

# **PARTNERS IN NAZI CRIMES**

## **96 Surviving Veterans of the Latvian SS Legion**

A joint report by non-governmental organizations, including:

- Historical Memory Foundation
- Foundation for the Support and Development of Jewish Culture, Traditions, Education and Science

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## Introduction

On March 16, Riga annually celebrates former Latvian SS legionnaires with popular events taking place in the heart of the Latvian capital. High-ranking politicians, members of nationalist and far-right neo-Nazi groups lay flowers to the Freedom monument in the center of Riga, in an act of remembering SS legionnaires who, as they believe, used to fight for the country's independence. The authorities persistently ignore anti-fascist protests that try to draw public attention to the fact that they were Hitler's proxies who participated in Nazi crimes in Latvia, Russia and Belarus.

Starting from 1991 to 2020, no Nazi collaborator from the SD Auxiliary Police, Latvian police battalions or other Latvian SS Legion units was brought to justice on charges of war crimes or crimes against humanity. The only exception was Konrad Kalejs, who was in charge of Salaspils camp security and took part in the mass murder of Jews while serving in the Latvian SD Auxiliary police (*Sonderkommando Arajs*). Latvia hesitated some time to send a belated request to Australian judicial authorities for his extradition. That decision was made as late as in 2000, and not in 1994 when Kaleis was stripped of U.S. citizenship after some details from his wartime past emerged. That ping-pong of a deportation process involving the United States, Great Britain and Australia, as well as the request delay on the Latvian side, eventually let a war criminal evade justice, despite his obvious involvement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See e.g.: *Barkham P.* Konrad Kalejs. Latvian Nazi lieutenant who resisted all efforts to bring him to justice. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/nov/12/guardianobituaries.warcrimes> (accessed 06.10.2018); Краснитский А. Калейс в ответе за гибель 296 узников Саласпилса // Час. Ежедневная русская газета Latvia. № 113 (1139). 16.05.2001.



**President of Latvia Andris Berzins awards the Order of Three Stars, which is the nation's highest civil decoration, to Laimonis Ezerģailis, a former SS legionnaire.**

The situation was no surprise. In Latvia, there is state-level effort to protect Nazi collaborators responsible for crimes against humanity. On October 29, 1998, the Latvian Saeima adopted the Declaration on Latvian Legionnaires in World War II, a document meant to glorify members of the Latvian SS Legion. The declaration falsely stated that “the aim of conscripted and voluntary legionnaires was to protect Latvia from the renewal of Stalin’s regime. They never took part in Hitler’s punitive acts against peaceful inhabitants.”<sup>2</sup> This statement is, of course, a lie, since historians are fully aware of war crimes committed by members of the Latvian SS Legion<sup>3</sup>. However, historical truth is something the Latvian government could

**2** Latvijas Vēstnesis, 10.11.1998. Nr. 336 (1397).

**3** See e.g.: Дюков А.Р., Симиндей В.В. Латышский легион СС в свете Нюрнбергского трибунала // Международная жизнь. 2011. № 6.

4 NRA, 15.03.2012.

5 Симиңдей В.В. Огнем, штыком и лестью. Мировые войны и их националистическая интерпретация в Прибалтике. М., 2015. С. 158–160.

6 Ibid. С. 165.

7 Ковалев Б.Н. Прибалтийский след на северо-западе России 1941–1944 гг.: преступления военных и парамилитарных формирований. СПб., 2020. С. 28–29.

8 Латвия — одна из пионеров soft power // Baltijas Balss, 12.05.2019. <https://bb.lv/statja/v-mire/2019/05/12/latviya-odna-iz-pionerovsoftpower>

9 Москва разгласила неприглядную тайну латвийской дипломатии // Baltijas Balss, 12.10.2019. <https://bb.lv/statja/nasha-latvija/2019/10/12/moskva-razglasila-neprikladnu-tyaynu-latviyskoy-diplomatii>

care less for; Karlis Kangeris of the Latvian presidential historians' commission admitted that the Saeima Declaration was meant to “protect the legionnaires from attacks in the press, local and — especially — foreign, calling them ‘Nazis’, killers’ and ‘war criminals.’”<sup>4</sup>

Later, Latvian SS legionnaires got social benefits from the Latvian government as ‘victims of Soviet political repressions’, including allowances, higher pensions, as well as additional payments from the national military budget.<sup>5</sup> The posthumous glorification of Nazi collaborators also took place in Latvia: in November 2000, a memorial dedicated to Latvian SS legionnaires was unveiled in the village of Lestene, with vocal support of the government and on donations from *Daugavas Vanagi*, the rightwing organization of Latvian emigrants abroad.<sup>6</sup>

*Daugavas Vanagi* (lit. ‘the Daugava hawks’) is an organization established in the West by Latvian SS legion veterans, many of whom were involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity. Once its chairman was Janis Cirulis, a former legionnaire involved in the Zhestyanaya Gorka massacre near Novgorod in which many civilians were killed.<sup>7</sup>

The close ties between *Daugavas Vanagi* and the Latvian state authorities are no secret. Back in the 1950s, the so-called ‘Latvian embassy in the U.S.’ and *Daugavas Vanagi* signed an agreement defining the general strategy of co-operation between the two organizations<sup>8</sup>. After Latvia gained independence, the state-level support of the organization continued. In the United States, for example, the person in charge of co-operation with *Daugavas Vanagi* is Juris Pekalis, Counselor at the Embassy of Latvia in Washington<sup>9</sup>. Latvian foreign minister Edgars Rinkevics, while on an official trip to Canada,



**Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics meets members of Daugavas Vanagi Canada, former SS legionnaire Laimonds Ozols standing second on the left**

did find time in his schedule to meet members of *Daugavas Vanagi* Canada, among them Laimonds Ozols, a former Latvian Nazi legionnaire<sup>10</sup>.

10 Ibid.

Currently, there are about 400 Latvian SS ex-legionnaires in the world, both in Latvia and abroad, at least part of them presumably involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity during WWII. This report is the first to disclose information on 96 Latvian SS legionnaires still living in Australia (19), Argentina (2), Brazil (3), Great Britain (4), Canada (15), Latvia (22) and the United States (33).

We hope this paper helps investigate war crimes committed during the Second World War by Nazis and their accomplices.

We must continue to reveal information on the still living members of the Latvian SS legion.

## The Latvian SS Legion: Historical and Legal Background

The history of the Latvian SS Legion dates back to January 24, 1943, after SS-Reichsfueherer Heinrich Himmler visited the frontline and, based on Hitler's unwritten "permission and command", ordered to merge the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Latvian police battalions that had taken part in operations near Leningrad, as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Motorized Brigade, under the name of *the Latvian SS Volunteer Legion*, with the appropriate written order issued by Hitler on February 10, 1943<sup>11</sup>. In April 1943, six Latvian police battalions formed one Latvian volunteer SS brigade, included in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment (the 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> 'order maintaining battalions') and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment (the 18<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 'order maintaining battalions').<sup>12</sup> For the German High Command, however, not only the combat units of the Latvian SS Volunteer Brigade were part of the so-called 'SS Volunteer Legion', but also all other Latvian police battalions involved in punitive actions in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland. This can be seen from SS-Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler's instruction dated May 26, 1943.<sup>13</sup>

Later, the Latvian SS Volunteer Brigade was transformed into the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS Volunteer Division (conscription order of January 7, 1944). At the same time, volunteer conscription and mobilization were announced for the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS Volunteer Division, with three of its regiments (3, 4 and 5) formed by mid-June 1943. The 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS Volunteer Divisions together included 11 police battalions in total<sup>14</sup>. Also, some who had previously

<sup>11</sup> Bleiere D., Butulis I., Feldmanis I., Stranga A., Zunda A. *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā (1939–1945)*. Rīga, 2008. 356. lpp.

<sup>12</sup> Silgailis A. *Latviešu leģions*. Rīga, 2006. 47. lpp.

<sup>13</sup> Блейере Д., Бутулис И., Зунда А., Странга А., Фелдманис И. *История Латвия. XX век*. Рига, 2005. С. 271.

<sup>14</sup> Бутлис И., Зунда А. *История Латвия*. Рига, 2010. С. 163.

served in the Arajs commando unit in 1944—45 joined the above-mentioned divisions. In 1943, the Latvian SD Arajs Kommando, notorious for the atrocities such as exterminating Jews and burning Belorussian villages, comprised 1,200 troops ready for punitive action<sup>15</sup>. Its leader Viktors Arajs was appointed battalion commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS Volunteer Division<sup>16</sup>.

Thus, the term “Latvian SS Legion” tends to describe a large military unit of somewhat irregular nature, which used to encompass, at different times, all Latvian SS and police units, such as Latvian police battalions, the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS Volunteer Divisions.

With this notion of the Latvian SS Legion in mind, let us now see what legal assessment is given to this unit by the judgment of the International Military Tribunal for the prosecution and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis (hereinafter *IMT*).

Article 9 of the IMT Charter stipulates that ‘at the trial of any individual member of any group or organization the Tribunal may declare (in connection with any act of which the individual may be convicted) that the group or organization of which the individual was a member was a criminal organization.’<sup>17</sup> According to this Article, the IMT used to consider if the SS had to be declared a criminal organization. In its judgment, the IMT eventually declared that “the SS was even a more general participant in the commission of War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity,”<sup>18</sup> and that “it is impossible to single out any one portion of the SS which was not involved in these criminal activities.”<sup>19</sup> The IMT found that “knowledge of these criminal activities was sufficiently general to justify declaring that the

**15** *Bleiere D., Butulis I., Feldmanis I., Stranga A., Zunda A.* *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā (1939–1945)*. 346. lpp.

**16** Латвия под игом нацизма: Сборник архивных документов. М., 2006. С. 311-328.

**17** Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal. Nuremberg, 14 November 1945 — 1 October 1946. Nuremberg, 1947. Vol. 1. P. 12. Неофициальный русский перевод: Нюрнбергский трибунал: Сборник материалов: В 8 т. М., 1987. Т. 1. С. 148 — 149. As the Russian translation of the IMT documents is not always correct or full, we hereinafter refer to its official English version.

**18** Trial of the Major War Criminals... Vol. 1. P. 270; Нюрнбергский трибунал. Т. 8. С. 652.

**19** Trial of the Major War Criminals... Vol. 1. P. 271; Нюрнбергский трибунал. Т. 8. С. 653.

SS was a criminal organization to the extent hereinafter described.”<sup>20</sup>

The judgment of the IMT included the following:

“ The SS was utilized for purposes which were criminal under the Charter involving the persecution and extermination of the Jews, brutalities and killings in concentration camps, excesses in the administration of occupied territories, the administration of the slave labor program, and the mistreatment and murder of prisoners of war.”

“In dealing with the SS the Tribunal includes all persons who had been officially accepted as members of the SS, including the members of the Allgemeine SS, members of the Waffen-SS, members of the SS Totenkopfverbaende, and the members of any of the different police forces who were members of the SS. The Tribunal does not include the so-called SS riding units.”

“The Tribunal declares to be criminal within the meaning of the Charter the group composed of those persons who had been officially accepted as members of the SS as enumerated in the preceding paragraph, who became or remained members of the organization with knowledge that it was being used for the commission of acts declared criminal by Article 6 of the Charter, or who were personally implicated as members of the organization in the commission of such crimes, excluding, however, those who were drafted into membership by the State in such a way as to give the m no choice in the matter, and who had committed no such crimes.”<sup>21</sup>

The IMT judgment therefore declared that the whole body of the SS was of criminal nature.<sup>22</sup> The judgment said

**20** Trial of the Major War Criminals... Vol. 1. P. 272; Нюрнбергский трибунал. Т. 8. С. 653.

**21** Trial of the Major War Criminals... Vol. 1. P. 272; Нюрнбергский процесс. Т. 8. С. 654–655.

**22** *Bloxham D. Genocide on Trial: War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory.* Oxford, 2003. P. 186.

that «Waffen-SS divisions were responsible for many massacres and atrocities in occupied territories»<sup>23</sup>, and, since the above-quoted final part of the judgment treated members of Waffen-SS as an integral part of the SS itself, there is no doubt that the judgment saw Waffen-SS as part of the SS criminal organization. There are official statements of the Russian Foreign Ministry that support this view.<sup>24</sup>

As one Waffen-SS military formation called *the Latvian SS Legion* is part of the SS (a criminal organization under the IMT judgment), the Legion itself can be considered a criminal organization. It is also worth noting that, according to the IMT judgment, the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian SS volunteer divisions inside *the Latvian SS Legion* can also be treated as separate criminal organizations.

It is also important the IMT judgment defines the following set of criteria regarding individual affiliation with the criminal group:

- SS membership, including Allgemeine SS, Waffen-SS, SS Totenkopf units;
- awareness of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the SS (as defined by Article 6 of the IMT Charter);
- participation in war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Moreover, the IMT judgment ruled out forced SS conscripts, who committed no war crimes or crimes against humanity, from the criminal group. This means that, under the judgment, those members of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian volunteer divisions who, firstly, were conscripted against their will and, secondly, committed no war crimes or crimes against humanity, cannot be considered members of a criminal orga-

**23** Trial of the Major War Criminals... Vol. 1. P. 270; Нюрнбергский процесс. Т. 8. С. 652.

**24** See e.g.: Об участии Эстонского легиона СС в военных преступлениях в 1941-1945 гг. и попытках пересмотра в Эстонии приговора Нюрнбергского трибунала (справочная информация). URL: [http://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonk-JEo2Bw/content/id/485512](http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonk-JEo2Bw/content/id/485512) (accessed 14.08.2019).

nization. However, the former limitation has nothing to do with the case we are analyzing here.

When the Latvian SS Legion was formed, one important factor was that its officers and, to a large extent, instructors (non-commissioned officers) were voluntarily recruited. SS-Oberfuerer A. Silgailis, chief of staff and the Inspector General of the Latvian SS Legion, wrote in his memoirs that they used to send special invitations to individual officers and instructors. The recruits had the right to decline the invitations, although in this case the alternative was, highly likely, hard labor<sup>25</sup>. The vast majority of officers and instructors either offered their services in 1941-42 or did not decline the invitations in 1943-44. Latvian historians believe that the total share of 'pure' volunteers among members of the two Latvian Waffen-SS divisions was as many as 15 to 20 percent of the approximately 52,000 cadre<sup>26</sup>. However, the backbone of the Legion, i.e. volunteered officers and non-commissioned officers, could be 90 and 60 percent, correspondingly<sup>27</sup>.

Facing defeat on the front and shortage in volunteers, the German military and occupation authorities, in a combined effort with the Latvian puppet autonomy agencies, resorted to mobilization of all fit-for-service males in Latvia. That measure was undoubtedly against the international law. However, recruits did have a number of opportunities to avoid affiliation with the Latvian SS Legion. According to the mobilization guidelines dated March and April 1943, persons who were subject to labor duty initially had the right to choose freely between three different kinds of conscription. The German authorities planned to attract three groups of conscripts in certain ratios: 15,500 for the SS legion, 22,000 in favor of the Wehrmacht, and 15,600 for civil service. However,

<sup>25</sup> Silgailis A. *Latviešu leģions*. 265. lpp

<sup>26</sup> Bleiere D., Butulis I., Feldmanis I., Stranga A., Zunda A. *Latvija Otrajā pasaules karā (1939–1945)*. 354., 359. lpp.

<sup>27</sup> Дюков А.Р., Симиндей В.В. *Латышский легион СС в свете Нюрнбергского трибунала // Международная жизнь*. 2011. № 6.

Himmler's instruction dated March 24, 1943 added some new requirements. Now, the recruits were supposed to be 17- to 45-year old Aryans with no criminal record, 164 to 168 cm tall or taller, physically fit for the Waffen-SS.

“Undesirable living conditions”, associated with labor duty or cutting trenches or building fortifications, was something many Latvian recruits wanted to avoid. They tended to choose military service as a more profitable option, shunning non-Latvian Wehrmacht units and following the propaganda call to join their “native” SS legion. The statistics of the first wave of mobilization show the recruit's preferences: 17,971 people signed up for the SS legion and later joined it, instead of the planned 15,500; whereas 12,979 joined Wehrmacht (which was 9,000 less than it had been planned); and 4,769 (or less than a third) joined other services.<sup>28</sup>

The same trend was obvious during the second recruitment (October and November of 1943) and the third recruitment (December 1943 to January 1944). Those were times when draft evasion, in a number of forms, was relatively safe. It was only in 1944 that a special order was issued introducing death penalty for the escapists. Nevertheless, there were numerous examples of Latvian youths daring to evade recruitment or leave the Latvian SS units, as late as after July 1944 when the “total” mobilization was declared.

All that is mentioned above leads us to the conclusion that the Latvian SS Legion must be considered a criminal group under the IMT judgment. An exception here, however, is one category of people serving in the Legion, namely those soldiers who were forcefully recruited during the fourth wave of mobilization and after (starting from February 1944, including the ‘total’ mobilization), who had not volunteered for

**28** Блейере Д.,  
Бутулис И., Зунда  
А., Странга А.,  
Фелдманис И.  
История Latvia.  
XX век. С. 272-273.

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Nazi police or other punitive agencies, and who committed no war crimes or crimes against humanity during the German occupation, including the period of their service in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian SS divisions. This is an exception made by the IMT, for which less than half of the cadre of the two divisions can claim. After 1945, the only reason that a number of allowances was made by the West for former Latvian SS legionnaires, including senior commanding officers and killers from *Sonderkommando Arajs*, was the Cold War-era environment.

## The Latvian SS Legion and War Crimes

Article 6 of the IMT Charter defines *war crimes* as “violations of the laws or customs of war” including, but not limited to “murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian population of or in occupied territory, murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity”.<sup>29</sup>

*Crimes against humanity* are, in their turn, defined by the Charter as “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.”<sup>30</sup>

By now, a number of actions have been revealed as taken by the units within the Latvian SS Legion that fit the definition of war crimes and crimes against humanity, as is defined in the IMT Charter.

Among them, the punitive Operation Winterzauber (“winter magic”) that took place in Russia and Belarus in February and March of 1943, in which hundreds of villages were destroyed and thousands of people murdered. Latvian police battalions within the Latvian SS Legion were responsible for that punitive action.<sup>31</sup>

According to the archive documents, anti-partisan and anti-civilian Operation Frühlingfest (“spring festival”) was carried out in the area of Ushachi and Lepel in the German-occupied

<sup>29</sup> Trial of the Major War Criminals... Vol. 1. P. 11; Нюрнбергский процесс. Т. 1. С. 148.

<sup>30</sup> Trial of the Major War Criminals... Vol. 1. P. 11; Нюрнбергский процесс. Т. 8. С. 148.

<sup>31</sup> «Зимнее волшебство». Нацистская карательная операция в белорусско-латвийском пограничье, февраль–март 1943 г.: Документы и материалы. М.; Минск, 2013.

Belarus from April 11 to May 4, 1944. Responsible for that combat and punitive action within the Friedrich Jeckeln group were not only the 2<sup>nd</sup> Liepaja and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cēcis Police Regiments in cooperation with the 5<sup>th</sup> Latvian Border Guard Regiment, but also units within the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS Division<sup>32</sup>.

**32** For the published archive evidence, see: «Уничтожить как можно больше...» Латвийские коллаборационистские формирования на территории Белоруссии, 1942–1944 гг. Сборник документов. М., 2009. С. 266–267.

**33** Чернов В.Е., Шляхтунов А.Г. Прибалтийские Waffen-SS. Герои или палачи?.. М., 2004. С. 83–84 (со ссылкой: РГВА. Ф. 451. Оп. 6. Д. 96. Л. 221–222, 236).

**34** «Данные злодеяния производила группа, выделенная из каждой роты». Новые свидетельства преступлений военнослужащих 19-й латышской дивизии Ваффен-СС // Журнал российских и восточноевропейских исторических исследований. 2015. № 1.

The Russian State Military Archive helped preserve the documents describing the character of the punitive action taken by a gendarmerie company in Leningrad and Novgorod regions. That gendarmerie unit was within the organizational structure of the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian SS Division and, when performing special functions, often had other combat units of the Division attached to it. On December 18, 1943, the village of Zalya-Gora west of Novgorod saw the execution of around 250 civilians; early in January 1944, the above-mentioned unit took part in mass shootings in Chudovo, Leningrad Region; on January 21, about 200 people were locked up in a barn and then machine-gunned in a village named Glukhaya. The total number of villages, destroyed with the participation of the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian SS Division, reached 23, with up to 1,300 people executed in 13 of them<sup>33</sup>. Other evidence of the punitive actions, taken by the units within the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS, comes from the testimony by a high-ranking officer of that division, assistant infantry officer SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer V. Kristejns.<sup>34</sup>

One can come across multiple primary sources describing the outrageous cruelty with which Latvian SS legionnaires treated prisoners of war. In particular, 14 Soviet POWs from the 65<sup>th</sup> Rifle Regiment of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Rifle Division were violently tortured on August 6, 1943 by the servicemen of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS Division. The special message delivered August 18, 1944 by head of the

Soviet SMERSH counterintelligence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baltic Front, contained the following details of the tragedy: ‘As for Private N.K. Karaulov, Junior Sergeant Y. P. Korsakov and Guards Lieutenant Y. R. Bogdanov, Germans and traitors from the Latvian SS units poked the POWs’ eyes and covered their bodies with multiple stab wounds. As for Guards Lieutenant Kaganovich and Guards Lieutenant Kosmin, they cut stars on their foreheads, twisted their legs and bashed their teeth out with army boots. As for Medical Instructor A. A. Sukhanova and other three nurses, they cut off their breasts, twisted their legs and arms and covered them with multiple stab wounds. They tortured Private F. Y. Yegorov, Private Satybatynov, Private A.N.Antonenko, Private P. Plotnikov and Petty Officer Afanasiev. No one of the wounded taken by the Germans and the Latvian fascists could escape torture and cruelty.’<sup>35</sup>

Another well-known example is shooting Polish POWs and burning them at the stake in the village of Podgaje, Greater Poland Voivodeship, carried out from 31 January to February 2, 1945 by soldiers and officers of the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS Division, part of Combat Team Elster. In 2002, Poland installed a monument at the site of that tragedy with an inscription on it, saying “Here, on February the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945, Hitler’s troops burnt a barn with 32 soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rifle Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division, fighting for the return of Piast lands to Mother Poland.”<sup>36</sup>

All the crimes mentioned above can unmistakably be qualified as war crimes and crimes against humanity, as defined by the IMT Charter and Judgment.

**35** Об участии Латышского легиона СС в военных преступлениях в 1941-1945 гг. и попытках пересмотра в Латвия приговора Нюрнбергского трибунала (справочная информация МИД России) // <http://www.mid.ru>, 12.02.2004.

**36** Александрова Ю. Трагедия в Подгае. Польская деревня до сих пор помнит «подвиги» латышских легионеров // Вести сегодня. 10.10.2008

## Identified Servicemen of the Latvian SS Legion



1. **Āva, Dailis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



2. **Aišpurs, Gunārs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Great Britain.



3. **Auziņš, Pēteris** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



4. **Bāliņš, Jānis** — born on June 29, 1925. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: the USA.



5. **Baļickis, Gatis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Brazil.



6. **Balodis, Mārtiņš** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Latvia.



7. **Balodis, Ernests** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



8. **Banis, Tālivaldis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**9. Baumanis, Bruno** — born on April 15, 1924. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: the USA.



**10. Bendrups, Viktors** — born on June 14, 1925 in Jelgava. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**11. Bergmanis, Ilgvars** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**12. Bērziņš, Aivars** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: the USA.



**13. Bērziņš, Laimonis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**14. Bērziņš, Hugo** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**15. Bērziņš, Jurgis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Brazil.



**16. Bērziņš, Jānis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**17. Bērziņš, Jānis** — born supposedly on November 5, 1926 in Viesiena. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.

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**18. Berķis, Artūrs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**19. Bilinskis, Jānis** — born on December 7, 1927 in Rēzekne. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**20. Bernšteins, Jānis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**21. Bitners, Imants** — born on March 29, 1923 in Liepāja. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States. He is an active member of Daugavas Vanagi.



**22. Blumbergs, Jānis** — born on January 17, 1927. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**23. Briedis, Valdis** — born on February 13, 1925 in Riga. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**24. Brikmanis, Aivars** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**25. Burkevics, Tālis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia. He is an active member of Daugavas Vanagi.



**26. Valdmanis, Edgars** — Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**27. Vaskis, Janis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Ohio, United States.



**28. Vēveris, Edgars** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**29. Vilks, Daumants** born in 1924. He voluntarily joined the Latvia SS legion and served in the intelligence unit. In 1945 he was taken prisoner by the Western Allies, released quite soon and lived in Germany until 1951.



**30. Gaiķis, Arturs** — born on January 21, 1919 in Vaives. Served in the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: United States.



**31. Gailis, Alfrēds** — born on January 3, 1918. Since the beginning of 1940 he had served in the Latvian army, then in the 24<sup>th</sup> territorial infantry corps. He deserted a few days before the Great Patriotic War started. From 1944 till 1945 Served in the 44<sup>th</sup> regiment of the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division, then in the intelligence unit of the same division. He was not taken prisoner, because he took weapons and went to the forest. There participated in the formation of the Forest Brotherhood. He was arrested in 1946 and sent to the camp for 25 years for the committed crimes. Served his term in the Vorkutlag. After he was released, he has been living in Latvia.



**32. Gedušs, Arvīds** — born in 1924. Since 1943 he had served in 33d regiment of the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Latvia.

#### IDENTIFIED SERVICEMEN OF THE LATVIAN SS LEGION



**33. Getners, Žanis** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**34. Grava, Andrejs** — Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: the USA.



**35. Grava, Arturs** — born on July 24, 1924 in Liepāja. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Ohio, United States.



**36. Grundmanis, Gunārs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**37. Gulbergs, Kārlis** — born on September 8, 1923 in Riga. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**38. Gulbis, Kārlis** — born on August 25, 1923. Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: Canada.



**39. Dāboliņš, Vilis** — born on December 23, 1924 in Baldone. Served in the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Canada.



**40. Daugaviņš, Uldi** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**41. Dukurs, Gunārs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**42. Dumpis, Andrejs** — born in 1917. Served in one of the Latvian police battalion, then in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**43. Dumpis, Arnolds** born in 1925. Served in the 15<sup>th</sup> Latvian Waffen-SS division, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: Great Britain.



**44. Zadvinskis, Zigfrīds** — born on January 5, 1924 in Rēzekne. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States. He is an active member of Daugavas Vanagi.



**45. Zariņš, Visturs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**46. Kalniņš, Viesturs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**47. Kalniņš, Vilis** — born on March 8, 1924 in Baryshka. Served in the 19<sup>th</sup> Latvian SS division. Current place of residence: United States.



**48. Kārkliņš, Arturs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia,



**49. Kleinbergs, Viesturs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**50. Kļaviņš, Pēteris** — born on September 26, 1927 in Jaunrava. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia, He is an active member of Daugavas Vanagi.

## IDENTIFIED SERVICEMEN OF THE LATVIAN SS LEGION



**51. Kristovskis, Aleksandrs** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**52. Kronitis, Uldis** born on November 10, 1925 in Riga. Served in the Latvian SS legion, he surrendered to the Western Allies. He left Germany for United States in 1950. Current place of residence: Ohio, United States.



**53. Kurmiņš, Antons** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**54. Krūmiņš, Bruno** — born on July 19, 1924. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**55. Kubels, Brions** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**56. Lapinš, Imants** — born on July 18, 1921 in Riga. Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: Canada.



**57. Laufers, Egits** — date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**58. Lācis, Visvaldis** — born on March 12, 1924. Voluntarily joined the Latvian police battalion in 1941 but was banned from service because his family insisted he was under-aged. Joined the Latvian SS Legion in 1943, served in the 19th Latvian Waffen-SS division, was a platoon com-

mander. Never was arrested after the WWII, received higher education in Moscow in 1965. In 1995, Lacis was awarded the Order of Three Stars, Latvia's highest civil decoration. Was a member of the Latvian Saeima from 2006 to 2011. Authored the book called *Latviesu leģions patiesības gaismā, or Latvian Legion in the Light of Truth*. Its publication and distribution was the legal basis for Russia's Investigative Committee to open a criminal case against Lacis on charges of rehabilitation of Nazism, Article 354.1 of the Russian Criminal Code.



**59. Līdums, Aivars**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**60. Lieljuris, Zigurds**, born Jan 19, 1931 (documented) or 1929 (real) in Elgava. Volunteered the Latvian SS Legion in 1944, conscripted to serve in an auxiliary unit. Transferred to a combat unit in 1945, participated in military action. Misreported his age as he surrendered to the Allied forces. According to his official cover story, he was a medical worker helping the wounded at the Legion's hospital. Enrolled for military service in the U.S. Army in 1951, took part in military action in Korea and Vietnam, an expert in anti-partisan war. Noted for ruthlessness and cruelty, of which he had told a lot to his friends. Was awarded with national American decorations. A U.S. citizen.



**61. Liepiņš, Guntis**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.

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**62. Mazalevskis, Viesturs**, born 1924. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**63. Mediķis, Žanis**, born January 03, 1926. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**64. Millers, Kārlis**, born 1925. Served in the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Canada.



**65. Nagobads, Visvaldis**, born November 18, 1921 in Riga. Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: the U.S.



**66. Ozols, Laimonds**, born 1924. Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: Canada.



**67. Pārups, Jānis**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Argentina.



**68. Pone, Jānis**, born November 22 in the village of Jaunpils. Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. Reportedly, he had been a member of a Latvian police battalion before he joined the Legion. Current place of residence: Michigan, United States.



**69. Puļčs, Vilis**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Brazil.



**70. Puriņš, Bruno**, born supposedly on April 27, 1927, in Riga. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: the U.S.A.



**71. Riņķis, Aivis**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the 19th Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Australia.



**72. Robežnieks, Herberts; Robeznieks Herbert**, born August 20, 1932 in Liepāja. (дату рождения просьба убрать) Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**73. Рудзитс, Рихардс** (Rudzits Rihards), date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**74. Саукантс, Харийс** (Saukants Harijs), born November 28, 1925 in Priekule Served in the Latvian SS legion, deserted in late 1944 and managed to get to the West pretending to be a refugee. Current place of residence: United States.



**75. Skrastiņš, Mareks**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**76. Skreija, Edgars**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the 19th Latvian Waffen-SS Division. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**77. Skrīveris, Imants**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia. An active member of *Daugavas Vanagi*.

#### IDENTIFIED SERVICEMEN OF THE LATVIAN SS LEGION



**78. Smalkais, Edmunds**, born March 05, 1921. Served in the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: Australia.



**79. Smuidriņš, Jānis**, March 23, 1926. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**80. Spīčs, Jānis**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**81. Spuntelis, Valfrīds**, born December 25, 1922 in Liepāja. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States. An active member of *Daugavas Vanagi*.



**82. Stokes, Jānis**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.



**83. Sūniņš, Elmārs**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS division. Current place of residence: United States.



**84. Titovs, Arvids**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**85. Undulis, Rolemāns**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**86. Upenieks, Kazimirs**, February 03, 1923 in Varkava. Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. After Latvia was liberated from the Nazi occupation, he went out in the

woods equipped with a gun to join the so-called Forest Brethren. Was detained by the Soviet state security but later freed. Current place of residence: United States. After Latvia gained independence, he was awarded the Latvian military Order of Viesturs. His brother Wojciech Upenieks, also a former member of the Legion, died in 2015.



**87. Freimanis, Harijs**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS Division. Current place of residence: Latvia.



**88. Cakars, Oļģerts**, born May 09, 1924 in Riga. Served in the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS division starting from 1944. Moved to Sweden after the war and then to the U.S. in 1953. Current place of residence: United States. Was awarded the Cross of Recognition, the Latvian national decoration, in 2010 by President Valdis Zatlers.



**89. Ceriņš, Laimons**, born July 19, 1923 in Valka. Served in the 15th Latvian Waffen-SS division, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: Great Britain.



**90. Cīrulis, Delvers**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Australia.



**91. Škapars, Uldis**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Argentina.



**92. Šūbiņš, Gunārs**, October 25, 1925 in Tervete. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: United States.

#### IDENTIFIED SERVICEMEN OF THE LATVIAN SS LEGION



**93. Ezerģails, Laimonis**, born 1923. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Latvia. Head of the Dobele branch of *Latvijas Nacionālo karavīru biedrība* (or 'national warriors society'), awarded with the Order of Three Stars, the highest Latvian decoration.



**94. Enģelis, Maris**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Great Britain.



**95. Jurģevskis, Ernests**, date and place of birth not established. Served in the Latvian SS legion. Current place of residence: Canada.



**96. Jakobsons, Hermanis**, born September 15, 1924 in Krakow. Served in the Latvian SS legion, which he joined as a volunteer. Current place of residence: Canada, an active member of Daugavas Vanagi.