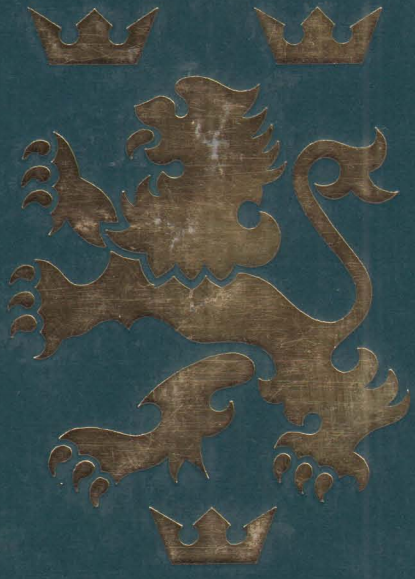
WOLF-DIETRICH HEIKE

The Ukrainian Division 'Galicia', 1943-45



A MEMOIR

WOLF-DIETRICH HEIKE

The Ukrainian Division 'Galicia', 1943-45: A Memoir

Edited by Yury Boshyk
With an introduction by John A. Armstrong

The Ukrainian Division was one of nineteen out of thirty-eight Waffen SS divisions that were composed mainly of foreign recruits by the end of World War II. Its military engagements are described vividly in this memoir.

As the Division's chief of staff from January 1944 until its ultimate surrender in May 1945, the author was in an exceptionally favorable position to observe how a large group of Ukrainians reacted to the impending and politically complex crisis on the Eastern front. His work occupies a unique place in the historiography of the Ukrainian national movement of that period.

The Division was formed in May 1943 and first saw action in July 1944 at Brody, where the major portion of its troops were killed or captured by Soviet forces. In October 1944 it was sent to Slovakia and was stationed there until January 1945. Then, by arduous marches under extremely difficult conditions, it was transferred to the mixed nationality area of southern Austria and northern Slovenia. At the war's end the Division retreated farther into Austria, to surrender to the British Army.

Most combat was with regular Soviet troops advancing through Hungary toward southeast Austria. Major Heike delineates these operations skillfully and graphically. The memoir is especially valuable for his account of the campaign in Styria — likely to remain the principal source of information on the Division's activities during the last months of World War II — as well as for the light it sheds on numerous

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Major Wolf-Dietrich Heike

Former Chief of Staff

The Ukrainian Division 'Galicia', 1943-45

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Contents

About the Author

WOLF-DIETRICH HEIKE was born on 27 June 1913 in Graudenz, West Prussia, the eldest son of Major Richard Heike and Rosemary Heike (née von Wedel).

A military career was the traditional choice in both his paternal and maternal families. After completing his schooling in Uckermark, Prussia, in 1934, he enlisted as an officer-cadet in the 2nd (Prussian) Artillery in Schwerin (Mecklenburg). He then attended the Military Academy in Munich. By early 1939, stationed at the artillery garrison in Flensburg (Schleswig–Holstein), he had reached the rank of battery commander.

At the beginning of World War II, Heike was in the Holstein 30th Infantry Division, and he fought in both the Polish and western campaigns. In early 1941 he was transferred to the 110th Infantry Division and later that year was fighting in the Russian campaign, becoming first aide-de-camp on the divisional staff.

From September 1942 Heike took part in further general staff training near Moscow and in early 1943 attended the Academy of War Studies in Berlin. He saw action that year as the 2nd general staff officer (1B) with the 122nd Infantry Division in the northern sector of Russia and was promoted to the rank of major in August.

Then, from January 1944, Heike served as senior general staff officer (1A) with the Ukrainian Division until its surrender. Despite the fact that he had always been a Wehrmacht officer, he was interned by the British from August 1945 until May 1947 on suspicion that he had been an SS company commander, a claim that he always refuted.

During the course of his wartime service, Heike was decorated with the Iron Cross, 1st and 2nd class, and an assault badge.

In postwar civilian life Heike studied agricultural science and industrial

management. From 1950 to his retirement in 1975, he was employed by Audi, first as assistant director, then as chief of personnel and administration, and subsequently as company director.

He held many volunteer positions, among them founder and chairman of the Association for Military Studies in Dusseldorf; founder (and honorary chairman) of the Employer's Association; chairman of the Administrative Committee of the Employment Office in Ingolstadt; and member of the board of the Bavarian Red Cross. For service to his country, Heike was conferred the Federal Cross of Merit with Ribbon in 1976.

Author's Preface

THIS WORK is of an historic nature, describing the military engagements of the Ukrainian Division during World War II.

It is an incontestable fact that the Ukrainian Division fought on the German side. Thus, in this memoir the reasons for its formation or for the side on which it fought are not addressed; this subject has been treated by various authors, and others are free to do so in the future. Nor will readers find any of my personal political convictions, or be confronted with an ideological polemic. Only my operational and tactical observations, strategic thinking, as well as the historical facts about various battles of this military formation, organized in the summer of 1943 in Galicia and active until its capitulation to the Western Allies on 8 May 1945, are the focus.

During World War II I was a professional soldier of the German infantry and an officer of the Ukrainian Division's general staff, not a politician. I have provided factual information about military engagements in chronological order, on the basis of my field diary entries, various maps preserved from the period, and my own recollections. The work was completed as early as in 1947, during my stay in an internment camp. I have tried, in this military-historical account, to present a portrait, similar to those produced in every country of the world, of a military unit worthy of respect and veneration.

One thing should be stressed at the outset for today's generation and those to come: in the 1943–45 period of the war the Ukrainian Division enlisted close to thirty-two thousand men. They fought with the Germans in good faith and for a cause they considered just; they battled, suffered, overcame, and were overcome. This was not the Division's fault. Its soldiers, no less than those on the other side, were fulfilling their duty. Alongside the peasants and workers stood older and distinguished veterans of World War

I, soldiers and officers from the Austro-Hungarian Army and the Ukrainian Galician Army (UHA), as well as scores of young men of the Western Ukrainian intelligentsia. They paid dearly in blood, a fact that the German people should never forget.

I wish to dedicate this book both to Ukrainians and to the German people, who owe the former a debt of gratitude. Regardless of our hard lot, we Germans should show sincere sympathy for the Ukrainian people, whom history so sorely tested in the past. I also dedicate it to my comrades in arms, as an addition to their general military history.

This work was written by a German who discovered and experienced the history and relations of the Ukrainian Division, the largest self-consciously Ukrainian military unit on the German side during World War II. I have taken the Division's part because I personally observed the results of the great errors of German policy, which also influenced the Ukrainian Division.

Let this work bring rightful recognition of the worthy deeds of Ukrainians who fought for true democracy, and let it serve as a testament to the courage and rectitude of soldiers who carried their swords honestly, to the end of the war, and put them down unstained.

WOLF-DIETRICH HEIKE

Editor's Note

ACCORDING TO George H. Stein's study of the Waffen (Armed) SS, at the end of World War II, of its thirty-eight divisions, nineteen were composed mainly of foreign recruits, numbering approximately 500,000 men. Eastern Europeans—Albanians, Belorussians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Croats, Estonians, Hungarians, Latvians, Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians, and ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe—made up the largest contingent.

This memoir gives an account of the military engagements of the Ukrainian Division. It was a Western Ukrainian division whose members were from Galicia, an area between Cracow and about 100 kilometers east of Lviv that had once been the westernmost part of Ukraine. From 1772 it had been an Austrian province, and from 1918 to 1939 it was under Poland. In July 1941 eastern Galicia was incorporated into the German-administered Generalgouvernement. The first contingent of recruits to the Division came mostly from eastern Galicia and Kholmshchyna. Later recruits came from all parts of Ukraine and included Soviet army personnel from the German prisoner-of-war camps.

The Division was at first named SS-Freiwilligen-Division "Galizien" (SS Volunteer Division "Galicia" or "Galician"). From June 1944 it was known as the 14. Freiwilligen-Grenadier-Division der SS (galizische Nr. 1) (14th Volunteer Grenadier Division of the SS, 1st Galician), and also as the 14. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS (galizische Nr. 1); then early in 1945 as ukrainische Nr. 1 (Ukrainian No. 1); and finally, toward the end of the war, as the 1. Ukrainische Division der Ukrainischen National-Armee (1st Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian National Army). For the sake of simplicity, it is referred to throughout this book as the "Ukrainian Division" or simply "the Division."

The staff of the Ukrainian Division consisted of the following departments: 1A, tactical assignments, military engagements, personal matters among officers; 1B, ammunitions supply, weaponry, transport; 1C, counter-intelligence, interrogation of prisoners, political control, censoring of correspondence; 2A and 2B, officer records, NCO records, and enlisted men's records; 3, court martial for criminal and political matters; 4A, uniforms, food supplies; 4B, sanitation and medical; 4C, veterinary; 4D, dental; 5, automotive and mechanical; 6, chaplains, religious affairs, press, theater, radio. Under the direct authority of the Division commander were the officer staff office, the field gendarmerie, and the field hospital.

The author wrote this monograph in 1947, while in a British internment camp, on the basis of notes made in his war diary, maps, and personal memory. The original title of the manuscript was *Sie wollten die Freiheit: Die Geschichte der Ukrainischen Division 1943–1945* (They Wanted Freedom: The History of the Ukrainian Division), published in German in 1973 under the same title. Fragments of the manuscript, such as the description of the Battle of Brody, were also published in the Ukrainian-language anthology *Brody* (Munich, 1951), and in *Visti* (News of the Brotherhood of Former Soldiers of the 1st Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian National Army).

The manuscript was first published in Ukrainian in 1970 under the title *Ukrainska dyviziia "Halychyna": Istoriia formuvannia i boiovykh dii u 1943–1945 rokakh* (The Ukrainian Division "Halychyna": A History of Its Formation and Military Actions, 1943–1945), edited by Dr Volodymyr Kubiiovych. The present English-language volume is based on this version. Most of the notes and appendices from the Ukrainian version have been retained and a more current bibliography added. The translation follows the modified Library of Congress system of transliteration and standard international and Ukrainian usage for place names.

The assistance of several individuals who contributed to the the publication of this memoir is gratefully acknowledged: Dr Myroslav Maleckyj, Lubomyr Szuch, and Oksana Smerechuk. Finally, Dr John Armstrong, the foremost authority on this period, was most gracious in reviewing the translation and in agreeing to provide an introduction to this volume.

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Introduction

THIS MEMOIR occupies a unique place in the historiography of the Ukrainian nationalist movement during World War II. Major Wolf-Dietrich Heike is one of a very few non-Ukrainians intimately and sympathetically involved with Ukrainians during that critical period. As chief of staff of the Ukrainian Division from January 1944 until its ultimate surrender to the British Army in May 1945, Heike was in an exceptionally favorable position to observe how a large group of Galician Ukrainians reacted to the approaching crisis on the Eastern front. He witnessed the immense devotion they demonstrated to the cause of Ukrainian nationhood.

Heike began his service with little knowledge of Ukrainian affairs. Throughout his sixteen months of contact he dealt mainly with rank-and-file Ukrainians rather than the leaders. Hence, one cannot anticipate revelations about the inner workings of the nationalist movement. Such information can be obtained, however, from other sources. Heike's memoir is especially valuable for the light it throws on the mentality of "ordinary" intellectuals, students, and peasants drawn into the cauldron of war in defense of their cause.

Major Heike was a Wehrmacht officer, experienced in combat on the Eastern front, rather than a member of the cadre of SS officials—discussed in more detail below—who were instrumental in organizing the Division. Hence Heike was an outsider in two senses—both to Ukrainians and to the Nazi fanatics who tried to utilize the Ukrainians for their own ends. To be sure, Heike was not entirely devoid of the prejudices concerning "peoples of the East" that affected most Germans of his generation. His remarks on the alleged "emotional leitmotif" of Ukrainian life, as a characteristic applying to all Slavs, may offend the latter and embarrass the foreign special-

ist. But a close reading of Heike's discussion of his interaction with flesh-and-blood Ukrainians demonstrates that his preconceptions arose not from condescension but from a sympathetic effort to come to grips with the special character of the people whom he found admirable.

His sincerity is demonstrated by his readiness to criticize German peculiarities still more sharply. Naturally, Heike found the Nazi regime mainly at fault. Yet he was careful to distinguish between men like the ruthless SS Reichsführer, Heinrich Himmler, whose approval was needed for constituting the Division but who regarded it as a dispensable instrument of German policy; Waffen SS officers like Fritz Arlt, intimately and sympathetically involved with the Division as a military formation; and the decisive role of officials like the governor of the Galician district of the Generalgouvernement, Dr Otto Wächter, whose ambiguous role will appear more clearly below. Moreover, Heike does not spare other Germans, including the Wehrmacht, in his critique of lost opportunities.

In discussing his experience with the Ukrainian Division, Major Heike treats a subject that has not received the attention it deserves in the overall story of wartime Ukraine. By far the dominant theme in this chapter of Ukrainian historiography has been, especially in recent years, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). It is easily understandable why the narrative of simultaneous guerrilla opposition to Communists and Nazis has become the dominant component in the World War II "heroic age" of Ukrainian nationalism. It is equally comprehensible why the record of clear-cut resistance to both totalitarian occupation regimes has been the principal theme in Ukrainian appeals to Western audiences. Yet the real history of the UPA, like the history of the Ukrainian Division, includes shadows as well as bursts of heroic light.

In any event, concern for the complete record demands that the historian devote equally meticulous scrutiny to an episode that may have presented more potential for military accomplishment than the guerilla activity. Justice, too, demands that the bravery of the Division soldiers, as devoted in a desperate situation as were the UPA fighters, should not be forgotten.

The initial formation of the Ukrainian Division is merely sketched by Major Heike, who did not join the Division until it had been in existence, formally, for eight months. Fortunately, the present volume contains a brief account of the Division's origins (Appendix A) by Dr Volodymyr Kubiiovych who, as the head of the Ukrainian community in the Generalgouvernement, was preeminently qualified to present the historical record. In addition, fairly abundant documentation in the German archives enables

the scholar to verify all major features of this initial period.

Initiatives for founding the Division arose in German as well as in Ukrainian quarters. Alfred Rosenberg, whom Hitler had nominally charged with supervising the occupied Soviet territories, in March 1943 approached the SS for assistance in constituting a Ukrainian national committee to support the German war effort—and simultaneously to counterbalance his Nazi rivals' tendency to rely on the Russian general Andrei Vlasov. At almost the same moment, Dr Kubiiovych addressed Hans Frank, the Generalgouverneur, with a suggestion that a major Ukrainian fighting force be constituted.

In practice, however, it was not Frank but his subordinate Otto Wächter, enjoying extraordinarily close contacts with Himmler, who brought the two initiatives together within the relatively narrow territorial framework of his own Galician gubernatorial district. This restriction, moreover, circumvented Hitler's fanatical refusal to admit that the Slavs generally, or Ukrainians in particular, were fit to bear arms. Consequently (although all understood that the recruits would be overwhelmingly if not exclusively Ukrainians), the new formation had to be named "SS Division Galicia," implying a limited territorial scope.

Clearly, the objectives of the Nazi leadership and of Ukrainians like Kubiiovych, who regarded collaboration as a bitterly regrettable but inescapable requirement for preserving the life of their community, were utterly opposed. Grasping this divergence, Major Heike clearly sympathized with the plight of the Ukrainian organizers. Indeed, he consistently berates even the German component of the Division (including all its command staff as well as most of the lower cadres) for failing to understand the political potential of the Division. This, he saw, was to be an instrument for enlisting Ukrainian national energies in the German fight against Soviet communism.

In a manner typical of German officers of his generation, however, Heike confuses this clear point by denying any "political" scope to his memoir. The reader can resolve the apparent contradiction by understanding that to Heike "political" refers to party or factional competition, whether German or Ukrainian, which the German military traditionally rejected. Yet he is deeply concerned with "political" in the sense of objectives transcending purely tactical or strategical military goals—a theme that, as Clausewitz's famous dictum implies, is unavoidable for military men collaborating with foreigners.

For Ukrainians, eagerness to form a substantial regular military force arose from a combination of traditional inclination and rational calculation. The Cossack motif permeating Ukrainian history impelled the contemporary generation to regard prowess in arms as a fundamental masculine

attribute as well as an essential defense mechanism in Ukraine's exposed position among powerful neighbors. The fresher memory of efforts to establish a Ukrainian state during the World War I period strongly reinforced traditional respect for armed force.

Heike repeatedly notes the significance in the Ukrainian Division of veterans of the independence struggle, culminating in the assumption of command by General Pavlo Shandruk. Such veterans constituted a living link to the first "heroic age" of twentieth-century Ukrainian nationalism, and as such were indispensable for morale. To be sure, all of these officers were too old to be effective at the company command level in combat. The experience of most was obsolete in terms of commanding at higher levels and for staff functions. Some, however, had supplemented their earlier wartime experience by serving in foreign armies, notably the army of the Polish state to which Western Ukraine formally belonged. The need for such an expedient to retain a minimal cadre of qualified military officers intensified Ukrainian eagerness to establish—at almost any cost—a major military formation of their own. Naturally, Ukrainians would have preferred an army under an independent state, or at least some body that might act as an incipient state.

Heike does not discuss this relationship between army and state because it lay outside his sphere of competence and, in any event, was not a realistic prospect. Nevertheless, from the moment that Rosenberg began exploring a coalition with the SS to offset the Vlasov alternative until the very end of the Nazi regime, labyrinthine negotiations for a "Ukrainian committee," either as a separate body or as an autonomous element of the "Russian Liberation Movement," were inextricably intertwined with the fate of the Division.

This is not the place even to sketch these complicated maneuvers. In considering the alignment of Ukrainian factions, however, one must constantly bear in mind that acceptance of the opportunity to constitute a Ukrainian military force was always linked to hope for eventually establishing a Ukrainian state apparatus. In the meantime, painful political sacrifices—a "Galician" instead of a "Ukrainian" Division; German cadres, down even to the non-commissioned officer level; and collaboration with the most despicable elements of the Nazi regime—went hand in hand with a readiness, in the immediate sense, to shed the blood of young Ukrainians for German objectives. In the thinking of Ukrainian leaders (which seems to have been endorsed by the rank-and-file) these sacrifices were justified by the long-term prospect of possessing a regular military force.

Today no doubt it is difficult to envisage how this long-term prospect attracted reflective Ukrainians—more difficult, even, than it was for those of

us shortly after the war, trying to comprehend Ukrainian calculations. In early 1943 many Ukrainians considered a stalemate on the Eastern front possible. In that case, the existence of a Ukrainian division would have enhanced their power to negotiate with the Germans. By 1944 virtually all Ukrainian leaders regarded German defeat, if not complete collapse, as probable. Their basic assumption then was that the wartime alliance between Stalin and the Anglo-Americans would not only disintegrate as soon as Nazi defeat was certain, but that armed Soviet–Western conflict would quickly follow. Such a conflict would end with destruction of the communist system. Its immediate effect, however, would be a highly unsettled condition in Eastern Europe, resembling the 1918–20 period. In such circumstances, even moderately strong local forces could be effective, both in altering the balance of power (especially among suppressed nations such as Ukrainians and Poles) and by providing protection for national communities. Ultimately (if acceptable to the triumphant Western Allies), such marginally effective regular military formations could bolster new state formations.

If such calculations had been peculiar to Ukrainians, one might tend to attribute them to the unrealistic romanticism that Heike thinks is a national characteristic. Poles, in their efforts to preserve the underground Home Army (Armija Krajowa) as a viable force and, to some extent, the commanders of the Slovak army mentioned below, shared these calculations. They, too, were Slavs, but a parallel from a remote war theater reinforces my impression that the calculations had little to do with "Slavic mentality." According to George McTurnan Kahin (*Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, 1952), leaders of the Indonesian liberation movement also reckoned with an unstable transition after the defeat of Japan. Then, these Third World rebels thought, relatively small local forces might be of pivotal importance. In their calculation, the vital objective was to prevent the return of Western colonialism (Netherlands officials backed by British troops) rather than invasion of Soviet armies. Just as Ukrainians, Poles, and Slovaks hoped for Western aid to offset renewed Soviet aggression, some Indonesian rebel leaders considered appealing for Soviet intervention to prevent the return of colonial occupation!

These remarkable "mirror image" calculations at opposite sides of the globe were reflected in the putative roles assigned officers of the defeated occupying powers. Just as German officers working with Eastern European national formations sought to utilize them as relatively "uncontaminated" bridges for approaching British and American forces, Japanese intelligence officers in touch with the Indonesian rebels viewed the latter's anti-colonial-

ism as a credential that might enable "repentent" Japanese imperialists to approach "anti-imperialist" Moscow.

All these schemes, mirror-image or not, turned out to be chimerical. Anglo-Americans were no more willing to run the risks or accept the sacrifices required for effective intervention in Eastern Europe than the Stalinist regime was prepared at that point in history to stake its existence on a world war originating in Southeast Asia. When one considers how close the world approached such all-out conflict in 1948 and 1950, it is hard to dismiss Ukrainian or Indonesian calculations (or their encouragement by desperate Axis officers) as mere dreams, however. War by miscalculation (as in Korea) is perhaps just as common for great powers as erroneous estimates on the *prospect* of major war is for lesser powers. On the uncertain terrain of prediction in international relations, the Ukrainian wager on the Ukrainian Division does not, therefore, appear to have been foolhardy.

Another factor suggests that Ukrainian calculations were not as farfetched as their ultimate failure superficially suggests. To form the Division, virtually all major Ukrainian political factions eventually accepted (at least tacitly) renewed collaboration with the Germans. As indicated earlier, the initiative on the Ukrainian side came from Dr Kubiiovych, chief of the Galician Ukrainian civil administration. For this task, Kubiiovych was impressively qualified by his complete command of German, his international reputation as a distinguished geographer, and his three years' experience in dealing with Generalgouvernement officials. Although he represented no Ukrainian party or faction, he commanded the respect of all—no mean accomplishment in that era of fratricidal strife. Above all (here I draw on my productive contacts with Dr Kubiiovych nine years later), he was a man of extraordinary *sang-froid* and keen judgement. Consequently, his reflections on the need for a Ukrainian military force (Appendix A) although largely independently made, acquired the support of nearly all other Ukrainian leaders.

By far the most important support came from the Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church. Bishop Joseph Slipy (much later Cardinal Slipy) publicly endorsed formation of the Division. It appears that Metropolitan Andrii Sheptytsky, the most revered Ukrainian, did so privately. With their encouragement, Dr Vasyl Laba became chief chaplain of the Division.

The prime requirement for support by the Ukrainian Catholic Church was that its priests function throughout the Division, both to insure spiritual and moral counsel for the young recruits and to negate any attempts at Nazi indoctrination. From the latter standpoint, at least, ecclesiastical efforts were entirely successful. Not only was the Ukrainian Division the only

SS-sponsored formation of Eastern Europeans including Christian chaplains; direct Nazi propaganda was virtually excluded. In return, the Church accepted the argument that a national military formation was essential for long-run Ukrainian interests, and encouraged volunteers to join. Church support was also instrumental in facilitating the enlistment of older officers belonging to certain prewar Galician parties like the Ukrainian National Democratic Union (UNDO).

Obtaining the support of the Melnyk faction (OUN-M) of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists was simpler. When Kubiiovych initiated his proposal, OUN-M guerrilla units in Volhynia were still opposing the German occupation authorities. Under pressure from Soviet partisans and rival nationalist guerrillas (the OUN-Bandera forces), however, Melnyk adherents rapidly lost ground. By the time recruitment for the Division was well under way their main remaining guerrilla force (the "Khrin" unit, later the "Volhynian Self-Defense Legion") agreed to enter German service. Subsequently, as Major Heike relates, the Volhynian Legion resisted, by unfortunate armed clashes, incorporation into the Ukrainian Division.

In mid-1943, however, OUN-M cooperation in recruiting for the Division was entirely in line with that faction's tactics. Indeed, the Melnyk faction probably had independently arrived at the conclusion that a regular military formation was indispensable. Melnyk was close to the Catholic Church, and his followers had long cooperated with Kubiiovych. As a high officer in the Galician Ukrainian forces of 1918–20, Melnyk appreciated the significance of regular military formations; indeed, he preferred to run his political organization along military lines. Finally, as described above, developments in Volhynia had left the OUN-M with few alternatives to renewed collaboration.

The position of the OUN-B is more ambiguous. Unquestionably, Bandera's followers initially rejected active collaboration in recruiting for the Division. Underground propaganda by the OUN-B in Galicia and Volhynia (including leaflets issued by the UPA, which by mid-1943 had been taken over by Banderists) denounced the German-sponsored military formation. Instead, the "new" UPA continued to urge armed struggle against the Nazis and the Soviets. Some underground publications repeated such appeals as late as mid-1944. Yet it is hard to conceive how recruitment could have proceeded so vigorously in eastern Galicia if the OUN-B, the most powerful political force among Ukrainian youth there, had opposed the Division as strongly as the underground propaganda implied. Major Heike throws some light on this issue when he recounts how Division soldiers who visited UPA units were allowed to return to their unit. Personal testimony and published memoirs by some Division veterans who unquestionably had close

contacts with the OUN-B assert that they had been secretly ordered by the Banderist commander of the UPA, Roman Shukhevych, to volunteer for the Division. Shukhevych hoped to use the volunteers, after they had been trained in warfare, in his guerrillas.

It appears, therefore, that down to the summer of 1944 (when the Division entered its catastrophic battle at Brody and the Soviet army invaded Galicia), the OUN-B at least avoided vigorously opposing the Division's formation. Subsequently, Bandera's adherents actively supported the reconstruction of the Division.

Ultimately, then, the OUN-B was in essential agreement with Kubiiovych, the Church, and the OUN-M that a regular military formation was essential for the Ukrainian future.

The surprising unanimity of Ukrainian nationalist views on forming the Division was not matched on the German side. When the initial steps were taken, in early 1943, probably all agreed that the overriding purpose was to assist in German victory. Even then, though, top SS leaders around Himmler envisaged the Ukrainian formation as a mere tactical instrument, to be discarded as soon as urgent military requirements were satisfied. Promises that Division soldiers would be treated just like Germans were to be kept only so long as the fundamental Nazi program for making all Slavs into helots had to be postponed. The superficially generous concession for Catholic chaplains was secretly negated by a high-level SS report (referring to Dr Laba's unwelcome sermons) to Himmler that "we will soon pull this tooth." In his last days Himmler may have envisaged alleging his support of liberation for Ukrainians and other Eastern Europeans as an alibi when approaching the Western Allies, but this was a transparent fantasy rather than Machiavellian scheming.

The role of intermediate SS officers like Dr Wächter is more puzzling. As a case study in the ambivalence of evil, his career might be worth exploring in depth. A member of Himmler's inner circle, Wächter apparently had no objection to supping regularly with the devil. As governor of Galicia, Wächter could hardly escape major responsibility for the murder of many thousands of Jews, Poles, and other nationalities in that densely settled area. Yet he appears to have tried to deal reasonably with Ukrainians, and may not have shared the ruthlessly treacherous aims of his superiors. Like Wehrmacht officers who had close contact with the nationality situation in Eastern Europe, Wächter may have realized by early 1943 that Germany had no alternative to sincere accommodation with some of the larger nationalities. Thus, while ostensibly observing Hitler's injunction against accepting Slavic military formations, Wächter took pride in developing the Division, which he well knew was really a nationalist Ukrainian unit.

Major Heike plausibly recounts how, in April 1945, as the defeat of Nazi Germany became a certainty, Wächter (long since driven from his gubernatorial post by the Soviet advance) kept in close touch with the Division. He developed a concrete plan for transferring the Division to northern Italy—even the Alpine route was laid out. There (a far less likely prospect) the Division was to be attached to General Władysław Anders' Polish army fighting alongside the British. If this failed, Wächter retained sufficient caution to add, at least surrender to the British could be arranged.

In the confused circumstances of May 1945 the Alpine route turned out to be impracticable for a large formation. But at the last moment Wächter slipped over the mountains. Evidently, he had Italian contacts who enabled him to hide in a monastery during the two years of life remaining to him.

Probably the Ukrainians of the Division were better off without such an unsavory sponsor when the moment for surrender to the British in Austria actually arrived. It does not appear that the Wehrmacht cadre, like Heike, played a significant role in this surrender, or profited from it, for they were quickly segregated from Ukrainian prisoners of war. In this respect the initial situation of the defeated Ukrainian soldiers differed from that of the Vlasov forces, which remained under the guidance of Wehrmacht Abwehr officers like Wilfried Strik-Strikfeldt, down to the final surrender to the Western Allies. Conversely, the great majority of the Galician troops, as prewar citizens of Poland, were retained in Western captivity, whereas most Vlasovites—Russian and Ukrainian—were repatriated to the inferno of Stalin's concentration camps.

I have discussed at length the political implications of the Ukrainian Division's formation and subsequent history because, although he throws much light on these complex problems, Major Heike was not prepared to analyze them. Even the superficial reader will note that his treatment of matters verging on the political tends to be hesitant and repetitious. Conversely, Heike's narrative of military operations exhibits the terse mastery of an expert staff officer. It would be presumptuous for me, therefore, to try to analyze and criticize those central portions of his memoir. All I can do is to appreciate his vivid portrayal of the Ukrainian Division's combat operations, to note the significant ways in which Heike's account fills gaps in our knowledge of the Division's activities and, occasionally, to suggest the political significance of its operations.

Heike's contribution is especially valuable because, in contrast to records of most German divisions employed on the Eastern front, the file of SS Division Galicia is missing from the original archives (now restored to the German Federal Republic) and from the microfilm copy in the United States

National Archives. As indicated above, these records contain ample documentation on the formation of the Division. There are also numerous memoir accounts by Ukrainian veterans.

Apart from Heike, however, no one has written a comprehensive memoir history of the Division's operations, and it is unlikely that any Ukrainian was in a position to do so. Consequently, Heike's account will remain the framework for orienting and evaluating other important but fragmentary military memoirs.

Heike's discussion of the decision to commit the Division to action in July 1944 at Brody makes it fairly certain that there was nothing sinister in that German decision. By that juncture, the position of the German "Nordukraine" Army Group from Warsaw to Podillia was truly desperate. Lviv—the immediate Soviet objective—was critical for German defense tactics and symbolically significant as the center of the Galician Ukrainian homeland. Hence, despite their inexperience, Ukrainian troops were eager to participate in defense of this sector.

The initial German plans for gradually introducing the Ukrainian Division as a unit into combat were disrupted by a Soviet encirclement movement which cut off the Division, along with several German divisions. In such unforeseen conditions, military necessity led to the Division being thrown piecemeal into combat. Despite brave and relatively effective resistance, a large portion of the troops were killed or captured. Many escaping from encirclement as individuals or in small groups joined UPA units. A substantial but greatly reduced nucleus (three thousand of the original eleven thousand soldiers) eventually broke through the Soviet encirclement and retreated into the Podillian upland.

The skeleton outline of the Brody tragedy cannot do justice either to Heike's three restrained but dramatic chapters on the subject, or to the numerous instances of heroism he recounts. A summary is necessary, however, to stress the major political conclusion that emerges from this episode: despite its frightful losses, a nucleus of the Division was still in existence in August 1944. Numerically shrunken though it was, the formation retained its significance as a military force hardened by battle, and enhanced in the eyes of German observers by its stubborn heroism in escaping annihilation. It was not necessary—as some scholars have assumed—to start over again in creating the Division. Moreover, SS headquarters was at last induced to concede to its soldiers the most important national symbols, such as the altered name of the Division.

Unfortunately, the SS connection soon manifested itself in a more sinister way. After filling its depleted ranks with new recruits and retraining, the

Division apparently anticipated renewed battle with Soviet forces early in 1945. In October 1944, however, SS headquarters ordered its transfer to Slovakia to suppress the rebellion of the major portion of the Slovak Republic's army. Heike seems to regard this rebellion as a communist plot, and its suppression, therefore, as a routine operation of the war against Moscow.

In reality, the situation was far more complicated than Heike recognizes. The Slovak Republic came into existence as a result of Hitler's destruction, in 1939, of the Czechoslovak state. Although Slovak independence was a genuine goal for much of the population, fanatical elements headed by the party of Andrej Hlinka soon dominated politically, vying with the Nazis in outrages against Jews and other minorities. As the prospects of German victory declined during 1944, top officers in the Slovak army plotted an eventual rebellion to disengage their nation from its Nazi associations. In the autumn of 1944 they felt obliged to act prematurely for fear that the country would slip under control of Soviet-backed partisans, directed from Kiev by the Czechoslovak Communist Party leader, Rudolf Slansky.

The Slovak military rebellion, therefore, was hardly controlled by Moscow. Instead, it represented a desperate effort (like the Warsaw uprising of the Home Army a few months earlier) to preempt efforts at liberation from the Nazis, thereby thwarting Soviet-backed communist efforts to dominate the country. In these circumstances, participation of the Division in suppressing the officers' rebellion, objectively regarded, is hardly a glorious page in the Division's annals. Subjectively, as Heike's remarks suggest, neither Wehrmacht nor Ukrainian officers were able to fathom the complexities of the situation. Hence they followed orders to put down the uprising. Apparently, their operation was carried out with maximal concern for the well-being of the fraternal Slav population of Slovakia. Even the treatment of captured Slovak military components (like that of Warsaw resistants) was lenient by Nazi standards. A detailed investigation of available German military records for Slovakia during late 1944 might do much to amplify Major Heike's description, along the lines just suggested, of the Division's operations in Slovakia. Unfortunately, specialists on the USSR and Eastern Europe, like the present writer, have never undertaken an in-depth study of these materials.

The Division remained in Slovakia from mid-October 1944 until mid-January 1945. Then it was transferred by arduous marches to the mixed nationality area of southern Austria and northern Slovenia (a part of Yugoslavia then occupied by the Germans). The Division remained in this area until the end of the war, when it retreated farther into Austria to surrender to the

British. Most combat activity, especially during the final weeks, was with regular Soviet troops advancing through Hungary toward southeast Austria. In other words, although now far distant from its primary defensive objective, the Ukrainian homeland, the Division was carrying out its mission (from the Ukrainian standpoint) by engaging Soviet armies and acquiring more experience and cohesion as a regular military formation. As usual, Major Heike delineates these operations skillfully and graphically. Barring detailed investigation of German documents for this region—still another specialized subject not fully explored by scholars—his chapters on the "Styrian" campaign are likely to remain the principal source of our knowledge of the Division's activities during the last four months of World War II.

As just indicated, operations against Soviet forces constitute a relatively uncomplicated subject from the political point of view. The initial operations of the Division, however, plus at least sporadic subsequent activities, were directed against anti-German guerrillas. These were Slavs fighting to evict an occupation force; hence suppression operations superficially resemble those directed against the Slovak army rebellion.

In Slovenia, however, whereas rank-and-file guerrillas consisted of Slovenes motivated at least partly by nationalist resentment of Nazi intentions (which included direct annexation to the Grossdeutsches Reich), complete control was exercised by Tito's communist partisan cadres. Consequently, Ukrainian soldiers were combating a real surrogate of their principal enemy, the Soviet regime. In fact, in his intention of annexing German-language areas around Klagenfurt (as well as Italian-speaking Trieste) Tito at that point outdid Stalin in intransigence. Tito's partisans engaged in a race with British forces moving up from Italy to occupy the coveted non-Slavic territories. Tito was prepared (at the risk of precipitating World War III) to fight the British to gain his objectives.

Quite possibly British irritation at this audacity explains why, as Heike recounts it, the British military commander in Klagenfurt instructed the Ukrainian liaison officer arranging surrender to muster the Division at a point where the British knew they might come into conflict with Tito's partisans. In the final analysis, therefore, the Division's conflict with the Yugoslav guerrillas may have eased its final move into Western Allied detention.

As the incident just recounted suggests, Major Heike's memoir illuminates numerous aspects of Ukrainian wartime experience, some remote from his main themes, many more significant perhaps than he himself realized. That is what any good memoir should do. Heike is obviously a man of action, more at home in the field or in business than at the historian's desk.

Only a man of that type, deeply immersed in a complex human experience, could have provided the account, at once vivid and deeply sensitive, which he provides. Confronted by such a document, the scholar's duty is to tidy up peripheral matters and to provide a broader perspective, while saluting the gripping narration and the heroic deeds it recounts.

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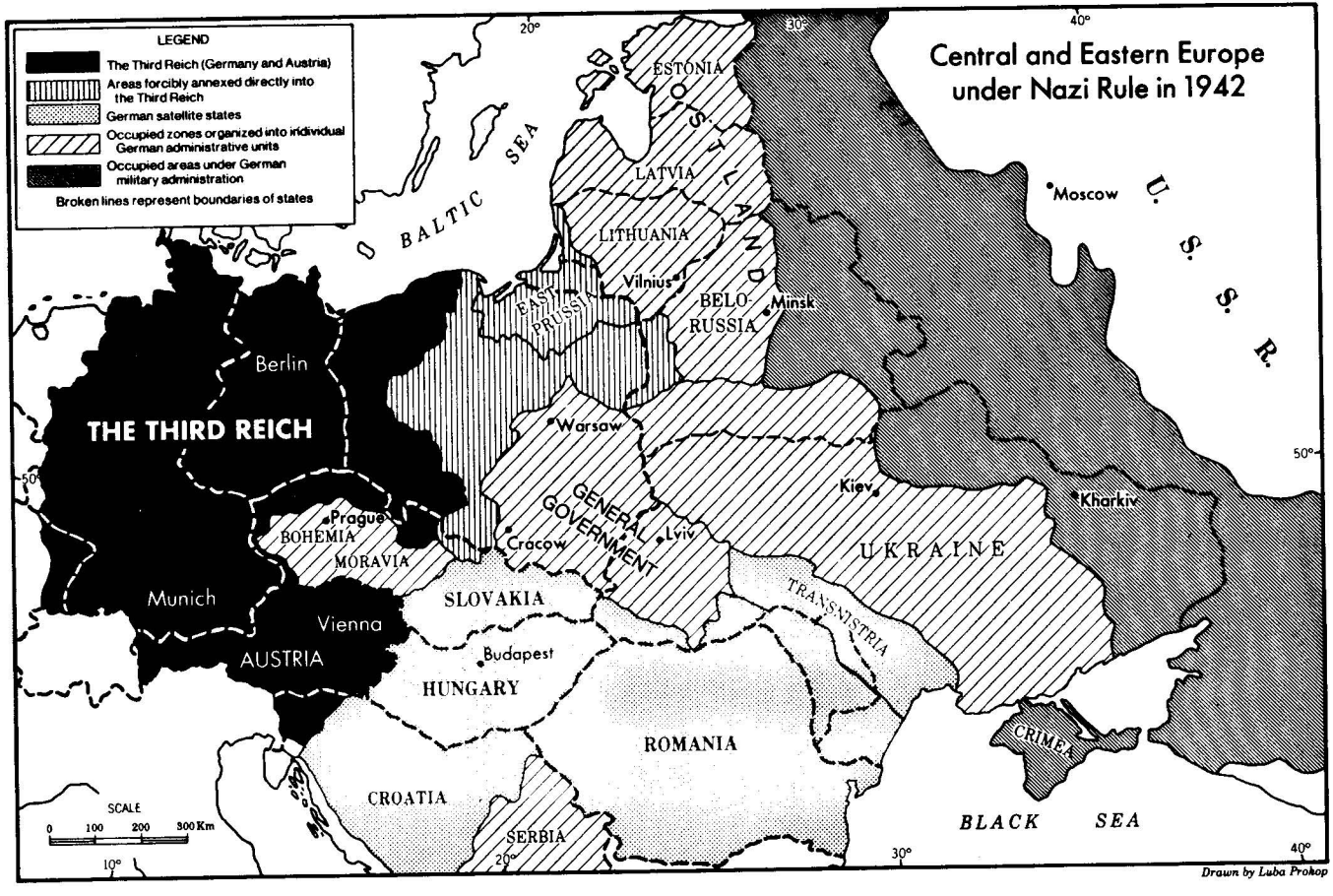
Central and Eastern Europe under Nazi Rule in 1942
LEGEND
The Third Reich (Germany and Austria)
Areas forcibly annexed directly into the Third Reich
German satellite states
Occupied zones organized into iridividual German administrative units
Occupied areas under German military administration
Broken lines represent boundaries of states
BALTIC SEA
ESTONIA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
Vilnius
Minsk
BELO-RUSSIA
EAST PRUSSIA
Moscow
U.S.S.R.
Berlin
THE THIRD REICH
Warsaw
GENERAL GOVERNMENT
Kiev
Kharkiv
UKRAINE
Prague
BOHEMIA
MORAVIA
Cracow
Lviv
Munich
Vienna
AUSTRIA
SLOVAKIA
TRANSNISTRIA
Budapest
HUNGARY
ROMANIA
CRIMEA
CROATIA
SERBIA
BLACK SEA
SCALE
0 100 200 300 Km
10°
20°
30°
40°
50°
Drawn by Luba Prokop

The Ukrainian Division 'Galicia', 1943-45: A Memoir

1 Formation and Training

In early 1943, after the defeat of the German armies on the Eastern front, Germans forgot their earlier vow: "The Eastern problem can be and will only be solved by the shedding of German blood." They began to recruit the peoples of Eastern Europe to do battle with bolshevism, and to organize these recruits into individual Waffen SS units.

After the formation of one Estonian and two Latvian divisions, it was the turn of Ukrainians in Galicia. The initiator of this idea was the governor of Galicia, Dr Otto Wächter, who, through the organization of such a division, sought to "play the Ukrainian card" by involving Ukrainians in a close partnership with the Germans.[1] This began when the catastrophe of Stalingrad had already occurred and when Soviet troops had returned to Ukrainian soil. In those failures of German forces on the Eastern front, Wächter saw an opportunity to change German policy toward Ukraine, if Ukrainians were willing to take up arms against communism on the German side. And so the success in battle of such a formation would demand from the Germans political concessions.

Perhaps Wächter's plan and his efforts bordered on utopianism. All previous attempts to form a Ukrainian military formation had failed in the face of staunch opposition from the government of the German Reich. A number of unqualified "politicians" continually meddled in the German *Ostpolitik*: the minister of foreign affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop; the minister for the occupied eastern territories, Alfred Rosenberg; the Reichskomissar of Ukraine, Erich Koch,[2] notorious for his brutality; his close friend and Hitler's private secretary, Martin Bormann; and (in the beginning) the Reichsführer of the SS, Heinrich Himmler,[3] whose influence on the politics of Eastern Europe was growing steadily stronger.

The success or failure of Wächter's plan depended on the cooperation of

both sides. Having encountered the insane policies of Reichskomissar Koch, Ukrainians viewed Wächter's plans with understandable suspicion. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) was already active in Volhynia, avoiding confrontations with German military units but concentrating on attacking German administrative and police stations.

After assessing potential advantages and disadvantages, and weighing alternatives, Wächter finally outlined a plan for forming a single volunteer Ukrainian division as a nucleus around which other divisions would be organized. He was convinced that tens of thousands of Ukrainians would volunteer. The size of the unit would be dictated by the availability of German personnel for the positions not filled by Ukrainian officers and NCOs, and by the ability of the German military supply system to arm such a unit. The setbacks on all fronts made it obvious that shortages of manpower, armaments, and matériel would constitute a limiting factor.

Ultimately, Wächter went to the top German political authorities with his research carefully prepared in support of his proposals. After lengthy negotiations, he was authorized to begin the formation of one volunteer SS division, to be named "Galicia."

Himmler explicitly ordered, however, that the formation of the Division required suppression of the slightest mention of Ukrainian independence. The words "Ukraine," "Ukrainian" (noun), and "Ukrainian" (adjective) were strictly forbidden, under pain of punishment. The soldiers of the Division were to be known not as Ukrainians, but as Galicians.

Despite these restrictions Wächter felt he had achieved his objective. His initiative was supported by Professor Volodymyr Kubiiovych, head of the Ukrainian Central Committee (UCC), the only legal institution representing the interests of Ukrainians in the Generalgouvernement. On 28 April 1943, the day of the official announcement of the creation of the "Galicia" Division by Governor Wächter, Kubiiovych issued a call to Ukrainian citizens to enlist in its ranks.

Prior to the Division's formation, the Military Commission (MC) was established to oversee matters involving Ukrainian military units. It was headed by the calm, even-tempered Colonel Alfred Bisanz,[4] a former officer of the Austrian Army and the Ukrainian Galician Army (UHA) (an element in the struggle for Ukrainian independence during 1918–20), who enjoyed the confidence of the Ukrainians. His assistants and political advisers were former Ukrainian officers.

In theory, the MC was also to have acted as liaison between Ukrainian military units and the Ukrainian population. In practice, however, the Ger-

mans turned it into a committee that merely assisted with recruitment and provided aid to soldiers and their families.

The MC had hardly any authority but numerous duties. Its many propositions and suggestions about the Division were largely ignored by the Germans, and even if acknowledged, they were not acted upon. This was due not to the incompetence of the MC but to the German authorities' unswervingly negative attitude toward it. However, from the start of its existence, the MC cooperated closely with the UCC and the Division.

The drive for recruits by the central recruiting office in Lviv and branch offices in the larger towns of Galicia began as soon as the creation of the Division was announced. Difficulties arose with the creation of the Division right from the start, however, because of the Germans' lack of preparation. No appropriate place or officer staff was available to train the recruits. Not until 18 July 1943 did the first groups of volunteers leave Lviv for various training camps, beginning with the "Heidelager" (Pustkow) camp near Dębica (Dembitz; Dembitsa), located between Cracow and Lviv. Here the German personnel of a reserve battalion began training with the Ukrainian recruits.

To accommodate the flood of volunteers, some were pressed into so-called "police regiments," numbered from four to eight. After numerous petitions and persistent correspondence, these regiments were included in the Division, although some not until the summer of 1944. Many volunteers who were not immediately accepted into the Division were greatly upset. They did not want to serve in the regiments of the Ordnungspolizei because they had volunteered for the Ukrainian Division. In addition, the Germans wanted to send some of these regiments to the Western front. Soldiers who underwent training in southern France submitted petitions warning of the dangers of keeping them in the West, in contravention to earlier German assurances that the Division would not be sent to fight against the Western Allies and would only be used against the Bolsheviks. There was even a mutiny in a regiment that the Germans were trying to keep in France.

There were other occasions when the Germans failed to keep their word. Instead of uniting all Ukrainians into one frontline unit and leading them into battle against bolshevism, as had been promised, the Germans divided the volunteers into many detachments. That these detachments were partly used against communist partisans did not alter that fact. Caught in the German intra-political power struggle, the volunteers felt offended by such treatment and their initial enthusiasm faded away.

Training did not begin in earnest until the appointment of SS Oberführer

Fritz Freitag as division commander and his arrival at "Heidelager" toward the end of 1943.

General Freitag, a former officer of the Schutzpolizei (security police), had been the commander of a regiment in the only frontline police division in the entire German Armed Forces (4. SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier Division). His technical knowledge, complemented by his experience at the front, was slightly above that of his German peers. According to the former commander of the police division, who later became chief of the Ordnungspolizei, Freitag led his regiment well.[5]

Freitag, however, was driven by an almost pathological ambition to succeed, often manifested by excessive discipline toward his subordinates. Freitag strove for advancement to the highest posts, and coveted recognition and awards. He was suspicious of most people and made life unpleasant not only for his colleagues but also for himself. Freitag's psyche and approach to people were too inflexible. This became more evident with the difficulties involved in commanding a non-German division. He was a theoretician who wanted to command a military unit from behind his desk. Moreover, he was often unaware of the true condition of his unit; thus many of his orders, though well-intentioned, could not be carried out.

When his orders were not complied with, Freitag would react with characteristic severity. His fellow officers recognized these inappropriate methods of leadership and did what they could to mitigate the situation. Many misunderstandings and unpleasant confrontations might have been tempered or even avoided completely by a different approach.

On the whole, Freitag was a diligent and consistent man, knowledgeable about military tactics and their application in battle. Freitag issued orders and commands calmly. He preferred to work according to precise methods that he believed valid. He unswervingly applied the methods he had learned to the task at hand. Occasionally, however, he was overzealous, for instance, when he attempted to force the ideas of National Socialism on those around him.

Everything that Freitag considered necessary for the Ukrainian Division he carried out with vigor and consistency, but without special consideration or adjustment and with a rigid adherence to the rules and regulations he had learned. It must be acknowledged, however, that he demanded complete honesty and dignity from his officer corps. He often dealt with violations with draconian severity. For the smallest offense he would court martial anyone. This he did even to his adjutant and closest colleague. Unfortunately, the inferior caliber of the German officers with which the Divi-

sion was saddled produced many occasions when Freitag was led to treat Germans more harshly than Ukrainians.

Freitag was inclined to a pathological distrust of people, particularly those with whom he worked most closely. The following incident suggests the effects of such distrust: I once hinted to Freitag that his attitude to the Division was not quite appropriate; Freitag then promptly fell ill and, after lying in bed for a few days, tendered his resignation as the commander of the Division. Only after the repeated pleas of his colleagues did he finally withdraw it. Whoever fell out of favor with Freitag stood little chance of again gaining his confidence. Frequent changing of his personal doctor is perhaps another case in point.

Freitag was preoccupied with the Division day and night. His hopes of achieving personal honors through the successes of the Division only showed his egotism. However, he lacked the requisite inspiration, breadth of view, and talent. In the final analysis, he was a petty, though diligent, bureaucrat who made life unpleasant for all those around him.

Freitag spoke often of the political significance of the Division. In practical terms, he neither developed any ideas nor tried to realize the political potential of his unit. He could not understand the psychology of Ukrainians and attempted to force upon them "the Prussian spirit." This was the most important reason why he never developed amicable relations with either the Ukrainians of the Division or with his closest German colleagues. In addition to his difficult personality, Freitag had a heart ailment, probably caused by his frequent changes in mood.

Freitag was respected for his military knowledge, his diligence, and his good intentions. However, as a person, he was not accepted among either the Ukrainian or the German cadres of the Division. One of the greatest tragedies of the Division was the appointment of such a man as its commander. Freitag's main accomplishment was that he molded the Division into a military unit capable of responding promptly and efficiently to orders and brought it to battle readiness. The honor of both the Ukrainian and German officers was maintained, and this was also due to Freitag.

His nature was best reflected in the manner of his death. Immediately following the general German surrender, heedless of his duties to the Division or his responsibility to his wife and children, he committed suicide. At the time of the German surrender his duties as the commander of the Ukrainian Division were far from over, since the unit needed a strong-willed leader at the time.

In lengthy briefing sessions Governor Wächter attempted to explain to Freitag the unique situation leading to the creation of the Division and its

special political significance. Of prime importance to the long-term goals of the Division was success in battle; the greater the success, the greater the political leverage Ukrainians would have in dealing with the Germans. Bearing this aim of the Division in mind, one can appreciate the sensitivity, understanding, and vision required to form it, and how carefully its deployment at the front had to be considered. The objectives of the Ukrainian Division were greater than those of any regular German army division; and these long-range goals could be attained only if all responsible authorities were aware of its significance. Governor Wächter tirelessly and exhaustively drew attention to this role of the Division in various meetings in Lviv and at the training facility in Dębica. Colonel Bisanz joined the operation with characteristic energy and, fortunately, Captain Dmytro Paliiv was equally enthusiastic.

Captain Paliiv, a former officer of the "Sich" Legion of Ukrainian Riflemen and the UHA, had also been a journalist and served as a member of the Polish Parliament in 1928–30. He was recommended by Professor Kubiiovych, head of the UCC, to be the political adviser to the Division commander. Paliiv served as the unofficial liaison between the Division, the UCC, and the MC. He also looked after the interests of Ukrainians in the Division. Considering Freitag's personality, Paliiv managed to carry out his duties with impressive skill and tact. He gave himself body and soul to the realization of the Ukrainian goals of the Division. This led to a considerable number of conflicts with Freitag. The Ukrainians of the Division have much to be grateful to Paliiv for his efforts.

However, the fate of the Division was in the hands of German military and political circles for whom the Ukrainian Division had no more significance than any other regular German division. They either ignored its political significance or gave no indication they were aware of it. Only this lack of interest can explain the poor quality of the officers and NCOs provided by the inspectorates of headquarters (SS-Führungshauptamt Corps).[6] For the most part, the cadres sent to the Division consisted of personnel rejected by other formations. Although considered adequate for the Ukrainian Division, they proved to be quite inadequate for a formation of this type. These inspectorates were more concerned with the quantity than the quality of personnel assigned to the Division. The most harm was done by the infantry inspectorate, which provided personnel not only in inadequate numbers but also with poor qualifications. On the other hand, the good will of the artillery inspectorate was commendable.

It was a great error to assign German officers and NCOs who never understood the Ukrainian psyche. This produced an unbridgeable gap between

Ukrainians and Germans. This gap was widened by Freitag's inability to address the issue. Conversely, the MC made every effort to attract the best recruits. By and large it was successful, despite time-consuming and sometimes futile attempts to get recruits (particularly from the upper classes) for the Division.[7] The shortage of medical personnel was also a persistent concern; there were few Ukrainian doctors in Galicia and they avoided military service, preferring to remain in private practice.

In November 1943, at the start of its formation and training, the Division consisted of about six thousand volunteers. New recruits arrived continuously. The staff of the reserve battalion at "Heidelager" was transferred to the Division and began training. The reserve battalion was disbanded. Unfortunately, many of these Germans proved to be unqualified and had to be sent back to German units.

Virtually all the Ukrainian soldiers were volunteers. Most of them were from Western Ukraine, with only a few from other parts of Ukraine. Most of the recruits were raw material, with no military training and little by way of a soldierly disposition. However, they all showed a willingness to become soldiers. They ranged in age from sixteen to seventy, with ninety percent between the ages of eighteen and thirty.

A majority of the Ukrainian officers had served with the former Austro-Hungarian Army and then with the UHA. Others had served in the Russian Imperial Army and then in the army of the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR). Fewer still had been in the Polish or Soviet armies. The latter were young, energetic, and schooled in modern warfare.

In contrast, the former Austrian officers were not suited to command frontline units according to their former rank (mostly lieutenants and captains) because of their age (forty-five to fifty-five) and poor physical condition. Several had proved excellent soldiers during World War I and had been decorated for valor. Some had not achieved success in civilian life and hoped to find a haven in the Division. They often had a high opinion of themselves as military men, despite the wholesale changes in methods of warfare since their service in World War I. Many of them tried, often in vain, to adapt to the new circumstances.

However—and this should be emphasized—there was a great degree of enthusiasm among the officers. This enthusiasm was sometimes manifested in a penchant for heated discussion rather than for planning and intensive work; with others, there was a definite lack of responsibility toward their subordinates.

My criticisms of the older officers may seem harsh, but one should bear

in mind the difficult conditions surrounding the formation of the Division. This harsh appraisal also reflects the high standards of the German Army. It should be further noted that the Ukrainian officer lagged behind his German counterpart in barrack drills as well as in military bearing and appearance. He did not particularly like barracks duties, and thus his positive qualities or lack thereof stood out in maneuvers or on the battle field. Therefore, one cannot judge an officer simply on the basis of his bearing and appearance during training, and by "Prussian standards of discipline," it is easy to stereotype an officer's capabilities in a way he does not deserve. Ukrainians are particularly sensitive to unfair treatment.

Among the older Ukrainian officers, of course, there were also men of exemplary discipline and deep sense of duty. An example was Major Ievhen Pobihushchy, a professional officer of the Polish Army, who rendered the Division innumerable services in the first days of its formation. My assessment of Ukrainian officers from the 1917–20 period should not, furthermore, be taken as a general characterization of Ukrainian officers. Some of the highly qualified men were not released from their employment by the German authorities, while others refused to serve with the Division for political reasons.

There were hardly any Ukrainian NCOs in the Division. Those who had served with the Polish or Soviet armies had modern training, but the majority (former World War I NCOs) were no longer suitable for service at the front because of their age. However, they were useful in the supply service. In general, their profile was very similar to that of the officer corps. Thus, by and large, the NCO corps had to be trained from scratch.

As a general characteristic of Ukrainian enlisted men one can say the following: the Ukrainian perception is decidedly idealistic and is mostly apparent in practical circumstances. The Ukrainian tends not to see the reality he faces but rather "his" reality, greatly influenced by his wishful thinking. He frequently bases his actions on such an imaginary conception. The Ukrainian's pure individualism, as opposed to the character of Russians, impels him toward the West. His individualism is clearly indicated by his attitude to social order. He rejects collective life, which demands severe discipline and unremitting obedience. This could explain the difficulties Ukrainians had in forming their own strong armed forces and in establishing a strong military tradition.

Among Ukrainians emotion overshadows reason. Not reason, but emotions that well up from the depths of the soul constitute the leitmotif of the Ukrainian's life. This characteristic seems to apply to all Slavs. Among the Slavs, the Ukrainian seems preeminently capable of raising himself to the

heights of enthusiasm, only to fall, after the first indications of failure, to the depths of apathy and disillusionment. He is capable of deep love but also, conversely, of incredible hatred.

The preeminence of emotions and the leading role of love are rooted in the deep religiosity of Ukrainians. All of the basic spiritual and material elements of the life of the nation are closely tied to the land, to mother earth. She is the foundation on which the Ukrainian builds his world view. The personality of the Ukrainian is temperate and hospitable. He is judicious and reserved. He views himself with a good measure of humor and self-critical irony.

Through these characteristics the Ukrainian frequently tries to avoid life's tribulations. He is unwilling to pass on bad news and is loath to refuse a request for his assistance. If he cannot help, then he at least offers the distressed his consoling words, sometimes twisting the facts in such a way that the Germans consider it lying though Ukrainians do not. For example, a soldier reports unwillingly that a bridge has been blown up, because these are unhappy tidings. He is predisposed to take a "roundabout route," a tendency that has probably been occasioned by centuries of oppression, when only by such means could he gain something.

The Ukrainian looks at life from an aesthetic and emotional point of view. Thanks to the clement climatic conditions of his country, which made tilling the soil fairly easy, he developed a certain indolence that is, however, definitely not laziness. On the other hand, his tragic historical past, and the sad state of present-day affairs, have made him distrustful and reserved. Despite his traditional hospitality, the Ukrainian is not inclined to make fast friendships. He is not easily approachable; in personal relationships he is restrained rather than outgoing.

Such general characteristics are readily apparent to anyone who has worked closely with Ukrainians. These qualities were unknown to most Germans, who considered Ukrainians to be the same as themselves. If any misunderstandings arose because of these psychological differences, Germans invariably assigned the blame to the Ukrainians instead of examining their own conduct. Such misunderstandings, which arose out of inadequate knowledge or ignorance of the psyche of other peoples, are woven like a red thread through the chapters of this book.

A vast majority of the young Ukrainians of the Division were not prepared for the severe discipline of military life. Lacking an inclination toward the military way of life, they adapted with great difficulty to the role of a soldier. The Ukrainians needed a great deal of understanding and compassion, a forgiving approach, and a gentle word from their German

instructors whom they trusted wholeheartedly. Thus, the Division in its early days looked more like a teeming assembly than a disciplined military unit. Those who understood its background were not surprised; the Division needed time.

Food supplies were another problem that plagued the Division. Ukrainians were used to eating plentifully, and primarily fatty foods. Therefore, adapting to nourishing but small military rations also proved difficult. Another problem arose from the Ukrainian preference for using belts rather than suspenders for their pants. Ukrainians did not wear suspenders because they were not accustomed to them; instead, they used rifle straps or stole reins from the stables. An explanation for this was provided by the imaginative Paliiv: Ukrainians were used to having a feeling of satiation in their stomachs, and so they would tie their pants with belts in order to tighten them by a couple of notches during lean times. Because German rations were small, they tied their belts tighter to maintain a feeling of satiation.

For the Germans, with their proverbial inclination toward organization and order, such explanations were difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless, morale among the soldiers was high and a spirit of camaraderie prevailed. Although drawers and lockers could not be locked, there were very few instances of theft among the trainees.

The Division's German staff came mostly from the only police division in all of the German armed forces. I was the Division's chief of staff and its sole member from the Wehrmacht. My duties included assisting the Division commander in organization, training, and tactical command. I served in the artillery; in 1943 I completed the academy of the general staff and was assigned to the general infantry corps. I arrived in Dębica on 10 January 1944.

With rare exceptions, the German officers were not suited to command a division of foreign nationality. Because of their relative youth, their lack of life experience, and knowledge of human nature, they were incapable of dealing with the difficult task of leading and caring for people. The more able among them could provide good technical instruction; they could not establish cordial personal relations and thus failed to win the trust of the Ukrainians. Others, particularly the eldest men, arrived with prejudices against Ukrainians and against the Division, which had the misfortune of being named "Galicia."[8] In addition, most of the young German corps were still unschooled in the military spirit, even though they had gone through

brief basic training. Many of them were also arrogant because of their successes at the front.

There was a general shortage of solidly trained and proven German officers and NCOs. Some of them had too many doubts, and too many had none. There were frequent incidents of alcohol abuse. Obviously, there were also good officers on the German side who devoted themselves to their duties with energy and sacrifice. Thanks to their character and knowledge, they attained significant achievements, no matter how difficult the task. But these men were few and far between.

Many misunderstandings between Ukrainians and Germans were caused by the actions of section 3 (court martial) of the Division. The head of this department should have been a better man, one who would have defended the rights and interests of the Division before its commander, General Freitag. To be sure, he did manage to moderate some of Freitag's sentences, but he never allowed Ukrainians to sit as overseers of the court martial's proceedings, despite Freitag's orders to this effect.

The personnel in charge of section 5 (the automotive and mechanical companies) were unsuitable from start to finish. The head of this department should have been an energetic officer with a truly professional knowledge of this area. He should have also shown understanding toward the Ukrainians, who had their own idea of how a car worked but were nevertheless quite interested and able students of technology.

The head of section 6 (pastoral guidance) also did not always comprehend Ukrainian problems or concerns. He worked diligently, assisted by a few Ukrainians, but his efforts were thwarted by the Division's commander. Freitag used section 6 to issue didactic newsletters focussing on the Ukrainians' inadequacies and transgressions. This section was very well financed, partly because much of its funding came from Ukrainians, and the MC channeled aid to the soldiers through it.

Yet another error was Freitag's failure to dismiss the chief field ordinance officer, Kleinow. Freitag kept him on because of his ability to organize courses of study and training. The continuous complaints about Kleinow that flooded the staff offices of the Division were simply ignored.

What was the situation with the young Ukrainian candidates for officer and NCO training? I have already noted that, although wealthier peasants and merchants had not figured among the volunteers, the young Ukrainian intelligentsia from the cities and the countryside flocked to the Division. At the initial organizational stage nearly fifteen hundred soldiers qualified for officer and NCO candidacy status on the basis of their education and their physical fitness. However, one had to deal with this most valuable of

Ukrainian commodities with considerable care. The mere existence of these volunteers did not solve the problem of providing an adequate number of officers and NCOs for the Division because future officers would have to be trained for a full year, by which time the Division would already have been deployed in battle. If they arrived to join the Division after their training, they would not have had a requisite amount of battlefield experience to fully assume command. Thus, paradoxically, the very fact of detaching this promising body of potential leaders at an early stage in the Division's organization served to weaken it.

The Division was also beset by a lack of good instructors. It therefore came as no surprise that most commanders viewed the departure of candidates to the various schools negatively. At the same time, it is difficult to excuse commanders who sent their inferior soldiers to the training centers and kept the better ones in their units.

In the regular reports to Berlin it was suggested that the only solution to this problem was to assign a larger number of capable and experienced German officers and NCOs to the Division. It was also proposed that these officers and NCOs be stationed with the Division temporarily, that is, only during its formation and training. When Ukrainian officers and NCOs returned from training, the Germans would be transferred to other units.

All of these proposals produced very few results, however. Rejection of such requests was due partly to the general shortage of such command personnel because they were dying on all fronts; at the same time, such conditions should have been foreseen before the formation of the Division. These factors made for an atmosphere of tension, which led to accusations of an absence of good will, a lack of enthusiasm, and the like. Only slowly did German officers arrive, and those who did rarely suited the Division's needs. A lack of professional knowledge, poor character, a tendency to drink—all these characteristics were common among the young and inexperienced German officers and NCOs.

It was in the best interests of the Division to send as many Ukrainians for training as possible. About six hundred officer candidates and two hundred NCO candidates were immediately sent off to schools. About one hundred NCOs took short-term courses without leaving the Division. This was not accomplished without a struggle, because one first had to overcome the attitude of Freitag, who felt that a candidate for such training should initially see some frontline action.

The greatest personnel problem was obtaining a sufficient number of good German staff to form the *Korsettstange* or "German skeleton" of the

Division. It also required a fair amount of skill to balance the postings to positions of command to ensure the proper distribution of Ukrainian and German staff. Initially, the German political authorities had contemplated filling only the Division staff with Germans, but the aforementioned dearth of trained Ukrainians in all departments made it necessary to expand the number of German postings. Unfortunately, there were only a few Ukrainian officers who had undergone tactical training and were ready to assume command of units,[9] and Freitag was skeptical about even these men. Thus it was unreasonable to expect that he would assign them to such posts.

This prompted some to resign from the Division altogether, claiming that they had volunteered for the post of battalion commander and demanding that they be given such a commission. They agreed to be supervised initially by a German officer; they also agreed to be subject to immediate dismissal should they prove unqualified and to be held accountable for obvious mistakes.

Freitag had different views on this subject. He wanted commanders who were already familiar with modern warfare and therefore favored German officers. Even so, he should have assigned Ukrainians to positions on the staff and with various unit commanders. Freitag remained deaf to repeated requests for such Ukrainian assignments down to the end of the Division's existence. For the Division this was an irritating handicap that left it without Ukrainians who were acquainted with all aspects of command. This came to light after the general German collapse in May 1945, when the German officers abandoned the Division or were separated from it by the Allies. If the long-range goal of the Division was truly to have it serve as a nucleus for a future Ukrainian national army, then all possible avenues should have been pursued in the organization of an officer corps. Freitag, however, completely neglected this important issue, concentrating instead on the strictly military task of building up a single powerful combat unit and ignoring the frequent petitions addressed to him.

He demanded even more German personnel to command all of the companies and most of the platoons and squads. His closest co-workers, particularly Paliiv, staunchly opposed this policy because the Division was clearly intended to have a Ukrainian character. But anyone familiar with the difficulties attendant on the formation of the Division could understand Freitag's insistence on a margin of "certainty," particularly since the Division was to see action in the near future.

Nevertheless, his crass methods were offensive to the Ukrainians. He should have brought his plan about gradually, especially after it became apparent that many German officers and NCOs not only were unsuitable for

leading soldiers of foreign nationality but were also doing harm. By the spring of 1944 some Germans had to be discharged because of their unsuitability, often because of their frequent, unrestrained drinking bouts.

These personnel problems continued throughout the Division's existence. Personal politics created continuous misunderstandings and conflicts—one of the major flaws of the Division. Even now it is difficult for me to decide whose opinion was right at the time. One can understand the Ukrainians' contention that positions of command and leadership of Ukrainian soldiers in a Ukrainian division should have been given to Ukrainian officers, but Freitag's position was defensible in view of the need to prepare the Division for battle in as little time as possible.

The best solution would have been a policy decision from the higher German authorities that set out exactly to what extent the Division was to be commanded by Germans. Freitag should not have been given a free hand, particularly since in the initial stages of the unit's organization, an agreement had been made restricting Germans to the general staff. Thus, Freitag should have been forced to choose either to accept the existing agreement or to decline the offer to command a division of foreign nationality.

The operational language of the unit was German. The older Ukrainians, including all of the officers and most of the NCOs, spoke it adequately but the enlisted men did not. Therefore, during training much time and effort was wasted by soldiers trying to learn commands in German. Great difficulties arose when Ukrainians serving in the communications units were forced to speak German. The best solution would have been to institute Ukrainian as the operational language. Germans, both officers and NCOs, of whom a higher level of intelligence was expected, would have found it easier to learn Ukrainian than did the regular Ukrainian foot soldier to learn German. Ukrainian representatives should have insisted on this right before the Division's formation and not have agreed to its formation if this demand had not been met.[10]

As a result of all of these difficulties, training had to progress gradually, a few steps at a time, with little by way of a method or system.

The Division was posted to the "Heidelager" training camp, which was still under construction. Other units were being housed there, so little space remained for the Division. The quarters for its members were dispersed over the whole camp, and often even its individual units, such as the artillery regiment, did not occupy a single enclosed space. The camp consisted of wooden barracks with primitive and inadequate fixtures. By the same to-

ken, the preconditions for instilling military discipline and order were non-existent.

There were few garages and supply storage sheds, and most of these were already being used. Thus carparks and depots had to be set up; these required numerous guards who were unable to take part in basic training. The provision of uniforms and weapons was irregular and also delayed training. Small arms and instruction equipment were in short supply, while there was a surplus of other items of little use. This reflected the state of manufacturing and planning at the time.

Because of the shortage of suitable training officers, NCOs, and weapons, it was impossible to proceed with the formation of formal units and sub-units of the Division. It was first necessary to organize a large number of training companies in which various specialists were grouped together, for example, a training regiment of infantry men, an anti-tank and demolition regiment, a cavalry regiment, an automotive regiment, and so on. Under the guidance of the best instructors, a basic corps of personnel for all sections of the Division were trained. This method proved quite appropriate. It also extended to such specialists as cooks, tailors, cobblers, and harness-makers.

Particular emphasis was placed on the training of NCOs. Aside from those individuals assigned to training schools outside the Division, there were several training groups within it, organized according to type of weaponry. Candidates first went through basic training as far as was possible given the shortage of uniforms, weaponry, and instructors. Apart from these activities there was guard duty and other tasks connected with the functioning of the camp.

Where equipment was available, specialized training was provided. A large number of recruits were assigned to army reserve units, in which they received basic training and instruction in the use of weapons. According to various reports, Ukrainian recruits acquitted themselves well in all areas and, in some instances, bested their German counterparts. The Division received a special commendation from the commander of the reserve light artillery unit in Rendsburg, where Ukrainian batteries placed first in speed of servicing and accuracy of fire. Because of a shortage of instructors, all three infantry regiments and the fusilier battalion were joined into one regiment that was initially commanded energetically and diligently by Major Ievhen Pobihushchy. And so the first four months of basic training passed.

Ukrainian officers continued their theoretical training in all aspects of military life under the finest German officers of the Division. Here it became apparent that even the most experienced German officers could learn something from the Ukrainians. Ukrainians proved superior in the use of terrain,

camouflage, rapid trench digging, building of temporary shelters, establishment of camps, and the like. It is a pity that the Germans did not think of putting such talents to use at an earlier date.

A great flaw in the "Heidelager" training camp was the fact that it was situated close to Galicia and was an open camp. Every Sunday a veritable mass migration of friends and relatives arrived at the camp to visit the volunteers. They brought an unbelievable quantity of food and alcohol with them. Drinking bouts took on unprecedented dimensions. The subsequent prohibition against civilians in the camp compound had little effect, because the men began to meet their relations at the Dębica station and in the nearby woods. This proximity to their native land and life in a "family atmosphere" prevented the Ukrainians from fully appreciating the importance of their duties. The steeling of the military spirit requires a more serious approach.

The proximity of home and hearth also provoked some desertion. Therefore, the Division command made plans to transfer the unit to Germany, to a closed camp with better quarters and conditions more conducive to training. The actual transfer of the unit was delayed because a vacant facility in Germany was not available.

The easy access into the "Heidelager" camp also aided and abetted the undesirable activities of the UPA, which was hostile to the Division because of Germany's policies in Ukraine. There were no instances of direct and open confrontation, but the UPA spread anti-Division propaganda by various means. They attempted to stem the flow of new volunteers and tried to attract those who had already joined into their own ranks, and did not stop short of coercion to achieve this. Eventually, its tactics toward the Division changed somewhat, but the attitude remained fundamentally the same.

Assistance to families of Division servicemen was inadequate or non-existent. Many complaints about this were directed at the Division, which tried to improve conditions. Most of the soldiers came from the poorer classes, and their families eagerly sought out these forms of aid. The Division aimed to solve the problem by assigning special officers to relevant German authorities and the MC. The provision of aid was, to a large extent, sabotaged by lower-echelon Polish functionaries in the German local administration, but the Ukrainians were also somewhat to blame. Regardless of the constant reminders and published guidelines, many Ukrainians did not send the requisite formal requests for assistance or did not complete them properly.

Priests played an important part in the life of the Division. With the exception of a small number of Orthodox servicemen, the soldiers of the Division

were deeply religious Greek Catholics. Andrii Sheptytsky, the Metropolitan of Lviv, was a friend and supporter of the Division, and he granted Freitag an audience. The metropolitan's close assistant, the archpriest and Dr Vasyl Laba, took the chaplaincy of the Division upon himself and, in so doing, deserves much praise. All the Division's units welcomed him. His special holiday services, particularly those at Christmas, will always remain in everyone's memories.

Every regiment and independent battalion of the Division had its own priest who was responsible to Father Mykhailo Levenets, a member of the Division staff. Services were held every Sunday and on every major holiday. Since Greek Catholic holidays come two weeks later than Protestant ones and because there are more of them, it was decided that only Ukrainian holidays would be celebrated. In this fashion a greater amount of time could be devoted to military matters.

The first Christmas of the Division remains as a memorable event. Ukrainians and Germans celebrated it in a congenial atmosphere. The Division's chaplain shared a traditional *prosfora* with the Division commander. After the borshch and other traditional Ukrainian dishes, the Ukrainians sang carols and celebrated according to their ancient customs, mixing the merry with the solemn. These few sacred hours spent together served as the first bonds of friendship between the Germans and Ukrainians.

The members of the MC often took part in the religious festivities and in major military celebrations. The commission's head, Colonel Bisanz, would remind the Ukrainians of various historical events and of their present duties in speeches imbued with a characteristic fervor. To the extent that his schedule would allow him, Governor Wächter also took part in the Division's celebration. In fact, relations between Wächter and the MC, the UCC, and the Division were always close and friendly.[11]

All holidays were enlivened by the musical performances of the Ukrainians. Their musical talent and love of song benefited everyone. The Ukrainian folk songs, and arias from operas and operettas (particularly from "Zaporozhets za Dunaiem") were of incomparable beauty. A choir conducted by V. Ostashevsky and an orchestra conducted by A. Krushelnytsky and, later, by Johann Thiessen, were also very successful. The "Tenner" march of the old Austro-Hungarian Army became the parade march of the Division. The many singers and musicians of the Lviv Opera Theater who had joined the Division ensured performances of a very high caliber. The artists of the "Vesely Lviv" troupe and those who did not enlist from the Lviv Opera Theater but came to visit the Division training camp brought many unforgettable hours of musical enjoyment and entertainment.

Ukrainian literature is a treasury of excellent works. The wonderful poems of the Ukrainian national bard, Taras Shevchenko, provided opportunities for many an evening well spent listening to recitals. His poem "*Iak umru to pokhovaite...*" was the will and testament of every Ukrainian in the Division.

Training of the Division proceeded in this atmosphere. From time to time, a German officer or NCO would arrive. The influx of volunteers increased, bringing the total to ten thousand. Horses and matériel arrived slowly. The soldiers underwent training at "Heidelager" and with various Wehrmacht reserve units. Professional officers and NCOs received instruction in specialized courses. In late January 1944 Freitag left for a four-week officer training course in Hirschberg in Silesia. During his absence the Division was under the command of Colonel Bayersdorff, the senior regimental commander.

One night in early February 1944, the Higher SS and Police Leader in Cracow, SS Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Koppe, called Division headquarters and passed on the following order:

> The Division is to immediately form a task force in order to combat Kovpak's[12] Soviet partisan formations that have penetrated into the territories of the Generalgouvernement. The strength of the task force is to be one infantry regiment, one detachment of light artillery, and detachments of sappers and anti-tank grenadiers. The task force is to be placed under the jurisdiction of the SS and police leader of the Generalgouvernement.

Presumably, this order was issued by the SS Reichsführer and chief of German police, Heinrich Himmler. Upon receipt of this order the Division immediately gave notice that, at the time, it was not able to follow it. I will not enter into a discussion of the finer points of this directive nor examine the reasons for the Division's inability to fulfill it; these reasons should be readily apparent.

When our representatives presented their position to officials of the SS and the police in Cracow, they were told curtly that the order originated with Himmler himself. Colonel Bayersdorff asked for a few hours for review but stated immediately that the Division was not in a position to hand over a battle unit the size of a regiment. After reviewing all resources and conferring with his officers, the commander said that the Division would be able to supply one battalion fortified by a battery of light field artillery. He stated clearly that this battalion would be nowhere near battle-readiness, and that he could not be held responsible for its performance in action.

Responsibility for the battalion's fate would rest solely with the SS and police command in Cracow. Because the officer corps for this battalion had to be organized from scratch, the task force would be ready for marching in forty-eight hours, not twenty-four as had been requested.

The most promising trainees were assigned to the unit. At least a few instructors had to remain with the Division, which was still in the process of training and organization. The task force was formed that night and a report sent off to Berlin. On the following morning a notice from Cracow arrived to the effect that the unit would not be sent into action in Galicia as of yet, and we all breathed a sigh of relief. This unit was to remain on call, however, and ready to march within twenty-four hours.

For training purposes, the unit was formed in forty-eight hours, according to plan. The Ukrainian soldiers were keen to march. Neither they nor the Germans treated this situation very seriously and considered it an entertaining change to the course of monotonous and arduous training. However, the unit was indeed not ready for action, and this fact was repeatedly reported to higher authorities in order to dispel any illusions they might have harbored. In any case, the Division staff had taken all of the necessary measures to form another task force if the need arose again.

Three or four days later we received another order from Himmler and the Cracow SS and police demanding the formation of a battle unit and its arrival in the district northwest of Lviv in twenty-four hours. They were to engage Soviet partisans in the area. Obviously, the warnings about the quality of the unit issued by the Division's commanders had not been heeded. The unit consisted of one infantry battalion, one battery of light artillery, some sappers, one demolition and anti-tank platoon, one communications unit, and a small supplies unit. The commanding officer of all these sub-units was Colonel Bayersdorff. The infantry battalion was led by the only available German battalion commander, Captain Bristot. Major Mykola Paliienko commanded the artillery battery. Paliienko had been an officer of the tsarist army, later of the UNR Army, a contract officer in the Polish Army, and a graduate of the Polish General Staff Academy.

The task force was sent off in three echelons, and this action was reported to Berlin immediately. It became apparent in a few days that Himmler had not given orders for the formation of a task force. He had simply mentioned it as a possibility in a conversation with Koppe. His casual remark was subsequently embellished and reissued as an order "on behalf of the Reichsführer." This incident exemplifies the conditions under which the Division had to operate.

When Freitag returned from his training course, he stated that he would

not have followed such an order because he was well acquainted with the modus operandi of the leaders of the Nazi Party. This was something new and strange for me since, as an officer of the Wehrmacht, every order was to be carried out, but every order was to have been thought out, not issued frivolously.

The order issued by Koppe was typical of the arbitrary conduct of war by so-called soldiers with no professional knowledge, without well-considered directives, and without regard for consequences or for the safety of personnel. Fortunately, Wehrmacht or Waffen SS formations stationed in the Generalgouvernement were not subject to the authority of the leader of the SS and police even temporarily. His authority extended just to police units. Only in exceptional cases were individual frontline units handed over to him for the execution of special assignments.

Not surprisingly, the aforementioned task force did not perform its duties well. It had been placed at the disposal of a police general in Peremyshl, who supplied and led it poorly. He was completely ignorant of military tactics and command. Those who issued the order to lead the unit into action despite the warnings of its commanding officers are fully to blame. Ill prepared for winter fighting, the battalion was taken along with other Wehrmacht and police units into engagements with partisans who had good supply lines and cadres who were well prepared for winter. After four weeks of action the task force returned to the Division, which by that time had been transferred to Neuhammer in Silesia.

Despite these unfavorable conditions, toward the end of the campaign the task force had participated in actions in the Chesanov, Liubachiv, Tarnohorod, Bilohrai, and Zamość districts (in northwestern Galicia and the Kholm region) with a fair degree of success.

Soon after, reports of the unseemly behavior of the unit began to arrive at the Division. This should have been expected because the soldiers had not finished their training, and their officers were young and inexperienced. One should not forget that the battalion had been sent to an area populated largely by Poles. The age-old antagonism between Poles and Ukrainians inevitably manifested itself. One should also take into account that the German units blamed many of their own misdeeds on the non-German unit from the Division. In many instances this was easily demonstrable. The shifting of blame onto the Division by German units was a phenomenon that would recur.

The Division's staff heeded all complaints and, if proof was provided, punished the guilty parties. The penalties meted out by Freitag were quite severe, and often disproportionate to the gravity of the offense to discipline

and order. Both the German and Ukrainian members of the Division made this discovery through firsthand experience.

In February of 1944 Otto Bauer, chief of staff of Governor Wächter's Galician administration, was assassinated. He had devoted a considerable effort to the Division's organization. A company and the Division's orchestra were sent to take part in the funeral ceremony. This was the first public appearance of the soldiers of the Division, who were enthusiastically greeted by the populace, which made for a major propaganda success. The orchestra was particularly well received.

The repeated requests that commanders of the Division had issued during February for transfer from "Heidelager" finally paid off. The Division was moved to Neuhammer. The transportation of weapons and supplies posed many problems. The lack of heavy trucks and of personnel experienced in loading and unloading equipment was felt very acutely. During a three-week period the Division was divided into thirty trainloads.

In March 1944 full-fledged military and battle training began in Neuhammer. The camp was much better equipped than "Heidelager." The local commander worked closely with the Division. Due to the shorter transportation route and the efforts of sections IB, 4A, and 4C, weapons, equipment, horses, and cars arrived mostly on time. The German commanders also arrived, so that by the end of February the officer corps of the individual units of the Division were organized; these were given responsibility for the formation and continued training of the sub-units.

The Division was set up as a Type 44 infantry division, that is, a modern infantry division. In addition, it was assigned a mixed flak battery consisting of one 20-mm, one 37-mm, and one 88-mm battery. All units were very busy.

This period of training was the most taxing for everyone involved. Regardless of various deficiencies, everyone went about their duties with enthusiasm and excitement, and minor successes gave even greater encouragement. New recruits from army reserves arrived and began to perform their duties efficiently. Specialists returned from their respective courses. The first newly trained NCOs also arrived and sought opportunities for advancement. The commanders of the Division made themselves familiar with their tasks. Unfortunately, Freitag wasted much of his commendable diligence at his desk and spent an insufficient amount of time with his soldiers in training. Yet it was at this time that the young Ukrainians and Germans under his command were in the greatest need of advice and leadership.

Relations between Ukrainians and Germans were not uniformly positive.

In fact, they left much to be desired. In most cases, relations depended on the disposition of the commander. If the young commanders worked with the soldiers in a spirit of understanding and discipline, relations always proved to be good and sometimes excellent. The best examples of such relations were the communications and anti-tank units. This does not mean that the commanders of the infantry regiments were inferior but simply that they had a greater number of soldiers under their command as well as a greater number of duties; they were thus unable to form more direct relations with their troops.

The establishment of good relations between Ukrainians and Germans was primarily the responsibility of the battalion commanders, and here the errors committed were the most obvious. Freitag attempted to rectify these mistakes, but he had created an invisible wall between himself and the Ukrainians that turned gradually into an impassable barrier. His foolish and short-sighted personnel policies contributed to a further deterioration of relations between Ukrainians and Germans. Freitag was incapable of assimilating the fact that he was the commander of a unit of foreign nationals in which German officers were, of necessity, the exception.

In the spring of 1944 police regiments 4 and 5, and later 6, 7, and 8, were incorporated into the Division. The officials of the UCC, Governor Wächter, and the soldiers of the regiments had to make repeated petitions to various authorities to obtain this transfer. They had volunteered for service in the Division only and were concerned they might be sent to the Western front and continue to be restricted to police formations.[13]

Most German officers and NCOs in these regiments were of no use to the Division because they were ill-suited to command frontline military units. They had to be sent back to the police sections. On the other hand, the *Volksdeutsch* officers from Slovakia who later joined the Division were adequate.

Among the German officers of the general staff of the Division a few individuals stood up for the interests and needs of Ukrainians. This is due in part to the fact that staff officers were not overburdened with minor, everyday problems. Demanding concessions on behalf of the Ukrainians was no mean feat, whether they were to be extracted from Freitag or from any of his subordinates. Moreover, the Ukrainians did not present a common front and, after the heroic death of Captain Paliiv at Brody, lost their most effective spokesman. His successor, Major Liubomyr Makarushka, had to become acquainted with his new job on short notice. Later, he managed to stand up for Ukrainian interests with equal energy and fervor.

The Ukrainians had a good grasp of which individual German officers

were well disposed toward them. Members of the MC frequently conferred with me, taking care to avoid General Freitag. The entire structure suffered because of an unsympathetic and inappropriate Division commander.

Although the German authorities nominally recognized the UCC and the MC, these organizations were given little opportunity to exercise any influence. Governor Wächter, an energetic man of considerable goodwill, was unable to convince the higher German political authorities of the viability of his basic goals, nor did he have much success with Freitag. The German authorities generally considered Wächter and most of the senior Ukrainian executives to be too much the mavericks.

Training was going very well, however. The Ukrainian soldiers were willing and enthusiastic, skillful and interested in all aspects of technical learning. Desertion, which had been such a frequent occurrence at Dębica, almost disappeared. Only a few soldiers did not return after their leave; they probably came under the influence of the UPA, which opposed the Division and tried to stop the flow of young Ukrainians into the Division. The more relaxed partisan life in the UPA, conducted under the Ukrainian national flag, was more attractive to the youth than the hard discipline of the Division. During each leave the Division's soldiers were used by UPA cadres as instructors for their partisans. Generally, at the end of their leave, the UPA would let the soldiers return. The UPA did not cause any significant damage to the Division.

Ukrainians assimilated knowledge quickly and ably translated it into practice in the field of orienteering. They evinced considerable toughness, endurance, and toleration of stress. In marksmanship—against all expectations—they proved decidedly inferior. They were very interested in technical matters, in which they quickly gained experience and skill, particularly in frontline artillery.

As drivers, they were very enthusiastic but wild. There were very few able driver-mechanics among them. Sitting beside a Ukrainian driver, one had the distinct impression of sitting beside an ignited powder keg. This might have been due to the relatively short driver-training period. As tenders of horses, they were adequate in that they fed them well but were not as willing to clean them or their harnesses.

The continuous influx of volunteers brought the Division to full size, with another eight hundred soldiers for a reserve battalion. The latter battalion was to serve as a source of reserve officers, NCOs, and soldiers for all units. Its members also took part in various specialized courses.

By April 1944 the flow of volunteers made it possible to organize a reserve-training regiment. Normally, such a regiment would not be part of a

frontline unit and was subordinated to a reserve commander in the rear; because of the Division's Ukrainian character, however, the regiment was assigned directly to it. Initially, cooperation between the main body of the Division and the reserve regiment, stationed in Wandern (near Frankfurt an der Oder), was very poor but later improved greatly.

During the first six months conditions in this regiment were clearly inadequate. There were four to five thousand recruits, raw civilians without any form of military preparation. There were only about forty to fifty German and Ukrainian instructors, who were not suited for frontline action themselves because of wounds they had sustained and were thus unable to conduct any practical training. The Division could not supply additional instructors because it barely had enough to attend to its own needs. It should be kept in mind that this regiment was in fact a reserve regiment, whose members would eventually join the Division itself.

Although the various training activities were demanding, soldiers performed their duties from dawn until dusk with enthusiasm. The commandant of the training camp commented frequently on the good discipline shown by the soldiers.

In May members of the MC and UCC and Governor Wächter arrived for an inspection. Military exercises were conducted for them under battlefield conditions that involved all of the Division's personnel—infantry, artillery, anti-tank, and sappers. The visitors saw the success of the training and the battle-readiness of a modern infantry division first hand. The subsequent parade and speeches by Wächter and Bisanz brought the visit to a close. For the Ukrainians of the Division, this was an opportunity to form links with their homeland.

The deployment of the Division drew ever closer as a visit by Reichsführer Himmler was announced. In the last stages of training there were nighttime exercises, forced marches, use of live ammunition, and combined exercises of all sections.

The many reports to higher German authorities always stressed the battle-readiness of the Division, its political nature, and the relevance of its involvement in military action with regard to Ukrainian interests. War against the Western Allies was considered out of the question, because the Ukrainians had volunteered only to fight against the Bolsheviks and for the liberation of their homeland. The German authorities had agreed to such a precondition.

It remained to be decided in which sector on the Eastern front the Division would be positioned. It was considered advisable that it be on Ukrai-

nian soil; thus the northern and southern salients were not appropriate. The Hungarian front was also considered irrelevant to Ukrainian interests, leaving the central front in Galicia and Belorussia. Obviously, Galicia would have been the ideal venue. However, the close ties with the local population and the influence of the UPA might have deleterious effects. On the other hand, familiarity with the territory would probably entail many benefits.

Having weighed the positive and negative sides of the argument, it was decided that Galicia would be the best place to start. The staff also decided that an open field engagement would be better as an initial contact and that engagements in forested areas would be better left until after some experience had been acquired. It was also thought that since Ukrainians were raised on the land, their usefulness in urban house-to-house fighting would be limited.

The battle-worthiness of the Division could also not yet be considered equal to that of a well-trained German division, and thus it was proposed that it be sent to a relatively quiet area of the front. The front could not be too wide and yet large enough so that two regiments could engage the enemy side by side, with the third behind it in reserve, in order to complete its training. The Division was to be flanked by two experienced German divisions. Such suggestions—if not demands—in the circumstances of the war can be considered fantastic, but the commanding officers had the political significance of the Division and the interests of the Ukrainians in mind.

The matter was not simply one of sending a regular Division into battle. This decision involved the first engagement of the only Ukrainian division. The outcome could decide the Ukrainian question. One copy of the report was sent to the commander in chief of Army Group "Nordukraine," Field Marshal Walther Model, whose headquarters were in Galicia. Model shared Wächter's views on the Ukrainian question and showed an enthusiastic interest in the appropriate deployment of the Division; he was particularly interested in stationing it on the front. He promised to do what he could to bring the plans outlined in the report to fruition. Without waiting for authorization from his superiors, he sent the Division ten Wehrmacht officers and NCOs experienced in frontline warfare, whose assignment was to acquaint all regiments with the terrain on which the Division was to be positioned. Such a measure was very welcome.

On 16 May 1944 Heinrich Himmler visited the Division. Governor Wächter was also present. Himmler began by addressing the German and Ukrainian officer corps.[14] On the following day he watched an exercise of all combined forces. Afterward there was a parade of select units chosen

from all of the sections of the Division that lasted nearly an hour and a half. The visit concluded with a closed meeting.

Himmler showed himself to be well acquainted with the various concerns of the Division. He was satisfied with the level of training and repeatedly voiced his complete approval. He also agreed to the proposals concerning the venue of its first engagement and assured us of his full support. In the course of his visit Himmler was made aware of Ukrainian concerns both by the Ukrainians themselves and by the Division commander. On the whole, he made an impression of having a comprehensive understanding of Ukrainian interests after they had been explained to him properly. The Division encountered no opposition from him, and any concessions that it won came either as a result of his orders or approval. On the third day Himmler left with Wächter for Model's headquarters in Galicia, to confer on the final details of the Division's future military engagements.

In June 1944 the Division was visited by a delegation of fathers of the soldiers, led by Professor Kubiiovych and Colonel Bisanz. Unfortunately, the delegation consisted of a majority of city dwellers at the expense of those from the country. The fathers examined the sons' quarters, attended some military exercises, and spent some time with their sons. This visit once again forged a bond between the Division and its homeland. The guests witnessed the Division's exercises and a parade of its various units.

In mid-June Field Marshal Model sent a telegram inviting General Freitag and his adjutants for a conference at his headquarters on the unit's future military action. The invitation was sent at Wächter's suggestion, and we all immediately left for Lviv by plane. Upon arrival we discussed with Wächter various organizational and political problems of the Division. During this meeting Günter d'Alquen informed us of "Operation Scorpion," a propaganda campaign directed at urging Ukrainian Red Army servicemen to desert to the German side. The Division was to send a larger contingent of propaganda groups of educated Ukrainians to areas where German and Soviet lines were in close proximity. Division command did in fact send out such groups, but we received no further news about them. It is doubtful that they played any significant role.

From Lviv we left for the Field Marshal's headquarters in a suburb of Lviv, where Model greeted us and listened to our reports about the Division's battle-readiness and its relative strengths and weaknesses. He agreed with the appraisal and propositions of Freitag and assigned the Division to the Stanyslaviv region, where the 1st German Panzer Army was stationed.

We traveled in wonderfully sunny weather through the green and blossoming expanses of serene Galicia. The local army commander, General of

Panzer Armies Erhard Raus, a former officer of the Austro-Hungarian Army, showed a complete understanding of the duties of the Ukrainian Division, fortified, no doubt, by his experience with Ukrainians in the armies of the Austrian Kaiser. He assigned the Division to a sector to the east of Stanyslaviv.

On the same day, we arrived at the regional army corps headquarters in order to discuss details concerning our new sector. We slept in Stanyslaviv and returned to the Field Marshal's headquarters in the morning to give him a report of our talks. The first echelons of the Division were to depart for the front fourteen days after the commander's return to Neuhammer. We immediately boarded an airplane to Silesia and began preparations for the Division's transfer to the front.

The Division received its final polish of training. Exercises involving the entire Division filled all of the remaining time. As before, the greatest problems were connected with establishing adequate communications links. The language of command was German, but there were very few German radio and telephone operators. Even the most intelligent of Ukrainians, although they knew German, could not always apply it to military communications, either finding it difficult to transmit or understand the orders given.

2 Exercises in Neuhammer

THROUGH THE SLATS of the shutters of the spartan officers' quarters, the first rays of a spring morning pour in and speak of the coming day, a day full of work and duties. Nature greets the day happily: thrushes and starlings sing merrily and a vivacious squirrel leaps from branch to branch. From the barracks the loud singing of Ukrainian soldiers marching off to morning exercises drifts over to our quarters.

A Ukrainian guest from Galicia is staying at the Division's staff headquarters. Today we leave for battle exercises to get a picture of the strenuous training that our volunteers in all branches of the service have been undergoing. At exactly half past six, a car stops in front of our quarters. After a twenty-minute ride through moorland and thick forest, a Ukrainian soldier stops us. He is the liaison officer of a battalion. He reports on his assignment and leads us through the brush to the command point of an infantry battalion.

At that moment the battalion commander is in conference with his company commanders. Every one of them wears army camouflage gear that conceals them from enemy sight and fire. The overall assignment of the battalion is to attack a row of enemy emplacements and to gain control of them. Today the advance has been postponed from daybreak to 0700. During the conference a light artillery detachment commander arrives and announces his unit's readiness to open fire. The battalion commander issues the final orders and directives. The battalion entrenched its positions during the night and is awaiting the order to move out.

We know that we are surrounded by soldiers readying themselves for the advance, but they are so well camouflaged that it is difficult to notice anything at first glance. We make a check of the artillery scouting posts, the infantry guns, the position of the grenade launchers and heavy machine-guns.

The officers and NCOs of various sections give their situation and readiness reports and their superiors an ammunition count.

The time is 0657. All is ready. The officers of rifle and mortar units do a final check on the accuracy of weapons settings. All orders and directives have been issued, all officers are in place. At exactly 0700 all weapons suddenly erupt into life. The grenades and shells of the heavy artillery, mobile artillery, and grenade launchers hiss above our heads. In front and alongside us machine guns bark. To our right, shots from our anti-tank guns tear the air.

The music of hell has broken loose. Explosion after explosion can be heard from the mockup enemy positions scarcely eight hundred meters in front of us. They are shrouded in smoke. Our positions come to life. Turf and branches begin to move and the shapes of our soldiers emerge.

At 0710 the infantry companies leap out at the sound of short whistles and curt commands. The advance begins. Our weapons fire intensifies into a mighty hurricane seeking to stifle the enemy's fire. When our infantry companies approach the enemy lines, our heavy artillery is hushed and begins to aim for particular targets, set ahead of time. Our artillery fires smoke grenades that conceal our infantry from the enemy with a thick curtain, and under its cover our infantry nears its objectives.

We join it during the advance and follow the interplay of fire and movement closely. In places where our forward movement was too forceful, or when an action proceeded recklessly or sloppily, there were judges in place who marked the resulting putative casualties. Now, our artillery fire is aimed farther forward in order to avoid harming our own troops with shrapnel from our shells. Our infantry reaches the enemy trenches. Hand grenades sail through the air. We hear twenty, thirty, forty explosions. In one minute, the assault on enemy positions begins with fixed bayonets.

This has been a minor exercise, a rehearsal for our imminent real-life tasks. Many mistakes have been made. We will evaluate them in a critical analysis of the exercise. They will be corrected in laborious individual battle training. We leave the battalion with a sense that the Ukrainians have already learned and realized much about its importance.

Our car speeds on its way to the communications unit. We are met by the adjutant, who explains the situation. This unit is responsible for setting up a communications network for the Division at the front line. The adjutant quickly explains the location and deployment of the various command points.

Our first stop is at the field telephone installation section, which connects the communications wires between the staff headquarters and the

individual regiments. In a wood, it is a fairly straightforward task to build a line using trees, but complex support pylons are necessary in an open field.

The able and experienced hands of the telephone operators, guided by the orders of the professional officers and NCOs, establish all the necessary links and appear to be able to make sense of the mess of wires and connect them to the switchboard. Near the telephone checkpoint a radio post sends out a call to its counterpart: "Siegfried–Caesar–Zeppelin" calling "Quelle–Heinrich–Anton" is repeated incessantly. On the way to the artillery command point, we encounter members of the repair teams—soldiers whose job it is, even under the heaviest enemy fire, to find and repair damaged lines in order to restore communications links.

At the regiment's command point the communications unit is well entrenched and concealed. Only a small red flag with a white "F" marks its location. Two telephone operators wearing headsets have taken positions in the trenches. They are receiving orders from Division headquarters. Toward the end of inspection we review the work of the radio operators, who are encoding a long transmission. By order of the commander, it is forbidden to transmit unencoded messages in case they might be intercepted by the enemy. Our guest is amazed at the complexity and variety of the communications unit. It comes as a surprise that we searched out the ablest men for this technical service unit. We proceed to the artillery regiment.

Here we are given a demonstration of a battery in full action while it is still spread out in an anti-aircraft pattern and hidden in a wood not far away. Nearby stands the emergency anti-tank gun. The commanders and crew of the individual batteries arrive on horseback to receive orders from the unit commander, then return in small detachments to their anti-tank positions, galloping through fields open to enemy fire. The commander of the battery receives orders and passes them on for further deployment of artillery fire. He gives exact orders for the placement of batteries to the second sextant NCO.

The first messenger trots off to his battery to move the guns to their assigned positions. The observation officer, the rangefinder NCO, and the sextant NCO quickly ready the lookout point. Here again camouflage is of prime importance. A diagram of the projected line of fire is drawn out calmly, as is a sketch of the lookout point, the targets, and hidden areas in the terrain. The rangefinder is used to measure the basic angle of targeting. The communications personnel of the battery establish radio and telephone links from the lookout to the command point and to the lead observer.

The artillery teams of the individual guns move them into position. The guns are instantly set to their basic positions. Ammunition is unloaded and

is immediately transferred to its positions according to the orders of the staff sergeants. Hardly has the second NCO in charge of positioning set the guns to their basic positions and secured them with poles and braces, when he receives an order on the radio: "Third gun, fire! Second, fire in sequence! Five degrees from base position! Three thousand! Level three hundred! Fire!" The artillery teams, from the battery commander to the fifth gunner, work feverishly.

We watch the battery in action for a while. Shell after shell issues from the barrels of the guns. The battery goes to group fire. An order follows: "All units, verify settings!" This serves to review the accuracy of the gun commander and of the gun positioner. Between the two platoons there is only a difference of three to five degrees, a very good performance.

Time is of the essence. We must still inspect the sapper battalion before noon. We reach the artillery calculations point, where the coordinates of targets are calculated, taking atmospheric conditions into account. We proceed to the sapper battalion by car.

The field road leads us directly to the battalion's exercise grounds near a river. One company is building a 12-ton emergency bridge. Some soldiers sink pylons into the riverbed with ramrods while others erect scaffolding. About fifty meters from the bridge the sappers are making a ferry out of two pontoons. Others cross the river with small pontoons. A strong current makes their work difficult. All exercises take place in frontline battle conditions; anti-aircraft defense, machine-gun nests, and vigilance in case of surprise attack are never neglected.

The sappers' job is arduous. On the one hand, it demands physical strength and, on the other, complex technical calculations and detailed planning. Therefore, in the sapper battalion there is a mix of hefty, well-built soldiers alongside typically "weaker" soldiers from the intelligentsia. Unfortunately, we have no time to go to the exercises of the 3rd company, which lays minefields and demolishes obstructions.

We proceed to the baking company, which makes bread for the entire Division. The Ukrainians work tensely but enthusiastically as they prepare bread for eighteen thousand men, equivalent to the population of a small town. The company has modern equipment, such as dough-mixing machines and trailer ovens. The provisions officer of the Division who commands the company praises the work of the Ukrainians. We sit down to lunch and listen to reports about the butcher's company, which belongs to the battle-supplies division, as does the baker's company. The butcher's battalion is also equipped with modern machinery and is quite capable of supplying the needs of the Division and its associated units. The company

does not yet slaughter livestock itself; it simply obtains meat from the commissariat. However, it makes sausages for the Division. We explain to our Galician guest that a large military unit like the Division is self-sufficient in terms of food supply, as well as in repair and replacement of armaments, automobiles, and all other equipment. The baker's, butcher's, medical, veterinary, repair, and field post sub-units of the Division are all part of the supply services, which comes under the command of section 1B or the 2nd general staff.

After the lunch break we visit the medical corps. We are greeted by the Division doctor and led to the main first-aid station. Several tents have been set up in a small wood. We enter one of the tents, which is marked "Admissions." It is a spacious tent with several army cots. The requisite amount of light comes through the cellophane windows. A generator provides electrical lighting at night. The Ukrainian medics bring in a few "wounded," who receive first aid treatment in one tent.

Another tent holds the operating theatre, and it is run by Ukrainian and German doctors, their assistants, and a few Ukrainian nurses. A large operating table stands surrounded by instruments, medicines, and bandages. Even the most complex operations can be performed there. A third tent serves as a haven for the wounded awaiting transfer to an army hospital. This first aid station can be dismantled and reassembled at a new location within a few hours.

Much impressed, we take leave of the medical corps. Our next stop is the location of the sectional exercises of the anti-tank and flak artillery units. We begin with an inspection of the use of the 88-mm gun, which requires a very complex and expensive anti-aircraft rangefinder indicator. The battery takes practice shots at flying targets. The guns aim with incredible speed as soon as the numbers have been read from the rangefinder. The crews for these guns consist mainly of Ukrainian university students, because the guns' operation involves some knowledge of mathematics. The battery then shoots at moving targets and is able to hit mockup tanks at a distance of one thousand meters. The soldiers calmly and quickly service the top-quality guns and score numerous direct hits. A battery of anti-tank guns, which destroy tanks with rapid, accurate fire, also take part in this exercise. The 37-mm and 20-mm guns ring out. They directly strike the assault infantry alongside the tanks. Tracer bullets draw fiery lines from the barrel of the gun to the target. A series of shots that almost reach the speed of a machine-gun drown out our conversation completely.

This is enough for today. We return to the camp. There, yet another sur-

prise awaits our guest: a parade of all sections of the Division. We barely reach the reviewing stands when the marching column, headed by the Division's orchestra, appears on the road. It turns and faces us. We hear the melody of the "Tenner" march, the parade march of the Division. The main column of the Division approaches, led by the senior regimental commander. He rides up, dismounts, reports to the commander, and stands alongside our guest.

A detachment consisting of the cavalry platoons of the three infantry regiments passes before us, with the horses restlessly thumping by to the sounds of the orchestra. It is followed by an infantry regiment. At the command, company after company files past in erect rows, saluting. Companies of infantry, machine gunners, cyclists, and heavy arms file past in rapid and varied succession. These are followed by two light and one heavy battery of the artillery regiment. The horses strain with all their might to pull the ponderous 150-mm guns. They seem not to hear the sound of the orchestra nearby. This unit is followed by a company of sappers on bicycles and a company of the communications unit on foot. Units of the supply service file past.

The parade lasts for about an hour and the orchestra never stops playing. It receives a well-deserved rest when a break comes in the procession. We hear the approaching droning motors of the motorized units, led by the commander of the demolition and anti-tank sections.

In the next section of the marching column are the motorized middle and light flak batteries. These are followed by a motorized battery of light field howitzers, and the column is closed off by the supply service's technical and mechanical unit. The orchestra files past in parade march to mark the end of the procession.

The parade made a considerable impression on our guest. The bearing, order, and presentation of the soldiers of the Ukrainian Division are good. When our guest leaves us, he will take back to Galicia the news that the sons of his land have passed this test: they have become good soldiers, conscious of the seriousness of their duties. He will also speak of how a modern infantry division is a complex and mighty military unit. And that is what the Ukrainian Division had become.

3 The Battle of Brody

On 28 June 1944 the echelons of the Ukrainian Division left Neuhammer for Galicia, to a district east of Lviv. Transfer proceeded at Tempo 4, which meant that four transport columns left every day. The executive corps of the Division's officer staff had left on 25 June.

On the 26th, I was to follow in the Division's plane, the Fieseler Storch. Twenty minutes before I was scheduled to depart, a copy of a teletype message from the German Army High Command (OKH) to the "Nordukraine" Army Group arrived. In it we were informed that the Division would not be deployed in the Stanyslaviv district but in the front's second line, in the probable center of the battle lines of the "Nordukraine." A strong concentration of Red Army forces in districts east of Lviv was seen to be massing, and the German High Command expected to see an enemy advance on Lviv and points west in early July.

The planning and measures taken to ensure a cautious introduction of the Division to its first engagement with the enemy thus came to naught. The countless reports and missions had been in vain. This was a bitter disappointment for those who had taken part in the planning. The Division was being thrown into heaviest fighting on the front, and it was only a matter of time before it would be thrown into the fiercest battles, possibly even to the area that bore the brunt of the main attack. Now I was forced to travel to the headquarters of the general army group to obtain a new situation report and a new set of orders.

Having spent the night in Cracow, I flew to Lviv on 27 June, notified Governor Wächter of the new situation, and went immediately to the "Nordukraine" Army Group headquarters. Here I also met with regrets about the decision of the German High Command, but all efforts to rescind the standing orders failed. The Division was assigned to the 13th Army

Corps of the 4th Panzer Army and given instructions to entrench in the second line in the Brody district, about one hundred kilometers east of Lviv.

The Division was also to continue and refine its battle training. According to the estimates of the army group headquarters, the Red Army advance was to come in about two or three weeks. This was deemed sufficient time for the Division to build emplacements and complete its training. The army group had, as yet, no more reserves worth mentioning, and thus the Division had to expect to be included in frontline fighting soon. Although army group headquarters did not relish this prospect, they claimed that developments on the Eastern front had forced their decision. The redeployment of the Ukrainian Division in another sector of the army group's territory was not foreseen.

The Division's echelons arrived in the new district. I reported by telephone to the staff of the 4th Panzer Army. Upon being told that my presence there was not essential, I flew off for a conference at 13th Army Corps headquarters. That same day the core of the Division's staff arrived and it was possible to begin work.

At army corps headquarters I met the commanding officer, Major General Artur Hauffe, and his chief of staff, Colonel Kurt von Hammerstein. The Ukrainian Division was something entirely new to them, and at first they were skeptical of its value in battle. However, they were pleased at the arrival of reinforcements and welcomed the chance to build a second line in their sector of the front.

General Hauffe described the situation—that the enemy lines were not manned by particularly strong forces and thus presented no immediate danger. There had been, however, a noticeable increase in the activity of enemy reconnaissance and advance attack groups. Enemy air activity had intensified, particularly in terms of reconnaissance. The unloading of the Division's matériel was to be done under cover of darkness. Our own reconnaissance reports and information obtained from prisoners indicated that enemy forces were being shifted for a concentrated attack in the 4th Panzer Army's sector.

As a component of the 4th Panzer Army, the 13th Army Corps was to defend a sector of the front that included the town of Brody and outlying areas. If the ratio of enemy forces to ours did not change, the corps would be barely adequate for this task. The corps had four to five infantry divisions or divisional groups at its disposal, and most of these were of medium or minimum strength. The entire 4th Panzer Army had no operable tanks in this sector, since the fifty stationed there were woefully low on fuel. Apart

from a few reconnaissance missions, our planes did not take part in the action, even though the enemy's shifting forces presented a number of vulnerable targets.

The commanding officer expected the attack to come in about fourteen days. In the event of an advance on Lviv, the enemy forces would have to seize the Brody defensive salient because the town was an important communications link. The general did not think there would be a frontal attack on the town and expected a pincer movement from the south and the north, with the main strike to come from the north.

He also envisioned another possibility—the worst scenario: that the Red Army forces would completely bypass the 13th Army Corps in its advance on Lviv, bypass the Brody salient, and surround it on all sides, forming a pocket. In this case, the corps would have to defend the front at Brody at any cost. To prepare for such a scenario, the Division had to accelerate the construction of its emplacements and man them as quickly as possible. The Division would then be faced with the task of preventing any attempt at outflanking the corps and stopping an enemy pincer movement, as well as halting any penetration into the Brody pocket. If the German front were penetrated, the Division would be thrown into a counterattack in order to close the gap. Other than its own internal reserves, the corps had no additional forces whatsoever and could expect no reinforcements.

The placement of the Division in the second line of the front was useful in that it could continue its training. This possibility had to be exploited as long as the front was quiet. The Division was assigned to defend nearly thirty-six kilometers of frontal sector through which the Red Army advance on Lviv was expected. No line of deployment had yet been set, and so the assembly points for individual sections of the Division were only generally assigned. The echelons of the Division arrived on schedule and without incident. General Freitag arrived in the Division's district by car after a meeting with Governor Wächter.

In the interim the reserve-training regiment was transferred from Wandern, where there was no longer any room for it, to Neuhammer. There were about seven thousand men there, and new recruits kept arriving.

General Freitag immediately reported to the 4th Panzer Army and the 13th Army Corps about the arrival of all of the Division's forces and their nature and capabilities. In light of the impending situation, a special request was tendered that, as a force made up of foreign nationals, the Division not be broken up and led into battle in individual units—the usual practice in such engagements—but that it should always be deployed as a whole and remain under its divisional command.

After the general assignment of positions was issued by the Division's staff and a detailed survey of the terrain was completed by all individual sections, an order was issued to commence construction of defense fortifications.

The first practical work in defense of their homeland inspired the Ukrainians. They finally received a reprieve from unpleasant, arduous, and long but necessary training sessions. All three infantry regiments were set to work building fortifications. The fusilier regiment built the forward emplacements, at times while under enemy fire. All other units were assigned to construct the rearguard entrenchments. To gain battle experience, the heavy artillery was brought into action under the command of frontline army units. This battle training paid dividends. The sapper battalion had its hands full and performed its duties well. The supply service was deployed near the village of Ozhydiv. The supply units built emplacements in their local defense points and adapted to frontline conditions, with all supply work being carried out at night. The field reserve battalion was stationed west of Ozhydiv and continued its training.

Although all units had been deployed about twenty kilometers from the front, they were placed on full alert. Billeting in civilian quarters was strictly forbidden. All units and their staff were to build quarters near, but not in, villages. These measures were to pay dividends later.

To supply food for its armies and as a preventive measure in view of the impending Soviet advance, the German staff bought up a fixed percentage of all horned cattle, leaving the local population with very little. Payment was made on the spot in cash or in government bonds, to requisitioning detachments of the supply service that were sent to the villages. The local population complained about such forced sales to the Ukrainian soldiers, who frequently, with weapons in hand, interfered with the work of the detachments. The higher military authorities were outraged at this "unseemly" behavior on the part of the Division's soldiers, but in this case the Germans were at fault. They should have immediately sent word of their orders to the Division, which would have explained to the Ukrainian soldiers the need for this severe but necessary measure. Perhaps the best solution would have been to hand over implementation of the requisition orders to the soldiers of the Division, instead of completely excluding them; they would have been better able to explain to the peasants the need for livestock. After urgent representations were made, further requisitioning was conducted with the assistance of the Division, and no other incidents occurred.

The fears of the Division's officer staff about the complications that could arise because its soldiers were stationed among their fellow

countrymen proved groundless. To be sure, many Ukrainians initially "played the honored guest at home," but this was quickly brought to an end. There were, however, many requests for brief leaves to the nearby areas. If these constituted visits to close relatives, the requests were granted. But in the end, the soldiers had to be reminded that they were on the front and that private concerns had to be subordinated to their military duties.

Because of enemy action in the 13th Army Corps sector, the Division was moved southward. It thus had to retreat from the emplacements it had built for the two regiments, not only on the left flank but later also on the right. The Division had built almost fifty kilometers of installations, of which only a small number were used.

There were more and more signs of an impending Red Army advance on Lviv that would strike with its greatest force directly at the 13th Army Corps. The entrenchment of the second line of defense was speeded up.

The enemy was concentrating their forces, and new enemy units were arriving. Their artillery fire was intensifying. They already had a numerical superiority and their air forces were increasingly active, while ours were nowhere to be seen—a great disadvantage. In addition, there were no prospects of reinforcements, either from the 13th Army Corps' sector or from those in the rearguard.

It appeared that the main forces of the Red Army had been aligned with the right flank of the 13th Corps and the neighboring flank of the 48th Panzer Corps.

The Division's staff and its units continuously gathered data about the possibilities of their inclusion in battle, particularly in counterattack in the Wehrmacht-controlled area. During a series of conferences, detailed planning and the practical considerations of the upcoming conflict were discussed.

It was decided that, according to available information, the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Soviet Guard tank armies, one independent tank corps, and the 6th, 7th, and 8th cavalry divisions were stationed across from the 4th Panzer Army. In addition, the enemy had an undetermined number of infantry divisions at their disposition. The cavalry divisions mentioned earlier were deployed in the Brody district.

Each Soviet Guard tank army consisted of three tank corps, with two brigades each. Each brigade had between three and four hundred tanks. In addition, each had independent minesweeping units and artillery brigades. The cavalry divisions, as opposed to the cavalry regiments, each had fifty

tanks. Therefore, it was estimated that in this sector the enemy had eighteen hundred tanks.[1]

The exact size and numerical designation of the individual Red Army infantry units was not available to us. In the center of the front there were nearly two enemy divisions for every German division, not including reserves. It could further be estimated that for every German division, there was a Soviet division in reserve behind the front line. One Soviet division consisted of only eight to ten thousand men, but its battle strength probably equaled that of one German division.

In this sector of the front, the southern border was sixty kilometers south of Ternopil at the Seret River and the northern border was north of Kovel at the Prypiat River. Here the enemy had three tank armies (of three tank corps each), one independent tank corps, three cavalry divisions, close to twenty divisions in reserve, and nearly eighteen hundred tanks and planes—seemingly boundless numbers compared to the German forces, which were somewhat restricted.

German forces in this sector were mainly those under the 4th Panzer Army and included two tank corps that were such only in name and two infantry corps. There were fifteen and a half divisions in reserve, forty to fifty tanks, and almost no aircraft. In addition, the 3rd, 5th, and 6th Panzer Divisions deployed east of Kovel were transferred to Hungary just before the Soviet attack. The protests of the Wehrmacht were in vain.

In mid-July a Soviet attack of incredible intensity was launched in the expected sectors. In the first stage of the attack the Red Army simultaneously penetrated the German line in two decisive areas: one was on the Ternopil–Lviv line, that is, into the middle of the 48th Corps; the second was north of Brody, at the juncture of the 13th Army and 46th Panzer Corps. Both strikes were so strong that they could not be halted, quite simply because of a lack of tanks and planes. A mass phalanx of tanks (mainly T-34s) poured through the gaps, supported by attack aircraft and dive bombers.

The German frontline command could not be faulted on any score, whether in its assessment of the situation or its carrying out of operations. The German officer staff and theater command properly assessed the strength of the enemy and frequently warned of the size and impact of the impending assault. It would have been unlikely for the local command to have misrepresented the situation to the German High Command, but their warnings were rejected as cowardly. And thus, during the summer months of 1944, this sector of the Eastern front was left to the powers that be by the will of the "greatest military leader of all time."

The enemy tank columns moved with extraordinary speed and ensnared the 13th Panzer Army before our reserve positions were able to move to relieve them. The enemy was aided by accidental circumstances. The northern tank strike force attacked only the left flank of the 13th Panzer Corps and hit the right flank of the neighboring 46th with full force. The vehicle carrying the commander and chief of staff of the latter unit had been blown up by a land mine. This set off a state of panic that lasted for two days.

The Bolshevik tanks met no strong opposition, tore through German positions, and closed the circle around the forces of the 13th Corps in the Busk district. Rumors that the commander of the left flank had deserted to the Bolsheviks and had thus enabled this encirclement were without foundation. However, they had a telling effect on morale during the fighting. Neither General Friedrich Hossbach (who later fought on the Western front) nor his adjutant (who later died in battle near Radom) went over to the enemy.

In the end, the man at fault for the encirclement of the 13th Corps was the Commander in Chief of the German Forces, Adolf Hitler. He had refused to listen to his military advisers when they counseled him to withdraw from Brody and set up the main line of defense on the elevation on the Pidhirtsi–Busk railway line. In this case, as in others, there was no lack of suggestions from the army and the local army group.

In this way the 13th Corps—and, with it, the Ukrainian Division—was surrounded in a matter of a few days. Neither the corps nor the Division could have done anything to prevent this, since all operations had gone on outside of their sectors. The corps did not even hear of the penetration on the southern flank until it was surrounded. Things had moved so quickly that the full meaning of the breakthrough in the north did not take hold until it was far too late.

The Bolshevik High Command had no intention of bypassing Brody and leaving the 13th Corps to its fate behind the lines. The corps still presented a threat to the enemy's forces, forces that were needed to continue the advance on Lviv. Thus arose another task for the 13th Corps: to pressure the enemy as much as possible, to hinder it from engaging in further operations. This would also strongly assist a German counterattack from the rearguard, and the rearguard alone could save the frontal sector and the 13th Army Corps.

As the Soviet operation in the Lviv district began, so did the arduous defensive battle of the 13th Army Corps—a battle of immense tactical significance, heroism, and sacrifice, and a battle that ended with the complete destruction of all units of the corps.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the enemy began the advance with superior numbers (particularly in regard to tanks) on the southern sector of the 13th Corps district, just south of Pidkamin. The staff of the corps began to suspect that this advance was connected with the northern breakthrough described earlier, and that the task of the enemy forces was to bind the Brody salient in a pincer movement and destroy it. Only later did it become apparent that the enemy command was concerned with two goals: one was a larger operational goal that had nothing to do with Brody, and the other was the simple tactical operation devoted to the destruction of the corps.

The advance tore into the right flank of the corps, again with an incredible rapidity, forcing the division units on the front line into a retreat. The corps was left with one last reserve—the Ukrainian Division.

What happened next was what we had most feared: the Division was sent into battle by individual regiments and not as a unified whole. With a seemingly mathematical precision, all that the Division had hoped to avoid, and all that its staff had warned against in countless reports, came to pass. This is not an accusation leveled at the leadership of the 13th Corps, which in the circumstances could not have acted otherwise, but at those who had decided to send the Division into battle in this particular district.

The first regiment to go was the 30th. Its assignment was to close the gap on the right flank of the corps. Neither I nor the regimental commander had had time to become acquainted with the terrain before advancing. About ten kilometers separated the regiment's original position and the projected place of engagement, east of Sasiv. The only access road was blocked by a panzer division, and following it would impede a rapid march. Not only that but on this clear day and on the next, afternoon air attacks of bombings and machine-gun fire caused losses in personnel, horses, and matériel. The regiment's advance was repeatedly halted.

Soon, however, the road was once again clear of dead horses and damaged vehicles. At the same time, first singly, then in groups, came the retreating German infantry. The demoralizing effect that the sight of this retreat made on the Ukrainian regiment, advancing into battle for the first time, can be imagined. Advancing on an enemy force superior in number that has just caused German frontal units to retreat is a dauntingly difficult task, even for the most experienced of soldiers, and it was doubly so for the Ukrainian units led into battle for the first time.

Having taken up positions in a small wood, the 30th Regiment immediately went into an attack under heavy enemy fire. It was outnumbered three to one. Then there were the tanks. The attempt to close the gap made by the enemy breakthrough, which by this time had widened, failed. Before the

regiment could even deploy, it was immediately attacked by tanks and largely destroyed. Only individual companies managed to outflank the breach and narrow the gap. The company commanders were forced to act on their own recognizance, because communications links between the battalion commanders and regimental commanders did not exist or, if they did, only for a short while.

The unit of light artillery actually managed to maintain position for short intervals but was eventually forced to relinquish them and to change them repeatedly. The constant overlapping of front lines greatly complicated matters for the artillery. It also had to function without communications and often just shot straight ahead. The regiment suffered its first casualties: one company commander and one battalion commander seriously wounded.

From the outset of the Soviet advance, a strong air attack was maintained. From dawn to dusk, enemy dive bombers and fighter planes intruded on the ground fighting. All important points, such as intersections, narrowings in the road, access roads, and towns were under constant bombardment and shelling from enemy planes. Our planes were nowhere to be seen. Only then did it become evident how correct it was to deploy units away from population centers.

Immediately after the assault began, all units of the Division were placed on full alert and ammunition supply units awaited orders. General Freitag and I were moving constantly in order to inspect locally all actions and to maintain contact between the front and the Division staff.

Then an order came for the 29th and then the 31st regiments, along with their artillery support units, to join the 30th Regiment in the field. In the first stage they were to approach Pidhirtsi and the district directly to the south. On the same day they were transferred ahead to the front, and in the evening both regiments moved out separately for an attack. The action to which they were assigned went slightly more according to plan than that of the 30th Regiment, but they both suffered heavy casualties; and so, right at the outset, they fell victim to a psychological shock from which they recovered slowly.

Finally, command over the three regiments was returned to the Division staff, which led the formation into battle as a single unit, even if its regiments were badly mauled. The heavy artillery of the Division was brought into full play. The Division blocked up the flanks and then completely sealed the gap created by the enemy. A counterattack of Ukrainian and the hastily reassembled remnants of German regiments was mounted. The Ukrainian Division finally gained control of a sector of its own on the front.

The routed 30th Regiment was sent back into the reserve rearguard. Over four days it was reformed into a battle-ready unit, although of decreased strength. Such a rapid reforming was a credit to the regiment's commander.

Because of the course of events the Division was thrust into the most difficult and most unclear frontal sector of the corps. The 30th Regiment was given the assignment of clearing the surrounding woods of the remaining enemy forces. The task of the rest of the Division was to set up a blockade of the Sasiv and Iaseniv valley in the southeast, and not to allow the enemy passage into the vast surrounding woodland.

Our left and rearguard units notified us that the enemy had again broken through our lines southwest of Brody. The field supply unit stationed in Busk reported that it was attacked by a strong combined force of enemy tanks and that it was retreating westward. Other supply units filed similar reports. At first the staff did not want to believe such reports, because it could not imagine how the enemy could have appeared that far in the rear. However, the corps headquarters confirmed these reports and gave news of the two operational strikes at Lviv.

It appeared that the enemy had successfully finished the first stage of their plan—the total encirclement of the 13th Army Corps—by meeting near the Buh River. The advance on Lviv continued. The line of communications between the corps and the rest of the German forces beyond the Buh were cut, and the corps had to fend for itself. Then orders came for the corps to defend its present positions regardless of the general situation. A relief operation for the corps was being planned to come from the south. At the same time, intensified attacks on the corps' sector were anticipated. The corps had to hold on to its present positions as long as possible to avoid complete destruction.

The next few days were very difficult ones for the Ukrainian Division. First, it found itself face to face with the main strike force; and second, the Soviet command had found out about the presence of the Ukrainian Division at the front and was trying to annihilate it at all costs. Therefore, the closing of the breach was only the beginning. The Division was now forced to remain at the newly acquired positions in the face of an intense onslaught of vastly numerically superior forces. Any additional emplacements or minefields had to be put in at night because of the proximity of enemy lines and because enemy aircraft made it impossible to do such work during the day.

The Red Army immediately mounted an overwhelming attack that we were initially able to repel. The individual breaches were cleaned up by

counterattacks, as our units got used to frontline action. Our supply lines still functioned well even though many of these units were depleted by transfers to emergency battle units or transfers to the defense of ammunitions depots and emplacements. During this time the rearguard supply units had to fight just as hard as the frontline units. Our heavy casualties bore witness to the fierce fighting and to the manliness of the soldiers.

After a series of initially unsuccessful attacks, the enemy drew up their reserves and intensified the artillery fire, tank action, and airborne attacks. It was obvious that the enemy wanted to free their forces for action elsewhere.

For ten days the battle raged in the Brody pocket, where the 13th Army Corps had been left to fend for itself and was fighting with all it had. Finally, with a desperate lunge, it led the remnants of its forces toward the Podillian highlands.

After many penetrations into the Division's sector, which we continued to repel, the enemy began to puncture the front line elsewhere. Masterfully seeking out the points of juncture between divisions, the enemy was able to concentrate their attacks on these seams incessantly. The main blow was struck between the Ukrainian Division and its right-hand neighbor, the 349th Division. The greatest drawback of fighting in that encirclement was the fact that communication with our right flank was impossible. Fortunately, the enemy never found out about this weakness and was not able to exploit it to their advantage.

Defensive battles developed. Enemy advances alternated with strong reconnaissance and quick-assault actions. There were fierce struggles for the villages of Peniaky, Huta Peniatska, Huta Verkhobuzka, Maidan Peniatsky, and Sukhodoly. The Division was forced to send its units, with increasing frequency, to flush out the enemy from the forests. Enemy pressure from the west was increased, which made provision of supplies increasingly difficult.

The numerous breaches caused by repeated enemy attacks forced the army corps staff to narrow the front in order to create reserve positions. As soon as they did, an unceasing series of air attacks was mounted against us. There were literally clouds of airplanes above us. They shot at everything that moved in our area and dropped a thick hail of bombs on the small forests. The movement of supply depots, necessitated by the narrowing of the front, became impossible in the daytime. After a while it became apparent that the least important matériel for continuing basic defense fighting or the food supply had to be either destroyed or left behind.

A problem emerged in the communications units: telephone lines had been shredded so completely that only radios could be used. But the radio

sets began to overload and would not function, so orders had to be transmitted by courier.

The situation in the Ukrainian Division's sector was becoming critical. It was still possible to contain the constant irruptions of the enemy but only with the help of remnants from other units. Our losses were heavy. The Ukrainian Division ended up in the critical salient of the front. The Bolsheviks' use of "Katiusha" rocket launchers caused incredible destruction and noticeably affected morale. Reports kept coming in from unit commanders saying that they could no longer hold their positions. It became apparent that the Ukrainians were not psychologically prepared for such heavy fighting. More could not be expected of them, since many German units had panicked as well.

In Pidhirtsi, located on a commanding elevation, fierce battles raged over the village and fort, which changed hands a number of times. The 29th and 30th regiments were involved in this action. Further fighting occurred near Kadovbytsi and Tsishky. Enemy tanks reached Olesko and joined their weakened units coming from the west near Busk. Our anti-tank units scored repeated hits at close range. The fusilier and sapper battalions were continuously in the middle of the fighting and acquitted themselves well. The 31st Regiment, the entire staff of which was killed north of Sasiv, began to show signs of disintegration. We had to shift battalions to cover for weak spots in various sectors, for example, one battalion of the Division was sent to defend Opaky.

In a situation such as this, efforts to break the encirclement should be initiated from the outside. The 8th Panzer Division and the 20th Division of Panzer Grenadiers were brought up for an attack. The encircled 13th Army Corps should have struck simultaneously toward the south in the direction of the diversionary attack. This breaking of the trap from the outside did not come about because of increasing pressure from the enemy from the south, which forced the two divisions to withdraw in order not to fall into the trap themselves; at the time the Soviets had already transferred the brunt of their attack south of Lviv.

The 13th Corps was ordered to break out. The corps commander decided to do this southward, in the direction of the Podillian highland and the area of the least enemy pressure. This was also where the attempt at breakout would have been least expected, because an attack on a heavily wooded area, made even more rugged by the steep borders of the Podillia elevation, went against the basic teachings of military strategy. One Wehrmacht division and the Ukrainian Division, which were located farthest to the north, were ordered to remain in place, defend their positions as long as possible,

and only under the direst enemy pressure to retreat southward, to enable the rest of the corps to escape from the encirclement. After the successful completion of this assignment, led by General Fritz Lindemann, the two divisions were to rejoin the rest of the corps.

All divisions of the corps set up special battle units made of remnants of their own forces. In a situation such as this, all possible measures had to be taken to ensure that no further enemy penetration occurred. Any breach would have effectively terminated any chances of breakout and would have led to the total destruction of an already weakened corps.

At this time a delegation from the UPA arrived and announced its intentions of helping the Division. The soldiers of the UPA were youths, without military training and in civilian clothes. The Division had no uniforms for them and, in the interests of the Division and of the UPA, decided to decline this offer of assistance.

By evening, however, when withdrawal was about to begin, enemy units penetrated the Ukrainian Division's sector. The situation was critical and the Division was only able to stabilize it with the help of other units. Right at that moment the corps commander asked for a situation report from General Freitag. The latter replied that he was not in a position to give such a report because he believed that the Division was not under his control any longer.

I could hardly believe my ears. Why had General Freitag not given any indication of his opinion to his closest fellow tactical officer? He had arrived at this conclusion entirely on his own, in haste and without due deliberation, and had immediately announced it to his superiors. It is no surprise, then, that this action produced a considerable feeling of enmity toward him. It is possible that he later regretted his action, or perhaps such a decision was in the greater interest of the corps. To be sure, some units of the Division were not under the control of the commander because there was a complete breakdown in communications. However, the next enemy advance could have caused a collapse of the front in the Division's sector, which would have paralyzed General Lindemann's efforts to carry out his defense of the corp's rearguard and led to its complete destruction. General Freitag should have at least requested that some reserve units be given him to shore up his front. He would have succeeded in this just as easily as General Lindemann did, because there were sufficient forces in reserve.

The commanding general of the corps accepted Freitag's resignation, handed over control over all units in the sector to Lindemann, and called Freitag in for duty with his staff. General Freitag should not have accepted this post but should have remained at the front with the very last unit of his

Division. General Lindemann stabilized the front with his own local reserves.

In fierce fighting the northern front of the corps slowly retreated southward. The situation was saved. Ferocious battles for the wooded highland and the village of Gavarechchyna broke out. New attacks began from the east, designed to stop us from gaining the Bily Kamin bridgehead. They were halted near Sviata Hora.

As members of General Lindemann's units, the Ukrainians fought bravely. There was not a single report of a soldier of the Ukrainian Division going over to the Bolshevik side.

4 After Brody

On 22 July 1944 the 13th Army Corps broke through the southern wall of the encirclement, not far west of Zolochiv, between the villages of Kniazhe and Iasenivtsi. Four assault guns of the 8th Panzer Division fought their way through to this same position from the outside but did not manage to break through the encirclement. All units under the command of General Lindemann fought with great heroism, the Ukrainian soldiers included; in so doing, they allowed the remnants of the 13th Army Corps to escape from the trap. In intense fighting the corps' units retreated southward. Pochapy, Belzets, Skvariava—these are places that will remain forever in the memory of the soldiers of the corps.

Initially, the escape breach was but 150–200 meters wide. Only later were we able to widen it. The breach was under continuous fire from all types of weapons. Enemy tanks raced along the width and the length of the escape corridor, showering the area with fire and kneading the ground with their treads. From the front, rear, and from all sides a hail of enemy bullets descended upon the troops. The corps commander personally directed the fighting from an outpost in the escape breach southwest of Khylchychi.

Directly in front of the breakout point, south of the Busk–Zolochiv railway line, rose the steep inclines of the Podillian elevation. This elevation was held by enemy units that were not numerous, but they were well camouflaged and had very experienced snipers. During the assault on the plateau we suffered casualties, both from the withering fire of the 20-mm anti-tank guns coming from behind and from the well-hidden sniper emplacements in the front. In scaling the steep embankments we were unable to take anything other than the most essential portable weaponry. We suffered enormous losses of matériel.

During the assault on the hills the air attacks ceased, probably because it

was impossible to distinguish between their planes and ours. Two German dive bombers appeared—the first and last German planes to make an appearance during the Battle of Brody—but they did not engage the enemy.

Enemy action did not end once we broke out of the encirclement. The Soviets had advanced much farther west, and this breakout did not mean we had reached freedom. We still had to fight our way out. The enemy had managed to set up a great number of emplacements in our way, although some of them consisted of only two or three tanks. The town of Holohory was one such point at which they inflicted heavy losses. It was there that the corps commander was killed.

I had been sent to the corps headquarters by General Lindemann to receive further orders, and once outside the pocket, I was joined by many Ukrainian soldiers. At the same time, General Freitag led the other larger group of Ukrainians out of the pocket. Both groups reunited on the same day under Freitag's command. The entire group, which included some Wehrmacht soldiers, stood at around eight hundred men.

Over the next few days, we continued to engage small contingents of Soviet forces. The units of the 13th Army Corps were in no man's land between the German lines to the west and the advancing enemy to the east. The 8th Panzer Division had advanced farther west than any other unit in the corps, had suffered heavy casualties, and was running out of fuel. The other units of the corps, including the Ukrainians, retreated in the general direction of the southwest. Chemeryntsi, Vypysky, Tuchne, Strilychi—here we were forced to confront the enemy yet again.

In a situation such as this, the Division's command should have been at the front of the column to assemble the Division's rescued units. It would have been easy to do this with motorized vehicles, but all vehicles had been left behind in the Brody pocket. After a considerable amount of haggling, the commander was allowed to use a vehicle of the 8th Panzer Division. A while later he was given his own personal car by the Division's technical company, which had rejoined it by that time.

With the help of many signals, Division command managed to assert control and lead the Ukrainian and German soldiers once again. Our column moved at a continuous forced march because of the speed of the enemy's advance. The roads in the path of retreat were controlled by enemy aircraft that paid particular attention to intersections and bridges. We had not yet been able to determine how many members of the Division were left.

Our retreat led us through Stryi, Drohobych, and Sambir. In Drohobych,

General Freitag met Colonel Bisanz and gave him an account of the Division's battles. Then the Division was ordered to ready itself for transfer, along with the other units of the 13th Army Corps, to the Uzhhorod–Mukachiv district of Transcarpathia. The Division was to proceed to the meeting point along the Sambir–Spas–Uzhok ravine road. Colonel Bisanz promised to notify Governor Wächter about all developments, because Freitag and I left immediately for 1st Panzer Army headquarters to report the Division's departure to General Erhard Raus. Raus listened to Freitag's report and thanked him for having brought at least part of the Division out of the encirclement. During dinner, to which other commanders of the 13th Army Corps were invited, Raus gave his personal commendation to all units of the corps.

Enemy pressure on the front intensified. The 1st Panzer Army resisted with all of its might. It was still difficult to estimate the extent of the losses sustained by the corps and the Ukrainian Division. There appeared to be left only small remnants of the original forces.

About five hundred Ukrainians from the Division met in Spas on the Dnister River. Governor Wächter arrived for a visit, and General Freitag greeted him in a depressed mood. The Division had been destroyed and all but lost. Wächter was also somewhat dumbfounded at the loss of nearly all of Galicia.

Freitag complained in very coarse, brutal terms about the cowardice, to his mind, of the Ukrainian soldiers. He expressed the belief that he had lost all face before his superiors and his career was finished, all because of the Ukrainians. The conference continued in this generally depressed tone.

Wächter said that in Berlin and in the office of the German High Command, the Division was not held in such low esteem. The conditions of battle were well known there, and in reviewing the result of the Ukrainians' performance, it was decided that they had fought rather well. Freitag's mood seemed to improve. He saw that he had gone too far in his groundless attacks on the Ukrainians and softened his tone. He began to say how true it was that, after all, the Ukrainians did not fight too poorly.

Irritated by Freitag's show of egotism, Wächter left immediately after this conversation. He had probably completely severed his ties with Freitag at this time, because when Freitag was decorated with the Knight's Cross for the Division's participation in the Battle of Brody, Wächter sent him no greeting.

I did not witness the entire conversation because I walked out when Freitag began to defame the Ukrainians. When I later inquired about the change

of attitude toward Freitag, Colonel Bisanz gave me an account of the discussion.

Unfortunately, Freitag continued to express his unprofessional opinion of the Division. In a speech to the Ukrainian second lieutenants of the Division in August 1944 at the Kienschlag officer school in Prosečnicy in Czechoslovakia, Freitag found it necessary to underscore the negative side of Ukrainian conduct at Brody to the budding Ukrainian officer corps. This provoked the German commander of the officer school himself to defend the Ukrainians.

Having crossed the Carpathians, the remnants of the Division assembled in the Serednie district, between Uzhhorod and Mukachiv. In time, about fifteen hundred soldiers of the Division assembled here, which included a veterinary company, a technical company, and a large section of the original reserve regiment. These units had not been in the Brody pocket. Aside from the full military equipment given to the new units and the portable weaponry of fifteen hundred soldiers, all of the Division's best equipment had been left behind in the encirclement, as was that of the other units of the 13th Army Corps. The German divisions did not manage to lead out a greater percentage of their troops than the Ukrainian Division, and they were disbanded and added to other divisions.

In Serednie, General Freitag and I made detailed reports and drew diagrams of the past engagements (everything from memory, since all of our war diaries had been lost in the Brody pocket) and sent them to the appropriate political and military authorities. Now it was at long last possible to draw up a gloomy situation report. The Division had gone into battle with eleven thousand soldiers. In the Brody pocket it lost nearly seven thousand. Most of them had either been killed or had been wounded and taken prisoner by the Red Army. It was possible that some of the wounded were still in various hospitals and would eventually return to the Division. Others had been assigned to German military units, as the inquiries conducted in the Iaslo district by the 18th SS Freiwilligen Panzergrenadier Division "Horst Wessel" revealed. Many missing soldiers could have ended up beyond the front lines, having mixed with the local population or joined the UPA.

The Division staff estimated that a number of soldiers would still return to the Division, which would bring the number of survivors of the Battle of Brody to about three thousand. However, many brave riflemen, NCOs, and officers would never return—they had died heroic deaths on the field of battle.

A particularly painful loss was that of the respected and loved Captain Dmytro Paliiv. Among the German officers, the loss of the commanders of the 31st Regiment and the communications unit were the most difficult to bear.

In past difficult battles the Division had acquitted itself as well as could have been reasonably expected. It was not at fault for having been caught in an encirclement and having to fight an enemy force that had every possible advantage. It was also unfair to compare the Division to similar German units that were experienced and battle-hardened. There were occasional instances of a loss of nerve, but this happened to any unit in its first engagement. No other unit had had even approximately as much responsibility in such unfavorable conditions as had the Ukrainian Division, nor could they approach it.

We had accurately gauged the unit's battle-readiness, and in our reports we had presented our assessment of the Division with scrupulous clarity, only not to be heeded. In fact, the directives of the higher authorities appeared to be in direct contravention to all of our proposals and estimations of the Division's command. Therefore, events followed their tragic course, unfortunately at the expense of the Ukrainians.

To be frank, the first sight of battle the Ukrainians had was that of German units retreating from the front. The Ukrainians were expected to perform better than the Germans and to save the day, yet they had never been in battle. Rather too much had been demanded of them, a group of men who had not yet matured under frontline action. During the fighting in the Brody pocket and during the breakout many Ukrainians proved to be extraordinarily brave. For example, wherever enemy tanks appeared, Ukrainians crawled up to fight with these metallic monstrosities at close quarters. There was a famous instance of a Ukrainian NCO who gave his life to destroy an enemy tank. Many of the Division's soldiers were awarded the Iron Cross for heroic deeds, and many were promoted for their bravery.

Looking back on the Battle of Brody, one can only say that the Division did not fail, that it performed its duties in battle with dedication. If fate did not reward the Division with victory, this was not the fault of the Division but of unfortunate circumstances. First of all, the German High Command had made the initial mistake when it assigned the Division to such a battle. The Division, however, made a noble beginning for the Ukrainian military tradition, which was to be shaped in further battles.

After our work on the battle reports, General Freitag and I traveled to the German High Command headquarters in Berlin, and Freitag proceeded into the main office. During that time, command over the Division's remnants

was assumed by the commander of the Division's artillery regiment, Colonel Bayersdorff.

SS Reichsführer Himmler took a personal interest in Freitag's reports. He was gratified that at least some remnants of the Division were able to escape the encirclement, because they could serve as the basis for an immediate reformation of the Division. The loss of weaponry at Brody was apparently one of his greater worries. Himmler had received precise information concerning the developments of the battle and believed that the Ukrainians had held up well. He thought that more could not be expected of Ukrainian units than of their German counterparts, who were equally unable to stop the advance of the enemy. He ordered Freitag to begin organizing a new version of the Division, whereupon Freitag asked that another commander be assigned to this post, so that he could be given a German division.

In light of his extensive experience with Ukrainians, Freitag's resignation was not accepted. He advised against the reformation of the Ukrainian Division purely on the basis of his wish to command a German one, particularly a division of German police. Nevertheless, Himmler insisted on reforming the Division.

We immediately proceeded to take all the necessary measures to this end. The Division was once again assigned to the military camp in Neuhammer, where the reserve-training regiment was stationed. Freitag and I traveled from Berlin directly to Neuhammer, where we discussed the final details of relocation with the camp commandant. Some difficulties arose because the camp was occupied and only a section of the former prisoner-of-war camp was free. Nevertheless, there was enough room to accommodate the remnants of the Division stationed in Transcarpathia. I flew to join them in the Fieseler Storch.

In Transcarpathia I found the remnants of the Division well rested and eager for a quick transfer, because little food remained and the soldiers lacked Hungarian currency to buy more. Relations with the local population were impeccable, their hospitality heartfelt and generous. Nevertheless, they had to wait for the transport trucks, because all railway lines were tied up with more important shipments. After ten days of waiting and complaining, the first echelons left for Neuhammer. I followed them by plane.

5 Memoir of a Battle Survived

A BLOODY DAY is coming to a close. Death has reaped a mighty harvest. Our surrounded units fought for their lives with the last of their strength, repelling enemy attacks on all fronts, one by one. Enemy incursions could not be completely fought off, only temporarily contained.

Many good friends did not survive this day. Not all of them rest in a warrior's grave: some are still lying out there where a bullet caught them or a grenade ripped them apart.

Enemy aircraft caused untold destruction. Almost all roads were choked with pulverized vehicles and bullet-riddled horses. The hot July air reeks with the rotten odor of swollen cadavers of horses. As far as the eye can see there are burning villages and barns—witnesses to the cruelty of the battle. In the heavy dusk a horrific panorama unfolds and is made even more poignant by the neighing of abandoned horses.

An order arrives to break out of the encirclement tomorrow. The Ukrainians, as well as the devastated German companies, have the assignment of holding the northern front of the pocket while the rest of the troops are to force its southern wall in order to lay down a road toward freedom and life.

Rockets flare on all sides. Fierce battles rage. The enemy advances at night under a deafening barrage of artillery fire. In the air a "sewing machine"—a slow Soviet plane—drones on. In the trenches, hand-to-hand combat with fixed bayonets. The detonation of a series of mines signals that an enemy patrol has strayed close by. Countless fires light up the night. Machine-guns and anti-tank guns chatter continuously. In between, salvos from the Soviet tanks ring out. All roads, paths, bridges, and villages are under heavy enemy artillery fire. Our columns lie under a hail of bombs.

O death, how sharp is your sting, how bountiful your harvest! One's eyes cannot close, every nerve is ready to snap. Everywhere one hears the cries

and laments of forsaken women and children. Off in the distance, a lowing cow, a howling dog.

Sometime after midnight comes news of a breakthrough out of the pocket toward the south. The enemy breaks through our lines in the north. Tracer bullets fly like sparks in the night. Our northern flank defends itself desperately and halts the enemy's advance, saving the corps from destruction, but the frontline troops have been stretched to their limits in this defense and retreat. There is no way of taking our trucks, horses, or heavy artillery. All roads, paths, and byways are choked. The escape route gives onto a steep wooded slope up which the exhausted men can barely wrench themselves, clearing their way with a rifle or pistol. The last motorized column inches its way through the night. The last bridge collapses under the weight of a twelve-ton truck. The column tries to go around it and gets bogged down in a marsh. A prize for the enemy.

Our units retreat from the northern sector. There are no more companies or battalions, only a handful of brave soldiers. A soldier falls here, a grenade lands there amid infantrymen. Groans rise up with the cries of the wounded: "Take us with you! Don't leave us here!" We can't help them, we can't even bid them farewell. We can only write to their mothers, wives, or girlfriends that they will never return.

How cruel war is! And so full of hate!

The new day begins brightly. The sun rises shimmering in the east. Does it know what a drama has been played out here? Faces laden with sadness and exhaustion turn to the east. When will the deadly fighter airplanes appear? Yes, one can see the imprint of fear, real fear for one's life on these faces. Then they are suffused with hope as they turn to the west and to the south. Will our planes arrive? They wait for them in vain. They did not arrive yesterday, and they will not arrive today or tomorrow. Did our army, our army group write us off? No, they would help us if they could, but they have nothing with which to do it; they have nothing left. But the enemy planes do not appear in the east.

From the south the enemy's pressure weakens and then abates. Is this a miracle? We sigh with relief. Up ahead is the breakthrough point. Another eight hundred meters....Here the fire of machine-guns and artillery rages madly, shells pour from the guns of tanks. Light anti-tank guns shoot tracer bullets—an inferno beyond the wildest imagination. Here lies the path to life and to freedom, but only after death takes its tithe. Many will not reach the end of this path.

The breakthrough point is only one kilometer wide. On both sides it is

flanked by enemy tanks that race back and forth, spewing fire from their barrels into the masses of huddled infantry and crushing everything that falls under their merciless treads. Before us, on the other side of the breach, lies a high railway embankment and behind it a steep slope rises like a wall, covered with dense brush. Only here and there can any clearings be seen. On the slope we can see the soldiers climbing. The enemy shoots at them from the sides and from behind.

Here, right by the breach, a lonely village stands. We are forced to pass through it because of the surrounding marshes. A small creek and a pulverized village. Explosions raise up the dust. A cow lows in a barn. The basements are filled with women and children. Houses burn. Near the barn, the commander-in-chief of the corps and his chief of staff wave their soldiers on, not heeding the exhaustion their faces bespeak. They had tried to spare their soldiers this fate, but it had been beyond their power. In a few hours, death will take these officers in its embrace.

After leaving the village our soldiers disperse once again, if only to lessen the effects of the hellish fire. On the right are bogs where many try to find cover. But they do so in vain—death reaps a harvest here as well. Our units push on across an open flatland without a hillock or ravine, through the breach. Grenades send up fountains of earth, and bullets buzz all around.

At first, the soldiers seek shelter in the face of these explosions, but then a sort of deathly ambivalence and apathy takes hold. An intolerable exhaustion of both body and soul...a fortnight of fighting in the pocket takes its toll. Time and again we see our old, good friends fall one by one. The never-ending pleading and eloquent stares of the fallen cut the soul to the quick: "Take us with you....Don't leave us here...." But we can do nothing. Two enemy T-34s approach, scattering fire in all directions. A fearless Ukrainian soldier from Zolochiv leaps up and destroys one of them with a *panzerfaust*.

We finally reach the railway embankment, where we hide and rest for a while. Our tongues stick to our palates as the canteen is passed around. The walking wounded who keep up with us endure hellish thirst.

Even here it is dangerous. A tank approaches the embankment. "Take cover!" We have no anti-tank weapons. Some of us attempt to leap over the embankment but the fire from enemy machine-guns forces us to retreat into hiding once again. The tank moves away, apparently not having seen us. We find conduits in the embankment and crawl through them to get to the other side.

Negotiating the clearing between the embankment and the wooded slope claims more victims. Thick covering fire picks us off one by one. Behind us,

one of our field cars attempts an insane crossing of the embankment. Shot to pieces, it lies in the middle of the track.

Now we scrabble up the slope through dense brush. This requires a final mustering of every last bit of strength. An incredible thirst from the burning hot July day tortures us. Thick currant bushes and other brush barely allows passage. Our ranks are raked from behind by artillery and flak weapons. Here a soldier falls dead into a clump of ferns. There a shriek marks a man who falls into the brush with a shattered leg. That will be his grave. These cruel scenes engrave themselves in our memories.

The thirst, the terrible thirst—and all of our canteens are empty. Many of us collapse from exhaustion, the slope is very steep. One helps the other, pushing, pulling. Everyone helps his fellows. True brotherhood. The officer helps the enlisted man and vice-versa.

Above me labors a soldier on a panting horse. This is the only horse that has made it this far. Right at that moment, there is a loud crack in the bushes—a pistol shot. A small movement in the bushes betrays a camouflaged Red Army soldier. He shot the horse at two paces and the smoking gun is still in his hand. Our soldiers take him prisoner. No one thinks of using his weapon. A new danger! The slope is covered with well-camouflaged enemy soldiers. We are in the middle of an enemy emplacement, the fire does not cease from behind, and the thirst burns.

We reach the ridge of the plateau. No more gunfire. Maybe we have reached safety. We sit down to rest and look back. We see the immense and horrific field of battle in all its cruel beauty, spattered with blood, stretching for kilometers.

On this clear day all of the details are as clear as on the back of one's hand. There is the village where the commander-in-chief rested. There are the swamps, the breakout point, the railway embankment. Soldiers are still streaming through. There are the two marauding enemy tanks. Farther in the distance is a battery of enemy artillery and, to one side, an advance artillery unit that has been shelling our men. Houses burn and as far as the eye can see lie our trucks and cars, abandoned, flaming, or burned wrecks. Our faithful friends, our horses, run among them or graze as if nothing had happened. Some are still in their harnesses, others still are towing their carts. But they are also not smiled upon by fate. Many of them are seriously wounded, their legs convulsing, their heads jerking up and settling back down. To the right, the church in Zolochiv is bathed in the sunlight. Only the ringing of the bells is missing, the song of death....

The river of our soldiers flows ever westward, hoping to meet our lines. Another disappointment: they are no longer there. The entire front is

retreating. In order to catch up with it, we must march, march, and march again. The heat is intolerable, our wounds fester, and our feet swell. Along the way, undamaged villages appear as oases in a desecrated desert. We must hurry. We are met by terrified villagers.

We stop by a cold well. What a reviving balm it is!

We string out into a long, thin file and march through silent forests. Up ahead we hear rifle fire. The enemy constantly blocks our way or attacks from the side. One detachment that was marching alone was ambushed in Holohory. The entire group was killed, including Major General Artur Hauffe, the corps commander-in-chief. In a meadow we encounter our soldiers, skulls shattered.

There is danger everywhere. Death is everywhere.

A short stop for a rest. I am falling asleep. One of my friends wakes me, but I no longer want to get up. A volunteer arrives with the order to go immediately to the corps commander. I get up, search for him everywhere, cannot find him. He has long since died. The faithful soldier could only have tricked me into marching. Those who stay will end up dead.

Before us is a large hillock, on its summit a lookout point. From there, we can see far around. Against the backdrop of the beautiful countryside we can see the retreating remnants of our forces. We climb down and rest in a ravine.

Some hours have passed since our breakout. Suddenly, a paralyzing roar erupts. Three or four soldiers fall, covered in blood. A well-camouflaged tank nearby shoots straight ahead. We leap aside and take cover. Enemy artillery opens fire from all sides. We skirt craters. Our own armored vehicles are three to four hundred meters away.

In the next town we find one of our mechanized infantry units. This is the retreating rearguard. We are no longer alone, we are with well-armed friends. It is still too early for rejoicing, however; they have very little ammunition and fuel. They are retreating. We can only continue marching. Those who stay will fall into enemy hands. We have not yet saved our lives. Our front will probably not be reestablished quickly. Without rest or stopping, we march day and night. How many days since we last ate warm food?

Enemy airplanes attack day and night. We are on our last legs. Our bodies begin not to heed the commands of our minds. There is hopelessness, uncertainty. We pass old and familiar towns of the beautiful Carpathian foothills—Stryi, Drohobych, Sambir.

Finally we reach our goal. Our first rendezvous point is in a Carpathian valley near Spas. Before us is one more final effort—the passage over the

Carpathians. We come back to life. We feel the happiness of revival amid the beauty of Transcarpathia. Only a handful of our soldiers remain alive; all others fell dead or are wounded and missing, at the mercy of fate.

Faithful soldiers, we will not forget you!

Fate was kind to us and we are grateful to her. Today, after the catastrophe, only one question remains: in that trap back there, was death kinder to some of our friends than life might be?

Let us give ourselves unto Providence. As it did then, let it now lead us through these times of trouble.

6 The Reformation of the Division

IN EARLY SEPTEMBER the remnants of the Division were transferred to Neuhammer. The reformation of the Division was to begin on 15 September. The deadline for achieving battle-readiness was set for the end of 1944. However, even with the greatest good will and dedicated effort this was impossible, because we had not only to supplement an existing force but also to rebuild it. Besides the time limitations, the armaments needed to equip the troops and train them were lacking completely. These factors can be attributed to the general state of the German war effort.

At Neuhammer the question of accommodations had to be resolved. In addition to the main camp the Neuhammer administration controlled a modern and well-equipped camp, Strans, which lay five kilometers to the east.

Neuhammer also had a large prisoner-of-war camp, now empty, that was surrounded by a two-meter-high barbed-wire fence and had primitive wooden barracks. Because all regular accommodations were occupied, the Division was assigned to this camp. General Freitag was not at all pleased, and he demanded that the Division be given at least a portion of the better quarters. The camp commandant tried to accommodate his request, but he was also bound to carry out the orders of the 8th Military District headquarters in Breslau.

Only after repeated petitioning of the local army headquarters and even the SS High Command was it possible to settle the matter. In a short while the Division's soldiers were moved to brick barracks, and only the reserve battalion was left in the prisoner-of-war camp. In accordance with their rank, the officers lived separately or a few to a room, in the pleasant officers' quarters. The horses were put into brick pens and our vehicles were retained in the shops and garages of the mechanics.

The second formation of the Division proceeded far more easily than the first. First of all, the Division now had experienced personnel, both Ukrainian and German. Second, all units were housed together, which made it easier to maintain discipline and continuity in training. Weapons and supplies arrived in time, even if they were not quite as plentiful as before, so there were no interruptions in the training.

For the new formation of the Division there were nearly three thousand returnees from Brody and eight thousand members of the reserve-training regiment, which brought the total back up to eleven thousand. The Division did not have problems with lack of personnel because new volunteers kept arriving. Another one thousand German officers and NCOs were to be assigned to it as well, to constitute the so-called "skeleton-personnel corps." Only under these conditions did Freitag agree to remain as commander of the Division. As luck would have it, the officer training course to which the Division had sent two hundred candidates had just come to an end, and they were all available for duty. This was a great help, considering our heavy loss of officers and NCOs in the Battle of Brody.

It was very difficult to find a replacement for Captain Dmytro Paliiv, who had disappeared at Brody without a trace. In the end, the choice came down to two Ukrainians: Dr Liubomyr Makarushka and Iurii Krokhmaliuk. The former was recommended by Ukrainian institutions, particularly the MC, while the latter had the support of the German commander of the Lviv supply depot.

Makarushka was chosen. He had been an officer in the Austrian and Ukrainian Galician armies, was a graduate of the Austrian Theresian Military Academy, and had been a deputy to the Polish Parliament between the two world wars. He took to his new post with great diligence and the best of good will. With Freitag he found it difficult to achieve any compromise. Nevertheless, Makarushka was quick to defend Ukrainian interests, and he did gain Freitag's trust. In some respects, he was more methodical than his predecessor, more persistent, and it was far more difficult to satisfy him.

There was no lack of Ukrainian soldiers. New recruits arrived on schedule, but there was now a marked difference. Previously, all of our recruits came straight from civilian life. This time they were mostly able-bodied men—Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Red Army. Ostensibly, they joined up voluntarily, but actually they did it from force of circumstance. No one was actually pressed into military service, but once they came to the Division, they had to obey military rules and could not avoid punishment if they went back on their decisions. This wave of recruits was not as good as the

first. All volunteers were immediately dispatched to the reserve-training regiment for battle training.

Two rifle battalions were added to the Division, but these German units did not live up to their expectations. The higher-quality officers and NCOs had been kept back by the German High Command and never reached the Division, regardless of the requests of its staff. Moreover, these battalions consisted mainly of Romanian *Volksdeutsche* from Transylvania who, by all appearances, seemed to have been trained to be horse grooms. Of much better quality were the *Volksdeutsch* officers and NCOs from Slovakia. They had served in the Slovak Army and readily befriended the Ukrainians.

Unfortunately, Freitag did not give them any opportunities to develop their talents, refused to advance them through the ranks, and in general rebuffed them. These officers and NCOs arrived at the Division with a positive attitude and eagerly went about their duties, so much the more puzzling was Freitag's attitude toward them. Makarushka's dogged attempts to have several Slovak Army officers of Ukrainian background join the Division were thwarted by Freitag.

Regardless of the large number of German personnel, the Division still felt a nagging shortage of good officers and NCO instructors. Nevertheless, the current staff was much better than that of the initial formation. Now the reserve training regiment could even help its instructors. To be sure, the regiment's recruits had not received complete military training and all of the basic military tenets had to be gone over with them.

General Freitag continued to petition the High Command for more German personnel. This time, his petitions bore fruit, but much more in terms of quantity than quality. The infantry inspectorate continued to manifest its ignorance of this problem.

So many Germans were posted to the Division that all positions of command of battalions, infantry companies, and heavy artillery companies could be given to them. One or two German NCOs could also be assigned to each. Administrative posts were also filled with Germans because, ostensibly, Ukrainians had few people with professional experience in these areas, and in the Wehrmacht and Waffen SS schools there were very few places for Ukrainians. What is more, the Division's administrative officer did not use the existing trained Ukrainian officers, even though he continuously assured Makarushka that he would do so. Occasionally he would make them company accountants. There were no grounds to criticize the Ukrainians for lack of qualifications because they were never given an opportunity to show their skills.

Almost all technical posts requiring longer training, from harness makers

to other craftsmen, were always given to Germans, and Ukrainians were made their apprentices. Ukrainians ably carried out their duties in the technical company, which was led for a long time by the exemplary Captain Leonid Martyniuk.

Freitag's wishes with regard to German personnel in the Division had been met, but this was not enough. He wanted to set up a reserve unit of German officers and NCOs. His measures elicited considerable dissatisfaction among the experienced Ukrainian officers who were forced to give their posts to completely inexperienced Germans and go to the reserve-training regiment or be reassigned to duty with the MC. Makarushka attempted to salvage the situation, but neither he, nor anyone else in the Division, was capable of changing Freitag's personnel policy. Aside from this, some Ukrainian officers still remained in the Division's general staff and in some positions of command with battalions, companies, and batteries.

Almost every corporal was Ukrainian. Many of them had gained invaluable experience at the Battle of Brody. They had all gone through intensive training and executed their orders very competently. I know of only one example of a Ukrainian officer being reprimanded for dereliction of duty. To be sure, some Ukrainian officers had to be dismissed from the Division at the outset because of their unsuitability, but the same happened with German officers. Not a single Ukrainian or German officer was ever punished for cowardice in the face of the enemy, and this was in no small measure attributable to the extraordinarily strict disciplinary standards established by Freitag.

The presence of at least some instructors with actual battle experience was very useful to the Division. Courses were set up by the reserve-training regiment to fill the ranks of the NCOs for command of the Division's subunits. Good results were produced by the field reserve battalion, which by this time had a number of experienced instructors.

A barrage of tests was set up for former Ukrainian officers. Earlier, the assignment of rank to former Ukrainian officers of the Imperial Austrian Army was done by the Division, upon attendant instructions from higher military authorities.[1] After a test of the officers' physical and mental attributes and an evaluation of the possibilities of their application, they were given a rank by the Division itself, generally equivalent to the ones they once held. Former ranks could not always be given, for instance, to those who were too old. Higher ranks were never given. These individuals had to take a lower rank and serve in any department of the administration or simply leave the services.

Many examinations were done under the authority of the commander of

the reserve-training regiment, Kleinow, who engendered quite a few complaints from the Ukrainians. Captain Makarushka brought this matter to Freitag's attention on many occasions and always had documentation about this arbitrary conduct. Kleinow almost never took part in the testing itself and made his decisions strictly on the basis of his subordinates' reports.

Freitag was informed that Kleinow did not even know which officers were slated for examination and which ones were not. Thus, some senior officers were set aside and treated as recruits, and their protests did not even reach the commander. Freitag simply let the matter rest and only incidentally issued Kleinow a reprimand.

Officer battle training proceeded at a furious pace. The candidates were once again sent out of the Division for courses. All sub-units of the Division continued their training in theoretical matters at topographic map centers and in field practice. It was finally possible to go through the paces of a planned, intensive, and refined training of officers, something that was noticeably absent from the Division's first training sessions. In the first instance, Ukrainian officers had lagged behind because of their advanced age (with a few exceptions) and a long lapse in military action between the two wars. Now the German officers and NCOs lagged behind because of their excessively rapid rise through the ranks, their youth, and their lack of practical experience.

The Ukrainian Division had become a well-known fact to the Ukrainian community in Germany, and more and more applications were being received from forced laborers and prisoners of war in camps in Germany. These volunteers could unfortunately not be released from their camps, especially those who had positions in administration or industry.

The best Ukrainian riflemen and NCOs were sent to so-called Ukrainian youth camps. These "youths" were mainly refugees who had fled the Red Army advance. At these camps they received pre-military training while they awaited transfer to the Division as candidates for NCO rank. However, most of them were taken for service into the German anti-aircraft units of the Luftwaffe.[2]

At long last, the commander of the reserve-training regiment was replaced by Colonel Marx, and further cooperation with the rest of the Division was greatly eased. The regiment took to intensive work and showed very good results. This regiment, particularly in a division of foreign nationals, had a very important duty to perform. It was here that young Ukrainians, who came from an entirely different world, first chanced upon the rigid framework of the army. The reception they encountered upon

joining and the attitude of their training officers had a great influence on whether they would be positively disposed to their Ukrainian Division. Thus, the MC and other leading Ukrainians were particularly interested in the relations of this regiment to the Division. Representatives of these institutions frequently visited the regiment, issued complaints to the Division's staff about various contraventions of regulations, and made a number of suggestions for changes.

In the preceding months a number of Ukrainian nurses had finished their training in German and Ukrainian facilities and were transferred to the Division. They were assigned to its field hospital, where about forty Ukrainian and a few German nurses later carried out their duties in exemplary fashion under the orders of the German head nurse. Military regulations did not generally permit a division to have a hospital of its own, but in light of its foreign (that is, non-German) nature the Ukrainian Division requested that it be assigned a separate hospital. This request was granted.

The main task of the hospital was keeping wounded and sick Ukrainian soldiers with the Division. In normal instances, German soldiers were sent from army hospitals to reserve regiments in the rearguard after recovery. As a result of this practice, many wounded soldiers of the Division had been sent to other reserve units and had been lost to it forever. Now all of the wounded would be taken care of in the Division's hospital, which was always stationed behind the Division and outside of the active sectors when it went into battle. Once discharged, the soldiers returned to the Division's reserve-training regiment. The quality of care was always very good and the hospital itself was subject to the inspections of the Division commander.

The Division was also assigned a rest home in the well-known spa at Zakopane, in the northern foothills of the High Tatry. This home was funded by the Generalgouvernement and Ukrainian institutions. To it were dispatched the Division's deserving Ukrainian and German soldiers for three to four week rests. Quite a number of Germans and Ukrainians spent a pleasant and restful time there.

The supply of matériel could not have been as good as it had been when the Division was first formed, because then it had received more weapons than called for in the regulations. However, the tireless IB, 4A, and 4C section officers managed to procure what was possible under the circumstances.

The Division was now formed as a Type 44 infantry division, with the difference that, instead of a mixed detachment of flak artillery, it now received one battery of 37-mm flak artillery. Later, when the formation of the Division was complete, it was ordered to convert to a Type 45 infantry

division. This kind of formation was born out of the experiences on the Eastern front and was geared to maximum use of limited personnel and reserves, limited weaponry, and weak supply lines. We requested that this designation not be applied to the Division, arguing that it had a ready base of volunteers and that its supply sections could not be reduced further because they supported a reserve regiment of six thousand men. This request was granted.

The condition of our horses was also much worse than when the Division was first formed. Those we received were often suffering from infectious diseases or were already in very poor condition. Many of them had to be destroyed. As with the first formation, we had to send horse requisitioning units throughout the Generalgouvernement. Then as now, many Ukrainians did not return from their mission. Some of them deserted, others joined the UPA, while some of them fell prey to marauding partisans and others to the enemy advance. It was much more difficult to obtain horses for our various units, but the 4C sectional commander did his best to supply them all. It was also most important that our Ukrainian horse grooms did a very good job of feeding and watering them.

The military police platoon was expanded into a company of more than one hundred field gendarmes. It performed very well in maintaining the necessary discipline and order in the Division. Ukrainian gendarmes did not flinch at combating transgressions of regulations and dealt with them with appropriate severity. In performing their duties they were considered to be the superiors of all the Germans.

The intensive training continued in all sub-units and was directed at making the Division battle-ready by the end of the year. This task was much easier now that the Division had its skeletal personnel corps and its unit commanders who could organize and carry out training independently in their sections. It was no longer necessary, as it had been in early 1944, to organize separate courses for the instructors. The reserve regiment, in which the recruits were subjected to a basic training that was closely associated with battle training, was of invaluable assistance.

At all stages, the training was done in the field, where particular attention was devoted to active defense. Frontal engagements in the Battle of Brody had demonstrated that Ukrainians did not stand up very well to enemy fire when in a defensive position. They were much more adept at counterattacks and charges. A considerable amount of time was devoted to hand-to-hand combat and night exercises tied to long marches of escalating degrees of harshness. The benefits of this latter training came to light later. The supply units, besides receiving technical training, joined in the general exer-

cises. Weapons training for at least two hours a day was assigned to all units, including the supply units. All facets of training incorporated the lessons learned at Brody.

The systematic training of the Division had begun on 15 September, and by early October combined exercises involving the use of live ammunition in battlefield conditions were taking place. The Wehrmacht was of considerable assistance in this since it had taught many of the specialists who were now passing on their knowledge to the Division. In addition, about one thousand soldiers of the Division were stationed with various Wehrmacht reserve units and underwent training. In the first stage of the Division's formation the Wehrmacht had also trained thousands of Ukrainians in its reserve units. The Division's supply service ran group courses that trained cooks, tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, and so on.

The reorganized Division was also given a unit of about fifty dogs trained in security and tracking. In order to provide trained handlers for these dogs, certain soldiers were sent to the so-called "Research Station for Homing Pigeons and Dogs." In engagements to come, particularly those in inaccessible terrain and dense brush, the canine unit proved indispensable.

Cinema screenings, recitals by artists and soloists of the Lviv opera, and the concerts of the Division's orchestra and Ukrainian choir provided the Division with much-needed relief and entertainment.

Unfortunately, the matter of social assistance for the soldiers' families was still not adequately resolved. This was a matter of particular importance now that many of the families had fled westward and did not know their final destination. A special commission was set up to locate and assist these families. It worked closely with the MC, the UCC, and the individual recruiting offices. The MC was concerned not so much with monetary aid as with finding a place for resettlement of the families, the provision of the basic necessities of life, and, if possible, finding employment.

By now, not only the Ukrainians but many Germans had also lost home and hearth. Because of this, Freitag allowed the wives of both Ukrainian and German soldiers to visit their husbands in the camp at Neuhammer. They were given separate accommodations and for appropriate payment they received meals from the army canteen. In order to enable the largest number of wives to take advantage of the few accommodations, visits were restricted to fourteen days. Many soldiers took advantage of this privilege, which raised their morale considerably.

A visit by Colonel Bisanz and other members of the MC and UCC was welcomed warmly. The soldiers particularly looked forward to visits by Father Vasyl Laba, who was everyone's favorite.

Progress in formation and training was the subject of reports filed regularly with higher military authorities. In every report the shortage of supplies and ammunition was cited as the reason why the Division would not be ready for battle by the end of the year. Demands were issued for adequate personnel, as were reminders and warnings that a premature use of the Division in heavy fighting was inadvisable. The political role and significance of the Division were also underscored. The fact that many young members of the Galician intelligentsia had joined the Division emphasized the necessity of ensuring that the unit's engagements were successful, from a political point of view.

From the moment it had been formed the Division's command had demanded that the German political authorities impart a Ukrainian national character to the unit, but in vain. Governor Wächter had also underlined the necessity of this measure. Only with the reformation of the Division did these petitions show any signs of influence.

Almost all Ukrainian demands were soon met. The Division, at long last, was granted permission to officially call itself "Ukrainian" and not simply "Galician." The latter name displeased the Ukrainians, and it conveyed an inappropriate understanding of the Division to many Germans. The Division obtained permission to fly the Ukrainian national blue-and-yellow flag alongside the German flag. A new oath of allegiance was accepted, which was no longer a translation of the German oath but allowed the Ukrainians to vow their allegiance to the struggle for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. It was also permitted to play the Ukrainian national anthem along with the two German ones.[3]

Only the national symbol, the trident, was still officially prohibited, although no one enforced this in practice. Almost all flowerbeds and stone mosaics in front of Ukrainian quarters were in the form of tridents.

Why were all of these national symbols allowed now when they were of virtually of no practical use? Why did this not happen earlier? The German Nazi government had made a basic mistake when it overestimated the German forces, permitted no compromises, and wished to have a free hand in all of its actions. How many times had the Ukrainians asked why the Germans were not giving them any form of political agenda? Ukrainians had been ready to work with the Germans and wanted to take part in the struggle against Russian communism on the German side, but they demanded to have their own political agenda that would guarantee the liberation of Ukraine. Who could expect any sort of Ukrainian enthusiasm without a political agenda? Without the prospect of a future? In the end, the Division was allowed to wear the trident. Although all of this progress

came much too late, nevertheless a new impetus was imparted to the soldiers and it raised their morale considerably.

Simultaneous with this progress, relations between the Division and the UPA improved. The latter had even maintained contact and proferred its help at Brody. This did not result in actual cooperation, because at the time the UPA units lacked the necessary training, weapons, and supplies. Also, the Division's command did not want to use civilians in order to avoid exposing them to the harsh treatment meted out to volunteers should they be taken prisoner. With the loss of control over most of Galicia, the influence of the UPA on the Division was almost eliminated. However, relations were maintained, and they continued to be good. The UPA had now turned its attention to a more fearsome enemy—the Bolsheviks. Its attacks against the rearguard of the Soviet front had caused a considerable amount of damage. According to many reports, the Red Army was forced to devote a large force to defend its supply lines and depots but, even so, suffered constant disruption. Germans kept contact with the UPA for their own benefit.

It came as a surprise to everyone when Freitag was awarded the Knight's Cross for the battle-readiness and performance of the Division's German and Ukrainian soldiers. At first the news sent general happiness through the ranks, because such an award was a great commendation for the entire Division. However, among the many messages of congratulations that arrived, there were none from either the MC, the UCC, or Wächter, and this spoke of their opinion of Freitag. Wächter finally did express his congratulations four months later, when he chanced to visit.

Having broached the subject of the treatment of Ukrainians by Freitag and many other Germans, it is worth taking the opportunity to discuss the German military concept of *kadaver-gehorsam* (obedience until death). The German Army, and particularly the old Prussian Army, was frequently criticized for this principle, which basically reduced the subordinate soldier to the level of a soulless automaton and unthinking being. A private could not be considered a human being; only as a low-ranking officer did one acquire such status.

Such treatment of subordinates could, to some extent, be excused in a professional army but never in a national one formed for the defense of one's homeland. In an army of this type, an academic, a doctor, merchant, or worker, although clothed in the uniform of a simple soldier, still has the right to be treated as a person. Every one of them comes to take up arms with the best of intentions and with a positive frame of mind. They are no worse than their officers or NCOs whose orders they follow. In the service

they might be subordinates, but they are never to be considered lower people, that is, worse or of less value than their superiors. A volunteer wants to be led with understanding and compassion, not with a "barracks tone." Only on such a basis can trust and the best possible performance be achieved.

These were the principles that should have been followed in training the Ukrainians. One had to be discerning in one's approach, sincere in spirit, and of an open heart. One had to treat a Ukrainian as a person, not as a subordinate. The leader could never be merely an able commander-machine. Thus the Division had to have a specially chosen German staff that would have had these characteristics and sufficient psychological preparation to understand the Ukrainian soul. The implementation of the "obedience until death" principle in training an already suspicious-minded Ukrainian could only produce a strong feeling of inferiority in him, which always stood in the way of his performing his duties in battle. Thus, the "barracks tone" was not suited to this Division, but human understanding and relations of heart to heart were.

This does not mean that all harsh words or reprimands should have been dispensed with in the Division—not at all. But they should have been applied with more judgement and understanding. Praise and reprimands, ably administered at the right moment, would bring the best results.

It should not be forgotten that Ukrainians respond very well to praise and are almost oversensitive to criticism. Obviously, in the Division, as in any good army in the world, the notion of command and obedience had to stand as the basis for all discipline and order.

7 The Division in Slovakia

In early October 1944 the Division received an order to transfer immediately to Slovakia, where an insurrection against the German occupation had just broken out. The Wehrmacht units in the area had become embroiled in suppressing it, but they were needed for deployment at the front. The Ukrainian Division was called in so as not to leave large sectors of territory without a German military presence. While stationed in western Slovakia the Division was to continue its battle training. It was assigned to the command of General Hermann Höffle, whose headquarters were in Bratislava.

General Freitag and I were to report to him immediately and obtain all the necessary information. The reserve training regiment was to join the Division in the field. The Division was also to form one battle group composed of a battalion supported by artillery, anti-tank, and sapper units. This battle group, also assigned to the command of General Höffle, was to be separated from the Division and sent ahead to suppress the insurrection.

The Division's staff immediately issued the requisite orders and directives. The battle group consisted of one infantry battalion of the 29th Regiment, supported by one battery of light artillery, two anti-tank platoons, two platoons of sappers, a communications unit, and a supply unit. Lieutenant Colonel Wildner, a *Volksdeutsch* from Slovakia and a former officer of the Slovak Army, was assigned to command it.

The battle group was assembled at once and sent off just twenty-four hours later in three transport trains. For the rest of the Division, transport requests were sent to the responsible officer in Breslau, and the entire Division prepared for transfer.

On the following day the commander, Freitag, and I, together with our support staff, went by rail to Bratislava via Vienna, to confer with Höffle's

staff concerning details of this transfer and the new assignment in Slovakia.[1] Naturally, Höffle was happy to obtain the reinforcements that the Division represented. Freitag emphasized that the Division was in the process of formation, that it was far from complete, and that he would see to it that its battle training continued. He also explained that because almost all available weapons, ammunition, and supplies had been given to the battle group, the remainder of the Division was not deployable.

General Höffle took these remarks into consideration. He believed that the mere presence of a large military unit, even in a state of limited battle-readiness, would contribute to the calming of the sector. He had a good understanding of the concerns of the Ukrainians and promised to supply the Division with weapons to complete the formation and training. This was nothing extraordinary; his interests dictated the creation of a battle-ready unit as quickly as possible.

Höffle informed us of the situation in Slovakia—that an insurrection, apparently Bolshevik-inspired, had broken out. Almost the entire Slovak Army had joined the rebellion, including the minister of defense, Brigadier General Ferdinand Čatloš. This insurrection was also supported in part by nationally conscious Slovaks, as a gesture of revolt against the German occupation. The insurrection had broken out in the tank garrison in Martin. There, and in the Ružomberok district, many Germans had already fallen victim to it. There had been recent indications of a possible revolt, but General Höffle's warnings had been ignored by the higher authorities. The German consul in Bratislava, Hans Elard Ludin, was particularly at fault.

Now the uprising was centered on the district of Banská Bystrica and Zvolen. The army of Slovak insurrectionists did not show a particular willingness for an all-out confrontation, but they had taken a considerable amount of weapons and supplies with them. Soviet officers and commissars were quite possibly the backbone of the insurgent army. Because of the uprising, partisan activity had broken out in Slovakia.

It was difficult to keep the main lines of transport and communications open. General Höffle planned to lead an attack on the center of the uprising as soon as he obtained the necessary forces. The Division's battle group was to take part in this action. His other plans included the suppression of partisan activity, which was often directed by local communist elements, as well as by individual soldiers of the Red Army. Since the mountainous terrain of the region favored the partisans, General Höffle desperately needed forces both to fight them and to defend important communications lines and centers of military production.

The Division was to be assigned to defend the town of Žilina as well as the surrounding district. The Division was immediately to engage in combat with the partisans. Their battle strength was rather insignificant, so the Division could begin at the level of training it had reached.

The "Tatra" Panzer Division from Legnica (Liegnitz) was also stationed in the Žilina district, and it had largely cleared the area. However, this panzer division was needed for the attack on the center of the uprising, and so the Ukrainian Division was to step in as a replacement. Höffle asked Freitag to go immediately to Žilina and discuss all the necessary details with the "Tatra" Division commander. The section IB commander was to resolve immediately matters of weapons and transportation with the quartermaster of General Höffle's staff, in which the latter was to give any assistance required. Höffle again promised energetic support. The Division filed a request for armaments with the office of the High Command in connection with its transfer to Slovakia. It received the laconic reply, "We have none. Get them from the partisans."

The next day I drove with General Freitag to Žilina, where we conferred with General Friedrich-Wilhelm von Loeper about the technical details of the exchange of control over the area. The Ukrainian Division would be responsible for clearing the following areas: Čadca, Ružomberok, Martin, Považská Bystrica, Žilina, Turzovka, and the important Upper Silesia–Bratislava and Žilina–Turzovka–Ružomberok railway lines. It was agreed that the defense of a large number of sites from partisans who enjoyed the advantage of well-covered territory would take a fairly sizeable military force. After these discussions, we returned to Neuhammer.

On 15 October 1944 the first echelons of the Division left Neuhammer for Slovakia. A few days prior to this, we sent a quartermaster unit ahead to take the necessary measures to accommodate the Division—assign living quarters, prepare the defenses, arrange for the provision of supplies, and so forth.

The Ukrainian Division took over from the "Tatra" Division and set up in the following districts:

- Division staff: in Žilina
- 29th Regiment: to the north, command point in Kysucké Nove Mesto
- 30th Regiment: to the west, command point in Velké Bytča
- 31st Regiment: to the east, command point in Martin
- Fusilier regiment: to the southwest, command point in Rajec
- Artillery regiment: Žilina district, command point in Bytčica
- Anti-tank and demolition unit: in Martin; sapper battalion: in Vrútky

- Communications unit: in Žilina
- Supply section: in the district directly south of Žilina
- Administration sections: in Žilina; field reserve regiment: to the east, command point in Bela
- Reserve-training regiment: command point in Čadca
- Battalion command points: 1st, Čierna; 2nd, Turzovka; 3rd, Oščadnica; reserve, Čadca

This was the basic deployment, arrived at after a number of changes, but it never did remain completely stable.

All units that were not part of the Division but were still operating in that area were placed under its command for use in anti-partisan and area-securing actions. Sometimes the Division had under its control up to eleven additional battalions, which it not only had to direct but also supply.

Considering that the Division, together with its reserve regiment, had about twenty-two thousand troops under its command, supplying other units was a heavy load for the provisions companies to bear. They, and the administrative units in particular, deserve commendation. The butcher's and baker's companies, ill-equipped and with minimal training, performed their duties very well, at times supplying forty-five thousand men with bread and meat.

The district the Division was to defend was divided into zones. The various sub-units deployed in these zones were responsible for defense, maintenance of order, and combating partisans. The senior officer in each district was given command of all of the non-divisional units stationed in his zone that had assignments similar to those of the Division. The point defenses were taken over immediately, and from the first day our various sub-units carried out search-and-destroy missions against the partisans.

The chief task facing the Division was the securing of the main railway line between Ružomberok and Žilina. This line cut through dense forest, crossed many small rivers, and had numerous tunnels. It was not only of considerable strategic importance for moving supplies but was also a valuable line for carrying newly made weapons from the artillery works in Ružomberok. The defense of the railway line was given to the Division as a so-called "Führer Befehl," an order of great importance.

The protection of the population willing to work, particularly the industrial workers, was another of the Division's duties. The partisans would often attack and abduct the workers on their way to the factory. It was

particularly important to protect the workers of the munitions works in Považská Bystrica, whose places of residence were far-flung.

Despite the strong defense force, here and there some rails were initially blown up. This did not cause an undue amount of damage because they could always be repaired. What was more important was that not a single strategic structure be destroyed. It is a credit to the Division that, in four months of service there, no bridge or tunnel (which, if damaged, would have caused indefinite delays of shipments) was blown up in its district. In addition, all shipments of munitions from the factory at Ružomberok arrived without incident. Obviously, there was not much the Division could do about acts of sabotage committed by the Slovak railroad workers.

Constant effort by the Division's units to clear the local terrain soon showed good results. Within ten days the Division managed to drive the partisans into the more distant mountain regions, far from all main roads and railways. It had been dangerous to go out alone in broad daylight; now it was safe to do so at night.

The commanders of the Division's individual units frequently conferred with the regional commander in Bratislava. This regional commander and his chief of staff, who was a Wehrmacht officer, were both well disposed to the Division and its needs, so that it was soon properly equipped and mobile. During various tactical conferences in Bratislava, I always found the staff there to be understanding of the interests of Ukrainians. The man who frequented the Bratislava headquarters most often was the commander of the IB section, as were his officers. He was the one responsible for keeping the Division so promptly and well supplied.

The Division received weapons and supplies of all kinds, particularly Czech-made trucks. A significant amount of weapons and supplies were part of the booty captured in the suppression of the rebellion, which was then assigned to the Division by the regional commander. The Division's battle groups also captured a fair amount of the weapons, ammunition, horses, and equipment they used. For example, up to ninety percent of the German field howitzers that the artillery regiment came to use were captured.

Vigorous training in all units continued after the transfer to Slovakia, with particular emphasis on combat and sharpshooting exercises. These were conducted with live ammunition, as training for anti-partisan activity. Territory where partisan units were known or suspected to be were always the ones chosen for reconnaissance missions, night exercises, or assault exercises. The exercises had a twofold benefit in that they harassed the enemy continuously and also provided each soldier with training in actual combat

situations. Under such conditions, battle training resembles frontline battles very closely.

The Division suffered almost no casualties, and the constant changes in our units' position ensured some success. However, the district in which the Division was stationed did not lend itself very well to exercises involving units or battalions of regimental size, because the deep, narrow valleys did not allow for deployment of such a large force in battle order.

Together with combat training, a series of weapons, marksmanship, and special courses were conducted. Drills were held only inasmuch as they contributed to the maintenance of discipline.

The mountainous terrain gave ample opportunities for strenuous physical exercise and training. Sentry duty and security were always conducted in earnest, because even on the company or platoon level, units had to operate independently in partisan-occupied areas.

To accelerate the pace of combat training the Division tried to avoid being assigned to the defense of important strategic points. Whenever possible, this kind of service was left to the German units, which consisted mainly of older soldiers and of invalids. They preferred sentry duty to combat with the partisans, while the Ukrainians, who had a good feel for nature, quickly accustomed themselves to service in the rugged terrain and gained experience in the frequent engagements.

In November 1944 preparations were underway for the final assault on the center of the insurrection in Banská Bystrica. The insurgents, between sixty and eighty thousand strong, awaited the advance in well-fortified positions. They had light weapons, artillery, and even some tanks and aircraft. The details of the campaign were not known to the Division's officers, because the Division did not take part in the operation. The German commander of forces in Slovakia led the assault with a relatively small force—only three divisions—and yet he was able to rout the insurrectionists with very few losses.

Of the Division's units, only Wildner's battle group took part in the assault, approaching the center from the southwest. The unit distinguished itself both in the assault and in defensive actions. Many of its soldiers were decorated. In this instance the soldiers of the Division were awarded standard medals of the German Army, not those given to Eastern European nationals, as was the practice in other units attached to the Wehrmacht.

At the same time the Division had to form a second battle group—the 3rd Battalion of the 30th Regiment, commanded by Captain Wittenmeyer—to free the main railway line and the roadway from Ružomberok to the east from partisan control. The group consisted of one

infantry battalion with a section of artillery, of sappers, anti-tank grenadiers, a communications unit, and a supply unit. In a four-week campaign against the partisans it managed to open both main communications arteries, to throw the partisan units back into the impenetrable mountains (the High and the Low Tatry), and to continue to monitor their movements. It persevered through deep snows and the most impassable of mountains, showing a high level of battle-readiness. The battle group also managed to uncover large caches of weapons, which ended up supplying our artillery regiment with all of its light guns.

The commanders of both battle groups were able and responsible officers who knew the Ukrainians and knew the key to their souls. They were both respected and trusted by the Ukrainian troops and achieved great successes with them.

A third battle group was also stationed in the area south of Ružomberok, but it did not encounter any partisans; they had all dispersed by that time.

The Slovak uprising, which had probably been inspired by communist elements and was supported by only a small segment of the Slovak national movement, was doomed to failure from the start. It was suppressed in a very short time, with very few losses to the occupying forces. The insurgents surrendered in whole formations at a time. Only a few small units managed to break out of the encirclement to continue fighting independently. They were eventually tracked down and either destroyed or taken prisoner.

During the days of fighting in the Zvolen–Banská Bystrica district, the Division was constantly engaged with the partisans, who managed to escape the pocket but were not given a moment's respite. The anti-partisan actions extended all the way into the Lower Tatry and Fatra mountains, where many of the partisan groups, their means of sustenance completely depleted, surrendered.

Since partisan war easily leads to harshness toward and excesses against civilians, the troops were continually admonished to conduct battles in a decent and controlled manner. All executions of prisoners and hostages were expressly prohibited. The destruction of buildings was also forbidden, unless in the course of battle they were occupied by the enemy. No hostages were ever to be taken, let alone shot. However, isolated instances of excesses toward the civilian population may have occurred. Such events were regrettable, but they could not be avoided, because the partisans obtained a fair measure of assistance from civilians. The perpetrators were held to strict account for their actions. The Ukrainians were accused by various parties of excesses for which they were not responsible, and the Division protested strongly against such false accusations.

After the suppression of the uprising the Division had either captured or been assigned so many weapons, horse, trucks, and other supplies, that it was fully equipped and battle-ready. The supplies were almost one hundred percent Czech, and the light Czech cars proved very useful.

The so-called SS Dirlewanger Brigade, a Waffen SS unit, had also taken part in the quashing of the rebellion. In this special punishment brigade demoted soldiers who had been punished for insubordination or breaking army regulations were given a chance to redeem themselves. The brigade consisted of various officers and men from all sections of the Wehrmacht. All officers, NCOs, and riflemen had been demoted to the lowest rank of private. Unfortunately, as was the case in German concentration camps—and earlier, in Allied prisoner-of-war camps—the criminal element had not been separated from those who had nothing to do with crimes against morality. For instance, some officers had been demoted and punished for "noncompliance with orders" that had been impossible to carry out in the changing circumstances of the front.

The commander of this brigade was SS Brigadenführer Otto Dirlewanger, a protégé of the SS central administration chief Gottlob Berger. Dirlewanger could not be considered a military officer. He was notorious for his brutal and stupid leadership of the brigade. Even in the middle of a campaign he frequently went on drinking binges at night and slept during the day. As a result of his gross tactical errors, the brigade often suffered heavy casualties.

There was little opportunity for rehabilitation for the brigade's soldiers. For example, two former officers of the Wehrmacht had distinguished themselves with bravery in the field, and this prompted the regional commander of German forces in Slovakia to recommend an advancement in rank. However, he was sent back a rejection from the SS central administration with a letter from Himmler, reprimanding him for his favoritism toward Wehrmacht officers. Both of these officers never received any recognition for their deeds.

For a very short time the Dirlewanger Brigade was attached to the Division during a campaign. Dirlewanger pointedly refused to carry out the Division's orders and spent the most crucial moments of battle in bed, completely uninterested in the fate of his unit. He had no control over what happened in his brigade, which was largely in the hands of the criminal element. They committed a number of outrages against the civilian population and left a bad reputation behind them wherever they went. Later, the brigade attempted to pass off these actions as having been committed by the Division, as if everything could simply be blamed on the foreigners. Unfor-

tunately, by order of Himmler and the SS central administration, the brigade was constantly shifted around, and it left entire districts plundered.

Dirlewanger also contravened all regulations concerning military secrecy. He printed up the entire staff list, battle-strength record, and armaments list of his unit at a civilian printing shop. The Division immediately reported this flagrant violation to higher authorities, hoping that this would effectively lead to Dirlewanger's dismissal. However, these hopes proved to be in vain. He was never reprimanded and remained at his post.

At the same time, in western Slovakia, in the "security zone," a so-called *Osttürkischer Waffenverband* (Eastern Turkish Battle Group) was fighting on the German side. The unit's commander was quite a singular personality. He paraded himself with the title of "Prince Harum al Rashid," or something to this effect. He was actually a German who spoke perfectly fluent German and who had previously been known to have a very ordinary German name but recently had accepted Islam. He had been awarded the title of "Prince" and countless medals (with which he bedecked his uniform) for his services to his new religion. His appearance was quite strange, and, whoever he might have been, he was certainly not a suitable military commander.

This "Prince's" unit also committed outrages against the civilian population (although not on the same scale as the Dirlewanger Brigade) and attempted to ascribe them to the Division.

It bears mentioning that the regional commander in Slovakia knew full well that the Division's command was doing its utmost to wage campaigns honestly. Thus, the misdeeds of such units as Dirlewanger's should be made clear, because they were always blamed on the Ukrainians.

All units of the Division took part in campaigns against partisans and continuous harassment of their units. Some missions were carried out by larger units, some by small assault groups. Surprise attacks on partisan strongholds on the march always had good results. From the beginning the Division's goal was to remain on the move and give the opposing forces no rest. The partisans either abandoned the Division's district completely or retreated into the impassable mountain regions far from the main arteries of communication.

To secure its district successfully the Division deployed itself in separate and even dispersed centers, by individual companies and sometimes platoons. This deployment spread the emplacements of the Division over a wide area, gave greater protection to factory workers, and eased anti-partisan actions and the continuous clearing of territory. Reconnaissance,

discovery, and then occupation of the usual routes of partisan movement and harassment of partisan units was the accepted tactic of such campaigns.

In these actions Ukrainians showed considerable endurance and expertise in such skills as use of the terrain and camouflage. However, if left to their own devices in impenetrable terrain, they frequently failed to follow orders, neglected basic military principles, and failed to pay attention to detail.

In searching terrain they also did not communicate with each other very well, so some campaigns did not end successfully. For example, in action east of Žilina, north of the Váh River valley, we had once encircled nearly two hundred partisans. The trap was set up rather tightly, so all attempts to break out were repulsed. In addition, a reserve unit stood by, ready in case of need. The partisans moved quickly from north to south along the eastern edge of the Division's line, looking for a weak spot in the defenses.

The next morning the final move to round up the encircled group was begun, but to our surprise the partisans had disappeared. What had happened? Everything had seemed to be progressing according to plan.... The riddle was solved on that same afternoon. Not heeding a definite order for all officers to remain continuously at their posts in their sectors, one Ukrainian company commander (who had been a highly valued leader up to that point) decided to spend the night in a neighboring farmhouse. The partisans, who had good scouts, immediately detected this gap and escaped the encirclement with a forced march out of the area. The commander of the Division immediately removed the man from his post and requested that he be court-martialed.

The Division staff always took these Ukrainian weaknesses into consideration and always used more troops than necessary in these campaigns. An important element of anti-partisan actions—surprise—was thus lost. To avoid this, it was necessary to keep changing the center of every unit's field of operations. One motorized echelon always stood ready to enable units to be sent in very quickly to any sector where needed. In extreme cases the Division used civilian automobiles out of necessity, having first obtained permission from the German commander.

The Division also cooperated with anti-partisan battle groups organized by the Germans that were actually partisan groups. They often had the best information on partisan activity. Their task was to track the partisan units, not to engage them. They were never to fight with the units they followed, unless they did so in self-defense. To have a complete picture of the partisan movement, the Division kept close contact with the neighboring German scouting posts beyond the borders of Slovakia. However, in most impenetrable areas, such as the Czech–Slovak border, these communications hap-

pened only sporadically and led to joint anti-partisan actions in a few isolated instances.

The supply sections took part in these actions, as did all other units of the Division. The Division's airplane, a Fieseler Storch, proved particularly useful for reconnaissance. It was also the best method of conveying orders in the field, because the mountainous terrain often ruled out the usual modes of communication. Radios could either not be taken along or contact could not be established because of the variability of elevation.

Relations between the soldiers and the civilian population were good. There were almost no difficulties in this regard. As was the case in later action in Yugoslavia, the Ukrainians quickly established a rapport with the population, perhaps because of their common Slavic background and the similarity of languages. However, this easy understanding soon bore unwanted consequences: a lively barter system arose between the soldiers of the Division and civilians—probably a characteristic of all Slavic peoples. This can also serve as proof that the Ukrainians did not harm the Slovak population.

An ably waged propaganda campaign on the part of the Bolsheviks in the partisan units succeeded in winning over a small number of the Division's soldiers. The campaign was particularly successful in influencing small units far away from main centers.

It came as a complete surprise that the first instance of success for this propaganda came in the Rajecke-Teplice district, to which the medical section was assigned. The section was headed by a German who always trusted the Ukrainians and strove to meet all of their demands. One morning about twenty men of his company disappeared, and the tracks they left behind in the snow indicated that they had gone over to the partisans. Some men from other units also went over to the enemy. A partisan unit operating under a Soviet officer in the district to the east of Žilina was particularly successful in encouraging this propensity.

Subsequently, measures were taken to limit the extent of relations between the soldiers and the population and to limit their overall knowledge of a particular area, such as frequent movement and shuffling of units. These transfers required considerable physical effort, which lessened susceptibility to enemy propaganda.

In several instances individual soldiers simply disappeared. It was difficult to tell whether they went over to the partisans of their own accord or were seized by force. The latter was indicated in a number of cases where the soldiers came back to the Division. Apparently, the final aim of virtually

every deserter was to join the UPA in Galicia. All told, about two hundred men deserted from the Division during its stay in Slovakia, a relatively small number considering the large size of the Division and its reserve regiment at the time.

The Christmas holiday of 1945 found the Division stationed in Slovakia. All units of the Division celebrated Christmas harmoniously, according to the beautiful Ukrainian traditions. Father Laba shared *prosfora* with the Ukrainian soldiers and the commander of the Division. All units were also served borshch, *kutia*, and fish. The Division's sub-units celebrated the holiday together and with fanfare. On Christmas Day representatives of the UCC arrived with Professor Kubiiovych, as did those of the MC with Colonel Bisanz. The guests visited each unit of the Division in small delegations and conveyed their greetings from their homeland.

Colonel Bisanz took the opportunity to talk with me and the chief recruiting officer from Lviv, Captain Schultz, in my quarters at Rajecke-Teplice. Aside from the usual organizational matters, we discussed the further existence of the Division, the treatment of Ukrainians, and Freitag's personnel policy. Bisanz said that he and Governor Wächter were taking measures to have Freitag removed as commander of the Division and replaced with someone more suitable. Bisanz asked me if I could suggest anyone for the post, or if I would like to take the post. Obviously, I had to reply in the negative to both of these questions.

In a subsequent conference with Freitag, Bisanz was unable to achieve any progress. Freitag repeatedly changed the subject when Bisanz began to speak frankly. The meeting ended in open disagreement between the two.

I was well acquainted with the colonel's plans and wishes and was therefore able to offer him considerable assistance. Bisanz instructed me to keep close ties with the Ukrainians in the Division's staff and recommended Captain Makarushka as a man worthy of particular trust. Makarushka benefited from this trust, but he could have acted on it to an even greater extent. In the event of difficulties with the commander he could always count on assistance from me, just as I had sought information from Makarushka. To be sure, Makarushka had insisted that since I was continuously occupied with organizational and tactical matters, I need not be embroiled in matters of petty personal conflict. This was understandable, but it did not take into account the disruption to the general cause at hand.

However, Freitag himself had earlier given Makarushka instructions that, as the general's tactical adviser, I was not to be distracted by other matters. Matters in Makarushka's jurisdiction were to be discussed only

with the commander of the Division. The commander of section 6 of the Division, Zoglauer, gave Makarushka a similar directive.

Given our unit's situation and the overwhelming amount of work required, I could understand these directives as a means of lightening the burden I carried. But a closer examination of the matter led me to realize that they were deliberate measures to limit the influence of the first officer of the Division, a Wehrmacht officer, to purely tactical matters, and exclude me from dealing with questions of Ukrainian interest. It came as no surprise, then, that Freitag spoke rarely to me about Makarushka's reports.

Colonel Bisanz requested that more Ukrainians be assigned to positions of responsibility in order to train them at such posts. He was supported in this by Makarushka, the adjutant of the Division, and me. We believed that such a measure was necessary given the future of the Ukrainians. This meant that some Ukrainian officers were placed in positions of responsibility, but there was no basic change in policy because of the commander's obstinacy. The Division's general staff continued to exclude Ukrainians, and even Major Pobihushchy was not admitted.

Colonel Bisanz also announced that the establishment of the Ukrainian National Committee, duly recognized by the German government, was to be proclaimed publicly. The committee was to be a Ukrainian institution comparable to the Vlasov movement, to be headed by General Pavlo Shandruk. He was also to become supreme commander of all Ukrainian armed forces. Colonel Bisanz added that Ukrainian political circles would never accept General Freitag as the head of the Ukrainian Army.

In Slovakia, the Ukrainian Division had a courteous relationship with the Hlinka Party and the Hlinka Guard. From his headquarters in Žilina, Freitag treated these organizations with suspicion. He limited dealings with them strictly to matters of administration. The Hlinka Party had proferred friendship, but Freitag did not accept such overtures.

Apart from its many idealistic members and honest leaders, the Hlinka organizations also included various opportunists, who were a bad lot. They incurred much damage to the image of Hlinka organizations because of their conduct and in this were similar to elements of the German Nazi Party. In fact, this multifarious nature of the Hlinka Party's leadership was the reason for Freitag's rather cool attitude toward the organization. Thus, there were no joint ceremonies or honorary visits of the Division's leaders. However, such relations were limited only to Žilina, because in other locales the area commanders maintained amicable contacts with the Hlinka Party and its cadres.

After the rebellion, in which almost the entire Slovak Army took part, measures were taken to improve general living conditions in the rearguard, particularly in the cities. However, an order from the SS Reichsführer stipulated a strict prohibition of contact between the armed forces and the local population, aside from strictly business matters. The German commander in Bratislava issued a series of orders to this effect. These orders were rather extreme in their severity and probably came directly from Himmler, who had arrived in Bratislava for a surprise inspection.

Freitag issued his own series of orders of a similar character, but most of these had to be rescinded within twenty-four hours because they were impossible to carry out. I had reservations about almost every single one of Freitag's orders, and this produced frequent explosive arguments. However, Freitag stubbornly held to his positions. His methods were those of a policeman, had very little practical worth, and showed neither flexibility, understanding, nor magnanimity. One example was an ordinance that would have bankrupted all hotels and restaurants in the Division's district if it had not been rescinded.

Freitag's order to issue military pay, half in Slovak crowns and half in German marks, also aroused a wave of dissatisfaction among the soldiers. The order was all the more unpleasant because it was still possible to buy goods freely in Slovakia. Naturally, some things were rationed, but nowhere near as much as in Germany. With crowns one could buy a considerable amount of goods, such as leather goods, toiletries, and luxury items, without ration cards.

At this time in particular, Ukrainians, who had lost their homeland, and Germans, whose Fatherland was under constant bombardment, had a good opportunity to buy many necessities. However, because of the order, they lacked the necessary crowns. A request to continue full payment in crowns was rejected, as might have been expected. The rejection was due to the then-current policy of running the German economy with slogans, and no exceptions were made. The Ukrainians resorted to another tactic: they sold the civilian population an incredible amount of uniforms and supplies in return for crowns. The Division's command made many requests for full payment in crowns, but these were, understandably, rejected.

At last, the battle training and formation of the new Division were drawing to a close. The general staff of the Division once again prepared a comprehensive memorandum dealing with the possibility of leading it into battle. Copies were sent to various German political and military institutions, as well as to the requisite army group. After an examination of the possibilities

it was proposed that the Division be sent into the western sectors of Galicia that were still unoccupied by the Soviets, where it could be used to fight partisans in the German rearguard. Attention was again drawn to the Division's political significance, as well as the need to counteract the failures of German policy in Ukraine with a considered and effective use of the Division.

The army group in Cracow expressed interest in the Division, and Freitag left for an official discussion of details. He also contacted the relevant service offices in order to enhance the quality of care for the Division members' relatives, which had been less than satisfactory until that time. Freitag then left for the Division's rest home in Zakopane. There had been numerous complaints of mistreatment of Ukrainians by the civilian German management of the home, and Freitag took the opportunity to verify them. After finding evidence of considerable abuse in the institution, he demanded and got the immediate dismissal of its German supervisor.

Within the Division Freitag resorted to various methods to maintain discipline and order. Perpetrators of offenses against the civilian population were met with court martial and severe punishment. This fate befell even his personal aide, an able Ukrainian lieutenant barely twenty years old. Freitag was of a mind to mete out the capital penalty, and only after all of his closest colleagues brought pressure to bear on him did he relent.

Freitag often addressed the Ukrainians of section 6 and never forgot to remind them of their shortcomings and bring the worst transgressions to light. To be fair, he also spoke of their accomplishments.

Aside from all of this, life in Slovakia left many pleasant memories. Nature bestowed a wonderful beauty on Slovakia. The Division's district included the rivers Váh, Kisuca, and Turča, with well-tended villages, beautiful cities, resorts, and ruins of ancient castles. Surrounding the valleys were the picturesque ranges of the Tatry, Fatra, and other mountains. Nature was equally magical year round in this region.

The local population was very friendly and always willing to help, and was well disposed to the Division's soldiers. They passed many a pleasant hour in individual homes with a mug of Hungarian or Slovak wine and to the sounds of energetic music.

Until the end of 1944 there were hardly any signs of war. One could buy anything in the shops. In the hotels and restaurants any food or drink could be ordered. Of course, there were nightly blackouts and frequent air-raid alarms which, followed by the noise of enemy bombers winging their way toward their heavy industrial targets in Silesia, reminded everyone of war-

time. Occasionally a bomb fell here and there, but no great harm was ever caused.

In the aftermath of the winter advance of 1944–45 the Red Army moved up to the Slovak border from the east and from the south, through Hungary. In the east it was held back by the 1st German Panzer Army and in the south, by the 6th German Army. The Division maintained a direct link with the 1st Panzer Army through its liaison officer. Through him, the Division staff obtained information about the situation on the front, which it relayed to the German commander in Bratislava. The latter maintained a link with the 6th Army and informed the Division about the situation in the south.

Along the valley of the Kisuca–Váh rivers, from the town of Čadca through Žilina to Bratislava, German forces began the construction of defensive positions. All tasks were coordinated by special Wehrmacht staff, who studied the locale very closely and made detailed plans.

Both frontal and reserve units took part in the construction of the line of defense, and party organizations worked together with the civilian administrative authorities. In the Division's district the Division itself contributed to the building of the bridgehead near Žilina and furnished the necessary trucks and manpower. By order of the commander in Bratislava, General Höffle, the second line of defense was built about ten kilometers east, on the northern extension of the Nitra line, in the valley of the Turča River. These positions extended from Martin to Vrútky and northward.

These tasks were carried out in great haste in order to more quickly block the valley of the Váh River in the east and the Nitra valley in the south and, in so doing, eliminate the threat of enemy forces outflanking the German front in Poland.

The 31st Infantry Regiment (stationed at Martin) and the sapper battalion distinguished themselves in performing their duties. The former entrenched in the Turča valley with great speed, facing east of the central defensive position, while the sapper battalion managed to erect a number of defensive emplacements in the larger and smaller valleys and build a great many anti-tank barricades. The latter also set up minefields, blocked rivers and viaducts, and rigged tunnels and bridges with explosives for subsequent detonation. It reconstructed the bridge in Vrútky, which had been blown up before the Division's arrival. All of these tasks had to be performed in addition to the usual routine of defense and security.

The Red Army intensified its attacks on the 1st and 6th armies from the east and south. The 1st Panzer Army retreated gradually westward to the positions foreseen. On the Hungarian–Slovak border, the enemy managed to penetrate the front line. Enemy units advanced with lightning speed right

up to Banská Štiavnica. This was a sign of danger for the Division, and so it prepared for battle as a whole and as a collection of battle groups.

Every battle group consisted of one infantry regiment with artillery, sapper, and demolition support units, as well as a unit of communications and supply. A plan for reaching battle-readiness of each such group was put forth and implemented.

The Division planned to set up three battle groups, one for each regiment. The first battle group was to be ready for marching in twenty-four hours. To ease transfer of units, a motorized column was set up. These measures were undertaken under the Division's own initiative, without prior consultation of the higher staff and, once they were complete, were reported to the commander in Bratislava and to the armies at the front.

As the front retreated the supply units for the 1st Panzer Army were transferred to Žilina. The entire region was packed with supplies. The only road to the east turned into an endless serpent of trucks that crawled throughout the day and the night. When such a large military force appeared, partisan activity died down almost completely. Therefore, the perimeter of the area the Division was assigned to defend was extended into the Nitra valley, in effect doubling it in size.

In late December 1944 the Division was ordered to send one battle group to southern Slovakia, where it was to repel the Red Army breakthrough in the Banská Štiavnica district. The group, consisting of the 29th Regiment and various support units, was formed without difficulty and was sped to the front by trucks. In case of need, the second group (the 30th Regiment) was brought to marching readiness. The 29th Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Deern, performed all tasks demanded of it. It distinguished itself in battles with the Red Army, both while advancing and while defending positions, and received commendations from all commanders who dealt with it. The artillery units were particularly worthy of praise. Individual soldiers of the group, Ukrainians and Germans, were decorated for bravery. In January the group returned to the Division.

The front was being pushed both from the east and the south, farther into Slovakia. The staff of the 1st Panzer Army was already planning to move to Velké Bytča, situated in the Division's district. This caused a new spate of difficulties in the billeting of armed personnel. The tasks to which the Division was assigned—the defense of its large sector and suppression of partisans—was no longer relevant.

From the flow of events the two choices facing the Division were rather obvious: the front or transfer. In the event that it was sent into frontline

battle, the staff had plans prepared to the last detail. Now the staff was contemplating transferring the Division by having it march on foot into a new district and was making all the necessary arrangements. The transport of weapons and other supplies, uniforms, ammunition, and food required about four hundred additional horses. These horses were necessary, not so much for the Division itself, which was fully battle-ready and self-sufficient, as for the reserve regiment, which was not very mobile during transfers. A detailed daily plan was drawn up for a possible march.

The Division was ready for a frontline battle, but now it was necessary to consider the circumstances. The prospect of committing as valuable a military unit as a modern infantry division without consideration into a risk-laden scenario was daunting.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that the Division assisted Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia. The Division's transport facilities and soldiers aided their evacuation from the frontal areas. In this humble fashion the Ukrainian soldiers of the Division were able to assist their countrymen in their hour of need.

8 Transfer to Styria

In mid-January 1945 the Division was preparing feverishly for either transfer or frontline action. On 21 January 1945 the transfer order was received:

The Ukrainian Division is to transfer immediately to Styria, on foot, where it is to complete its reformation and training and reach complete battle-readiness. The exact district where the Division is to be stationed will be indicated by the Higher SS and Police Leader in Ljubljana. During its training the Division is to continue fighting the many partisan units in its assigned district. The reserve regiment will continue to be attached to the Division and will also transfer to the new district on foot. There is no rail transport available for transfer of the Division at this time. The Division will be subordinated to the local command until such time as it is brought into action.

In a supplementary order the commander of German forces in Slovakia forbade the use of the main Žilina–Bratislava–Vienna road, which was restricted to traffic bearing supplies for frontline units. The route the Division was to follow to reach its new district was about one thousand kilometers long. It wound through mountainous terrain and through side roads that had probably not yet been cleared of snow.

The Division staff was ready for transfer, but the choice of destination came as somewhat of a surprise. The Division was ready to march, however. It was now simply a matter of carrying out a plan already prepared in advance, and marching.

For this the Division needed another four hundred horses, because some of its sick and exhausted horses had to be left behind in Žilina. Additional horses and trucks were needed for transporting uniforms, food, and

ammunition, as well as for the mobilization of the reserve regiment. According to staff calculations, the Division needed about eight to nine hundred horses and about one hundred trucks.

The Division obtained the necessary requisition for horses and trucks from the commander of German forces in Slovakia. The Division staff issued the appropriate orders to their sectional commanders. The horses and trucks were rented, not confiscated. All owners were given a receipt for the full value of the horse or truck. Thus, a rental fee was to be paid, or, if it proved to be impossible for the commander in Slovakia to return the horses or trucks themselves, he could reimburse the former owners in cash.

All units were given orders for the exact procedure and quantities involved in the requisitioning of horses and trucks. Each unit had a commission consisting of one officer and a unit accountant. Experience with German units had taught the members of the staff to expect a certain amount of abuse in this requisitioning, because if it happened among Germans, more could not be expected of Ukrainians. However, it was hardly expected that there would be instances of abuse in every company. The Division's staff was immediately flooded with complaints, originating mainly from the sector where companies from other divisions were constructing emplacements in the Váh River valley. Almost all of their horses and trucks had been seized.

In all, about sixteen hundred horses and more than three hundred trucks had been willfully requisitioned, or nearly eight hundred horses and one hundred and fifty trucks more than had been deemed necessary by the norms set by the staff. It was obvious that these were not taken as a result of necessity but of the greed of certain units. In some cases, the excess was excusable since the quartermaster had issued a far larger quantity of food supplies than had been anticipated. The reserve regiment had also received a large shipment of uniforms.

The Division returned more than two hundred horses and one hundred trucks. The commander meted out severe penalties to all units that had contravened orders. The commander in Bratislava accepted the excuses of the Division and demanded simply that lists of the requisitioned matériel be sent to him as quickly as possible, for the rapid reimbursement of the population. The commander of section 4C and the Division's veterinary officer wasted a considerable amount of time compiling these lists, because in many instances neither the German nor the Ukrainian requisitioners had given out receipts.

A considerable amount of fuel was also required for the Division's motorized equipment, but it was not obtainable anywhere. It was therefore de-

cided to transport all trucks by rail, other than some cars used for liaison and communications. All supplies that could not be easily transported by road were also carried by rail. There was a shortage of suitable freight cars, and so the Division's liaison officer had to remain in Žilina to oversee the eventual transfer of the motorized equipment.

On 31 January 1945 the Division marched out along two routes. The main highway through Žilina–Bratislava–Vienna was prohibited. After a number of changes, it was decided that the Division would use the bridges across the Danube near Bratislava and Klosterneuburg. All other decisions were turned over to the Division. The commander of the demolition and anti-tank brigade remained in Slovakia as the supervisor for all mechanized vehicles to be transported by rail, as did the first orderly of communications, who was to oversee cleanup.

The Division was divided for the march as follows:

MARCH GROUP A

- Commander: Commander of the Division
- Units: 29th Grenadier Infantry Regiment, 30th Grenadier Infantry Regiment, the reserve-training regiment, the communications unit, parts of the anti-tank unit, the artillery regiment, supply services, Division staff
- Route: Čadca, Žilina, Považská Bystrica, Trenčin, Nové Město nad Váhom, Neustadt, Malé Karpaty, Maleacky, Klosterneuburg, Wienerwald, Semmering, Graz, Maribor

MARCH GROUP B

- Commander: Commander of the 31st Grenadier Infantry Regiment
- Units: 31st Grenadier Infantry Regiment, a fusilier battalion, the sapper battalion, the field reserve battalion
- Route: Vrútky, Martin, Piščany, Malé Karpaty, Bratislava, Wiener Neustadt, Hartberg, Gleisdorf, Graz, Maribor

This was the basic route. However, owing to the heavy snows and the poor road conditions, the commander in Bratislava relented and allowed the heavy artillery brigade and some sections of the sappers to travel past Malé Karpaty on the main highway between Piščany and Bratislava.

All units of the Division were given a daily route with a detailed road map and assigned rest areas. This kind of march required considerable physical endurance. It was planned in such a way that three to four days would be devoted to marching thirty to forty kilometers a day, followed by

a day of rest. The snows and the uncleared roads presented obstacles that the soldiers found difficult to overcome. Such conditions could only be understood by someone who had experienced this kind of forced march. March Group B faced the roughest terrain, from Martin to Piščany, on through to Malé Karpaty, and, finally, from Wiener Neustadt through Hartberg to Gleisdorf. Group A had to contend with the harshest difficulties near Malé Karpaty and in the Wienerwald. In the Graz–Bruck district the Division stopped for an eight-day rest, which was to ready it for the last stage of non-stop marching and immediate encampment in the new district.

Regardless of various obstacles, the Division marched on according to schedule. A quartermaster's team assigned to find lodging for the night marched one day ahead of each unit.

Along the way, General Freitag and I reported to General Höffle in Bratislava. He was absent at the time, but his chief of staff commended the Division for performing the tasks it had been assigned in Slovakia.

The Division's stay in Slovakia proved to be beneficial in all respects. It armed itself there, capturing the necessary weapons from the partisans; it kept peace and order in its perimeter; it gained valuable anti-partisan experience and attained a high degree of physical fitness thanks to the constant marching and action in mountainous terrain. It also gained experience in action against the Red Army. In short, the Division could not have asked for a better period of military training. It could be entirely pleased with its performance in Slovakia. The Division left Slovakia as an operational military unit ready for battle.

The march through Bratislava went according to plan and made a good impression on the Division's members.

In the course of the Division's departure, another one hundred soldiers deserted and mingled with the Slovak population. Some of them could see no prospects in fighting on the German side and remained in Slovakia to await the Soviet advance and eventually return home. Others may have wanted to join the ranks of the UPA to continue the fight against bolshevism. In relative terms, set against the twenty-two thousand servicemen of the Division, the rate of desertion was not so significant.

The district of Vienna offered another good opportunity to leave the ranks of the Division, inasmuch as there were quite a number of transit camps for Ukrainian refugees. Thus, the Division's staff made contact with the 17th Army District in Vienna and forbade soldiers of the Division entry into the city. The Division marched around the city to the east and west. The local military police and authorities ensured that none of its soldiers would be allowed entry.

With the help of the command of the 17th (Vienna) and 18th (Salzburg) Military Districts, the officers of the Division's sections IB and 4A set up supply points all along the route the Division was to follow. Some problems arose in the Bruck district because the city did not have sufficient supplies due to breakdowns in transportation and to a general food shortage.

To prepare quarters in the district to which the Division was assigned, a team of quartermasters headed by the commander of section IB of the Division set out. This team was to have been headed by me, but I had to supervise the final phase of the marching; Freitag had taken ill and was not able to return to duty for ten days. During the rest stop in Bruck, I did travel ahead to establish the exact deployment of units in the new district.

Because of heavy enemy air attacks along the road from Graz to Bruck, the Division was forced to march during the night. The road from Graz all the way to Maribor and farther to Celje (Cily) and Ljubljana (Laibach) was paralyzed during the daylight hours by the Royal Air Force, flying from airstrips in Italy. All units of the Division had to be in their quarters by morning. Despite these precautions, however, some casualties in personnel, horses, and matériel were suffered, not so much from bombing as from strafing attacks.

The commander of the Division's section IC arrived in the new district ahead of me and made all of the necessary arrangements for lodging the Division's various units. Some difficulties arose when it was found that the new district was rather small. In addition, supplies were not in order because the district's population had to be supplied constantly with agricultural products and because the ongoing bombings caused heavy damage to communications facilities. Only a few transports stopped off in the area, since most of them were on the way to the front.

I immediately drove to see SS Gauleiter Dr Siegfried Uiberreither in Graz. Unfortunately, I arrived right in the middle of an air raid and the Gauleiter had to meet me in his bunker. Instead of proceeding to business, he assailed me with complaints, asking why I had brought the Division to his province. The Gauleiter did not forget to mention that he was Hitler's personal friend. He had no food for the Division. Up to then peace and order had reigned in his province, he claimed, and now the arrival of the Division was sure to cause famine among the civilians. I replied that the Division had not arrived of its own volition but was following orders of higher authorities, and as far as the peace in his district was concerned, only this could be said: it was impossible to travel safely by day in a motorcar along the road from Maribor to Celje.

The Gauleiter erupted into a fit of rage and threatened to have me shot.

However, his anger sprang from other reasons. The Division had arrived without any notification being given to him, at the demand of the chief of police in Ljubljana, who was responsible for combating partisans in the area. The Division was a military formation subject to the orders of its superiors and completely independent of the Gauleiter's authority.

Despite these initial setbacks, I managed to secure the deployment of the Division in the district and, having done so, lost interest in its peculiar and nervous Gauleiter. Eventually, the Gauleiter changed his opinion of the Division and became quite well disposed toward it. Later, in a dispute between the Division and his subordinate district official (*Landrat*), he sided with the Division.

The Division's deployment was under the control of the Higher Police Leader in Ljubljana and was altered a number of times. The job of the quartermasters was also made difficult by the great number of partisans active in the area. Our units were frequently forced to retreat after engagements with even larger partisan forces, and thus it was not even possible to set up quarters in time.

During its march along the Maribor–Celje road, in the Slovenske Konjice district, the Division's flanks were protected by special units. On the whole, partisan action was much heavier in Yugoslavia than in Slovakia. The entire territory had been manned only by an insufficient number of weak police posts. The police were forced to fight defensive battles against powerful partisan formations. The partisans were well armed and were supplied by airdrops from planes flown by the British or by Tito's forces. They were led by a very competent corps of commanders and were able to move very rapidly. The establishment of any sort of normal local administration was out of the question.

The Division's command was quite aware of the proximity of the Eastern front and kept this tactical consideration in mind when planning the new deployment of its forces. Two infantry regiments were to be stationed east of Maribor, in a line from north to south. They were reinforced by detachments of artillery. All heavy weaponry, particularly that of the anti-tank and demolition detachments, was concentrated in the Maribor district, to ensure its mobility in all directions.

The chief of police, who considered combating partisans to be a major priority, wanted to deploy the Division in the following manner: Deutschlandsberg, Leibnitz, Maribor, Slovenska Bystrića, Slovenske Konjice, Slovenjgradec, Dravograd. It was forbidden to billet troops in Maribor. The center of deployment was in the partisan-controlled mountainous forests of

Pohorje, south of the Dravá River. After a number of changes, a temporary deployment was arranged (it, too, changed with time):

- Division staff: in Selnic (Zellnitz am Drau)
- 29th Grenadier Infantry Regiment: in the district to the south and southwest of Maribor; command point: Slovenske Konjice (Gonobitz)
- 30th Grenadier Infantry Regiment: in the district southeast of Slovenjgradec (Windisch–Graz); command point: Velenje (Wöllan)
- 31st Grenadier Infantry Regiment: in the valley of the Dravá, at Ruše (Reiffing), Fala (Fall), Radlje (Radl); command point: Lovrenc (St. Lorenzen)
- Fusilier battalion: in Slovenska Bistrića; command point: Zg. Polskava (Ob. Pulsgau)
- Artillery regiment command points: regimental command, 1st and 4th sections, in Slovenska Bystrića; 2nd section, with the 30th Regiment; 3rd section, with the 31st Regiment
- Anti-tank unit: in Slovenska Bistrića
- Communications unit: in Ruše
- Sapper battalion: in Radlje, Muta (Hohenmauthen)
- Supply section: in the district of Leibnitz
- Transport column: in the district south of Maribor; command point: Slivnica (Schleinitz)
- Field reserve battalion: in the district of Brossruck, Eibiswald–Arnfels–Leutschach
- Reserve-training regiment: in the district of Deutschlandsberg; command point: Deutschlandsberg

Toward the end of February 1945 the Division arrived in its area of deployment. On 28 February the march was officially ended by a special order. The Division dug in on both sides of the border of Austria and Yugoslavia, mainly on the latter side in the territory inhabited by Slovenes.

The Division had marched for hundreds of kilometers, overcoming many obstacles to prove itself worthy. The soldiers had weathered it well, but the Division's horses were decimated by the rough terrain and the harsh winter conditions. Discipline along the way was exemplary.

We were also blessed by a run of good luck. Throughout the march the Division's soldiers were able to quickly take up their quarters and leave them just as quickly when required. Relations with the local population were generally good. Only one complaint was received by the Division's staff. It concerned the theft of a considerable amount of butter from a

dairy. An investigation was conducted and no guilty parties were found among the members of the Division. It is quite possible that the enemy had stolen the butter, or even that the theft was a fabrication.

9 The Division in Styria

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY after the Division took up lodgings in its new district, difficulties with the local administration arose. The civil servants of the area lived in fear of their overwrought Gauleiter and took offense very easily, presumably because they were intent on preserving an Imperial Austrian sensibility. In spite of the Division's directive to its unit commanders instructing them to cooperate fully with local civilian bodies, such heated disputes arose in the Deutschlandsberg area that the Gauleiter himself had to intervene and take the Division's side.

Unfortunately, some companies began to requisition food arbitrarily from the local population, to offset the diminished rations set for armies stationed in German territory. These measures were completely unjustified, since the Division received a larger quota of food than either the civilian population or even regular German army garrisons. The Division had brought some supplies with it from Slovakia and used them to supplement rations. In addition, the Division had petitioned to receive rations due a frontline formation, in view of its engagements with partisans, and this request had been granted.

The provinces of Styria and Carinthia were divided into security zones, and the Division was assigned to one such zone. South of it was a security zone commanded by a police colonel. To the southwest stood a Wehrmacht formation; to the north and west there were no defense units.

As it had been in Slovakia, so now in Styria the entire district to which the Division was assigned was itself divided into security sectors in which individual sub-units of the Division were responsible for maintaining law and order, security for important strategic objectives, and, therefore, for fighting the partisans. The senior officer was automatically designated as

the local commandant, and he was given command of all units in the area, both those belonging to the Division and others.

Relations between the Ukrainians and Slovenes were good from the start. As in Slovakia, a vigorous trade in black market goods unfortunately began to flourish between them. There were almost no excesses committed against the civilian population. Any that may have occurred took place in the course of fighting with partisans, when it was often difficult to separate innocent civilians from the enemy. Here also, as in Slovakia, some German units attempted to shift the blame for their misdeeds onto the Division simply because it was a Ukrainian formation.

In the territory controlled by the Division there were two types of partisans: Marshal Tito's communist partisans, and the Chetniks. Tito's partisans were constantly on the move. They were supplied by airdrops and assembled in impenetrable mountain regions in formations that grew to twenty or thirty thousand and more. However, regardless of their numbers, they were poorly armed and showed little willingness to fight. Given their numerical strength, they should have enjoyed far greater successes. Nevertheless, they were still a force to be reckoned with.

The Chetniks, on the other hand, although fewer in number, were very well organized. Their squads operated in the district east of Maribor. They were well armed, well disciplined, and wore full uniforms. They did not allow Tito's men or German forces to enter their district. Aside from this, they were loyal to the Germans, and they maintained order and calm in their territory.

A portion of Styria, south of the Dravá River, had once belonged to Yugoslavia. There was no organized Nazi Party here. In its stead was the *Heimatsbund* organization, which was set up along the same lines as Hitler's Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Nazi Party). It was headed by Dr Steindl, who was responsible to Gauleiter Uiberreither in Graz. An intelligent man, Steindl had many good district party leaders, particularly the one who was responsible for the Maribor *Heimatsbund*. The *Heimatsbund* was also similar to the Nazi Party in that it had its share of idealists and of various sorts of hangers-on and bad elements.

In the Division's district there were groups of Tito's partisans and combating them was a priority. Further training had to be put off, but action in battle provides the best training of all.

Every unit of the Division saw action from the very first day. At first the Division cleared the areas around the cities where its units were stationed and pushed the partisans away from the main transport and communications arteries. It had been unsafe to travel on the main road not only by

night but also in daylight, if one traveled unaccompanied. Anti-partisan actions were performed by combat units of varying size. In some cases, small detachments were used. In others, a medium-sized force consisting of squads that included elements from neighboring formations was sent into the field. There were also major operations in which the entire Division worked with other units.

In the wake of a ten-day period of concerted action, the Division's district remained quiet. The most important accomplishment was securing the main highway between Maribor and Celje for all traffic. Soldiers of the Division could travel alone along this road at night and not be attacked.

Obviously, the partisans were far from completely eliminated. However, judging by experience in Slovakia and Styria, it was possible to establish order and tranquillity fairly quickly in an area ostensibly controlled by them.

In fighting the partisans the most important thing was not to allow them a moment's rest and to harrass them continuously. In this way they would be thrown on the defensive, lose confidence, and move to another district. A more difficult matter was their encirclement and destruction. For this a fairly large, experienced force with good NCOs, capable of rapid movement, was essential. A good radio link was of equally great importance.

In view of the general situation in the war, Division was forced to take part in actions that its command considered to be of little relevance. The chief of police in Ljubljana, Obergruppenführer Rosner, was well disposed to the Division but demanded rather much of it. Although he supplied the Division very well, he also threw it into anti-partisan actions quite arbitrarily. The Division's staff did not always take his orders seriously, because he was not a professional soldier and thus was not very well versed in military tactics.

In addition to Rosner's demands the Division also had to contend with the general impenetrability of the area of operations. The Division's successes prompted Rosner to demand that his own police battalions carry out similar actions, but they worked very slowly and showed no initiative.

The commandant of the police defense district was a virtual model of passivity. A good and diligent man, he was mired in bureaucratic red tape. Because of his excessive caution and indecisiveness, the partisans he moved against anticipated his plans and left their emplacements before his units could get to them.

Rosner led a number of anti-partisan actions personally. The first of these involved the Division and two other German regiments. It was staged in the district south of Ljubljana, in the Menina Planina mountains. A strong concentration of partisans had assembled there to pick up supplies that had

been dropped by air. The Division was given the most difficult task: to advance by forced march over a distance of around one hundred kilometers and then, after only a few hours rest, proceed through the mountains, which were covered in deep snow and rose to two thousand meters. Here the Division was to push the partisans into their last defensive emplacements for their final encirclement and elimination. Success depended on speed and surprise.

The soldiers of the Division showed remarkable endurance. They marched through mountains in which there were no houses or trails after an arduous one hundred kilometer march, without a hot meal, slept under a cold winter sky, and left all trucks, horses, and radio equipment behind. The radio equipment might have been the only link between the regiments, but it could scarcely be carried along with the necessary food and ammunition. Thus, the engagement had to proceed according to a prearranged plan.

The Division advanced along its assigned route in a southwesterly direction but did not manage to engage the main body of the partisan force, because the partisans had taken advantage of their superior knowledge of the terrain and escaped from encirclement.

After three days the operation was brought to a conclusion with little to show for the exertions it had required. The partisans had been forced to jettison some of their munitions; some individual partisans had been killed or taken prisoner. The Division suffered negligible casualties: a few wounded and one dead.

Although the mission itself was not a success, it had become apparent that the Division was capable of great effort in the face of the most difficult climatic conditions. In and of themselves, the forced march and the conducting of a field operation in normally impassable mountains were great accomplishments of the Division's soldiers. After the conclusion of the assignment the Division returned to its quarters in the various security sectors and continued to battle partisans locally.

The greatest difficulty was in maintaining communications during antipartisan actions. For this the Division needed adequate radio equipment, which it did not have. Therefore, every sortie had to proceed according to a prearranged plan, and after an operation was initiated, it was impossible to change course. Most of the time, the Division's airplane was of no use in communications.

The Division had some tracking dogs that were very useful, particularly at various sentry points. However, they needed much care and, after march-

ing for long periods, at least twelve hours of rest. Later, a special truck was outfitted to bring the dogs to the area where they would be used.

Ten days after the Menina Planina operation the entire Division moved out for a larger maneuver to encircle and destroy Tito's partisans. Again, they were said to be concentrating to receive an airdrop of supplies in the southwest corner of the Division's district. The Division was to secure and clear the districts of Mozirje (Prassberg), Ljubno (Laufen), Solčava (Sultzbach), and the Boskovec massif, which rose to an elevation of 1,590 meters.

Some units proceeded to their assigned areas by long march, while those farthest from their points boarded trains. The trains traveled by day and came under attack by enemy planes, which managed to destroy two locomotives and inflict heavy casualties. The operation proceeded similarly to the one aimed at Menina Planina. The mountainous terrain was, once again, very demanding. As before, it was impossible to carry out the main objective—the encirclement and destruction of the partisans.

In the course of these major actions it became apparent that using large forces to fight the partisans would not produce any results because heavy troop movements could be easily detected. At the critical moment the partisans would break up into small groups and hide in the underbrush or steal past our lines under the cover of night. They did not have any major supply depots or heavy equipment, but their strength was their incredible ability to march seventy-five kilometers in one night. Experience had taught the Division that the most successful anti-partisan actions were those carried out by small detachments and assault squads.

The Division could not successfully bring off any major action because other partisans would attack the district it left behind, which was not covered by an armed force. They would burn villages, seize livestock, blow up bridges, build blockades on the main roads, and launch assaults on weakly defended emplacements of the Division. No sooner would the Division set out on a major operation than it had to hurry back to restore order in its own district. Only the artillery regiment and the fusilier battalion remained in the south to continue to engage the partisans. These units fought successfully in the Sava River district.

South of the Dravá River the Division fought the "Bachern" (the German name for the Pohorje plateau) partisan brigade. Rosner had continued to plan large operations but was unable to put the largest of them into effect because of developments on the Eastern front. Rosner wanted to advance on the center of Tito's movement, and the Division was to have been the backbone of this advance. It was to cover an area from the outskirts of

Ljubljana southwest all the way to Trieste. This would have been an interesting, yet very risky, operation.

Apart from the physical conditioning gained in battles against the partisans, other kinds of training proceeded according to plan. The most time was devoted to marksmanship and weapons exercises. Drills were held once a week to strengthen discipline, which had become excessively lax under battlefield conditions. The training of NCOs also proceeded according to plan. Only tactical officer training was not conducted, because of the total dispersal and continuous engagement of the Division's units.

Allied aircraft were very much in evidence in the provinces of Styria and Carinthia. Dive bombers and fighter planes based in Italy, mostly British, were in the air almost continuously. On a clear day one could see the heavy bombers on their way to bomb industrial targets in the district of Vienna. In the Division's district all traffic on the roads was subject to attack by roving planes that caused considerable damage to personnel, horses, and matériel. In the district south of Graz, movement along railway lines during the day was impossible, because this immediately provoked an air attack that would knock out the locomotives.

Main railway centers, such as Graz and Maribor, were also subject to continuous bombardment that managed to halt traffic completely at times. The grounds of the railway station in Maribor were completely destroyed. The Division's main rail supply point was Pragersko (Prager Hof), and it, too, was under constant air attack. On bright nights the Allies dropped supplies to Tito's partisans.

In February 1945, in accordance with a plan to unify all Ukrainian military formations into a Ukrainian National Army, a battalion of Volhynian Ukrainians arrived. This unit was a former Schutztmannschafts-Bataillon that had seen action in Volhynia and the Kholm region. It consisted of Ukrainian partisans who had banded together in the Kremianets area of Volhynia in March 1943 to defend the Ukrainian population against Russian and Polish partisans, as well as against the Germans.[1] This unit was associated with the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists under the leadership of Colonel Andrii Melnyk. In June 1943 the Germans came to an agreement with this unit: it was renamed the Ukrainian Self-Defense Legion. In early 1944 it was commanded by Kvitka, a colonel in the Ukrainian Army of 1917–21, who was replaced in June by Colonel Petro Diachenko. The legion had proven its mettle in many battles.

Its German commander, a Waffen SS Sturmbannführer, appeared to be a dreamer and seemed to be more of an intellectual than a leader of a military

formation. Initially, this battalion was not included in the Division and was merely kept on as a separate unit pending full integration into it. Captain Makarushka was to have explained the nature of the Division to these soldiers and clarified that they were being assigned to the sole Ukrainian combat formation in order to continue the struggle together. However, the Division's command granted the battalion commander's request that he be allowed to brief the legion's men himself. This, unfortunately, proved to be a severe handicap.

On the day that the battalion was to have been officially integrated into the Division, accompanied by the usual fanfare from the orchestra under the Ukrainian flag, the senior regimental commander and I drove to the battalion's quarters. Two-thirds of the battalion had deserted, taking their equipment, weapons, horses, and trucks, with them. Apparently, the battalion commander had done nothing at all to inform his soldiers of the nature of the Division and plans for its future use. Rumors circulating among the enlisted men created an entirely erroneous impression of the Division. Antagonism to the Division had probably also been fostered by Ukrainian officers who, discharged from the Division because of their lack of qualifications, had ended up in this very same Volhynian battalion.

On the other hand, the condescension of the German officers toward the Ukrainians contributed to the battalion members' considerable distrust of the Division. The battalion commander had done nothing to explain the nature and mission of the Division, and thus was responsible for the difficulties that arose. This was yet another clear example of how the Germans placed inappropriate men in positions of command in formations of foreign nationals.

Obviously unaware of the local situation, the Volhynian company left for the forests east of Maribor, in the Lenart (St. Leonard) district, which was controlled by the Chetniks. The Chetniks sought to rid themselves of these unwanted reinforcements, in whom they were not in the least bit interested, and from whom they could not expect much good. Through the adjutant of the district leader of the Styrian *Heimatsbund* in Maribor, the Division established contact with the Chetniks, who provided reports on the fugitive company's movements.

On the following day the Division sent out a company of its own men, under my command, in pursuit of the Volhynians. We stopped them without a shot being fired. They were given orders to muster at a specific time and place but were allowed to keep their weapons. I considered this order to be correct, since it was not they who were at fault for deserting but their German battalion commander.

The Volhynians complied with the orders. Speaking through an interpreter (Captain Makarushka), I explained to the soldiers the nature of the Division, the fact that the German High Command officially recognized it as a single military body to which all other Ukrainian units were to be joined, and that members of the Division were permitted to wear national insignia. None of the Volhynians knew about any of this.

Under the command of Captain Makarushka, the company was led back to the Division, where it was divided among the various units. The soldiers fought well in the ranks of the Division, and many came to be decorated for distinguished service. The Volhynians, who were strong of build, surpassed their Galician countrymen in military prowess. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian commander of the company, First Lieutenant "Voron" (Roman Kyveliuk), was later executed by General Freitag for theft.

I did not hear about this until a distraught Captain Makarushka filed his report about it. I respected the first lieutenant for his military bearing and would have backed him fully. One could have staked one's honor on "Voron" in the right circumstances. His execution was particularly tragic because all of the Volhynians were convinced that he had been shot for the desertion of the battalion, in contravention of the promise that no punishment would be meted out.

During the Division's stay in Styria, another one hundred and fifty soldiers of the Division deserted. Some were influenced by Tito's propaganda, others mixed in with the local population and disappeared, while still others were taken prisoner. All told, since the formation of the Division in 1943, about six hundred men had deserted—a negligible number considering the extraordinarily large number of soldiers in the Division and its reserve regiment.

As in Slovakia, so in Styria the Division was deployed in a beautiful mountainous area. The romantic valley of the Dravá River passed through the northern end of the district. The legendary Fala castle rose dark and eerie from the riverbed. In the south stood the majestic Menina Planina massif. The Pohorje massif lay south of the Dravá valley, covered in thick spruce forests and divided by deep valleys. Here and there one could see small homesteads. Vineyards grew on the sunny shores of the Dravá.

Meanwhile, in the east the front had moved into Hungary and the situation was getting much worse. The Red Army had broken through along both sides of Lake Balaton and crossed the Austrian border into the Feldbach district east of Graz. Hitler's personal and patently absurd order for a counterattack on Budapest and the establishment of a frontline on the Danube near the Dravá estuary resulted in total defeat.

The proximity of the front meant that the Division was constantly on full battle alert. From early March on, all plans for bringing the Division into frontline action were finalized down to the last detail.

Dr Steindl, the head of the Styrian *Heimatsbund*, was surprisingly well acquainted with frontline conditions and relayed all news to the Division. The Division also established contact with the army at the front and provided its commanders with the necessary information, in case its services should be required.

In March Steindl was killed while visiting the front in the Feldbach district. From then on the Division's command cooperated closely with the *Heimatsbund* leader of the Maribor district.

10 The Division's Days of Crisis

In mid-March 1945 the artillery regiment and the fusilier battalion were engaged in anti-partisan operations south of the Sava. Division command was notified that Tito's partisans, among whom was the longstanding "friend" of the Division, the "Bachern" Brigade, had reappeared in the Bachern (Pohorje) area. Despite the proximity of the front, the Division's command decided to mount another four-day operation against them. The intent was to attack the partisan concentrations to push them back from the Division's district and the rearguard of the front. Such measures were also necessary because the Division would probably be soon thrown into frontline action and would not be able to continue to neutralize the partisans.

The Division and its reserve regiment soon cleared the Kozjak (Possruk) district and crossed the Dravá River into Pohorje, where all units at the Division's disposal were deployed to encircle the partisans. The operation was going according to plan, the partisans were unable to break out, when, suddenly, an order from Army Group South hit us like a bolt of lightning: *it was an order to disarm the Division and hand over its weapons to newly created German divisions.* The order was issued by SS Reichsführer Himmler. The Division was to gather all of its weapons and supplies, take them to a railway depot, and load them onto freight cars bound for Nuremberg. The army group was to ensure that this order was carried out.

The Division's command was dumbfounded. This was a purely political directive, issued by politicians from behind their "green desk." It appeared that they knew nothing whatsoever about the situation on the south Austrian front. This order arrived at the Division's headquarters on 20 March 1945.

According to the order the Division was not to be disarmed permanently

but was only required to hand over its weapons temporarily; it would be shipped new ones in a short while. However, this was scarcely possible considering the situation at the front. Allied forces were deployed near Nuremberg and any weapons shipment would most probably not reach its destination. All railway lines in Austria were completely paralyzed. Any railway vehicles available were needed to keep supplies moving to the front. Transport administration officials claimed that obtaining the requisite freight cars was not possible at that time.

On the Eastern front the situation was becoming increasingly critical. A Red Army tank column had advanced to within forty kilometers of Maribor—directly in front of the Division. Now the Division was in an area with a high concentration of partisans. Even if this insane order were to be carried out, there would be no way to transport the weapons and supplies to their destinations. Also, the Division was a unit of twenty thousand men. If it were disarmed, its soldiers would become a powerless target for any attack and would not be able to fire a single shot in their own defense. The order for disarmament would also arouse the deepest suspicions of the Ukrainians and, if carried out, would surely mean the dissolution of the Division. Many Ukrainians would probably go over to the partisans, driven by their instinct of self-preservation. The only way out was to attempt to have the order rescinded.

The commander of the Division left for Himmler's command post in Salzburg. The anti-partisan operation in Pohorje continued, pending a clarification from Freitag in Salzburg. In Salzburg no one initially seemed to have heard of such an order until Freitag addressed Himmler's personal bureau, where it was confirmed. The Division was very cautious about orders issued by SS authorities, because they were notorious for resorting to spurious "Führer's orders" or "Reichsführer's orders." Obviously, with an order for the complete disarmament of the Division, the greatest caution had to be exercised. The Division was forced to halt the very successful action undertaken against the partisans, to prepare to hand over weapons, and to acquire means for their transportation. In the meantime, the chief of staff of Himmler's command post in Salzburg was to take up the matter of rescinding the order with Himmler himself.[1]

The Division's command tried to play for time and delay carrying out the order in any way possible. However, at no time did the Division's command consider sabotage or simply refuse to carry out the order; it wanted only to have rescinded an order issued without due appreciation of the situation in Austria. Complying with the order in undue haste could have resulted in tragic consequences. After all, the Division was a strong unit,

ready for action at the front, which happened to be only forty kilometers away. Because of the situation at the front, the weapons and supplies of the Division would probably not reach their destinations, while the Division itself would be left at the mercy of fate in an area teeming with partisans. The Division's command also felt compelled to stand up for the rights of the Ukrainian soldiers and defend them against these harsh measures in such a grave situation.

In response to the increasing insistence of the chief quartermaster of Army Group South, the Division's command stated that it would hand over weapons only when the requisite freight cars arrived to transport them. Thirty-eight trains were required to effectively transfer the Division's weapons and supplies, yet not a single one had arrived. Then the chief quartermaster realized the dimensions of the problem and promised to review the order at German High Command; until then, he had been under the impression that this was a matter of only one shipment of arms.

The Division immediately sent out a very sharply worded teletype message to the higher authorities, including Himmler, about its concerns. After all, the Division was potentially faced with complete annihilation. The superficial excuses that the order to hand over weapons was temporary, and that similar orders had been issued to every foreign national unit, proved to be untrue.

In a few days Army Group South sent orders specifying that the Division was to hand over part of its small arms arsenal. Both Ukrainians and Germans listened to this directive in horror, then silently and tearfully handed over their rifles and machine guns.

At the front the situation was worsening. The Red Army moved still closer to Maribor. Apart from the Ukrainian Division, there were no reserves in the rearguard, and if the Red Army managed to penetrate the front in this sector, it would seize control of the important communications and supply centers of Graz and Maribor. This would effectively cut supply lines to the south and southeast, and had to be prevented at all costs. Therefore, the Division's command drew up plans for the defense of Maribor on its own initiative. It brought its regiments in closer to Maribor in order to build up defensive emplacements on both sides of the city, mainly to the east.

As the moment of crisis approached, artillery and anti-tank detachments took up positions in Maribor itself. The sapper company also set up in the city. The commander of the infantry regiment, who was stationed at the bridgehead at the outskirts of the city, became the local commander. He re-

placed the acting commander, who had proven to be unsuitable for commanding a frontline unit.

The independent actions of the Division restored a measure of calm to the Maribor district. It reported them to the 2nd and 6th armies, which were holding the front. If the Division was to defend Maribor, it had been deployed incorrectly and should have moved farther to the east. However, the Division was under orders to hand over its weapons and thus had to remain close to a railway station. In addition, it was ready to move to new positions in a very short time. For the moment the two infantry regiments were entrenched near Maribor, while the 31st Regiment remained in the southern sector of the Division's original area of deployment. Since the Division was still considered to be in a stage of reformation, it was subject to the command of the rearguard.

In response to its queries the Division soon received many replies containing new orders from the following authorities:

- SS Reichsführer
- Field command post of the SS Reichsführer
- Operations department of the German High Command
- Chief quartermaster of the German High Command
- Army Group South
- Army Group Southeast
- 18th Military District Headquarters
- 2nd Army Headquarters
- 6th Army Headquarters

In this flurry of messages some orders grotesquely contravened others. Various higher military commanders demanded that they be given the weapons and supplies. A few of the directives were clearly designed to benefit certain commanders, and the matter was undoubtedly completely confused. It was decided that the Division could keep twenty percent of its weapons and twenty percent of its supplies.

In response to the reminder that, with supplies cut back to twenty percent, the butchers' and bakers' companies would not have sufficient food to feed all of the men, the higher authorities decided that the Division was to hand over all supplies. Apparently, no one bothered to consider how the Division was to continue feeding its twenty-two thousand men. The Division's command did not even consider carrying out such an absurd order. It was responsible for the fate of the Ukrainians in the Division, and no one had relieved it of this responsibility.

The concentration of the Division's forces around Maribor and the construction of the defensive emplacements continued. These initiatives were welcomed by the 2nd and 6th armies. The company of fusiliers was moved to Spielfeld, where it was to defend the Mur River narrows and crossing. The Division's staff kept in constant touch with its commanders in anticipation of its imminent deployment at the front. The regimental commanders in turn kept their officers informed of developments. The sapper battalion continued to build all kinds of emplacements.

Resistance to the disarmament order continued. The Division demanded that only the highest authorities decide the matter. Because of the dangerous situation at the front the Division decided to return small arms to its soldiers, who received them gladly. The Division considered this to be essential, since it was now manning a line of defense.

On 26 March 1945 the former Governor of Galicia, Otto Wächter, and the leader of the MC, Colonel Bisanz, arrived late at night. Freitag refused to lodge them in the staff quarters or discuss the Division's current situation with them. Only after my intervention did he agree to do so.

Both Wächter and Bisanz were well acquainted with the situation at the front but knew nothing of the disarmament order. After the evacuation of Galicia, Wächter was given a post in the SS administration with responsibility for all units of foreign nationals. Thus, the person who was in the best position to defend the rights of the Division had arrived at a critical time.

Wächter immediately went into action. He contacted all relevant authorities, including Himmler. He persuaded the local Gauleiter, Uiberreither, that it would be in the interest of his province to have the disarmament order rescinded; Uiberreither apparently had direct contacts with Hitler. Although Wächter's efforts seemed to be in vain, it proved impossible to carry out the disarmament order because the heavy bombardment of the Maribor railway station halted all traffic for a few days.

Wächter left for Army Group South headquarters, to explain the situation to Commander Alexander Löhr. Wächter argued that rather than allow the Division to be destroyed without weapons, it should be sent to the front, for which it was entirely ready. Wächter was accompanied by the first liaison officer, who served as a professional adviser. Because of the considerable amount of work to be done, Freitag declined to allow me to accompany Wächter, despite requests from both of us.

There was constant activity among all of the Division's staff throughout the day and night. Because of the threatening situation at the front, orders, reports, directives, and questions concerning disarmament all followed in quick succession.

The Division had moved its defensive positions farther to the east and north to the Mur River in order to approach the 2nd and 6th armies at the front. Enemy reconnaissance had discovered a weakness in the front line where the two armies joined and quickly took advantage of it to burst through the front. The Division could not move farther east independently, but it took up positions that would enable it to close the breach in the front line. The commanders of all sub-units received orders to begin reconnaissance missions, particularly to survey the approach roads to the districts of Gleichenberg and Feldbach, where the breach was made.

Wächter returned from army group headquarters with the good news that the commander would arrange for the Division to be taken into front-line action. In the interim the Division had actually collected and returned small arms from the soldiers several times. Confusion spread through the ranks in the wake of these contradictory orders.

In early April a Fieseler Storch was shot down near our supply depot. A Luftwaffe general who survived the crash arrived with orders for the Division. He claimed that he had been authorized to take over the Division's weapons in order to arm a new paratroop division, the 10th. He had about one thousand men under his command, who apparently had had no infantry training. Therefore, he had further authorization to appropriate personnel from the Division, and if he did, then the Division would not have to part with any weapons.

This was another puzzle for the Division's command. They were asked to believe that some Luftwaffe general with one thousand men of the airborne was to form a paratroop division with the weapons and supplies of the Division. The next day a telegram arrived from the headquarters of the 18th Military District in Salzburg, with which the Division had no connection whatsoever, ordering the Division to immediately reform as the 10th Paratroop Demolition Division. This kind of order the Division's command could not fathom, no matter how hard it tried. It was difficult to believe that higher authorities would issue such an absurd directive.

The Division, however, took this as a sign that it was essential to hold on to all of its weapons, reissue those that it had taken from its soldiers, and prepare for the advancing enemy. The Division's command had no intention of converting into a paratroop division and decided to wait patiently for an explanation.

Finally, the Division's protests and Wächter's efforts paid off. On 28 March 1945 we received an order from the command post in Salzburg not to disarm and to await further orders.

In the interim the Division had completed the emplacements along the

Mur River. The 31st Regiment had not yet arrived but was on its way, on a forced march from the Konice district. Because the Division had carried out all of these defensive measures on its own initiative, it did not receive additional fuel and ammunition.

Despite the assistance of the local *Heimatsbund*, our reserves were depleted. There was little prospect of receiving more supplies, because the Division was not under the direct command of any army group. In order to alleviate the situation somehow, the Division was given authorization to stop retreating German and Hungarian divisions and requisition fuel and ammunition from them. However, this was not easily done. All roads were filled with retreating formations. Their discipline was very poor and they were hostile to the Division. A few units were able to requisition some ammunition and fuel, but it soon became necessary to buy them. Only in special cases could requisitions be made by specially designated officers.

The Division was also able to form another artillery detachment out of the retreating Hungarian units. This detachment performed very well in subsequent battles, but it was later taken away from the Division by higher authorities.

11 The Last Battles at the Front

AT LONG LAST the period of anxiety over whether the Division would be disarmed or converted into a paratroop unit came to an end. On 30 March 1945 I went to confer with my counterpart in the 2nd Panzer Army. I reported the situation, condition, and battle-readiness of the Division, and requested that it be deployed with the 2nd Army. The 2nd Panzer Army chief of staff confirmed all of the reports and supported the Division's inclusion in the 2nd Army. It had been a long time since his army had seen as strongly manned and armed a unit as the Ukrainian Division. He stated that, pending its acceptance into the 2nd Army, the Division would be assigned to closing the breach in the front between the 2nd and 6th armies, a line running from Gleichenberg to Feldbach. I returned to my command post greatly relieved. The situation had been explained and the fate of the Ukrainians no longer seemed as hopeless.

By order of Army Group South the Ukrainian Division was included in the 2nd Army on 31 March 1945. According to the general directive, the Division was to begin advancing to the breakpoint on 1 April. The 2nd Army put the Division under the command of the 1st Cavalry Corps.

The Division thus avoided liquidation. It was assigned to action in which it could distinguish itself. The Division command no longer paid attention to the orders for disarmament and reformation that continued to come in but simply passed them along for higher authorities to deal with. The Luftwaffe general, whose proposition for turning the Division into a parachute unit had been rejected by the Division, was given some supplies and left satisfied. The many difficulties, arguments, and futile work had come to an end. We were satisfied because level-headedness had prevailed, preventing a disgraceful and premature end of the Division.

A Waffen SS officer from Reichsführer Himmler's command post arrived

at the Division's staff operations department. He spent ten days and found a suitable "liaison officer" for his command post. His behavior made it obvious that he had some other mission that he did not reveal. I had the impression that my attitude and work, as the only Wehrmacht officer in the Division's staff, was being investigated.

The 29th and 30th regiments took part in the advance on the breach in the front, and both were supported by a detachment of light artillery. The 31st Regiment was kept in reserve. The sapper battalion was still occupied with the fortification of Maribor, and the fusilier battalion was stationed in the Radkersburg district, under the command of the 23rd Panzer Division. The field reserve battalion was moving along the Gleisdorf–Feldbach road on the left flank of the advance. The units of the 3rd Cavalry Division were advancing on the right, while the remnants of the 5th SS Panzer Division "Wiking" moved on the left. The reserve regiment remained at its position in the Deutschlandsberg district and there continued to combat partisan formations.

The advance officially began on 1 April 1945, at 0630, and was immediately successful. The Division's units, heartened by the decision to retain arms, showed considerable battle-readiness and decisiveness. Our line of advance was showing progress in all sectors and broke through rather weak enemy resistance. The Division quickly took control of the elevation and the village of Straden. The command point for the Division was moved from St. Peter to Gnaas, and then on to Straden, where we had a clear view of the battle field. After heavy fighting, the Division captured the lookout points at Stradner-Kogel, Gleichenberg-Kogel, and the Gleichenberg castle.

The battle for the village of Gleichenberg itself was particularly hard fought. A critical situation arose for a short time when the 29th Regiment was thrown back, but a counterattack with heavy and light artillery support soon recovered the lost territory.

Thus, the Ukrainian Division closed the breach in the front between the two German armies and carried out its orders. Sending the Division into battle enabled the 1st Cavalry Corps to move its 3rd Cavalry Division off the frontline and into reserve position. All units of the Division that had taken part in the advance, including the field reserve battalion, carried out their orders. To be sure, the enemy did not present any strong resistance, but casualties on both sides were fairly heavy. Neither tanks nor planes took part in the fighting on either side. The success of the Division in its first engagement raised morale and confidence tremendously. The Ukrainians fought stubbornly and well.

Right after the successful advance came the much more onerous task of maintaining possession of the acquired terrain. It was clear from the start that the enemy would try to regain lost territory. Almost at once the Soviets began their counterattack, which the Division was, nevertheless, able to repel. Then the enemy prepared for a full-scale assault on the Gleichenberg-Kogel and Stradner-Kogel elevations, and this took the form of strong artillery bombardment. The first assaults were repelled and individual breaches were closed by counterattacks. The Ukrainian soldiers were much more susceptible to strong artillery fire than Germans and were easier to flush out of defensive positions. However, they proved superior in counterattacks and almost always regained lost territory.

The Division's command planned its defensive actions in accordance with these characteristics of the Ukrainian soldier in mind. The frontline positions were kept fairly weak, with large reserves massed near the front. This tactic saved a considerable number of personnel in the face of heavy enemy fire, but it could only be practiced with a large formation like the Division.

The enemy assault intensified. Artillery fire increased. Under this heavy pressure, breaches appeared in the Division's defensive lines, and we were not able to close them with our troops. The 3rd Cavalry Division was brought in from the reserves. During one such critical situation, the commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Corps was at the Division's command point. The discouraging news from the front so unnerved General Freitag that he announced to the commanding general his resignation from the Division's command and from responsibility for its performance in action, just as he had done at a critical moment at Brody. The commanding general did not accept Freitag's resignation and ordered him to remain at his post. In a few hours the situation on the front improved; the enemy breakthroughs were repelled and closed up without further difficulty.

In a few days the enemy managed to penetrate the line of one of our regiments once again, but this time the situation was not as serious. Nevertheless, Freitag summoned Captain Makarushka and began to harshly berate the Ukrainians. This time Makarushka decided to strike back and suggested that Freitag immediately issue a request to the MC for the dissolution of the Division. Makarushka also voiced his suspicion about the accuracy of Freitag's reports concerning the strength of the battle-ready soldiers of the Division. He requested permission to conduct on-the-spot inspections of the condition of all units. During his inspections he had met certain detachments which, since they were in action, had reported only half their actual capability. Freitag declined to dissolve the Division.

The Stradner and Gleichenberg elevations changed hands several times. The 3rd Cavalry Division also had to retreat frequently. The fighting for these positions caused many losses on both sides. The losses were far greater on the German side, however, because the enemy had four to five times the amount of troops. Enemy artillery fire was also very heavy. There were enemy tanks in action, although planes still were not used. We had neither tanks nor planes and were short of ammunition for artillery and heavy infantry weapons.

In the southern sector of the corps, in the district of Radkersburg, heavy defensive action was taking place in which the Division's fusilier battalion fought as a unit of the 23rd Panzer Division. The commander of this division reported that the battalion's performance in action was commendable.

It was again apparent that, for a Ukrainian soldier, the commanding officers were of crucial importance. If a commander was able and competent, and knew how to exercise his authority, the Ukrainians responded with their best performance in fighting and displayed endurance and determination in their advances.

Some regrouping was required after the constant changes in the situation on the front, which had pushed the Division over to the left flank of the corps. The 29th Regiment had suffered considerable losses in its distinguished capture of Gleichenberg, as did the 30th Regiment. Both regiments had to be given respite from the frontline, to rest and receive fresh troops. These reinforcements were provided by the field reserve battalion, but even so, each regiment had to be reduced in size from three to two battalions.

The matter of commanders was more serious. Two battalion commanders, Kuchta and Podlesch, had died in battle and a few others were wounded. Aside from this, the commanders of the 29th and 31st regiments, Deern and Pannier, had to be hospitalized in Völkermarkt. It was not easy to replace two regimental commanders but it had to be done. The men assigned to the posts, Wildner and Wittenmeyer, fulfilled their duties well and had many successes with their regiments.

Eventually, the Gleichenberg-Kogel and Stradner-Kogel elevations were lost; to prevent further casualties it was decided not to try to retake them. The capture of the two elevations had little strategic significance. However, the Gleichenberg castle was retained, because it cut through enemy lines and constituted a main point of resistance in the Division's line of defense.

At long last the front began to stabilize. The Division was assigned to defend its own sector of the front, which included the castle and village of Gleichenberg on the right flank and extended to the outskirts of Feldbach on the left. As previously mentioned, the main defensive point was the Glei-

chenberg castle, which stood on a hill surrounded by forest. The Division defended this sector successfully throughout the fighting that was to come.

The three regiments were deployed side by side, and a large reserve was placed behind the line. The reserve units of the Division consisted of the fusilier battalion, the sapper battalion, and the field reserve battalion. The latter was stationed near the Division's headquarters. In this way the Division progressively gained comprehensive control of its sector, as each unit was assigned a part of it. A detailed plan of fire was drawn up that took the capabilities of all of our heavy artillery into consideration. To our right stood the 3rd—and later the 4th—Cavalry Division, and to our left was the SS Panzer Division "Wiking." The sapper battalion built defensive emplacements throughout and secured them with a great number of minefields and strongpoints.

According to the basic plan, all reserve units intensified their work on primary, secondary, and tertiary lines of defense. Aside from this, all units were readied for defense in case of encirclement. The supply services were reorganized and assigned to the construction of defenses.

The Ukrainian Division defended its sector of the front effectively. All enemy advances, which became progressively weaker, were repelled. Temporary breaches were sealed by counterattacks. The units got accustomed to battle conditions and calmly awaited further developments in the fighting. Every night, reconnaissance units went behind enemy lines in order to scout out enemy positions and bring back prisoners. Assault teams destroyed advanced enemy pressure points, and captured ammunition and prisoners. The soldiers went into such actions eagerly and with fervor. The Division always had a clear picture of enemy actions in its sector.

Across from the Ukrainian Division stood the so-called 3rd Ukrainian Front. Ukrainians from the east faced those from the west. The ratio of forces was three to one in favor of the enemy; the relative strength of heavy weaponry and artillery was still worse for us, although tanks and planes continued not to be used in the fighting. On both sides were many Ukrainians—something each side tried to exploit to its advantage. The Soviets used megaphones, leaflets, and spread rumors in their efforts to get the Ukrainians of the Division to go over to them. Some of the Division's units proved to be more susceptible to this propaganda than others, and a few did cross over. As a countermeasure, the Division's command frequently rotated units from the frontline to reserve positions, or changed their deployment in the sector.

From the beginning of the defensive fighting in the area to the day of surrender, ninety-eight instances of desertion were recorded by the Division.

This was negligible considering the large number of soldiers in the Division, the critical time of general disintegration, and the incidence of desertion in the German divisions of the corps.

After the Division engaged in frontline fighting, Wächter left to visit the Cossack formations and the commander-in-chief of the German forces in Italy, General Heinrich Freiherr von Vietinghoff. Bisanz left to visit the reserve regiment in Völkermarkt.

Before his departure Wächter mentioned the possibility of a general surrender. As the official responsible for all foreign units in the SS armed forces—the Cossack Corps, the Ukrainian Division, and the Eastern Turkish formations—Wächter had plans to transfer these units to northern Italy by way of Tolmezzo and hand them over to the Allies.

Wächter wanted to merge the Ukrainian Division with the Polish army of General Władysław Anders because, from a legal standpoint, the Ukrainians in the Division were former citizens of Poland. Thus, he considered it advisable to change the name of the Division back to "galizisch no. 1" to underscore its territorial origin.

He thought the Division should acquire as many food supplies as possible, particularly livestock, because the Division would have to cross the Alps. The deployment of the reserve regiment in Völkermarkt was very conducive to such a plan, since it would be relatively easy to acquire the supplies necessary for a transfer to Italy. In any event, the Division could not afford to be taken prisoner by the Soviets and had to surrender either to the English or the Americans. These were the matters that Wächter intended to discuss with the commander-in-chief of the German armies in Italy. Before his departure Wächter notified us of the arrival of General Pavlo Shandruk, head of the Ukrainian National Committee (UNC) and commander-in-chief of all Ukrainian formations.[1]

In mid-April 1945 about twenty-five hundred Luftwaffe personnel who had no infantry training whatsoever were assigned to the Division. In this group were about seventy officers, ranging from ensign to captain; the rest were mainly NCOs, from corporals to sergeants major. For the most part, the latter were airfield technicians, and some were pilots who had been released at this late stage for service at the front, but were of no practical use.

It was difficult to decide how to employ these soldiers because they had neither infantry training nor experience in battle. Earlier Freitag would have been overjoyed at this large influx of German personnel, but they had arrived rather late and become rather more of a hindrance than a help. To make matters worse, they had no weapons. The Division had barely enough

munitions to supply its own soldiers, and there were shortages in the reserve regiment.

To Freitag, however, every German soldier was a good soldier, and he wanted to keep them with the Division at all costs. To send them into battle, it would have been necessary to first disarm twenty-five hundred battle-hardened Ukrainian soldiers and send them to work battalions. Their replacements would be put into the ranks as platoon and squad leaders—men who had no experience in battle and no training but were German. Such a decision in the final stages of the war would have greatly demoralized the Ukrainians.

After lengthy deliberations Freitag finally abandoned his plan and decided that the new arrivals would first have to undergo training. However, since the field reserve battalion could only provide training for twelve hundred men at a time, the rest were assigned to other units of the Division. Some of them (mainly the radio and telephone operators and other technicians) were immediately absorbed by the appropriate sections of the Division. What was to happen to the others after the three to four week training period, nobody knew. Everything depended on the general course of events.

The Division's regimental commanders were divided on the matter of including the newcomers into their ranks. The commander of the 29th Regiment was completely against it. In this he had my support. The commander of the 30th, however, wanted the largest contingent possible allocated to him, as soon as possible. His wishes were granted as an experiment, and he formed a third battalion in his regiment. The other two regiments had already received reinforcements and had also formed a third battalion.

One other plan of Freitag's deserves mention. He wanted to regroup the entire Division in order to have one fully German battalion in each regiment. Because of insurmountable organizational problems (not the least of which was the fact that all units were right at the front), this plan was rejected. Eventually, surrender occurred before the Luftwaffe men were put to any use. Apart from the inclusion of a large contingent in the 30th Regiment, the rest spent the end of the war engaged in military exercises with the reserve battalion and in the individual units of the Division. Such a resolution was fortunate, because it prevented another serious rift between the Ukrainians and the Germans.

The construction of emplacements continued. They were made according to the specifications of the army, the corps, and the Division itself. This project required a large number of workers, and so it was decided to decrease the size of the reserve regiment and to group the soldiers into work battalions. The plan was later approved by General Shandruk, as the

commander-in-chief of all Ukrainian forces. These measures were not a derogation from the soldiers' dignity, but simply an adjustment to the military's practical needs—using shovels instead of rifles. However, because of a lack of equipment and building material, even this plan could not be fully brought into effect.

In mid-April 1945 the Division was assigned to the 6th Army, commanded by Panzer Army General Hermann Balck. The 6th Army in turn assigned the Division to the 4th SS Panzer Corps, under the command of SS Obergruppenführer Herbert Gille. Thus the Ukrainian Division became part of the 6th Army's right flank; it was given responsibility to cover another sector that extended to Feldbach and included the road and the east–west railway line. The Division had two main defense positions: Gleichenberg castle and the strategically more important emplacement near Feldbach.

In the stabilized area of the front, the Division carried out its tasks well. Supply lines functioned normally, and food was abundant until the last day of the war, because the Division had a great amount of food in its stores. But because of poor transportation, the shortage of ammunition was almost catastrophic, particularly for the artillery and heavy weapons units. The Division initially had sufficient ammunition and thus had shared some of it with other units, who used it up completely. Nevertheless, on the day of the general surrender, every gun in the Division had a standard allotment of ten to fifteen rounds. In this regard, the Division was in a better position than any other unit in the 6th Army.

12 The Defense of Gleichenberg

THE WARM AND SUNNY spring day was coming to an end. A deep silence reigned among the green hills of Styria. One could hear the town clock in Feldbach counting off the hours. The peasants were returning from their fields. Here and there, one could hear the puttering of motorcycles ridden by regimental liaison officers.

The Division's staff had set up headquarters in the foothills. General Freitag and I lived and worked in a converted passenger bus. Other detachments were billeted in the few available houses in the valley. Work continued through the day and night.

The Division's chief liaison officer telephoned in his evening report to the 1st Cavalry Corps, ending a day that, apart from the occasional artillery exchange, had passed uneventfully. The fields for obstructive, disruptive, and emergency fire were outlined for the night. The reconnaissance squads were briefed once again on their nighttime objectives.

We had to change our light signals, because we learned that our code had been cracked in another sector of the corps. The telephone rang continuously. Reports came in, orders went out. The radio communications unit received orders that were to be encoded and sent on. The corps' chief of staff discussed the situation with me by telephone, while the other divisional chiefs listened in and readied to report their plans for action in their sectors. I discussed matters of ammunition supply with the Division's section 1B commander. The section 1C commander arrived to report on the situation at the front.

Work—concentration—decisions—orders. Work accumulated around me. My adjutant arrived with a report on the personnel in the Division's units and with a plan for distributing reinforcements among them. Captain Makarushka awaited his appointment with General Freitag, during which

he would once again defend the interests of the Ukrainian soldiers. Thus, the day of work drew to a close.

Around 2100 hours, Freitag and I found time for a rest and for a dinner at our desks. The Ukrainians put much time and effort into preparing simple but tasty meals. We will never forget you, honest and trustworthy helpmates, for your care and your diligence.

The telephone rang and cut short the dinner—the regimental commanders were calling to discuss tactical matters with me. Somewhere along the frontline a rifle shot or a machine-gun burst was heard, indicating a nervous sentry. Here and there an artillery or mortar shell exploded—part of the continuous haphazard exchange of fire.

From the Division's command point one could see the signal rockets rise into the air. The terrain was then illuminated as if by daylight. The bright strings of tracer bullets cut through the air, followed by a sharp crack, and then deep silence. For about an hour a thick cloud cover blew in. The moon and the stars were not to be seen; only the glaring light of a rocket flare would cut through the darkness of the night. Light drops of rain began to fall. To the west behind Spielfeld, where the sun had set not long ago, lightning could be seen.

From the right flank of the Division there came a devilish clamor that lasted for about five minutes. The heavy drumming of the enemy's mortar fire interspersed with the ringing bursts of machine-gun fire were echoed tenfold because of their emplacement in the foothills. Flares shot into the air, one after the other. Immediately the telephone came to life; the division to our right wanted to know what was going on, because everything was quiet in their sector. We advised them to wait, since we had not yet heard from the frontline. The commanders there were probably quite busy and would not have wanted to be bothered with questions. They had their line of communications: from regimental commander to battalions, then from the battalions to the company commanders.

The next phone call was from the commander of the regiment on the right flank. He reported that a strong enemy assault force was advancing on positions near the Gleichenberg castle. The situation was not yet entirely clear. He issued an emergency signal to the regimental reserve unit, which was encamped deep behind the frontline. Freitag alerted his reserves.

Based on experience, we used the following defensive principle: the main frontline was manned by relatively weak forces, while the main body of the force was placed in reserve. This was done because the Ukrainians were very susceptible to heavy artillery fire, yet courageous in counterattack.

The commander of the regiment on the left reported that the enemy had

attacked in his sector but that the assault group had been repelled. On the right flank the situation was still unclear, because the company on the outermost edge had given way under heavy artillery fire. The next report told us that communications between that company and the rest of the right-flank battalion were cut off. The commander of the right-flank regiment reported that the enemy had penetrated our positions near the Gleichenberg castle. The castle was still in our hands. The commander immediately sent his regimental reserves into a counterattack and ordered that one company from the Division's reserve unit be moved from the valley under Gleichenberg. These orders were carried out. The liaison officer passed orders on to the reserve company commander. The artillery regiment and the demolition and anti-tank detachment reported their readiness, through their own communications links.

This assortment of information led the operations section of the Division to envisage the situation as follows: an enemy force the size of a company, supported by a good artillery and mortar barrage, had managed to break through on both sides of the castle. Because of the heavy enemy fire our company left its trenches. Around the castle, however, our positions were holding on. The sector of the company to the left of the castle remained undefended. The exchange of fire resumed, indicating that our counterattack had begun. The Division sent in another two companies from the reserves, since the enemy forces appeared to be too strong for the regimental reserves alone to repel.

The liaison officer informed our neighboring unit to the right about the situation in our sector. This unit informed us that a forceful enemy reconnaissance action was in progress. Similar reports arrived from other areas in the Division's sector. All of these small-scale incursions were apparently diversions for the main assault on the Gleichenberg castle, an important point on the front. Located on a steep hill, the castle remained as a grain of salt in the eye of the enemy and mitigated the enemy's capture of the Gleichenberg-Kogel and Stradner-Kogel elevations, because the castle had such a commanding view of the surrounding terrain.

The Division staff then received a report from the commander of the regiment on the right flank that his counterattack had failed, and that the enemy force should be estimated to be a reinforced company. The Division's command had anticipated this and now decided to take direct control of the counterattack.

The man assigned to lead the counterattack was the commander of the reserve battalion. He had at his command two reserve companies, a squad of sappers with flamethrowers, and the troops that had retreated from their

positions. Two artillery observers would track the advance. Other details were to be resolved on the spot, by the individual battalion commanders and the commander of the artillery detachment. Because of a shortage of ammunition, the artillery was limited to a total of sixty shells. The field artillery of the right-flank regiment with the 150-mm gun was to give support. It also had a limited number of rounds available.

Then the planned counterattack began. The time lost in preparation was used by the enemy to shore up positions, and we took this into account. The battle had begun at 2315 hours. Our counterattack was to come at 0130 after an artillery barrage starting at 0128. Under cover of the artillery, our units advanced on both flanks of the enemy force. The enemy resisted stubbornly. Our artillery had to go into action twice more, and then fell silent so as not to cause casualties among our advancing forces. The task was taken in hand by the infantry which, after heavy hand-to-hand combat with fixed bayonets, hand grenades, and flamethrowers, was able to regain control of our emplacements.

At 0200 hours the commander of the counterattack force announced that the enemy had been repelled and that the sector was once again in our hands. Our casualties: one dead, four wounded. Enemy casualties found in our emplacements: three dead, three taken prisoner, two of whom were wounded.

Having achieved its objective, the battalion returned to the Division's reserve. The regiment resumed control of its sector. The Division reported the results of the action to the corps and to the neighboring division. The wounded prisoners were treated and then handed over to section 1C for interrogation. The commander of section 1B issued supplies of ammunition. Calm was restored in the Division's operations staff. The time was 0245.

The battle was over for the night. The men lay down for a short rest. It was possible that the enemy would resume the fight for the castle in about two days. The Ukrainian soldiers had fought bravely and zealously, and they had gained experience. The last successful counterattack had greatly raised their morale and their self-confidence. They would handle future tasks equally well. This battle for Gleichenberg castle, an important strategic point, had been carried out exclusively by Ukrainian officers and troops. They had brought the battle to a respectable conclusion.

13 The End of Hostilities and the End of the Division

In late April 1945 General Pavlo Shandruk, head of the Ukrainian National Committee and commander-in-chief of all Ukrainian military formations, joined the Division. Along with him came Dr Wächter, Colonel Bisanz, and Dr Fritz Rudolf Arlt, an official initially with the Generalgouvernement and later with SS operational headquarters. General Shandruk brought trident insignia for the Ukrainian soldiers to wear on their caps. A former officer of the Russian Imperial Army, Shandruk later served with the Ukrainian Army. In the interwar period he had served as a professional officer in the Polish Army, having graduated from its General Staff Academy.

The general, interested in all matters concerning the Division, asked Freitag and me for a detailed report. He was a model officer and quite sincere. At the front, he visited all of the units, whose members greeted him spontaneously. His visit came at an ideal time, because the enemy had just intensified the propaganda campaign urging the Ukrainians to go over to the Bolshevik side. He appealed to the conscience and honor of the Ukrainian soldiers and, invoking the pledge they had sworn, called upon them to fulfill their duties as soldiers. The presence of the general, in a Ukrainian uniform, made a profound impression on the Ukrainians of the Division and improved their morale greatly.

Wächter soon left the Division. General Shandruk left some days later to join the reserve-training regiment, where he set up his quarters. This was a very good idea, because direct and constant contact with General Freitag would have made him uncomfortable. In general, relations between Shandruk and the Division commander were not very good, which is not surprising considering their differences in character.

Nothing of consequence seemed to be happening at the front. Apart from the actions of enemy reconnaissance and assault teams, as well as an intensification of artillery fire, days at the front passed rather calmly. Neither side used tanks or planes. The main concern of the Division's command at the time was the impending defeat of Germany. The problem of avoiding being taken prisoner by the Red Army loomed large for both Ukrainians and Germans. All units were subjected to a "purge" of unnecessary matériel, to make the Division as mobile as possible and to ready it for a march over the mountains in the event of a general retreat. These measures were taken in accordance with orders from the German High Command.

One could gather from these orders that the higher governmental authorities planned to continue fighting in the Alps, in accordance with the plans of the Reich administration. On this kind of a retreat only the most indispensable equipment could be taken, and only such equipment that could be readily transported across the most difficult and steep mountain passes without blocking them. This meant that the light guns had to have a ten-horse pulling team, and the heavier guns had to have a twelve-horse team. All other matériel was to be gathered in one depot and from there be transported by rail to the reserve regiment.

The work was done in great haste, and soon the depot grew to an immense size. The Division had already begun to rid itself of needless equipment, but even so, many things still came to be considered a useless encumbrance.

On 2 or 3 May 1945 all commanders, higher adjutants, and chiefs of staff were called to army headquarters for a conference. The conference was headed by General Balck, Commander-in-Chief of Panzer Armies. He expressed his belief in the positive result of approaching events and asked the commanders present to convey this view to their soldiers. He gave instructions for the conduct of battles and ordered greater use of reconnaissance groups; these groups were to stage raids deep into the enemy rearguard, remain behind enemy lines for as long as possible, and collect intelligence and destroy military objectives. The Ukrainians were to participate in these actions, particularly the more courageous officers.

The commander-in-chief claimed that supplies of ammunition were assured in the future, and that there was still enough fuel and ammunition in the supply depots near the front to successfully repel the enemy advance. Apart from this, he declared that the army had done everything possible to take over all ammunitions supply depots in districts under its control.

Those in attendance found his assessment difficult to believe and received it with considerable skepticism. At the same time, the officers returned to

their units with some vague hope for the future—despite their disbelief in General Balck and their certainty that the end of the war was imminent, to be brought about by the complete collapse of Germany.

German forces on the Division's right flank had been completely regrouped. Its new neighbor there was the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division, the "Reichsführer SS."

By now the Allies had entered Austria from the west and the southwest. The commander of the Division allowed Captain Makarushka to leave for the Völkermarkt–Klagenfurt district to contact the Allies and notify them of the existence of the Ukrainian Division. On 5 or 6 May 1945 Makarushka met an English unit and was received correctly and cordially by its commander. Makarushka asked the commander to designate the Völkermarkt district as the mustering point for the Division. This request was granted, because the Division's reserve regiment and some other of the Division's sub-units were stationed there.

The area was not yet occupied by the British Army, which had only just managed to reach Klagenfurt. They had not been able to occupy the city itself because it was the center for a garrison of Tito's partisans, with which the advance units of the British force had only just come into contact. At Makarushka's remark that Tito's partisans would not tolerate the presence of the Division in the Völkermarkt district until the Allies arrived, the English commander simply instructed the Ukrainians to hold Völkermarkt until they did arrive. When reminded of the fact that the partisans were allies of the English, the commander simply repeated his instructions.

Makarushka then went to Völkermarkt, where he was soon summoned by the partisan command. Makarushka informed them that the English had instructed the Ukrainian Division to muster in the Völkermarkt district. They replied that this was impossible, since the city belonged to Yugoslavia, not to England. After lengthy negotiations Makarushka decided to order the reserve regiment to march northward, to avoid harassment from Tito's partisans.

During the march the reserve-training regiment engaged in heavy battles with partisans and disintegrated into several small units. Since Makarushka no longer had any line of communication with the Division and knew nothing of its intentions, he sent guides to the fork in the road at Twimberg; they were to redirect the Division's columns bound for Völkermarkt north toward Radstädter Tauern. Thus the plans negotiated by Makarushka with the English brigade commander had to be changed.

Wächter's plan of crossing over to northern Italy and the Allies through

Tolmezzo seemed to be out of the question. First, the English had already entered the Völkermarkt–Klagenfurt district; and second, Yugoslav and Italian partisan formations had increased to such size that Tolmezzo was not passable. Also, the Division's withdrawal would cause a tremendous weakening of the front and put the units stationed there in great danger.

On 6 May 1945 there was a conference of all divisional chiefs of staff at the command point of the 4th SS Panzer Corps. The discussion was headed by the commanding general himself. He said that Germany was faced with inevitable surrender. It was therefore necessary that measures be taken to avoid the capture of German and foreign national units by the Red Army. From 7 May the entire front was to disengage from the Red Army and, leaving all matériel behind, to move to territories occupied by the English and the Americans. On that day only the units of the 4th SS Panzer Corps that had pushed far into the front would be withdrawn. The retreat of the Ukrainian Division was to begin twenty-four hours later—on 8 May, when all units of the corps had been aligned. Further details of this withdrawal were discussed later.

On the afternoon of the sixth, all division commanders and commanding generals were summoned to General Balck's headquarters. He notified them that Germany was on the brink of unconditional surrender and that capture of its army by the Red Army was to be avoided. At the Division's suggestion, Völkermarkt was designated as a general mustering point.

For all units of the 4th SS Panzer Corps as well as for the right-hand neighbor of the Division, the 1st Cavalry Corps, the retreat was made difficult by the small number of bridges spanning the Mur River, which flowed right behind the frontline. For the Division the situation was much worse because, as an infantry division, its retreat would be much slower than that of its motorized and mobile neighbors. It should also have been of particular importance that the Ukrainians not fall into the hands of their eastern enemy. However, despite the explanations of the Division's status in the army—and requests for priority in retreat—the army command made no decision.

In the afternoon of the same day General Shandruk, Dr Wächter, Colonel Bisanz, and Dr Arlt returned to the Division. Wächter immediately went to army headquarters to secure earlier withdrawal for the Division.

In the previous few days the commanders of all the Division's units had been informed of the general situation and the expected and possible events to come. At the end of this briefing session Colonel Bisanz requested that he be allowed to speak and delivered an impassioned speech. He called upon all commanders to conscientiously fulfill their duties, at this, the most diffi-

cult time for the Division. The order to withdraw did not surprise the Division, since it had made in advance detailed plans for retreat. The route assigned to the Division was as follows: the Pakstrasse from Graz through Wolfsberg to Völkermarkt.

The Division's sapper company built a twelve-ton support bridge spanning the Mur River just south of Graz to enable a quick crossing for the Division during the retreat.

On 7 May, at 1100 hours, the units forming the advance arcs of the front immediately to the left of the Division began to retreat. The Division itself had not yet been notified when it was to begin retreating. Already on that day, however, the Division commanders had moved all of their supply service and logistics units westward. All roads in this direction were clogged with German troops, but movement, supervised by numerous officers as well as by the military police, proceeded without a hitch.

Almost all units of the 6th Army, including the 4th SS Panzer Corps and the Division, retreated along the Pakstrasse. However, the various units of the 1st Army were to march along this road from the southeast, from Wolfsberg north toward Radstädter Tauern; in other words, traveling in the direction directly opposite to the 6th Army. The congestion that resulted was worst at the crossroads near Wolfsberg, where the two marching columns met head on.

Unfortunately, the exact time of the retreat was not agreed upon by the 1st and 6th armies, and a conflict in timing of retreat arose between the Division and the neighboring 1st Cavalry Corps. This corps again became the Division's neighbor to the right, because the Waffen SS Division "Reichsführer SS" had been transferred to the Vienna district.

According to orders issued earlier, the Division was to have begun its retreat on 8 May at 1100 hours. The 1st Cavalry Corps did not want to retreat until that evening, because they could not disengage from the enemy during the day. Also, the retreat of the Division's left flank near Feldbach encountered a number of difficulties. On the other hand, the Division had to face the fact that its neighbor to the left would retreat during the day, and the Division could not possibly hold its positions with a flank exposed.

The Division's dispute with the 1st Cavalry Corps over the use of the Pakstrasse was one in which neither the 4th SS Panzer Corps nor the 6th Army wanted to become embroiled. Nothing was resolved, mostly because the units involved were all bent on serving their own interests. It became clear later that it would have been quite possible for both units to retreat along the same road simultaneously without serious delays or problems.

Throughout the day of 7 May both General Freitag and I asked the 4th SS

Panzer Corps to give them the exact time for the withdrawal of the Division from the front. All petitions received the same answer: "Wait. The orders will come."

That evening, I was still trying vainly to get the corps to issue the appropriate orders. On 8 May, at 0200, Wächter telephoned to say that his car had broken down on his way to the 6th Army headquarters. He was surprised to learn that all was quiet on the Division's sector of the front. To the best of his knowledge, the army had already given the orders for an immediate withdrawal.

All non-combat and support units of the Division had been moved to the rear. I again called the 4th SS Panzer Corps for orders and again received none. Finally, at 0600 hours, on 8 May, the chief of staff of the Panzer Corps phoned in the order for an immediate withdrawal from the front. Only a few rearguard units were to remain at the front line until 1400 hours. The Division was to march along the Pakstrasse in the direction of Völkermarkt.

The Division withdrew from contact with the corps, and from that point on, no further orders could be received. There was no particular personal farewell, not even between the commanding general and the Division commander. It was a strange way to release the Division from the ranks of the 4th SS Panzer Corps. It was clear that, for the Germans, the Division was a division of foreign nationals, not a German division.

The Division immediately issued orders for a retreat to all of its units, which had been awaiting them impatiently. Amid renewed fighting, the staff remained near the front until 1000 hours, then quickly transferred its headquarters to the other side of the Mur River. Enemy activity intensified as they noticed the retreat. However, the disengagement and withdrawal proceeded as planned. The rearguard commanders carried out their tasks in defending the retreat. Only on the left flank did problems occur. The 30th Regiment ran into some difficulties near Feldbach and suffered some casualties. The enemy was only carrying out isolated attacks and did not mount any offensives along the entire front.

The retreat proceeded well, even though all roads were overflowing with traffic. There was no air cover to defend the marching columns. That afternoon Soviet planes strafed and bombed them, but they did not inflict any serious damage. All units carried only the most essential and rudimentary weapons and supplies; they left all heavy weaponry, especially artillery pieces and heavier stores of supplies, behind. Some of the heavier weapons were deliberately damaged to make them unfit for further use.

14 The March to Captivity

THE DIVISION had to disengage from the enemy completely, and this could only be achieved by constant and rapid marching. The soldiers had to keep marching to reach territories occupied by the Allies. Until they did, rest stops were forbidden; marching was to continue day and night because of the constant threat of a final Red Army onslaught designed to capture the Wehrmacht units that had faced it. On 8 May 1945 I returned to the frontline on the opposite bank of the Mur River, to urge all units still on the front, particularly rearguard units, to effect immediately a speedy withdrawal.

The Division maintained radio communication with the reserve-training regiment commanded by Captain Makarushka until the evening of 7 May, when it was broken. However, the regiment knew that the Division's mustering place was in the regiment's district. Since radio contact could not be reestablished with the reserve regiment, the Division had to allow for the possibility that something untoward had happened. The Division sent the chief liaison officer to inform the reserve regiment of the arrival of the rest of the Division in the Völkermarkt district.

The Mur River was crossed in accordance to plans and without any delays. The crossing was aided by the bridge recently built by the sapper battalion. General Shandruk, Wächter, and Dr Arlt visited the Division's staff.

All units were well supplied with food. Moreover, they would have been able to replenish their stocks with provisions stored in supply camps west of Graz if individual units had had enough space to carry such supplies.

The entire Division was moving constantly. It was difficult to command the entire Division because the troops had spread out over such a large area. It was still possible to issue orders to our horse-drawn and motorized

units, but the infantry often hitched rides with other motorized units to make their way west.

After the Division moved across the Mur River and away from the enemy, the commanders attempted to reach the front of the marching column to reestablish command over the Division. At first the command remained behind purposely, to clear up some tactical difficulties and to help the Ukrainian soldiers get to the west as quickly as possible. The fact that the Ukrainians had become mixed in with other, non-Ukrainian units was of little significance.

The main goal, for the Division as well as for the entire German Army, was not to fall into the hands of the Soviets. In this case, speed was of more importance than holding individual formations together, especially because the Allied forces would eventually stop all soldiers. Then there would be plenty of time for roll calls. On the other hand, the cavalry corps had remained fairly cohesive, mainly because it had enough field radios to maintain communications and also because its units had natural means of rapid transport.

Soviet planes made a few more bombing and strafing runs on the marching columns, but these attacks did not cause many casualties. The last such attack occurred on 10 May.

In the meantime, the liaison officer who had been sent to the reserve-training regiment notified us that the area in and around Völkermarkt contained no English formations and, instead, that a strong regiment of Tito's partisans were stationed there. The reserve regiment, whose units were placed at a distance from one another, came under heavy attack, suffered heavy casualties, and attempted to break through to the north. During the fighting, the regiment disintegrated. Later, I found only the commander of the regiment, some of the company commanders, and a few infantrymen.

In light of the situation and acting on his own initiative, the liaison officer intercepted the Division at the crossroad just to the north of Wolfsberg and redirected it farther to the north, to the direction in which all German units were marching.

The advance units of the Division were undoubtedly informed of the change in direction by the guides sent ahead by Makarushka. Thus, the Division found itself in the main column of the retreating German Army, which was moving through Twimberg–Judenburg–Murau–Mauterndorf, in the direction of Radstädter Tauern and Radstädt. The fact that a greater number of Ukrainians did not fall into the hands of Tito's partisans in the Völkermarkt region can be attributed to the initiative of the liaison officer, Michel, and to Captain Makarushka.

General Freitag with his staff rushed toward the front of the column, to assert command of his troops. In the afternoon of 10 May the Division's command post was set up in the marketplace in Tamsweg; in the evening the post was moved to St. Andrae, some three kilometers to the north. On that same evening came the news that the Allies were interning all foreign national and Waffen SS units in Tamsweg. This report was delivered and confirmed by Wächter's aide-de-camp. As an officer of the Wehrmacht I drove to the Allied checkpoint in Tamsweg to find out whether there was a way of bypassing it. Before I left, I asked Wächter and the Division's command staff to wait for my return. Freitag lay down to rest, and Wächter promised they would wait for me.

I went through the checkpoint without difficulty but could not bypass the heavy traffic of the stalled column of troops and vehicles. I did, however, send the staff secretary, Nödinger, back to the Division's headquarters to repeat the request that they await my return, because I wanted to scout another route.

I finally returned to Mauterndorf in the late afternoon, having been severely delayed by the crowded roads. I met the 1st liaison officer, the 1st staff secretary, and the sapper battalion commander to give them the new route for the Division's march. They told me that General Freitag had fallen into despair about the overall situation and committed suicide. The rumor that he had shot himself was eventually confirmed. They claimed that Freitag had earlier made plans to escape into the mountains with them, but he had apparently abandoned this plan when they declared they would not follow him because they considered it completely nonsensical. The liaison officer also informed me that General Shandruk had probably gone to meet with the Americans in Radstädt. The report on Wächter was that he had disappeared in an unknown direction into the mountains.

Unfortunately, this was the way the Division's headquarters dissolved, rather prematurely. The suicide of the commander bears witness to his lack of responsibility toward his unit. Freitag should not have behaved in such a manner, because his obligations to the Ukrainians had not been completed. He had capitulated far too soon, because he imagined that the difficulties ahead were insurmountable. His work was nowhere near finished.

I could not get through to the front of the Division's column or get to General Shandruk because of the overcrowding on the road and at the pass at Radstädter Tauern. I therefore established contact with an English brigade and reported a number of the Division's units to them. The English assigned a large field near Tamsweg for the mustering of the Ukrainian

Division. In the opinion of the English brigadier, the Ukrainian units that had surrendered in Radstädt had nothing to worry about.

The command of the Ukrainian troops arriving at Tamsweg was assumed by Major Pobihushchyi. I decided to stay at the headquarters of the 1st Cavalry Corps and, from there, helped the Ukrainians assemble at the indicated gathering point. I later made several visits to the soldiers of the Division who were interned at the camp in Tamsweg. My visits continued until the entire camp was moved to Spittal. For the most part, the German personnel of the Division had separated themselves from the Ukrainians, while those who remained were later separated by the English.

In Mauterndorf I had enough time to meet with Colonel Bisanz, and we offered the Ukrainians advice and various pointers. Colonel Bisanz believed that his work on behalf of the Ukrainians had come to an end, and he headed toward Radstädt. I was taken to the prisoner-of-war camp, where the news of Freitag's suicide was corroborated by a local German police official. Freitag's body was recovered and buried at the cemetery in St. Andrae. It came to light that the detention of all units of foreign nationals and of the Waffen SS had come as a result of provocative actions taken by an SS unit in the area. The checkpoint on the road was dismantled on the following day. Thus, the suicide of the Division's commander became even more tragic.

Later, the Ukrainians were transported from the region of Spittal. Some went to Rimini, in northern Italy, and the rest to Radstädter Tauern. With this relocation the Ukrainian involvement in the German war effort came to an end.

APPENDIX A

Origins of the Ukrainian Division "Galicia"

AFTER THE GERMAN OCCUPATION of Ukrainian territory, the participation of the Ukrainian populace in paramilitary and military formations increased noticeably. In the territory of the Generalgouvernement (as a result of the unification of Galicia), the number of Ukrainian auxiliary police increased, as did the number of Ukrainians in *Werkschutz* and in other support formations that came under the jurisdiction of the administrative (and, more specifically, police) authority. Here and there (particularly in the Kolomyia region), men were pressed into Waffen SS units in barbaric fashion, without any consultation with Ukrainian intermediaries, and often without the knowledge of the central German authorities of the Generalgouvernement. Moreover, many Ukrainians ended up in the ranks of the German armed forces for varying reasons. For the most part, these Ukrainians were taken into military or support formations and units, for service in the central and eastern regions of the expanding Reich.

All of these formations had little significance for the Ukrainians, either politically or militarily, because they were small and generally did not incorporate Ukrainian officers, even of the lowest ranks. Moreover, there was no political basis for promoting the interests of Ukrainians. The same applies to the so-called "Ukrainske Vyzvolne Viisko" (UVV) or Ukrainian Liberation Army, which came into existence at the beginning of 1943. Such German behavior could be understood because, for them, the question of Ukrainian nationhood did not exist, whereas the formation of a larger military unit composed primarily of Ukrainians would have constituted a political act.

The events of the war in early 1943 allowed for increased speculation that a large Ukrainian military formation could become a reality. The

catastrophic defeat at Stalingrad, the Red Army's recapture of the eastern lands bordering on Ukraine, and the successful Allied landing of troops in Northern Africa had a sobering effect on German troops in the east, and strengthened the position of those Germans who advocated cooperation with the non-Russian nations of Eastern Europe. Hitler's declaration of February 1943 expressed the hope that other nations threatened by the Bolshevik onslaught would stand united on the Eastern, anti-Bolshevik front. This was, perhaps, the first indication of an impending change in policy. Soon after came the formation of large Latvian and Lithuanian Waffen SS units.

A realistic assessment of German–Ukrainian relations led to the conclusion that talks directed toward creating a Ukrainian military formation could only occur in the Generalgouvernement and, in particular, in Galicia, where the regime was incomparably less severe for the Ukrainian population than in Reichskommissariat Ukraine. Therefore, on 8 March 1943, I wrote to Governor General Hans Frank, requesting the use of a variety of means to form a volunteer Ukrainian military unit on the territory of the Generalgouvernement—a unit that would fight side by side with the Germans against the Soviets. That same day I conferred on this subject with Dr Ludwig Losacker, Director of Internal Affairs in the Generalgouvernement and former Vice-Governor of Galicia, who understood the need for Ukrainian–German cooperation.

In order to resolve the question of a Ukrainian military formation, it was necessary to find a German sponsor who would take the matter upon himself and whose rank would guarantee success. The Governor of Galicia, Dr Otto Wächter, was such a man. He was an Austrian by birth (son of an Austrian general), and an able and ambitious man with direct connections to Himmler, because of his rank of SS Gruppenführer. From his experience of working with his aides—Dr Otto Bauer, Dr Losacker, and Colonel Alfred Bisanz—and through contact with Ukrainian officials, Wächter realized that the Germans had committed grave errors in their policy toward Eastern Europe. He decided that this policy should include a far greater amount of cooperation between the German administration and the Ukrainians. Galicia, in his opinion, was a country in which the influences of German (Austrian) culture, dating back to the late eighteenth century, had to be restored. Wächter believed that there should be closer German–Ukrainian cooperation, and that all but the highest administrative posts of the country should be given to Ukrainians.

Wächter's conception of regional policy was very useful for us at the time, but neither he nor Bauer could fully realize their plan because they

were dependent on Berlin, where the governing approach to Ukrainians was more consonant to that of Eric Koch. Wächter often used his political connections without the knowledge of his superior, Hans Frank, because the latter did not understand the political issues of the East, and because his influence in Berlin had declined considerably. Moreover, Wächter ably took advantage of the strained relations between Frank and Himmler.

I spoke with both Wächter and Bauer in general terms about the need for a Ukrainian military formation. In March 1943 Wächter felt that the time had come to take the proposal for creating a Ukrainian military unit in Galicia to Berlin for further discussion. He discussed the matter with the chief of the SS Hauptamt, Gottlob Berger, who oversaw the foreign national formations in the Waffen SS, and with Himmler. He then received a general authorization to initiate a military formation of Galician Ukrainians.

In late March and early April 1943 Wächter had not yet started the negotiations with Ukrainians, but his associate, Colonel Bisanz, began to spread the word around Lviv about the formation of a Ukrainian army. Bisanz had already begun discussions with individual veterans and had begun recruiting men into the putative formation. There was some danger, of the uncontrolled creation of Ukrainian military detachments without consultation or negotiation with the Ukrainian community, for it was certain that the Germans could easily organize some sort of a Galician formation, even without the consent of the Ukrainian population.

In this situation I decided to become actively involved in these matters. On 3 April I had lengthy discussions with Wächter and Dr Bauer, and raised the issue of the desire of Ukrainians to fight alongside the Germans against the Bolsheviks. I also warned the Germans not to carry out any recruiting drive for the putative military formation without a firm political basis of support in the Ukrainian community. I argued that a campaign without such endorsement could not possibly produce any desirable results, and would never win the support of the Ukrainian community. Further discussions followed, on the one hand between Wächter and myself, and on the other, with numerous Ukrainian citizens. Wächter was in constant contact with Berlin throughout this time.

At this point a digression might be useful, in order to explain some of the Ukrainian motives for the creation of a Ukrainian formation within the framework of the German armed forces; to speculate on the German goals and motives for allowing the creation of such a formation; and to examine the differences in the Ukrainian and German views on the subject.

I had discussed these matters with many individual Ukrainians, particularly veterans, and almost openly declared my ideas at the leadership

meeting of the Ukrainian National Committee (composed of members of the Military Commission, professional soldiers, and heads of Ukrainian regional committees) held on 18 April 1943 in Lviv. I repeated these ideas on my numerous trips into the countryside, as well as in a speech delivered at Neuhammer during my visit to the Division in May 1944.

These are the main theses of my deliberations on the creation of the Division, which I delivered as a paper at a conference on 18 April 1943:

> We live in the midst of the cruelest of wars, in which no mercy is shown; in which only might, physical might, has any value. Our moral positions are lofty, but our physical strength is lacking. It is for this reason that we remain the object and not the subject of the events unfolding around us. To improve our chances, our dream has been the creation of our own armed force. A variety of efforts have been undertaken to this end since the general declaration of war. The establishment of the Ukrainian Armed Forces is our desire, because then we will become an allied fighting force recognized for having sacrificed our blood for our cause. In this way, we will become an active force in politics....
>
> A variety of armed units are being organized in the Eastern Territories, and they are composed of Ukrainians, but the units themselves are not Ukrainian. They are not linked to the organized Ukrainian world. No Ukrainian political institution stands behind them, because in none of these units was there any German declaration of political intent. The spilling of Ukrainian blood (including hundreds at Stalingrad) has no bearing on Ukrainian–German relations, or for that matter, our role in the world. Given the choice between the two kinds of army, the insurgent and the regular, we stand firmly behind the latter....
>
> Only now do we come to a partial realization of our efforts. Why only now? Because earlier, the Germans had refused to allow Ukrainians into the political arena, even at the lowest level. There are two German approaches to dealing with Ukrainians: Erich Koch's, the completely negative; and that of the Galician authorities, who rely on the compromise between the ideas of the Reich and the needs of other nations. These two approaches are in constant opposition. In the Galician sector, the idea of cooperation was adopted—a concrete turning point in Ukrainian–German relations. This new policy can be the beginning of a solution to the problems in the Eastern campaign if it passes the test of maturity....
>
> This humble initiative does not satisfy our desires, but that is a matter of sentiment. Cold logic and sober social and political realism, supported by

the experience of three years, teaches us to see reality for what it is, and not to paint it with bright or dark colors depending on our moods.

We are for the creation of the Division because it is demanded by Ukrainian interests. Our advantages are the following: (1) instead of an anonymous force we become a recognized part of the struggle against bolshevism; (2) we enter the political arena (no matter how humbly) of Europe and the world; (3) we take measures to preserve our physical well-being and we establish the nucleus of an army; (4) this can be the starting point for the development of future plans; (5) only in this fashion can we establish a military academy for our youth, run by a Ukrainian officer corps. This academy will be able to instill discipline, obedience, sincerity, honesty, resoluteness, a sense of responsibility, and other military virtues. Our war with Moscow will take on official form.

What will happen if we do not take advantage of this opportunity? The thinking of Koch and Globocznik[1] will win out. For these reasons, we accept this task, despite its humble form, and despite the fact that it will not be accepted by a section of our society.

There is no room here for negativism. Instead, we need as positive an attitude as is possible. Difficulties in the realization of this matter will arise, both from the side of the Germans (the Koch camp) and from the side of the Ukrainians.

In this speech I also made a further reference to the education of our youth. I claimed that if we thought it important to send our students to study at German universities, then we should send our young men to study the skills of the German military.

At the time of the creation of the Division, the imminent defeat of the Germans was obvious. However, the defeat of Germany need not have entailed a Bolshevik victory. One could still hope there would be political chaos in Central Europe and an invasion of the Balkans by the Western Allies. In such a scenario, the Division could have played a significant role as a Ukrainian national army. We also had hopes that the creation of the Division might encourage a change, at least tacitly, in German policy in eastern Ukraine. We hoped that the policies of Wächter would spread eastward and allow the creation of a Ukrainian power base (especially military), beyond the borders of Galicia.

The thinking of the Germans, particularly Wächter's, was somewhat different. They believed that German–Ukrainian cooperation could be used to harness Ukrainian forces to the German war effort and serve as a springboard for a new form of German hegemony in Eastern Europe. Neither side

ever completely trusted the other. Moreover, each "partner" approached the other in different ways. Wächter would say, "You, the Ukrainians, now have a chance to show us what you are capable of, and in time you will develop an appropriate place for yourselves in Europe." The Ukrainian approach was, "Create a satisfactory political climate and base for us, define our place in Europe, and in time we will go along with you."

In carrying on the negotiations concerning the Division, I had my eye on a number of other advantages we might have been able to gain, and about which I spoke at numerous meetings. Thanks to the creation of the Division, we expected a relaxation of the strict political regime in the Generalgouvernement, while at the same time, Ukrainian substance would be preserved. In addition, it would be possible to exploit a succession of minor concessions to strengthen the Ukrainian position, acquire new posts in the administration of the region, and attain economic and cultural goals far more easily than it would have been to wrest such rights from the Germans in a major treaty.

Therefore, both before the Division was formed and after the Act of 28 May 1943, the Ukrainian Central Committee put the following demands to the German authorities:

- Amnesty for all political prisoners, particularly for the members of Stepan Bandera's Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
- Privatization of all Ukrainian assets
- Autonomy for district Ukrainian auxiliary police
- Return of control of the press
- Reorganization of the so-called "Building Service"
- Improvement of conditions for the Ukrainian *Ostarbeiter* working in Germany

In military matters, we demanded wider recruiting rights for the Division, which we wanted to extend throughout the territory of the Generalgouvernement and the Reich. We also demanded that all Ukrainian personnel in military or paramilitary units other than the Division be transferred to it, particularly those individuals who were originally from the territories of the Generalgouvernement, or who were emigrés from the region.

During the negotiations with Wächter it became clear that his jurisdiction was limited, and that it would not be possible to bargain with him for more. Wächter had gained support for the Division through Berger, but he also had opposition from Eric Koch and highly placed "dignitaries" of the Gestapo, who saw the Ukrainian problem exclusively in a negative

light—from a military intelligence (*Abwehr*) point of view. In such conditions, the Division could not become generally Ukrainian in character but instead had to remain regional, or Galician. The extent of the unit's Ukrainian character would have to depend on its personnel rather than its external organization.

Wächter could not give the Ukrainians any political guarantees, because he could not travel to Berlin to seek them. If he had done so, he would not only have not received any concessions, but he would also have jeopardized his own position there and, consequently, weakened the case of the Division.

Moreover, guarantees wrested from those who considered all negotiations and pacts as simply pieces of paper had no value. Realistically speaking, the negotiations with Wächter were of little substance, to say the least. Throughout the deliberations, it was necessary to recall that the Germans could always move to organize the Division without dealing with the Ukrainians at all.

During the discussions with Wächter, the following three points were established:

- The Galician military formation would be a division.
- It was to be a regional formation, as indicated by its title, "Division Galizien no. 1".
- The uniforms and insignia of the Division would be those of the Waffen SS.

As in other large foreign national formations in the German Armed Forces, recruitment to the Division was to be voluntary. Religious affairs were to be exclusively in the hands of Ukrainian spiritual leaders. Liaison between the Division and Ukrainian and German officials was to be performed by the Ukrainian Central Committee (UCC).

The act proclaiming the creation of the Division was to include a general call to all Ukrainians urging them to join the ranks of the Division. Recruiting for the Division, the care of the soldiers and their families, and support in organizing the Division, was the responsibility of the Military Commission (MC). The members of the latter body were to be nominated by Wächter on my recommendation. Because of the importance of the matter at hand, the MC was to be headed by myself. The officer corps would be mixed—German and Ukrainian. A whole range of important details had to be finalized in the shortest time possible. At least a partial political amnesty was also to be announced.

After a meeting with Wächter and Bauer, I began discussions on the subject of the Division with Ukrainians, mostly with veterans and members of the UCC executive. However, my first meeting was with the most important of Ukrainian authority figures—the Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky. I heard him speak almost the same words I had heard from him during the summer of 1941: "There is almost no price which should not be paid for the creation of a Ukrainian army." I did not have direct discussions with Ukrainian political groups, but these were conducted indirectly, since the individuals I had asked to join the MC were members of the political organizations in question. They had all discussed the proposed ideas with their parties before accepting my proposals. Several members of the UCC also conducted negotiations with political groups not represented on the UCC. It should be added that no one to whom I offered membership in the MC refused, except Dr Roman Dashkevych. Political factions (both OUN factions) were either positively or negatively disposed to the Division. Obviously, I discussed the matter of the Division at length with Dr Kost Pankivsky.

After the general discussions, I wrote to Governor Wächter on 8 April and informed him that our community was ready and well disposed to the formation of the Galician Division. I expressed the reservation that the regional designation belittled the significance of this formation. I also introduced a proposal for the organizational structure of the MC, as well as a list of the prospective members.

On 15 April the first meeting of the MC took place and, later, the regional conference of the heads of committees and veterans' associations. On 28 April the ceremonial proclamation of the creation of the Division took place, accompanied by a manifesto from Governor Wächter and the Governor General, Hans Frank, who was represented by Dr Losacker. That day, my own proclamation appeared. Both manifestos explained that the Waffen SS Grenadier Division "Galizien" was formed in accordance with the principle of voluntary participation in the war against the Bolsheviks, emphasized the legal equality of the Ukrainian and German soldiers, and proclaimed the provision of insurance for the family of the volunteer, on the same footing as the German soldier's. It also stressed that religious matters would be in the hands of Ukrainian priests. However, one last-minute change was made without prior consultation with the UCC: the latter body was no longer responsible for liaison, and the head of the MC was to be Alfred Bisanz. The purpose of this tactic was clear: to keep the influence of the UCC at a minimum, and to keep the MC under strict control.

Nevertheless, the MC worked with the UCC harmoniously, and all important decisions were handed down only after agreement was unanimous. Of

the many demands issued to the Germans, few were realized. Despite continuous attempts to obtain general political amnesty for Ukrainians, the number of political prisoners actually released was only about 150, including the officers of the Ukrainian Police Company no. 213, which consisted of the two Ukrainian companies organized by the leadership of the OUN during the summer of 1941.

After the Act of 28 April 1943, the most important matters were the attempts to have the recruiting campaign apply throughout the Generalgouvernement (which was a success) and the Reich (which failed); to draw Ukrainian officers to the Division; and to provide officer training for a few hundred of our young men who had a secondary education.

In conclusion, it is necessary to emphasize that, of those Ukrainians who contributed their energies to the organization of the Division, all had exclusively Ukrainian interests in mind. In their understanding, the Ukrainian cause required the organization of a large Ukrainian military unit as the basis for a Ukrainian army, and they knew that the Germans would somehow have to be paid for this. They did not approach the matter sentimentally, but with cold political calculation. It would perhaps be of some relevance to note that the man who was entrusted with all aspects of our plans concerning the Division, the man who was to defend Ukrainian interests either in concert with the Germans or against them, and the man who was to conduct the termination of relations with the Germans and eventual transfer to the Western Allies, if the need arose, was a man of illustrious memory, Captain Dmytro Ivanovych Paliiv.

VOLODYMYR KUBIIOVYCH

NOTE

1 Globocznik was the chief of German police of the Lublin district. He was notorious for his complete denial of the Ukrainian question and for atrocities committed against the Ukrainian rural population at his behest, which claimed about five hundred victims.

APPENDIX B

Appeal to Ukrainian Citizens and Youth by the Central Committee President on the Formation of the Ukrainian Division 6 May 1943

THE LONG-AWAITED MOMENT has arrived when the Ukrainian people will again have the opportunity to come out with gun in hand to do battle against its most grievous foe—Bolshevism. The Führer of the Greater German Reich has agreed to the formation of a separate Ukrainian volunteer military unit under the name SS Infantry Division "Galicia."

Thus we must take advantage of this historic opportunity; we must take up arms because our national honor, our national interest, demands it.

Veterans of the struggles for independence, officers and men of the Ukrainian Galician Army! Twenty-two years ago you parted with your weapons when all strength to resist had ebbed. The blood of your fellows who fell on the Fields of Glory calls upon you to finish the deed already begun, to fulfill the oath you swore in 1918. You must stand shoulder to shoulder with the invincible German army and destroy, once and for all, the Bolshevik beast, which insatiably gorges itself on the blood of our people and strives with all of its barbarity to arrive at our total ruination.

You must avenge the innocent blood of your brothers tortured to death in camps in the Solovets Islands, in Siberia, and in Kazakhstan, the millions of brothers starved to extinction on our bountiful fields by the Bolshevik collectivizers.

You, who followed the thorny but heroic path of the Ukrainian Galician Army, understand more than anyone what it is to fight in the face of an enemy such as Red Moscow, shoulder to shoulder with an army capable of destroying the Red Monster.

The failures of the anti-Bolshevik forces of the European Entente in the years 1918 and 1920 testify irrevocably that there is only one nation capable of conquering the USSR—Germany. For twenty-two years you waited

with sacred patience for the holy war against the barbarous Red hordes menacing Europe.

It goes without saying that, in this titanic struggle, the fate of the Ukrainian people is also being decided. Thus, we must fully realize the importance of this moment and play a military role in this struggle. Now the battle is not uneven, it is not hopeless. Now, the greatest military power in the world stands opposed to our eternal foe.

Now or never!

Youth of Ukraine!

I turn to you with particular attention and call upon you to join the SS Infantry Division "Galicia." You were born at the dawn of the great age when the new history of Ukraine began to be written in crimson Blood and golden Glory.

When your fathers and elder brothers, first and alone in all of Europe, took up arms against the most fearful enemy of Ukraine and that of all humanity.

When your brothers, inflamed as you are now, first wrote into history the peerless heroic deeds of the Battle of Kruty.

When your brothers covered themselves with the glory of the first Winter Campaign, writing into history the heroic deeds of the Battle of Bazar.

It was then that You, our Youth, were born, then that You grew, as revolts rose up across the whole of Ukraine against the Bolshevik invader; an invader who, by ruin, famine, exile, torture, and murder, strove to wipe our nation from the face of the earth. Then You, our Ukrainian Youth, laid your colossal sacred sacrifices on the altar of your Fatherland. You burned with the sacred fire of love for it. Hardened your spirit for it, readied yourself for the right moment of reckoning by arms. With longing in your heart, with glowing embers in Your soul, You waited for this moment.

And now this moment has come.

Dear Youth! I believe that your patriotism, your selflessness, your readiness for armed deeds, are not mere hollow words, that these are your deep feelings and convictions. I believe that You suffered deeply and understood the painful experiences of the past struggles for independence, and that You culled from them a clear sense of political realism, a thorough understanding of the national interest and a hardy readiness for the greatest of sacrifices for it. I believe in You, dear Youth. I believe that You will not idle while the Great Moment passes by, that You will prove to the whole world who You are, what You are worth, and what You are capable of.

Ukrainian Citizens!

I call upon you for great vigilance. The enemy does not sleep. In the

memorable years of 1917–19, enemy propaganda lulled our people with lofty words about eternal peace, about the brotherhood of nations. Now this propaganda aims to tear weapons from our hands once again, and the enemy disseminates countless absurd slogans, groundless conjectures, and febrile dreams among us. You know where this propaganda originates. You know its purpose. Counter it decisively, even when it comes forth under a Ukrainian guise, guilefully exploiting the uninformed and confused among the Ukrainian people. You know the value of arms, and thus I believe that, with God's assistance, You will worthily pass the test of political maturity to which history has put you.

Ukrainian Citizens!

The time of waiting, the time of debilitation and suffering has come to an end. Now, the great moment of armed deeds has also come for our people. Side by side with the heroic army of Greater Germany and the volunteers of other European peoples, we too come forth to battle our greatest national foe and threat to all civilization. The cause is sacred and great and therefore it demands great efforts and sacrifices.

I believe that these efforts and sacrifices are the hard but certain road to our Glorious Future.

VOLODYMYR KUBIIOVYCH
President
Ukrainian Central Committee

APPENDIX C

Appeal to the Able-Bodied Youth of Galicia

THE POPULATION OF GALICIA has shown many examples of its gratitude since German soldiers first expelled their Bolshevik oppressors. The Galician villager was conscious of the importance of his work and duty, and labored mightily and with sacrifice to lend a hand in feeding Europe. Galician intellectuals, industrial workers in factories and mines, clerical workers in institutions and business offices, all worked with all of their might. The army of Galician men and women who work in German industry and food supply is preparing bread and weapons for victory.

Time and time again, the Ukrainians of Galicia voiced the wish to participate in Germany's armed struggle, with weapons in hand. The Führer has acknowledged the will of the Galician people, and has allowed for the formation of the SS Infantry Division "Galicia." The volunteers will be under the spiritual care of Ukrainian priests.

The volunteers, as members of the Division, will wear national insignia. The volunteers whose fathers fought bravely in the ranks of the former Kaiser's Imperial Army will have priority for acceptance in the Division.

Ukrainian youth of Galicia! You have earned this right. You are called to battle with your deadly enemy, the Bolshevik, to fight for your faith and for your Fatherland, for your families and your family fields, and for the just, new order in Europe.

For hundreds of years, your ancestors stood to face the hordes from the East. In this heavy hour of crisis, show your manliness and readiness once again.

DR OTTO WÄCHTER
Governor of the Galician District

APPENDIX D

On the Formation of the Ukrainian National Committee and the Ukrainian National Army March 1945

THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE (UNC) has come into being by the will of Ukrainian citizens who now reside in Germany and in countries allied with it.

The formation of the UNC is a new page in the socio-political life of Ukrainian citizens, who, governed by a pervasive love for the Homeland, desire to see it free of its invader.

The UNC is the spokesman of these hidden sentiments in our citizens and it firmly strides along the path which leads to the formation of a sovereign nation-state.

To this end, the UNC is organizing the Ukrainian National Army (UNA), whose purpose is to renew the armed struggle for Ukrainian statehood.

The UNA, in Ukrainian uniform, under the national flags sanctified by the battles of the past, under the command of its own Ukrainian officers, will stand under the ideological and political leadership of the UNC. Its ranks will be filled primarily by Ukrainians in the German Army and in other military and police formations.

The building of a nation-state requires Ukrainians of sound body and mind who are deeply nationally and socially conscious. To further this goal the UNC will ensure the protection of all Ukrainians in Germany, equalization of rights of Ukrainian workers with those of their counterparts of other nations, and primarily will ensure their widest possible religious, moral, cultural, and material welfare. The UNC will also ensure the release of all political prisoners.

Foreign and ancient borders separating the individual Ukrainian lands have generated differences in thought and deed. These must disappear in a unified march to a common goal. The UNC wishes to speed up this process

of unification of the Ukrainian populace, not only through a wide-ranging educational policy but also by a united Ukrainian approach to all matters.

The UNC will cooperate with National Committees of other nations enslaved by Muscovite Bolshevism who are fighting, as are the Ukrainian people, for Independence and Freedom.

The UNC will staunchly strive to perform the duties placed upon it by Ukrainian citizens, and it will perform them with confidence, providing that every consciously Ukrainian individual concentrates all of his efforts on the Common Struggle for a Common Victory.

Major General PAVLO SHANDRUK
Head, Ukrainian National Committee

Professor VOLODYMYR KUBIIOVYCH and OLEKSANDER SEMENKO
Vice-Presidents, Ukrainian National Committee

PETRO TERESHCHENKO
Acting General Secretary, Ukrainian National Committee

Notes

CHAPTER ONE

1 Otto Wächter (1901–49), Nazi Party politician from Vienna, who took part in the Austrian Anschluss in 1938. He was Governor of the Galician District from 1942 to 1944, later a military administrator in Italy, and a member of the SS executive in Berlin. After the war he lived in hiding in Rome's Maria dell'Anima monastery and died in Italy in 1949.

2 Erich Koch (1896–1987), Nazi Party politician, Gauleiter of East Prussia from 1928, and Reichskomissar of Ukraine in 1941–44. Notorious for his brutal regime in Ukraine, he went into hiding after the war and was arrested in West Germany in 1949. He was deported to Poland, where he was sentenced to death in 1959. Koch's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, which he served in Barczewo prison until his death.

3 Heinrich Himmler (1900–45), Reichsführer of the SS and chief of the German state police. President of the police force in Bavaria from 1933, he became chief of the political section of the Reich in 1935 and of the German police as a whole in 1936; Minister of Internal Affairs from 1943; Commander-in-Chief of the Army Reserves from 1944; Commander-in-Chief of the "Rhine" and "Vistula" armies from December 1944 to March 1945. He committed suicide in a British screening camp on 23 May 1945.

4 Alfred Bisanz (b 1890–?). A German born in the Lviv region, he served as an officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army. In 1918–20 he served as a lieutenant colonel in the Ukrainian Galician Army (UHA) and the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR) Army. He was the commander of the Lviv brigade of the UHA and one of the initiators of the Chortkiv offensive of 1919. In the interwar period he went back to his small landholdings in the Lviv region. In 1940–41 he was the commissioner of Ukrainian affairs in the Population and Social Welfare Department

of the Generalgouvernement in Cracow, and from 1941 headed a similar sub-department in the administration of the Governor of Galicia in Lviv. In this capacity he provided assistance to Ukrainians and served as an adviser to German authorities on Ukrainian affairs, particularly to Governor Wächter. In 1945 he was arrested by the Soviets in Vienna and sent to the Gulag. He was last heard of in the early 1950s.

5 Freitag's record is mentioned in the directive concerning the formation of the Division issued on 20 July 1943, "Aufstellung der SS-Freiwilligen Division 'Galizien,' 30 Juli 1943, Geheime Kommandosache," *Records of the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police* (Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei), National Archives, Washington, D.C., T-175-108-2631292-3. The man responsible for the formation of the Division was SS Brigadenführer and Waffen SS Major General Schimana, who was at his post until 19 November 1943. From 20 October 1943 until the end of the Division's existence, the commander was SS Oberführer Fritz Freitag, promoted on 20 May 1944 to the rank of SS Brigadenführer and Major General of the Waffen SS. See K.-G. Klietmann, *Die Waffen SS. Eine Dokumentation* (Osnabrück, Verlag "Der Freiwillige," 1965), p. 193.

6 The SS-Führungshauptampt Corps was a special branch of the German armed forces. Its responsibilities were to supervise and control the various branches of the armed command.

7 In June 1943 the head of the regional SS administration (SS Hauptamt) announced that about eighty thousand men had volunteered for service in the Division; of these, fifty thousand were accepted and thirteen thousand passed the recruitment procedure.

On 5 July 1943, in accordance with the order of the SS Reichsführer, 300 officers, 48 medical officers, 1,300 NCOs, 800 candidates for NCO status, and 2,000 riflemen were to be sent to the defense battalion at the "Heidelager" camp by 15 July. In addition, another 12,000 were to be called up to form the 4th to 8th regiments. In practice, matters turned out differently. According to reports, by 31 December 1943 there were a total of 12,634 (256 officers, 449 NCOs, and 11,929 enlisted men); by 30 June 1944, a total of 15,299 (346 officers, 1,131 NCOs, and 13,822 enlisted men); and by 20 September 1944, a total of 12,901 (261 officers, 673 NCOs, and riflemen 11,967. From the information provided by Klietmann, it is obvious that the Division always had sufficient riflemen but a dearth of officers and a lack of NCOs in particular. See Klietmann, *Die Waffen SS*, pp. 194, 519.

8 In June 1943 the Reichsführer of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, forbade the use of the designation "Ukrainian" in reference to the Division and ordered that it be called the "Galicia" or "galizisch"; the volunteers were to be referred to as "Galizianer." Governor Wächter protested this measure, pointing out that

Galicia was a state, territorial, and provincial concept, not a national one. Himmler rejected this and other objections, basing his decision on the negative attitude shown to the Germans by Ukrainians in 1918–19. See Klietmann, *Die Waffen SS*, p. 194; and Heinz Höhne, *The Order of the Death's Head: The Story of Hitler's SS* (London, 1972), p. 466.

9 During the Battle of Brody there were only two high-ranking Ukrainian field officers in the Division: Major Mykola Paliienko, commander of the Division's heavy artillery; and Captain Mykhailo Brygider, commander of the 1st battalion of the 29th regiment. Paliienko died during the battle; Brygider was eventually discharged.

10 The language of command for the Division was to be "Galician," while the "operational language" was to be German. However, the commander of the Division did not always abide by this rule.

11 On 15 April 1943 the first meeting of the MC took place in Lviv, chaired by Professor Kubiiovych. A draft constitution, drawn up by Iurii Tys-Krokhmaliuk, was accepted at this meeting. Under its provisions the executive consisted of the following: Professor Kubiiovych, head; Colonel Osyp Navrotsky, chief financial officer; Ievhen Pyndus, assistant to the chief financial officer; Mykhailo Khronoviat, conscription department; Dr Liubomyr Makarushka, officer department; Andrii Palii, family care and relations department; Mykhailo Kushnir, department of propaganda; Stepan Volynets, department of education; Dr Ivan Rudnytsky, legal department; Dr Volodymyr Bilozor, department of health; archpriest and Professor Vasyl Laba, department of religious affairs; Iurii Tys-Krokhmaliuk, department of military history; Professor Zenon Zeleny, department of youth.

This was initially accepted by Governor Wächter without reservation, but soon thereafter, without prior consultation with Professor Kubiiovych, Wächter declared that the MC was a subordinate body to his office; he appointed Colonel Bisanz as its head and General Viktor Kurmanov as its honorary leader. The rest of the executive remained intact. The changes in function and structure of the MC was the result of bad faith on the part of Governor Wächter. Not only did he define its purpose vaguely, but he also formed a German action committee under the direction of Dr Schultz. This purely German institution was organized as a counterpart to the MC and soon began to take over the handling of an increasing number of matters formerly under the MC's jurisdiction.

Colonel Navrotsky served as the bureau chief of the MC and as the deputy to Colonel Bisanz throughout. It was mainly due to his efforts that harmonious cooperation between the MC and the Ukrainian Central Committee (UCC) was possible.

12 "Kovpak's partisans" was the general German designation of all Soviet partisan

formations active in the northwestern districts of Ukraine, even though Sydir Kovpak, one of the most outstanding organizers and leaders of the communist partisan movement in Ukraine, was active in this area of Ukraine and Galicia only in the summer and fall of 1943.

13 The "police regiments" were made up of the initial wave of volunteers for the Division. They were trained in a district of the former Prusso-Polish region, near Gdynia, Białystok, and in eastern (Metz) and southern France (Pau, Tarbes, and Salies-de Béarn). The composition of the regiments was as follows: 1,264, Galizischen SS-Freiwilligen Regiment 4; 1,372, Regiment 5; 1,293, Regiment 6; 1,671, Regiment 7; 1,573, Regiment 8. Battalions in these regiments consisted of four companies of about 160 soldiers, and the companies consisted of three infantry platoons and one communications section. All of the officers and NCOs of the police regiments were Germans.

In early February 1944 the fourth regiment was transferred into action against Soviet partisans in Galicia and took part in engagements with the Red Army in Ternopil. In France the soldiers finished their training in spring and most of them were sent to rejoin the Division at Neuhammer. During training they were also used against French partisans. After the dissolution of police regiments in France, some soldiers deserted to the ranks of the French partisans. For example, the group under Osyp Krukovsky was made a separate detachment in Major Legrand's resistance group.

Governor Wächter, the UCC, and the MC all protested against the exclusion of the police regiments in the Division, and these protests were successful. The MC sent some of its members to visit the regiments. Iurii Krokhmaliuk traveled to France and to the 4th regiment in the Zbarazh district. See Iu. Krokhmaliuk, "U Zbarazhi," in *Visti* (Munich), nos. 4–5 (18–19) (June–July 1952); M. Nebeliuk, *Pid chuzhymy praporamy* (Paris, 1951); Ie. Protsakevych, "Politsiini polky," in *Visti Kombatanta* (Toronto–New York), nos. 3–4 (1970).

14 A very apt description of Himmler's speech is provided by George H. Stein in *The Waffen SS: Hitler's Elite Guard at War, 1939–1945* (Ithaca, 1966), p. 186.

CHAPTER THREE

1 See M.A. Polushkin, "Na sandomirskom napravlenii," in *Lvovsko-Sandomyrskaia operatsiia, iul-avgust 1944 goda* (Moscow, 1969), pp. 12–13, 17, 25, 56, 73–80; *Istoriia Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* SSSR, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1952); and F.W. Mellethin, *Panzer Battles: A Study of the Employment of Armor in the Second World War*, trans. H. Beltzer, ed. L. Turner (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958).

CHAPTER SIX

1 The Ukrainian Division, which was a unit of the Waffen SS, used the latter's ranks. Heike uses Wehrmacht ranks.
2 See Zenon Zeleny, *Ukrainske iunatstvo v vyri druhoi svitovoi viiny* (Toronto, 1965).
3 The two hymns were the German national anthem, "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" and the Hitlerite anthem, or so-called Horst Wessel song, "Die Fahne Hoch."

CHAPTER SEVEN

1 See Jozef Mikus, *Slovakia: A Political History, 1918–1950* (Milwaukee, 1963); John A. Armstrong, ed., *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison, 1964); and the bibliography in this volume.

CHAPTER NINE

1 For more on the Volhynian Legion, see Orest Horodysky, "Dva dni v partyzantsi," in *Samostiina Ukraina* (Chicago–New York), no. 7 (161) (July 1962), and Kost Hirniak, *Ukrainskyi lehion samooborony: prychynky do istorii* (Toronto, 1977).

CHAPTER TEN

1 In all probability the order for disarmament of the Division originated directly from Hitler, after a discussion of the matter on 23–24 March 1945 in his quarters in Berlin. See Stein, *The Waffen SS*, pp. 3, 194–96.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1 See Pavlo Shandruk, *Arms of Valor*, trans. Roman Olesnicki (New York, 1959); and Kost Pankivsky, *Vid komitetu do derzhavnoho tsentru* (New York, 1968).

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other aspects of Ukrainian involvement in the war.

In describing his combat experience with the Division, Major Heike treats a subject that, in the overall story of wartime Eastern Europe, has long been neglected.

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