

OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL  
FOR WAR CRIMES  
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STAFF EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

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Title and/or general nature: (Report Concerning the Activities of the Special Commando 11a in Cherson from 22 August to 10 October 1941) Photostat.

Date: 22 August to 10 October 1941.

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WB-448. AOK 11/Abw. Offz. Einsatz Group D And SD.

PERSONS, FIRMS OR ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED:

Field Marshal Fritz Erich v. MANSTEIN, C.G., AOK 11.

TO BE FILED UNDER THESE REFERENCE HEADINGS:

NOKW – General

NOKW – Atrocities.

SUMMARY (Indicate page nos.):

“During the first days, steps were taken for the solution of the Jewish problem for the safety of the racial Germans and for the battle against the Bolsheviks.”

“The Jewish problem was solved in its first stages. On 23 August 1941, Jews were ordered to wear the Jewish Star and to register . . . . . After the number of Jews was known, they were placed in one area and the street was blocked off . . . . . After the registration, the wishes of the Wehrmacht could be fulfilled for Jewish worker groups. Daily, Jewish working groups of all types were placed at their disposal; their strength rising from 120 persons in the first days to thousands of persons in the last days”.

P.3., VI, shows the following report: “The commandos carried out the following executions: 400 Jews and 10 Jewish women were shot as reprisal for sabotage against communications. 11 political criminals (GPU, partisans, etc.) were executed. One partisan who personally had attacked the commandos was publicly hanged.”

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OFFICE CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

Report on the Activity of the Special Detachment 11 a in Cherson from 22 August to 10  
September 1941

On 20 August 1941 a small advance commando entered Cherson with the troops and reported the town to be free of enemy troops. Thereupon on 22 August 1941 a commando consisting of 2 leaders and 13 men were sent to Cherson in order to take over the task of Sonder-kommando 11 a. After this Command in the first two days had taken the first steps to solve the Jewish question, for the protection of the German Nationals (Volksdeutschen) and to combat the bearers of Bolshevism, the situation of the town which comprised approximately 100,000 inhabitants, suddenly changed. On 24 August 1941 at 1500 hours artillery bombardment [started]. Apart from a few interruptions the bombardment lasted up to 6 September 1941. On various days it reached an extraordinary intensity, thus for instance 180 hits were counted in the town during one day within two hours. In addition bomb attacks were directed against the town almost every night and five times even during the day. This situation induced several agencies to depart from Cherson again.

Taking into consideration the measures which had already been started and the alleged especially intensive communication from Cherson to the Reds, the unit decided to stay. However the work of the Commando was very much hampered by enemy activity. At one time the larger part of the population had taken refuge in the cellars and due to the threat of the Reds and the Russian artillery superiority they were completely intimidated. This affected particularly their readiness to give information of Communists, partisans, etc. The atmosphere was really depressing, everybody counted on the return of the Reds and a corresponding propaganda was being conducted. Furthermore the freedom of action of the Commando was restricted in the town and in the surroundings. The work of the Commando from 22 August to 10 September 41 had the following result.

1. The first part of the Jewish question was solved. Already on the 23 August 1941 by a proclamation on order was given to the Jews to wear the Yellow Star and to register. The registrations were carried out according to the instructions of the Commando by the Council of elders (Aeltestenrat), which had been established for this purpose. After a recognition and general survey of the Jews had thus been effected they were, for the purpose of easily watching them,

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forced together into several street blocks which were blockaded off. The establishment of a permanent Jewish housing district is not intended hereby. As a result of the registration the requests of the Wehrmacht for Jewish Labor squads could be not from the second day

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onward. Jewish labor squads of all kinds numbering 120 persons at the beginning and increasing to about 1000 in the last days were daily made available.

(hand-written initials) HW

- II. On 23 August also the German nationals, inhabitants and refugees were requested by posters to report to the Commando. Until 10 September about 180 persons presented themselves, 163 of those were recognized as racial Germans. Identity papers and posters for the protection of property issued by the C.i.C of the 11th Army were issued to them. Furthermore new lodgings were requisitioned and allotted to them in case of need. From among the racial Germans all demands of the Wehrmacht for interpreters or specialists could be met. Besides, suitable persons were asked to write reports.

Ukrainian KONRAD in the Hurys of 1st Lt. TULING [unknown]ts. reported, K. stood well the test and is continuing his activities (initials)

- III. An Ukrainian self-defense squad was established to help in maintaining peace and order and to protect important factories and stores and to extend the own work possibilities. When entering Cherson the Commando found already in existence a so-called "Ukrainian Security Service" which was provided with identity bla[unknown]s issued by the Stadtkommandant[unknown]. Unreliable elements were eliminated and checked persons were enlisted. The detail numbering 157 men were ceremoniously sworn in by the Commando Leader. The self defense squad could already successfully be utilized several times, as for instance apart from guarding highly important enterprises or stores, for blocking off the streets on the occasion of executions, for assisting when a Dnjepr island was combed out, but above all at the pre-examination of those numerous persons brought to the Commando every day or who appear on their own. The self defense squad also proved itself to be a suitable cadre for the establishment of a news' and agents' network.
- IV. The search for the bearers of Bolshevism, which was started on the day of arrival, showed some results. Thus could be caught among others the former Chief of the Russian Secret State Police (GPU) of Cherson, the Czech KAMINSKI, who particularly from 1919 to 1921, had carried out the liquidation of Czarist officers and officials.

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The Chief of the prison department and the chief of the prison workshops of the NKVD were caught. The political commissar of a company was also arrested. In addition some material was found which contained details of leading Bolshevik functionaries, who escaped from Cherson.

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The search of the Bolshevik main offices such as NKVD buildings and Party Committee bore no results.

15,000 tons IV Wi IV a

V. In addition the securing of buildings, stores, etc., must be mentioned. Regarding important plants and stores the town of Cherson is of considerable significance. Among others it has two canning factories, one large mill with a daily milling capacity of 5 tons, one brewery, one giant silo containing stocks of 300,000 tons of oats, barley and wheat, in addition small quantities of corn, seeds and food stuffs of all sorts.

Would then be 8 times as large as the large silo in Nikolajew! Impossible

The Commando participated in the protection of these plants and stocks as far as it was within its powers, above all indirectly by combatting of sabotage and by putting up of self defense guards. Two large Russian oil tank stores were also situated in Cherson. One of them, which was situated in a Dnjepr island, was set on fire by a direct hit of the Bolshevik artillery on 5 September 41. The stocks which amounted to 5 million litres of naphtha and 1 million litres of patrol burned out completely.

(initials)

IV. The Commando carried out the following executions:  
400 Jews, 10 Jewesses were shot as a reprisal measure for sabotage acts and forwarding of communications. 11 political criminals (GPU-Chief KAMINSKI, chief of the prison, commissar, 3 partisans, etc.) were executed. One partisan leader, whom the Commando itself has apprehended was hanged in public.

VII. Besides the completion of these tasks the necessity arose for the Commando to assist in further tasks:

Army Signal

1) On many night patrols the reports about light signals were followed up. During these proceedings by the way all the assumptions proved wrong except one. During one search however one short wave transmitter could be confiscated, which was already destroyed, but which in the opinion of the division had been the sender directing the Russian artillery bombardment on the town. In any case it was not heard any longer.

Commander denies that

2) The utilization of the Commando was particularly intensive in combatting the partisans. As early as August 1941, a report received, 2 persons who wanted to take information to the Reds across the river were apprehended approximately 12 km upstream of the Dnjepr, and for the transmittal of which they were to receive a reward of allegedly 5000 Rubles . . .

3) Finally, a great number of investigations, arrests and interrogations were carried out by the Commando of persons some of whom were turned over by Wehrmacht agencies or reported for suspicion of espionage, sabotage, hostile remarks, etc.. Altogether, 56

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thorough and 120 short interrogations were conducted. In this connection the following is noteworthy: The accusations against the persons turned over in almost all cases proved to be without foundation. Almost all of them had to be released again; not a single person could be executed . . .

In the entire period during which the Commando carried out these tasks its strength was 15 men. No losses occurred. When the 72nd Division moved from a village near Cherson to Bereslaw the leader of the Aussenkommando Cherson reported on 5 September 1941 to the Division General on the work of the Commando.

The General, who had already been informed via the I[o] expressed to the Commando his appreciation and his thanks. The Stadtkommandant, Lt. Col. v. Rochow, who departed on 5 September 1941 also expressed his thanks to the Commando for the good support.

(handwritten footnote)

General Hansen, too is very satisfied with the Commando.

W (oehler) 24/9

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

6 July 1948

I, Marshall F. Webster, Civilian, No. S-046204, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with both the German and English languages; and that the above is a true and correct translation of document No. NOKW-636.

Marshall F. Webster  
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