on a red patch which was outlined in white for officers and green for others. The N.C.O. shoulder ranks of one, two or three silver tress bars remained as before, but commissioned ranks were now indicated on shoulder boards of a kind once used by the old Czarist army.*

ECPA



An Unteroffizier in a Cossack unit. Note the collar patches are worn with lances pointed down.

*The use of shoulder boards had been jettisoned by the Red Army as symbols of a hated former regime, but significantly, they were brought back by Stalin in 1943 in an attempt to give it a more patriotic "Mother Russia" (as distinct from simply Bolshevik) image. They have remained in use ever since.

All Cossack Units
(as detailed in an order of 29 May 1943)



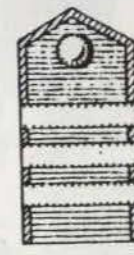
Freiwilliger



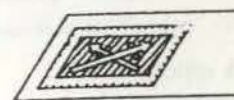
Gefreiter



Unteroffizier



Feldwebel
(Wachmeister)



Leutnant



Oberleutnant



Hauptmann
(Rittmeister)







Major



Oberstleutnant



Oberst

Colors:  Silver  Red
 Olive green  Blue

Cossack corporal.

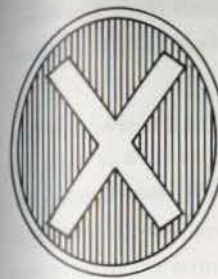


Collar patch for non-commissioned ranks. Introduced in May 1943.

A Cossack officer.



Badge worn on the fur cap of this Terek Cossack is the St. Andrew's Cross (not crossed lances) below an odd version of the *Hohenabzeichen*.



First design of Cossack cap badge was (unofficially) a St. Andrew's cross.

Cap badge



As their cap badge, Cossacks had crossed lances upon a red vertical bar on a green oval background.

Since the army's *Hoheitsabzeichen* was expressly forbidden to Slavs, its place was taken by a device of roughly the same dimensions which takes the form of a vertically elongated swastika (as used by the *Schuma* formations), in white upon green, flanked on either side by "wings" of grey/green/grey.



This Cossack wears the breast insignia illustrated above.

At this time arm shields were introduced to denote Don, Kuban and Terek Cossacks. The colors of these derived from the colored facings worn by the regiments that came from these areas in the old Czarist army.

A somewhat later modification was the replacement of the crossed lances and red bar cap badge by cockades in various "national" colors:

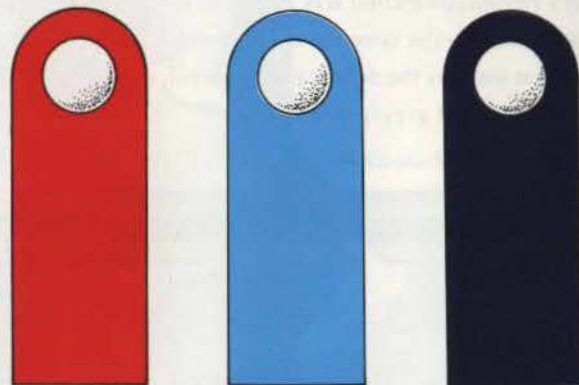
Black and red: Kuban Cossacks

Green and light blue: Terek Cossacks

Blue and yellow: Siberian Cossacks

Red and blue: Don Cossacks.

A further innovation was the introduction of colored shoulder straps - red for Kuban, light blue for Terek, and dark blue for Don Cossack units.



Kuban Cossacks

Terek Cossacks

Don Cossacks

The above shoulder straps were worn for a short time but only by the lowest rank (Reiter) of the Cossacks.

In December 1943 three higher officer ranks - Major General, Lt. General, and General - were added to the existing scheme of grades which was now made universal for all Russian and Ukrainian formations (not merely Cossack) within the German army. Only the ethnic legions with their own (already described) collar and shoulder ranks remained outside it.

Up to this time Germans serving with Cossack units wore German rank insignia, while the Cossacks wore the specially designed Cossack type. Pannwitz, however, insisted that all the men under his command should wear German insignia. He argued that to have two different sets of ranks created an invidious distinction between Cossack and German. To increase the self-esteem of the volunteers yet further, Pannwitz authorized the wearing of a wide variety of traditional Cossack items of dress and the carrying of native Cossack weapons (for ceremonial purposes). German officers in the division/corps were encouraged to adopt these habiliments for full-dress parades. Pannwitz himself often donned Cossack garb.

The various insignia and clothing worn by members of the two Cossack brigades/divisions (and latterly corps), were as follows:

2nd BRIGADE/DIVISION

1st Don Cossacks Cav. Regt. Headgear was a black *Papacha* (a tall fur cap wider at the top than at the bottom), with a red top on which was a cross made of silver tress. On the outer seams of the trousers, a red stripe. The arm shield (right arm) was red and blue (red, upper and lower segments; blue, left and right segments). This was surmounted by the word DON in white in the first versions, but after July 1944 "DON" was replaced by a Cyrillic V D (*Voysko Donskoye**), which resembles B.A. in Latin script.



Von Pannwitz decorating a lieutenant colonel of the Don Cossacks. Note the officer's black *Papacha* and red strip on his trousers.

**Voysko* can be rendered as tribe or clan, sometimes as nation, but "ethnic group" is closest to the actual meaning.



Early form of arm shield.



Pre-corps arm shield.



1st version of corps arm shield.



Arm badge of 1st and 5th Regts. in corps.



A female member of the 1st Brigade wearing the arm patch as illustrated (at lower left) on her upper right sleeve.



(a)



(b)



(c)

- (a) 1st Don Cossacks Division in corps.
- (b) Ditto artillery.
- (c) Ditto Signals units.



Officers cap cockade.



Other ranks cap cockade.



Don Cossacks Regt. No. 1 command flag of 1st and 2nd Abteilung.

2nd Siberian Cossacks Cav. Regt. Headgear was a white *Papacha* with a yellow top and silver tress cross. Trouser stripe was broad yellow. The arm shield (right arm) was yellow and light blue (yellow upper and lower segments, light blue left and right segments). This is surmounted by the Cyrillic letters P S V (which resemble the Latin N C B).



Manton-Foshole Coll.

Siberian Cossacks, 2nd Regiment of corps.



Note that this Gefreiter from the 2nd Siberian Cossacks Regiment wears a white *Papacha*, the arm shield on the right arm and the numeral "2" below crossed cannons on his shoulder straps (indicating a member of Siberian artillery within the regiment). Note also that his breast eagle is sewn on backwards.



Siberian Cossacks cap cockade (other ranks).

4th Kuban Cossacks Cav. Regt. Headgear a black Kubana (a "lower" fur cap than the Papacha, approximately seven inches high), with a red top and silver tress cross. Narrow red trouser stripe. Arm shield (right arm), black and red (red the upper and lower segments, black the left and right segments, but after July 1944 the black was omitted). Above this is a Cyrillic K V (Kubanskoye Voyski.) (It resembles a Latin K B.)



Pre-corps arm badge, 1st design.



Pre-corps arm shield, 2nd design (authorized, but possibly never worn).



G. Petersen

Kuban Cossacks 3rd and 4th Regts. Variant type of arm shield.



(Left) Kuban Cossacks 3rd and 4th Regts. of the corps (July 1944). (Right) Alternative design.



This Kuban Cossack wears the arm shield with a colored bar above it (purpose not known). Note also that the shield is worn on the left sleeve.



Cap cockade (for other ranks).



ECPA



Kuban Artillery in the Don Cossacks Division (note this is the same as for the Don Cossack artillery but without the word "DON").

Members of the Kuban Artillery in the Don Cossacks Division (note arm shield) being awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class.

2nd Brigade/Division

3rd Kuban Cossacks Cav. Regt. Dress as for the 4th Kuban Cossacks Cav. Regt., except that the arm shield was worn on the left arm.

5th Don Cossacks Cav. Regt. Dress as for the 1st Don Cossacks Cav. Regt., except that the arm shield was worn on the left arm.

6th Terek Cossacks Cav. Regt. Headgear a black *Papacha*. Down the outer seams of the trousers a 25mm light blue stripe edged on either side by black (the black edging being approximately 4mm wide). The arm shield (left arm) was cornflower blue and black (blue the upper and lower segments, black the left and right segments.) This is surmounted by the word TEREK in white, but after July 1944 this was replaced by a Cyrillic T V (*Tereskoye Voysko*.) (It resembles a Latin T B.)

Manion-Foxhole Collection



Pre-corps arm shield, 1st design.



Pre-corps arm badge, 2nd design.



1st type of corps arm badge.



Terek Cossacks cap cockade (other ranks).



G. Petersen

Terek Cossacks in Cavalry Corps. Final form of arm shield (July 1944).

The color and style of the trousers worn by members of the brigades/divisions varied. Dark blue was worn by the Don Cossacks, blue-grey (often ex-Luftwaffe) by the Siberians, and black by the Kuban Cossacks. But this was not an invariable rule since any, or all, of the above could wear normal German army field grey. Officers wore breeches.

Divisional personnel who were not members of the above regiments (i.e., all those belonging to sections with the number 55), wore on their right arm a shield in horizontal yellow/red/blue (yellow being the upper color). A bar, or "bend," in the appropriate *Waffenfarbe* was worn across it at a 45-degree angle by the artillery and signals sections (red and yellow, respectively). The Don artillery had DON in light blue above this, but the Kuban artillery had nothing.



Special arm badge for "55 Abteilung."

A member of "55 Abteilung" (note arm shield).



ECFA

Headquarters staff wore on the right upper arm an oval badge which is blue with a white Ataman's staff between two black *Shashkas* (curved Cossack sabers), the whole has a narrow inset red surround. Members of Pannwitz's Personal Bodyguard wore on both sleeves, about three inches above the cuff, a broad inverted, gold double chevron.



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Arm badge of Headquarters Staff of XVth Cossack Cavalry Corps (worn on right upper arm).

ECFA



Personnel assigned to the headquarters staff with drawn Shashkas.

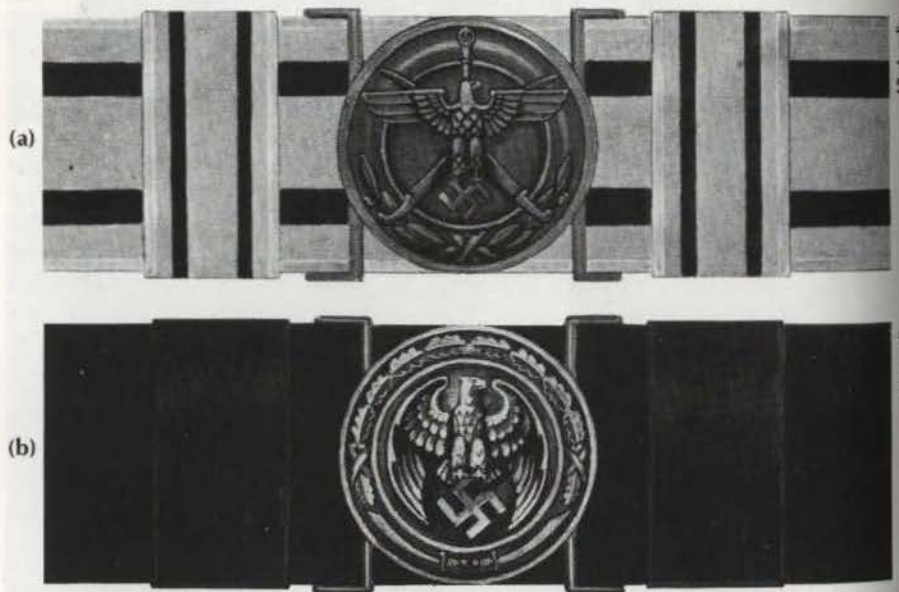


ECFA

Personal Guard Squadron of the commander-in-chief of the XVth Cossack Cavalry Corps (von Pannwitz). A broad gold double chevron was worn about three inches above the cuff on both sleeves to designate this assignment.



Note the corps symbol on the right fender of von Pannwitz's command car.



Two tentative designs for belts and buckles for Cossack units prepared by the German firm of F.W. Assmann in May 1943. Almost certainly neither design was adopted.
(a) is a bluish grey belt with black bands,
(b) is an all black belt.

The 5th Don Cossacks Regiment and the 2nd Siberian Cossacks Regiment both had their own regimental cross. These are not decorations but items of dress. The wearing, on the breast pocket, of regimental crosses, enamel badges or other emblems to distinguish a unit (or training establishment) is common to many continental countries. The Young Cossacks School had its own "graduates" badge. This is an oval wreath of oak leaves with, in the center, an Ataman's staff and crossed *shashkas*. At the base is the German eagle and swastika and a scroll with (in abbreviated form) *Shkola Yunykh Kozakov* (School for Young Cossacks). These words, likewise in Cyrillic script, also appear on the cuff title of the school which is green silk with silver lettering.

5th Don Cossacks Regimental cross. Has the name of its commander KONONOV (in Cyrillic) and date of foundation of the regiment, 28.X.1941.



2nd Siberian Cossack Cavalry Regt. cross.

Vaclav Duchac



Graduates Badge of School of Young Cossacks. Most often found in white metal, this version is unusual in having a gilt wreath and gilt scroll. This may indicate that the badge existed in more than one grade.

G. Petersen



Cuff title "School of Young Cossacks."

Items of traditional Cossack costume worn by members of the division/corps, in addition to the special headgear already mentioned, were: the *Tcherkessa* - a long black tunic/coat sometimes knee-length, sometimes extending to the ankles (depending on the region of origin of the wearer). It opened at the neck to reveal the *Beshmet*, or shirt, which was, by custom, red for Kuban Cossacks, blue for Terek Cossacks, although black was as often worn instead. Pannwitz's personal bodyguard normally wore field grey with the inverted gold cuff chevron (already described), but on full-dress parade a select few wore blue *Tcherkessas* with red shoulder straps and a red *Beshmet*. The *Bashlyk* is a hood worn from a cord round the neck and hung loosely down the back. This was red for Don Cossacks, blue for Terek and Siberian Cossacks. The *Burka* is a black cape, so long and broad that it covers both horse and rider.

ECFA



The traditional *Tcherkessa* (black) is worn with a colored *Beshmet*. Note the *Kindjals* (daggers) and the *Shashkas* (sabers).

The crossed lances collar patch and other German-designed items of "Cossack" insignia were worn only by Cossack units outside the brigades/divisions/corps. Pannwitz allowed traditional Cossack weapons such as *Kindjal* (dagger), and the *Shashka*, to be carried on ceremonial occasions. If sufficient genuine Russian weapons were not available, German cavalry sabers were issued in their stead. Pannwitz's personal bodyguard always carried *Shashkas*.

This mounted cossack wears the long, black *Burka*.



ECFA



Note the insignia and decorations worn on this field-grey *Tcherkessa*. The ribbon bar indicates this man is German and a veteran of World War I.

During the summer in Yugoslavia, the Cossacks were issued tropical German army khaki uniforms. *Waffenfarbe* was cavalry yellow.

Even after the takeover of the corps by the S.S., pay-books remained army, not S.S., and no S.S. insignia of any sort was ever worn. Some Cossacks units, however, did wear S.S. type black collar patches. These were Security formations (mainly employed in Northern Italy).



Paybook for a Cossack volunteer made out in both German and Russian.

NOTE:

Although the XV Cossack Corps was to be under the jurisdiction of the Waffen-SS, it never was. The Corps retained its status as a formation of the Wehrmacht, with the Waffen-SS responsible only for logistics (i.e., materiel and other necessary supplies).

The Italian army had a Cossack Cavalry unit (*Gruppo Savoia*), which wore traditional Cossack costume with, on the right upper arm, a chevron in white/blue/red (the Imperial Russian colors). After the defection of Italy from the war, her Cossack units were absorbed into the German army and the three-colored chevron may have been carried over onto the Wehrmacht uniform.



Red/blue/white chevron worn by Cossacks of the Gruppo Savoia of the Italian army. There is some evidence to suggest that this was carried over into the XVth Cossack Cavalry Corps after Italy's defection from the war.

With the several alterations to insignia and frequent lack of availability of supplies, the Cossacks of the German army wore, in fact, every conceivable variation of dress and insignia! Often Red Army items such as the brown tunic or the N.C.O.s blue peaked cap with its yellow band were carried over into use along with articles of German uniform. Sometimes even ex-White Army garb, hidden since the days of the Civil War, was fetched out to be adorned with German insignia and proudly worn again!



Cossacks in the German service - headgear is entirely Russian, including peaked cap - blue with red band.



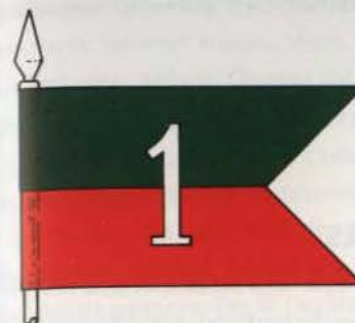
A variant of the Cossack badge at right: a silver metal death's head on black with a yellow bullion surround. This is actual size, drawn from an example in a private collection.



A Cossack in an unidentified German army unit - possibly the Jungschulz Regiment. Note his death's head arm badge.

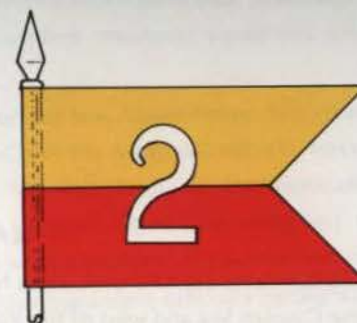
One item of German/Cossack dress that did arouse resentment in certain quarters was the broad red stripe down the outer seams of the trousers, as sported by the Don Cossacks. Since the broad red trouser stripe is, in Germany, reserved for general officers, its use by others was a source of irritation and offense to some. Col. Wagner, a German officer with the 1st Don Cossacks, was strolling down the street in Zagreb in his red striped trousers, Cossack cape and fur *Papacha* when he was accosted by an irate German general who demanded to know what the hell he thought he was doing "in that comic opera get-up!"

COSSACK SQUADRON PENNANTS



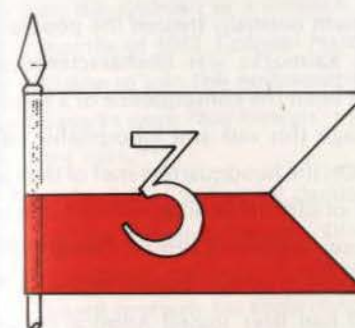
Don Cossacks Regt. No. 5 command flag of 1st Squadron.

(Green over red)



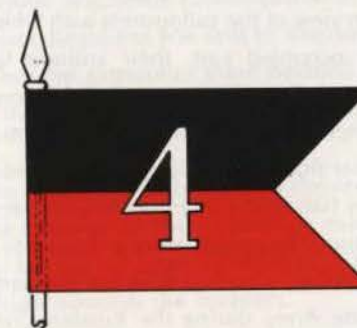
Don Cossacks Regt. No. 5 command flag of 2nd Squadron.

(Yellow over red)



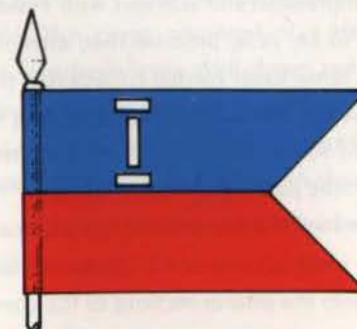
Don Cossacks Regt. No. 5 command flag of 3rd Squadron.

(White over red)



Don Cossacks Regt. No. 5 command flag of 4th Squadron.

(Black over red)



Don Cossack Regt. No. 5 command flag of 1st Abteilung (2nd Abteilung is the same but with a white II).

(Blue over red)

KALMUCKS

The Kalmucks (or Kalmyks), are a Mongolic people who inhabit an area northwest of the Caspian Sea and west of the Volga. They are, by tradition, nomadic and belong to the Tibetan Buddhist religion. An autonomous Kalmuck Republic within the U.S.S.R. was set up in 1935 but abolished on Stalin's orders after the Second World War on grounds of the Kalmucks collaboration with the enemy.*

In view of the callousness with which the Germans normally treated the peoples of the occupied east, their attitude towards the Kalmucks was uncharacteristically benign. The seeming goodwill however may have been the consequence of a need to protect their own lines of communication through this vast and inhospitable land, rather than of affection for the Kalmuck people. On the headquarters staff of the German 16th (mot.) Infantry Division were a number of officers familiar with the obscure Kalmuck language. Among these was a Russian-born Sudeten German, Otmar Werva (or Wrba), who had adopted the name of Otto Doll. A former cavalry officer in the White Army during the Russian Civil War, Doll had later joined Admiral Canaris' *Abwehr* and had served for a time as military attache in Odessa.** In August 1943, Doll, accompanied by a staff of only two, a driver and a wireless operator, was given the task of establishing contact with the leaders of the Kalmuck people. He seems to have made an excellent impression and was met with a wide degree of cooperation. The Germans even went so far as to promise that, after the war, a "Free Kalmuck State" would be set up - a remarkable pledge considering the Nazis' customary reluctance to commit themselves to any undertaking regarding the future of territory under their control. The hated Soviet *Kolkhozy* (collective farms) were abolished and the Kalmuck tradition of nomadic pastoralism substituted. A "National Committee" was set up which may have created the impression that it was a provisional government, although in reality it was a mere adjunct of the German military administration. Financial grants were made to help the poorer sections of the community (a feature of German occupation policy unique to Kalmuckia!). Thus, the Germans succeeded in winning the collaboration of a considerable section of the populace. The Kalmucks were

*The Kalmucks did not regain their status as an autonomous republic with the Soviet system until 1958.

**The author apologizes to readers of his "The Patriotic Traitors" for the misinformation it contains regarding Dr. Doll!

encouraged to police their own region. Armed *Ortsmilizen* and *Ordnungsdienst* units were created rather like the *Schuma* in other areas of the occupied east. In addition to these static defense troops, there were independent mounted squadrons which patrolled areas without German garrisons.

The first regular Kalmuck military unit to be formed was *Abwehrtrupp* 103, created in August 1941 by order of the Commander-in-Chief 6th Army as a security force to prevent Soviet Partisan harassment of the German lines of communication. In September 1942 the 16th (mot.) Infantry Division raised and equipped two squadrons of Kalmuck cavalry providing them with a mixture of German and captured Soviet weapons. On 17 October the two squadrons were officially incorporated into the *Wehrmacht*, and on 30 November given the designation 1/2 *Kalmückenschwadron* 66. A cavalry squadron is roughly the equivalent of an infantry company and usually consists of two troops of around 60 to 100 men each.

When the creation of a Cossack Cavalry Division was being contemplated in the early months of 1943, Colonel Nazorov's Kalmuck Regiment was sent to Kherson in the Ukraine to join this embryonic formation, but the authorities there decided that the Kalmucks were "too foreign" to fit in with "the other Cossacks," and the regiment was sent back.***

After the fall of Stalingrad (January 1943), the Red Army embarked on the reconquest of the Kalmuck Steppes. Throughout the summer of 1943, wholesale evacuations took place, not only of military personnel but also of large numbers of civilians who feared reprisals for their cooperative attitude towards the invaders.

By recruiting among the evacuees, the Germans were able further to increase the size of their Kalmuck mounted detachments (as nomads, the Kalmucks are natural horsemen). By July 1943 seven Kalmuck cavalry squadrons had been formed, and by August the creation of a Kalmuck Cavalry Corps (*Kalmückische Kavallerie Korps*, or KKK), was made possible. This corps consisted of a Headquarters Staff and four *Abteilungen*, each of six squadrons (now with three, not as previously, two, troops apiece). One squadron in each *Abteilung* was classed as a *Jagdschwadron* (literally "a hunting squadron"), and this was regarded as an elite or shock troop. Normally each squadron had around 100 to 150 men, but the *Jagdschwadron* had only sixty.

In July 1944 the KKK was reorganized into two brigades of two regiments each. Its recorded strength at this time was:

147 officers

374 non-commissioned officers

2,917 other ranks.

Equipment was German, Soviet and Dutch rifles, submachine guns and pistols. There were also thirty heavy machine guns and an unspecified number of mortars. Before

***The Kalmucks are, by no stretch of the imagination, Cossacks. By race, language and religion they are totally distinct.

this reorganization the majority of the officers had been Kalmucks, with the Germans acting only as "advisors," but after July German officers (around 90 in all) took over all senior positions of command.

The KKK retreated through the Ukraine to Poland where, in a major action at Radom in January 1945, it was virtually wiped out. What was left in a battle-worthy condition was withdrawn to Bavaria and reconstituted as a Dismounted Cavalry Regiment and sent to join the XVth Cossack Cavalry Corps in Croatia.

Uniforms and Insignia

Less concern seems to have been devoted to special insignia for the Kalmucks than for other "eastern" volunteers. Indeed only one special "Dr. Doll's Kalmuck Unit"**** badge certainly exists, and even here it has proved impossible to produce photographic evidence that it was ever actually worn. The Kalmucks, many of whom were ex-Red Army cavalrymen, probably retained their Soviet uniform after discarding its insignia. When German uniforms were eventually issued, these also were worn without insignia. Probably nothing approaching standardization of dress was ever achieved in the KKK, and only the German "advisers" (later commanders) wore properly constituted military garb.



Red design on light blue (Dodkins Collection). Another version exists which has brown central emblem on light blue with brown lettering on a yellow surround.

As Buddhists, the Kalmucks had as their flag a saffron banner.

****Dr. Doll died in 1943 before the final dissolution of the forces he had done so much to create.

KAMINSKI and R.O.N.A.

The town of Lokot on the edge of the Bryansk Forest lies about halfway between Orec and Kursk in central Russia. In January 1942 it fell under the jurisdiction of the 2nd Panzer Army. The forest, a natural refuge for Partisans and Red Army fugitives, presented a potential threat to the security of the German forces in that area. The mayor of Lokot, K. Voskoboinikov, was allowed by the Wehrmacht to set up a "Self Defense" force of some 500 men to protect the German lines of communication and safeguard the food and materials with which he had undertaken to supply 2nd Panzer Army.

The experiment proved so successful that an autonomous District of Lokot was later established which embraced over a million souls. (Lokot itself had a population of only around 6,000.)

Voskoboinikov was killed leading an attack on the Partisans in the Bryansk Forest and his place as leader of the District of Lokot was taken by Bronislav Vladislavovich Kaminski, son of a Polish father and German mother, born in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) in 1903. A chemical engineer by profession, Kaminski had no reason to love the Soviets. Under suspicion as a "foreigner," a bourgeois intellectual and potential dissident, he had spent five years in one of Stalin's labor camps, having been released only a few months prior to the German invasion. He was a brilliant, if autocratic, organizer, spoke German fluently, and threw himself wholeheartedly behind the German cause. He tried (unsuccessfully) to form a Russian Nazi Party, but apart from this one failure, his record was one of unqualified success. Lokot became a model of self-sufficiency under his guidance. It had its own newspapers, hospitals, banks and even its own Kaminski-devised tax system! The stipulated food supplies never failed to be delivered to the Wehrmacht on time and the Germans found it necessary to maintain only a minimum liaison staff. The original Self Defense force was expanded into a small private army, which by September 1943 had grown into a brigade of some 10,000 men, organized in five infantry regiments, supported by its own artillery (36 field guns), and armor (24 captured Soviet T 34 tanks), as well as engineer, signals, and medical units. This force went under the grandiloquent title of the Russian Liberation Peoples' Army (*Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Narodnaya Armiya*, or R.O.N.A.).

Uniforms tended to be whatever was available locally - this often meant ex-Red Army divested of its Soviet insignia, although a mixture of German was also worn and some hidden Czarist vestments were also resurrected! Kaminski himself wore the uniform of a Wehrmacht officer but without badges. In place of the German cap badge he wore the old imperial cockade of white/blue/red (the outer color being white). The scheme of ranks is not known but was in all probability based on the Czarist type (indicated on the shoulder boards). The arm shield of R.O.N.A. was the Cross of St. George (a Czarist military decoration), in black on a white background; above this, in yellow on a black frame, the letters R.O.N.A. (but being in Cyrillic, this resembles P.O.H.A.). The above description applies to the "official" version of this badge, but locally produced types did not necessarily follow this pattern very closely. One authentic example (in a private collection in England), shows a black cross without the crossed swords on a white background, outlined narrowly in red; above this is a yellow P.O.H.A. on a field grey background. There may well have been other versions, their artistry depending on the skill of their makers.



Official R.O.N.A. arm badge. Black and white with yellow P.O.H.A.



Red/blue/white cockade worn by R.O.N.A. officers on the (German) peaked cap.

The R.O.N.A. fought several successful actions against the Partisans of Bryansk and even induced some of them to change sides. Kaminski was awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class and dubbed "The Warlord of the Bryansk Forest."

By the autumn of 1943, however, things were beginning to go wrong. The Germans were in continuous retreat in Russia, and it was not long before Lokot had to be evacuated in the face of the Red Army's relentless advance. Kaminski and his R.O.N.A. (which now comprised some 15,000 men), were removed to Ratibor on the Polish-Czech border. An exodus accompanied by 10,500 civilians and 1,500 cows!

In March 1944 the R.O.N.A. was renamed a *Volksheer Brigade* (Peoples Army Brigade - a term which sounds more Soviet than German). In July it was accepted into the Waffen S.S. as S.S. Assault Brigade (*Sturmbrigade*) RONA. Kaminski was granted a commission as a *Waffen-Brigadeführer*. His men were not, as yet, deemed fit for front-



R.O.N.A. arm shield.



Branislav Vladislavovich Kaminski

line service and were sent for further training to Hungary. When, in August 1944, the Polish Home Army began its abortive uprising in Warsaw, one regiment (of around 1,700 men), under Lt. Col. Vrolov was detached from the brigade and sent to the Polish capital to assist in the suppression of the Revolt. It arrived on 5 August but was withdrawn three weeks later on the orders of the German operational commander, Erich von Bach-Zelewski, on account of its atrocious conduct and general lack of discipline. Kaminski himself was in Warsaw for only about ten days. Later he was arrested by the S.S. in Lodz and charged with looting - an offense punishable by death. He was shot by an S.S. firing squad on being found guilty. His death however was officially attributed to a Polish partisan ambush on the road to Lodz.

Sturmbrigade RONA was still largely garbed in its motley assortment of Red Army and German uniforms, often with only a "In the Service of the Waffen S.S." brassard to distinguish them as S.S. men.

Kaminski's death was a severe blow to the morale of the brigade. Rumors quickly abounded that he had been deliberately murdered on Himmler's orders. There may have been more than a little truth in this. Why should the S.S., a body of men not oversqueamish in such matters, have shot to death one of its senior officers on a charge of looting a few items of jewelry? Could the true reason have been that the S.S. were beginning to find Kaminski's arrogance too much? (At Lokot he had, for example, set up home in a former residence of the Grand Duke Michael and surrounded himself

with every conceivable luxury.) Perhaps, too, the S.S. had discovered some Jewish antecedents in the Kaminski family. Or was it that by this time Himmler had come to the decision to sponsor Vlasov as Russia's "liberator," and found two would-be "Russian de Gaulles" an embarrassment - better to be rid of one or other of them; Kaminski was just the unhappy choice for the bullet.

Whatever the reason, the passing of Kaminski meant the disintegration of the R.O.N.A. There had once been plans to expand the *Sturmbrigade* into a division and a number had already been allocated. It was to be the 29 *Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S. (russische Nr. 1)*. But the project had to be abandoned; demoralization had eaten into the soul of Kaminski's followers. It was decided to disband the brigade and redistribute its more reliable members among other formations. Some went over to Vlasov's R.O.A., others to the "second" Russian S.S. division (*30 Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S.*), which was formed in August 1944. (See section on Belorussia.) The number 29 was reallocated to an Italian S.S. division (see Vol. 2 of the present series).

A collar patch for the projected RONA Division was devised, but almost certainly never issued. It takes the form of the St. George's Cross (as per the official arm shield), in white on a black background. Genuine examples exist, but were probably only "pilot" samples. Ironically, this collar patch was still featured on the S.S. map of February 1945 long after the disbandment of the brigade!

Not all the R.O.N.A. men were Russians; some were Ukrainians, other Belorussians, and there were even a few Poles.



Collar patch of 29th *Waffen Gren. Division der S.S. (Russian No. 1 - most of whose members were ex-R.O.N.A.)*

OSINTORF and the R.N.N.A.

One of several German ventures in the clandestine arming of former Red Army men as anti-communist fighters was carried out by *Versuchsverband Mitte* (Experimental Formation of Army Group Center), at Osintorf, near Smolensk. A military unit consisting entirely of former Red Army personnel equipped with captured enemy weapons was set up in March 1942 by German Military Intelligence.

Officially *Abwehr Abteilung 203*, it went under a variety of designations - *Verband Graukopf*, Boyarsky Brigade, Russian Battalion for Special Duty, Osintorf Brigade, and latterly, the Russian National Peoples Army (*Russkaia Natsionalnaya Narodnaya Armiya*, or R.N.N.A.).

The initiative for the creation of this formation came from an emigre, Sergei Ivanov, who succeeded in recruiting several prominent Soviet personalities held in German captivity as well as a number of distinguished fellow exiles. Among the prisoners-of-war was Vladimir Boyarsky, commander of the elite 41st Guards Division of the Red Army, and Gerogi N. Zhilenkov, First Secretary of the Communist Party for the Moscow District. Of the notable emigres, Igor Sakharov was perhaps the most eminent. The son of a Czarist general, and hero of the Spanish Civil War (on Franco's side), Ivanov acted as liaison officer with the *Abwehr*, while Sakharov filled the role of his deputy at the camp itself. "The camp," - it was actually a former peat works - had barrack accommodation for some 10,000 men. In July 1942 there were around 3,000 Russians there, all former prisoners-of-war and still in their Red Army uniforms (although divested of insignia). By December 1942 the number had swelled to around 7,000. In place of the former Red Star as a cap badge, they wore a white/blue/red cockade, while rank was now indicated by Czarist style shoulder boards.

The brigade now consisted of four infantry battalions, one artillery and one engineer battalion. Each battalion ran its own officers and N.C.O.'s courses. Organization, training and drill were all Russian-style. There was a camp newspaper *Rodina* (Fatherland), which, perhaps unwittingly, fostered the idea that the brigade was to form the nucleus of a Russian Liberation army. The brigade's first commander was Col. K.G. Kromiadi, but, as an emigre, he was removed from his post under an order from Hitler which forbade emigres within the battlezone. In August 1942, Col. Boyarsky took over command. In December, Field Marshal von Kluge inspected the brigade. He expressed himself well pleased with its state of training and its already proven

reliability under fire (it has participated successfully in actions against encircled pockets of Red Army troops in the German rear that May). He then added, as though this was the most natural consequence of this compliment, that it was his intention to issue the brigade with standard Wehrmacht uniforms and weapons and split it into a number of infantry battalions which would be assigned to different combat divisions of the German army.

This seemingly casual pronouncement had a shattering effect on the morale of the brigade. Perhaps misled by its own propaganda, it had begun to see itself as a future all-Russian anti-Bolshevik army. Now it found it was to be dispersed and would serve in German uniform, under German command. Zhilenkov and Boyarsky protested vehemently, but were met only with a curt, "Those are your orders, obey them, or face a court martial." They were powerless in the face of this threat.

The brigade was re-formed as five individual security battalions (*Ost Bataillone 633-637*) and employed only on anti-Partisan operations in the rear. The Germans did not trust it to serve at the front after some 300 of its members deserted on learning of von Kluge's decision.

It was the end of the R.N.N.A.

GIL-RODIONOV and DRUZHINA

Although most experiments with the arming of anti-communist Red Army defectors were initiated by the army, the S.S. also had a foray into this forbidden field - albeit with unhappy results.

At Pskov in northern Russia (close to the Estonian border), a unit of former Red Army soldiers was established in April 1942 with the nominal purpose of broadcasting subversive propaganda to their erstwhile comrades. Before the close of the year, this concept had been extended to embrace the idea of parachuting suitably trained Russian agents back into Russia to act as saboteurs in the enemy rear. The code name "Zeppelin" was selected for this foolhardy enterprise. But to ensure the reliability and loyalty of the men selected, it was decided that they should first be put to the test in actions against the Partisans. A combat unit of around 1,000 Russians with only eight German officers was formed and given the rather fanciful title of *Druzhina* (Bodyguard). The leading actor in this affair was Lt. Col. V.V. Gil, the 35-year-old former Chief of Staff of the Red Army's 229th Infantry Division. The *Druzhina* proved exemplary in combat against the Soviet Partisans of Belorussia, and a second unit, *Druzhina II* was formed. In March the two units were merged as one under the designation 1st Russian National Brigade (sometimes referred to as the S.S. *Druzhina* Brigade). Gil, who now adopted the *nom-de-guerre* of Rodionov, was appointed its commanding officer. It had a strength of about 3,000 and a motto of "Fight for a New Russia."

When the Osintorf experiment ended in the dissolution of the R.N.N.A., one of its leading protagonists, G.N. Zhilenov, was moved to Pskov where he was assigned responsibility for forming a "1st Guards Brigade" from among the Russian volunteers. His arrival, with its implied challenge to his authority, seems to have finally clinched matters for "Gil-Rodionov." For some time past he had begun to question the wisdom of his conversion to the German side. He had by now seen the realities of life under the Third Reich at first hand. He had spoken to disillusioned eastern workers and soldiers and had witnessed the contempt with which the Germans treated those who worked or fought for them. It did not encourage him to make further sacrifices on behalf of Adolf Hitler! By August Gil had determined not only to defect back to the Soviets, but if possible take the brigade with him. On 13 August, in what would appear to have been a prearranged encounter, a strong Partisan force ambushed the brigade

and demanded its surrender. Gil then threatened to shoot anyone unwilling to change sides. All the German liaison staff were killed. Despite this, some 30 officers and 500 other ranks refused to go over to the Partisans and fought their way out of the encirclement to return to the German lines.

Gil was rewarded by Stalin with the Order of the Red Star. (It has to be said, however, that few "double defectors" were so gratefully received back into Soviet hands. Most who attempted a second change of coat ended up in labor camps in Siberia or facing a firing squad.)

The small number of *Druzhina* men who had established their trustworthiness by fighting their way out of the ambush became, under Zhilenkov's leadership, the First Guards Brigade of the R.O.A. But for the S.S., the whole *Druzhina* experiment was an embittering experience which goes some way to explain Himmler's hostility towards would-be Russian "liberators" and his opposition (up to the eleventh hour) to Vlasov. The *Reichsführer* S.S. was, of course, careful to keep the *Druzhina* fiasco concealed from his master. Hitler was told merely that the brigade had been disbanded "because of indiscipline."

BELORUSSIA (White Russia)

White Russia is the most westerly region of the country, adjoining Poland and to the north of the Ukraine. It goes under a confusing variety of names - Belorussia, Ruthenia, White Ruthenia (in German: *Weissruthenien*) and Byelorussia. Being the furthest west, it was the first part of Russia to be occupied by the Germans and the last to be liberated. Its people were encouraged to think of themselves as being different from the Russians and a mild degree of nationalism was fostered. A limited amount of autonomy was permitted within the tight framework of German rule. *Generalkommissar* Wilhelm Kube was "assisted" by a Belorussian Advisory Council (*Rada*), headed by Dr. Ivan Ermachenko, an elderly emigre and one-time officer in General Wrangel's anti-Bolshevik White Army.

In October 1941 Kube sanctioned the formation of a Belorussian People's Self-Help Organization, the B.N.S. (*Belaruskaya Naradnaya Samapomach*). The following July the active members of the B.N.S. were permitted to create their own armed combat units to counter the increasing threat from the Soviet Partisans in the region. This armed force was known as the B.K.A. (*Belaruskaya Krayovaya Abarona*).



A. Southard

Wilhelm
Kube

The first of these was the Belorussian Home Guard (*Weissruth. Heimwehr*), raised in March 1944 as a sort of locally based police force. It was much more static and less combatant than its counterpart, the active units of the Schuma. The *Heimwehr* (or *Heimatwehr* - both names mean the same), wore ex-Allgemeine S.S. black uniforms with blue cuffs, pocket flaps and collars. Like the Schuma, they were organized as individual battalions (there may have been about 30 in all), plus twelve Pioneer battalions whose function was manual labor. There was a *Heimwehr* Leadership School (*Führerschule*) in Minsk with a mixed staff of Germans and Belorussians.

The other quasi-military body was the White Ruthenian Youth Work (*Weissruthenische Jugendwerk*, or W.J.W.). This was its German designation - in Russian it was known as the Union of Belorussian Youth (*Sayuz Belaruskay Moladzi*, or S.B.M.). It might be likened, very roughly, to the Hitler Youth. Its official existence dates from an inauguration ceremony in the Municipal Theater of Minsk on 20 June 1943. It had no coherent political platform other than anti-communism, although, ironically, nearly one-third of its officers were ex-Komsomol (Communist Youth) leaders! In July 1943, a group of fifty W.J.W. officials were taken on a conducted tour of Hitler Youth establishments in Germany. Membership, voluntary, was open to lads between the ages of 14 and 18; by the end of the year the W.J.W. claimed that 40,000 had joined.



Badge of the White Russian Youth Work (in German, *Weissruthenischen Jugendwerk*).

The Reich authorities were less interested in imbuing the young men of the W.J.W. with political understanding than with putting them to work in Germany's interests. About 300 boys were employed as apprentices at the Luftwaffe repair workshops at Minsk. The Luftwaffe provided them with uniforms. With this they wore the brassard of the W.J.W. - horizontal white/red/white (the Belorussian colors), with, in the center, a diamond shaped badge, again white/red/white, but the colors vertical in this

case, with a double-barred cross upon which a spade crossed with a sword and the letters S b M (being in Cyrillic, this resembles C b M). The Todt Organization in Minsk also took on W.J.W. trainees. The Germans were pleased with the technical aptitude displayed by the Belorussian lads and some 4,500 were brought to Germany to work as apprentices in the busy, and much-bombed, aircraft industry of the Reich.

When *Dienststelle Nickel* set about recruiting youngsters for its Flak Helper program, the W.J.W. was the obvious source to tap so far as Belorussian youth was concerned. *Kriegseinsatzkommando Mitte* recruited 2,354 Belorussian Flak Helpers. They wore Luftwaffe uniform with the W.J.W. brassard. Their cap badge was a vertically colored white/red/white lozange with the double-barred cross in the center.



Cap badge of the Belorussian Flak Helfer.



Brassard of Belorussian Flak-Helfer.

By the summer of 1944, the Red Army was back in Belorussia and the "government" fled to Posen, later to Berlin. Those units of the Schuma, B.K.A. and *Heimwehr* still loyal to their German masters were withdrawn to the Reich where, in July 1944, they were re-formed as *Schutzmannschaft Brigade Siegling*. The brigade consisted of four regiments based mainly on the former Schuma battalions from *Russland Mitte*. These included Artillery Section 56 and Cavalry *Abteilung* 68. By adding other stray Belorussian, Russian and Ukrainian volunteers, it proved possible to upgrade the brigade to a division in August 1944. This was listed as *30 Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S. (russische Nr. 2)*. The use of the term "2nd Russian" (*russische Nr. 2*), was due to the fact that at this point of time it was still hoped that Kaminski's R.O.N.A. would form the basis of a 1st Russian Division of the Waffen S.S. As it transpired, the projected 1st Russian never came into being, and some of its intended personnel were transferred to the 30th Division instead.

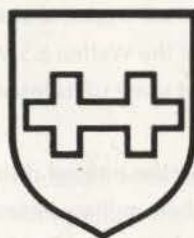
It was thought unwise to commit the untried division to the front line and, since most of its members had gained their military experience in battles against Partisan forces, it was decided to give it its baptism of fire in this role. It was, therefore, dispatched to northern France in September 1944 to deal with the *maquisards* of the Belfort region. Even against the lightly armed and numerically inferior French resistance, its performance was lamentable. It suffered heavier losses than it inflicted

and the rate of desertion was alarming. The division was withdrawn from active service. In March 1945 it was downgraded to a brigade, comprising one infantry regiment, one cavalry squadron, and one artillery section. It was now designated *Waffen-Brigade der S.S. (weissruthenische)*. Some of the German cadre of the disbanded division were remustered to the 38 S.S. Panzer Grenadier Division "Nibelungen," being hastily assembled from the training personnel at the S.S. officers' school at Bad Tölz.

A special collar patch was devised for the 30th Division. It takes the form of a plain version of the double-barred cross placed horizontally on a black patch. It is extremely doubtful if this was ever issued. In all probability either a plain black collar patch or the S.S. runes were worn. The same version of this cross is given as being the vehicle sign of the division, but, again, no photographic evidence is forthcoming to substantiate this. Two versions of an arm shield also exist. One is in the army pattern and has vertical white/red/white with a yellow, double-barred cross in the center; the whole being within a red "frame" with, at the top, *Weissruthenien*. It is unlikely that such a highly colored shield would have been suitable for active service. The other version, shown on the S.S. map of February 1945, is a red bar at a 45-degree angle across a plain white shield with *Belorousskaia* (Russian for Belorussia), at the top. No evidence, other than that of this map, can be found for the existence of such an arm shield.



Collar patch of 30th Waffen-Grenadier-Division der S.S. (Russian No. 2). May never have been worn.



30th Division vehicle sign.



Arm badge, possibly intended for 30th Division, but no confirmation of its ever having been worn.



Belorussian arm badge as illustrated on the S.S. map of 1945. It is not known if this was ever made or issued.



German steel helmet with White Russian shield painted on side. May have been for Schuma or for 30th Waffen-Grenadier-Division of the Waffen S.S.

There was a half-hearted attempt to transplant the miniscule Belorussian National Socialist Party (P.B.N.S.), formed by Fabin Akinshyts in Paris in 1933, to Minsk (the "capital" of Belorussia), but it succeeded in recruiting no more than a handful of adherents, and when Akinshyts and his deputy Vladislav Kazlouski were both assassinated by the Partisans, the project fell through. Kube was blown up in September 1943 when a bomb was left under his bed by a trusted Belorussian servant girl.

Kube's place was taken by S.S. *Brigadeführer* von Gottenberg, who combined the functions of *Generalkommissar* (Governor), and Higher S.S. and Police Leader. Oddly enough, the murder of Kube was followed by the granting of greater, rather than lesser, autonomy to the province. The Advisory *Rada* was superseded by a Belorussian Central Council under the Presidency of Raduslav Ostrovsky, although the Germans insisted on vetting all his cabinet appointments. On 1 April 1944, Belorussia was made a separate entity, no longer part of the *Ostland* (which had, up to this time, comprised the three Baltic states and Belorussia). It was now directly subordinate to Berlin.

"President" Ostrovsky greatly increased the strength of the B.K.A. by the simple expedient of making service in its ranks obligatory. The B.K.A. had its own uniforms and insignia which did not draw on German paradigms, but were wholly nationalistic in character. Its cap badge features the knight on a charger emblem more usually associated with Lithuania. But Belorussia and Lithuania had once been linked as the Principality of Polotsk (between 1320 and 1563), and this device, known as the *Pohonja*, is common to both. Indeed, the *Pohonja* is strongly associated with Belorussian nationalism. B.K.A. uniform was brownish grey in color.



Cap badge of the B.K.A.

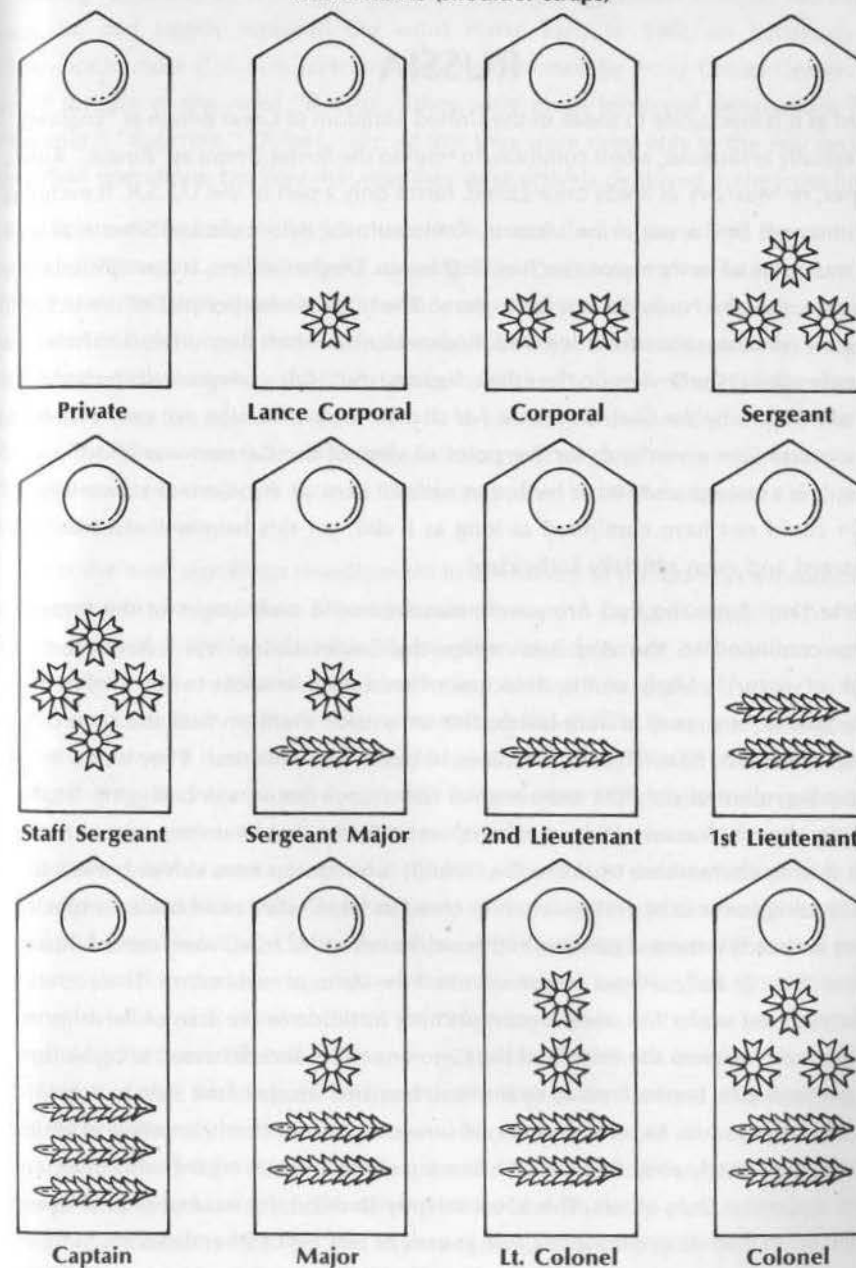
B.K.A. officer. Note collar patch with double-barred cross.



The B.K.A. was, at least in theory, an independent force, but the German S.S. and Police Command in Belorussia had complete control over the locally recruited *Schutzmannschaft*. In the *Ostland* the battalions of the Schuma were numbered 45 to 59, inclusive, 51 to 55, inclusive, and 57 to 64, inclusive. There was, in addition, an ar-

tillery detachment (with the number 56), and a "cavalry" or mounted unit (with the number 68). The operational commander of the Belorussian Schuma was S.S. *Obersturmbannführer* (Lt. Col.) Siegling. His men were later to form the basis of a Waffen S.S. division; but before dealing with that, it is necessary to mention two other Belorussian para-military formations.

B.K.A. Ranks (shoulder straps)



All emblems are gilt.

RUSSIA

Just as it is inaccurate to speak of the United Kingdom of Great Britain as "England," it is equally erroneous, albeit common, to refer to the Soviet Union as "Russia." Russia proper, or Muscovy as it was once called, forms only a part of the U.S.S.R. It excludes the immense land areas of the Ukraine, Transcaucasia, Belorussia and Siberia, as well as a multitude of lesser regions such as Kirghizstan, Daghestan, etc. It was a distinction, however, that the Nazis did not fail to draw. The non-Russian peoples of the U.S.S.R. were, as we have seen, accorded a cautious welcome when they offered to help the struggle against the Soviets (in the ethnic legions), but Hitler categorically forbade the use of Russians by the German forces. For all that, their utilization not only occurred, but occurred on a vast and, for the point of view of the German war effort, a vital scale. It is a strange and ironic truth that without Russian aid, Germany's war against Stalin could not have continued as long as it did, yet this help was resented, discouraged and even officially forbidden!

Desertions from the Red Army were massive in the early stages of the invasion. (They continued to the end even when the Soviet Union was patently on the brink of victory!) Many of the defectors offered their services to the Wehrmacht. Reluctant to turn away willing hands, the army took them on "off the record," as *Hiwis* (short for *Hilfswilliger* - Volunteer helpers, or Auxiliaries). They were, in the beginning, allotted only the most menial tasks: cook-house work, digging latrines, looking after the horses, acting as officers' servants, etc., but later they were entrusted with driving ammunition trucks to the front. It is but a step from carrying shells for a gun to taking over its operation when its crew has been killed or wounded, especially if one is already a trained gunner. In this way hundreds of *Hiwis* were sucked into the vortex of battle and, without orders, assumed the status of combatants. Their courage and steadiness under fire, their uncomplaining fortitude in the face of hardship and danger won for them the respect of the German soldier and did much to break down the psychological barrier created by the "sub humans" image of the Slavs as presented in Nazi propaganda. As time went by, *Hiwis* were, in direct contravention of Hitler's orders, increasingly entrusted with the bearing of arms. In this regard some units were more audacious than others. The 134th Infantry Division, for example, quite openly signed on ex-Red Army personnel from as early as July 1941. Other divisions, more circumspect, although they did not scruple from the use of *Hiwis*, shrank from putting

such illicit transactions through the books. Thus thousands of Russian "helpers" never appeared on the recorded strengths of the German divisions in the East. By the end of 1941, around 150,000 Russians were in the employ of the Wehrmacht. Less than a year later this had risen to half-a-million and of these some 200,000 were in combat units. By the end of 1943 this figure had doubled!

During the winter of 1941/42, a new term, *Osttruppen* (Eastern Troops), had come into use and largely replaced the word *Hiwis*. Early in 1942, six battalions of *Osttruppen* under Col. von Tresckow had been formed by Army Group Center. To avoid the use of the word "Russian," they were given territorial designations like "Knieper," "Berezina," "Pripet," etc. At first they were used only in the rear on anti-partisan operations, but later that year they were actively deployed in the front line.

Malicious individuals in the S.S. drew Hitler's attention to the army's flagrant disregard of his orders prohibiting the use of Russian "sub humans" as soldiers, and on 10 February 1942, a "Führer Order" forbade any further expansion of the *Osttruppen* and restricted the use of those units already in being to the rear areas only. Despite this apparent proscription, the *Osttruppen* continued to grow. The High Command authorized the use of *Hiwis* up to 10- or 15-percent of divisional strength, and in August 1942 there were even official regulations governing uniforms, insignia, pay and decorations for *Osttruppen*. By early 1943 an estimated 80,000 Russians were in the so-called *Ostbataillonen*.

By far the most significant development in the history of the *Osttruppen* and their subsequent expansion into a "liberation army" was the capture in July 1942 of the Soviet General Andrei Andreivich Vlasov. Born in September 1900, Vlasov was a professional officer with a distinguished career behind him. Before the war he had served on the Russian Military Mission to Chiang Kai-shek (a fortunate posting, as it turned out, since it meant he was absent from Russia at the time of Stalin's merciless "purge" of the Red Army's top command). In November 1939, Vlasov returned to the U.S.S.R. to take command of the 99th Infantry Division which he transformed from an undisciplined rabble into a crack unit - Stalin spoke of it as the most efficient in the army and awarded Vlasov the Order of Lenin. In January 1941, Vlasov was given command of the 4th Tank Corps. After the outbreak of hostilities in June of the same year, he participated in the defense of Kiev. In November he was recalled to assist in the defense of Moscow as commander of the 20th Army. By the end of the year, the Red Army had gone over to the offensive and on 2 January 1942, Stalin invested Vlasov with the Order of the Red Banner and promoted him to Lt. General. His name now featured prominently in the Soviet press and became well known on both sides of the front. In March 1942 he was placed in command of the 2nd Soviet Assault Army and ordered to relieve Leningrad. The attempt failed and his Army of nine infantry divisions, six light infantry brigades and an incomplete armored brigade was surrounded at Volkhov (east of Leningrad), where, abandoned by Stalin (he made no attempt to



Vlasov at the time of his capture.

relieve them), 32,000 officers and men of the Red Army allowed themselves to be taken prisoner.

Among a certain section of the German Army there had long existed the hope that one day a prominent Red Army captive might be induced to lend his name to a Free Russia Movement on the lines of De Gaulle's Free French. The ideal candidate would have to be well known and respected among his own people and in good moral standing. General Mikhail Lukin, former commander of the 19th Soviet Army, had at first sight seemed suited for the role. He had expressed a willingness to lead his countrymen in their struggle against Stalin, but as the price of his collaboration he demanded complete independence in both military and political matters. Predictably, Hitler turned him down flat. The Führer stormed that he wanted to hear no more talk of Russian liberation movements. The army, however, did not give up. Despite the rebuff, they persisted in their belief that a Russian liberation movement could be created and that Vlasov, a more distinguished soldier and more discrete individual than Lukin, was the man to head it. Their confidence seemed justified. Vlasov favorably impressed all who met him. Tall, lean, with an earnest osseous face, he had more the appearance of a scholar and aesthetic than a military man. His patriotism was manifestly sincere and he was free of that tendency towards self-dramatization which other Soviet luminaries had displayed to the annoyance of their captors. Here, at last, the army felt, was the "Russian De Gaulle" for which they had long sought. There still remained the daunting task of persuading Hitler.

In view of his frequently and crudely expressed opinion of the Slavs, why should Hitler wish to sponsor Vlasov? Why, too, should senior officers of the Red Army take on the cause of a country which was not only their military adversary but also their implacable ideological opponent even to the extent of regarding them as scarcely members of the human race?

So far as Hitler was concerned, he had abandoned none of his deep seated prejudices, but with the war now turning against Germany, its leader was beginning to conceive the idea that it might be possible to exploit Russian anti-communism to Germany's advantage without at the same time committing himself to any promise regarding its future. In brief, that he could use the fiction of a liberation movement to trick the Russians into cooperating with him, then, the war won, defraud.

Russian collaboration, on the other hand, was the product of a woeful ignorance as to the true nature of Hitler's Germany. The "iron curtain" existed long before Churchill gave it a name. Soviet citizens were deliberately denied information about conditions in other countries (lest the comparisons prove unfavorable to their homeland). The Germans did not attempt to enlighten them. It was an article of faith among the Nazis that Slavs were incapable of assimilating national-socialist doctrine and Hitler forbade translations of his word into Russian or any other Slavonic tongue. As a result of this, the invaders were confronted with such a degree of ignorance that even Jews welcomed them as deliverers from Soviet anti-semitism! The confusion was further compounded by the indiscriminate use of the word "fascist" in the Soviet press as a term of vilification for any form of anti-communist activity. This created the impression that anyone who resisted Stalin was a "fascist." Thus, ex-Red Army men who took up arms against the tyranny in their homeland did not resent being branded "fascist." To make matters worse, it was Stalin's doctrine that any soldier who allowed himself to be captured (in theory, Red Army men fought to the death), was a proven coward and potential traitor. Allowances to the families of prisoners were stopped on his orders. Naturally, any professional officer who found himself in this position could, with justification, assume that his career was finished. All this made the changing of allegiances easier. Few, if any, of the Russians who fought on Hitler's side were converts to Nazism.

Despite Hitler's frenzied attempts to restrain the development of the Russian contribution to his own war effort, the exigencies of the situation increasingly forced him to give recognition to the fact that Germany now possessed a sizable Russian army.

A first step had been the setting-up of an "Inspectorate" in August 1942 under General Ernst Köstring. This had, in theory, been limited to Caucasian troops but, unofficially, Köstring took under his wings all eastern volunteers. When Köstring retired in January 1943 a new post of *General der Osttruppen* was created and given to Lt. General Heinz Hellmich, a Prussian with, in marked contrast to Köstring who had been born and educated in Russia, no knowledge of Russia or the Russian language. Köstring's ability to experience proved irreplaceable and he was brought back in June 1943 as Inspector General of Turkic and Caucasian units. In typical Nazi fashion the responsibilities of Hellmich and Köstring overlapped but, luckily, the two men got on well together. As before, Köstring's work extended beyond its supposed limits to encompass Russian and Ukrainian volunteers in addition to those of Caucasian and

Turkic origin. In January 1944, Köstring took over from Hellmich with the new title of *General der Freiwilligen Verbände* (General of the Volunteer Units).

In the interim, however, a great deal had happened. Hitler sanctioned the use of Vlasov "for propaganda purposes only." The small but determined band of officers in German Intelligence who championed the Russian cause gave "propaganda purposes" the widest possible interpretation! In effect, it opened the door to a whole range of activities which went far beyond mere propaganda. In November 1942, a Russian National Committee was set up in Berlin under the chairmanship of Vlasov on the lines of the already existing National Committees of the various ethnic legions. The Committee issued a proclamation announcing a three-point program: (i) the destruction of Stalinism, (ii) the conclusion of "an honorable peace" with Germany, and (iii) Russian participation in "the New Europe." This declaration, popularly known as the Smolensk Manifesto (although it was in fact composed in Berlin and mainly by Germans), was signed by Vlasov on 27 December 1942. Copies were then dropped by air not only over enemy lines in the east but also, by a carefully planned "mistake" on the part of Army Intelligence, on the German side of the front also. Thus ensuring that the Vlasov cause, denied on Hitler's orders, any mention in the German press, was "accidentally" made known to the *Osttruppen* on service at the front!

The winter of 1942/43 with disaster at Stalingrad and defeat in North Africa, marked the turning point in Hitler's road to ruin. Henceforth as Germany's fortunes declined, so those of her Russian "allies" improved. At the start of the year (1943), the *Osttruppen* acquired a new and significant name, Russian Liberation Army (*Russkaia Osvoboditelnaia Armiia*, or R.O.A.). Although an "army" in name only (no single unit was larger than a battalion), and widely dispersed across the vastness of the eastern front, they did at least possess a sort of spiritual cohesion and a common emblem. The choice of a suitable arm badge was one on which a great deal of mental effort was expended. A Russian artist, A.N. Rodzevich, submitted nine different designs to the



Vlasov (right) at his headquarters in Berlin.

Eastern Ministry, but Rosenberg, who disliked Vlasov, raised objections to them all. Finally a motif based on the old Czarist battle flag was selected. This is a blue St. Andrew's cross (Saint Andrew being the patron saint of Russia as well as of Scotland), on white within a narrow red "frame," surmounted by the letters R.O.A. in cyrillic (they resemble the Latin P.O.A.). The flag of the R.O.A. was similarly a blue saltire on white with narrow red edging.

An R.O.A. school was set up at Dabendorf, about 20 miles outside Berlin "to train propagandists," but in reality it acted as the headquarters and spiritual center of the new army. Work was begun on the development of an R.O.A. "air force." General H. Aschenbrenner of the Luftwaffe, a former German air attache in Moscow, and his adjutant Buschmann (an Estonian who had already helped set up the Estonian air squadron), established a Russian flying unit commanded by an ex-Red Air Force colonel, V.I. Maltzev. Aschenbrenner had the designation *General der Ostflieger*. Vlasov had no jurisdiction over the Luftwaffe's *Ostflieger*, but Aschenbrenner got on well with him and even went so far as to suggest that the R.O.A. Propagandists School be removed from Dabendorf to Pillau in East Prussia and thus come under a Luftwaffe administrative district instead of an army district. Nothing, in fact, came of this proposal.

Developments at Dabendorf proceeded apace. Two Russian language newspapers, *Dobrovol'yets* (The Volunteer), and *Zaria* (Dawn), were published. The former was intended for soldiers, the latter for the *Ostarbeiter*. An impression was created that Vlasov was in some sense "in charge" of the R.O.A. This was completely erroneous. Apart from his own small personal staff, Vlasov commanded no troops of any sort.

Nonetheless, illusion was more potent than reality. The monthly rate of desertion from the Red Army rose to 6,500 in July 1943 as compared with 2,500 the previous year - and this against a background of the U.S.S.R. actually beginning to win the war!

But the very success of the R.O.A. contributed to its undoing. In Himmler the R.O.A. had an implacable foe. Although later the *Reichsführer* S.S. became a convert to the Russian cause, at this stage he did all in his power to sabotage Vlasov. This he finally achieved by telling Hitler that units of the R.O.A. were deserting back to the Red Army, taking their German weapons with them! Some cases of this sort had occurred, but they were minor and rare. It was, however, all the anti-Vlasov "evidence" that Hitler required. He had already been incensed by Vlasov's publicly voiced criticisms of German policy in Russia. In September 1943 Hitler informed a stunned High Command that the R.O.A. was to be dissolved. The generals pleaded with him to reconsider this decision which, if implemented, would result in the collapse of the entire eastern front. There were, by the army's own official estimate, some half-a-million *Osttruppen* (in 78 battalions, 122 companies, one regiment and innumerable police and security units), and this was a conservative figure since it did not take into account the many "unrecorded" *Hiwis*. The total was certainly closer to three-quarters of a million. Hitler was adamant. His orders, he screamed, had been defied too long and must now be carried out. The army argued that with manpower so short, this loss in numbers must prove fatal. The heated debate ended in a compromise. Only units over whose reliability and loyalty there hung a doubt would be disbanded; the others would be transferred to the west as soon as practical. The army could breathe again. In practice only around 5,000 men were actually disarmed on grounds of dubious reliability, while the concept of "as soon as practical" allowed for a fair degree of procrastination (in fact, some units never left the east). However, by October 1943 the transference of large numbers of *Osttruppen* from the eastern front to western Europe began. This was achieved by exchanging individual R.O.A. (or other) battalions with German battalions in every corner of occupied Europe from Norway in the north to Greece in the south. For example, Battalion 643 of the R.O.A. was sent to Jersey (in the Channel Islands) in exchange for the 2nd Battalion of Grenadier Regiment 582 of the German army.¹ Transfer to the west applied equally to the ethnic legions. Thus, the Channel Islanders witnessed at the same time the arrival of another *Ostbataillon* when Battalion 823 of the Georgian Legion was exchanged for the 2nd Battalion of Grenadier Regiment 583 stationed in Guernsey.

Morale among the volunteers slumped as a result of these moves. Vlasov was prevailed upon by the German authorities to address an "open letter" to the volun-

¹In the event Regiment 582 was spared the ordeal of a posting to the Russian front when it was decided to retain it in Jersey and replace its fit young members by older or wounded men. Jersey's Britons were amused by the P.O.A. on the arm shield - they "translated" this as "Pals of Adolf!"

teers explaining that the move was only "temporary" and hinting that it was in the nature of a regrouping in preparation for greater things to come. This letter served to reinforce the popular misconception that Vlasov had been placed in command of the volunteers. Even the Germans had begun to slip into the habit of speaking about "the Vlasov army" or "the Vlasov troops." The pro-Vlasov faction in Army Intelligence was encouraged to press on with its endeavour to translate the illusion into reality.

The large majority of senior Red Army officer defectors and prisoners willingly placed themselves under Vlasov's authority (General Lukin was the only notable exception). Major General F.I. Trukin, who headed the R.O.A. School for Propagandists, had with him at Dabendorf six former Red Army generals, sixty former Red Army colonels, and a host of lesser officers. Only twenty-three officers at Dabendorf were German. The school, which enjoyed the status of an independent battalion, was in typical Nazi bureaucratic confusion, run by no less than four different agencies: (i) Army Propaganda Section IV, (ii) Army District III (Berlin); (iii) *Fremde Heere Ost*;² and (iv) the Inspectorate of *Osttruppen*. This multiplicity of masters was not without its advantage since it allowed the playing off of one agency against another. In this way official restrictions were circumvented. Training of "propagandists" started at Dabendorf on 1 March 1943. In the course of its existence, the school turned out thousands of graduates. An R.O.A. Officers School was opened at Mariampol in Lithuania under an ex-Red Army Colonel Assberg. After the transference of the *Osttruppen* to the west, the school was moved to Conflans in France, and Assberg was promoted to general. In Russian fashion, the Officers School had its own graduates badge.

A new post was created, "Commander of the Volunteer Units under the Commander-in-Chief West,"³ to act as an inspectorate for the R.O.A. and ethnic legion volunteers now transferred to western Europe. Throughout the winter of 1943/44, the movement of *Osttruppen* continued and on the eve of D-Day (June 1944), Köstring reported to Himmler that there were about 100,000 eastern volunteers in the Luftwaffe and Navy and around 800,000 in the army. Himmler refused to believe it! Nearly 20,000 R.O.A. men were captured by the allies in the twelve weeks following D-Day.

More and more attention was now given to the needs of the volunteers. An Independent Native Medical Corps with its own Russian-speaking doctors and nurses was formed, and twenty hospitals set aside exclusively for the use of *Osttruppen*, as well as new convalescent homes and leave-centers. Eventually, under pressure from

²"Enemy Armies East" under Reinhard Gehlen was concerned, theoretically, with gathering intelligence about the Red Army, but Gehlen used it to build up a very successful anti-communist spy network in the east which later proved invaluable with the coming of the "Cold War."

³The first incumbent of this post was Major General von Wartenberg. He was later replaced by General Oskar von Niedermeyer, commander of the 162nd (Turkic) Infantry Division.

the pro-Russians in Army Intelligence, the word *Osttruppen* was abandoned in favor of the expression "Volunteer Formations" since *Ost* had unpleasant associations with the detested *Ostabzeichen*.⁴ At the Infantry School at Posen an Inspectorate of Native Officers was established. Russian officers were now allowed to wear German epaulettes of rank to signify their equal status.⁵ The right to German decorations was restored (see below). A special oath for R.O.A. and U.V.V. volunteers was introduced:

"As a loyal son of my native land, I voluntarily enter the ranks of the Russian (or Ukrainian) Liberation Army and solemnly swear that I shall fight sincerely against Bolshevism and for the welfare of my people. In this struggle which is being waged on the part of the German army and its allies against a common foe, I pledge to Adolf Hitler, as Leader and Commander-in-Chief of the Liberation Armies, fidelity and unconditional obedience. I am at all times prepared to risk my life for this oath."

German soldiers were exhorted to adopt a "correct and comradely attitude" towards the volunteers⁶ who now enjoyed all the same rights, allowances and leave entitlement as their German counterparts.

The R.O.A. had come a long way in eighteen months, but it was still only a phantom army. It took the impending destruction of the Reich to achieve its final synthesis.

Although Himmler had always appeared inexorably opposed to the concept of a Russian liberation movement, keen observers of the S.S. could not have failed to detect of late a change in its attitude towards the *Ostvolk*. Substantial use was already made of Latvians and Estonians. Ukrainians had recently gained admission "by the back door" into the ranks of the Waffen S.S. as "Galicians." Himmler was even talking of the possible creation of an Eastern Moslem S.S. division. The S.S. was also recruiting (kidnapping would perhaps be a more accurate description), 15-20-year-olds from all over the occupied east for active duty as Flak helpers. Now that the S.S. was adopting a much more open policy towards the use of Slavs, there were those in its upper echelons who urged Himmler to muscle in on the Vlasov market. Was not the S.S. already styling itself "the army of Europe" and taking under its wing all non-German volunteer units? Could, for example, such valuable human material as the XVth Cossack Cavalry Corps be allowed to remain in the hands of its rival - the army? Himmler, who had a collector's mania for amassing men, found these arguments persuasive. He was ready to allow that at least no harm could come from a meeting with Vlasov. The date chosen for this was 21 July 1944. On the eve of their encounter, an event occurred which relegated the Vlasov question to relative insignificance. This

⁴See section on Eastern Workers.

⁵The date of this order was 18 March 1944. Thereafter, all ranks wore German rank insignia.

⁶The word Volunteer (*Freiwilliger* or *Dobrovolets*) replaced *Schütze* (Rifleman) in the *Ostbataillone* and *Legionär* in the Legions as the term for Private in June 1944.



Vlasov with Russian and German officers.

was the celebrated 20 July bomb plot in which Hitler only narrowly escaped death. The Vlasov appointment was postponed. The two men did not meet until 16 September.

In the intervening time the S.S. had acquired two "Russian" divisions (the 29th and the 30th *Waffen-Grenadier* divisions - Russian Nos. 1 and 2), and had established a *Leitstelle Ost* (Guidance Office East) of its own in Berlin in direct competition with the *Leitstellen* of the Eastern Ministry. Kaminski, a potential rival "Russian de Gaulle," was safely out of the way (shot dead by his S.S. masters). The path therefore seemed clear for Vlasov. Indeed, when he met Himmler he found Germany's dreaded S.S. chief remarkably affable and accommodating. To Vlasov's surprise, Himmler proposed the immediate formation of a "Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia" (*Komitet Osvobozhdeniia Narodov Rossii*, or K.O.N.R.), which would be granted the status of a provisional government once the Germans were again in control of a large area of Soviet territory. The K.O.N.R. would be allowed to raise an army of five divisions, two of which were to be activated immediately. The personnel for these would be drawn from existing R.O.A. units or by means of recruitment among the *Ostarbeiter* in Germany. There was, of course, the tricky question of the political aspirations of the other nations of the U.S.S.R. The problem was side-stepped. Apart from a vague promise by Vlasov to grant the Cossacks a wide degree of autonomy, no commitment was made as to what form the new non-Communist Russia would take. The various ethnic committees were outraged when they learned of the Himmler-Vlasov agreement. They imagined that their legions had been fighting for their respective national identities against Russia!

On 14 November 1944, the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia held its first congress, significantly in a Slav city - Prague. All the ethnic committees,

with the exception of the Kalmyks, boycotted the event, but it turned out to be something of a triumph for Vlasov. A senior German official spoke of the K.O.N.R. as "an ally of Germany."

After the Prague meeting the Presidium of the KONR returned to Berlin to get down to the business of creating an administrative machine and a military arm. Military matters were placed in the charge of General Trukhin, and the search for men and materials began at once. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that Vlasov was not at this time, or any subsequent time, given command of the R.O.A. nor was his Civilian Matters Department allowed to assume responsibility for the hundreds of thousands of *Ostarbeiter* in Germany. Some units of the R.O.A. were transferred to the VS-KONR⁷ and some *Ostarbeiter* were allowed to volunteer, but the German army was unwilling to hand over large numbers of its combat-experienced eastern troops to the VS-KONR. An over-burdened German armaments industry was not in a position to take on yet more work. All things considered, it was a minor miracle that the VS-KONR was able to assemble and equip a full division within the space of a mere two months.

The bulk of the VS-KONR recruits had to be found from among recent Red Army defectors, but there was no shortage of candidates. On 28 January 1945, Vlasov formally assumed command of the VS-KONR which at this point in time comprised one fully activated Division - the 600th *Panzer-Grenadier* Division at Münsingen in Württemberg under General Buniachenko, a second partly formed division - the 650th *Panzer-Grenadier* Division at Heuberg (about forty miles from Münsingen) under General G.A. Zverev, a Reserve Brigade, an Officers Replacement Pool, a Pioneer Battalion and miscellaneous support units.

At Neuren an "air force" (or Air Division) consisting of one air transport squadron, one reconnaissance squadron, one Flak regiment, one paratroop battalion and a Flying Training unit (in all, some 4,000 men), was under the command of V.I. Maltsev, recently promoted General by the Germans. On 2 February 1945, Goering personally handed the Air Division over to Vlasov. By March 1945, the VS-KONR numbered some 50,000 men of whom about 4,000 were in its Air Division. The Cossack Cavalry Corps was promised to Vlasov by Himmler as was the Russian Guard Corps in Serbia (see Vol. 3), but in fact, neither was ever placed under his command.⁸

In February 1945 the VS-KONR fought its first action when a light armored detachment from the 1st Division under Colonel Igor Sakharov (formerly of the R.N.N.A. at

Osintorf) went into battle in Pomerania as "a sample demonstration" of the fighting ability of the VS-KONR. It met with considerable success - at least so far as inducing the enemy to surrender was concerned. Hundreds of Red Army men changed sides and joined it. Himmler sent Vlasov a congratulatory telegram and Sakharov a gold watch. The detachment was then brought back to Münsingen to rejoin the 1st Division which was now deemed battleworthy. In March it was moved to the Oder front and ordered by the Germans to attack the Red Army salient near Frankfurt. On the 11th it joined action with the enemy but took such a pummeling that on the 15th Buniachenko, apparently on his own initiative, ordered it to withdraw south. Despite frantic German appeals, the Division continued to put distance between itself and the enemy. By 28 April it was back in Czechoslovakia. A few days later it was encamped about forty miles outside Prague. When, on 5 May, a spontaneous rising in the Czech capital took place, Buniachenko ordered his men to go to the assistance of the insurgents. The communist faction in the Czech resistance was, however, infuriated that a Red Army "renegade" (as they saw him) should place himself on their side in the struggle. They demanded the removal of Buniachenko and his men. On the evening of 7 May, the 1st Division was withdrawn from Prague. The following day the war in Europe ended. The 1st Division capitulated to the Americans who turned most of it over to the Russians. The 2nd Division, with the exception of the Headquarters Staff (which was in Nuremberg) and one regiment, fell directly into Soviet hands. Vlasov himself was not so much "handed over" by the Americans as snatched from them - by a Russian armored column (obviously Stalin was determined that Vlasov would never live to head an anti-communist army under the patronage of the Americans).

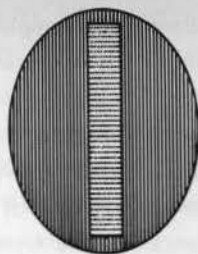
Vlasov, Buniachenko, Zverev, Maltsev, and eight other leading figures in the ROA-KONR experiment were executed in Moscow in July 1946 for "acting as agents of German intelligence and indulging in espionage and diversionary terrorist activity." This brief summary of their activity, which appeared on a back page of *Pravda* on 2 August 1946 along with the news of their execution, was all that the people of the U.S.S.R. were permitted to know at the time - nor has any Soviet historian since sought to shed further light on this aspect of "The Great Patriotic War"!

UNIFORMS AND INSIGNIA

At first *Hiwis* wore their former Red Army brown divested of its insignia, later German field grey was issued, but again devoid of insignia, even shoulder straps. A brassard with the name of the service to which they were attached was sometimes worn. On 18 August 1942, *Führer* Directive 46 laid down regulations relating to uniforms and decorations for the *Osttruppen*. The Russian *Ostbataillone* were, it stated, to wear the same rank insignia as the Turkistan units (introduced in June of that year). Rank was, therefore, to be indicated by the collar patch and the shoulder strap (see chapter on Ethnic Legions). The cap badge was simply a vertical red bar on a dark green oval.

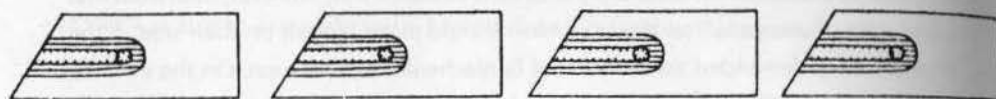
⁷V.S. - *Vooruzhennye Sily* (Armed Forces) of the KONR. This was the correct designation of the military arm, but it was still often referred to, even in *Volia Naroda* (the KONR's own newspaper), as the R.O.A.

⁸By an order dated 16 February 1945, the Russian Guard Corps was authorized to wear on the right upper arm the R.O.A. badge, but this was as far as the proposed amalgamation went.



First type of cap badge for Osttruppen, other than Cossacks or the Turkistani battalions (introduced in November 1942).

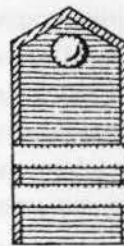
**RANKS OF RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN "LEGIONS" IN THE WEHRMACHT
(LATER THE R.O.A.)**
(Insignia as detailed in an order dated 29 May 1943)



Private



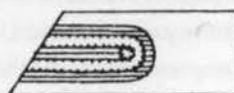
Lance Corporal



Corporal



Sergeant



2nd. Lieutenant

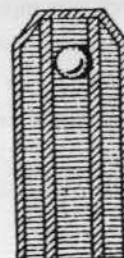
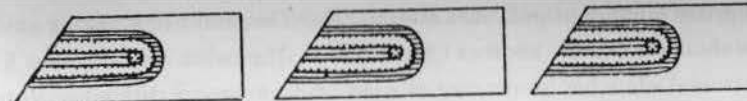


Lieutenant



Captain

Gold stars



Major

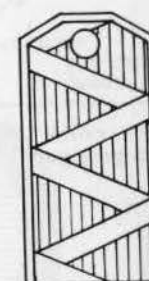


Lt. Colonel

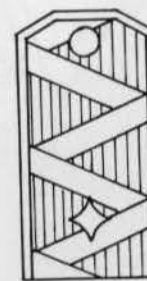


Colonel

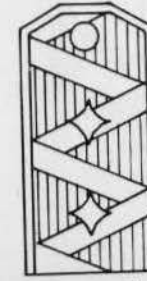
Gold stars



Major General



Lt. General



General

Standar Anky

Gold lace, silver stars

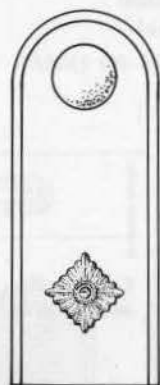
These ranks added in December 1943.

Colors

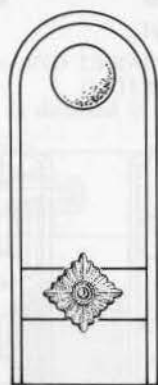
Silver	
Yellow	
Dark green	
Red	
Blue	
Light blue	

In December 1943, there was a major change in *Osttruppen* insignia. It was now formalized and divided into two groupings: one for the ethnic legions, the other for the Cossacks, Ukrainians, and Greater Russians. It was the latter category that was used by the R.O.A. Rank was indicated on dark green shoulder straps which had red piping; non-commissioned grades had, in the Russian manner, one, two or three "bars" in white cloth (12mm to 14mm wide; although sometimes German N.C.O. tress was used in its place - this is a little narrower, being only 10mm wide). Commissioned ranks wore shoulder boards of the old Czarist variety. These had red piping with a central red stripe for subalterns and a double red central stripe for officers up to Colonel (plus

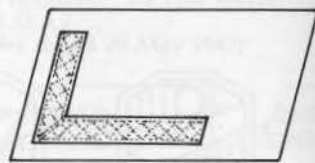
the appropriate number of gold stars in each case). Generals had a zig-zag gold lace across the shoulder board - another Czarist revival. The collar device for the R.O.A. was a horizontal white bar terminating in a grey button upon a dark green, rounded end patch. Officers had a silver bar and button and their patch was piped in silver wire; generals had a gold bar and button and gold wire piping. Two additional ranks were added to the R.O.A. in January 1944. These were *Oberschütze* (Senior Private) - a silver star on the shoulder strap, and *Obergefreiter* (Senior Lance Corporal) - a silver star added to the lance corporal's white transverse shoulder strap bar. These were, however, short-lived since on 18 March 1944 the R.O.A. was granted the "honor" of wearing the ranks and collar insignia of the German army.



Oberschütze shoulder strap



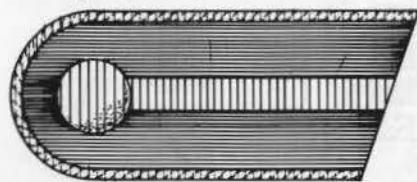
Obergefreiter shoulder strap



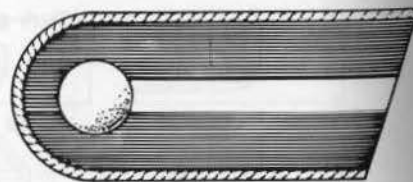
Obergefreiter collar (silver chevron) field grey patch

The above were two new R.O.A. ranks introduced on 1 January 1944 but done away with in March 1944 under an ordinance which made the R.O.A. adopt standard Wehrmacht rank insignia.

Collar patches:



Collar patch for Generals (Gold bar, button and piping)

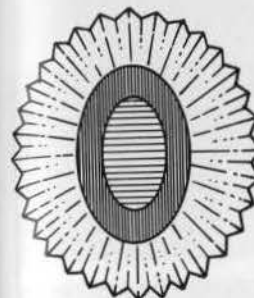


Collar patch for officers (Silver bar, button and piping)

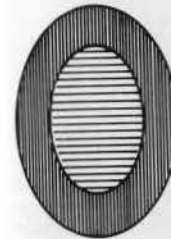


Collar patch for non-commissioned ranks (White bar and grey button)

The cap badge, or cockade, of the R.O.A. was a red/blue oval (blue being the outer color); officers had a larger cockade with a white outer edge. Later, non-commissioned ranks also wore white/blue/red.



Officers cap cockade



Other Ranks cap cockade.

This R.O.A. Leutnant wears the proper cap cockade, collar patches, arm shield and German Army style shoulder straps indicating the photo was taken after 18 March 1944.



The R.O.A. Officers School had its own graduates badge. This is a star upon a downward pointing sword. In the center is a blue St. Andrew's cross on white enclosed by a red circle upon white, in Cyrillic, is 1st Officers School, R.O.A. An award diploma for this badge in a private collection in the United States reads: "The

recipient has the right to wear the second class badge of the school (*das Schulabzeichen zweiter Klasse*).” This reference to the badge being in more than one class is interesting. The only examples of the badge known to the author are grey metal, but it is possible that silver and/or gold may also have been given, depending on the grade attained.



“Graduates Badge” of 1st R.O.A. Officers School.



DIPLOM

Der Inhaber dieses Ltn. Nikolaew, Wassilij hat
die Erste Offizierschule der Russischen Befreiungsarmee
(ROA) in der zweiten Erfolgsgruppe beendet
Auf Grund des Befehls des Generals der Freiwilligen-
Verbände vom Februar 1944 unter Nr. 1st er zum
Podporutschik befördert und hat die Berechtigung das
Schulabzeichen zweiter Klasse zu tragen.

Der Kommandeur der Schule

Der Leiter der Schule

Der Abteilungsleiter

L. S.

Obst. (..).

Nr. 314

Februar 1944

Diploma of the R.O.A. Officers' School. It reads:

The holder, Lt. Wassilij Nikolaew, has graduated in the second top class of the 1st Officers School of the R.O.A. Under the authority of an order from the General of Volunteer Units, dated February 1944, number (blank), he is promoted Podporutschik* and granted the right to wear the School Badge 2nd Class.

*Russian for Lieutenant.



A Cossack officer. On his right breast pocket he wears the badge of a Graduate of the R.O.A. Officers School.



Four non-commissioned officers of the R.O.A. No two are dressed exactly alike!



A tentative design for a belt for “Ostvolk Führer” (Officer in the Osttruppen), prepared by the German firm of F.W. Assmann in May 1943. Almost certainly never put into actual production. Belt is bluish-grey with carmine edges and two black bands.



(a)



(b)

(a) Standard German army belt worn by Osttruppen, "Legion," and, later, R.O.A. Motto means "God with us" and was the traditional German army motto. (b) This Police buckle may have been worn by Osttruppen or Ukrainian volunteers; there is also a version without the motto, simply a laurel wreath around a swastika.

Sprachmittler

Cuff title for an Interpreter.

The R.O.A. arm badge has already been described. It was the same for both the army and the Luftwaffe volunteers, except that the army type is on dark green, the Luftwaffe arm badge is on air force blue/grey. German personnel serving with R.O.A. units also wore its arm badge. When the R.O.A. created its own "air force," its members wore German Luftwaffe collar ranks but R.O.A. shoulder ranks. In the center of the officer's cap badge the round black/white/red German national cockade is replaced by the oval white/blue/red cockade of the R.O.A. Otherwise, the uniform was entirely German.



Lower part of Air Force peaked cap badge set. The upper part is the normal Luftwaffe flying eagle.



arm shield of the R.O.A. "Air Force." Exactly like the military R.O.A. shield, but the background color is Luftwaffe blue-grey.



A second lieutenant in the R.O.A. Air Force. His white/blue/red oval cockade centerpiece to the cap badge is just discernible. His shoulder strap may have, in the Russian manner, a red stripe down the center, but this detail is not clear. The rest of his uniform is standard Luftwaffe officer.

Hitler wanted the R.O.A. to have a uniform of its own, quite distinct from that of the Wehrmacht. This was not intended as an honor or privilege; quite the reverse. The sight of Slavs in German uniform was something that stuck in Hitler's throat. He urged the army to create a "Russian" uniform, different in style and color from anything currently being worn. This injunction was resisted on the grounds that the clothing industry, already over-taxed with work, could not cope with this additional burden. But by the early months of 1944 Hitler got his way, at least in part. Some units of the R.O.A. were issued with a light bluish-grey uniform (possibly made from supplies of "horizon blue" cloth left over from the First World War, French army). This was constructed in the Russian manner with a blouse-like tunic which opened only as far as the waist (and therefore had to be put on over the head). It had two breast, and two hip pockets and could be worn either with the collar open or closed. The trousers tapered towards the bottom and were worn with high boots. The R.O.A. arm badge was worn on the left upper arm. Above the right breast pocket there was an elongated swastika with "wings" on either side (of the type originally worn by Cossack units). This unusual uniform seems to have been worn only by a very small number of R.O.A. troops.



Badge worn above right breast pocket on special R.O.A. uniform (but already worn previously by some Cossack formations).

The VS-KONR wore field grey with the R.O.A. arm badge. There is some question as to whether or not the VS-KONR would have eventually been given a special arm shield of its own. A cloth badge in shield form, showing the double-barred Russian Orthodox cross in blue upon a white background within a red frame surmounted by the word RUSSLAND (German for Russia), certainly exists and may have been the design, or one of several designs, for the VS-KONR. But such a highly colored device would seem inappropriate for active service, and it is more likely that this belongs to a tentative series produced by the BeVo firm.



Arm shield with blue cross on white within a red "frame" with RUSSLAND (Russia) in white at the top. Possibly a tentative design for the R.O.A. arm badge but never issued or worn although certainly manufactured.

Vlasov himself never wore a German uniform. After his capture he wore civilian clothes until a special, unique uniform was devised for him by two officers of German Intelligence (who paid for it out of their own pockets!). It consisted of a dark brown tunic, piped in gold down the front, with six buttons, worn closed at the neck. It had no shoulder straps or collar patches. The collar was piped in gold, as were the turned-up cuffs (each with three gold buttons). The tunic had four pockets. The trousers were black with a red stripe down the outer seam as worn by general officers. The long

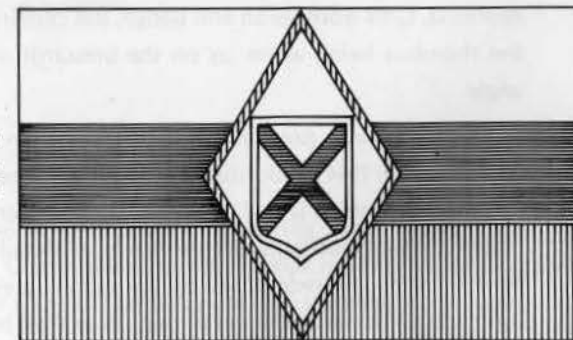


Vlasov (in center) with, to his right, a German liaison officer. An interesting detail is that the German wears the R.O.A. cockade on his cap surmounted by the German army eagle-and-swastika, but Vlasov and the other Russian officer have only the R.O.A. cockade. Vlasov wears the special uniform unique to himself.

brown greatcoat had red lapels in place of the white of a German general. On his brown peaked cap, Vlasov wore a white/blue/red cockade. The cap has gold visor cord.

In addition to fifty, or so, thousand Russians drafted into the Luftwaffe's Flak defenses from early 1943 onwards (often serving captured Russian anti-aircraft guns), Russian youths, male and female, between the ages of 15 and 20, were conscripted for the same task by the combined efforts of the Hitler Youth-S.S.-Luftwaffe from March 1944 until the collapse of the Reich. The Statistical Department of the Hitler Youth lists the Russian component of these "Flak helpers" as 1,383 (the second lowest; only the Lithuanians having less with 1,012). The eastern Flak helpers, unlike their German counterparts who had two uniforms, received only working dress - whatever was available. The Russian boys wore with this a brassard which is white/blue/red (white

Brassard for boys. Russian national colors of the Czarist days with blue St. Andrew's Cross on white, outlined in red, similar to R.O.A. arm badge.

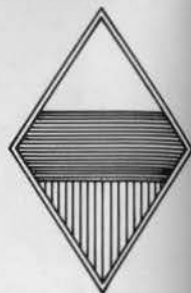




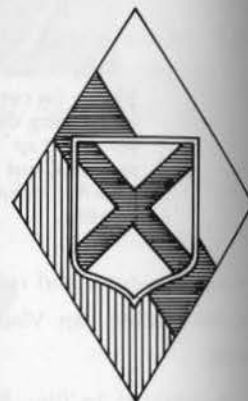
German recruiting poster for Russian youth. It reads (approximately) "You will be in the avant garde of your people." Note the S.S. runes on a triangle above the brassard.

uppermost). In the center of this is a white rhombus with a shield of the type worn by the R.O.A. - a blue saltire on white within a narrow red frame. Above this they wore S.S. runes in white on a black triangle (all non-Germans were supposed to wear this, but not all nationalities appear to have done so). The cap badge was a white/blue/red diamond. Girls worn, as an arm badge, the centerpiece of the brassard, but instead of the rhombus being white (as on the brassard), it is white/blue/red, at a 45-degree angle.

A *Grossrussische Jugendwerk* (Greater Russian Youth Work) Organization was formed in May 1944 in Borisov, a small town between Minsk and Smolensk. This organization, which is said to have had a membership of between 2,000 to 3,000, had its own uniform and flags (unfortunately, no details are available). With the advance of the Red Army and reconquest of this region, its existence came to an end. Doubtless some of its former members ended up as Flak helpers in the Reich.



Cap badge



Arm badge for girls.



Members of an unidentified Russian Women's Labor Company. They do not appear to have insignia of any sort.

MEDALS AND DECORATIONS

In the early days, some commanders awarded their *Osttruppen* German decorations and war badges, but when Hitler learned of this he was outraged and ordered that all such awards would not only henceforth cease but those already made would be withdrawn. This insulting order left the *Osttruppen* bereft of any recompense for acts of bravery or merit. To fill the vacuum some units awarded special "medals" of their own devising. At first their recipients wore them with pride, until they discovered that their German comrades were secretly amused by these "Mickey Mouse medals."

To remedy this unhappy situation, the army pressed for the creation of an official award. On 14 July 1942, a "Decoration for Bravery and Merit for the Eastern Peoples" (*Tapferkeits- und Verdienst-Auszeichnung für der Ostvölker*) was instituted in two classes, subdivided into five grades as follows:

- 1st Class in gilt
- 1st Class in silver
- 2nd Class in gilt
- 2nd Class in silver
- 2nd Class in bronze.

The 1st Class in gilt and silver are both pin-back stars, measuring 50mm across, worn on the left breast pocket. The 2nd Class is the same type of star but measuring only 40mm, which hangs from a 30mm ribbon. The colors of the ribbon for the three grades are:



1st Class with swords (left) and without (right)

Gilt class: green with two red stripes

Silver class: green with two white stripes

Bronze class: plain green (but of a slightly darker shade than for the previous two).

Any of the above can be "with swords" for combatant merit or "without swords" for non-combatant or civilian merit (some nurses received it). Each grade presupposes possession of the lower grade, that is to say, like the Iron Cross, the 1st Class could not be awarded unless the 2nd Class was already held, but in exceptional circumstances, both could be awarded together. The ribbon of the 2nd Class could be worn diagonally from the second buttonhole (like the Iron Cross 2nd Class), or on a medal

ECFA



This Cossack officer, who has just been awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class, wears all grades of the Decoration for Bravery and Merit for the Eastern Peoples on his left breast.



Award certificate of the 2nd Class in Bronze to a Cossack volunteer.



2nd Class in Bronze without Swords

Dr. K.G. Klettman

ribbon bar - when this latter practice was employed, small crossed swords were worn on the ribbon if the award was "with swords."

But even with the creation of this special *Ostvolk* decoration resulted in psychological problems. The *Osttruppen* felt slighted that it was given only to themselves; no German ever appeared with one. The objection was overcome (again at the insistence of the pro-Russian faction in Army Intelligence) by extending, as from November 1942, eligibility for the 1st and 2nd Class in silver to German cadre personnel. The 2nd Class was equated with the Iron Cross 2nd Class (which had to be held before an award of the *Ostvolk* 2nd Class could be made), and the 1st Class in silver with the Iron Cross 1st Class (again the regulations required the German decoration to be held first).

An interesting variant of the *Ostvolk* ribbon exists, but is shrouded in a certain degree of mystery. This version, sometimes referred to, erroneously, as the "Vlasov ribbon," is as follows:

2nd Class in gilt: light yellow with a narrow red central stripe

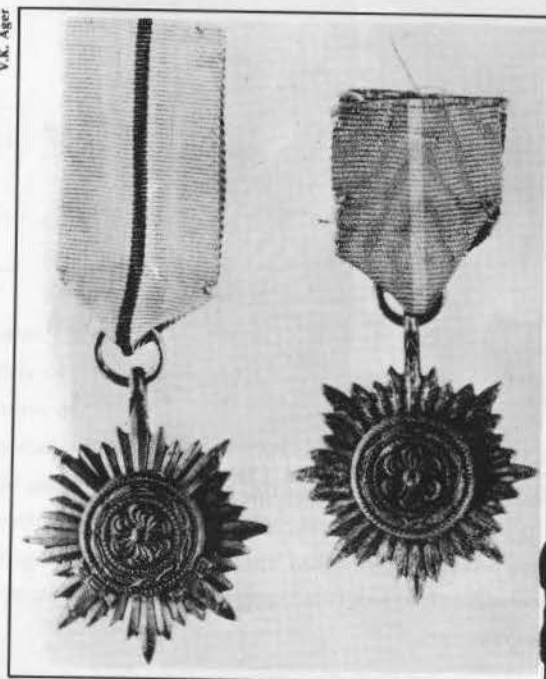
2nd Class in silver: grass green with a narrow dark blue central stripe

2nd Class in bronze: lime green with a narrow light blue central stripe.

This ribbon is only 26mm wide. The central stripe in each case is 1.5mm wide. Examples of these ribbons were certainly produced and some unquestionably genuine (and apparently issued) medals suspended from such ribbons exist in private collections.

But was this really intended as a distinctive ribbon for the exclusive use of "Vlasov troops"? That seems highly improbable. The "Vlasov troops" were the entire R.O.A. and, therefore, this type of ribbon should be fairly common; whereas, it is, in fact, extremely rare. It is more likely that they were of an experimental nature, never approved for issue.

V.K. Ager



Decoration for Bravery and Merit of the "Eastern Peoples" with so-called "Vlasov ribbon." 2nd Class in Gold (yellow ribbon with narrow red central stripe), and 2nd Class in Bronze (lime green ribbon with narrow light blue central stripe).

Siberian Cossack N.C.O. with War Merit Cross 2nd Class with Swords and Ostvolk Medals 2nd Class in silver and bronze.



A German general talks to wounded Osttruppen after decorating them with the Decoration for Bravery and Merit of the Eastern Peoples.

Although the extension of the *Ostvolk* award to German personnel did something to assuage the susceptibilities of the *Osttruppen*, the army continued to press for their eligibility for German decorations and war badges. After all, they argued, no other foreign volunteers were denied this right. Were not Latvians and Estonians being invested with the Knight's Cross, yet even a modest 2nd Class Iron Cross was forbidden to a Russian. Hitler relented to the extent of permitting the General Assault and Wounded badges to *Osttruppen*. It was not until 1944 that they were finally granted the right to the Iron Cross. No member of the *Ostvolk* ever received an award of the Knight's Cross, but they might be said to have gained this honor "by proxy" when it was given to German officers commanding R.O.A. units. For example, Captain Siegfried Keilling, in charge of an R.O.A. artillery battery in France, was awarded a Knight's Cross. When questioned about the fighting quality of the men under his command, he replied: "This Knight's Cross is the best answer to the question of their ability."

SONDERDIVISION R

One of the least known and least publicized "eastern" volunteer formations was the *Sonderdivision R*. Its lack of renown is all the stranger in that it was, in fact, the first such unit. As early as July 1941, a Russian emigre with the rank of *Sonderführer K* (holder of a special commission roughly equivalent to captain), formed in the German rear in northern Russian, a *Lehrbataillon für Feind-Abwehr und Nachrichtendienst* (roughly: Training Battalion for Intelligence Gathering about the Enemy). This officer, Boris Alexeievich Holmston-Smyslovsky, born in Finland in 1897, had been in the Czar's personal bodyguard and had fought in the Civil War against the Red Army. After the defeat of the White forces, he emigrated to Poland and later to Germany where he attended the Staff College of the German Army.

Most original members of the *Lehrbataillon* were, like himself, emigres, but soon its ranks were swelled by deserters from the Red Army. Later indeed, some 85 percent of the unit's strength consisted of men who had crossed over to take up arms against Stalin and, hopefully, participate in the liberation of their homeland. The single battalion quickly became twelve, and in the winter of 1942/43 it was renamed *Sonderdivision R*. (Special Division R. - the "R" standing for *Russland*). It was listed as one of the regular divisions of the Wehrmacht. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that *Sonderdivision R*. had no connection whatsoever with the R.O.A. Holmston-Smyslovsky, promoted to the rank of colonel, remained in command. All pretense that this was merely an intelligence gathering formation had by now been abandoned. It was created as a combat division and served at the front as such. In February 1945 it was camouflaged under the designation *Die Grüne Armee z.b.v.* (the Green Army available for duty). On 4 April 1945 (only a few weeks before the end of the war in Europe), it was renamed the 1st Russian National Army. Holmston-Smyslovsky was promoted general - an honor which came somewhat late in the day! With the collapse of the German Reich, the 1st Russian National Army withdrew across the frontier into Lichtenstein. There it was given generous sanctuary by a government which bravely resisted all Stalin's demands that the Russians be forcibly repatriated. The Liechtensteiners even went so far as to finance the emigration of its members who wished to depart for South America (or elsewhere). Many, including Holmston-Smyslovsky himself, availed themselves of this offer, but, hard to credit, some went back voluntarily to the U.S.S.R.



Arm badge of
Sonderdivision
R.



General Holmston-Smyslovsky (center) with two adjutants of the *Sonderdivision R*. Their uniform is standard German army except for the omission of the eagle and swastika emblem from above right breast pocket and as upper half of the cap badge. Holmston-Smyslovsky does now, however, wear the collar patch of a German army general.

Sonderdivision R. wore standard German army uniform with the exception that the eagle and swastika badge normally worn above the right breast pocket and as the upper part of the cap badge was omitted. It would appear, from photographic evidence, that Holmston-Smyslovsky never wore the gold collar ornamentation of a German general (although he did sport the broad red trouser stripe of a general officer). On the left upper arm a black outlined shield in the old Czarist colors - white/red/blue - was worn. This was also the divisional flag.

As far as can be ascertained, Holmston-Smyslovsky never had any dealings with Vlasov and certainly the Germans, with their cynical policy of "divide and conquer," would not have been the ones to foster such contacts!



General Holmston-Smyslovsky greeted by a priest at the door of a church.



Officers of the Sonderdivision R at an evening meal.

EASTERN WORKERS (*Ostarbeiter*)

More than two million persons from the conquered east (about half of them women), worked in Germany during the war. But, unlike those who came from the west, these *Ostarbeiter* were treated more as slaves than as fellow laborers in the German cause. The presence in their midst of this vast array of foreigners was a constant anxiety to the German authorities. It was felt that the aliens would have to be marked in some way, just as the Jews already were, to ensure that they did not stray outside the strictly prescribed confines of their life in the Reich. They were, for example, banned from all places of public entertainment, relaxation, or refreshment.

The first workers to be so marked were the Poles. Poland, had, of course, been the first "eastern" country to be overrun by the Germans. Under a shameful mutual agreement with Stalin in 1939, Hitler took over part of western Poland. In March 1940 the Polish marking made its first appearance. It took the form of a violet P on a yellow diamond shaped background with a violet outline. The whole is on white cloth. The badge measures 65mm horizontally and 73mm vertically (or, with the white background, 82mm by 90mm).



Polish Worker

A second, and more notorious emblem, the *Ostabzeichen* (East badge), was brought into use in February 1942 in pursuance of a directive issued by Goering the previous November. This target-like badge measures 60mm by 70mm and features the word OST in white on blue, outlined by two "frames" of white. It had to be worn on



The "Ostabzeichen" or "East Badge" worn originally on the right breast, later on right sleeve. White on blue; there is also a version which is black on white.

Foreign worker in the German aircraft industry. Note his "OST" patch.



This foreign worker also wears the "OST" patch, but on the left breast of his shirt.



November 1942 - come to the Reich as volunteers), be allowed to wear a Ukrainian emblem in place of the detested Ost patch. Himmler refused. However, various German labor agencies, worried by the declining morale of their eastern workers and the consequent detrimental effect on production, continued to press for an abolition, or at the least, a modification of this odious symbol. As a minor concession to their wishes, Himmler ordained that "satisfactory" workers would in the future be allowed to wear a slightly smaller version on the left shoulder instead of the right breast. In April 1943, Albert Speer, Chief of the German Armaments Industry, announced that Hitler had approved the granting of the Medal of the Order of the German Eagle in Bronze without Swords (*Deutsche Bronzene Verdienstmedaille*), to outstanding foreign workers from countries "without diplomatic representation in the Reich" (in practice this meant eastern workers). The usual requirement for this dubious "honor" was at least two years' good work connected with the German war effort or a single significant act of merit. Speer now joined in the chorus of protest about the continued use of the Ost badge, but again Himmler was adamant. The only concession that the Reichsführer S.S. would allow was that "good" eastern workers might be excused wearing the badge when granted the special "privilege" of attending a concert, theatrical performance, or other "cultural event."

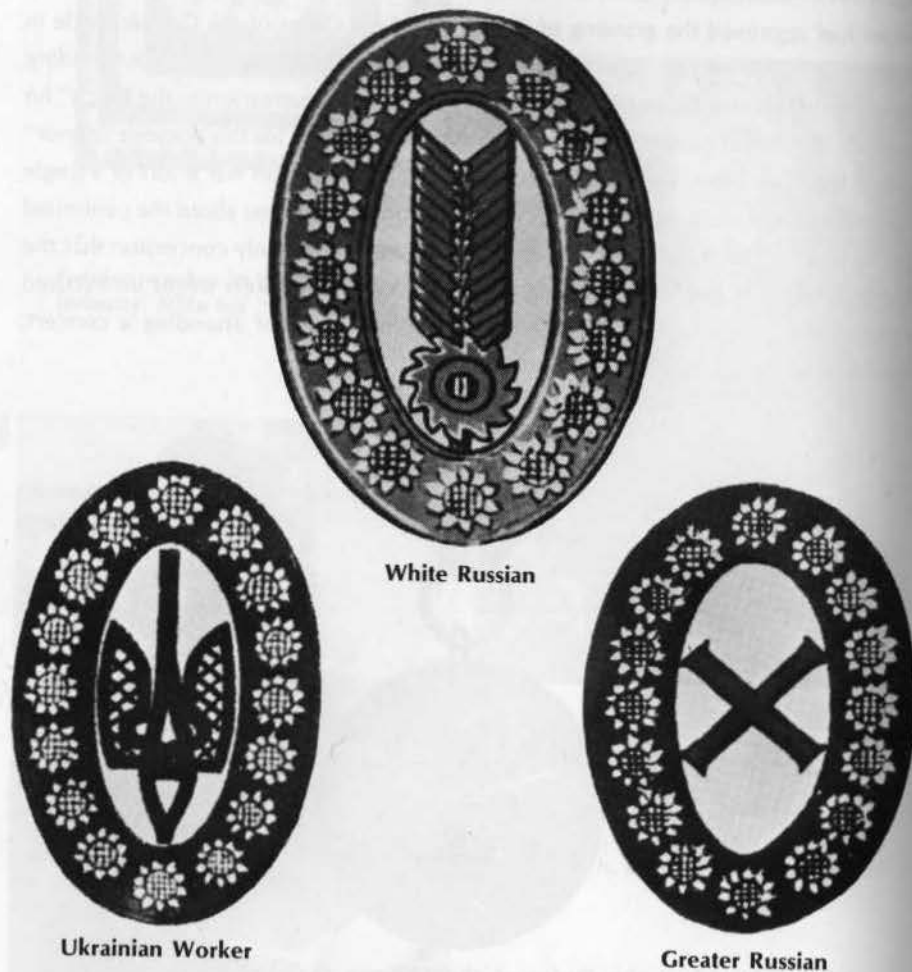


Medal of the Order of the German Eagle in Bronze without swords. This could be awarded to workers without diplomatic representation in the Reich in recognition of special achievement.

the right breast by all workers from the east other than Poles from the General Government who continued to wear the P badge as described above. The use of this degrading patch was deeply resented by its wearers. Even some Germans regarded it as unnecessarily offensive. Gauleiter Sauckel, the Plenipotentiary for Labor Operations, asked Himmler that the Ukrainians (80 percent of whom had, up to this time -

It was not until Himmler became converted to the cause of a German-sponsored Russian Liberation Army that he could be persuaded to jettison the Ost badge. Even then, the prospect of leaving these dangerous creatures unmarked was too alarming for the S.S. Chief and he merely substituted new "artistic" Nationality Emblems

(*Volkssturnabzeichen*) for the former device. These nationality emblems did, at last, distinguish between the three main groups of eastern workers, namely the Ukrainians, the White Russians and the Russians proper (or Greater Russians). The new badges were oval and feature: (a) for the Ukrainians, a blue trident, (b) for the White Russians, a stylized sunflower, and (c) for the Greater Russians, a blue St. Andrew's Cross narrowly outlined in red. These motifs are surrounded by: for (a) a blue oval with yellow sunflowers, and for (b) and (c) a red oval with white sunflowers.



The May-June 1944 issue of the periodical "*Deutschland im Kampf*" carries details of an award which it states could be made by the German manager of a factory (*Betriebsführer*) to any Russian, White Russian or Ukrainian in his employ who achieved some special feat of production or made some other notable individual contribution to the German war effort. This new award is described as being a badge in the form of "a sword crossed with a hammer." No illustration, unfortunately, accom-

panies this announcement and the author has been unable to find any record of such a badge being issued.

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of the *Ostarbeiter* were not employed in the German armament industry, but in agriculture. Alexander Dallin's "*German rule in Russia*" quotes the following figures for the deployment of eastern workers (as of December 1944):

On agricultural work	725,000
On mining	93,000
In machine and equipment construction	180,000
In the metal industries	170,000
On the railways	122,000

Many women workers were brought to the Reich simply to act as domestic servants in German families.

The publication "*Deutschland im Kampf*" of May-June 1944 also carried an announcement that R.O.A. soldiers invalided out of the service who took up work in German industry would be allowed to wear a *Streifen* ("Stripe," but possibly signifying a cuff band) with their nationality badge and "a corresponding inscription (*entsprechende Inschrift*) - presumably the name of their region of origin in German. No illustration, or other details, are given and it is uncertain whether this was ever put into effect.

ADDENDUM

Corrections and Additional Information Relating to Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of this series.

VOLUME 1 NORWAY



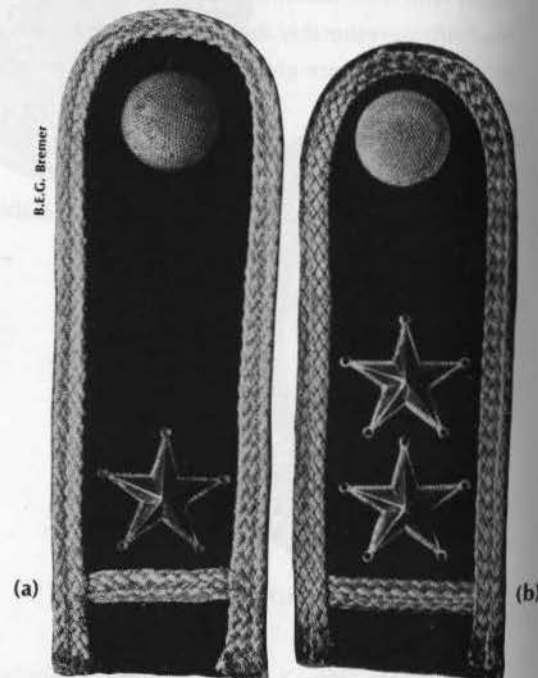
Arm badge of the N.S. Leadership School (page 11). Note Samlings (not Samling, as in original drawing).



Collar patch of Leader's Personal bodyguard (p. 19).



Badge of Den Norske Legion--the Norwegian volunteers in Finland's "Winter War." Metal and enamel badge. It was worn for a time on SS uniforms, but later its use was forbidden.



Shoulder straps of (a) Corporal and (b) Sergeant of the Order Police (p.63). These differ from the German type illustrated but it is quite possible that German style was later adopted.



Duty gorget of a Rikshird Guard (pages 12 to 16 of Vol. 1). It is silver with Rikshird and Vakt (Guard) in gold lettering, also gold and red NS emblem. The style of this gorget is similar to that of the Norwegian AT (Labor Service - see page 34 of same volume). Both are of the same general shape and both are suspended by a leather strap attached to the reverse of the gorget. The above drawing is based on a colored photograph of an example in the collection of Anders Skötte of Båstad, Sweden.

B.E.G. Bremer



Tunic of a Second Lieutenant in the Administrative Branch of the Labor Service (pages 30-31). Silver colored metal insignia on green cloth patches. Tunic is tan colored.



An unusual variant of the Viking ship collar patch as illustrated on page 53. The actual size is 55mm by 42mm. It is hand-embroidered, possibly a prototype--but so far, an unrecorded one. There is no evidence of its having been worn.



Close-up of arm badge.

Anders Skötte

Not included in Vol. 1, because unknown to the author until recently, was an auxiliary guard unit raised by the German Army in the summer of 1942 known as the *Wachdienst Norwegen* (Norwegian Guard Service). This was for men of the age of 50 and over. It was, at first, provided with German field grey uniforms with carmine collar tabs and shoulder piping. On shoulder straps W N in white cotton. Ranks were indicated by "bars" or stars on both collars. Higher ranks had white/black piping around collar tabs. On the left upper arm an eagle holding a shield with a swastika with W (left) and N (right) was worn. The same device was also used as the cap badge. Towards the end of 1943 the army-style tunic was replaced by that of the German Order Police (ORPO). It is possible that the Norwegian volunteers were only non-commissioned grades and that the officers were German.



Anders Skötte

Blue-grey Model 1931 Norwegian Army steel helmet with white VQ monogram of Leader's Personal Bodyguard (pages 17-19). On left side only.



Anders Skötte

Green Model 1931 helmet with silver Order Police decal. There is also the same type of helmet with gold Police decal (this may be Harbor or Water Police). On left side only.



Anders Skötte

German M/1940 steel helmet in green with silver N.S. decal on both sides. For Hird Factory Guard (pages 60-61) and Hird Alarm Units (*Hirdens Alarmenheter*).



An extremely rare photo of a cuff title "Den Norske Legion." As far as the author knows, this is the first picture of this little known cuff title to be published.

Collar patch of the Police Company (page 44).



B.E.G. Bremer



B.E.G. Bremer

The N.S. badge illustrated in the Addendum to Vol. 3 (page 269) has been identified as the arm badge of N.S. girls (in place of the former brassard).

The above brooches are, upper row: 54mm silver, 54mm bronze; lower row: 41mm silver, 41mm bronze. It is fairly certain that these indicated rank in the female A.T. (in the manner of the German RADw)).



Anders Skjette



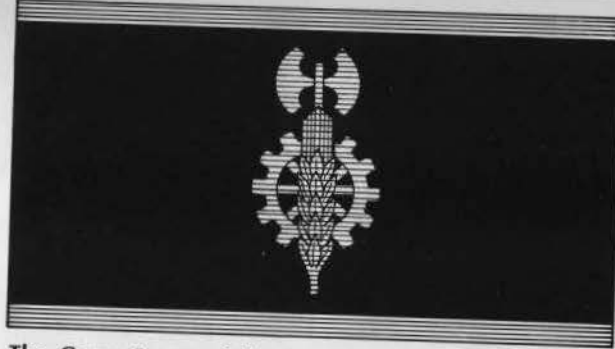
Ceremonial belt for the *Førerorden* (pages 17, 18). Bronze coloured with silver centerpiece. Belt is silver with black edges top and bottom (drawn from a coloured photograph).

FRANCE



A. Cantelaupe

Marcel Bucard (extreme right), leader of the Parti Franciste (page 123) reviews Party Staff in Paris, April 1943.



The *Corps Francs* of the Franciste Party formed in 1943 what were known as *Brigades Bleues* which, armed with light infantry weapons, took part in the battle against the forces of the resistance. The *Corps Francs* and the *Brigades Bleues* wore the same blue shirt uniform as the others but with a black brassard with red edges and a red Franciste emblem in the centre.



An alternative version of the S.O.L. cap badge (page 136) with S.O.L. motto "Faire Face" on blue/white/red scroll below. This motto was later taken over by the Milice Française.



French army Adrian steel helmet with *Milice* emblem on the front (page 176).



Example of "Charlemagne" cuff title (actual width is 27mm).



Metal badge worn on front of motorcyclist's crash helmet by *Garde du Maréchal* (page 197).



Breast badge of officers of the *Police Nationale* (page 185).



Collar badge of the *Garde du Maréchal* (page 197).

VOLUME 2 ITALY

I am indebted to Col. Pier Amedeo Baldrati of Como for the following additional information on the Italian Section in Vol. 2 of the series:

Page 244: The three arrows collar patch was worn only by the *S.S. Fusilier Bataillon "Debica"* of the 29th Division. This was a reconnaissance battalion, not one of the two regiments of the Division which were numbered 81 and 82 (the information given on page 312 of Vol. 3 is incorrect). The arm badge of the 29th Division, the eagle and fasces (as illustrated on page 240), was normally cloth, but a metal version was also worn.

The medal shown on this page was for the 1st Volunteer Bersagliere Battalion "Benito Mussolini" which was formed on 9th September 1943 under the name *Primo Battaglione Volontari delle S.S. "Benito Mussolini."* Later the words *delle S.S.* (of the S.S.) were dropped. The correct ribbon is green.

Page 246: The *Karstjäger* Division was certainly referred to as the "Italian Division," and some, at least, of its members wore the *Italia* arm shield of which there were two versions—one German-made, the other Italian-made. The collar patch for non-German members was either plain black or an alpine flower now identified as a *Cirsium Spinosissimum* which is associated with the Carso Mountains (not a cornflower).

Page 249: Italians incorporated into the Luftwaffe wore standard Luftwaffe dress with collar patches in the appropriate *Waffenfarbe*, below which they wore the sword-in-a-wreath badge (known as the *Gladi*) which was the emblem of the R.S.I. The cuff title *Italianen* was worn by the Staff (German) of the *S.S. Kommando Nord Italien* with headquarters at Verona.

Page 311 (of Vol. 3): The flag is that of the 1st Regiment of the 29th Division (Regiment 81). The 2nd Battalion of this Regiment was awarded a pennant with the word *Vendetta* (as illustrated).

For further information on the Italians I have to thank Cosimo Vuerich of Trani who states that the 2nd Battalion of the 29th Division (whose pennant is mentioned above) suffered severe losses in action against the Allies at Anzio. In the three week battle, it lost 340 of its 650 men. In recognition of its bravery, Marshal Graziani awarded it the Medal of Military Valor in silver--as a unit citation. This was pinned to its above-mentioned *Vendetta* pennant. Also in action at Anzio was the *S.S. Fusilier Bataillon "Debica"* which likewise sustained heavy casualties. Both these units were the first to have their red collar patches replaced by the black ones of the German S.S.

An estimate of the number of Italians incorporated into the Luftwaffe places it at around 150,000, made up, approximately, as follows:

Aircrew: 640

Parachutists: 450

Ground technicians: 12,000

In Flak Divisions (in Italy): 50,000

In Flak Divisions (in Germany): 35,000

The remainder of the estimated 150,000 were employed in a non-combatant capacity as drivers, cook-house staff, etc., in the Reich.



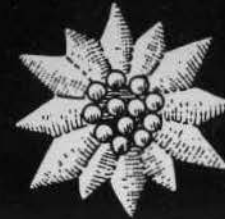
(a)



(b)

Arm badge for 24th "Karstjäger" Division of the S.S. (a) is German made, (b) Italian made. Both are horizontal green/white/red on black shield with "ITALIA" in white.

Collar patch worn only by non-German members of the 24th "Karstjäger" Division. This flower is properly *Cirsium Spinosissimum*.



**B.T.G.
IX SETTEMBRE**

Ribbon of the Battalion "9th September." In some versions of this ribbon the IX is written simply as a 9.



Members of the Battalion "9 Settembre" with ribbon worn in the manner of the Iron Cross 2nd Class.

Formed in France after the fall of Mussolini from two battalions of the Blackshirt militia, it wore Italian army uniform with the Wehrmacht eagle-and-swastika above the left breast pocket and as a cap badge. It returned to Italy in October 1943 to fight the Partisans and, later, the Allies at Anzio. It was granted the title *Il Battaglione "9 Settembre"* by Mussolini in August 1944. In October 1944 it was attached to the German Brandenburg Division and, as part of this division, it fought against the Red Army on the eastern front from October 1944 to January 1945 when it was brought back to Italy to once again take part in anti-Partisan fighting. Theoretically part of the Italian forces, it was typical of the confusion between German-command units and the supposedly "independent" army of Mussolini's "Italian Social Republic."

(Information supplied by Cosimo Vuerich)

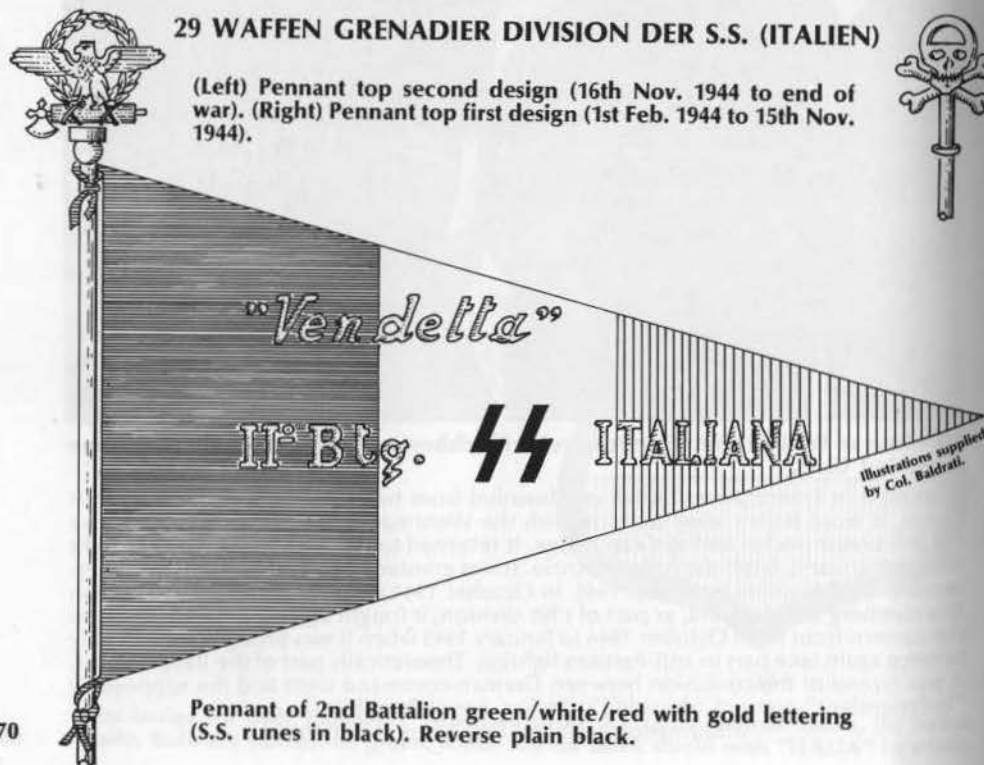


Frank Thayer

Additional sidelights on the 29th Division have been furnished by Frank Thayer who has supplied the above interesting pictures of items in his own collection. The black collar patch has the *Gladi* emblem of the R.S.I. The red collar patch has an unusual version of the *Fasces* (which may have come off some other Fascist uniform). Neither of these has been previously recorded or illustrated and both may have been either unofficial variants, or semi-official transitional items. The arm badge (right) is certainly a home-made piece. It has been cut from a field-grey tunic. It shows the S.S. runes in black above a black *Fasces*. The whole is piped in red/white/green--the Italian colors--an interesting, but certainly in this case, unofficial item.

29 WAFFEN GRENADIER DIVISION DER S.S. (ITALIEN)

(Left) Pennant top second design (16th Nov. 1944 to end of war). (Right) Pennant top first design (1st Feb. 1944 to 15th Nov. 1944).



Illustrations supplied by Col. Baldrati.

Pennant of 2nd Battalion green/white/red with gold lettering (S.S. runes in black). Reverse plain black.

Standard of 2nd Regt. of 29th Division. Silver letters on black. Reverse vertical green/white/red in equal proportions (as per the Italian flag).



HOLLAND



Specialists in S.S. insignia may be interested in this unusual version of the Signaller's Badge (normally just a single "Blitz") worn by a member of the Pz. Gren. Brig. Nederland. This can be seen above the cuff title *Nordland* on man on extreme right. The above photo has been kindly supplied by Josef Charita and the illustration is a Xerox of an actual example of this rare badge in the Army Museum at Brussels.



Ulrich of England

Pages 225-226: The story of the Dutch East Company (N.O.C.) is told and some description of its uniform given, but a further N.O.C. badge has come to light (right).

BELGIUM

Page 73: Photo of a young officer in the Garde Wallone, not the Vlaamsche Wacht. (Same page): Abt III was stationed at Kortryk (not Oudenarde).

Page 77: Remi Schrynen was the only Fleming to win the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. The other Belgian recipients, Degrelle, Léon Gillis and Jacques Le Roy, were all Walloons.

Page 119: A cuff title with WALLONIE was certainly worn--Degrelle wore such a cuff title.

Page 228: The NSVO badge should read (top part) *Het Haardvuur*, not *Het Hartvuur* (the translation is, however, the same). (Information supplied by Major Charita).

VOLUMES 2 AND 3: SWEDEN

Some very general remarks about Swedish volunteers in the Waffen SS are to be found on **page 272** of Vol. 2. This is expanded on **page 314** of Vol. 3, and I am now indebted to Mr. B.E.G. Bremer of Stockholm for the following additional information:

Volunteers were trained at Graz and Klagenfurt in Austria as well as at the "international" SS camp at Sennheim in Alsace. When the "Nordland" Regiment was split off from the "Wiking" Division to form a new Division, only about 40 Swedes remained in the "Wiking." The bulk were transferred to the "Nordland." Since the use of mortars is a speciality of the Swedish army and many of the volunteers (ex-army men) skilled in this, the Swedes were formed into a motorized heavy mortar platoon (the *Schwedenzug*) within the "Nordland" Division. First "blooded" against the Partisans of Yugoslavia, they were later dispatched to the Leningrad Front, participated in the ferocious "Battle of the European SS" at Narva in Estonia (with heavy losses) and finally took part in the last ditch defense of Berlin.

Although most of the volunteers were in the "Nordland," Swedes were also to be found in eight other Waffen SS Divisions. They were prominent in the "Kurt Eggers" propaganda company. At least five Swedes, of officer grade, served in this multinational unit--the Germans may have felt that propaganda written by neutrals would sound more convincing!

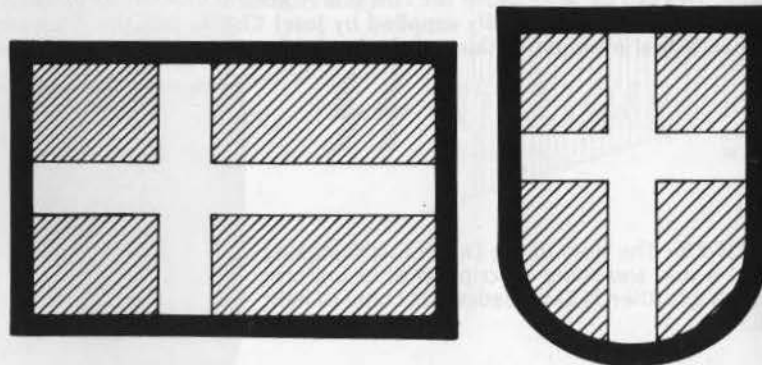
Some 20 Swedes graduated from the SS Officers' School at Bad Tölz. In two cases at the top of their class.

Many Swedes received the Iron Cross 2nd Class and about ten, the Iron Cross 1st Class. The two most distinguished Swedish Waffen SS soldiers were:

Hauptsturmführer Hans-Gösta Pehrsson of the "Nordland" who won the Roll of Honor Clasp in addition to both grades of the Iron Cross and the Close Combat Clasp in Silver. He was wounded five times. He died in 1974.

Oberscharführer Sven-Erik Olsson of the "Frundsberg" Division who was decorated with both grades of the Iron Cross and later awarded the German Cross in Gold. He died in 1985.

Veterans testify that the Swedish flag arm badge (shown on the celebrated SS map) was worn in the closing stages of the war. It is said to have been found in two versions--"horizontal" (like the first design of its Norwegian SS equivalent) or "vertical" (like the second version of the same).



Two versions of the Swedish arm badge. Yellow cross on blue with black "frame."

Some Swedes who had served in the German forces were brought to trial after the war but only on a charge of having left their army posts without permission. There was no question of, as in formerly occupied lands, "traitorous collaboration with the enemy."



Commemorative badge for Swedish volunteers on the Hango Front in Finland. The three crowns are the royal emblem of Sweden. The actual size is 83mm.



Another commemorative badge relating to the Swedish volunteer company in Finland (this time during the so-called "Continuation War"--that is to say, when Finland joined Germany in her struggle with the Soviet Union after June 1941). Many of the Swedish volunteers were from the Swedish Nazi Party, known since 1938, as the SSS. These initials, in the Finnish national colors of blue and white, form the basis of this badge. In addition to being given to all the military volunteers, it could also be awarded as a special honor to any very active SSS member at home (in Sweden). Actual size is 35mm. Swedish veterans of Finland who later transferred to the Waffen SS continued to wear these commemorative pieces.



Bremer Collection



Nordisk Ungdom (Nordic Youth) or NU. Up to 1938, the NU employed the swastika as its emblem, but after this date the Vasa (or Wasa) badge was used. The cap badge was a white "Wolf hook." (a) "Day" badge of 10th anniversary rally, Stockholm 11th-14th June 1943, (b) Vasa emblem (worn on left breast pocket and flags, etc.).



Bremer Collection



Uniform of the Nordic Youth.

VOLUME 3: SUDETENLAND



Page 14:

A sketch of an unidentified belt buckle is tentatively attributed to the Freikorps in the Sudetenland prior to 1938. Mr. B.E.G. Bremer of Stockholm sends the above photo of a very similar buckle (identical apart from the fact that the swastika is set "square") which was worn by some members of the Swedish Nazi Party (NSAP) and the Swedish Nazi Youth (NU). This buckle is of German manufacture and may well have been worn by others apart from Swedes; for example, some Volksdeutsche or Ostvölker units.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA



An alternative version of the badge shown on Page 20 for the CNST VLAJKA. The correct title of this party should be Czech National-Socialist Party VLAJKA (*Česky národně-socialistický Tábor VLAJKA*)

Page 26: The badge shown on this badge as a cap badge for army NCOs was also worn, in a cloth version, as an arm badge by the *Totaleinsatz* (Czech members of the German *Luftschutz* in Germany) and, probably, also by Czech members of the Fire Police Regiment "Bohemia-Moravia" and the Stand-by Police Regiments (*Bereitschaftspolizei-Regimenten*) in the Protectorate.

Page 30: The badge identified as being a marksman's lanyard badge is, in fact, the shoulder strap badge of the Volunteer Fire Brigade of the Protectorate (*Freiwillige Feuerwehr in B. u. M.*).

(Information supplied by Vaclav Duchac).

SLOVAKIA



Vaclav Duchac

Page 90:

Unidentified Slovak badge but very probably Military Sports Badge of the Hlinka Guard.

GREECE



Obverse



Reverse

Pages 94, 95: Clem Kelly has supplied the above pictures of an unidentified medal of the E.O.N. It might be assumed that the "4" indicated four years service. However, as this emblem appears on other E.O.N. pieces, it may have no connection with length of service. Information on the Greek collaborators continues to be very hard to find, and any additional information would be very welcome.



General Magyarossy, Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian Air Force greets aircrew of a Hungarian dive-bomber squadron on the Eastern Front, 1943.



Hungarian Air Force Corporal (Laszlo Stahl) with the winged propeller collar badge worn by non-commissioned grades.



Hungarian Air Force Lieutenant (George Levay) in 1937. Note the Air Force dagger. Levay had a very distinguished career and was the only Hungarian pilot to be awarded the German Cross in Gold (3rd March 1945). He now lives in Australia. (This photo and the previous two are from his personal collection).

I have to thank Zoltan Körössi, Klaus Benseler and George Levay for the following additional information:

Page 108: The Levente Badge of Honor wrongly described as Levente Youth Leader's Badge is in three classes--a 1st class for 15 years service. This measures 45mm and has the motto *Szebb jövőt* (a brighter future). The 2nd Class is smaller, being only 40mm. The motto on this is *Szebb jövőt adjon Isten* (God grant a brighter future). This class was awarded for 10 years service. The 3rd Class, for five years service, measures 35mm and is simply the Levente badge with the addition of a wreath of green laurel leaves, and, on a white band, the motto *Szebb jövőt*. In addition to long service, any of the above could be awarded for merit in, or to, the Levente movement (to non-Hungarians as well as nationals).

Page 128: The collar tab at the top is that of an officer cadet, not a Warrant Officer. The dress tunic shown on this badge is known as a Nagy Attila.

Page 132: The medal General Jany is wearing on the right on his Signum Laudis is the Fire Cross, not the Officer's 25 years' service cross.

Page 143: The officer shown on this page is Captain Stephen (Istvan) vitez Szakoni.

Page 146: The pilot's badge was awarded in gold only (not gold and silver types). Other aircrew members received the same badge but without the crown.

Page 148: The Saint Laszlo Division was formed after the Red Army had crossed the Hungarian frontier but before the total occupation of the country so that its major actions were, in fact, fought within its native land. The Division was made up largely of redundant ground personnel of the Hungarian Air Force plus a parachute regiment.

Page 149: Budapest fell to the Red Army on 13th February 1945.

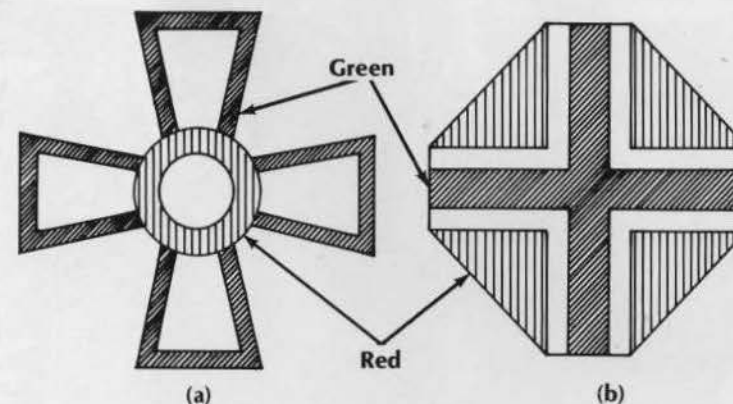
Page 152 Line 12: "same cross on a white ribbon" should read "same cross on a wide ribbon" (a printer's error!).

Page 154: Major General Oszlanyi was a recipient of the rare Military Order of Maria Theresa. He died in exile in Canada. His last job--janitor in a factory!

Page 162: The Signum Laudis with red/white ribbon was, as conjectured in the text, indeed awarded only in time of peace for acts of bravery on the part of either civilians or military persons. **Same page:** The Defense of the Nation Cross was in three classes--bronze, silver and gilt.

Page 163: The first investiture of the Order of Heroes took place on 20th August 1921.

Page 164: The Officer's Gold Medal was, second only to the Military Order of Maria Theresa, the highest ranking decoration for a soldier. In the Second World War, only 15 awards were made.



Space did not allow for the inclusion of an illustration of the marking used to identify Hungarian tanks (and other AFVs). This was in two different designs illustrated above: (a) is the first type, and (b) the second.



Members of the Croat Air Legion with the red and white chequer-board shield of Croatia on side of German steel helmet.



Croat Air Force volunteers. The aircraft in the background is a British "Blenheim" bomber of the former Royal Yugoslav Air Force.



Photo of the badge shown (inaccurately) as a line illustration (but still not properly identified!).

Page 213: A footnote may be added to the history of the 13th Division. In the closing stages of the war the depot personnel of the by-now-disbanded 13th "Handschar" Division were renamed the *SS Gebirgsjäger Ausrüstungs und Ersatz Bataillon 13* (SS Mountain Light Infantry Equipment and Replacement Battalion 13). It consisted mainly of Volksdeutsche from Rumania and Croatia with a cadre of German officers and NCOs.

In the face of the Red Army's advance into Austria, Gauleiter Überreither of Syria ordered that it be transformed into a combat unit and used in the military defense of his Gau. It was made up to strength by adding the staff and guns from the Army Artillery School at Dachstein and ground personnel of the "Boelcke" Squadron of the Luftwaffe. It was then made part of the 9th Gebirgs (Mountain) Division of the German Army. Despite an acute shortage of virtually everything (it even had to rely on mules for its transportation) it acquitted itself well against the vastly superior forces of the Red Army and held out until the final surrender of Germany in May 1945.

Pages 236-237: It is suggested that the arm badge with an Odalsrune in a circle was unique to Phleps as commander of the 7th Division. However, the book "7 S.S. Gebirgs-Division Prinz Eugen in Bild" shows Oberführer Dr. Müller and other officers of this Division also wearing this arm badge below their S.S. eagle. The suggestion that Phleps was the only one to wear this is, therefore, obviously incorrect.

VOLUME 3: MISCELLANEOUS



(1)



(2)



(3)

- (1) Variant of metal badge of the Deutsche Jugend in Hungary. White swastika on black; not black swastika on white (as on brassard, flags, etc.)
- (2) Civil lapel badge of Stryian Heimatbund.
- (3) Lapel badge of the D.A.F. of the Deutsche Partei in Slovakia. Black cog wheel and swastika on red-edged white shield.



(4) Civil lapel badge of German Volksgruppe in Croatia.

(4)



(5)



(6)



(7)

- (5) Civil lapel badge of the Sudeten-German Hilfswerk.
- (6) Civil lapel badge of the German Volksbund in Carinthia (Lower Austria).
- (7) Decoration (*Ehrenzeichen*) of the *Volksdeutsche Bewegung* of Luxembourg. (Volume 2, pages 252-255).