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*Places of Shame - German and bulgarian
war crimes in greece 1941-1945*



Learning from history Nr. 1

Content

Introduction

German invasion

Greek-Yugoslav counteroffensive

Withdrawal and surrender of the Greek Epirus Army

Battle of Crete

German war crimes in Greece

International court proceedings

**Nuremberg US Military Tribunal: Process
Generals in Southeastern Europe**

Proceedings before Greek courts

Proceedings before German courts

Village	Date	Victims
Perivolia- Misiria	23.05.1941	74
Kondomai	02.06.1941	23
Alikianos	02.06.1941	42
Kandanos	03.06.1941	16
Sternes	03.06.1941	10
Tavronitis	03.07.1941	12
Alikianos	01.08.1941	148
Paleochora	07.09.1941	27
Drama-Doxato	28.09.1941	15.000
Kormista	01.10.1941	91
Kerdylia	18.10.1941	200

Tsaritsani/Larissa	12.03.1943	45
Vounihora	10.04.1943	?
Kefalovryso	10.07.1943	23
Kournovo	06.06.1943	106
Mousiotitsa	25.07.1943	153
Kommeno	14.08.1943	317
Vorizia	27.08.1943	5
Viannos- Massacre		
Pefkos	12.09.1943	5
Ano Viannos	14.09.1943	2
Amiras	14.09.1943	114
Kevalorisi	14.09.1943	36
Vachos	14.09.1943	19
Kato Symi	14.09.1943	28
Kalami	14.09.1943	4
Agios Vasileios	14.09.1943	31
Gdochia	15.09.1943	42
Myrtos	15.09.1943	18
Paramythia	19.09.1943	60
Lingiades	03.10.1943	82
Kallikratis	08.10.1943	29
Monodendri	26.11.1943	118
Mega Spileo	08.12.1943	11
Drakia	13.12.1943	116
Kalavryta	13.12.1943	674
Larissa	1943/1945	1.210
Kalamata	02.02.1944	800
Kalogreza - Athen	15.03.1944	22

Klissoura	05.04.1944	277
Pyrgoi	24.04.1944	368
Kamares	04.05.1944	28
Vathy	16.05.1944	110
Argolis	23.05.1944	86
Agii Anargyri	05.06.1944	27
Pavlos Melas	06.06.1944	101
Distomo	10.06.1944	218
Ypati	17.06.1944	44
Marathoussa	19.06.1944	26
Asvestochori	26.07.1944	19
Eleftherochori	05.08.1944	150
Anogia	13.08.1944	25
Sokaras	17.08.1944	27
Kokkinia - Athen	17.08.1944	100
Sarchos	18.08.1944	36
Damasta	21.08.1944	30
Kria Vrissi	22.08.1944	35
Amari-Masscre		
Ano Meros	22.09.1944	38
Vrysses	22.09.1944	30
Gerakari	22.09.1944	30
Kallithea - Athen	28.08.1944	21
Kakopetros	28.08.1944	23
Malathyros	28.08.1944	61
Chortiatis	02.09.1944	149
Giannitsa	14.09.1944	75
Egaleo - Athen	29.09.1944	137
Other Places by timeline		

Introduction

German invasion

At dawn on 6 April, the German armies invaded Greece, while the Luftwaffe began an intensive bombardment of Belgrade. The XL Panzer Corps—planned to attack across southern Yugoslavia[clarification needed]—began their assault at 05:30. They pushed across the Bulgarian frontier at two separate points. By the evening of 8 April, the 73rd Infantry Division captured Prilep, severing an important rail line between Belgrade and Thessaloniki and isolating Yugoslavia from its allies. On the evening of 9 April, Stumme deployed his forces north of Monastir, in preparation for attack toward Florina. This position threatened to encircle the Greeks in Albania and W Force in the area of Florina, Edessa and Katerini. While weak security detachments covered his rear against a surprise attack from central Yugoslavia, elements of the 9th Panzer Division drove westward to link up with the Italians at the Albanian border.

The 2nd Panzer Division (XVIII Mountain Corps) entered Yugoslavia from the east on the morning of 6 April and advanced westward through the Struma Valley. It encountered little resistance, but was delayed by road clearance demolitions, mines and mud. Nevertheless, the division was able to reach the day's objective, the town of Strumica. On 7 April, a Yugoslav counter-attack against the division's northern flank was repelled, and the following day, the division forced its way across the mountains and overran the thinly manned defensive line of the Greek 19th

Mechanized Division south of Doiran Lake. Despite many delays along the mountain roads, an armoured advance guard dispatched toward Thessaloniki succeeded in entering the city by the morning of 9 April. Thessaloniki was taken after a long battle with three Greek divisions under the command of General Bakopoulos, and was followed by the surrender of the Greek Eastern Macedonia Army Section, taking effect at 13:00 on 10 April. In the three days it took the Germans to reach Thessaloniki and breach the Metaxas Line, some 60,000 Greek soldiers were taken prisoner. The British and Commonwealth forces then took over the defence of Greece, with the bulk of the Greek Army fighting to maintain their old positions in Albania.

Greek-Yugoslav counteroffensive

In early April 1941, Greek, Yugoslav and British commanders met to set in motion a counteroffensive, that planned to completely destroy the Italian army in Albania in time to counter the German invasion[83] and allow the bulk of the Greek army to take up new positions and protect the border with Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. On 7 April, the Yugoslav 3rd Army in the form of five infantry divisions (13th "Hercegovacka", 15th "Zetska", 25th "Vardarska", 31st "Kosovska" and 12th "Jadranska" Divisions, with the "Jadranska" acting as the reserve), after a false start due to the planting of a bogus order, launched a counteroffensive in northern Albania, advancing from Debar, Prisen and Podgorica towards Elbasan. On 8 April, the Yugoslav vanguard, the "Kovski" Cavalry Regiment crossed the treacherous Prokletije Mountains and captured the village of Koljencava in the Valjbone River Valley, and the 31st "Kosovska" Division, supported by Savoia-Marchetti S.79K bombers from the 7th Bomber Regiment of the Royal Yugoslav Air Force (VVKJ), broke through the Italian positions

in the Drin River Valley. The "Vardarska" Division, due to the fall of Skopje was forced to halt its operations in Albania. In the meantime, the Western Macedonia Army Section under General Tsolakoglou, comprising the 9th and 13th Greek Divisions, advanced in support of the Royal Yugoslav Army, capturing some 250 Italians on 8 April. The Greeks were tasked with advancing towards Durrës. On 9 April, the Zetska Division advanced towards Shkodër and the Yugoslav cavalry regiment reached the Drin River, but the Kosovska Division had to halt its advance due to the appearance of German units near Prizren. The Yugoslav-Greek offensive was supported by S.79K bombers from the 66th and 81st Bomber Groups of the VVKJ, that attacked airfields and camps around Shkodër, as well as the port of Durrës, and Italian troop concentrations and bridges on the Drin and Buene rivers and Durrës, Tirana and Zara.

Between 11-13 April 1941, with German and Italian troops advancing on its rear areas, the Zetska Division was forced to retreat back to the Pronisat River by the Italian 131st Armoured Division Centauro, where it remained until the end of the campaign on 16 April. The Italian armoured division along with the 18th Infantry Division Messina then advanced upon the Yugoslav fleet base of Kotor in Montenegro, also occupying Cetinje and Podgorica. The Yugoslavs lost 30,000 men captured in the Italian counterattacks.

Withdrawal and surrender of the Greek Epirus Army

As the invading Germans advanced deep into Greek territory, the Epirus Army Section of the Greek army operating in Albania was reluctant to retreat. However, by the middle of March, especially after the Tepelene offensive,

the Greek army had suffered, according to British estimates, 5,000 casualties. The Italian offensive revealed a "chronic shortage of arms and equipment." The Greeks were fast approaching the end of their logistical tether.

General Wilson described this unwillingness to retreat as "the fetishistic doctrine that not a yard of ground should be yielded to the Italians." [*disputed - discuss*] Churchill also criticized the Greek Army commanders for ignoring British advice to abandon Albania and avoid encirclement. Lieutenant-General George Stumme's Fortieth Corps captured the Florina-Vevi Pass on 11 April, but unseasonal snowy weather then halted his advance. On 12 April, he resumed the advance, but spent the whole day fighting Brigadier Charrington's 1st Armoured Brigade at Proastion. It was not until 13 April that the first Greek elements began to withdraw toward the Pindus mountains. The Allies' retreat to Thermopylae uncovered a route across the Pindus mountains by which the Germans might flank the Hellenic army in a rearguard action. An elite SS formation—the *Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler* brigade—was assigned the mission of cutting off the Greek Epirus Army's line of retreat from Albania by driving westward to the Metsovon pass and from there to Ioannina. On 13 April, attack aircraft from 21, 23 and 33 Squadrons from the Hellenic Air Force (RHAF), attacked Italian positions in Albania. That same day, heavy fighting took place at Kleisoura pass, where the Greek 20th Division covering the Greek withdrawal, fought in a determined manner, delaying Stumme's advance practically a whole day. The withdrawal extended across the entire Albanian front, with the Italians in hesitant pursuit. On 15 April, Regia Aeronautica fighters attacked the (RHAF) base at Paramythia, 30 miles south of Greece's border with Albania, destroying or putting out of action 17 VVKJ aircraft that had recently arrived from Yugoslavia.

General Papagos rushed Greek units to the Metsovon pass where the Germans were expected to attack. On 14 April a pitched battle between several Greek units and the LSSAH brigade—which had by then reached Grevena—erupted. The Greek 13th and Cavalry Divisions lacked the equipment necessary to fight against an armoured unit but nevertheless fought on till the next day, when the defenders were finally encircled and overwhelmed. On 18 April, General Wilson in a meeting with Papagos, informed him that the British and Commonwealth forces at Thermopylai would carry on fighting till the first week of May, providing that Greek forces from Albania could redeploy and cover the left flank. On 21 April, the Germans advanced further and captured Ioannina, the final supply route of the Greek Epirus Army. Allied newspapers dubbed the Hellenic army's fate a modern-day Greek tragedy. Historian and former war-correspondent Christopher Buckley—when describing the fate of the Hellenic army—stated that "one experience[d] a genuine Aristotelian catharsis, an awe-inspiring sense of the futility of all human effort and all human courage."

On 20 April, the commander of Greek forces in Albania—General Georgios Tsolakoglou—accepted the hopelessness of the situation and offered to surrender his army, which then consisted of fourteen divisions. Generals Ioannis Pitsikas and Georgios Bakos had already warned General Papagos on 14 April that morale in the Epirus Army was wearing thin, and regrettably combat stress and exhaustion had resulted in officers taking the decision to put deserters before firing squads. Nevertheless, Papagos condemned Tsolakoglou for his decision to not continue fighting. General Blamey also criticized at the time, Tsolakoglou's decision to surrender without permission from General Papagos. Historian John Keegan writes that Tsolakoglou "was so determined... to deny the Italians the satisfaction of a victory they had not earned that... he opened [a] quite

unauthorised parley with the commander of the German SS division opposite him, Sepp Dietrich, to arrange a surrender to the Germans alone." On strict orders from Hitler, negotiations were kept secret from the Italians and the surrender was accepted. Outraged by this decision, Mussolini ordered counter-attacks against the Greek forces, which were repulsed, but at some cost to the defenders. The Germans Air Force intervened in the renewed fighting, and Ioannina was practically destroyed by Stukas. It took a personal representation from Mussolini to Hitler to organize Italian participation in the armistice that was concluded on 23 April. Greek soldiers were not rounded up as prisoners of war and were allowed instead to go home after the demobilisation of their units, while their officers were permitted to retain their side arms.

Battle of Crete

On 25 April 1941, King George II and his government left the Greek mainland for Crete, which was attacked by Nazi forces on 20 May 1941. The Germans employed parachute forces in a massive airborne invasion and attacked the three main airfields of the island in Maleme, Rethymno and Heraklion. After seven days of fighting and tough resistance, Allied commanders decided that the cause was hopeless and ordered a withdrawal from Sfakia. During the night of 24 May, George II and his government were evacuated from Crete to Egypt. By 1 June 1941, the evacuation was complete and the island was under German occupation. In light of the heavy casualties suffered by the elite 7th *Fliiegerdivision*, Hitler forbade further large-scale airborne operations. General Kurt Student would dub Crete "the graveyard of the German paratroopers" and a "disastrous victory."

(Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Greece)

German war crimes in Greece

During the occupation of Greece between April 1941 and September 1944 (in the area of the "Fortress Crete" also beyond) have members of the German Wehrmacht and the SS committed a variety of war and occupation crimes, which fell thousands upon thousands of women, men and children

In the Second World War, the German Wehrmacht also violated basic norms of the Hague Convention on Land Warfare and the so-called international law of war not only in innumerable individual cases, but in principle by granting, passing on and following criminal orders. Only examples of war crimes, most of them with incredible cruelty, are: Distomo, Kalavryta, Giannitsa, Viannos, Kondomari, Aliciano, Anogia, Cephalonia, Chortiatis, Kommeno, Klissoura, Mousiotitsas, Paramythia, and Lingiades. 60,000 Jews were deported and killed in German extermination camps (see: Jewish persecution in Greece).

International court proceedings

After 1945, apart from the Nuremberg trial before the International Military Tribunal (1945-46), on the basis of Law No. 10 of the Allied Control Council (KRG) of December 20, 1945, a series of trials took place before Allied military courts, those of the Wehrmacht and the SS were convicted:

Nuremberg US Military Tribunal: Process Generals in Southeastern Europe

In the seventh of a total of 12 successor trials of the Nuremberg Trials (The United States of America vs. William List, et al., Also: Case 7, Geiselmord Trial and Process Generals in Southeastern Europe) had run from 8 July 1947 to 19 February In 1948, before the American military tribunal V, general field marshals and generals of the Wehrmacht were responsible for war crimes committed in the occupied countries of Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece. Seven of the twelve defendants had to answer for their actions during the occupation of Greece. Four of them were convicted for excessive war crimes:

1. Wilhelm List: Field Marshal, Commander-in-Chief of the 12th Army Command (Commander of German Invasion Troops) and Wehrmacht Commander Southeast, judgment: life-long;
2. Hellmuth Felmy: General of the Airmen, commander of South Greece from June 1941 to September 1942, then commander of the LXVIII. Army Corps in the Peloponnese, verdict: 15 years imprisonment;
3. Wilhelm Speidel: General of the Airmen, since September 1942 Commander South Greece, then from 8 September 1943 Military Commander Greece and thus the highest representative of the German occupation administration, judgment: 20 years imprisonment;
4. Hubert Lanz: General of the Mountain Forces, Commander of the XXII. Mountain Army Corps in Epirus, verdict: 12 years. The emerging Cold War and a broad circle of supporters from the ranks of West German politics, the judiciary, the public and the clergy for the convicted war criminals justified the amnesty, which the American High Commissioner John McCloy issued on January 31, 1951 for imprisoned convicts of the Nuremberg war crimes trials. As the last of the men listed here, Wihelm List was released in October 1952 from the Landsberg war criminal prison.

Proceedings before Greek courts

On the basis of the evidence collection and documentation of crimes carried out by the National Hellénique of Criminels de Guerre (ON-HCG), in Greece, until the end of the 1940s against 17 delivered or locally arrested German indictment (tabular list in Fleischer 2006, p. 534/535), of which, however, only four German war criminals were sentenced to significant penalties:

1. Alexander Andrae: General, commander of the "Fortress of Crete" from June 9, 1941 to August 30, 1942, was sentenced to four times life imprisonment and ten years additional sentence;
2. Bruno Bräuer: General, commander of the "Fortress Crete" from September 1, 1942 to June 30, 1944, was sentenced to death and executed on May 20, 1947;
3. Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller: General, commander of the 22nd Infantry Division stationed in Crete from 1 August 1942 to 15 March 1944, then commander of the "Crete Fortress" from 1 July 1944 to 22 September 1944 as Bräuer sentenced to death and executed on May 20, 1947;
4. Fritz Schubert: Oberfeldwebel, chief of the killer band collaborating with the Wehrmacht "Jagdkommando Schubert", was sentenced to death and executed on 22 October.

When in 1950 consular relations between Germany and Greece were recorded, apart from Andrae, only the former SS-Obersturmführer Heinz Zabel, who had just been delivered by France (where there were still more than 100 alleged German war criminals at that time), was imprisoned the involvement in the massacre of Distomo was charged.

The release of condemned war criminal Andrae, etc. Federal Chancellor Adenauer, Federal President Heuss and Bishop Otto Dibelius. The Federal Government "also increased the pressure on the Greek government, which was existentially dependent on its main export product tobacco on the market of the former main customer Germany to regain ground" (Nessou, p. 415). Andrae was pardoned on 15 December 1951.

Thereafter, the German urge for an amnesty of all "war accused" was intensified. In addition to Zabel, who was now only in Greece, these were all those men who were wanted on the war criminal lists of the Office National Hellénique of the Criminels de Guerre and some of whom held high posts in Bonn. Although Zabel was transferred to Germany in the course of the lengthy negotiations in 1953 (while at the same time the most prominent living Greek resistance fighter, Manolis Glezos, was imprisoned), a general settlement had not yet been found. The offer of Greece to close the cases, if in return the Federal Republic would undertake to pursue their prosecution in Germany, stood still in the area, when the former war administrative council Dr. med. Max Merten, who was instrumental in the deprivation, deprivation and deportation of 45,000 Jews from Thessaloniki, was arrested in Greece in 1957. In connection with the resolution of the case Merten - he was deported to Germany on 5 November 1959 - Greece drew a legislative line under the persecution of German war criminals and left their prosecution the country of the perpetrators ..

Proceedings before German courts

In only one case - already in 1951 - investigations against Germans directly involved in the war and occupation crimes

in Greece led to the opening of a main trial: it ended in 1951 with an acquittal before the jury court of the regional court of Augsburg. The execution of 6 civilians from Mariana near Chania on November 13, 1944 - one day after their capture (sic!) - accused the defendant Captain Richard Sand, commander of the 1st Battalion / Grenadier Regiment of Crete, of the judgment as "international self-defense "at least, however, from the point of view of international law emergency", if "suspicious persons who were in the run-up to the German main line and were not immediately recognized as harmless, were shot without orders by order of officers" (from the judgment, quoted after Rüter , P. 666).

On the basis of the procedures transferred from Greece to Germany between 1952 and 1956 against approximately 800 accused persons, more than 200 preliminary investigations were initiated, mainly in the 1960s; but all of them were discontinued, some with similarly hair-raising reasons.

(Source: <http://www.gedenkorte-europa.eu>)

Places of Shame

Perivolia - Misiria - 23. May 1941

The executions at Misiria are probably the earliest, perhaps the first, acts of reprisals against civilians in Greece during WWII. On 23 & 24 May 1941 some 60 people were executed at the beach in Misiria, a small settlement at the eastern outskirts of Rethimno town.

The German forces that landed in Rethimno area realized immediately that they were facing armed opposition not only from regular troops, but from civilians as well.

At Perivolia in Rethimnon, their reaction to the fact was the capture, on the 21 of May, of a large number of civilians as hostages (some 140). The captives were held in two buildings, the Dulumpeki Café and the Ioannis Melissurgos residence.

On the afternoon of 23d May, after some more episodes of paratroopers being killed by insurgents, the Germans summoned 36 men at the beach in Missiria and executed them (4 of them fled 3 survived). Another party of 32 captives (including women) faced execution in the same area at the same time, but most of them (apart seven) were saved when an Australian artillery unit started shelling the beach.

On the next morning, of May the 24th, some 17 older men were picked up from the Dulumpeki Café and were executed at the same area. Their bodies were incinerated at the spot after they were soaked in gasoline.

The dead from the previous day were dumped in a nearby well, which was filled to the top. The execution area became a place of commemoration as early as 1943. The memorial that stands now in the execution area was built in the late 70s. The marble relief in its center was situated originally on the allied cemetery that once stood close by.

The Douloumpeki Building



German Paratroopers captured some 50 civilians and imprisoned them in here in 20 May 1941. They were executed among other captives on 23d and 24th in the nearby seashore, in one of the earliest acts of reprisals against civilians in Greece.

The building

It is known by the name of its owner which was Theodoros Douloumpekis. In 1941 this building (probably one store only) was used as a cafe shop and was among the few houses astride the "National" road in Misiria.

When German Paratroopers fell and occupied this area in 20th May 1941 they used this building among several others in the area as a defensive stronghold.

The Execution at Misiria

The actual cause of the imprisonment it is not known but it seems that the Germans were outraged by the fact that civilian population was facing them and inflicting many casualties. Finding themselves under unfavorable circumstances they probably considered safe to take some prisoners as a precaution.

When the next day they discovered that one of their comrades that was sent to bring water was found slaughtered (probably by civilians since no tactical units were present nearby this area) they unleashed their wrath on the prisoners.

The captives were marched down the road 20 meters W to the seashore. They were put in a line and were fired by a squad of some 10 men. During the execution, Australian artillery guns that were situated in hill A some 4 km to E opened fire to the Germans, causing a disorder. Four men from the convicted found the opportunity to escape, one of them died from wounds.

The church of Ayios Georgios was one of the epicenters of the battle at Perivolia in May 1941. A number of Paratroopers found shelter in the church and fought for ten days a hard battle of survival, surrounded by insurgents as well as Greek and Australian forces.

A large group of German paratroopers were dropped at the low hills south of Perivolia. After an original attempt to press toward Rethimnon town they faced great resistance and were forced to retreat.

The group took cover in the Perivolia settlement creating a pocket of resistance, turning its buildings, among them Ayios Georgios, into strong holds. The Australian troops, aided by elements of Greek armed units and Cretan insurgents, attacked the Perivolia pocket from almost all directions several times.

They German forces were able to hold positions at Perivolia, in a bitter 10 days battle. At the 30th of May they were relieved by troops of the 5th division advancing from the Chania area.

The walls of the church have been plastered after the war, so numerous bullet holes are today not visible on the church. Nevertheless the ferocity of the fighting is still evident on the marble parts of the building, which still carry the marks of that conflict.

(Source: <http://remnants.gr>)