

***Wehrmacht* Security Regiments in the Soviet Partisan War, 1943**

Historians generally agree that, as an institution, the German *Wehrmacht* identified strongly with National Socialism and embroiled itself in the Third Reich's criminality through a mixture of ideological agreement, military ruthlessness, calculation and careerism.¹ Less certain is how far this picture extends to the *Wehrmacht's* lower levels — individual units and jurisdictions, middle-ranking and junior officers, NCOs and rank-and-file soldiers. For the German Army of the East (*Ostheer*), which fought in the ideologically coloured eastern campaign (*Ostfeldzug*) of extermination, subjugation and plunder against the Soviet Union, the scale of complicity, of the resulting killing and of the manpower involved make lower-level investigation especially pertinent.

The picture emerging from a detailed, albeit still embryonic, case study treatment of units of the *Ostheer's* middle level (*mittlere Schicht*) — a picture which, thanks to the nature of the sources available, is significantly fuller than that of its rank and file — is one in which motivation and conduct, whilst undeniably very often ruthless and brutal, were nonetheless multifaceted in origin and varied in form and extent.² This article argues that, if the dynamics behind *mittlere Schicht* brutality are to be understood more fully and their effects quantified more comprehensively, the *mittlere Schicht* itself needs breaking down and examining in terms of the different levels — divisions, regiments, battalions and others — that comprised it. The setting is the *Ostheer's* anti-partisan campaign in the central sector of the German-occupied Soviet Union, namely Byelorussia and the areas of greater Russia to the east of it, during the spring and summer of 1943.

Numerous studies maintain that the sheer scale of killing inflicted by the *Ostheer*'s anti-partisan campaign betrays the truly murderous nature of a campaign primarily directed not at partisans but at the wider population.³ Some, whilst not necessarily denying that killing of non-combatants took place, maintain that it was caused primarily by frustrated, fearful German reactions to particularly severe difficulties, not least the underhand ruthlessness of the partisans themselves.⁴ Hannes Heer's 'war of extermination' thesis (*Vernichtungskriegsthese*) depicts the campaign as an ideologically determined endeavour to strip the soldiery of all civilized norms and replace them with an 'extermination mentality'.⁵ Christian Gerlach stresses the importance of economic calculation, citing the killing and destruction which accompanied the mass burning of villages and seizure of crops, livestock and labour that characterized many anti-partisan operations after 1942.⁶

This article firstly outlines the approach to anti-partisan warfare adopted by a particular *Ostheer* security *division*, the 221st, which operated in the south-eastern corner of Byelorussia, and how interacting conditions and perceptions at divisional level contributed to formulating it. The bulk concentrates on the conditions, perceptions and conduct of the three security *regiments* — the 45th, 183rd and 930th — subordinate to the 221st during the spring and summer of 1943. In focusing on these areas, the article seeks to explain why regimental-level ruthlessness in the 221st was distinct in cause, form and extent from division-level ruthlessness. Firstly, however, the campaign's general background needs sketching.

I

The spring and summer of 1943 saw *Ostheer* security efforts in the central sector aimed ostensibly at guarding supply routes to the front while also safeguarding administration and, increasingly, economic exploitation against an ever more numerous, active and disruptive partisan enemy.⁷ But the great bulk of killing in anti-partisan operations was visited not upon genuine partisans but upon unarmed civilians.⁸

Throughout the campaign, anti-Bolshevism and anti-Slavism often hardened *Ostheer* units' treatment of the population and

prosecution of anti-partisan warfare.⁹ This ideology was wedded to pitiless military attitudes towards guerrillas and potentially guerrilla-supporting populations, attitudes dating back to the Prussian Army's traumatic experience during the Franco-Prussian War.¹⁰ During the *Ostfeldzug* this fusion of ideological and military harshness was reinforced by successive higher-level orders.¹¹ One infamous example was the OKW directive of December 1942 which, at Hitler's instigation, forbade *Wehrmacht* courts to prosecute soldiers guilty of 'excesses' against civilians during anti-partisan operations, and urged 'the most brutal measures . . . against women and children also'.¹²

A further brutalizing force, again already indicated, was the pressure of circumstances. *Ostheer* security troops were mainly older, relatively poorly-equipped soldiers of dubious quality, wholly insufficient quantity and low priority in terms of training, equipment and supply. Yet they were charged with both guarding the means of supply, administration and economic exploitation and actively carrying the fight to the partisans themselves. They had to execute these duties across a vast area riddled with swampy, forested terrain which, thanks to the impenetrability and cover it afforded, was a gift to partisans and a bane to occupying troops.¹³ The frustration these circumstances engendered could be exacerbated by: pressure from above for results; the tendency to substitute terror of the population for combating actual partisans; and the fear and contempt felt by officers and men towards both partisans (whose methods, it must be stressed, were themselves often deeply ruthless and underhand) and the civilians who may or may not be supporting them.¹⁴

An especially brutalizing dynamic was possessed by the *Großunternehmen*, the large-scale encircle-and-destroy operations which became the main source of carnage in the anti-partisan campaign from 1942. The pressure of having to cleanse a vast area with inadequate manpower and within a brief time-scale meant that such operations could deteriorate into situations in which the units participating — by accident or design — abandoned attempts to distinguish between partisans, proven partisan accomplices and general civilians, and killed the latter on a sometimes massive scale.¹⁵ From 1942, the Reich's increasingly desperate economic demands and expanding partisan territory created a further incentive to ruthlessness. Areas whose population was deemed suspect of aiding and abetting partisans were

labelled 'bandit areas' and ravaged by German and allied units accompanied by representatives of the *Wirtschaftskommando* (WiKo) economic inspectorates. Though common sense and economic calculation — the need both to avoid alienating the rest of the population unnecessarily and procure labour — might often preclude the *indiscriminate* killing of civilians during such operations,¹⁶ the misery they inflicted could be enormous. Villages failing to meet agricultural quotas could be condemned as 'bandit-friendly' and earmarked for destruction, and thus villages were destroyed, crops seized and forced labour procured on an increasingly vast scale. Thus also did inhabitants deemed of doubtful economic value, mainly women, children and the elderly, face internment or even death at the hands of the SS *Einsatzkommandos* or the *Wehrmacht's* own Secret Field Police (*Geheime Feldpolizei* or GFP) to whom *Ostheer* units handed them over. The scale of some 'economic' anti-partisan operations and the devastation they effected have led Christian Gerlach to speak of the emergence of a 'dead zones' (*Tote Zonen*) policy in German anti-partisan warfare during 1943.¹⁷

But if previous literature on *Wehrmacht* occupation in the East *in general* is any guide, conduct at the *mittlere Schicht* level was shaped by *interaction* of all these forces, filtered by a lower-level interaction between a unit's particular circumstances and the perceptions of its officers.¹⁸ The former consisted of such things as fighting power, the tactical situation, environmental conditions, the ethnic makeup of the local population and the impact and behaviour of the partisans — factors which, in view of the size and diversity of the occupied Soviet Union and the plethora of *Ostheer* units assigned to administer it, were varied indeed. The latter were shaped by such things as an officer's sense of pragmatism, careerist ambition and personal values. The composition of such values is likely in turn to have been fundamentally influenced by past experiences. The experience of *Ostheer* security officers, hailing as they did from a broad age range considerably older than that of their front-line colleagues, was diverse to say the least.¹⁹

Proclivity for ideological agreement with National Socialism and therefore, eventually, for ruthless anti-partisan conduct in the East was unlikely to be diminished by direct experience of the Western Front and the perceived primitiveness of Slavic living conditions on the Eastern Front during the First World War;²⁰ of

the allegedly Bolshevik-inspired collapse in morale in the German Army and on the home front during 1918; and of involvement in suppressing the left-wing uprisings which sprang up across Germany during the years that followed.²¹ The latter period, particularly, has been identified as an especially potent originator of ideologically based anti-partisan ruthlessness, because here the perceived dangers of Bolshevism and armed civilians were experienced *together*.²² Also important were experiences during the inter-war years; in particular, officers *readmitted* into the vastly expanded *Wehrmacht* after 1935 had in many cases been embittered by direct suffering, as civilians, during the economic crises that assailed the Weimar Republic.²³ Ruthlessness was further fostered by National Socialist policymaking's 'leadership principle', whereby higher-level directives resembled less clear orders than general guidelines designed to harness ideological conviction and careerist ambition to brutal effect.²⁴

Conversely, the fact that *Ostheer* security officers were subjected to this array of potentially brutalizing conditions and personal influences to different degrees meant that their proclivity for ruthless anti-partisan conduct and their proclivity, conversely, for a more measured, constructive approach, were marked by different degrees also. This helps explain why, to varying extents, numerous *Ostheer* anti-partisan units did pursue saner, more constructive 'hearts and minds' measures, crucial in any counter-insurgency campaign, aimed at wooing both population and potential partisan deserters.²⁵

The mainstay of *Ostheer* anti-partisan efforts during 1942–3 was eleven security divisions operating across the three Army Group Rear Areas of North, Centre and South, together constituting the largest portion of Army-administered territory in the occupied Soviet Union. Extensive assistance in screening and executing partisan 'suspects' was rendered by the *Einsatzkommandos* and the GFP, and additional manpower was often leased by Himmler's Order Police (Orpo). Nineteen forty-three also saw security divisions co-operating with *Luftwaffe* field units, and with Hungarian and Slovak troops.²⁶ The everyday workings of occupation were overseen by static garrisons (*Feldkommandanturen* and *Ortskommandanturen*).²⁷ Further reliance on anti-partisan warfare was placed upon eastern troops (*Ost-Truppen*), raised from former Soviet POWs, and upon a militia (*Ordnungsdienst*) raised from opportunist civilians.²⁸ But the main

source of security division manpower, and this article's main focus, was the security regiments (*Sicherungs-Regimenter*, until the summer of 1942 designated *Landeschützen-Regimenter*).

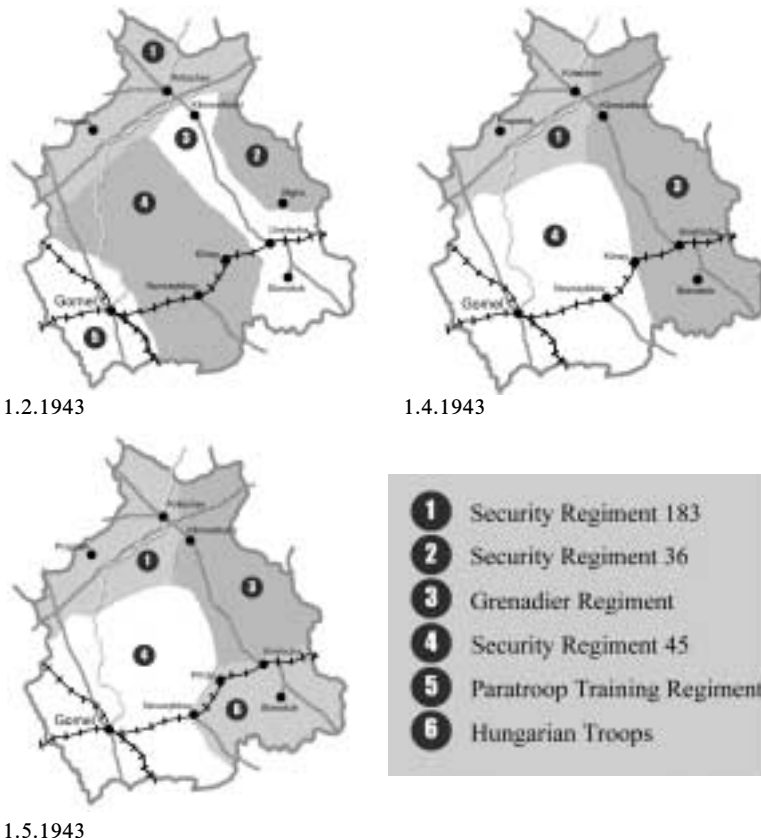
Before turning to the security regiments of the 221st Security Division, however, the way in which *division*-level officers viewed their situation and behaved accordingly needs outlining.

II

During 1943, the strength of the Soviet partisans in the German rear grew from 130,000 to 250,000; in Byelorussia alone, the Germans estimated that it grew from 57,000 in January to 103,600 in September.²⁹ With the mounting woes of occupation, German brutality in anti-partisan warfare and the increasing likelihood of eventual German defeat assuring these partisans ever greater popular support and an ability to wreak increasing disruption upon German supply, administration and economic exploitation, security conditions in the entire Army Group Centre region underwent alarming deterioration.³⁰ The 221st, like all security divisions, found the task of combating these developments ever more arduous.³¹ Reports on its own situation tell a clear story; the number of partisan sabotage acts, for example, increased from eighty-seven in April to 233 in May.³² The operations section wrote that

the unrest in the entire divisional area reached dangerous proportions. Valuable economic installations — depots, dairies, distilleries and so on — were everywhere attacked and in places burned down. Raiding and plunder of the villages and the murder of *starosten* and other pro-German inhabitants became the order of the day. The division's attempts to combat this mushrooming threat were severely restricted due to the inadequate forces available.³³

Crucially, the division also found that increasing popular embitterment at German occupation policies and the growing likelihood of ultimate German defeat meant that its ability to cultivate was waning also. OD desertion increased, native administrators started tacitly transferring their allegiance to the partisans and the propagandizing and recruitment of *Ostarbeiter* (eastern workers) for labour service in the Reich proved an increasingly thankless task. The result at divisional level was greater injections of ruthlessness into directives for anti-partisan operations and a marked increase in the destruction of villages.³⁴



Source: T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 1.2., 1.4.4.3. Stand des Divisions-Bereiches; T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 1.5.43. Stand des Divisions-Bereiches. Scale: 1 cm = 20 miles.

Figure 1
Changes in Composition in the 221st Security Division's Jurisdiction,
Spring-Summer 1943

Nevertheless, the 221st's approach was characterized by *relative* restraint, a tone set by its division-level departments. The intelligence section, the department charged among other things with propagandizing the population, wrote reports for higher-level consumption berating the short-sightedness of an occu-

pation policy that was so manifestly failing to engage the population, and increased circulation of Russian-language newspapers and *Ostarbeiter* propaganda.³⁵ The quartermaster's section ordered that partisan deserters be given the same level of rations as the *Ost-Truppen*.³⁶ Restraint was most apparent in the 221st's clash with the Hungarian VIII Corps over Operation *Csobo*, executed by the Hungarians in the 221st's jurisdiction in July. There was an enormous contrast between on the one hand the adherence to quota levels in requisitioning and the moratorium on evacuation, reprisal-taking and village-burning which the division urged, and on the other the 922 deaths — mostly, one assumes, of non-combatants — which the Hungarians delivered.³⁷

Behind this approach lay an interaction of the particular conditions and perceptions that influenced the 221st. Since its arrival in the Gomel region in June 1942, particularly paltry intelligence and acute problems of over-stretch, which for a time completely hamstrung its ability to execute mobile operations, had contributed to the employment of relatively far-sighted hearts and minds measures.³⁸ Whereas past studies have argued that severe conditions could fuel brutality, the 221st's example shows that, if they deteriorated beyond a certain point, certain aspects of an increasingly difficult situation could compel restraint. If a unit was *so* weak, blind or over-stretched that it was unable to execute mobile operations or impose its presence in native villages for a commensurate length of time, then it lacked the practical means of alleviating such frustration through increased terror and coercion. As an alternative means of easing security tasks, it could attempt to engage both population and potential partisan deserters more effectively. By contrast, *Ostheer* units committed to more strategically important areas undergoing *particularly* severe partisan disruption, such as the Witebsk-Polozk region or the Bryansk Forest, enjoyed greater potential for executing *Großunternehmen* and, consequently, for killing civilians, because they were allocated more manpower to counter that disruption. Such was the case, for instance, with the 201st Security Division.³⁹ But the 221st's more moderate approach was shaped not just by circumstances, but also by the fact that its division-level officers, having ingrained the lessons they had learned earlier in the campaign, were sensible enough to see the need for it. The neighbouring 203rd Security Division, though operating

in circumstances similar to the 221st's, displayed a markedly harsher attitude towards anti-partisan warfare.⁴⁰

Relative to the divisional level, however, the security *regiments'* perception of their circumstances was such that their behaviour was often significantly more brutal. Admittedly, the overall disparity between recorded German and recorded partisan casualties was markedly less gaping than it was in the jurisdictions of the other three Army Group Centre security divisions. This indicates that, almost certainly, the more measured exhortations emanating from divisional level did indeed chime to some degree with how the regiments viewed the situation.⁴¹

There were also many instances, however, of conduct that was anything but measured.⁴² One reason for this was that the increasingly onerous context of over-stretch; low-fighting power; a vast and inhospitable environment; and above all partisans growing increasingly popular, numerous and effective; could be felt at regimental level so acutely that it increased the tendency to behave according to direct fears and immediate frustrations, rather than to the more considered need for keeping the population on board. This is especially clear in the case of the 183rd Security Regiment, particularly that of one of its own subordinate units, Security Battalion 242 — a unit apparently responsible on two occasions (17 May and 29 August) for the indiscriminate massacre of large numbers of non-combatants.⁴³

III

Even by the standards of the normally miserable conditions endured by *Ostheer* security units, Security Battalion 242's situation was particularly dire. The 183rd Security Regiment's area comprised the north-western corner of the divisional jurisdiction, an area which contained none of the major rail routes that criss-crossed the rest of it.⁴⁴ Consequently, the 221st viewed the partisans there as considerably less threatening — albeit numerous and active in a general sense — to the vital maintenance of supply to the front than those at large in other parts of its area. The 183rd's jurisdiction thus remained far down its list of priorities. Responsibility for the 183rd's jurisdiction was assigned to a single battalion, and Security Battalion 242 was the unlucky unit.

The battalion was consistently neglected in terms of reinforce-

Table 1
Overall German/Partisan Casualty Disparities in 221st Security Division's Jurisdiction According to Divisional War Diary,
21st June 1942–31st May 1943

Period	German and native allied dead			German and native allied wounded			Partisan dead	German/allied native dead as % partisan dead	German/allied native dead and wounded as % partisan dead
	German	Native allied	Total	German	Native allied	Total			
21–30.6.42	1	6	7	2	1	3	17	41.18	58.82
1–31.7.42	7	7	14	17	4	21	83	16.87	42.17
1–31.8.42	46	6	52	67	2	69	94	55.32	128.72
1–30.9.42	36	35	71	44	10	54	182	39.01	68.68
1–31.10.42	8	11	19	10	5	15	35	54.29	97.14
1–30.11.42	22	5	27	45	5	50	109	24.77	70.64
1–31.12.42	5	11	16	9	5	14	86	18.60	34.88
1–31.1.43	16	43	59	36	4	40	123	47.97	80.49
1–28.2.43	71	7	78	52	5	57	128	60.94	105.47
1–31.3.43	9	7	16	5	9	14	19	84.21	157.89
1–30.4.43	15	26	41	45	21	66	481	8.52	22.25
1–31.5.43	60	33	93	75	43	118	166	56.02	127.11
Totals/average	296	197	493	407	114	521	1523	42.31	82.86

Source: T-315/1678, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia. Anlagen zum Monatsbericht, Juni–Dezember 1942; T-315/1678, files 35408/1 and /2. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia. Anlagen zum Monatsbericht, Januar–Juni 1943.

Table 2
Overall German/Partisan Casualty Disparities in 221st Security Division's Jurisdiction According to Operations Section's
Monthly Reports, 21st June 1942–30th June 1943

Period	German and native allied dead			German and native allied wounded			Partisan dead	German/allied native dead as % partisan dead	German/allied native dead and wounded as % partisan dead
	German	Native allied	Total	German	Native allied	Total			
21–30.6.42	18	Nfa	18	29	Nfa	29	46	39.13	102.17
1–31.7.42	26	0	26	36	0	36	206	12.62	30.10
1–31.8.42	32	6	38	57	4	61	281	13.52	35.23
1–30.9.42	26	30	56	37	13	50	164	34.15	64.63
1–31.10.42	6	26	32	4	7	11	39	82.05	110.26
1–30.11.42	13	15	28	30	8	38	106	26.42	62.26
1–31.12.42	10	26	36	14	17	31	139	25.90	48.20
1–31.1.43	24	35	59	52	6	58	199	29.65	58.79
1–28.2.43	70	51	121	57	16	73	202	59.90	96.04
1–31.3.43	14	54	68	8	15	23	68	100.00	133.82
1–30.4.43	13	53	66	40	35	75	500	13.20	28.20
1–31.5.43	26	48	74	29	42	71	176	42.05	82.39
Totals/average	384	297	681	415	144	559	2126	39.88	71.01

Note: Nfa = no figures available

Source: T-315/1584, file 29196/2. Sich.-Div. 201 Ia. Monatsberichte, Juni 1942–Januar 1943; T-315/1585, file 29186/2. Sich.-Div. 203 Ia. Monatsberichte, Juni–Oktober 1942; T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 Ia. Monatsberichte, Dezember 1942–Mai 1943; T-315/1885, file 38424/2. Sich.-Div. 286 Ia. Monatsberichte, Januar–Mai 1943.

ments, rations and equipment, and the incidence of anguished situation reports shows that its isolated, third-rate units were therefore particularly incapable of preventing the partisans from tightening their grip on the area and diminishing the *Wehrmacht's* standing in the eyes of the population. Those reports vividly describe the wretched state of impotence and fear to which Security Battalion 242 was consequently being reduced.⁴⁵ By 10 May, a week before the first massacre, civilian labourers were reportedly no longer turning up to help deforest the area on either side of the railway tracks; instead, the Germans and the OD were virtually having to drag them there. A day earlier, German sentries had been murdered on duty. The OD itself, meanwhile, was growing increasingly disobedient and untrustworthy. One occasion which made this clear was the killing of Corporal Nickel, of Security Battalion 242's third company, on the night of 13/14 June. Nickel was inspecting the OD barracks in Janowka when the building suddenly came under partisan attack. To the third company, it was clear that the attack had taken place with the connivance of OD men. The most telling sign of this was that Nickel, an unpopular figure amongst the OD, had been shot in the back.⁴⁶

The fear engendered by such incidents was almost certainly exacerbated by the underhand methods which the partisans themselves were reportedly using all over the 221st's jurisdiction. February brought reports of female Russian agents posing as kitchen personnel and poisoning the troops' food, or throwing strychnine down wells. In early February, partisans managed to tune into the same wavelength as one of the division's regiments. The exchange that followed was recorded by the division's intelligence section. At the end of the conversation an unknown voice called down the line: 'Thanks for the chat! Yours, the partisans.'⁴⁷ It was later reported that the partisans were erecting dummies with guns in the middle of the forest; German troops approaching them had opened fire and given their position away.⁴⁸ On 22 June the intelligence section reported an increase in partisans wearing German, Slovak, Hungarian or pro-German Cossack uniforms. The same report also described how the partisans often made false telephone calls to lure German troops and OD men out of their strong-points.⁴⁹

Feeling greater immediate pressure, then, than the 221st's division-level command or indeed the battalions operating under

the 221st's other security regiments — in what was for the entire division an increasingly alarming situation — the morale of Security Battalion 242's troops was in danger of going into free-fall. 'The troops' pride and confidence', the battalion reported, 'are suffering, because their paltry numbers, inadequate weaponry and low mobility prevent them from delivering a powerful blow against the bandits . . . the current strained situation is creating demands which cannot be met in the long term.'⁵⁰

Then, on 17 May, the battalion reported an 'engagement' in which around sixty-five partisans were recorded killed and up to another 150 wounded, at absolutely no loss to the battalion itself.⁵¹ Such a yawning gap in casualties points glaringly to the true nature of what took place that day. Whilst the divisional files do not go into detail about the events, it was almost certainly the first point at which Security Battalion 242's mounting fear, frustration, distrust of the population and desperate need for visible success against the partisans translated into indiscriminate massacre of civilians.

It would be quite wrong to assume, as most *Wehrmacht* apologists probably would, that the brutalization process which Security Battalion 242 underwent was not eased to a significant degree by a base of anti-Slavic contempt reinforced by National Socialist ideology.⁵² By the same token, however, it would be wrong to underestimate the brutalizing potential of the pressures to which Security Battalion 242 had been subjected. If the battalion's dire situation were not remedied immediately, moreover, such events were likely to repeat themselves. Nor was any remedy forthcoming; by early June the battalion's situation was worse in every respect:

Last night, quite by accident, the Ortskommandantur in Propoisk uncovered a plot by some Hilfswillige (auxiliary volunteers), who until then had been reliable, to murder their officers and then, with the OD and bandits massing before Propoisk, to annihilate the other Germans there . . . [meanwhile] the battalion's strength continues to dwindle without any prospect of reinforcement, and its tasks grow more difficult and numerous. Things cannot continue as they are. The men on watch are being pushed to the limits, and every man down to the lowliest private is afraid in the face of the danger which grows more threatening all the time. No one can explain or understand why our side is so weak and inactive; this is a condition which the German Army has never before experienced.

The companies can no longer spare any men for the training courses which have been ordered . . . the last replacements arrived in September 1942.⁵³

By mid-June the battalion's condition bordered on the pathetic. It had lost forty-seven dead, fifty-three wounded and six missing, and two thirds of these losses had been sustained since February 1943. The reinforcements consisted of one man and two NCOs, and even these were of third-rate quality.⁵⁴ The food situation in the north-western sector was especially shocking; it was described in depressing detail in a report of 10 July by the 183rd Security Regiment's commander, Colonel Alfred Kessler. 'The men don't understand why they are being supplied at this time of year with dry vegetables, which are neither nourishing nor appetising', wrote Kessler. The result was that the food was atrocious even if it had been prepared by an expert — which in most cases it had not, for most outposts lacked a proper cook. Normally the troops received about 15 grams of fat per day, to be distributed among four pieces of bread. 'This, as I have already reported, is barely enough for a single slice of bread. Of course, it's possible in theory to spread 15 grams over four slices, but the result is that you can hardly even see it.'⁵⁵

Kessler stressed the danger which hunger posed to the troops' morale, morale already suffering from the fact that the troops' families lived for the most part in one of the most heavily-bombed areas of the Reich. Perhaps most ominously, he pointed out that the troops saw their food situation as no better than that which had presaged the German Army's collapse in morale on the Western Front in 1918.⁵⁶ Neither this nor the battalion's own appeals, however, brought significant improvements in Security Battalion 242's situation, and this in an area now infested with as many as 3,000 partisans armed to a large extent, it was reported, with machine-guns.⁵⁷ With the mounting fear, frustration and pressure which such further deterioration would have brought in its wake, it is perhaps surprising that the battalion did not commit further atrocities before that of 29 August.⁵⁸

The case of the 930th Security Regiment highlights the importance of such circumstances in hardening regimental- and battalion-level behaviour further because it exemplifies, by contrast, how less desperate circumstances translated into less brutal conduct. Severe though the conditions facing the 930th were, they were not so severe as to induce the kind of frustrated, indiscriminate 'lashing out' that periodically characterized Security Battalion 242's behaviour. Admittedly, figures for April and May 1943 show that Security Battalion 242 was able, during

those months at any rate, to commit more men per kilometre of rail and road than the 930th was.⁵⁹ But any overall advantage was more than cancelled out by a combination of the poor quality of the battalion's own troops, the poor quality *and* unreliability of the OD on whom it was depending particularly extensively, and the fact that the 930th could call on twice as many troops to patrol and carry out mobile operations in the interior.⁶⁰ The 930th's southern sector, meanwhile, was actually one of the quietest in the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction. Moreover, whilst partisan activity in the 930th's northern sector was of special concern to the 221st because of the presence of important rail routes and the greater proximity to the front, the 221st's monthly situation reports suggest that Security Battalion 242 actually had to contend with greater *numbers* of partisans, and consequently greater disruption to overall administration and economic stability. Two thousand six hundred partisans, including the large Fjedorow group, were loose in the 930th's northern sector in March as compared to 2,500 in the 183rd's jurisdiction that month, but the arrival of the powerful Grischin group in April and the 400-strong Kletschew Brigade in July boosted partisan numbers in the latter area considerably.⁶¹ Partisan attacks on economic installations, OD strong-points and German-appointed native administrators were just as widespread in the 183rd's jurisdiction as in the 930th's.⁶² In fact, so extensive was partisan control of agriculture in the 183rd's jurisdiction, and so entrenched their position in the area, that reports circulated of them actually *flying out* livestock into the unoccupied Soviet Union.⁶³ Finally, there were significant periods when the 930th's forces guarding supply routes were considerably bolstered.⁶⁴

Whilst the 930th was also afflicted by the over-stretch of forces which, in any case, were fairly typical of the inferior quality that characterized the *Ostheer's* rear area security forces, the relative advantage the regiment clearly enjoyed was reflected in behaviour which, though mirroring the frustrations it was experiencing, was clearly less brutal than Security Battalion 242's.

This is not to deny for a moment that a vast amount of human misery was inflicted by the 930th. Its execution of Operation *Zugspitze* in February saw the burning of seven 'bandit villages' and the shooting of 141 'accomplices' by the GFP.⁶⁵ A sharp rise, in March, of partisan sabotage along the railways in the 930th's led to the regiment's call, on 8 April, for ruthless execution of a

Table 3
Distribution of Security Forces for Guarding Road and Rail in Jurisdictions of
183rd and 930th Security Regiments, March–July 1943

Date	Length of rail and road to guard in static security duty (approx.)		Total no. of officers, NCOs and men on static security duty (plus OD in brackets)		Average no. of officers, NCOs and men per km of track/road (plus OD in brackets)	
	Sec. Btl. 242	930th Sec. Rgt.	Sec. Btl. 242	930th Sec. Rgt.	Sec. Btl. 242	930th Sec. Rgt.
27.2.43	200	300	Nfa	1379	-	4.6
18.3.43	200	300	Nfa	719	-	2.4
5.4.43	200	300	Nfa	515	-	1.7
24/5.4.43	200	300	c.260 (+592)	573	1.3 (+3)	1.9
24/5.5.43	200	300	c.260 (+316)	510 (+2)	1.3 (+1.6)	1.7
24.7.43	200	300	Nfa	835 (+68)	-	2.8 (+ 0.2)

Source: T-315/1684, file 36509/8. Sich.-Btl. 242, 25.4.43. Besetzung der Feldwachen und Stützpunkte; Sich.-Rgt. 183 (no date; March 1943). Stützpunkte; Gren.-Rgt. 930, 23.2.43. Stützpunkte; *ibid.*, 27.2.42. Stützpunkte im Abschnitt der Gren.-Rgt. 930; *ibid.*, 18.3.42. Übersicht über Besetzung und Bewaffnung der Stützpunkte; *ibid.*, 24.4.42. Personelle Stärke der Stützpunkte und Wachen. T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Sich.-Btl. 242, 25.5.43. Besetzung der Feldwachen und Stützpunkte; Sich.-Rgt. 930, 24.5.43. Personelle Stärke der Stützpunkte und Wachen; I/Sich.-Rgt. 930, 24.7.43. Betr.: Sicherungskräfte; II/Sich.-Rgt. 930, 24.7.43. Betr.: Karte 1:300 000 über Sicherungskräfte an Eisenbahnen und Durchgangstraßen.

Table 4
Partisan Attacks on German/OD/OT Personnel, Civilian Administrators and Economic Installations in
Jurisdictions of 183rd and 930th Security Regiments, March–July 1943

	March	April	May	June	July
183rd Security Regiment (18 incidents total)	23.3. <i>Starost's</i> house destroyed & family abducted.	20.4. OD strong-point attacked. 22.4. <i>Starost</i> shot escaping.	5.5. OD private accommodation and family members burnt. 10.5. OD barracks burnt down. 14.5. Mayor killed. 18.5. Waterworks destroyed. 22.5. Two mills destroyed. 26.5. OD strong-point attacked.	1.6. OD strong-point attacked. 13.6. Strongpoint attacked (unclear whether German, OD or OT). 14.6. Strongpoint attacked (unclear whether German, OD or OT). 17.6. Waterworks destroyed.	9.7. Guard post attacked (probably German). 14.7. OD strong-point attacked. 24.7. Electrical plant destroyed. 24.7. German guard post attacked. 30.7. Hay depot destroyed.
930th Security Regiment (16 incidents total)	28.3. OD/OT bridge watch attacked. 28.3.: Depot attacked.	1.4. Deputy mayor kidnapped. 16.4. Mayor killed. 22.4. OD strong-point attacked. 28.4. Depot attacked. 30.4. Depot burned down. 30.4. OD strong-point attacked.	6.5. Mayor abducted. 21.5. Mayor killed. 27.5. OD strong-point attacked.	25.6. OD strong-point attacked.	8.7. OD strong-point attacked. 10.7. <i>Orts-kommandantur</i> petrol dump attacked. 17.7. OD strong-point attacked. 22.7. Waterworks destroyed.

Source: T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia. KTB, 23., 28.3., 1., 16., 20., 22., 28., 30.4.43; file 36509/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia. KTB, 5., 6., 10., 14., 18., 21., 22., 26., 27.5., 1., 13., 14., 17., 25.6., 8., 9., 10., 17., 22., 24., 20.7.43.

no-man's-land order by which any Russian civilian found either on the track or in its environs was to be shot on sight.⁶⁶ Increasingly intractable circumstances; the loss of regimental personnel to duties elsewhere in April; and an increase in partisan rail sabotage in May hardened the regiment's attitude, resulting in summer directives ordering extensive burning of 'bandit' villages.⁶⁷ Harrowing though this picture is in human terms, however, the fact remains that the 930th's approach, systematic and ruthless as it was, never involved spurring the regiment's own troops to unbridled brutality against the civilian population. There is no record of the kind of indiscriminate mass killing apparently perpetrated by Security Battalion 242.

These examples show how the immediacy of circumstances in the field and the acuteness of the pressure they engendered could ensure that regiments and battalions had far less time for the psywar niceties which division-level officers were still employing to try to counter increasingly dire conditions. However, it is the *interaction* between conditions and *perceptions* which needs examining if the causes of brutality amongst *Ostheer* security regiments are to be understood more fully. An example of this interaction is provided by Operation *Osterhase*, conducted by Colonel Hans Wiemann's 45th Security Regiment against the partisans threatening the Gomel-Dowsk and Rogatschew-Dowsk railways in the central sector of the 221st Security Division's jurisdiction during April 1943.

IV

In the course of *Osterhase*, at a cost to themselves of five dead, the 45th Security Regiment and its subordinate units recorded the deaths of 250 partisans in combat with only thirty-four small arms captured.⁶⁸ These disparities dwarfed the equivalent figures in all the 221st's other mobile operations that year. Furthermore, *Osterhase* was the only operation about which the division itself voiced concern regarding the clearly huge proportion of non-combatant dead.⁶⁹

At first, some blame appears to fall on the 221st Security Division itself. Because of the increasing pressures the division was experiencing by the spring of 1943, *Osterhase* was the first instance in which the divisional quartermaster declared that the

level of requisitioning in particular villages depended upon whether the village was earmarked for destruction, or whether it was to be left standing in the interests of further economic exploitation. The issue that was to decide a village's fate was whether it met its quota, and the logic of 'economic' anti-partisan warfare dictated that those that had not must be obliterated.⁷⁰ Ruthless though these orders were, however, they do not explain the particular kind of brutality which characterized *Osterhase*. The *economically* determined destruction of villages envisaged in the division-level directive was a systematic process involving, as elsewhere, the burning of the villages themselves, the evacuation of the able-bodied population, and the handing over of 'economically non-viable' individuals to the *Einsatzkommandos* or GFP. It did not involve killing civilians piecemeal and then passing them off as partisans fallen in combat.

On the other hand, the usual pressures of the *Großunternehmen* mechanism — second- or third-rate troops in insufficient numbers, charged with cleansing an area within an unrealistic time-scale — almost certainly did play a brutalizing role. Security Battalion 242 (again), two of whose companies were on temporary loan to the 45th, was pessimistic about the state of its own mechanization, claiming its trucks were wholly unsuited to fast delivery of supplies or transportation of reserves to critical sectors. Another source of depression was the age of the battalion's company commanders — fifty-four, fifty-two, forty-eight and forty-four. At platoon level the commanders' ages were fifty-four, forty-seven, forty-five, thirty-seven and twenty-eight.⁷¹ Right from the start of *Osterhase*, moreover, the 45th recognized that the forces committed to the operation fell short of what was required for an effective encirclement.⁷² On 28 April, furthermore, it was announced that the forces which the 203rd Security Division had committed to the operation were to be returned to the 203rd the following day.⁷³ Thus the forces still committed were now under even more pressure to produce results, and a likely result, as already pointed out, was greater brutality.

But nor, in this case, should the brutalizing effect of increasingly intractable conditions be overstated. The circumstances facing the units which, in January and February 1943, participated in *Klette II*, another mobile anti-partisan operation to the 221st's name that year, gave far greater cause for complaint. The units — Security Battalion 791, the first battalion of the 8th SS

Police Regiment, the third battalion of the 638th (volunteer) French Infantry Regiment and *Ost-Bataillon* 604 — had been thrust into *Klette* II directly after participating in two mobile operations, in extremely severe winter conditions, in the 221st's especially troublesome north-eastern sector.⁷⁴ Moreover, the orders on economic requisitioning and deserters for *Klette* II, taking place as it did not in the 221st's area itself but in the rear of the Second Panzer Army to the north east, were significantly more ruthless than those issued by the 221st that winter.⁷⁵ Yet *Klette* II claimed the 'killing in action' of 149 'partisans' and the capture of fifty-three small arms as against losses on the German side of fourteen dead — disparities which, whilst almost certainly reflecting the butchering of a large number of non-combatants, dwindle next to those of *Osterhase*.⁷⁶

Admittedly, there was less time pressure in *Klette* II — it took place over a fortnight as opposed to *Osterhase*'s four days. But for *Osterhase*, the time factor seems less decisively brutalizing in view of the fact that, in December 1942 and January 1943, the 221st's subordinate units carried out two operations, *Ankara* and *Ankara* II, which, despite involving a combination of time-spans, overall manpower and surface area which imposed similar demands on the troops as *Osterhase*, together yielded a 'definite' partisan body count of just thirty-two.⁷⁷

For brutality, in other words, *Osterhase* far outdid them all. Explanation for that brutality, then, needs to go further.

A focus on the two days on which the bulk of *Osterhase*'s killing took place raises further questions. On 27 April the main action centred around the village of Kamenka. There was a major clash in the forest near the village, with a surprise German attack on a partisan camp, before the Germans moved into Kamenka itself. 'The village of Kamenka', it was reported, 'had been built up as a well-stocked supply base, primarily with livestock and horses, all of which fell into the hands of the troops.'⁷⁸ In piecing together a picture of how 250 people were killed during *Osterhase* at next to no cost to the Germans, it becomes clear that many of Kamenka's villagers were probably killed when the Germans arrived that day or, at least, in the forests round about. The requisition carried out in Kamenka was reported as 'total', with all the produce and livestock falling into the hands of the troops themselves rather than those of the requisition staff from the *Wirtschaftskommando* in Gomel,⁷⁹ and troops set on picking the

Table 5
Time, Manpower and Areas Covered in Operations, *Ankara*, *Ankara II*, and *Osterhase*, December 1942–April 1943

Operation	Duration of operations	No. of coys/troops (approx.) involved (total for both ops)	Area covered (sq. km, approx.)	Area covered per man over op. duration (sq. km, approx. average)	Area covered per man each day (sq. km, approx. average)
<i>Ankara</i>	6 days	10/800	160	.2	.033
<i>Ankara II</i>	3 days	15/1200	160	.133	.044
Average for both					
<i>Ankara</i> ops	4.5 days	12.5/1000	160	.16	.036
<i>Osterhase</i>	5 days	9/720*	125	.174	.035

Source: T-315/1678, file 29380/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia KTB, 22.12.42; T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia KTB, 19.1.43; T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Ia, 26.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara. Gefechtsbericht, 19.-24.12.42, 1; Verlauf des Unternehmen Ankara I (map; no date); Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 16.1.43, 1; Geplanter Verlauf des Unternehmens Ankara II (map; no date); T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Ia, 25.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara II. Gefechtsbericht, 17.-21.1.43; T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase.

Note: Totals given here for numbers of men and involved in the operations are by necessity inexact, but the overall ratios between operations that result are sufficiently reliable. On the strength of the regular reports generated by the 221st's subordinate battalions, security regiment infantry companies during 1942–3 seem on average to have been around eighty men strong. See battalion- and regimental-level reports in: T-315/1679, file 29380/5 and T-315/1684, file 36509/9. * Equivalent of about ten companies were committed during the first half of *Osterhase*, eight during the second. All three operations had equivalent to about three companies' worth of mechanized or at least mobile troops: first battalion 8th SS Police Regiment in the case of the *Ankara* operations, two mounted squadrons of eastern volunteers and a *Luftwaffe* company in the case of *Osterhase*.

From the after-action reports, it is clear that *Osterhase* did not afford significantly greater 'practical opportunity' for killing, in the form of major 'engagements', than any of the other operations. NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Ia, 26.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara. Gefechtsbericht, 19.-24.12.42; *ibid.*, 25.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara II. Gefechtsbericht, 17.-21.1.43; T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Ia, 9.2.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Klette II. Gefechtsbericht; T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase.

village clean may have felt particularly disinclined to handle the civilian population in a measured way. With Kamenka being used to stockpile partisan provisions, the villagers clearly would have been under suspicion anyway.

The question remains, however, as to why the combat troops, in a breach of normal *Ostheer* practice which the 45th Security Regiment sanctioned or at least accepted, were allowed 'first go' at the pickings in the first place.

According to the regiment's report, the second surge of killing came on the 29 April, when heavy resistance was reported in a forest three kilometres west of Lossof:

(i)n the course of hard, day-long fighting it proved possible, thanks to the very well-equipped *Luftwaffe* units which were on hand, to drive the bandits into the forest and cleanse it by evening. After the two bandit camps in the forest were overrun, the enemy, having suffered very heavy losses, fled westward across the swamps.⁸⁰

If, as seems likely, this 'engagement' also saw a high 'partisan' death toll, then at least part of the possible explanation lies with the *Luftwaffe* troops. Certainly, it was these troops who were credited with the success of the Lossof part of the operation: 'Without these troops, well-led and with modern equipment, the division's own weak and ill-equipped forces would have been quite unable to achieve success against such superior and well-armed bandits.'⁸¹ This, however, explains only a small part of the contrast between partisan and German casualties, for where the *Luftwaffe* troops' superior equipment would have been decisive was in combat with actual partisans. These, however, seem to have constituted 15 per cent, at most, of partisan dead during *Osterhase*.⁸² The deaths of many non-combatants on this occasion therefore requires a different explanation.

At first, some explanation seems again to lie with the *Luftwaffe* troops. *Luftwaffe* field divisions, mindful of the ruthless exhortations of Reich Marshal Göring, and hailing as they did from an organization which if anything was more strongly imbued with National Socialist ideology than was the *Ostheer*, enjoyed an especially vicious reputation as anti-partisan fighters.⁸³ This is relevant for the Lossof killings only.

Any explanation for *Osterhase*'s brutality, then, is incomplete without incorporating the influence upon the troops' conduct of the attitude of Colonel Wiemann and the other officers of the 45th Security Regiment. Unlike the 183rd or 930th Security

Regiments, there is clear evidence of a *particularly* strong, *ideologically* inspired ruthlessness permeating the officers' collective mind-set. This appears to have driven brutality beyond the point to which it would have been driven by the concrete pressures of the situation alone, or indeed also by the more commonplace kind of anti-Slavic contempt that may have played an additional role in brutalizing Security Battalion 242. The 45th's ordering of the destruction of Kamenka in Operation *Junikäfer* and the *systematic killing of its entire population* — one measure which, according to the official record at least, the 221st's subordinate regiments executed in no other case during 1943 — points in this direction. So too does a regimental memo earmarking twenty-two villages for destruction, in contrast to the 221st's call for a moratorium on such actions, during Operation *Csobo*.⁸⁴

So too, furthermore, do earlier regimental directives. At the outset of the 221st's tenure in the Gomel region in June 1942, for instance, Colonel Wiemann ordered that, for an operation about to take place around Nowosybkoŭ, security and pacification measures were 'to be executed ruthlessly. Partisan suspects and any civilians possibly in contact with the partisans are to be dealt with using the utmost harshness. If the population does not voluntarily participate in the anti-partisan effort (through information and reconnaissance) then it is to be treated as suspect.'⁸⁵ The last two sentences are especially revealing. To urge utmost harshness against anyone *possibly* in contact with partisans, and to throw suspicion of such contact automatically on anyone not *voluntarily* participating in anti-partisan efforts was to sanction coercion and encourage suspicion so indiscriminate as to extend to possibly anyone. Such a degree of blanket hostility towards the civilian population was absent from any directive issued by any of the 221st's other subordinate regiments during 1942, and it went firmly against the more measured, differentiating treatment of the population which the division itself was urging. Whilst the level of killing inflicted by the 45th during its summer operations remained relatively low, the hardening longer-term effect of such exhortations upon the mind-set of its subordinate units and rank-and-file soldiers was a different matter. Indeed, the months between September and December 1942 did see the 45th involved in village-burning and apparent massacre to a markedly greater extent than any of the 221st's other subordinate regiments.⁸⁶

The files for *Osterhase* itself provide further indications of a harsh ideological mind-set. For one thing, *Osterhase* was the only one of the 221st Security Division's 1943 anti-partisan operations for which the regiment commanding compiled a report bothering to mention the number of partisan commissars who had been killed.⁸⁷ Even more strikingly, it was the commissars who, according to the 45th, had been the driving force behind partisan ferocity — they had, it was claimed, been shooting any partisans seen fleeing in the face of the Germans.⁸⁸ Such an explanation of Soviet fighting effectiveness was common across the *Ostheer* in 1941 — a period which saw countless German reports of Red Army commissars terrifying their own troops into fighting with threats of death or dire punishment — but not by 1943. The fact that the main explanation of partisan resistance in *Osterhase* that was offered was still the Bolshevik bogeyman rather than the genuine increase in partisan fighting effectiveness identified by the majority of *Ostheer* anti-partisan units says more about the ideological paranoia of the officer who wrote the report than about the true state of affairs. The fact that German casualties in *Osterhase* were so slight suggests even more strongly that the talk of 'ferocious partisan resistance' in the regiment's after-action report on the operation was the work either of an officer whose ideological drive blinded him to reality, or of an officer intent on currying favour with a regimental commander who was indeed so blind.

Although the personal *Wehrmacht* files which are the main available source of biographical information on individual officers do not offer deep insights into mentality, they do provide a range of important clues. From Colonel Wiemann's file, it is clear that his regional origin and both his wartime and peacetime experiences were together highly conducive to fostering an ideologically ruthless approach to anti-partisan warfare in the *Ostfeldzug*.⁸⁹ Born in 1885 to a Saxon land-owning family, Wiemann spent the years 1915 to 1918 on the Eastern Front. The experience of 'primitive' eastern living conditions during a formative time in his life may well have reinforced the animosity towards 'eastern races' felt more strongly in the eastern part of Germany. If Wiemann's anti-Slavism was firmly in place by 1918, his experiences of the next two years had great potential to engender strong anti-Bolshevism. His experience of the carnage of the Western Front, whilst limited, encompassed the period

from August to November 1918 when Bolshevik infiltration allegedly contributed to the German Army's collapse in morale and combat effectiveness. Wiemann's role in the bloody suppression of the left-wing revolts of 1918–20, meanwhile, was both extensive and direct; in March 1919 he was appointed battalion commander in the government security forces in Bremen, and eight months later he was working for the security police in that same city. Officers who underwent such experiences might not only be brutalized by the bloody street fighting but also subscribe to notions associating Bolshevik ruthlessness with the 'dirty' underhand warfare waged by armed civilians. Finally, the 1920s and early 1930s saw Wiemann working — among other things — as manager of a building firm which fell victim to the economic crisis in 1931 and was liquidated in 1932. The sense of personal humiliation and contempt for the failings of both the economic order and the Weimar Republic which may well have resulted could have strengthened Wiemann's ideological proclivities.

The example of the 930th Security Regiment further highlights the importance of brutalizing personal factors also by showing, again, the more restrained outcomes resulting from their absence. Colonel Wiemann's background and experiences made him a far stronger candidate for the conduct of ideologically brutal anti-partisan warfare than Colonel Julius Lehmann, the 930th's commander until the end of April 1943.⁹⁰ Born to an officer family in Western Germany in the Kandel/Rheinpfalz region in 1899, Lehmann may well have been less subject to the anti-Slavic tendencies more prevalent in eastern Germany and, coming in to the Imperial Army only in April 1917, was less extensively exposed to potentially brutalizing experiences during the First World War. His seventeen-month stint on the Western Front — he never saw action on the Eastern Front — ended with his capture by the British in September 1918. Perhaps most importantly, his capture ensured that he did not participate in the *Kampfzeit*. Moreover, his status as a continuing officer during the Weimar years ensured that, though belonging to an organization anti-Bolshevik in temperament and distinctly cool on democratic forms of government, such enthusiasm as he felt for National Socialism was not strengthened by any personal experience of unemployment. Thus Colonel Lehmann's regional background and past experiences, and his subsequent potential for ideologi-

cally driven brutality in anti-partisan warfare, were very different to Colonel Wiemann's.

Moreover, whilst Lehmann was described in a personal report by the 221st's divisional command as 'reliably National Socialist in character',⁹¹ it is not clear how far this assessment genuinely reflected reality or how far it was just a stock phrase to avoid any higher-level notions of suspect loyalty on the part of the officer in question. *Einwandfreier Nationalsozialist* is certainly a phrase that appears regularly in officers' personal files; the division's judgement of Wiemann, by contrast, went out of its way to describe him in markedly stronger terms as a '*convinced bearer and conveyor of the National Socialist world view*'.⁹² In view of how the 45th Security Regiment behaved, this is an extremely telling comment. The 45th's behaviour indicates very strongly that, even if Wiemann himself did not always issue direct orders to the effect, his influence was indeed felt at all levels of the regiment's command structure. As well as the comments on commissars in *Osterhase* itself, a further strong suggestion that Wiemann's influence did indeed rub off on his subordinates are the expressions of Captain Beck, commander of the regiment's 11th company, of how his total distrust of the population shaped his unit's execution of Operation *Nachbarhilfe* in May 1943:

The population of the forest villages, or of the villages at the edges of the forest, is working without exception with the bandits. It is immaterial whether this co-operation is voluntary or coerced; it alone is sufficient reason to deal the partisans a decisive blow by evacuating the population and burning down the villages in these areas.⁹³

Even if some subordinate officers did not actively share Wiemann's world view, their sense of careerism, intensified and converted into action by the dynamic of the leadership principle, would have meant that the need to win their commander's approval provided them with an incentive both to display the ruthlessness integral to that view and to convey it to their own troops.

V

This article has sought to explain diverse degrees of brutality and their causes, both across different levels of an *Ostheer* security division and also within them. At regimental level, clearly, con-

ditions of overstretch, falling fighting power, vast tracts of hostile terrain and an at best increasingly ambivalent civilian population went some considerable way towards fuelling brutality. This came about via whatever particular combination of fear, frustration, pressure from above for results or sheer practical desperation in the face of an increasing lack of alternatives to directing terror against potential partisan-supporting populations. Moreover, the greater immediacy with which these conditions could be felt at regimental level and below made for a *more* pronounced tendency to brutality at these levels.

But it is far from the case that this article's findings entirely support the view that brutality was situation-driven. For one thing, there is a strong possibility that the process by which a unit in the situation of Security Battalion 242 was brutalized was eased by a base of contemptuous, ideologically based anti-Slavism. For another, the behaviour of the 45th Security Regiment and the brew of racist, ideological harshness which clearly was central to influencing it, shows the need to look beyond concrete conditions. It is important to consider how degrees of ruthlessness were determined by the interaction of conditions with the attitudes, be they brutalizing or moderating — clearly, in the 45th's case, the former — of particular officers. This is not to endorse a *Vernichtungskriegsthese*; it is, however, to argue that the core explanation of ideological harshness which it propounds has more merit in evaluating the behaviour of some *Ostheer* officers and their units than others.

It is worth noting that diversity in security regiments' own conditions, perceptions and subsequent conduct does not alter the fact that they operated within particular *division*-level contexts which were themselves conducive to ruthlessness to different degrees. Indeed, it is worth remembering that the division-level context in which the 221st's security regiments operated was less brutalizing than that of the regiments which served under the 201st. Thus, grim though it is to note, even the 45th Security Regiment's ruthless, ideologically influenced behaviour was nearer the 'tamer' end of the spectrum compared with the bloody excesses of the 201st's operations of late 1942 and early 1943. How far this varied picture applies to the range of other *Ostheer* security regiments across the vast, diverse swathe of the German-occupied Soviet Union remains an issue for further research.

All that aside, however, the clear differences between division-

and regimental-level behaviour apparent in this article, and the particular interactions between situation and perception which underpinned them, clearly demonstrate the importance of breaking down and analysing brutality at the different levels of the *Ostheer's mittlere Schicht*.

Notes

1. Manfred Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat* (Hamburg 1969); Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Das Heer und Hitler* (Stuttgart 1969); Michael Geyer, *Aufrüstung oder Sicherheit* (Wiesbaden 1980); idem., *Deutsche Rüstungspolitik 1860–1980* (Frankfurt am Main 1984); Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges*. Two parts. (Stuttgart 1981); Horst Boog et al., *Germany and the Second World War, Volume Four: The Attack on the Soviet Union* (Oxford 1998; esp. contributions by Jürgen Förster and Rolf-Dieter Müller); Peter Jahn and Reinhard Rürup, eds, *Erobern und Vernichten* (Berlin 1991); Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden* (Bonn 1997, fourth edition); Rolf-Dieter Müller and Hans-Erich Volkmann, eds, *Die Wehrmacht: Mythos und Realität* (Munich 1999). For a literature overview and an excellent introduction to the debate's development to the late 1980s, see respectively: Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Ueberschär, eds, *Hitler's War in the East 1941–1945* (Oxford 1997); Theo J. Schulte, *The German Army and Nazi Policies in Occupied Russia* (Oxford 1989), 1–27. The debate since 1989 is outlined in Ben Shepherd, *German Army Security Units in Russia 1941–1943. A Case Study* (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham 2000), 1–18.

2. Schulte, op. cit.; Truman O. Anderson, 'Incident at Baranivka: German Reprisals and the Soviet Partisan Movement in Ukraine, October–December 1941', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (1999), 585–623; idem., 'Germans, Ukrainians and Jews: Ethnic Politics in Heeresgebiet Süd, June–December 1941', *War in History*, Vol. 3 (July 2000), 325–51; Klaus Jochen Arnold, 'Die Eroberung und Behandlung der Stadt Kiew durch die *Wehrmacht* im September 1941: Zur Radikalisierung der Besatzungspolitik', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, Vol. 58 (1999), 23–63; Christian Hartmann, 'Massensterben oder Massenvernichtung? Sowjetische Kriegsgefangene im "Unternehmen Barbarossa"', Aus dem Tagebuch eines deutschen Lagerkommandanten', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 49 (2001), 97–158; Ben Shepherd, 'Hawks, Doves and Tote Zonen; A *Wehrmacht* Security Division in Central Russia, 1943', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (2002), 349–69; idem., 'The Continuum of Brutality. The German Army and the Soviet Partisan War, 1942', *German History* Vol. 21, No. 1 (2003), 49–81. Very insightful, though focusing upon other theatres of the Second World War, are: Michael Geyer, 'Civitella della Chiana on 29 June 1944: The Reconstruction of a German "Measure"', Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann, eds, *War of Extermination. The German Military in World War II 1941–1944* (Oxford 2000), 175–216; Mark Mazower, 'Military Violence and the National Socialist Consensus: The *Wehrmacht* in Greece, 1941–44', in Heer and Naumann, op. cit., 146–74. For a review of the drawbacks involved in studying the rank and file, see Shepherd, *German Army*, 7–10.

3. Jürgen Förster, 'Securing "Living-Space"', Boog et al., op. cit., 1189–1244; idem., 'Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust', Müller and Volkmann, op. cit., 948–63; Timothy P. Mulligan, 'Reckoning the Cost of People's War: The German Experience in the Central USSR', *Russian History*, Vol. 9 (1982), 27–48; Hans Umbreit, 'Das unbewältigte Problem. Der Partisanenkrieg im Rücken der Ostfront', Jürgen Förster, ed., *Stalingrad: Ereignis — Wirkung — Symbol* (Zürich 1992), 130–50.

4. On partisan ruthlessness, see: Joachim Hoffmann, 'The Conduct of the War Through Soviet Eyes', Boog et al., op. cit., 833–940; Jörg Friedrich, *Das Gesetz des Krieges. Das deutsche Heer in Rußland 1941 bis 1945. Der Prozeß gegen das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Munich 1993), 514–45; Klaus Hammel, 'Kompetenzen und Verhalten der Truppe im rückwärtigen Heeresgebiet', Hans Poepfel et al., eds, *Die Soldaten der Wehrmacht*, (Munich 1998), 184–90; Wolfgang Hasch and Gustav Friedrich, 'Der Partisanenkrieg der Sowjetunion und die deutschen Gegenmaßnahmen im Zweiten Weltkrieg', Poepfel et al., op. cit., 232–8, 246–51. A flaw in these studies is their playing down of how far the brutality of the partisan war was fuelled by the content of the *Wehrmacht's* own security directives and propaganda and the resulting conduct of German troops. On the partisan policy of driving a wedge between Germans and population by deliberately provoking German ruthlessness, see: Bernd Bonwetsch, 'Sowjetische Partisanen, 1941–1944. Legende und Wirklichkeit des "allgemeinen Volkskrieges"', Gerhard Schulz, ed., *Partisanen und Volkskrieg* (Göttingen 1985), 92–124, here 110.

On the general conditions endured by rear area troops, in terms of: poor training and equipment; inadequate levels of manpower; the vastness of the rear areas and the inhospitability of terrain; and the potentially brutalizing effects of these conditions, see especially Schulte, op. cit., 42–52, 69–85, 117–49, 253–76. See also: Matthew Cooper, *The Phantom War* (London 1979), 89–93, 143–61; Shepherd, *German Army*, 22–3, 63–6, 83–91, 133–5, 173–9, 211–14, 218–19. None of these works deny the importance of ideology also in contributing to ruthlessness. On the similar effect of conditions upon German occupation officials generally, see: Bernhard Chiari, *Alltag hinter der Front* (Düsseldorf 1998), 72–80.

5. Hannes Heer, 'The Logic of the War of Extermination: The Wehrmacht and the Anti-Partisan War', Heer and Naumann, op. cit., 92–126.

6. Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde* (Hamburg 1999), 975–1036. See also: Witalij Wilenchik, *Die Partisanenbewegung in Weißrußland 1941–1944* (reprinted from: *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 34 (1984)), 201–6; Umbreit, op. cit., 142–6; Timm C. Richter, 'Die Wehrmacht und der Partisanenkrieg in den besetzten Gebieten der Sowjetunion', Müller and Volkmann, op. cit., 855–7.

7. An example of the disruption caused is that in July 1943 there were 1,114 explosions along the railways in the Army Group Centre Area, compared with 841 the previous month. Erich Hesse, *Der Sowjetrussische Partisanenkrieg 1941–1944 im Spiegel deutscher Kampfanweisungen und Befehle*, third edition (Göttingen 1993), 250–1.

8. In the absence of more precise figures, Tim Mulligan notes that German files for the central sector of the occupied Soviet Union record Axis *casualties* of 52,300 as opposed to 243,800 partisan *dead* for the period of the eastern war — a figure which, Mulligan estimates, was probably nearer to 300,000. Mulligan, op.

cit., 45, 47. Even this disparity is dwarfed by many of the disparities for individual months and individual anti-partisan operations. For an idea of these, see Mulligan, *op. cit.*; Gerlach, *op. cit.*, 899–906.

Whilst there undoubtedly were major disparities between recorded German and recorded partisan dead, qualifications need making as to the circumstances in which killing took place and the number of non-combatant dead for which *Ostheer* units were themselves directly responsible.

The figures cited by Mulligan and Gerlach do not generally distinguish between ‘partisans’ recorded killed in combat, shot after combat by the *Ostheer*, or shot after being handed over to other agencies such as the SS or the *Wehrmacht* Secret Field Police. The figures used by Mulligan, moreover, often fail to include death tolls amongst native units in German service. On both counts, see Tables 1 and 2.

The possibility that some of the remaining disparity between recorded German and recorded partisan dead was due not to killing of non-combatants but to factors such as poor partisan combat performance or frequent Germans use of artillery should not be ruled out. See Gerlach, *op. cit.*, 907–9; Hammel, *op. cit.*, 212; Shepherd, *German Army*, 29; *idem.*, Note 18, Chapter 2, Note 62, Chapter 7.

On the other hand, statistics should not be interpreted too rosily from a German point of view.

Claims that contrasts between recorded partisan dead and amounts of weapons recorded captured occurred because partisans were burying or destroying their weapons in order to avoid being identified as partisans may have validity in some cases. It is generally unlikely, however, that partisans trying to break out of German cordons would have allowed themselves to go weaponless in this way. Gerlach, *op. cit.*, 833–4, 899–909; Shepherd, *German Army*, Note 18, Chapter 2.

Although factoring in the wounded into German casualty figures reduces the disparity between recorded German and recorded partisan losses (see Tables 1 and 2), the effect would be at least substantially cancelled out by also factoring in partisan wounded — something which the source limitations of official *Wehrmacht* files renders impossible to achieve accurately in any case.

The implications of these issues for evaluating the degree of brutality in the *Ostheer*’s anti-partisan campaign in general are considered further in the forthcoming book version of the PhD. On the general accuracy and comprehensiveness of official *Wehrmacht* sources in recording partisan dead, see Shepherd, *German Army*, 27–30; Lutz Klinkhammer, ‘Der Partisanenkrieg der Wehrmacht 1941–1944’, Müller and Volkmann, *op. cit.*, 815–36.

9. Förster, ‘Securing “Living Space”’; *idem.*, ‘Wehrmacht, Krieg und Holocaust’; ‘Operation Barbarossa as a War of Conquest and Annihilation’, Boog et al., *op. cit.*, 481–521; ‘Zum Rußland-Bild der Militärs 1941–1945’, Hans-Erich Volkmann, ed., *Das Rußlandbild im dritten Reich* (Cologne 1994); Peter Jahn, ‘Russenfurcht und Antibolschewismus: Zur Entstehung und Wirkung von Feindbildern’, in *idem.* and Rürup, *op. cit.*, 47–64; Christian Streit, ‘Ostkrieg, Antibolschewismus und “Endlösung”’, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, Vol. 17 (1991), 242–55. By 1942–3, the Jewish population of the area of the German-occupied Soviet Union under military government had been largely exterminated, primarily by organs of the SS.

10. Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War* (London 1961), 249–56, 374–81; Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare* (London 1980), 193–7; Richard C.

Fattig, *Reprisal: The German Army and the Execution of Hostages during the Second World War* (PhD thesis, University of California, San Diego 1980), especially 48–68; Christopher Browning, 'Wehrmacht Reprisal Policy and the Mass Murder of Jews in Serbia', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen*, Vol. 33 (1983), 311–49.

11. On the 'criminal orders' and their implementation during 1941, see especially: Förster, 'Operation Barbarossa'; idem., 'Securing "Living Space"'.

12. Reprinted in: Norbert Müller, ed., *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in der UdSSR 1941–1944. Dokumente* (Cologne 1980), 139–40. On the radicalization of the German anti-partisan campaign and body counts inflicted during 1942–3, see especially: Timothy P. Mulligan, *The Politics of Illusion and Empire: German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1942–1943* (New York 1988), 137–46; Gerlach, op. cit., 884–1036.

13. In Byelorussia such terrain covered two million hectares. Schulte, op. cit., 47.

14. Cooper, op. cit., 1, 83–4; Schulte, op. cit., 127, 266–7; Hermann Teske, 'Über die deutsche Kampfführung gegen russische Partisanen', in: *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau*, Vol. 14 (1964), 662–75. Terror was more successful for a time, thanks to the greater practicability of imposing a physical German presence in the much smaller geographical area concerned, in Yugoslavia. Truman O. Anderson, *The Conduct of Reprisals by the German Army of Occupation in the Southern USSR, 1941–1943* (PhD thesis, Chicago University, IL 1994), 40–1, 79–81; Klaus Schmider, 'Auf Umwegen zum Vernichtungskrieg? Der Partisanenkrieg in Jugoslawien, 1941–1944', Müller and Volkmann, op. cit., 919–20. Whilst clear links between circumstances and intensified brutality can be discerned, the limitations of official *Wehrmacht* records as a source often render it difficult to judge precisely which of these motivations or which combination of them were responsible for linking the two in particular cases.

15. For instance, operations *Schneehase*, *Kugelblitz* and *Donnerkeil*, executed by the 201st Security Division in the Witebsk-Polozk region of north-western Byelorussia during the first four months of 1943, recorded 2,737 partisans killed in combat at a cost of 109 German dead. Up to 500 of this number may have been executed by the GFP; the sources are not sufficiently specific to reach a definite judgement about this portion of the casualties. Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv (BA-MA), file 26–201/11. 201. Sicherungs-Division Ia, 27.1.43. Kriegstagebuch (KTB) des Divisionsgefechtsstabes 201. Sich.-Division für Unternehmen 'Schneehase'; Angriffsgruppe Jacobi Ia, 12.3.43. Gesamtzusammenstellung über Feindverluste, eigene Verluste und Beute bei dem Unternehmen 'Kugelblitz' vom 20.2.-11.3.43; 201. Sich.-Div. Ia, 3.4.43. Gesamtergebnis Unternehmen 'Donnerkeil' durchgeführt vom 21.3.-2.4.43 im Raum Witebsk-Polotsk-Newel.

16. Mulligan, *Politics*, 141; Gerlach, op. cit., 924–6.

17. Gerlach, op. cit., 1010–36. On the destruction or preservation of villages according to economic criteria, see *ibid.*, 980–96. For examples of participation by *Ostheer* units in such operations see *ibid.*, 885–93, 983, 987–9, 992–3, 1012–15. The challenge to Gerlach's deterministic view of how economic factors shaped *Ostheer* POW policy presented by Christian Hartmann's recent case study (Hartmann, op. cit.) is worth bearing in mind when considering Gerlach's arguments as to how far economic factors brutalized *Ostheer* anti-partisan warfare.

18. See works cited above, Note 2. Truman Anderson, analysing the reprisal actions of the 62nd Infantry Division in Ukraine in 1941, maintains that '(t)he sub-

ordinate elements of the command acted on the basis of an often contradictory set of decision-making criteria, collected in pieces from its ideological indoctrination, from traditional inter-European military method, *and from the independent logic of the immediate tactical circumstances as presented by intelligence*', Anderson, *Conduct of Reprisals*, 302–3 (my emphasis). Pleas for a more differentiated, lower-level approach to researching the *Wehrmacht's* anti-partisan warfare across Nazi-occupied Europe are made in Klinkhammer, op. cit.

19. On officers' generational experiences and mind-sets, see: Bernhard R. Kroener, 'Strukturelle Veränderungen in der Militärischen Gesellschaft des Dritten Reiches', Michael Prinz and Rainer Zitelmann, eds, *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung* (Darmstadt 1994), 267–96, here 272 ff. See also: Theo J. Schulte, 'The German Soldier in Occupied Russia', Paul Addison and Angus Calder, eds, *Time to Kill* (London 1997); Rolf-Dieter Müller, 'Die Wehrmacht — Historische Last und Verantwortung', idem. and Volkmann, op. cit., 3–35; Shepherd, *German Army*, 26–7.

20. On the latter, see: Jahn, op. cit.

21. On the *Kampfzeit* and its impact, see Kroener, op. cit., 274–6; Robert G.L. Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism. The Free Corps Movement in Post-war Germany 1918–1923* (New York 1969), Chapter 2; Martin Broszat, 'Soziale Motivation und Führer-Bindung im Nationalsozialismus', in *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 18 (1970) 392–409 (here especially 396); Nigel H. Jones, *Hitler's Heralds. The Story of the Freikorps 1918–1923* (London 1987), Introduction, Chapter 1.

22. Conference paper by Dr. Johannes Hürter, Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich, at the annual conference of the German Committee for the Study of the Second World War, Dresden, 29–30 June 2001.

23. Kroener, op. cit., 274–6.

24. On the general historiographical debate over the leadership principle and Hitler's role in perpetuating it, see: Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London 2000), 69–92.

25. On the Army's cultivation attempts, by both field units and higher-level offices, and their failings, see Mulligan, *Politics*, especially 123–46; Schulte, *German Army*, 128, 143–4, 150–72. On German 'cultural policy' in Byelorussia, see: Wilenchik, op. cit., 215–19. On general *Ostheer* propaganda and 'constructive' occupation policy directed at the Russian population, see: Ortwin Buchbender, *Das tönende Erz* (Stuttgart 1978), 272–84; Schulte, *German Army*, 150–79. Of major relevance, despite focusing on the civilian-administered part of Byelorussia, is: Chiari, op. cit., 51–159. For details of hearts and minds measures enacted in the central sector of the *Ostheer*-administered jurisdiction, see: US National Archive, film T-501/27, file 31491/4. Der Kommandierende General der Sicherungstruppen und Befehlshaber im Heeresgebiet Mitte (RHGeb. Mitte), Ic. Tätigkeitsberichte, Juni–Dezember 1942 (all other primary source references are USNA unless otherwise stated).

26. On the GFP, see: Klaus Geßner, *Geheime Feldpolizei* (Berlin 1986); on participation in anti-partisan warfare by *Luftwaffe* field divisions: Gerlach, op. cit., 963–4; by the SD: Schulte, *German Army*, 234–9; Gerlach, op. cit., 959–63. On the Orpo's security role and also its overlap with the killing of Jews, see: Heiner Liechtenstein, *Himmels grüne Helfer* (Cologne 1990); Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men* (New York 1992); idem., *Nazi Policies, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (Cambridge 2000), 116–69; Konrad Kwiet, 'Auftakt zum Holocaust',

Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Der Nationalsozialismus. Studien zur Ideologie* (Frankfurt am Main 1993), 191–208; Andrej Angrick et al., ‘Da hätte man schon ein Tagebuch führen müssen’, Helge Grabitz et al., eds, *Die Normalität des Verbrechens* (Berlin 1994), 325–85; Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust* (London 2000), 60–4, 78 ff.

27. Chiari, op. cit., 96–159; Schulte, *German Army*, 150–79.

28. Mulligan, *Politics*, 147–61; Förster, ‘Securing “Living Space”’, 1219–25; Chiari, op. cit., 160–94; Joachim Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen 1941–1943* (Freiburg 1976); idem., *Die Geschichte der Wlassow Armee* (Freiburg 1984).

29. Leonid Grenkevich, *The Soviet Partisan Movement 1941–1944* (London 1999), 299; Hesse, op. cit., 207–8.

30. See above, Note 7.

31. For the changing composition of the 221st’s jurisdiction during the spring and summer of 1943, see Figure 1.

32. T-315/1682, file 36509/4; T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia Monatsberichte, April–Mai 1943.

33. T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 6.5.43. Monatsbericht, April 1943, 1. *Starost* translates as headman.

34. See: Shepherd, *German Army*, 185–226; idem., *Hawks*.

35. T-315/1686, file 36509/17. Sich.-Div. 221 Ib, 27.6.43, 2; T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 2.6.43, 1. T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Prop.-Abt. W, Staffel Gomel, 21.7.43; Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 28.7.43; Shepherd, *German Army*, 192–6; idem., *Hawks*.

36. T-315/1687, file 36509/27. Sich.-Div. 221 Ib, 29.6.43.

37. T-315/1686, file 36509/19. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 2.7.43. Ibid.. Betr.: Unternehmen südl. Nowosybkoff; T-315/1684, file 36509/9. RHGeb. Mitte Ia, 16.7.43; T-315/1686, file 36509/19. III/Sich.-Rgt. 45 Verbindungs-Offizier, 11.7.43; Shepherd, *German Army*, 209–10; idem., *Hawks*.

38. Shepherd, *German Army*, 145–84.

39. Schulte, *German Army*, 117–49; Shepherd, ‘Hawks’; Kurt DeWitt and Wilhelm Moll, ‘The Bryansk Area’, John A. Armstrong, ed., *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison, WI 1963), 458–516; Ralph Mavrogordato and Earl Ziemke, ‘The Polotsk Lowland’, Armstrong, op. cit., 517–56. On the death tolls in the 201st-led Operations *Kugelblitz*, *Schneehase* and *Donnerkeil* in the Witebsk-Polozk region, see above, Note 15.

40. Shepherd, *German Army*, 126–32, 148–50, 152–3. For instance, the 203rd’s administrative section merely remarked that it was scarcely avoidable ‘that many people killed in cleansing operations are not actually partisans’. T-315/1586, file 29186/3. Sich.-Div. 203 VII, 2.8.42, 4.

41. See Tables 1 and 2.

42. See Note 43.

43. For a full list of the twenty-five ‘smaller-scale’ atrocities committed by the 221st’s subordinate units during its security tenure between March 1942 and August 1943, see relevant tables in Shepherd, *German Army*, 133, 174, 211. ‘Atrocity’ is defined as any case for which the KTB recorded the number of partisans killed as fifteen or more and German losses as apparently too low to reflect genuine combat. The smallest ratio between partisan and German losses in any of the tables is approximately 7.5 to 1; most of the instances record considerably greater ratios, and many record no German dead at all. These contrast with many

engagements recorded in the KTB in which the ratio of German to 'partisan' casualties clearly does reflect genuine combat.

Whilst the need for units to appear successful may affect the reliability of KTB figures, and figures of individual unit reports, they remain the only official record of their actions. It would not have been in these units' interests, however, to inflate successes too much, for this would have suggested that they were coping sufficiently well not to need further reinforcement. A further necessary qualification of figures for partisan dead in particular instances, however, is the frequent lack of reliable *precise* information about partisan dead with which these units themselves had to reckon. For further discussion of the inevitable imprecisions and uncertainties surrounding these figures, see Shepherd, *German Army*, 29–30.

44. T-315/1684, file 36509/8. Sich.-Btl. 242, 10.5.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Bereich des Sich.-Btl. 242, 2.

45. Whilst Security Battalion 242 may well have exaggerated its difficulties to some extent, the objective facts of its situation (see also Tables 3 and 4) can only lead one to conclude that the battalion was indeed particularly pressured. Moreover, officers who embroidered difficulties persistently and excessively in their reports to divisional command risked discovery and reprimand.

46. T-315/1684, file 36509/9. 3/Sich.-Btl. 242, 14.6.43. Betr.: Tagesmeldungen.

47. BA-MA, RH 26–221/51b 13.2.43, 2. Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 13.2.43. Ic Befehle und Mitteilungen Nr. 3, 2–3.

48. T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 21.4.43. Ic Befehle und Mitteilungen Nr. 7, 1.

49. T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 22.6.43.

50. T-315/1684, file 36509/8. Sich.-Btl. 242, 10.5.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Bereich des Sich.-Btl. 242, 2.

51. T-315, file 36509/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia. KTB, 17.5.43.

52. On the limitations of official *Wehrmacht* files in giving extensive insights into these kinds of personal motivation, and the widespread paucity of alternative sources that might highlight them (as is unfortunately the case here), see Shepherd, *German Army*, 30–1.

53. T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Sich.-Btl. 242, 30.5.43. Betr.: Lage im Bereich des Sich.-Btl. 242.

54. T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Sich.-Rgt. 183, 17.6.43. Betr.: Bandenmeldung im Gebiet Propoisk u. Korma, 1–2.

55. T-315/1684, file 36509/9. Kommandeur Sich.-Rgt. 183, 13.7.43. Betr.: Verpflegung.

56. *Ibid.*

57. T-315/1684, file 36509/9. 2. Komp. Sich.-Btl. 242, 13.8.43. Betr.: Meldung über Mannchaftslage der 2. Komp. in Stützpunkt Krasnopolje. This report may well be exaggerated — a partisan group this strong could have overwhelmed the company whenever it wanted to — but it is almost certain that the company was in a very bad state.

58. On 29 August the battalion reported an engagement in which 150 partisans were killed or wounded and German losses totalled fifteen dead, thirteen wounded and nine missing. Clearly some genuine combat had taken place, but in view of the battalion's obviously poor state of fighting power the disparity still seems suspiciously high. T-315/1682, file 36509/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia. KTB, 29.8.43.

59. See Table 3.

60. Maps of the divisional area at the beginning of May and June 1943 show four companies stationed in the interior of the 930th's jurisdiction as opposed to two in Security Battalion 242's. T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Einsatz der Sich.-Div. 221, 1.5., 1.6.43.

61. T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 4.4., 26.4., 26.5., 27.6., 27.7.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich.

62. See Table 4.

63. T-315/1687, file 36509/24. Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 26.5.43. Betr.: Bandenlage im Divisions-Bereich.

64. See figures for March and July 1943, Table 3.

65. T-315/1686, file 36509/17. GR 930 Ia, 8.2.43. Bericht über Verlauf und Ergebnis des Unternehmens 'Zugspitze'.

66. T-315, file 36509/8. Gren.-Rgt. 930 Ia, 8.4.43.

67. Sich.-Rgt. 930 Ia, 23.6.43. Betr.: Evakuierung des Mamajewka-Gebietes. In April the 930th's combat strength fell from 659 to 439 as it lost many troops to other units, and May saw a large increase in partisan rail sabotage in its area. According to the divisional war diary (an incomplete source, admittedly), thirteen successful partisan attacks on railways took place in the 930th's jurisdiction during May as opposed to six during April. T-315/1684, file 36509/8. Gefechtsstärke der 930. Gren.-Rgt., 1.2.-11.5.43; T-315/1682, file 36509/1. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 1.4.-31.5.43. KTB, 1.1-1.6.43.

68. T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase.

69. T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 29.4.43; Sich.-Rgt. 45, 29.4.43.

70. T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 6.4.43. Betr.: Unternehmen 'Osterhase', 2.

71. T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Btl. 242, 4.5.43. Erfahrungsbericht aus dem Unternehmen 'Osterhase' vom 27.4.-30.4.43, 1-2.

72. T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase, 5.

73. Ibid.

74. On the winter operations, see Shepherd, *German Army*, 114, 177-9. During the second half of 1942 the Mamajewka Forest in the north-east of the 221st's jurisdiction was regularly identified as the most troublesome area of partisan activity for which it was responsible. T-315/1681, file 35408/2. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 5.9., 5.10., 8.11., 30.11.42. Monatsberichte, August-November 1942.

Snow tracks and frozen swamps made the task of hunting 'partisans and accomplices' easier in winter than in summer. Gerlach, op. cit., 905-6. Arguably, this makes the higher 'partisan' death toll in *Osterhase* more significant still.

75. It was ordered for *Klette II* by the Second Panzer Army rear area command that all stocks in the area be removed or, where that was not possible, destroyed on the spot, and units were also told they would have to live off the land during the operation. Over deserters, meanwhile, no distinction was to be made between those who deserted before and those who deserted during the operation. On all three counts, the 221st's winter directives were significantly more discriminating. T-315/1680, file 29380/9. Sich.-Div. 221 Ic, 3.12.42. Betr.: Überläufer; T-315/1682, file 36509/4. Besondere Anordnungen zum Divisions-Befehl für

Unternehmen 'Klette', 2; Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 5.2.43. Monatsbericht, Januar 1943, 1-2; T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Rgt. 36, 10.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara; Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 14.12.42; T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 7.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara II, 3.

76. T-315/1685, file 36509/12. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Ia, 9.2.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Klette II. Gefechtsbericht. Although artillery was used in both *Klette II* and *Osterhase*, the recorded disparities between German and partisan dead and between partisan dead and partisan weapons captured are sufficiently large to indicate that mass killing of non-combatants did indeed take place.

77. See Table 5. There were thirty-two 'certain' cases of partisan dead over the two operations with a total of 150 partisan dead estimated, as opposed to 250 'certain' cases during *Osterhase* alone. NA T-315/1685, file 36509/11. Sich.-Rgt. 36 Ia, 26.12.42. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara. Gefechtsbericht, 19.-24.12.42, 1; *ibid.*, 25.1.43. Betr.: Unternehmen Ankara II. Gefechtsbericht, 17.-21.1.43.

78. T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Div. 221 Ia, 2.5.43. Betr.: Bericht über Unternehmen Osterhase, 2.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*

82. Judging on the basis of the difference between captured partisan weapons and recorded partisan dead. See Note 67.

83. See above, Note 26.

84. *Ibid.*

85. T-315/1679, file 29380/5. Sich.-Rgt. 45, 23.6.42. Befehl für die Sicherung und Aufklärung im Raum um Nowosybkoff', 2.

86. Shepherd, *German Army*, 136-8, 174, 177.

87. T-315/1685, file 36509/13. Sich.-Rgt. 45, 1.5.43. Erfahrungen über den Kampf bei Kamenka und Lossow. The report was written by a lieutenant of the regimental operations section, on Colonel Wiemann's behalf.

88. In the course of extensive research, no other report was unearthed from 1943 attributing ferocious partisan resistance mainly to the threats and merciless exhortations of Soviet commissars. Whilst such reports may have been made, then, they were probably rare. A clear demonstration of just how rare and how at odds with reality the 45th's comments were is to contrast them with those of Colonel-General Hermann Hoth. Though Hoth issued a particularly ruthless ideological general order to his troops in autumn 1941 and was also at the forefront of efforts to radicalize conduct of the *Kommissarbefehl*, by which Red Army commissars falling into *Ostheer* hands were to be shot, even he recognized that the Russians were not fighting primarily out of fear of their commissars. By 1943 there was if anything infinitely greater reason to draw this conclusion. Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, 84; Förster, 'Rußlandbild', 149.

89. BA-MA, Pers 6. Personal file on Colonel Hans Wiemann. Lebenslauf.

90. BA-MA, Heeresgeneralskartei. File on Colonel Julius Lehmann. Lehmann is a pseudonym; Federal German data protection laws prevent the naming of officers who either are still alive or died within the last thirty years, or for whom no date of death or proof that they are still alive could be found but who were born within the last 110 years.

91. *Ibid.*

92. BA-MA, Pers 6. Personal file on Colonel Hans Wiemann. Lebenslauf. My emphasis.

93. T-315/1683, file 36509/5. Hauptm. Beck, 11/Sich.-Rgt. 45, 16.6.43. Bericht über Erfahrungen in der Bandenbekämpfung (insbes. 'Nachbarhilfe' I u. II), 2. My emphasis. Beck is a pseudonym; see above, Note 91.

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