



ORIGINAL PAPER

Measures to reorganize the German secret services in Croatia in the autumn of 1944

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Abstract:

The evolution of events in the autumn of 1944, the defeat of German troops on all fronts, made new organizational measures necessary to cope with security problems. The situation in Croatia required drastic unification and discipline. In accordance with the Supreme Military Command and the SS High Command, all forces came under the command of the Military Abwehr (Abwehr Sub-regional Headquarters (AST) or the Intelligence Unit (Nahrichtentrupps), or, as the case may be, the Ie branch of the competent division (corps). S.D. relations with the Abwehr or Ie branch in other areas outside Croatia were not affected by this decree. This paper presents the main measures taken by the German military authorities in the fall of 1944.

Keywords: *Sicherheitspolizei (Gestapo, Feldpolizer, și Feldgendarmerie, Croatia, Agrram.*

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Introduction

The occupation of Yugoslavia in 1941 was a military operation by the Axis powers, also known as the “April War,” which began on April 6, 1941, after a coup d'état overthrew the pro-German government. The invasion, launched by Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria, lasted 11 days, culminating in the surrender of the Yugoslav army on April 17. This event led to the dissolution of the Yugoslav state and the division of its territory among the Axis powers, including the creation of the Independent State of Croatia. In April 1941, the German army invaded Yugoslavia and then Greece. Klingenberg, a company commander in the Das Reich division, led his unit to the capital Belgrade, where a small advance guard accepted the city's surrender on April 13. Fritz Paul Heinrich Otto Klingenberg (December 17, 1912-March 23, 1945) was a German officer in the Waffen-SS who served in the SS Division *Das Reich* and was commander of the SS Division Götz von Berlichingen. He was best known for his role in the capture of the Yugoslav capital, Belgrade, for which he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. A few days later, Yugoslavia surrendered.

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In August 1943, there were over 30 enemy divisions on Yugoslav territory, as well as a large number of satellite and police formations of the Ustasha and Domobrani (military formations of the Croatian puppet state), the German Sicherheitsdienst, Chetniks, the Neditch militia, the Ljotitch militia, and others. The Croatian Internal Guard reached its maximum size at the end of 1943, when it had 130,000 men. The Wehrmacht and the forces of the Independent State of Croatia, controlled by the Ustaše, fortified a front in Syrmia, which held out during the winter of 1944-1945 to help evacuate Army Group E from the Balkans. The army of the Independent State of Croatia consisted at that time of eighteen divisions: 13 infantry divisions, two mountain divisions, two assault divisions, and one Croatian replacement division, each with its own organic artillery and other support units. There were also several armored units. From the beginning of 1945, the Croatian divisions were assigned to various German corps, and by March 1945, the Southern Front had 32,000 men from the Croatian Gendarmerie (Hrvatsko Oružništvo), organized into five volunteer police regiments plus 15 independent battalions, equipped with standard light infantry weapons, including mortars, ensured the security of the rear areas. (Colin D. Heaton, *Invasion of Yugoslavia: Waffen SS Captain Fritz Klingenberg and the Capture of Belgrade During World War II* By by [HistoryNet Staff](#)6/12/2006.)

In Croatia, there was no permanent representative of Amt VI CZ, but in practice this proved impossible, as Kormanio Nord of VI CZ was completely occupied with preparing its operations against Russia. In the course of its general efforts to build resistance movements, VI S then attempted to form a resistance network and R with part of a Kommando of Jagdverband Ost, under the leadership of a Stubaf. Dr. Pechau in the Heresgruppe Kurland area. All actions taken were Romanian attempts, because the psychological moment for such things had long since passed. I do not know to what extent VI S made use of the established depot of FAK II (Frontaufklärung II) in these efforts; I mention this only because it seems likely that they did. The special method of the Jagdverbaende was usually to base their activities on the armed operations Aufklärung and Kormanio, in order to form centers of resistance in this way as well. I mention this because it is possible that operations of this kind were attempted by PECHAU in the Kurland area; their importance would have been only local, however. Here the preparation

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of the L network began at the right moment. The trusted Croats had been carefully prepared, but they were so influenced by the uncertain state of domestic politics in their country and the deterioration of morale that in the end – perhaps not out of ill will, but rather out of fear – they neglected their work, because the training traffic, which had been running normally until then, continued. The supply circle of Network I had expanded to the point of collapse. There were 2 Funkstellen. The amount of SOE funds is not now remembered but cannot have been very large.

(V) ORGANIZATIONS

Comd. HEIDRICH, BERLIN, Wilhelmsstrasse 109.

Before the war, there was a passageway connecting it to the current RSHA (Prinz Albrechtstrasse 9), the Gestapo headquarters. See Annexes 1 and 2 to SIR 800. At the outbreak of war, the SDHA was merged with the RSHA.

Commander (Ostuf) Dr. Alfred FILBERT, BERLIN GRUNEWALD, Telbriickstrasse. First house on the left coming from Hohenzollerndam. This office became Amt VI (Ausland) of the RSHA.

Personalities: GOTTSCH, KRAUS, NAUJOKS, WANECK, ZEISCHKA

Comd Dr. BEST, BERLIN SCHMARGENDORF, Berkaerstrasse 23-26, former Jewish dormitory. Guarded by an SS with an MG walking on the opposite side of the road (the building was still occupied in February 1944).

The RSHA department is responsible for security and espionage abroad. Divided into actions according to countries.

Personalities: KRAUS, NASSENSTEIN, BERGER, HERICH, BLUM

Commander Dr. BEST, BERLIN SCHMARGENDORF, Berkaerstrasse 23-26, former Jewish dormitory. Guarded by an SS with an MG walking on the opposite side of the road (the building was still occupied in February 1944).

The RSHA department deals with security and espionage abroad. Divided into actions according to countries.

Personalities: KRAUS, NASSENSTEIN, BERGER, HERICH, BLUM.

10. Commander BEISNNER. PW believes his name is Abtt. (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens). (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens, 1944: p. 9.)

11. Commander in 1939 Oberfuhrer STAHLECKER. He came under the authority of the SDHA. Since the establishment of the RSHA, the SD Oberabschnitte has been renamed SD Leitabschnitte.

Personalities: GOLDBACH.

12. Geheime Staatspolizeiamt-Gestapo Directorate.

13. Under the control of the GESTAPO.

14. Commander (Stubaf) GOTTSCH.

VIENNA. IX, Porrsellangaso.

Formed in 1938 under the auspices of SD Amt III/3. Dissolved in 1939.

Notable figures: WANECK, ZEISCHKA, MOOR, GEISLER, Frl von DURKERSRODA, PW.

The evolution of events necessitates new adjustments. The orders currently in force will be canceled to the extent that they are consistent with the situation.

The following orders are recalled.

1. The situation in Croatia requires drastic unification and discipline. In accordance with the Supreme Military Command and the High Command of the SS, all SP peoples are under the command of the military Abwehr (sub-regional Abwehr NQ (AST), or the intelligence unit (Nachrichtstrupps), as appropriate) or, if applicable, the branch of the branch in other states are included in this unification.

The above decision will also lead to savings in manpower, which can be used more efficiently in other areas. The members of the Committee are made available to H.Q. Berlin for assignment to other sectors. The nominal lists of those who do so will be sent here immediately for forwarding to Berlin and Vienna.

Thus, after this reduction in personnel, only a few special SD units will remain, which will be left to the SD from other units, to be transferred to the Croatian police or a P.O.W. camp.

The above changes were made with the sovereignty of the Croatian state in mind, as in the political sphere, being the most important department of the independent state administration, they were the most sensitive.

Obviously, SD cannot completely abandon their investigations into the main political trends. However, these will be carried out by specially appointed officers, and not by the SD, to the extent

The considerable restrictions and reductions in SD activities discussed above must under no circumstances become apparent to the outside world, for reasons of security and prestige. With regard to external relations, the configuration must be maintained in its entirety. (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens, 1944: p. 11.)

3. As regards the head of the Sicherheitspolizei and SD for Croatia, SS Gruppenführer Konstantin Kammerhofer (Konstantin Kammerhofer (January 23, 1899 in Turnau; September 29, 1958 in Oberstdorf) was regional leader of the Styrian Heimatschutz in Austria during the interwar period, and during the National Socialist period he was SS group leader, police lieutenant general, and representative of Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler in the Independent State of Croatia. Kammerhofer was the son of a farmer and mill owner. After attending primary and secondary school, he graduated from business school. Kammerhofer enlisted in the Styrian Volunteer Riflemen in 1915 and took part in World War I in the Imperial and Royal Army from March 1917. Army from March 1917. He suffered a war wound on the Italian front, and Kammerhofer, who was decorated several times, rose to the rank of soldier. After the war ended, Kammerhofer spent a year as a prisoner of war in Italy. Kammerhofer was married in 1924 and had four children. He was a wine merchant by profession. Kammerhofer was already involved in the national gymnastics movement and in the Homeland Defense of Styria, where he was a local and district leader and, ultimately, one of the two provincial deputy leaders from 1930. Kammerhofer was involved in the Pfrimer Putsch in Styria in September 1931 but was acquitted in the subsequent treason trial. Kammerhofer belonged to the radical German nationalist and anti-Semitic group within the Styrian Homeland Defense around August Meyszner and Hanns Albin Rauter, who, like him, would later make careers in the Nazi state. Between 1932 and 1933, Kammerhofer succeeded Walter Pfrimer as regional leader of the Styrian Heimatschutz and, as such, played a key role in forming a “fighting community” with the National Socialists and, ultimately, in the merger of his organization with the Sturmabteilung (SA) of the NSDAP, which was illegal in Austria. Kammerhofer led the "Upper Styria" brigade as SA brigade leader from the end of 1933. Former Heimatschutz officials of all ranks were assigned the corresponding SA ranks and subsequently also played a key role in the July coup against the Dollfuss government.

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After the failure of the July 1934 Putsch, he fled Austria to the German Reich via Yugoslavia. Here he worked for the refugee aid organization in Berlin from January to March 1935 and later joined the SS (membership number 262,960). (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens, 1944: p. 10.)

After the Anschluss of Austria in March 1938, he joined the NSDAP in May 1938 (membership number 6,165,228). From 1938, he was also a member of the Reichstag (11th electoral term) and a councilor in Vienna. Kammerhofer received the commemorative medal for 9 November 1923, known in Nazi parlance as the "Blood Order." From at least 1936 until 1941, he was SS leader in the cities of Essen, Bochum, and Vienna. At the end of January 1941, Kammerhofer was promoted to SS-Brigadeführer; in this position, he was responsible for the Flemish SS in Brussels from June 1941 to March 1942. From 1942 to 1943, he was head of the SS and police in the "Asserbeidschan" group, which he himself had founded in Hindenburg.

In July 1942, Kammerhofer was promoted to SS group leader and police lieutenant general, and from March 1943 to 1945, Kammerhofer acted as "representative of the Reichsführer SS", analogous to a senior SS and police chief in the Independent State of Croatia. After Heinrich Himmler personally intervened with Ante Pavelic, Kammerhofer was able to act almost unhindered in Croatia. One of Kammerhofer's tasks was to establish mixed German-Croatian police units to combat the partisans and the Cetnik movement, which were subordinate to his high command. This meant that Kammerhofer and the SS had a significant part of the state executive in their hands. The growing influence of the SS in Croatia led to strong tensions between Kammerhofer and the Ustasha regime, the Foreign Ministry, and the German envoy in Zagreb, Siegfried Kasche. Kammerhofer ordered ruthless actions in the fight against the partisans. For example, after an assassination attempt in which a high-ranking SS and police official was killed, he ordered the burning of all houses near the scene of the crime and the execution of over 100 people. In early July 1943, Kammerhofer was promoted to SS group leader and lieutenant general of police. Shortly after the end of the war, Kammerhofer was taken prisoner by the Allies near Salzburg on May 11, 1945, and was interrogated in Nuremberg in 1947. He was then extradited to Austria and tried in Graz. However, Kammerhofer managed to escape and hide as a construction worker in Hanover. The exact dates are unknown. On September 29, 1958, Kammerhofer was found dead in a guesthouse in Oberstdorf.) Kammerhofer's biographies often mistakenly cite Hanover, his last known place of residence, as the place of his death. Its headquarters, as well as all essential police and SD headquarters, remained outside Agram, in the province. However, for external purposes, in order to deceive the enemy, the image had to be maintained as if Agram, being the capital, contained important German police and SS stations, with important commanders and station chiefs. (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ss-and-police>.) Apart from this, however, the experience gained in Warsaw was fully utilized, and through strong and special protective measures, care was taken to ensure that the events that took place in Warsaw would not be repeated in Agram.

To this end, specially trained, powerful, motorized combat groups of the SS and Ordnungspolizei, partially equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, were in the process of being halved – for security reasons and as far as we know, these preparations were not discovered by the enemy, and for security reasons, this task force will only act in case of a serious emergency and will not take part in the general guerrilla war against the partisans beforehand.

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The SD leaders believed that if the necessary vigilance was maintained, there was no cause for concern. For reasons closely related to the above, it might even be desirable for the communist forces in Agram and the surrounding area to attempt uprisings of this kind.

4. The units in Banja Luka, Sibenik, and Zadar are disbanded in accordance with paragraph 1. Similarly, the units in Bjelovar, Bihac, and Bos. Gradiska are no longer operational. Correspondence with the units there will cease accordingly.

5. With regard to policy, the following provisions must be observed:

In the case of all Croatian Ustasa units and other units, the policy is that prisoners, including officers and commissars, are to be treated severely. Anyone who takes action against the life of a prisoner has forfeited his own life.

In addition, German policy, which will be enforced with all possible vigor, is that reprisals by Croats should invariably and erroneously be regarded as taking place on German orders.

Subject: S.E. Command (Supreme Balkan Command).

Previous communication decrees issued by this command.

On this subject: dated 10.11.44, ref. as above.

Regarding the verbal discussion between the Hauptsturmführer and the commander of the operational unit, it is hereby announced that the measure ordered by the above decree is canceled due to the transfer of most of the General Staff.

The impression is given, in an appropriate manner, that no change has been made. Unit signs, requests for requisitioned space, etc. Therefore, the attacks would not be successful from a military point of view, as they have an extremely unfavorable effect on communication in the minds of the inhabitants.

Opened by the commander or acting commander.

Subject: Organization and policy.

1. As agreed at the 1944 conference, the departure from the city of the local police chief, Agram, and the Croatian police chief has been agreed verbally. Visits to Agram for discussions with Croatian commanders, etc., will give the impression that the previous situation is still in force.

2. The SS chief's headquarters will move in a few days to the location that has already been indicated. Among all the new local garrisons near Agram, courier facilities will be found capable of being established without difficulty. Separate instructions for there and when the appropriate opportunity arises, that visits to Agram for discussions with Croatian commanders, etc., will give the impression that the previous situation is still in effect.

2. The SS chief's headquarters will move in a few days to the location that has already been indicated. Among all the new local garrisons near Agram, courier facilities will be found capable of being established without difficulty. Separate instructions for there and when the appropriate opportunity arises, that the HQ of the SS Chief is in the city of Agram itself. (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens, 1944: p. 12.)

The precautionary measures announced in circular 1.10.44.-1 Org. 207/44 Top Secret Para 3, regarding protective measures for a state of emergency in Agram, have since been extended to our garrisons. If possible (but in this regard, the utmost caution must be exercised in any measures taken), communist uprisings in Agram are even desirable for reasons already known.

VIENNA. IX, Porssellangaso.

Formed in 1938 under the aegis of the SD Amt III/3. Dissolved in 1939.

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Personalities: WANECK, ZEISCHKA, MOOR, GEISLER, Frl von DURKERSRODA, PW. Among the SS officers who were active in Croatia, we mention: Edmund Veesenmayer (November 12, 1904, Bad Kissingen – December 24, 1977, in Darmstadt) was a German politician, officer (SS-Brigadeführer) and war criminal. He significantly contributed to the Holocaust in Hungary and Croatia. He was a subordinate of Ernst Kaltenbrunner and Joachim von Ribbentrop, and collaborated with Adolf Eichmann. Veesenmayer was the son of Professor Franz Xaver Veesenmayer from Oberstaufen in Kempten (Allgäu). From 1923 to 1926, he studied political science in Munich, then worked as a lecturer at the Technical University of Munich and the University of Economics in Berlin. Veesenmayer joined the Nazi Party (NSDAP) in 1932 and the SS in 1934. He joined influential business circles, making many friends in high places. From March 1940, he was entrusted with planning the movement of (neutral) Irish people against Great Britain. At the beginning of 1941, he was attached to the German diplomatic staff in Zagreb (Croatia). He played an important role in the persecution and murder of Croatian and Serbian Jews. On March 19, 1944, he became the Reich's plenipotentiary in Hungary after the German occupation, the "authorized representative of the Greater German Reich" in Hungary. In a telegram dated June 13, 1944, he reported to the Foreign Ministry: "the transport of Jews from the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvania ... with a total of 289,357 Jews in 92 complete trains of 45 cars." On June 15, 1944, Veesenmayer informed Ribbentrop in a telegram that approximately 340,000 Jews had been delivered to the Reich. He also announced that, after the final solution of the Jewish question, the number of deported Hungarian Jews would reach 900,000. Edmund Veesenmayer, born on November 12, 1904, in Bad Kissingen, Brigadeführer in the Waffen SS, died on December 24, 1977.

In the 1949 trial, he received a 20-year prison sentence for crimes against humanity, slavery, and membership in a criminal organization. This was reduced to 10 years in 1951. He was released on December 16 of the same year, after serving almost 6 months for each crime he was responsible for.

Later life. After his release, he lived with his wife at Geroldstrasse 43 in Münchener Westend, his financial situation being precarious at the time. Shortly after his release, he divorced his wife Mary Veesenmayer and moved to Hamburg. The divorce was formalized by the Landesgericht Hamburg on July 22, 1953. They had no children. His wife kept his name until her death and lived in Munich, earning her living by managing a pension.

Between 1952 and 1955, Veesenmayer worked as a representative for an agricultural machinery manufacturer in Iran. However, the business was not doing very well, and Veesenmayer was trying to find a better situation. At the end of his life, he lived in Darmstadt, at Rosenhöhweg 25. In 1977, Veesenmayer fell ill and died on December 24 in a hospital in Darmstadt due to heart failure. (ARNOLD SUPPAN: 2019.)

German intelligence officers Abwehrstelle are mentioned

26.Hstuf HELM. German agent 35 years old, 170 cm tall.

Joachim Karl Paul Nikolaus Deumling = Born on January 25, 1910. Head of Unit IV D 2 (General Government Affairs in the Reich) within the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) and head of Einsatzkommando 10b as SS-Obersturmbannführer und Oberregierungsrat [March 1943-January 1945] in Croatia; After the war, he worked for the British Army in the Rhine, but the British blacklisted him for security reasons in 1951; he became an intelligence advisor to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Arrested on June 26, 1967, in the RSHA trial; released in December 1968. Investigated in 1969 for

complicity in the murder of at least 3,823 people [the investigation did not lead to indictment and trial]. Died on April 2, 2007.

Wilhelm Höttl Born on March 19, 1915. Head of RSHA counterintelligence for Central and Southeastern Europe; second in command after Himmler's representative in Hungary. "Höttl was released from detention in December 1947, and the US Army refused to extradite him to the Austrian people's courts, which at that time were taking action against Nazi perpetrators. In March 1948, he contacted the CIC and later became head of two espionage operations, namely "MOUNT VERNON" and "MONTGOMERY". He died on June 27, 1999. Arrogant. 1940 attached to the German Embassy in BELGRADE as police attaché. 1943 attached to the German Embassy in ZAGREB as police attaché.

Odilo Globocnik Senior commander of the SS and police in the Adriatic region; head of Operation Reinhard as SSPF Lublin (Poland).

Wilhelm Fuchs – Born September 1, 1898. SS-Oberführer and police colonel; commander of Einsatzgruppe Serbia and Befehlsmander der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD (BdS) (Serbia) April 1941-January 1942; Commander of the Security Police and SD in Lithuania; commander of Einsatzkommando 3 (USSR), September 1943-May 1944; commander of Einsatzgruppe A and BdS (Ostland) in Riga until October 1944; commander of Einsatzgruppe E (Croatia). Hanged for war crimes on January 24, 1947, in Belgrade.

Marko Jesper Matošević Croatian. Commander and supervisor of the provinces of Livac-Zapolje, Usora-Soli, and Posavje. Tasked with defending food supply lines against Yugoslav partisan paramilitaries and suppressing the communist rebellion, former spy. Presumed to have emigrated to Argentina at the end of the war in 1945 or to have defected to Bleiburg, Austria.

Wilhelm Traub Born on April 2, 1910. Gebietskommissar, "Navahrudak"; SS and police leader, "Quarnero." Died in captivity in Yugoslavia on February 18, 1946.

By the end of March 1945, it was clear to the Croatian army command that, although the front remained intact, it would ultimately be defeated due to a sheer lack of ammunition. For this reason, the decision was made to retreat to Austria and surrender to British forces advancing north from Italy. The German army was in the process of disintegrating, and the supply system was in ruins.

Bihać was liberated by partisans on the same day that the general offensive was launched. (ARNOLD SUPPAN : 2019.

The 4th Army, under the command of Petar Drapšin, broke through the defenses of the 15th SS Cossack Cavalry Corps. By April 20, Drapšin had liberated Lika and the Croatian coast, including the islands, and reached the old Yugoslav border with Italy. On May 1, after capturing the Italian territories of Rijeka and Istria from the German LXXXXVII Corps, the Yugoslav 4th Army outpaced the Western Allies by one day to Trieste. (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens, 1944: p. 12.)

OSS activity in Croatia in the fall of 1944 and spring of 1945

Among the Allied intelligence services that the SD faced in Croatia, the American OSS stands out. Intrigued by Tito's partisans. (Wilhelm Flicke, 1953.) Hayden accompanied a group of them in the summer of 1944 deep into Croatia and, in an episode 20 miles from the Hungarian border, he joined them in the summer of 1944 and decided in the summer of 1944 to see some action inside the country and he himself infiltrated deep into Croatia in the summer of 1944 to see them in action and on a mission, 20 miles from the Hungarian border, almost 200 miles inside the country, to rescue downed Allied

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airmen. He was impressed by their dedication to the mission for Yugoslavia and their support for American OSS agents, whom they contrasted with the British "imperialists." "It is impossible," Hayden later told a group of OSS trainees, "to work with the partisans and not be completely moved by their determination and sacrifice."

Some members of the OSS believed that Hayden, Benson, Thompson, and Tofte, the supply team for Operation Audrey, had become too close to Tito's communist partisans and had lost their objectivity. Most of the team members were withdrawn from the mission in early 1944, and Tofte himself was sent back to the United States, officially for insubordination. Donovan personally liked Tofte and considered his operation to have been quite successful.

The OSS's efforts in Yugoslavia were successful in that the support given to the Resistance helped keep many German divisions there and off the main Allied fronts and also helped save thousands of downed Allied airmen and aircrews. However, given the political decisions taken by the Big Three, Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt, the proportion of support was increasingly and overwhelmingly given to Tito's partisans rather than Michailović's Chetniks. In the summer of 1944, Tito's partisans went on the offensive again, both against the weakened Chetniks and against the Germans. The OSS reestablished contact and support for Mihailović that summer, mainly through a new unit created to help rescue downed airmen. By the end of the war, approximately 2,000 downed pilots had been rescued and evacuated through areas controlled by Chetniks or partisans in Yugoslavia. Some members of the OSS believed that Hayden, Benson, Thompson, and Tofte, the supply team for Operation Audrey, had gotten too close to Tito's communist partisans and were most of these pilots were Americans shot down during US Air Force air raids from Italy against heavily defended Axis oil fields and refineries in Ploiești, Romania. Most were members of B-24 Liberator bomber crews, but some were pilots of the fighter planes that escorted them. Otto Feher, a member of the OG, recalled that the Resistance had brought in a Tuskegee airman, the first black pilot he had ever seen, who had managed to escape capture by the Germans for several weeks. Another 1,000 airmen had been rescued by the OSS SO in the rest of the Mediterranean theater of operations, for a total of 3,000 qualified Allied airmen rescued to fly again. Allied support for guerrilla operations during the war, first for the Chetniks and then for the Partisans included equipping tens of thousands of guerrilla fighters. They kept 35 Axis divisions in check, including 15 divisions of the German army that could otherwise have been deployed in Italy, France, or on the Eastern Front. But Allied favoritism toward the partisans and, in particular direct assistance from the Red Army in the fall of 1944 helped Tito create a communist state in postwar Yugoslavia. Similarly, although a small OSS mission collaborated with rival communist and non-communist resistance movements in the small neighboring country of Albania, mainly to rescue survivors from downed American planes, it was the communists who came to dominate the country in the postwar period. (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens, 1944: p. 15.)

Final operations

However, despite the German surrender, sporadic fighting still took place in Yugoslavia. On May 7, Zagreb was evacuated, on May 9, Maribor and Ljubljana were captured by partisans, and Löhr, the supreme commander of Army Group E, was forced to sign the total surrender of the forces under his command at Topolšica, near Velenje, Slovenia, on Wednesday, May 9, 1945. Only Croats and other anti-partisan forces remained.

Between May 10 and 15, Yugoslav partisans continued to encounter resistance from Croats and other anti-partisan forces in the rest of Croatia and Slovenia. The Croatian Internal Guard, the Slovenian Internal Guard, and other anti-partisan forces attempted to retreat to Austria. The Battle of Odžak was the last battle of World War II in Europe. Representatives of the Independent State of Croatia attempted to negotiate a surrender to the British under the terms of the Geneva Convention, to which they had acceded in 1943, being recognized by it as "belligerents," but were ignored. (TNA, KV3152, Kew Gardens, 1944: p. 16.)

War crimes and atrocities. The Ustaše regime in Croatia (mostly Croats, but also Muslims and others) committed genocide against Serbs, Jews, Roma, and anti-fascist Croats. The Chetniks (mostly Serbs, but also Montenegrins and others) pursued genocide against Muslims, Croats, and pro-Partisan Serbs, while the Italian occupation authorities instigated ethnic cleansing (Italianization) against Slovenes and Croats. The Wehrmacht carried out mass executions of civilians in retaliation for resistance activity (e.g., the Kragujevac massacre and the Kraljevo massacre). The SS Division "Prinz Eugen" massacred large numbers of civilians and prisoners of war. Hungarian occupation troops massacred civilians (mostly Serbs and Jews) during a major raid in southern Bačka, under the pretext of suppressing resistance activities. The Ustaše, a Croatian ultra-nationalist and fascist movement that operated between 1929 and 1945 and was led by Ante Pavelić, took control of the newly formed Independent State of Croatia (NDH), established by the Germans after the invasion of Yugoslavia the Ustaše sought an ethnically pure Croatian state by exterminating Serbs, Jews, and Roma from its territory. Their main target was the Serbs, who numbered about two million. The first massacre of Serbs took place on April 28, 1941, in the village of Gudovac, where nearly 200 Serbs were rounded up and executed.

Ustasha militia units razed entire villages, often torturing men and raping women. Approximately one in six Serbs living in the NDH were victims of massacres, meaning that almost every Serb in this region had a family member who was killed in the war, especially by the Ustasha.

The Ustasha also set up camps throughout the NDH. Some of these were used to detain political opponents and those considered enemies of the state, others were transit and relocation camps for the deportation and transfer of populations, while others were used for mass murder. The largest camp was the Jasenovac concentration camp, which was a complex of five subcamps located about 100 km southeast of Zagreb. The camp was notorious for its barbaric and cruel killing practices, as described by witness testimonies. By the end of 1941, along with Serbs and Roma, the NDH authorities had imprisoned most of the country's Jews in camps such as Jadovno, Krušćica, Loborgrad, Đakovo, Tenja, and Jasenovac. Almost the entire Roma population of the NDH was also killed by the Ustashes. (Croatia and "Ethnic Cleansing" Akiko Shimizo). In Croatia, the Commission for the Identification of War and Post-War Victims of World War II was active from 1991 until the seventh government of the republic, led by Prime Minister Iвица Račan, ended the commission's work in 2002. All sides engaged in the widespread shooting of hostages, but the largest number of hostages were shot by the Germans in Serbia between 1941 and 1944. (www.ssoar.info, Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian victim centred propaganda and the war in Yugoslavia, MacDonald, David Bruce.)

Measures to reorganize the German secret services in Croatia in the autumn of 1944

Conclusions

The events of autumn 1944 and the defeat of German troops on all fronts necessitated the adoption of new organizational measures to address security issues. The situation in Croatia required drastic unification and discipline. In accordance with the Supreme Military Command and the SS High Command, all forces were placed under the command of the Military Abwehr (Subregional Headquarters of the Abwehr (AST) or Intelligence Unit (Nachrichtentrupps) or, where appropriate, the Ie branch of the competent division (corps).

The SD headquarters, as well as all essential police and SD headquarters, remained outside Agram, in the province.

For external purposes, in order to deceive the enemy, the image had to be maintained as if Agram, being the capital, contained important German police and SS stations, with important commanders and station chiefs.

The experience gained in Warsaw was fully utilized, and through strong and special protective measures, care was taken to ensure that the events that took place in Warsaw would not be repeated in Agram. To this end, specially trained, powerful combat groups, motorized by the SS and Ordnungspolizei, partially equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, were in the process of being halved – for security reasons and as far as we know, these preparations were not discovered by the enemy, and for security reasons, this task force would only act in case of a serious emergency and would not take part in the general guerrilla war against the partisans beforehand.

By the end of March 1945, it was clear to the Croatian army command that, although the front had remained intact, it would ultimately be defeated due to a sheer lack of ammunition. For this reason, the decision was made to retreat to Austria and surrender to British forces advancing north from Italy. The German army was in the process of disintegrating, and the supply system was in ruins. Among the allied secret services that the SD faced in Croatia, the American OSS stands out. Most of the team members were withdrawn from the mission in early 1944. Donovan considered the operation to have been quite successful.

The Ustaše regime in Croatia (mostly Croats, but also Muslims and others) committed genocide against Serbs, Jews, Roma, and anti-fascist Croats. The Ustaše also set up camps throughout the NDH. The largest camp was the Jasenovac concentration camp, which was a complex of five subcamps located about 100 km southeast of Zagreb. The camp was notorious for its barbaric and cruel killing practices, as described by witness testimonies. By the end of 1941, the NDH authorities had imprisoned most of the country's Jews in camps such as Jadovno, Kruščica, Loborgrad, Đakovo, Tenja, and Jasenovac. Almost the entire Roma population of the NDH was also killed by the Ustashas.

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