German Counterinsurgency Revisited

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Wars, Great and Small

Regular (external) war is, by way of underlying concepts, between nations using the entire spectrum of the people, army and state. In irregular (internal) war, some parties are neither independent states nor state sponsored actors, as in the case of rebellion against a foreign occupying power. It can also be conflict within a nation such as a revolution or civil war. Regular and irregular conflicts can take place together, separately, or even on a sliding scale. Subversion, sabotage, terrorism, partisan or guerilla fighting are techniques and are not ends in themselves, and are all regarded by Clausewitz as tactics and the ultimate school of the soldier.[1]

A German view of the nature of guerrilla warfare is needed before examining how they countered resistance during the course of World War II. Of note is that the term guerilla war was defined as *kleinkrieges, kleinerkrieg,* or small war. This could either involve partisan (*partisanen*) or people's (*volks*) warfare, one involving the support of

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[1] One professor of history at the U.S. Naval Academy began the discussion of guerillas using the Book of Maccabeus. See Franklin Mark Osanka, ed., *Modern Guerilla Warfare* (New York: Free Press, 1962); Peter Paret and John W. Shy, *Guerillas in the 1960's* (New York: Praeger, 1962); Andrew R. Molnar, *Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies* (Washington, DC: American University, 1965); Lewis Gann, *Guerillas in History* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971); Anthony James Joes, *Guerilla Warfare: A Historical Biographical, and Bibliographical Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996); Ian F.W. Beckett, ed., *Encyclopedia of Guerilla Warfare* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1999); William R. Polk, *Violent Politics: A History of Insurgency, Terrorism, and Guerilla Warfare from the American Revolution to Iraq* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), etal. Basic assumptions are appended at the end of the paper.

military actions, the other being political in nature.[2] With clear aims, small war assisted political and military struggles and hindered an enemy's war effort "through military subsidiary actions" particularly during long conflicts or periods of social upheaval.[3] The guerillas succeeded by tying down enemy forces; destroying their supplies, transport, and communications; eliminating collaborators; and supporting conventional military 'reconnaissance, intelligence, and espionage.' Success depended upon small units, independently deployed, but with a central command or common goal. Guerilla war was waged in stages dependent upon the strength of the opposing forces, the terrain, and the support of the population and began with "passive resistance" and ended with a "general uprising."[4] According to German field service regulations, the response against enemy partisan parties operating in the rear area was: "they should be surrounded and destroyed. Detailed mopping-up in the rear area may be necessary, but stronger forces are usually required for this."[5] The focus on military or "kinetic" efforts was a historic characteristic of the German approach.

Arguably, Clausewitz's dictum that defense (including so-called people's war) is stronger than offense rooted the German preference for annihilation or destruction, particularly in dealing with resistance or rebellion.[6] Because all available forces would be used for the main effort or attack, security in the rear was left to minimal supporting troops who relied on extreme measures to ensure order and clear lines of communication. To analyze this, German sources of doctrine will be reviewed, along with revisiting operational history in a tertiary arena: Yugoslavia, the German Southeast Theater, and the example of the 7th Prinz Eugen SS-Mountain Division. Of note is that the historian Matthew Bennett used the Southeast experience as a case

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[2] Von der Heydte points out that *guerilla* means small war, while *guerillero* is an individual participant, not to change my use of the term in its excepted sense. Other terms that can cause confusion are the use of *jagdeinheiten* for both guerilla and special assault detachments, *jagdkommando* for army hunter units, and *jagdverbande* for SS hunter formations (patrols might be more useful for these). Similar confusion exists with the Office of Strategic Services "Operational Groups" and current U.S. Army Special Forces operational detachment "A" teams.

[3] SS-Fuhrungshauptamt, *Werwolf, Winke fur Jagdeinheiten* (Berlin: January 1945), p. 5ff. See Michael C. Fagnon, ed. and trans., *SS Werwolf: Combat Instruction Manual* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 1982), p. ix.

[4] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, pp. 6-7.

[5] Bruce Condell and David T. Zabecki, eds. and trans., *On the German Art of War: Truppenfuhrung* (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 2001), pp. 171-172.

[6] Most recently put forward in Jon T. Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz: A New Approach to On War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), passim.

"which is worth describing in more detail as an example", while Peter Lieb thought the situation there to be to fraught with contradictions because "it involved too many players".[7] This intricacy is present in the complex insurgencies of the current day. Advances in holocaust studies and departures from evidence presented during the Nuremburg Trials allow German occupation policies to be reconsidered.[8] The former Allies now have had more than a half century of their own experience with revolutionary wars and counterinsurgency campaigns since the end of World War II to draw upon for perspective.[9]

How do these terms and concepts illuminate the German suppression of rebellion in occupied territories during World War II? This question will be examined in three parts: 1) background from Clausewitz through the World War (1831-1932); 2) doctrine that was available in *Nazi* Germany (1933-1945); and 3) practice from examples in Yugoslavia (1942-1944). By focusing on the question of "what," rather than "who, when, or where," This paper uses "reverse engineering" to understand final doctrine and experience rather than strict chronological development. In doing so, it offers a tool to consider specific cases of internal conflict during this global war.

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[7] Matthew Bennett, and "The German Experience," in *The Roots of Counter-Insurgency: Armies and Guerilla Warfare, 1900-1945*, by Ian F.W. Beckett, ed. (New York: Blandford Press, 1988), pp. 72-73; Peter Lieb, "A Few Carrots and a Lot of Stick: German Anti-Partisan Warfare in World War Two," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, by Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds. (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008) , p. 269.

[8] For instance Philip W. Blood, *Hitler's Bandit Hunters: The SS and the Nazi Occupation of Europe* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2006); Richard Rhodes, *Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002); Colin D. Heaton, *German Anti-Partisan Warfare in Europe, 1939-1945* (Atglen: Schiffer Publishing, 2001); Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997); Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993). Related books by Edward B. Westerman, Geoffrey P. Megargee, and Ben Shepherd are examples of recent scholarship.

[9] For Americans, this includes Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations, 1942-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 2006), the recent U.S. Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Field Manual, FM 3-24, MCWP 3-33.5* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), and Stephen S. Evans, ed., *U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2008).

War by Detachments

As with most German military thought and practice, it helps to start with *On War*, in which Carl von Clausewitz, a Prussian officer and thinker more appreciated in later years than in his own time.[10] *On War* included a chapter about "The People in Arms" that dealt with the subject of small wars.[11] For Clausewitz this was based on examples from North America, Vendee, Tyrol, Silesia, and particularly the French occupation of Spain, the source of the terms small war, partisan, and guerilla (the Russian campaign was not long enough for an insurgency to emerge, though partisans were used).[12] While 'partisan' was the preferred name for detached troops, 'guerilla' (*guerillero*) also meant a bandit fighter (*bandenkampfer*) and referred to the enemy. This ambiguity of ends/means or guerrilla/counter-guerilla" was a thread that continued through subsequent German thought and actions. It was in conflicts between regular and irregular detachments that small wars were won or lost.

According to Clausewitz, for resistance to succeed or be effective, conflicts had to be fought in the interior of the country, not dependent upon a single successful engagement, the area of operations had to be fairly large, the terrain relatively inaccessible (forests, marshes, or mountains) and the population's "national character must be suited to this type of war."[13] Along with the strengths of irregular conflict - that "resistance will exist everywhere and no where" - Clausewitz also considered the physical and psychological vulnerabilities of these irregular forces. Resistance failed if fighters concentrated in populated areas, if the guerillas assumed fixed positions, if too many regular troops were with the partisans, if the bands were inactive, or if they suffered from an inordinate fear of being captured and killed.

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[10] Clausewitz (1780-1831): See Hans Rothfels, "Clausewitz," Edward Mead Earle, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), pp. 93-113; Michael Howard, *Clausewitz: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Hew Strachan, *Clausewitz's On War: A Biography* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007); and Sumida, *Decoding Clausewitz.*

[11] *Volksbewaffnung*, arming the people or the nation. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. and trans. (New York: Everyman's Library, 1993), pp. 578-584.

[12] Strachan, pp. 186ff; the German General Staff later cited examples from the Vendee 1793-1796, Spain in 1808-1814, Tyrol in 1809, Germany in 1813, France in 1814, the German-French War of 1870-1871, and various European colonial wars.

[13] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 579.

Ultimately, however, Clausewitz managed only to describe the problem without coming up with a solution. He was, of course, making an argument for the people in arms, rather than prescribing the suppression of rebellions and uprisings by conquered populations. Established practices existed that dealt with the suppression of rebellious populations regardless of intellectual theory.[14] To counter threats in the rear, conventional forces in Clausewitz's period used escorts to protect convoys, as well as guards on bridges, defiles, and stopping points. Population centers were garrisoned, "or even looted and burned down as punishment."[15] If resistance increased, larger forces were involved in this security effort. Occupation forces could be significantly weakened by losses of men and material to protect lines of communications with garrisons or detachments, and containing rebellion centers or borders. This explains the German preference for total destruction in the practice of security campaigns. According to Paret and Shy, modern tasks for countering irregular forces were to defeat militarily the irregular force (partisans or guerillas) of whatever size, to separate the irregulars from the population, to maintain social order and governance authority.[16] The Germans historically focused on these with a vengeance.

To historian Robert Citino, the "German way of war" called for "short and lively" and "total" campaigns fought through the violent encirclement of the enemy, at times by equal or smaller sized German forces. Moves to the flanks and rear promoted confusion and opportunities that the Germans benefited from and their opponents did not. The aim was the quick annihilation of the enemy's forces because the Prussians, then the Germans, could not afford to wage drawn out wars of attrition. Citino defined this as a preference for maneuver rather than positional warfare. In practice, this applied to irregular as well as conventional opponents.[17] The German Great General Staff (*Grossgeneralstab*) insisted the customs of warfare on land allowed for the relatively

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[14] See the writings of Henri de Jomini (1779-1869) for the 18th and 19th Century; Charles E. Callwell (1859-1928) for the modern era.

[15] Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 580.

[16] Paret and Shy, pp. 11-15, 40-51.

[17] Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), passim; although not specifically stated by him. It was discussed at the conference as a consideration, which he acknowledged as plausible.

off-hand execution of irregular fighters without trial.[18] In this, the German armed forces insisted they were within their legal rights, although Isabel Hull considered it to be founded on a military culture of "absolute destruction" inherent in Imperial Germany.[19]

The German Way

Modern German anti-guerilla methods began with the formation of the German Second Empire and the German-French War (1870-1871). While the French army was defeated in three months, one quarter of the German troops were left guarding their rear areas against French guerillas (*franctireur*, *freischarler*). Their experiences led the Germans to demand at subsequent Hague conferences that hostage taking and execution by occupying powers be allowed, as well as the summary killing of captured "irregulars," confiscations, and fines. During the Second Empire, the colonial campaigns in China (1900-1901), Southwest Africa (1904-1906), and East Africa (1905-1907) witnessed a lack of restraint that European conflicts had appeared to have. A "scorched earth" approach to small wars was seen also in other European and American colonial examples.[20] These actions were further developed in World War I in response to resistance, real or imagined, as German forces moved through Belgium to attack France. The German occupation of the Ukraine after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk provided a short-lived example of the needs of an occupying power for an effective counterinsurgency campaign against communist resistance.[21] Also during the World War, General Paul E. von Lettow-Vorbeck's effort in Africa was a masterful instance of successful small wars campaigning based upon German colonial experience.

In the aftermath of the First World War, a perception grew in Germany that defeat must partly have been caused by betrayal at home; war in the rear therefore

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[18] Deserters, renegades, and spies were separate categories; drafted in 1902, these customs and laws of war were used through World War I; John H. Morgan, ed. and trans., *War Book of the German General Staff* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2005), pp. 8-15, 54-57

[19] Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), passim; Lieb, pp. 72-74; Bennett, pp. 61-66. Alan Kramer, "German War Crimes 1914/1941: Continuity or Break?," *34th Congress of the International Commission of Military History*, Trieste, 31 August-5 September 2008.

[20] See Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars* (London: HMSO, 1906, reprinted 1976), passim.

[21] Lieb, pp. 72-73.

loomed large in the German psyche. Despite humanitarian and legal criticism, the 'German approach' to suppressing resistance carried over into the volunteer corps' (*freikorps*) containment of upheaval in Germany proper in the post-war period where the methods used abroad worked domestically as well. Later, Order Police and the Armed Forces continued these practices. Small war doctrine was convoluted by political and military concerns in a seemingly unique fashion in the Third Empire; existing beliefs and practices were amplified through the prism of National Socialism as victims were pre-selected based upon ideology. Martin Gutmann argued that German beliefs that European culture and civilization were under threat from Anglo-American liberalism and Soviet bolshevism, with the broader fascist faith in the regenerative qualities of violence, were what motivated the German severe response to any resistance.[22] But Bennett observed that Imperial *schrecklichkeit* and *Nazi abschreckung* were the same policies, "which could only succeed if backed by overwhelming force" and, with hindsight, responding to perceived rather than actual threats.[23] Modern scholarship has recognized that this mindset was across the spectrum of the people, army, as well as state and not just limited to isolated elements of society.[24] Included was a broad definition of the measures used to suppress dissent--basically accepting that the power of life and death resided with the state alone.[25]

Firsthand experience was gained in 1923, with resistance to French occupation in the Ruhr. In 1928, the War Ministry called for similar action in the future. A 1933 police manual discussed open and urban terrain techniques to deal with "partisans, insurgents, and rebellious rioters and dissidents." These were based on encirclement and splitting or compressing the resulting cordons.[26] The same techniques and procedures were used by the SS and Higher Police first internally then externally. Army High Command field service regulations (*truppenfuhrung*) of 1933-1934 considered partisan or small war to be "combat under special conditions" the same as fighting in

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[22] Martin Gutmann, Syracuse University, ABC-Clio research grant, Society of Military History Meeting, 3 April 2009.

[23] Bennett, p. 80.

[24] Context is provided by Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005) and Richard Bessel, *Nazism and War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004).

[25] A point well made in Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); although my preference for comprehensive background is Hilberg.

[26] Carl Hammer, ed. and trans., *The Gestapo and SS Manual* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 1996), pp. 61ff.

cities, forests, mountains, crossing rivers, and at night or in fog. This was by exception and to be avoided if possible. Small scale military raiding parties conduct these operations on the enemy's front, flank, and rear in support of a military main effort.[27]

Germany began World War II with the preceding assumptions. As Germany invaded and occupied territory in 1939, the Armed Forces, SS and Police, all issued instructions on how to deal with resistance and rebellion. Efforts intensified with the invasion of the Balkans and the Soviet Union. Initial Jewish "final solution" efforts were often labeled anti-partisan actions or "head hunts." Hitler's reaction to the Soviet's July 1941 declaration of partisan war was that it gave Germany "the opportunity to exterminate anyone who is hostile to us."[28] In time, these various prescriptions were incorporated into a coherent administrative and training doctrine. On 25 October 1941, the Army High Command issued *Directives for Combating Partisans*. Then in August 1942 Hitler issued Directive 46, which insisted that "combating banditry" be the third element of German security policy along with genocide and slave labor (*bandenbekampfung, endlosung der Judenfrage,* and *erfassung*). This involved the active participation of military and police forces.[29] With these guidelines, the German response to resistance varied with time and place ranging from local collaboration to genocide. The most extreme conditions were in Poland, the Balkans, and the Soviet Union (Shepherd's "Wild East").

In fact, Hitler opposed any overly systematic approach to small war, for fear that it would limit troop effectiveness. In late 1942, he noted,

> The essential thing about anti-guerilla warfare—one must hammer this home to everybody—is that whatever succeeds is right. Here's the most important point: if someone does something which is not according to instructions but which leads to success or if he is faced with an emergency with which he can only deal by using brutal methods, then any method is right which leads to success. The object must be to exterminate the

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[27] Condell and Zabecki, *Truppenfuhrung*, pp. 171-172; for an explanation of the development of these regulations see Robert M. Citino, *The Path to Blitzkrieg: Doctrine and Training in the German Army, 1920-1939* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2008).

[28] Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2004), p. 309.

[29] Blood, p. 77ff; Lieb, pp. 76-77; Arvo L. Vercamer, "German Rear Area Security in World War II," from www.feldgrau.com , accessed 31 March 2006.

guerillas and re-establish order…the annihilation of the guerillas is an overriding duty. Therefore anything which assists in the annihilation of the guerillas will be considered right and conversely anything which does not contribute to the annihilation of the guerillas will be considered wrong.

Armed Forces High Command General Alfred Jodl added, "In battle they [the troops] can do what they like." [30] Although the way ahead was debated for some time, Hitler was not satisfied with the doctrine written: "by issuing regulations, the troops would be limited in their ruthless fighting against gangs." Jodl responded that "what people do while fighting is not written down in these regulations…But these regulations deal with retaliation after the fighting, and that has to be forbidden."[31] The Armed Forces High Command issued *Battle Instructions for the Fight against Bands in the East* in November 1942 which evolved into *Warfare against Bands* by April 1944.[32] In broad terms, the threat from partisans or guerillas was defined using the terms "bands" and "bandits."[33] Command and control, unit organization, and reconnaissance for both offense and defense were described in detail. Support from the air, by communications, and with motorized forces was also addressed.

German security structure in occupied territories influenced the way doctrine was applied. Indeed, unlike Germany proper which was organized at the regional level (*wehrkreise* or *oberabschnitt*), occupied areas were split between "front" and "rear". The *Wehrmacht* was responsible for pacification at the front and the SS and Police for carrying out similar tasks in the rear.[34] The German Army Command (*OKH*) determined

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[30] 1 December 1942; Walter Warlimont. *Inside Hitler's Headquarters, 1939-45* (Novato: Presidio, 1991), pp. 289-291.

[31] 1 December 1942; perhaps referring to execution of hostages taken before an incident as opposed to reprisal killings after the fact; Helmut Heiber and David M. Glantz, eds. *Hitler and His Generals: Military Conferences, 1942-1945* (New York: Enigma Books, 2003), p. 773.

[32] Oberkommando der Wehrmacht. *Warfare Against Bands* (Berlin: 6 May 1944), eds. and trans. by C. Aubrey Dixon and Otto Heilbrunn, in *Communist Guerilla Warfare* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955), pp. 201-223. A complete copy of this directive needs to be located and translated.

[33] Bands or gangs, bandits or gangsters were terms standardized by the SS and Police in 1942 to cover all manner of resistance.

[34] Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), pp. 179-180, 228; War Department, *Handbook on German Military Forces TM-E 30-451* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945), pp. 43-45. Based upon several Heydrich-Wagner agreements which regulated the

the nature of security in rear areas based upon whether it was in occupied territory, a zone of military administration, or within a theater of operations (zones of communication and combat). This was with security divisions (*OFK*), regiments (*FK*), and battalions under the control of area or sub-area provost commanders and town commanders (*OK*) and used Army tactical forces as needed from supply and replacement units. While cooperating or competing with the Armed Forces High Command (*OKW*), the Reich Leader of the SS and German Police (*RFSS*) Heinrich Himmler used several levels of control to conduct these same duties. At first, this was through various regional Higher SS and Police Leaders (*HSSPF, SSPF*) who conducted security and anti-partisan efforts. These transformed from the earliest SS-Main Office of Reich Security (*RSHA-Bds*) and Order Police (*Orpo-BdO*) task forces in occupied territory to joint military operations. Armed-SS (*Waffen-SS*), normally under the tactical control of the Army, were also used for security operations.[35] Eventually this was with the *RFSS* Headquarters Staff (*KSRFSS*) which retained units directly under its control for employment on "special" tasks.[36]

Jews, Reds, and Bandits

Any analysis of German methods needs to include reference to the body of doctrinal material that guided the tactics, techniques, and procedures employed in the field. Indeed, doctrine for anti-guerilla operations was based solidly upon previous field service regulations and experience rather than being a departure from them, though still viewed as combat under "special conditions."[37] Strength of the German

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organization, function, and relations between the German armed forces in the East and elsewhere, finalized with Leader's Directive 46 of August 1942; subsequent Nuremberg Trials and modern scholarship questions whether there was a distinct break between the German armed forces and party formations; see Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2006), passim; Hamburg Institute for Social Research, *The German Army and Genocide* (New York: New Press, 1999), passim. Front and rear need to be defined in the circumstances of occupation found in the Southeast.

[35] For example the SS-"Death's Head" formations in the campaign in Poland in 1939.

[36] In September 1941, Himmler briefed his senior field commanders that while Aryan people would be brought into the German Reich, others would be excluded through "relocation," "permanent removal," and "racial purification" (double-talk for killing); Heaton, p. 106; Wolff, interview.

[37] An earlier definition of "special operations."

approach was characterized by van Creveld as fighting power based upon troops who obeyed orders.[38] Von Thun took exception, and felt it was more a result of a superior system that placed emphasis on "mission-type orders" as found in Condell and Zabecki.[39] The reality was a more complex mixture of educated and trained leaders, drilled and motivated troops, established doctrine and procedures that emphasized maneuver and initiative, and ample weapons and equipment. German opponents could not match these combinations, at least locally. Whatever failings at the highest level, the battlefield approach (the German art or way of war), was combined with a military culture of "absolute destruction."[40] A more detailed consideration of this evolving doctrine provided needed insights into the mechanics of the effort (the exercise in reverse engineering).

Arguably. this revised perspective is more accurate than previous accounts. In the rear areas, minimum troops were to be used for security, with a district focus using headquarters and provost units.[41] Standing security forces came from army regional headquarters, provost, field police, or SS and police units, while tactical forces provided commands, units, detachments, and patrols as needed. The German methods showed an institutionalized view based on the whole of German experience and not just a departure or ad hoc approach when it came to security and pacification actions (hostage taking and reprisals).

Command and Control Measures

The Germans felt command, control, communications, and information (C_3I) were the basis for either passive or active military actions to kill, capture, or convert resisters. Information, surprise, mobility, and firepower were essential and the initiative had to be maintained, even if limited forces were at hand. Resolute resourcefulness was demanded in order to keep the bands from establishing themselves

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[38] Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-1949* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 166, 171-173.

[39] Prof Romeo v. Thun, email, 7 March 2008.

[40] Condell and Zabecki, van Creveld, Citino, and Hull, opcit; it can be argued as well that the German anti-guerilla tactics were counter-productive; Edward Luttwak, etal, H-war, email 29 May 2007.

[41] Condell and Zabecki, *Truppenfuhrung*, pp.172, 243, 258-259.

and gaining strength "If possible, each action by the bands has to be followed by counter action…Newly appearing bands have to be fought at once."[42] OKW acknowledged that no one battle tactic would master the band menace. The enemy would take advantage of any stereotyped response. "In the battle technique as well, adherence to a rigid principle has to be avoided, since the bands quickly react and take the necessary countermeasures…."[43] The method to do so depended upon the strength of the available German forces, the enemy situation, and the general course of the campaign--a commander used an approach that caused the greatest damage. Control by sector with close objectives allowed independence within a framework of set tasks. Needed to exercise command was reliable telephone networks that were backed up by radio. Personal mobility with light aircraft allowed commanders to intervene at decisive locations. Commanders were admonished to always have a distinctive center of gravity (*schwerpunkt*), but retain enough mobile reserve forces to change it "in a flash" if and when the situation on the ground changed. OKW recognized that "success depend upon superior leadership," facilitated by unity of command in any specific operation. One army, police, or SS leader would be in charge of all other services. Similarly, they recognized the need for close cooperation between military and civilian authorities.[44]

Anti-guerilla work was not a job for those in search of distinction. Dixon and Heilbrunn have observed that while a number of guerilla leaders achieved almost legendary fame, "not a single anti-partisan fighter, ancient or modern, has made a reputation for himself or is known to anybody but the initiated." These anti-guerilla leaders were made rather than born: "his job is a highly technical one; he must combine the qualifications of a military officer and police officer, and he must be trained for his job. But no country in the world has ever trained anti-partisan fighters; they all had to learn the hard way." By the time needed experience and knowledge was gained by counter-guerillas, according to Dixon and Heilbrunn, it was often too late for them to use it. This seemed to be the case for the Germans, who did not always assign their best leaders to these duties.[45]

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[42] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 203-204.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Imagination seems to be a deciding factor for both guerilla and anti-guerilla leaders, according to von der Heydte. Dixon and Heilbrunn, p. 147.

German sources of expertise included Army Generals Manstein, Zeitzler, Manteuffel, and Gehlen. Contributors to doctrine noted by Prinz Eugen Division commander SS-General Otto Kumm were Wolff, Arlt, and field commanders Fegelein, Klingenberg, Schimana, and Lombard. Kumm added, "Schimana and Klingenberg also taught the course on anti-partisan warfare at Bad Tolz, and we all attended at one time. This was the first attempt to make this type of warfare a legitimate course of instruction, and it was needed badly."[46] In 1942, Himmler named a deputy for anti-bandit warfare (*Bevollmachtigter fur die Bandenkampfung im Osten*), SS-General von dem Bach, whose responsibilities expanded in 1943 to head all SS and Police anti-bandit units and operations (*Chef der Bandenkampfverbande*).[47] SS and Police-General Karl Wolff remembered him as being controversial, one of the architects of the *einsatzguppen* "concept of anti-partisan warfare," who would also remove troops from peaceful areas regardless of suspicious activities, but could be ruthless and efficient.[48] Hitler felt that von dem Bach was "a clever chap." Armed Forces chief Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel added that success occurred when, "In those anti-guerilla actions laid on by Bach-Zelewski he was in sole command both of the police and of the troops from the divisions in the area."[49] In another case, Himmler told senior commander SS-General Arthur Phleps in Yugoslavia that the aim was clear: "The creation of two territorial corps, one in Bosnia, the other in Albania. These two corps with the division 'Prinz Eugen,' as an army of five SS mountain divisions are the goal for 1944." To this end, the V. and IX. SS-Mountain Corps were formed in the Southeast to command the Prinz Eugen, Handschar, Skanderbeg, and Kama Divisions in suppressing rebellion in Croatia and Bosnia.[50]

Two kinds of intelligence about the enemy were needed by these commanders: intelligence gathered before operations and intelligence needed as operations commenced. This was collected by ground, air, and signals observation and

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[46] Otto Kumm, interview by Colin D. Heaton, etal., 1980, 1985.

[47] 21 June 1943; Heiber and Glantz, pp. 773-774.

[48] Karl Wolff, interview by Colin D. Heaton, etal., 1983, 1984.

[49] Blood, passim; Warlimont, p. 392; Leo Goldensohn, *The Nuremberg Interviews* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 265-278.

[50] Roland Kaltenegger, *The Mountain Troops of the Waffen-SS, 1941-1945* (Atglen: Schiffer Publishing, 1995) 10; Himmler to Phleps, 22 May 1944 in Carl Kosta Savich, "Vojvodina," from www.pogledi,co.yu, accessed 1 March 2006.

reconnaissance submitted to a centralized center in order to conduct pattern analysis that formed the basis of situation reports and graphics.[51] Intelligence from guerilla deserters was considered unreliable but the interrogation of prisoners was one of the best sources of information and "It is therefore wrong to shoot captured bandits at once."[52] In addition: "The use of informants and provocateurs ["V-men"] forces the guerilla unit to reinforce their observation teams and use special precautions when [contacting] civilians. Men of confidence and sympathizers must be ordered to observe the enemy agency [SD] that recruits and employs the informants against guerilla units. Informants that have been uncovered must be destroyed."[53]

Enemy resistance groups were considered different from "what is otherwise usual at the front. His cunning, viciousness, and cruelty have to be met with special attention, resoluteness, and harshness."[54] Thoughtlessness and inattention caused most Germans not to recognize this threat. Because they faced fewer and more lightly armed forces, they underestimated the impact of bandit actions. One commander recalled, "unlike the…military, the partisans adhered to no set doctrine, used no set order of battle you could study, and basically struck when most opportune."[55] Local populations were recognized as necessary to provide a support network and terrain strongly influenced the possibility and means available to a band. Urban terrain and well developed rural areas presented greater problems for resistance (mainly because they could be countered with normal police measures) than wooded, undulating, poorly passable terrain with poor infrastructure.

The use of local auxiliaries was critical but they were not to be trusted. "A very great danger is that the bands will learn too early about the planned undertaking. Therefore all preparations have to be made within the smallest circle of the command staff."[56] Historian Colin Heaton showed how this included not just German nationals, but overseas Germans, and foreign auxiliaries (between two and four million non-

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[51] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 209-212.

[52] OKW, *Bands*, p. 212.

[53] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, p. 58.

[54] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 205-208.

[55] Leon Degrelle, interview by Colin D. Heaton, etal., 1984, 1993.

[56] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 205-208.

Germans) in a war of brutal ethnic extermination.[57] These efforts to win the local populations were opposed from the highest level and German forces participated in fights "conducted with extreme cruelty on both sides." Keitel felt that "members of the *Wehrmacht* who were involved in the guerilla fighting were afterward called to account for their behavior." To which Hitler responded:

> The enemy is using fanatical, communist-trained fighters who don't hesitate to commit any act of violence. More than ever this is a question of survival. This fight has nothing to do with military chivalry or with the agreements of the Geneva Conventions. If we don't engage in this fight against the bands with the most brutal means possible—in the East as well as in the Balkans—the available forces will soon be unable to control this plague. Therefore, the troops are authorized and required to use all means possible in this fight without any restrictions—including against women and children—as long as it leads to success.[58]

A German commander in the Southeast concluded: "All is right that leads to success. After three full years of war in the Balkans each commander knows what is best."[59]

Passive Measures

Defensive efforts, or police measures, were oriented on "lines of communications:" railways and rail traffic, roadways and road traffic, waterways and water traffic; administrative and communications facilities; and agriculture or natural resources. In this, all "troops must be able to conduct actions against bands, even supply units, technical units, and security units."[60] A proviso from field service regulations qualified that "no more manpower than is absolutely necessary" was committed to the rear areas. Instead, "All troops, troop billets, traffic and economic installations as well as war important plants have to protect themselves and to be

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[57] Heaton, pp. 6, 219-228.

[58] 16 December 1942; Heiber and Glantz, pp. 771-772.

[59] *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals Under Control Law Number 10*, Vol XI (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1950-51), p. 827.

[60] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 222-223.

protected against attacks by bands through security measures."[61] A note of caution was added: "The securing and guarding of the land and of all important installations…makes careful reconnaissance and planning for all guerilla actions, but does not make the actions impossible. There is no countermeasure…that cannot be rendered useless through skillful adaption to it."[62] In fact, a majority of the defensive effort was involved with rear area security.[63]

The attitude of the population and the amount of assistance it was willing to give guerilla units was of great concern to the Germans.[64] Different treatment was supposed to be accorded to affected populations, band supporters, and bandits, while so-called population and resource control measures for each were noted (but were in practice, treated apparently one and the same). 'Action against enemy agitation' was the psychological or information operations of the *Nazi* period. The *Nazis* believed that, "Because of the close relationship of guerilla warfare and politics, actions against enemy agitation are a task that is just as important as interdiction and combat actions. All means must be used to ward off enemy influence and waken and maintain a clear political will. Tactical activities must always take consideration of this necessity. It is essential…to have constant news of the general situation."[65] The priority of focus was on the German forces, the local populations, and guerilla bands: "The leader in charge of political questions has the important duty of establishing and maintaining contact with the population. This must be done under consideration of all precautions. He must find out their sufferings, worries and opinions…Every possibility must be used to unmask enemy agitation and lies, to supply the population with true news, reminding them of the eternal values of nationhood, and root out cowardly servility."[66] With public affairs units down to the division level, all reliable means to spread information were used. "Often the most simple are the most effective (mouth-to-mouth, chain and ring letters, inscriptions with chalk, paint, and stamps on walls, enemy billboards and proclamations, pamphlets from hand to hand). It may become necessary for larger units

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[61] OKW, *Bands*, p. 203.

[62] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, p. 59.

[63] Condell and Zabecki, Truppenfuhrung, p. 243.

[64] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, p. 59.

[65] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, pp. 60-61.

[66] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, pp. 61.

to acquire a duplicating machine, or a printing press, and also material to make simple stamps." [67]

Active Measures

Part A:—

Offensive efforts, or military operations, needed the aggressive deployment of "hunter" units, surprise attacks or pursuit, and encirclements by major commands.[68] Reconnaissance-strike operations were the most common manifestation. Patrols deployed against bands were "Small, but especially effective units, composed and armed as *jagdkommandos* [hunter or combat patrols], are especially suitable to impede the formation of bands and to disrupt band communications."[69]
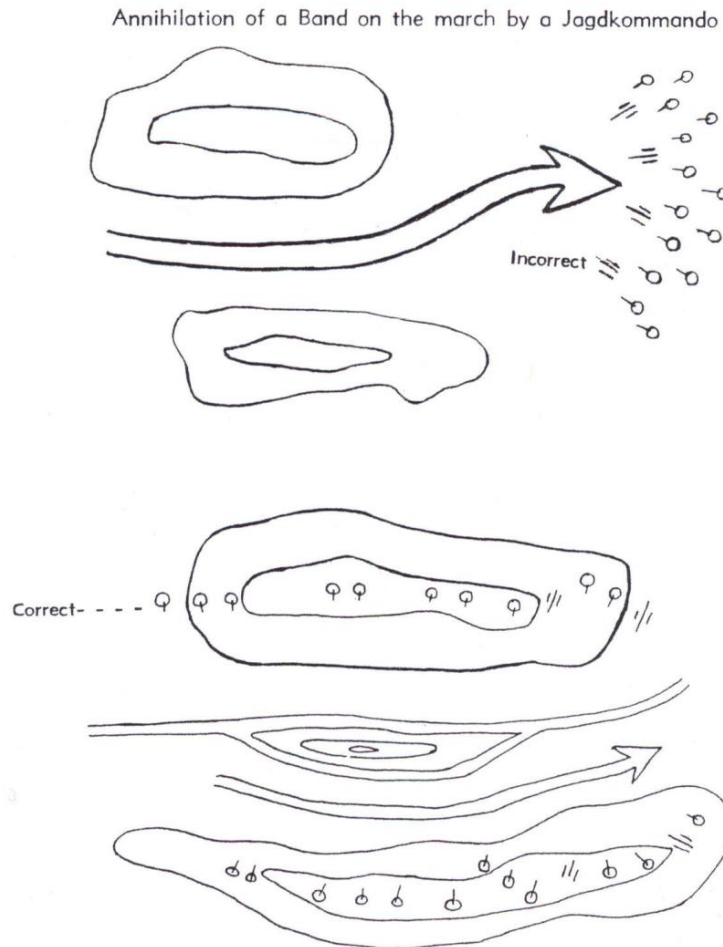
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[67] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, pp. 61.
[68] OKW, *Bands*, p. 212-222; Dixon and Heilbrunn, pp. 113-163.
[69] OKW, *Bands*, p. 203.

Figure 1: Annihilation of a Band on the March by a Jagkdommando

Annihilation of a Band on the march by a Jagdkommando

Hunter patrols, which were platoon or company size, were formed with local assets from the army rear area, security, and other divisions endangered by guerillas. Internal structure was to consist of four squads each with an officer in charge, one local scout in civilian clothes, armed liberally with light machine gun, semi-automatic and automatic rifles, sniper rifles, and grenades. Mobility was to be by foot, draft animals, skis, and sledges. Provided with radios, hunter units were supposed to operate for up to two weeks without re-supply.[70] It was a kind of warfare that could not be rushed and required time to develop opportunities to defeat the guerilla. A post-war German

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[70] Dixon and Heilbrunn, pp. 126-128.

special forces officer described hunter or ranger units as "men who knew every possible ruse and tactic of guerrilla warfare. They had gone through the hell of combat against the crafty partisans in the endless swamps and forests of Russia."[71]

The idea underpinning hunter battle procedure was: "By imitating the fighting technique of the bands and assimilating themselves to local conditions, to get unobtrusively as near to the band as possible, and then annihilate them by surprise action."[72] The best areas in which to operate in were those through which the guerillas moved, obtained their food, and through which they had to pass to carry out attacks and sabotage. Notably, fortified guerilla base camps were not suitable targets for the hunter patrols. Doctrine went on to explain:

> The employment of special hunter forces…is a considerable problem for guerilla fighters. It is the mission of these hunter forces to detect, pursue and fight the guerilla units with the same means and methods—cunning, camouflage, surprise—that the guerillas use. Because of this, the…hunter forces, which consist of specially picked men, are particularly dangerous. Only untiring watchfulness and never lessening caution can protect against surprise attack from…hunter forces. It may be necessary to concentrate the complete guerilla war effort in an operational area on destroying an especially dangerous…hunter force.[73]

Friedrich Umbrich, with the second regiment of the Prinz Eugen Division, left an account of hunter actions in practice from the fall of 1943.

> To call our assignment in the mountains in the area of Sinj a 'patrol,' then, is a misnomer: it involved more than patrolling the countryside. Rather, we were *spahtruppen*--lookout troops--sent to rocky, densely forested mountains in a desperate attempt to prevent partisans from gathering and mobilizing. At the same time, operating in small groups, we were exposing ourselves to ambush. We could trust no one, for snipers could be lurking behind every bush and every outcrop…Most of the time, we were to be invisible. Moving quietly, spread out in fan formation which

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[71] Fagnon, *Werwolf,* p. ix. The German special forces and reconnaissance school was a sought after posting for North Atlantic Treaty Organization special operations personnel.

[72] OKW, *Bands*, p. 221.

[73] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, pp. 58-59.

isolated each man from his group, we covered huge distances on foot and spent hours lurking at lookout points in the area we were assigned to patrol, the group leader scanning the surrounding terrain through field glasses. If we observed nothing, we then fanned out cautiously to a new position…Our main job was to make sure the partisans didn't gather and become stronger. We had to keep them split, to prevent them from joining into units large enough to attack and overrun us.[74]

Part B:—

In addition to hunter groups, the Germans employed attack-pursuit operations when faced with the opportunity to do so. These were designed to destroy the enemy through surprise attack "If forces or time are not sufficient for encirclement or difficult ground makes it impossible, the bands, even without previous encirclement, have to be attacked, defeated and hunted until they are completely destroyed."[75] Two approaches were used, one where reconnaissance was possible before-hand allowing the placement of blocking forces; and the other where a frontal attack had to be launched because of a lack of time or restricted terrain.[76] The goal was to surprise the guerillas while on the march or before constructing base camps. A quick attack would cause them to fight or flee, at which point their small groups could be hunted down and destroyed. According to OKW, "One has to put up with the escape of individual isolated groups". The hunt was a more elaborate version of the attack-pursuit, with the goal of overtaking the guerillas carried out by fast moving forces. The primary target was guerilla leadership.[77]

General Kumm recalled by 1943-1944,

We decided on a tactic of probing forward with a squad, followed by a platoon, which would be flanked by a platoon on either side. Once the *partisans* fired, the center squad would give chase, dropping to fire as the following center platoon rushed through the covering fire. The two

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[74] Anna M. Wittman with Friedrich Umbrich. *Balkan Nightmare: A Transylvanian Saxon in World War II* (Boulder: East European Monographs (Columbia University Press), 2000), pp.113-118. Umbrich, Lallier, and Boschet are the only junior rank accounts I have other than those cited by Kumm.

[75] OKW, *Bands*, p. 203.

[76] Dixon and Heilbrunn, pp. 122-123.

[77] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 219-220.

flanking platoons were in radio contact with the rest, so depending upon which way the *partisans* ran, the facing platoon would stand fast while the entire formation would pivot around the enemy, chasing them into the line of fire of the stationary unit.

This plan worked very well, and once the enemy were engaged the platoons would call artillery fire behind the partisans preventing their escape, forcing them to stand and fight. This was when heavy weapons would take over and artillery would be walked back into the partisan unit…The circle would grow smaller, constricting the ring until the surviving *partisans* broke for cover, and we allowed an avenue of escape that was fire free…The few who attempted to leave got burned, while the rest would group together to find moral support or security in their closeness. This we exploited by bombing, artillery or machine gun fire, but it was always a costly tactic…[but still] the best method of containment and liquidation that we ever used.[78]

Of course these remarks addressed battalion and company-size engagements rather than the larger scale operations such as Knight's Move (May 1944) or Open Season (June-July 1944).
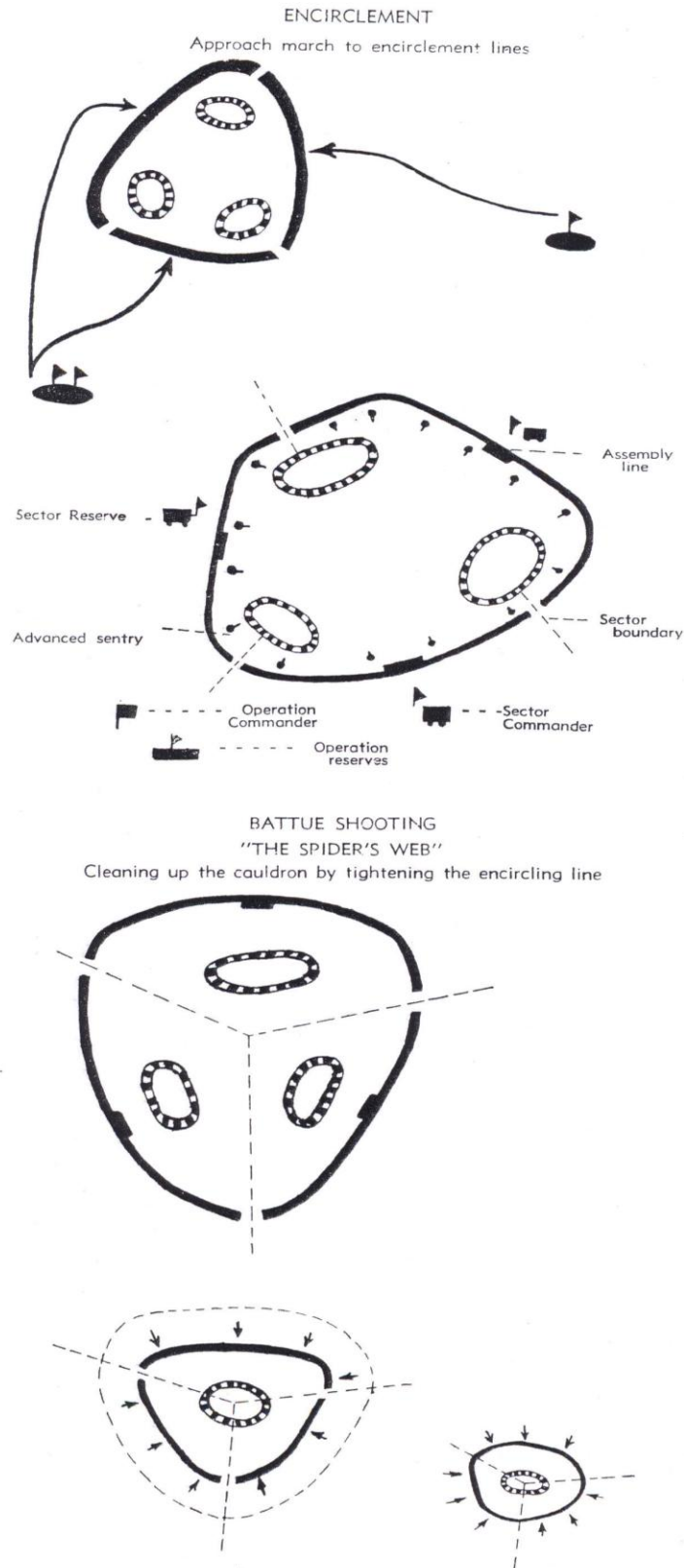
Part C:—

The third operational approach utilized by the Germans was that of encirclement-annihilation.

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[78] Kumm, interview.

Figure 2: Encirclement

These operations were preferred for their thoroughness, but were also the most demanding of material and personnel. The objective was to encircle the bands, and then 'clean out' the encircled area. "This is the main battle technique and at the same time the most efficient means for eliminating the band menace. It requires larger forces, but leads most decisively to success."[79] The Germans believed that this maneuver was the most comprehensive and should be attempted in all cases, even against small guerilla groups. "The basic maxim of this technique is: To cut off every escape route and to annihilate all parts of the band."[80] According to Lieb, this tactic needed first rate units such as the 7th SS or 1st Mountain Divisions to carry out in broken terrain.[81]

Variations of the encirclement-annihilation approach were analyzed to ensure success. First, preparations and preliminary movements were necessary to bring forces into place. These forces had to move from their respective assembly areas at different rates so that they would arrive at the encirclement line at the same time. Thereafter, ground had to be occupied and positions prepared without giving away the intent of the maneuver to the guerillas. Thin lines were not sufficient; conventional defense arrangements were needed to include advance outposts, main lines of resistance, adequate artillery, and mobile reserves. Air support was of more limited value because of the fleeting nature of the target or the possibility of compromising surprise.[82]

When the "spider's-web"—so-called for the control measures portrayed on German maps—was complete, the annihilation effort began. The resulting "cauldron" was cleaned up by tightening the encircling line with "battue shooting." A "partridge drive" occurred when one side of the cauldron held fast and allowed the rest of the encircling lines to move towards it (best used when a geographic feature such as a mountain or river served as an obstacle against the guerillas). Another method was to send in strong company or battalion columns to break the cauldron into sub-cauldrons which in turn were reduced. If a permanent base camp was encountered, a designated
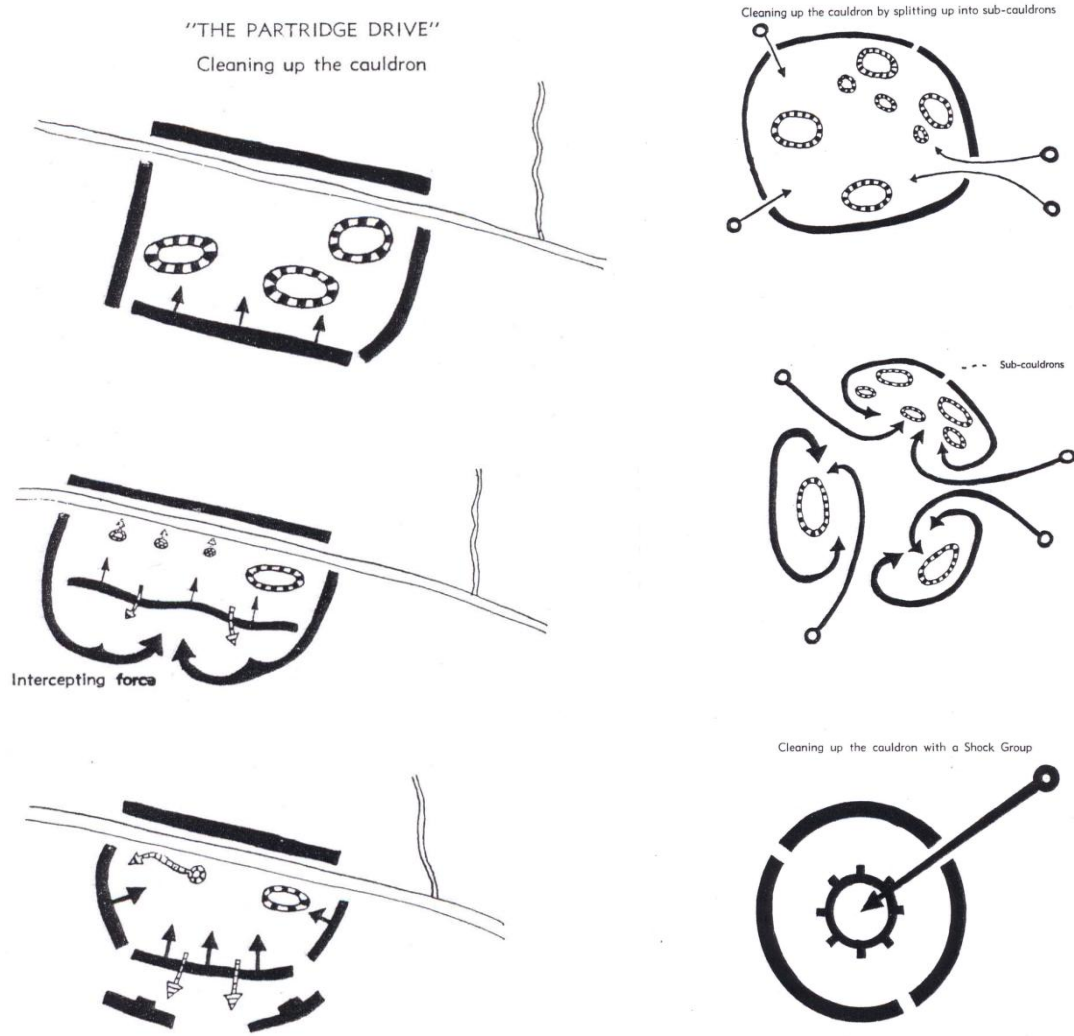
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[79] OKW, *Bands*, p. 203.
[80] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 212-219.
[81] Lieb, p. 267.
[82] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 212-219.

shock unit from the reserve force would be used to attack it because of the guerilla's tendency to fight rather than flee.[83]

Figure 3: The Partridge Drive

"THE PARTRIDGE DRIVE"
Cleaning up the cauldron

Intercepting force

Cleaning up the cauldron by splitting up into sub-cauldrons

Sub-cauldrons

Cleaning up the cauldron with a Shock Group

The encirclement and search of an operational area required large numbers of troops. "If…forced to employ such measures that tie down a large number of his forces, this is already a success [for the guerilla]. Such large-scale operations must be feared less than the employment of hunter forces because there always are sure possibilities to evade" through moving when the intention to encircle is detected, going through

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[83] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 212-219.

enemy lines before it becomes fixed, staying behind in a hidden area, or breaking out through a weak point in the line.[84]

For example, with the major defeats in Africa and Russia, the Axis needed to secure its threatened southeastern front in December 1942. At play was the continued rivalry, discussed in depth by Nicolas Virtue, between the Germans and Croats on one hand and the Italians and Serbs on the other that would prevent real cooperation in the course of events.[85] German Armed Forces Southeast and Twelfth Army underwent a number of shifts in structure for Croatia, Serbia, and Greece at this same time. The conduct of operations fell under the leadership of Army-General Rudolf Lueters, Commanding General, German Forces Croatia as part of Army Group E of Air Force-General Alexander Loehr. The Italians were led by General Mario Roatta (later General Mario Robotti) and the Second Army. Their stated mission was to defend coastal regions and lines of communication from Allied attacks. Vital to this was the elimination of the internal threat posed by the growing insurgent movements in the region. Joint planning took place in Germany and Rome with final orders being approved in January 1943.

Operation White (known as the fourth offensive to the communists), was the most famous encirclement in the Southeast Theater, taking place between January and March 1943. Against an estimated 43,500 of Tito's followers centered on Bihac, the Axis mustered 90,000 men with a further 60,000 in support. This included the German 7th SS-Mountain Division; the 369th, 714th, 717th Infantry Divisions;[86] and supporting Croat forces. The Italians provided the *Lombardia*, *Re*, and *Sassari* Divisions with supporting Serb Chetniks. The 718th Infantry and *Murge* Divisions joined in the action later. German, Croat, and Italian aircraft added combat power throughout the fighting.[87]

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[84] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, p. 59.

[85] The resistance was fractured as well between royalist chetnik and communist partisan guerillas supported by the Allies.

[86] The 700-series divisions were lighter security forces of older soldiers, the 300-series were German-lead Croat legions.

[87] References for Operation White include C.N.M. Blair, *Guerilla Warfare* (London: HMSO, 1957), pp. 30-34; Robert M. Kennedy, *German Anti-guerilla Operations in the Balkans, 1941-1944* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1954), pp. 34-37; Otto Kumm, *Prinz Eugen* (Winnipeg: J.J. Fedorowicz, 1995), pp. 30-55; Fitzroy MacLean, *The Heretic* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 163-191; Josip Broz Tito,

Fought primarily in Italian areas of responsibility, *Operation White* consisted of three subsequent major engagements. In the first, the partisans were encircled in Bosnia by strong motorized columns concentrating on Bihac between 20 January and 17 February (*Operation White I*). The partisans, spread into seven "brigades" or "divisions," had been taking steps to move from Bosnia into Montenegro and even Serbia. The Axis attack seemed to have been anticipated and the partisans were on the move before the cauldron was completed.

The second phase was between 25 February and 17 March (*Operation White II*), when the object was to catch escaping partisans in Herzegovina and Dalmatia with a series of running engagements through Drvar, Livno, and Jajce. Mixed weather conditions limited air support, and by keeping to the roads and stopping operations at night, the Axis forces allowed the partisans continue southward. Indeed, conventional German tactical doctrine actually called for controlling mountains heights from the valleys and existing road network. The Germans were unable to intercept the partisans, and the Italians and Chetniks did not hold their defenses along the Neretva River allowing Tito to cross into Montenegro. The third and final phase, *Operation White III* or *Mostar*, was to eliminate those partisans who escaped the encirclement. Tied to this was the disarming of the Chetniks demanded by the Germans of Italy. This final phase was left mainly to the Italians and failed, so the Germans followed with *Operation Black* (the fifth offensive) within months.[88]

At a lower level, the 7th SS-Mountain Division justified its role as a regional reaction force, first on the eastern and then western flanks of the operation. SS-General Phleps led the 7th SS-Mountain Division during this operation. The division divided into three battle groups, Boser in the east, Hedrich center, and Schmidhuber west. First was the attack on Bihac and then the pursuit of the partisan breakout from the encirclement to the southeast to Bosnaski Petrovac, Drvar, Livno, and Jajce. All of this was an effort to get in front of Tito's columns by using artillery or air to pin the partisans down, and then using high speed road mobility to overtake their columns. These tactics came up

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Selected Military Works (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavacki Zavod, 1966), pp. 131-137, 226-231; Mark C.Yerger, *Waffen-SS Commanders* (Atglen: Schiffer, 1999), pp. 151-153; H.L. de Zeng IV, "Anti-Partisan Operations in Croatia," from www.axishistory.com, accessed 29 July 2008..

[88] *Operation Black* took place between May and June 1943 and was a better example of encirclement than the more complex White.

short, because "the enemy was more mobile in the mountains and always avoided our encirclements."[89] The Axis forces also found that they needed to attack over high ground and not from the valley or plain. It was "a bitter lesson: we could only advance over the hills and mountains, before we entered a village in the valley."[90] Some 101 engagements took place during the first two phases of *Operation White*,[91] claiming 3,603 enemy killed both by count and estimate, another 2,378 wounded, and with a large amount of "booty" captured.

Himmler believed that Phleps "proved his worth through his far-sighted, energetic and flexible troop leadership...This was accomplished in spite of snow more than one meter deep in the mountainous area that they had to cross and the countless tree and road bocks." He added, "The physical and fighting performance of the SS-Volunteer Division 'Prinz Eugen' in the wild, rough and remote mountainous area, in the middle of snow storm, rain and fog, must be considered excellent."[92] But according to Kumm, "Phleps did not trust his heterogeneous officer corps enough to issue brief orders. In spite of all the previous training, he still did not feel secure. Phleps' work was not finished even after he issued the order. From early morning until late at night he was with the battle groups, orienting them on the spot and issuing subsequent orders."[93] To his credit, this was an area Phleps had served in before and during World War I. On 4 March 1943, at Hitler's military conference, it was briefed that "The Balkan operations are characterized by particular success by the Chetniks. The SS division is continuing to advance."[94] Later another conference revealed political and military conflicts within the Southeast that were unresolved at the highest level..."one can't understand the mentality of those tricksters if one doesn't know them." In this, it was commented that "Phleps knows the situation down there quite well. He was also quite successful with his units."[95]

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[89] Kumm, p. 37.

[90] Kumm, p. 35, 36.

[91] Kumm, p. 41.

[92] Yerger, pp. 151, 153.

[93] Kumm, p. 34.

[94] Heiber and Glantz, pp. 75-76.

[95] Heiber and Glantz, p. 504.

At Hitler's request, Himmler passed orders from the SS-Main Command Office (*SS-Fuhrungshauptamt*) that contested areas were to be turned into "a desert and not to spare anyone, women or children"—in effect the whole region was declared enemy territory. Phleps then directed that: "the entire population of this area must be considered rebel sympathizers."[96] In April 1943, the Prinz Eugen Division commander ordered that children and women were to be shot in "action" or "judicially." At the time, the Croatian Minister of War complained to the German Foreign Ministry that 22 locations and some 1,000 inhabitants had been "crushed."[97] German Plenipotentiary in Croatia Edmond von Glaise-Horstenau recorded, "The SS acted as if they were in enemy territory, led by the bad example of their commanders. Robbing and looting were wide-spread. No action was taken against any offenders…The example of the SS and Cossacks also had its influence on the regular *Wehrmacht* troops, who wondered why they could not have the same privileges."[98]

These anti-partisan operations were fought in the winter with great brutality, large numbers of civilians were detained or displaced, livestock and stores seized, and villages were razed. The partisans lost some 12,531 killed or executed and another 2,506 captured and deported. The Germans lost 672 killed or missing and some 258 wounded (other Axis losses were less). In addition, some 4,626 civilians were killed or died of exposure and another 1,229 arrested and deported. If order was restored for a time in Bosnia, Dalmatia, and Herzegovina it was at the expense of the rural population. Bauxite and mining areas were put back into production. It was the largest anti-bandit operation in terms of numbers and territory covered. It was also too big, too slow, and fought with mixed forces and goals. Despite the effort, some 20,000 partisans, including 4,000 wounded, escaped the cauldron to fight another day. Some 12,000 Chetniks were pursued by both the Germans and partisans and lost their Italian and Allied support. In the end, German military and political leadership in Croatia questioned the approach that offered no hope and only desperate resistance.[99]

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[96] Heaton, p. 93; Kumm, p. 22.

[97] "7._SS-Freiwillige," from www.de.wikipedia.org, accessed 19 July 2006.

[98] Heaton, 94.

[99] de Zeng.

CONCLUSION: Kill Them All, God Knows His Own

In the aftermath of military actions, extreme efforts ensured that resources were no longer available to support resistance. This was because the best safeguards remained without permanent effect, "if the formations do not succeed, by way of attack, in creating a sufficiently extended area which is free of bands."[100] The population was sent off as labor, those remaining were turned into refugees or killed, stores and useable material were removed, and any remaining infrastructure destroyed. By this means, a return to the medieval *chevauchee* or the more modern *rastrellamenti*, resistance was prevented from taking root. The modern concept of winning over the population through long term social and economic programs was recognized but kept in check by short sighted wartime necessity. Of course this ignored the power of desperation for prompting both resistance and collaboration.

Allied, particularly Soviet, attacks in 1944-1945 forced Axis withdrawals, including from the Southeast Theater which stretched from the border of Austria, through Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece. This re-defined the Yugoslav partisan as support for conventional military campaigns rather than being independent rebellions or social revolutions (which took place in Yugoslavia during the war and in the post-war period). By January 1945, based upon some six years of experience with a variety of fronts and circumstances, the Germans felt that "guerilla war is conducted in the frontline, the flanks, and most of all in the rear of the enemy and his country, in enemy occupied area and in the countries that are allied with the enemy or are important to his war effort, economy and politics." By then, Higher SS and Police were writing doctrine, although the German Army conducted the majority of counter-guerilla actions.[101] They found that, "Guerilla war that is conducted in a hard, determined fashion, and with

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[100] OKW, *Bands*, pp. 203-204.

[101] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, pp. 5ff. The British GS(R)'s 1939 guerilla warfare pamphlets were similar to the 1945 German exposition. Both written when the possibility of having to resist occupation became a reality. Related Allied views on the subject are found in Dixon and Heilbrunn; Blair, *Guerilla Warfare*. German guerilla resistance warfare has been well documented by Perry Biddiscombe, *Werwolf: The History of the National Socialist Guerilla Movement, 1944-1946* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), *The Last Nazis: SS Werewolf Guerilla Resistance in Europe, 1944-1947* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2000), and *The SS Hunter Battalions: The Hidden History of the Nazi Resistance Movement, 1944-1945* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2006).

clear political aims, is an effective means to assist one's own military and political struggle, and to harass and paralyze the enemy's war effort, economy and politics through military subsidiary actions."[102]

The Allies believed during the war that to understand German anti-partisan measures, "it is necessary to discuss briefly the characteristic of Allied partisan organizations and their fighting techniques."[103] Studies of partisans also formed the basis for concepts of German resistance activities as occupation of German territory occurred. American intelligence reports as late as March 1945 perpetuated this theme, summarizing German analysis of experience against Russian and French guerillas. This saw a return to Clausewitz's views of more than a century earlier: "The guerrilla war is not a momentary substitute, but an essential part of modern warfare. In desperate situations it is the ultimate means to defend freedom and life of the nation to the utmost. Conducted in conjunction with general military operations, clear political objectives and qualified means, the guerilla war can lead to success of decisive importance."[104] Success was based upon "the political, military and economic situation, the terrain, population's density, traffic infrastructure, national characteristics and religious habits, the attitude of the population and most of all, by the toughness and combat effectiveness of the employed guerilla units."[105]

Counterinsurgency commander Kumm later claimed:

We managed to secure nearly all of the military objectives given us. Where we failed we were not properly supported…Another problem was our policies…we had great problems with *partisans* all over Europe, but these were problems we could have handled and converted to our advantage early on…If Berlin genuinely cared about winning the war in the East they would have completely supported the recruiting plans and maintained a rein on the *einsatzgruppen* activities.[106]

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[102] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, p. 5.

[103] War Department, *TM-E 30-451*, pp. 257-261. German special forces were described in James Lucas, *Kommando: German Special Forces in World War Two* (London: Cassell, 1985); Antonio J. Munoz, *Forgotten Legions: Obscure Combat Formations of the Waffen-SS* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 1991); and Franz Kurowski, *The Brandenburger Commandos* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2005)

[104] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, p. 5.

[105] SS-FHA, *Jagdeinheiten*, p. 11.

[106] Kumm, interview.

While these frontline views were recognized, higher policy objectives went in another direction as one Berlin superior, SS-General Wolff, felt:

> Sure, we made mistakes, and in retrospect I can see how the world vilified us. But for us it was a war of national survival, and in this kind of war you must do hard things and make tough decisions…Naturally the destruction of villages, killing people even if proven to be *partisans*, rapidly destroyed our credibility and increased resistance against us. This was true all over Europe… The lessons should have been learned sooner, but unfortunately this was not the case.[107]

What conclusions, then, can we draw from German counter-insurgency operations? It would be useful to recall the words of Russell F. Weigley: "Irregular war is not only utterly unglamorous in reality but extremely hard to win. In addition, because it puts a premium upon breaking rules and doing anything to win (while conventional war does at least adhere to certain rules and customs), because almost the essence of irregular war is that anything goes, irregular war can well plant an infection of lawlessness and brutalization in any society that becomes involved in it."[108] Put more succinctly, if the German strategic goal in the Southeast was to maintain order to secure resources, workers, and soldiers; then, according to one Prinz Eugen Division veteran, "their tactical treatment of the population was in total contradiction to that particular goal.[109]

"When you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into to you." Friedrich Nietzsche[110]

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[107] Wolff, interview.

[108] Russell F. Weigley. *The Partisan War: The South Carolina Campaign of 1780-1782* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), p. 3; written about the American War of Independence.

[109] Prof Adalbert Lallier, email, 27 May 2009.

[110] Nietzche added, "He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster." *Beyond Good and Evil* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 102.

ASSUMPTIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2007, I presented a paper to the Society for Military History on "German Counterinsurgency in the Balkans: The Prinz Eugen Example, 1942-1944," followed by participating in the Glasgow Caledonian University and University of Strathclyde conference on Partisan and Anti-Partisan Warfare in German-occupied Europe.[i] From these I learned that depictions of German anti-guerilla operations have come a long way from Hollywood's *The Moon is Down* or *North Star*, other 1940s images, and subsequent Nuremberg War Crimes Trials.[ii] But had progress been made in the sophistication and depth of understanding of German measures against resistance? Required was more background about German methods of suppressing rebellion during World War II. Conditions that were general need to be separated from specific circumstances in these occupation campaigns.

Basic assertions underlying this study included:

1. War is the threat or use of force to compel another to one's ends.

2. Force can be direct (annihilation) or indirect (attrition).

3. War is conducted by both direct and indirect means.

4. Ends in external war are peace and of strategy, victory.

5. Ends in internal war are to retain or obtain control of society.

6. Society is composed of the people, army, and state.

7 Strategy--political goal, military object, ends and means, allocation, timing, priorities, intelligence, and logistics.

8. Operations--employment, deployment, information, and supply.

9. Tactics--techniques: shoot, move, communicate.

10. Doctrine--collective deductive theory or inductive practice; beliefs used to understand, organize, equip, train, and to fight wars.

11. And a question, do institutions or personalities define doctrine and practice?

Diagrams were from Dixon and Heilbrunn, pp. 214-216, 218-219. Alexander Hill, Adalbert Lallier, Geoffrey P. Megargee, Charles P. Neimeyer, George A. Petersen, Agnes F. Peterson, Ruzica Popovitch, Paul Sofranak, Milan Vego, and Edward B. Westermann all made contributions to this paper which are gratefully acknowledged. This study was also encouraged by fellow scholars of the German Armed-SS: Bender, Blood, Estes, Fagnon, Goldsworthy, Hatheway, Heaton, Madej, Mollo, Moore, Munoz, Stein, Taylor, Wegner, Williamson, and Yerger. While our aims have differed, we dealt with the same material, and their pioneering efforts are gratefully recognized. This is by no means an exhaustive analysis and is an introduction to be expanded upon in the future in part from response to this paper and needed additional research. Specific references used in this study are provided in footnotes.

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[i] *Journal of Slavic Military History*, 20: 705-737, 2007.
[ii] Movies can be a measure of popular perception based upon simplified depictions and characterizations and are certainly are not a substitute for reality or narrative. Post-war productions include *Kanal*, *Come and See*, and 2008's *Defiance*.