

Détails sur l'Opération Wald Fest (*Aktion Wald Fest*)

Les données qui suivent sont des extraits copiés du rapport d'enquête réalisé entre fin 1944 et le début de l'été 1945 par le major Barkworth du 2ème SAS

Cette enquête, « Missing Parachutists », a eu 2 objets :

- D'abord retrouver la trace des 39 parachutistes anglais de l'Opération Loyton exécutés par les hommes des Einsatz Kommandos
- Ensuite faire juger ces derniers pour les crimes de guerre qu'ils avaient ordonnés ou exécutés ici, à leur encontre et à l'encontre des habitants d'ici. Ce qui fut fait (*en partie seulement*) lors du procès de Nüremberg et lors du procès mené à Wupperthal du 6 au 10 mai 1946 par la British Military Court

Merci à ces anciens de l'Opération Loyton qui m'ont confié ces précieux documents

2ND SPECIAL AIR SERVICE REGT.



MISSING
PARACHUTISTS

To The Commanding Officer,
2nd Special Air Service Regiment.

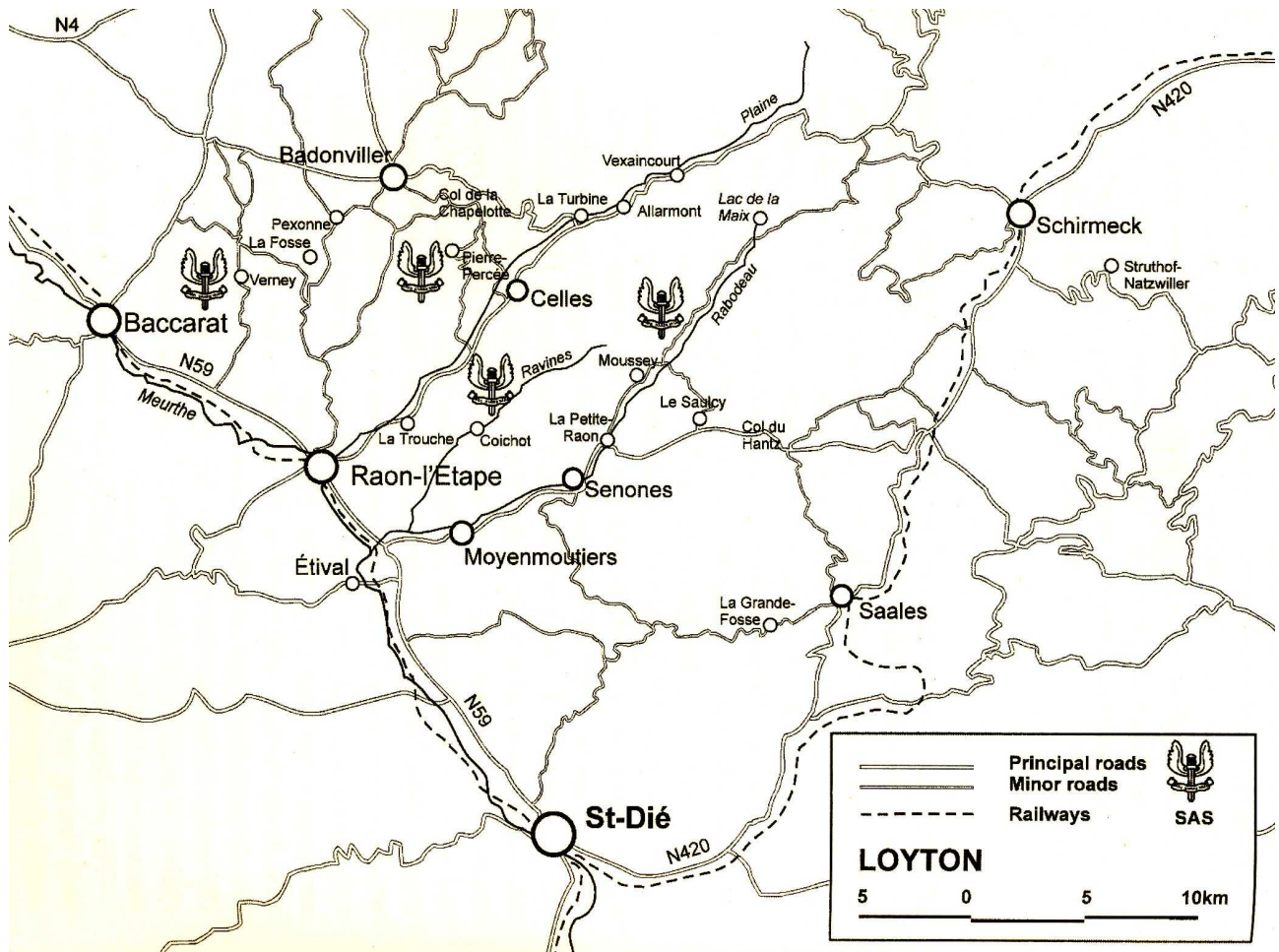
In accordance with your instructions dated 15th May 1945,
a report is appended on the murder of personnel of this
regiment taken prisoner in Eastern France during the months
of August, September and October 1944.

COPY N°58

"But in these cases
We still have judgement here, that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor"

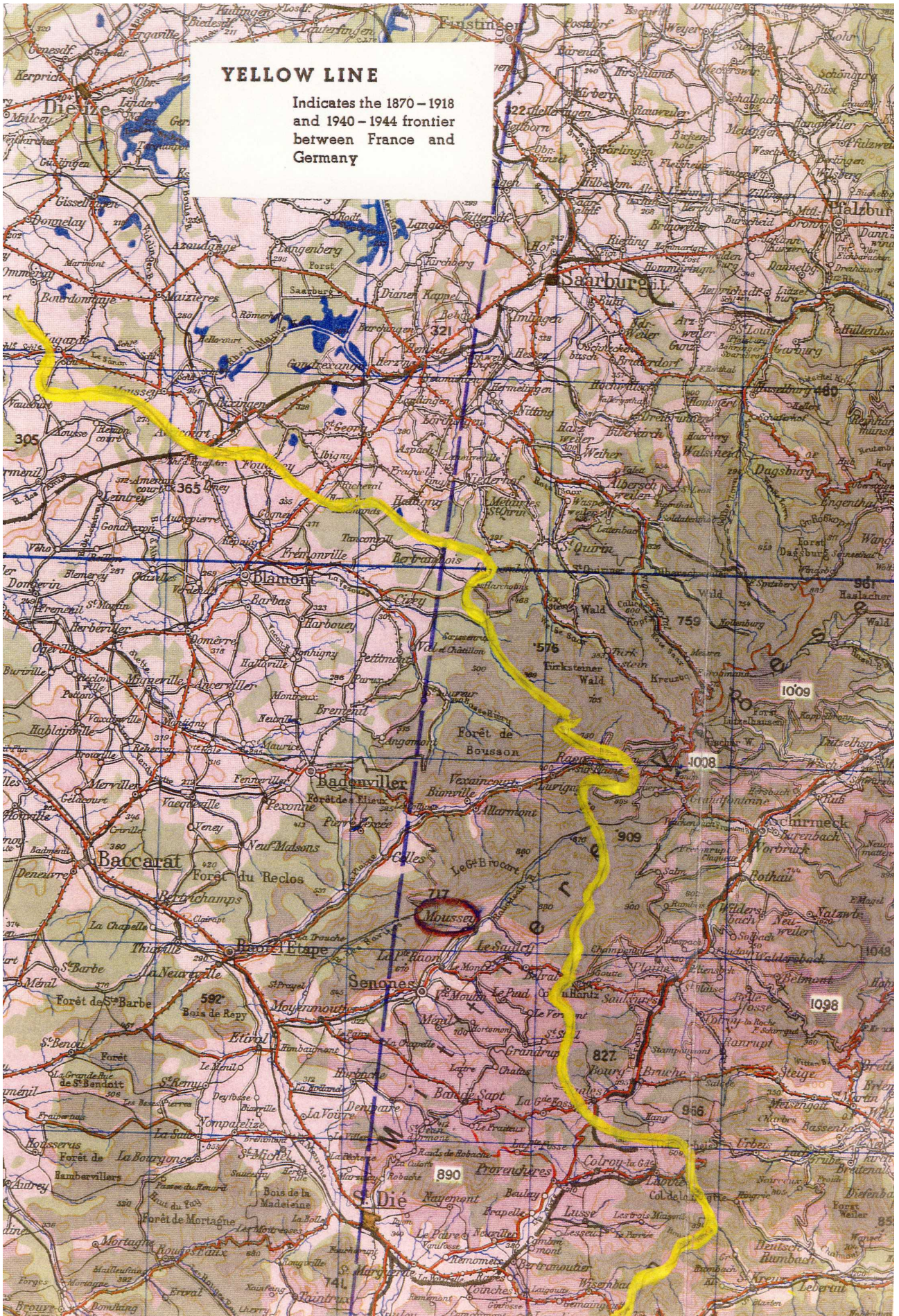
Macbeth Act I Scene VII.

Localisation de l'Opération Wald Fest : sur le territoire même de l'Opération Loyton



YELLOW LINE

Indicates the 1870 - 1918
and 1940 - 1944 frontier
between France and
Germany



I. General Conditions in the Vosges area during the Summer of 1944

The map opposite shows the position of the political frontier between France and Germany of 1870 — 1918 and 1940 — 1944 from the Swiss frontier following the ridge of the Vosges mountains northwards, and curving thence in a northwesterly direction to join the frontier of Luxemburg.

So far as Alsace is concerned, the majority of the population speak better German than French, and temperamentally they approximate more to the inhabitants of Baden than to the French.

This difference in population and language, although the majority of Alsations now claim to feel themselves as French, had far reaching effects when it came to the formation of a resistance movement against the German invaders. Open resistance flourished to the West of the crest of the Vosges, but to the East it was virtually non-existent. The proximity too, of so teutonic an area of France, increased the incidence of denunciations and collaborators in the adjoining area to the West. In this western area no Maquis groups were formed until the summer of 1944. In July of that year however, the first Maquis encampments were set up at isolated points in the wooded mountains. Under instructions from their headquarters they were intended to concentrate on the process of organisation and consolidation, but unfortunately the premature and abortive action taken by a few hotheads provoked German reactions, and led to the introduction of various Gestapo and S.D. units, whose task it was to negative such activity in the area.

The French civil population of the valleys running westwards from the ridge of the Vosges gave very considerable help both the Maquis and parachutists in the area, for which they payed very dearly. Practically the entire male population of Moussey, for example, was arrested during the autumn of 1944, and only a small fraction lived to return after the war

Action Wald Fest

At the beginning of August 1944, the B.D.S. Alsace, Dr. Isselhorst was away in Berlin. The report of Maquis and parachutist activity was accordingly passed to Isselhorst's office, and was dealt with in his absence by his deputy Ostubaf. Wilhelm Schneider, and the B.D.S.'s adjutant Hstuf. Ernst Meier.

According to Isselhorst, these two men were delighted at the opportunity of escaping from the routine of office life.

Ostubaf. Schneider set up his tactical H.Q. in Schirmeck camp on the 15th August, and took over as an office the bureau of the police lieutenant of that camp, Oberleutnant Nussberger.

Schneider's staff consisted of:

Hstuf. GEHRUM Julius
Ostuf. SCHLUDE
Stuscha. STASSIK
Stuscha. BRONNER
Stuscha. ORTSTADT Hans
Hscha. FISCHER Karl
Schar. PFENNIG (interpreter)

It should be noticed that although based on Schirmeck the members of this H.Q. travelled to the various sub-units, and the fact that witnesses may have seen them at one or the other Einsatz group should not be taken as indication of membership of that particular unit.

Ostubaf. Wilhelm Schneider

was the deputy for Staf. Isselhorst. A former sea captain who had served in the North German Lloyd; he was pompous, ineffective, and fond of drink. Isselhorst referred to him as "a drunken old trottlet" and it was presumably because of this that Isselhorst refused him the official appointment to the position of deputy, although in fact he performed the duties of that office.

Schneider's great friend and adviser was Kriminalrat Uhring, on whose advice he is said to have relied for the majority of his decisions, and who was later also involved in the interrogation of English parachutist prisoners. Uhring worked under Freyse the head of Amt VI which was directly responsible to the R.S.H.A.

Hstuf. Gehrum Julius

Hstuf. Julius Gehrum was employed in referat IV/3 controlling the frontier and Abwehr. Still fonder of drink than Schneider, he is said to have been an extremely ruthless character and is certainly involved in the murder of S.A.S parachutists (see statement by Schmidt).

Stuscha. Stassik

Stuscha. Ortstadt Hans

Stuscha. Bronner

These three worked together, with Pfennig as the interpreter for French interrogations. Stassik admits the death of a Frenchman (Pfister) as a result of beating during a "Verschärfte Vernehmung" at Schirmeck camp.

Hscha. Fischer Karl

This interesting character had been attached to the German Embassy in Madrid, and had worked for "N" in Tangier during the war. He speaks Spanish and English. He frequently visited Kommando Schöner (see below).

The sub-groups under command of this H.Q. at Schirmeck were spread out, based on villages in the two valleys North and South of the wooded area where the Maquis was suspected to be; that is, in the Plaine valley running northeast from Raon l'Etape to the Donon, and the Rabodeau valley running parallel to the South of it. It should be noted that detachments under the command of B.D.S. Alsace were operating West of the 1940 frontier and were therefore in the area of B.D.S. France. The latter however was in no position to undertake adequate action owing to the disorganisation of his units caused by the retreat. These anti-parachutist and anti-maquis detachments consisted of (a) Einsatz-Kommandos of Sicherheits-Polizei and S.D. (b) Schutzpolizei (c) Wehrmacht. For dispositions on the 16th August 1944 see plan I page 16.

A. Einsatz Kommandos

(I) Kommando Schöner

This unit had a total strength of approximately 30, and was at Chateau Belval from 16. 8. 44 until 28. 8. 44. Members of this group identified are: — Hstuf. Erwin Schöner, Oscha. Hermann Walde, Uscha. Peter Hugo Liedloff, Uscha. Rénatus Mutterer and a number of reinforcements from the Karlsruhe Gestapo to make up to the total. Schöner himself had lived in America for 6 years, where he had worked in New York. He was said to have been a very timid character. This Kommando was responsible for the capture of 3 parachutists from the S.A.S. group — Sjt. Seymour and Pct. Hall on the 17th August, Sjt. Davis on the 20th August and possibly for the murder of a fourth Sjt. Lodge on the 19th of August.

(II) Kommando Hilker — Raon sur Plaine/Vexaincourt

Hilker with 7 men and a Schutzpolizei reinforcement of about 25 men was first at Raon sur Plaine from 16th to 25th August 1944, and moved to Vexaincourt. In this group was until the end of the month a Müller, said to be from Metz, and Peter Eisenberger of Stuttgart an interpreter.

(III) Kommando Görlich — Allarmont

This unit was also reinforced by a troop of Schutzpolizei.

B. Schutzpolizei

Major Fechner commanded a group on the Donon. Detachments were lent to the smaller Einsatz Kommandos of the Gestapo, (see A above), and another group under command of Major Ewald was in the Saales area.

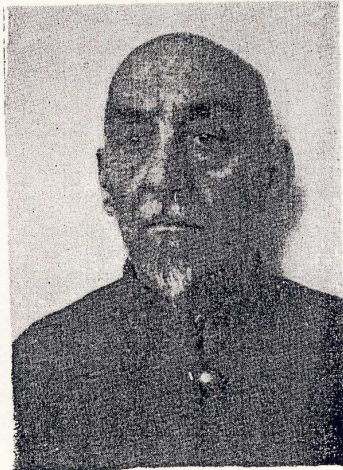
C. Wehrmacht

General Vaterrodt, the military commander of Strassburg, despatched a bicycle infantry unit to the Vosges area from the Manteuffel Kaserne and Wehrmacht troops were seen at Allarmont and at Belval. General von Kirschbach commanding the Wehrmacht in the area, had his H.Q. at the Arbre Vert in Allarmont.

The sweeping of the high ground West of the Donon began on the 11th of August and continued until the area was cleared.

The result of this repressive action was the complete disorganisation within a fortnight of open Maquis activity in the area, from which it was never to recover.

The Triumvirate of Action Waldfest



SCHNEIDER



GEHRUM



UHRING

II- Les BDS (Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei ou Commandements des Polices de Sécurité) :

(a) B.D.S. Alsace

The 1940 frontier between Alsace and the rest of France was also the dividing line between the spheres of the B.D.S. France and the B.D.S. Alsace. B.D.S. (Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei und des S.D.) Alsace, Standartenführer Dr. Erich Isselhorst, who had taken up his duties in Strassburg in January 1944 was still in August 1944 B.D.S. for Alsace, but I.D.S. (Inspektor der Sicherheitspolizei und des S.D.) for Baden and Wuerttemberg. There was, in effect, no material difference between the status of these two appointments, except that the Gauleiter of Wuerttemberg was able to pass orders direct to the subordinates of the I.D.S., whilst in Alsace and Baden Gauleiter Wagner passed his orders through the B.D.S.

In October 1944, Dr. Isselhorst became B.D.S. South West; a position which included B.D.S. Alsace and I.D.S. Baden and Wuerttemberg.

Dr. Isselhorst was a lawyer who joined the Gestapo in 1935, and after a career which took him to Munich and to Russia, where he had experience in dealing with Russian partisans, was posted to Strassburg. He is intelligent, but gives the impression of weak character and inefficiency.

Dr. Isselhorst had no officially recognised deputy, but Ostubaf. Schneider of his Personal H.Q., who was responsible for Amt IV and V, took over in Isselhorst's absence.

The personal referent, or A.D.C. to Isselhorst was Hstuf. Ernst Meier. The normal establishment of headquarters of the B.D.S. which was situated at 10 Rue d'Alsace, Strassburg, was as follows:

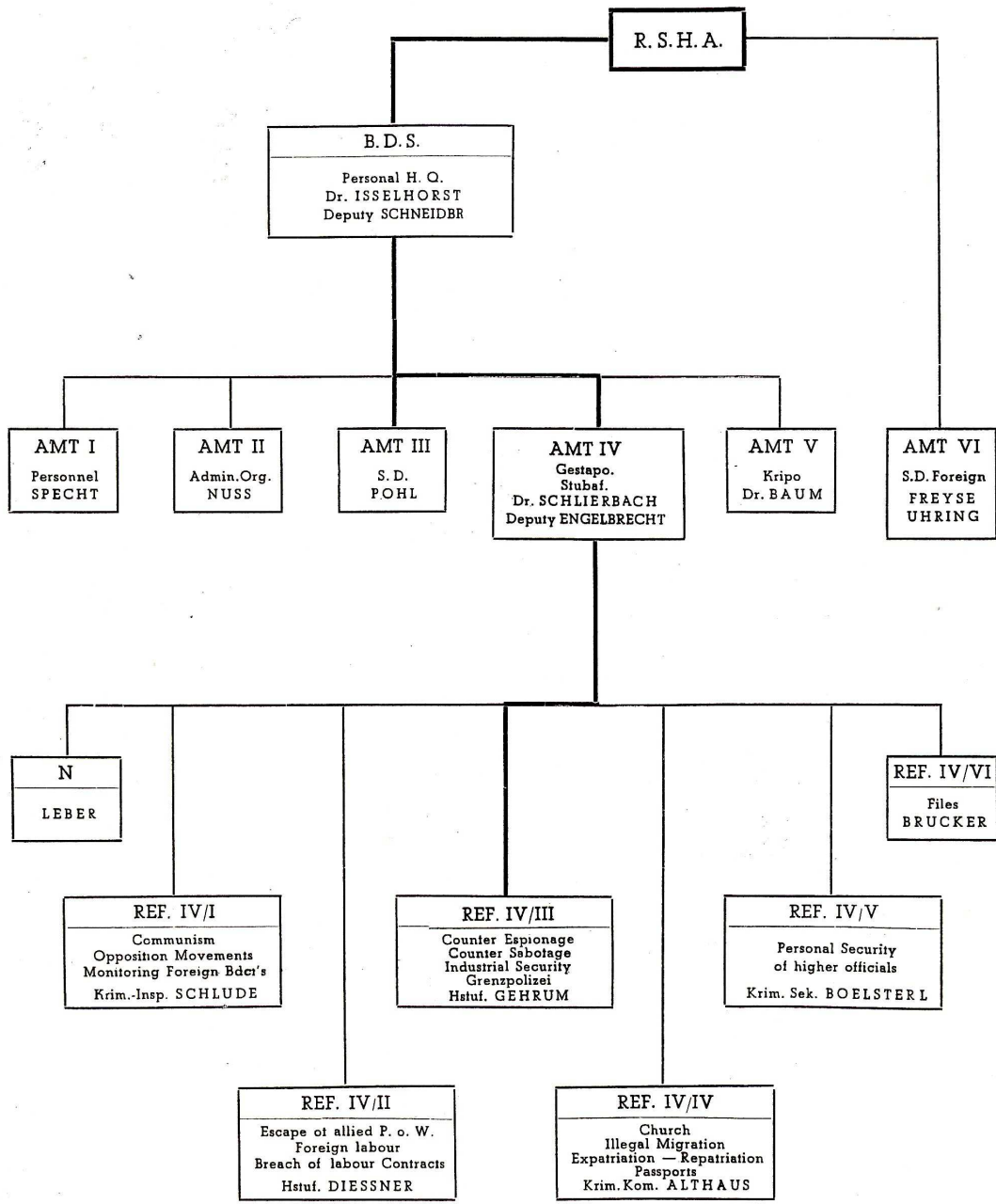
Composition during period August/November 1944.

Staf.	Dr. ISSELHORST Erich	Commander
Ostubaf.	SCHNEIDER Wilhelm	Deputy Commander (responsible for Amt IV and V)
Hstuf.	MEIER Ernst	Personal referant to Isselhorst
Hstuf.	NUSS	Administration
Hstuf.	SPECHT	Personnel
Ustuf.	LAUBIS	Signals Officer
Hscha.	NOTHLICH	Signals N.C.O.
Stuscha.	SOHLER	Administration
Hscha.	RIEGERT	Official mail clerk
Uscha.	HEYDT	Isselhorst's driver
Uscha.	HEIM	Reserve driver
Uscha.	SIEDL	Concierge
Frau	ZOLLNER	Isselhorst's personal secretary
Fräulein	ASMUS	} Typists
Fräulein	THALHEIMER	
Frau	BÄCHLER	} Telephonists
Frau	WALTHER	

The organisation under the B.D.S. at Strassburg in the autumn of 1944 is best illustrated by the attached table.

It is noteworthy that Amt VI directed by Freyse was immediately responsible to the R.S.H.A. Berlin.

Uhring was the real power in this referat, and he became involved in the action against the S.A.S. parachutists, first because his area was across the 1940 frontier in France, and he was able to supply information; secondly because of his close liaison and personal friendship with Schneider, and thirdly because he was commissioned by Amt VI R.S.H.A. to interrogate S.A.S. parachutists concerning equipment on behalf of Skorzeny.



Some personnel of Sicherheitspolizei Strassburg



STUTZLE



MINCK



NUSS



ALTHAUS



LEBER



SCHILPP



BRUCKER



WAHL



UTZ

(b) B.D.S. France

In the summer of 1944 Obergruppenführer Oberg was Höherer SS- und Polizei-Führer in France. Under him as B.D.S. France was Standartenführer Dr. Knochen.

During the period after the landing in Italy but before the evacuation of Paris, a secret order was disseminated by B.D.S. France to the effect that all parachutists captured behind the lines were to be shot within 48 hours (see evidence of von Krogh).

About the 15th of August 1944 the H.Q. of B.D.S. France was withdrawn to Nancy where it remained until about the 15th of September.

During the time in Nancy, Knochen was replaced as B.D.S. France by Stossberg, whose reign lasted only for a few days. Knochen is said to have been sent as a private soldier to a Strafbataillon for cowardice in making a premature withdrawal from Paris. On the 15th of September when the H.Q. of B.D.S. France left for Fraize, Ostubaf. Suhr who had previously served at Toulouse, replaced Stossberg.

Composition of H.Q. B.D.S. France while at Fraize was, so far as is known,

Ostubaf.	SUHR	B.D.S.
Hstuf.	VOGT	Amt I
Ostubaf.	Dr. STINDT	Amt IV
Hstuf.	GUTEKUNST	Amt VI
Stubaf.	KOLB	Untersuchungsführer
Hscha.	GRIEM	Adjutant to Suhr
Ostuf.	BREUN	Nachrichtenführer
Oscha.	GALOW Bernhard	} Signallers
Oscha.	EXNER Martin	
Fräulein	GRIMM Käthe	} Female signals clerks
Fräulein	HONRATH Gretl	
Fräulein	WEILGUNI Louise	
Fräulein	PAVLOVSKI Helga	
Fräulein	LAGLER	Typist

The S.D. Kommandos in the area concerned under control of B.D.S. France were on 16. 9. 44: —

- (1) Kdo. zbV 7 PULLMER At Cirey
- (2) Kdo. WENGER At Baccarat and Raon l'Etape
- (3) Kdo. RETZEK At Raon l'Etape
- (4) Kdo. HOTH At Gerardmer
- (6) Kdo. TANZMANN St. Dié for a few days, later at Giromagny

III. The composition and activity of the Einsatz Kommandos used in the Vosges area

On hearing of the beginning of the Maquis trouble, Dr. Isselhorst had hurriedly returned. The construction of a new fortification line on the Western slopes of the Vosges ordered by Gauleiter Wagner was scheduled to begin on the 1st September, and in order to protect those engaged on this work, and in particular the Hitler Youth from attack by partisans, B.D.S. Alsace and B.D.S. France were required to supervise the area with Gestapo and S.D. units. Accordingly at a conference between B.D.S. Alsace and B.D.S. France it was decided that instead of the 1940 frontier, the line of the proposed fortifications should form the division between their respective areas, with the proviso that Einsatz Kommandos of B.D.S. France could work eastwards if they wished up to the 1940 frontier. This whole undertaking was referred to by the code name "*Action Waldfest*". It was divided into two periods.

Waldfest 1 (1st Sept to 30th Sept).

Waldfest 2 (1st Oct until Nov). Plans of the disposition of Einsatz Kommandos on the 1st and 16th of each month are included on pages 16 to 21.

Waldfest 1

- (a) B.D.S. Alsace continued to use Schneider as director of that part of the undertaking under his control but withdrew him from Schirmeck to Strassburg. According to Isselhorst both Gehrum and Uhring worked in close co-operation with Schneider as an anti parachutist and anti maquis triumvirate,

Einsatz Kommandos under command of B.D.S. Alsace, during the period 1st to 30th September 1944 were: —

Kommando Schöner	- Raon l'Etape (1 to 8 Sept)
Kommando Callis, (ex Kdo. Schöner)	- Giromagny (mid Sept to 30 Sept)
Kommando zbV 6 Ernst	- Arrived St. Dié 6th Sept, was transferred to the command of B.D.S. Alace when it's H.Q. moved to Saales on 15 Sept (see note on page)

(b) B.D.S. France provided the following (period 15th to 30th September).

Kommando zbV 7 PULLMER	- Cirey
Kommando WENGER	- Baccarat/Raon l'Etape
Kommando TANZMANN	- Giromagny
Kommando RETZEK	- Baccarat/Raon l'Etape
Kommando HOTH	- Gerardmer

As part of the agreement between B.D.S. France and B.D.S. Alsace, the camps of Schirmeck and Struthof/Natzweiler, with all their facilities, were placed at the disposal of B.D.S. France.

Waldfest 2

The second phase of Waldfest began with the month of October. The advance of the American 7th Army had made a reorganisation imperative, and most of the Kommandos controlled by B.D.S. France moved eastwards. B.D.S. Alsace continued to maintain Kommando Ernst at Saales, and B.D.S. France had Kommando Pullmer at Cirey, Hoth at Gerardmer, Tanzmann at Giromagny and Hülff at Belfort. Kdo. Sinnhoff which moved from Badonviller to Zabern, was transferred to the command of B.D.S. Alsace. Both B.D.S. Alsace and B.D.S. France had received instructions that parachutists captured outside the actual zone of ground operations, and in particular when working with Maquis, should be executed. Isselhorst states that he decided to apply this order only when collaboration with Maquis was proved, and this intention is partly confirmed by the subsequent treatment of S.A.S. parachutists captured by units under his command.

B.D.S. France Ostubaf. Suhr and Ogruf. Oberg are said by Isselhorst not to have made this reservation, and certainly Einsatz Kommandos under their control had a worst reputation than those under Isselhorst.

The following tables and diagrams of S.D. units in the Vosges area during the autumn months of 1944, are intended as a guide to the disposition and activities of each unit.

It should be noted that on several occasions two units or branches of units were active in the same town or village, and it is felt that without adequate

detail it would be impossible to obtain a sufficiently clear picture of this network of branches.

Each S.D. Einsatz Kommando had a number of Aussenstellen. The normal establishment of these was at times augmented by visits from the Kommando H.Q. or by reinforcements as the tactical situation required.

The pressure of the allied advance eastwards necessitated a withdrawal from the more immediately threatened towns, and it will often be found that a Kommando H.Q. took over the buildings formerly occupied by one of its Aussenstellen.

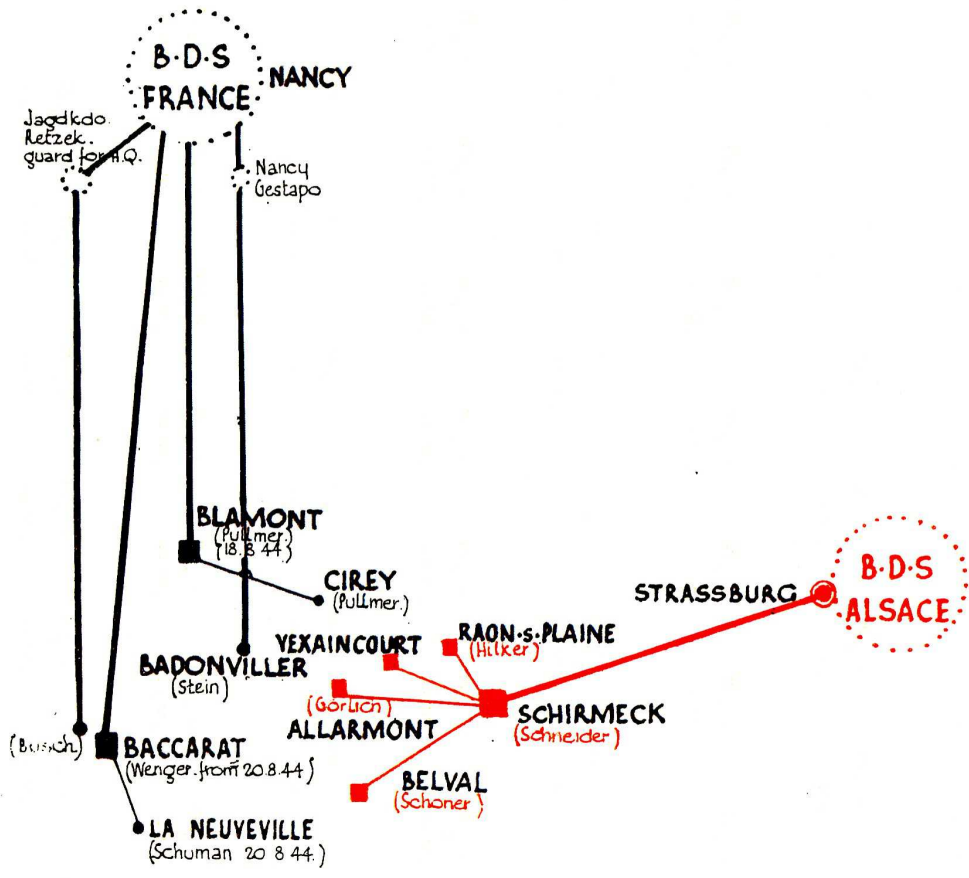
On information at present available, the three units involved in war crimes against S.A.S. personnel are:

- (1) Kdo. Schöner (under command B.D.S. Alsace)
- (2) Kdo. Ernst (under command B.D.S. Alsace)
- (3) Kdo. Wenger (under command B.D.S. France)

with the additional possibility that Kommando Retzek collaborated with Kommando Wenger.

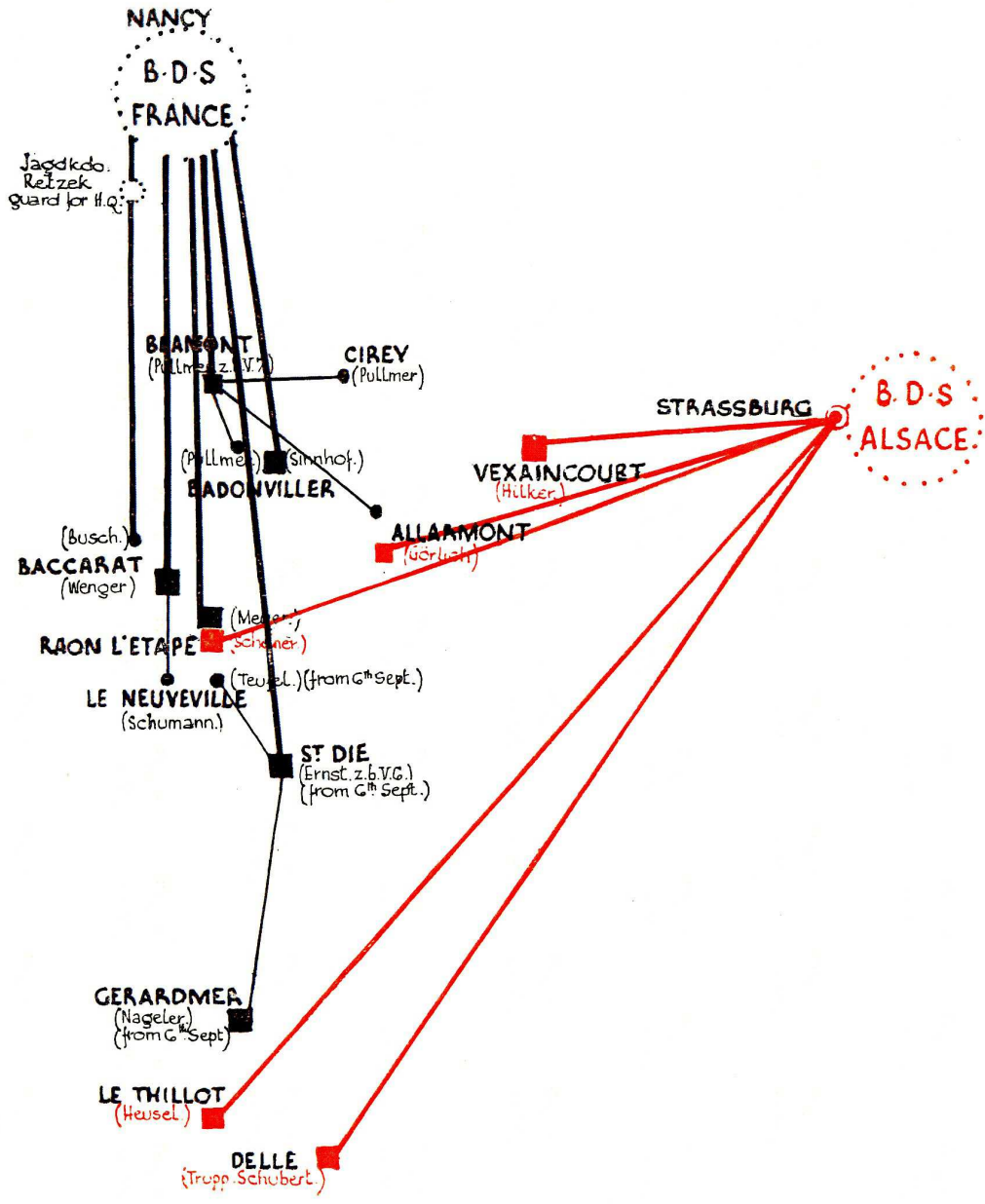
It is interesting to observe the consistency in criminal methods of each group. Kommando Wenger for example, invariably burnt the bodies of murdered S.A.S. parachutists, (see cases 5, 8 and 9) while Kommando Ernst merely took the clothes away for burning and buried the bodies naked (see case 7).

EINSATZ KOMMANDOS · 16 · AUG · 44



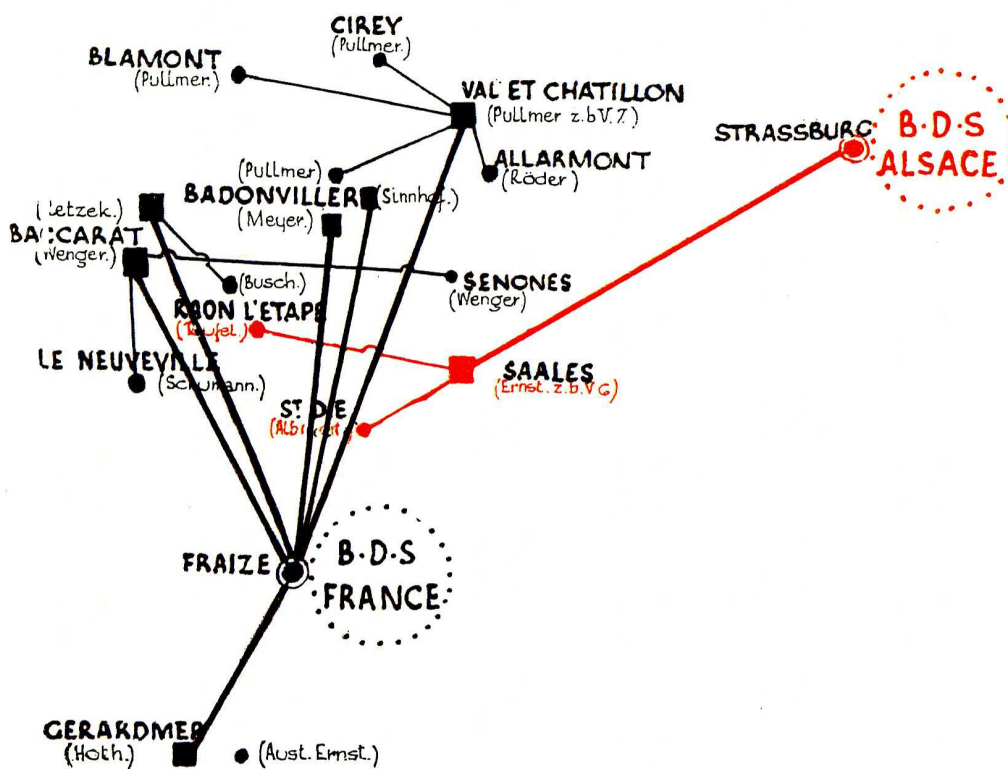
- Headquarters.
- Aust:

EINSATZ • KOMMANDOS • I • SEPT-44



■ Headquarters
● Aust:

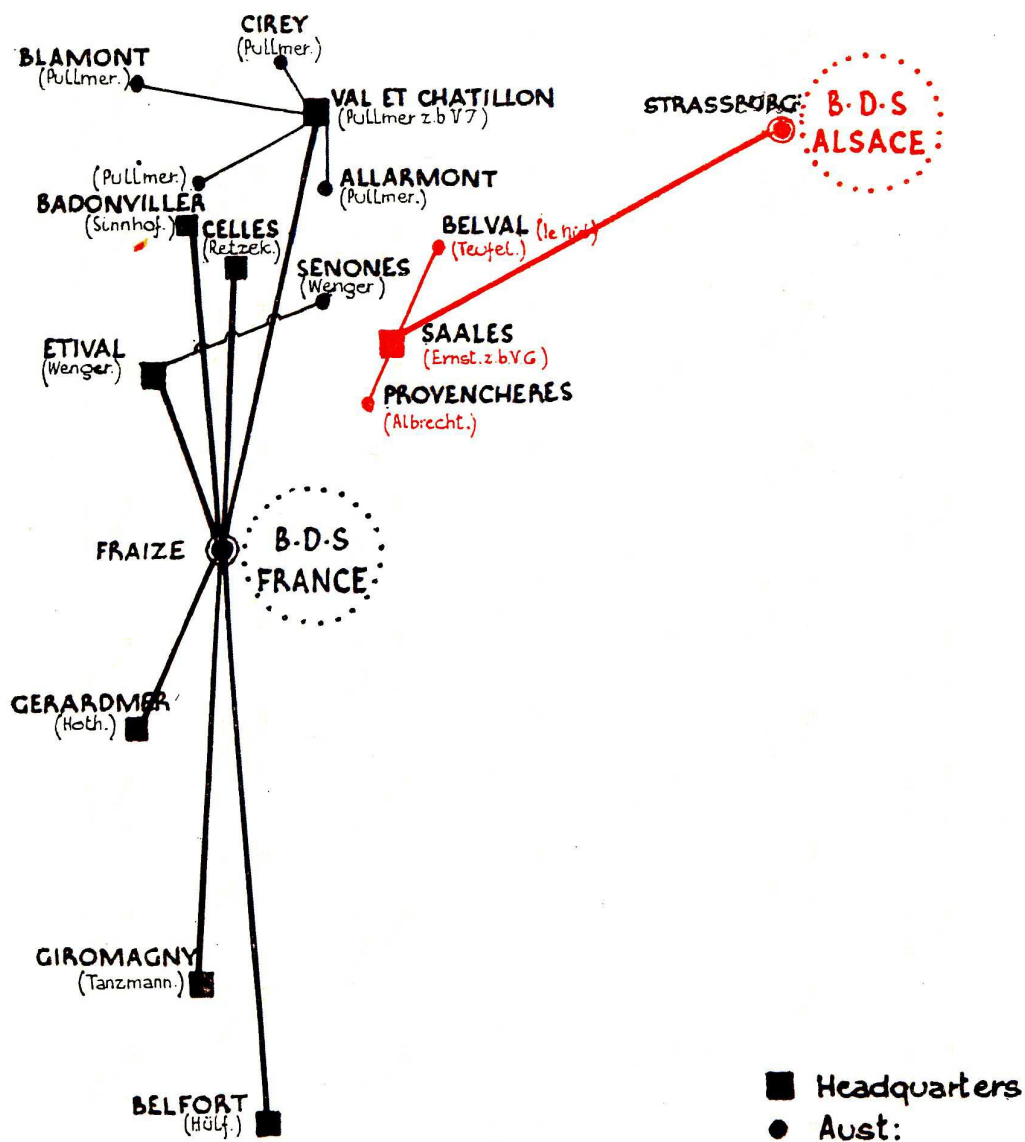
EINSATZ KOMMANDOS · 16 · SEPT · 44



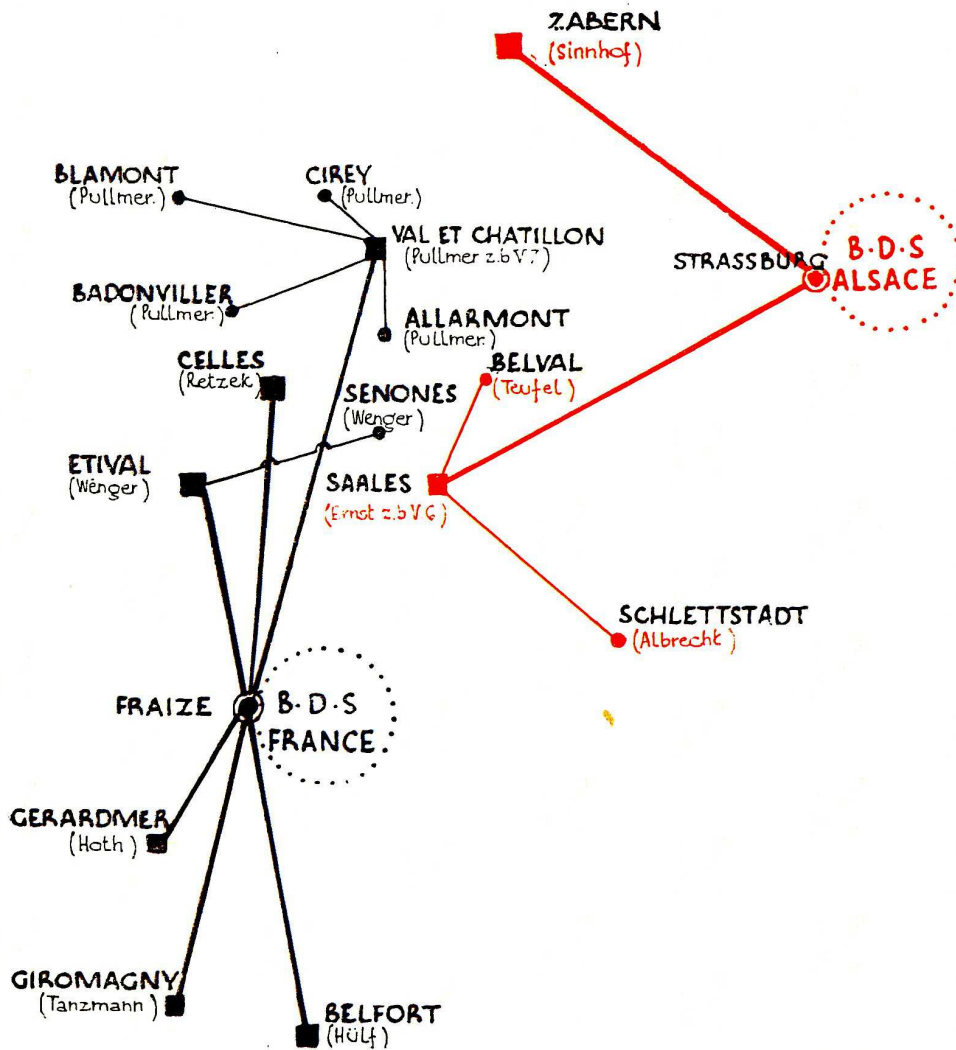
- Headquarters
- Aust:

Kdo. Meyer should be shown in Raon l'Etape not at Badonviller

EINSATZ KOMMANDOS · 1·OCT·44

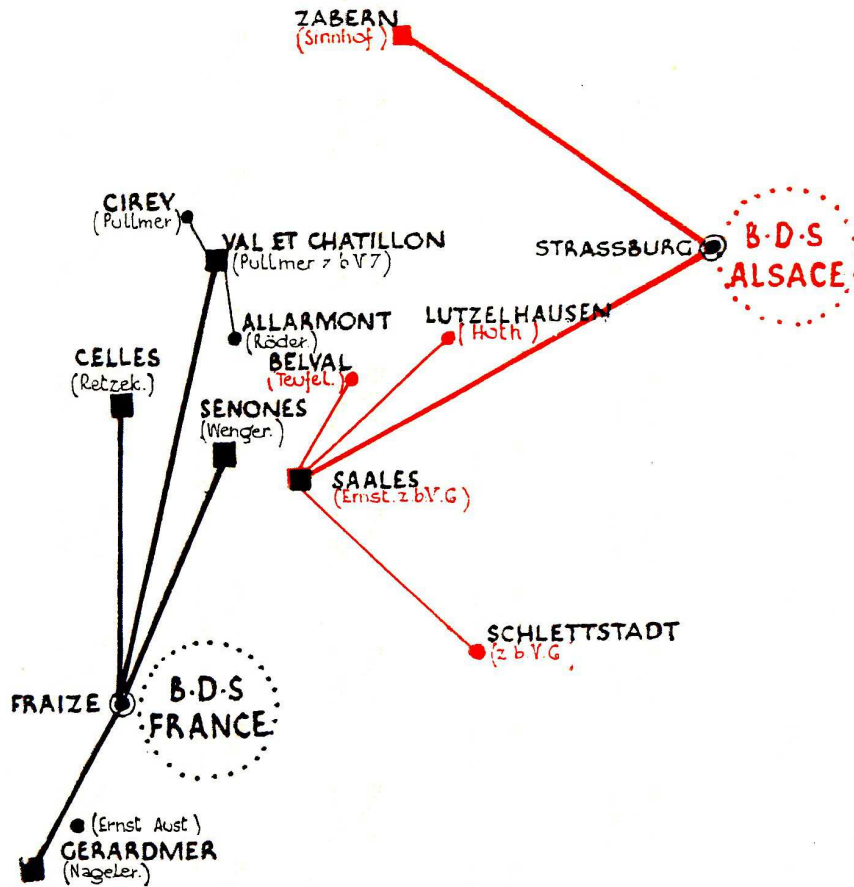


EINSATZ KOMMANDOS · 16 · OCT · 44



- Headquarters.
- Aust:

EINSATZ KOMMANDOS · 1·NOV·44



Kdo. Ernst had an Aussenstelle at Gerardmer with its H.Q. at Saales.
 Kdo. Hoth should be shown at Lützelhausen as dependent on B.D.S. France, not as an Aussenstelle of Kdo. Ernst at Saales.

Members of Einsatz Kommandos



LIEDLOFF



SCHONER



WALDE



SCHNEIDER



STASSIK



ORTSTADT



GEIGER



ZAHRINGER



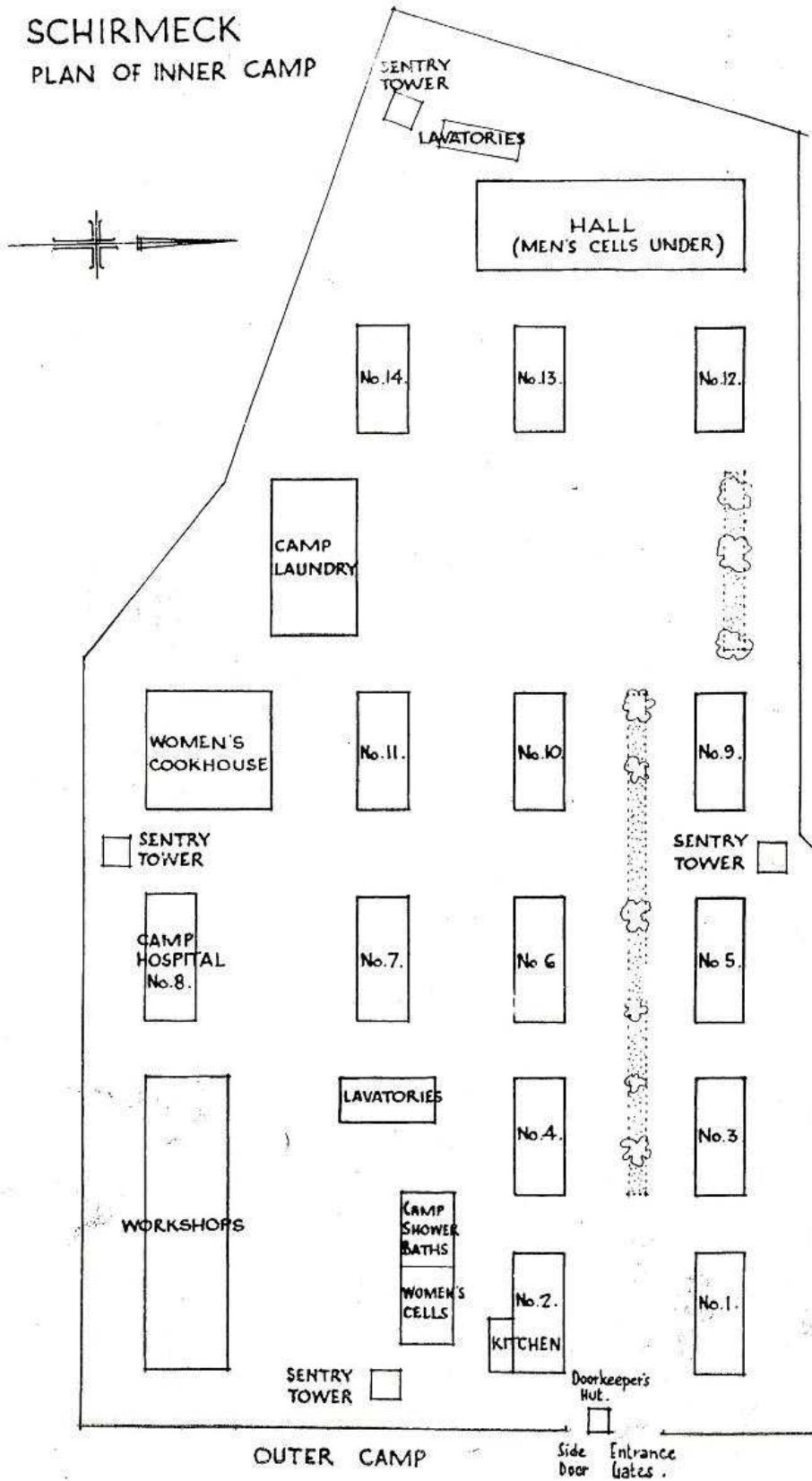
GOLKEL

Le centre d'internement et de passage avant les exécutions

The Sicherungslager of Schirmeck Vorbruck



SCHIRMECK
PLAN OF INNER CAMP



Some personnel of the Sicherungslager of Schirmeck Vorbruck



OSTERTAG



BUCK



NUSSBERGER



NEUSCHWANGER



THÜRMAN



FREITAG



WEBER



LEHMAN



SCHLESINGER

**Le procès de Karl Buck et de ses adjoints par la British Military Court : Wupperthal,
6 au 10 mai 1946. Cliquer -> <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/WCC/buck.htm>**