

Office of U.S. Chief of Counsel
For War Crimes APO 696-A U.S. Army

Staff Evidence Analysis By: E.M. Hardy

Doc. No. NOKW 2225

Date: 19 September 1947

Title and/or general nature: Order from the LIII AK for the reconnoitering and development of the Panther position, destruction and devastation in the outpost area. Signed GOLLWITZER. 4 pp. (photostat)

Date: 23 September 1943

Source (Location of original, etc.) : German Document Center, MID, Room MB-863, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C. WB-2948 330 Inf. Div. 43242/3

Persons, Firms or Organizations Involved:

V. KLUGE, Guenther, Genfldm., (deceased) C in C H. Gr. Center

REINHARDT, Georg-Hans, Genobst., C in C Pz.AOK 3

GOLLWITZER, Friedrich, Gen.d.Inf. (Russian PW) CG LIII AK

To be filed under these reference headings: V1 B 1 c

NOKW General

NOKW Atrocities

Summary (indicate page nos.) :

Instructions are given for the devastation of the forward area. "The forward area must become a desert." Villages and individual houses, bridges, passes and weirs, important crossroads, routes etc. are to be effectively destroyed within a 10 kilometer zone.

Translation of Excerpts of Document no. NOKW-2225
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(handwritten notes): Commander TA 330 J.D. (initial) 139/43 Top secret 26.9 Ta R 26/9

Corps Headquarters LIIIrd AK

The commanding general (Section Ia No. 336/43 Top Secret) (stamp)

Top Secret!

Corps Headquarters, 23 Sept 43 28 copies 10th copy 4th order for Reconnaissance and construction of the panther position; destruction and devastation in the outer boundary of the position. (initial) R 27 September

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6) Destructions and devastations:

East of the panther position a zone 40 kilometers wide has been fixed where particularly extensive destructions of all kinds are planned since it will later become the outer boundary of the position. A subsequent stay in this zone must be made difficult for the enemy with all means available. The outer area must become a desert!

Corps Headquarters LIIIrd was ordered to reconnoiter, prepare and carry out the destruction up to 10 kilometers; within 10 – 40 km east of the panther position the destruction works are transferred to the armies in their respective sectors.

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In this connection I order:

- a) Reconnaissance within the 10 kilometer zone is to be carried out immediately by the army sectors.
- b) The reconnaissance has to be extended to a thorough destruction of:
 - 1) all localities and individual houses,
 - 2) all bridges, footbridges, culverts and weirs,

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3) important crossroads, paths and corduroy roads, in particular the supply roads

Dowsk – Roslawl in sector B and

Orscha – Smolensk in sector C,

4) all other important objects for possibilities of observation, 5) mining of terrain sectors of tactical importance, fords and both sides of bridges.

c) until 27 September a provisional reconnaissance result is to be submitted to Corps Headquarters on Map 1: 100.000. The Eastern border line of the 10 kilometer zone is to be marked on the maps. The following connecting points are ordered: Between Army sectors A and B: Western perimeter of the locality 4 kilometers east of Besed,

Between army sectors B and C: Northern perimeter of Lutischtsche,

Sector Army group center to army group north: Southern perimeter of Pesoli.

d) the beginning of the destructions and devastations within the 10 kilometer zone will yet be ordered. A report has to be made to Corps Headquarters until 16 hours of the previous day what destructions are planned for the following day. Simultaneously with this work, destructions and/or the burning down of houses within 500 meters before the main line of resistance are to be carried out as soon as possible within the framework of "clearing the range."

e) the army sectors will prepare roads of retreat for the individual sectors which are to be reported to Corps Headquarters expeditiously, at the latest until 26 September. When beginning with the destructions guide sentries secured against band attacks are to be posted in the eastern 10 kilometer border zone on the designated roads of retreat. The position of the guide sentries is to be marked on the maps to be submitted.

f) railways and railway installations may only be destroyed by railway engineers. Orders for this will be issued by group Kodeis/Army Group Center.

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The armies, or, in an emergency, the local tactical leaders in close connection with the Kodeis and/or the local leader of the assigned railway engineers will order the uniform completion of the railway destructions.

g) The order for the destruction of the signal communications are issued by corps chief signal officer 453 who asks the army group chief signal officer for the necessary data.

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h) Destructions of airfields and installations of the Airforce will be carried out by offices of the Luftwaffe.

(Initial)

(Signature) Gollwitzer

Distribution: In Draft

Certification of Translation 5 May 1948

I, Idy Sieber, Civilian, No. 20104, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with both the German and the English languages; and that the above is a true and correct translation of excerpts of document No. NOKW-2225.

Idy Sieber 20104