

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MILITARY AND PARA-MILITARY ORGANISATIONS

#### A. GERMAN SS — SCHUTZSTAFFEL (PROTECTION SQUAD)

1. The function of the SS was to guarantee the security of the Reich and the Nazi Party. It was divided into two main forces :

(a) *The Allgemeine SS (General SS).*

The Allgemeine SS was organised into various protection units and the S. D. Sicherheitsdienst (Security Police) was under its command. The functions of these units were to protect certain Reich commitments, for example :

- (i) The SS Funkschutz protected radio installations.
- (ii) The SS Postschutz protected post and telegraph services.
- (iii) The SS Bahnschutz protected railway installations.

From 1940 on the ranks of the Allgemeine SS were opened to Belgians (Flemish), Dutchmen, Danes and Norwegians, as well as many other foreign workers who were induced to join, providing they could fill the high physical and ideological requirements. Special sections were established to deal with the different national groups. One of the main objects of these formations was to spread Nazi ideas in their own countries and amongst their own people.

(b) *The Waffen SS.*

The German Waffen SS was a fully militarised force whose members volunteered for service for the duration of hostilities. The recruiting for the Waffen SS was done through the Headquarter units of the Allgemeine SS. It was organised into a number of divisions which were usually given such names as SS Division "Prinz Eugen" and SS Division "Hitler Jugend" (see Chapter XXV on German Order of Battle). In addition certain foreign divisions were recruited, such as the Latvian SS Legion, the Estonian SS Legion and the Ukrainian SS Legion. These foreign units wore the Waffen SS uniform (field grey with black tabs) with the national emblem on the left sleeve. The nomenclature of ranks of the SS were different from that of the Wehrmacht (see Chapter XXVI).

2. *Miscellaneous SS Legions.*

After the occupation by Germany of most of the countries of Western Europe a systematic campaign was inaugurated by Nazi propagandists designed to cause dissension within the countries thus occupied. The purpose of such a policy is obvious. By creating dissension they were able to gain adherents from amongst the disgruntled elements of the occupied countries. These persons became members of the Quisling governments and volunteers for the numerous foreign SS legions which became part of the German Army.

For example, the Flemish sections of Belgium were set against the Wallons, and as a result of the conflicts which arose because of the clever Nazi propaganda, a large number of Flemish volunteers joined the Fifth SS Panzer Division. It will be noted from Section 2 below on the German Order of Battle, that this Division also had Scandinavian and Dutch volunteers.

When interviewing miscellaneous Western nationals who may be found in Germany or Austria, it must be borne in mind that some Frenchmen, Luxembourgers, Belgians, Dutch, Danes, Norwegians and Finns were volunteers in the various national legions which were established by the Germans. A careful interview should be conducted to ascertain that such persons were not, in fact, members of these SS units. This may be done in part by checking with the 7771 Document Centre in Berlin where the files of all SS personnel are held and by looking at Polizei-Amt registrations as to nationality as many of these persons were given German citizenship as a result of their services to the Reich. (For details regarding these Legions see Chapter xxv).

## B. O.T. — ORGANISATION TODT

3. The Organisation Todt (commonly known as Organisation Tod (death) because of its consumption of human material) was partly an off-shoot of the R.A.D. (Reichsarbeitsdienst), State Work Committees. It recruited a number of its German personnel from that Organisation, a certain number of young conscripts being allocated by it to the Organisation Todt.

4. Originally in charge of building the Reichsautobahn and later the Siegfried Line, it consisted of a technical and administrative Staff dealing with civilian contractors for individual tasks. Later when shortage of machinery and material increased the O.T. had its own supply departments with high requisitioning authority. Furthermore when labour had to be supplied to the contractors, a system of forced labour camps was brought into operation. Later armed guards for camps, work places and stores were also created.

5. The Organisation Todt included three categories :

- (a) Officers and "members" wearing uniforms (with a red Swastika armband for Germans and a grey ribbon with "Org. Todt" for Non-Germans).
- (b) The O.T. Guard Units, wearing uniforms and black shoulder flashes (epaulettes), gasmask, steel helmets and rifles. They were Danes, Italians, Poles, etc. Both this and the above group were given the status of Wehrmacht in 1942.
- (c) The most numerous groups were forced labourers, who were in O.T. Camps and may sometimes hold O.T. Camp Cards or Pay records or letters showing a Feldpost address. They were *not* members but rather prisoners of the O.T., not entitled to uniforms and arms. They may have been issued with wooden shoes and drill suits and their wages were low, not exceeding one mark per hour.

6. After the death of Dr. Todt the Organisation came under the control of Alfred Speer, who, not to be outdone by his predecessor instituted a Corps of Engineers. For this purpose he recruited young men who had undergone the necessary training from amongst the subjugated nations. Baltic, Polish, Ukrainian and Russian technical personnel were enlisted in the corps by the promise of high wages, smart uniforms and a position of trust. The letters S.P. appeared on the collar of the uniform tunic worn by these engineers.

## C. D.A.F. — DEUTSCHE ARBEITSFRONT (THE GERMAN LABOUR FRONT)

7. The D.A.F. was a labour organisation in a very limited sense because membership was virtually compulsory for all German workers. It was the largest Nazi Organisation

in so far as numerative strength of members was concerned and direct membership was only given to German nationals.

8. However, when importing voluntary workers to Germany the party formed a number of foreign workers associations which were under the supervision of the D.A.F. For example, there was "Die Ukrainischer Hilfskomitet" or "Ukrainischer Haupt-Ausschuss im Gouvernement Général". Each had as their main office Berlin with branch offices in Poland and Ukrainia.

9. The D.A.F. emblem consisted of a swastika surrounded by a cogged wheel outline.

#### D. ELIGIBILITY STATUS OF THE ABOVE GROUPS

10. Waffen SS.—Members of this Organisation are outside the mandate of IRO except in the case of members of foreign SS units who can make it plausible that they were conscripted.

11. Members of Organisation Todt who were Officers or Guards are *prima facie* outside the mandate of the Organisation. The prisoners or workers are *prima facie* within the mandate, other factors being equal.

12. Members of the D.A.F. were, as is mentioned above, usually voluntary workers. If the nature of their work was such that it might be construed as voluntary assistance to the enemy, they would then fall outside the mandate of IRO.