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Testimony of: Willi Haase, Eader Strasse 6, Friedeberg (Neumark), Germany.

Taken at: Fifth Army Stockade, Livorno, Italy.

Date: 16 September 1944.

Present: Major EDWIN S. BOOTH, JAGD, Commissioner.
Major MILTON R. WEXLER, IGD, Military Counsel.
Major CARL H. CUNDIFF, AGD, Defense Counsel.

Technician fourth grade Adrian L. Stehauer, 36454544, Hq. & Hq. Co., 5th Army, was sworn as reporter.

First Lieutenant WILLIAM G. DeWALL, O-1301915, I. B. W., G-2, Fifth Army Stockade (2680th Headquarters Company, M. I. S., A. P. H. Q.), was sworn as interpreter.

(The witness was sworn)

Questions by Major Wexler:

Q What is your name and home address?

A Willi Haase, Eader Strasse 6, Friedeberg (Neumark), Germany.

Q What is your organization?

A Fifth Company, Second Battalion, 35th S. S. Regiment, 16th S. S. Division.

Q Were you in the town of S. Anna on August 19, 1944?

A No, I was not there at that time. I was not with the unit at the time.

Q Where was your unit?

A The whole 5th Company was in S. Anna at the time. The whole second battalion was there.

Q What, approximately, were the number of men in the second battalion at that time?

A Between 250 and 300 men.

Q Were you on that day?

A I was possibly still at the station or at the regimental C. F. of my unit on the 15th of August.

Q Do you know whether or not members of the second battalion retaliated against Italian Partisans of S. Anna?

A The whole second battalion was there but I know definitely that Ober

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Schurfehrer Wertzmann had something to do with it since he was platoon leader.

Q How did you know about the incident?

A Through my comrades.

Q Name the comrades that participated in the incident.

A (Pause -- no answer)

Q Did Feldwebel Jansen, formerly Acting C. O. of the 5th Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th S. S. Regiment, participate in this massacre?

A He received the orders from the battalion commander since he was acting company commander at the time.

Q What is the full name of the battalion commander?

A I don't know his name; I just know he was a captain.

Q Did Unter Officier Ruhter, S. S., Volunteer, and later of Sniper Scout, 5th Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th S. S. Regiment participate in the massacre?

A It was a whole battalion order from the battalion commander.

Q If it was a full battalion order, then did not Ruhter participate?

A Yes.

Q Did Unter Officier Leibale, S. S. Volunteer, participate in the massacre?

A Yes.

Q Did Feldwebel Wertzmann participate in the massacre?

A Yes.

Q What is the name of your comrade who told you about the incident?

A More than one have told me.

Q State in detail exactly what they told you.

A The families were shot and houses were set afire. The people were led into the flaming houses and burned to death. That's all I was told.

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- Q How many people in all were killed?
- A I don't know.
- Q Were any women among those killed?
- A My comrades said that women and children were among those killed.
- Q Did your comrades say what time this happened?
- A I don't know the date--only that it happened in the morning hours, but it was before the 20th of August.
- Q What town did this happen at?
- A I didn't find out about the name of the town until I was interrogated.
- Q When did you return to the town?
- A I was never there. I came after the incident approximately the 21st of August.
- Q Then you were in this town of S. Anna?
- A No.
- Q When were you captured?
- A I deserted from the unit the 7th of September and was picked up by Allied troops on the 9th of September.
- Q Were you picked up by Americans or Italian Partisans?
- A By the Americans.
- Q During August were you engaged in fighting Italian Partisans?
- A No.
- Q Was any part of the 2nd Battalion fighting Partisans?
- A Yes, at the time they were fighting against the Partisans--the whole 2nd battalion.
- Q In the vicinity of S. Anna?
- A Yes, they said it was against the Partisans that they were doing this.

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Q How far from this town of S. Asna was the regimental S. P. I

A I don't exactly know because I did not arrive until after that and the fighting with the Partisans was over and we were pulling down toward Asna.

Q Which companies are there in the second battalion?

A The 6th, 7th and 8th companies.

Q What is the name of the commander of the 6th Company?

A I do not know because I was not there at the time.

Q What is the name of the commander of the 7th Company?

A I do not know the names of the commanders of the 7th and 8th Companies.

Q What is the name of the battalion executive officer?

A I am not sure, but I believe it was Captain Starfisher Dasso.

Q Can you give the names of any officers from the battalion headquarters?

A No, because I was only there a short while.

Q Did you testify that the order to kill the people of S. Asna came from battalion headquarters?

A My comrades told me the order came down from battalion headquarters.

Q Did your comrades tell you that the 6th, 7th and 8th companies had also participated?

A Yes, the whole battalion was committed.

Q Did you make a statement in writing concerning the incident?

A Yes, I did it yesterday.

Q Will you please read your statement slowly so that it will appear in the record?

(Witness reads from his statement as follows)

"I, Starfisher Willi Dasso, am telling to the best of my knowledge, the following:

Point #1 - By orders of the regimental commander, women and children were shot in the town of S. Asna, although the commander knew that it was innocent blood. Most of the men did not want to, but were forced because

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of orders.

Point #2 - "I can not say much about the organization or the unit because I arrived a few days after the bloody incident, at the 5th Company. I can only state what I have heard from my comrades. The second battalion was used for this punishment expedition. If mortars and heavy machine guns were used, I do not know definitely.

Point #3 - "I can say little about the officers and men because I came to the unit after the incident. For that reason I am giving only officers and noncoms whom I got to know through my comrades."

Major Wexler: We will dispense with the names, since they have already been testified to, and I ask that you continue to read from your statement.

Point #4 - "Most of the blame falls to the regimental commander, since he gave orders. If orders came from higher than the regimental commander, I do not know. The battalion commander whose name I do not know, is also just as mean. I only know that he is a captain and came from the police to the regiment. That's all that I know."

"I do not give this sworn statement under any threats--just out of my own interest."

Signed Willi Haase.

Q Did the order originate with the battalion commander or the regimental commander? --

A My comrades told me that the order came from the regimental commander, but it could just as well have come from the battalion commander as he is just as mean.

Q If the orders came from the regimental commander, is there any reason why the second battalion was chosen to do the work?

A It could be that the second battalion commander asked for the job and volunteered for it.

Q How old are you?

A I am 19 years old.

Questions by Major Booth:

Q Is the statement which you have just read and which you made yesterday a true statement of all the facts known by you?

A Yes, I have written that under oath.

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Questions by Major Seclert:

Q How long have you been in the 5th Company?

A From two to three weeks.

Q Why is it you can name only four comrades and one company commander?

A Because we were on coastal defense and we were split apart and we never came out away from our little place.

Q Who was your immediate superior officer?

A Ober Schurmfuehrer Wertzmann.

Q Do you know if there was a commissioned officer as commander of the 5th Company?

A Yes, Lieutenant Sasse came in on the 25th of August.

Q Who preceded him as officer?

A I do not know.

Questions by Major Cundiff:

Q Are you a native born German?

A Yes.

Q From what city in Germany are you?

A Friedeberg (Neumark).

Q How long have you been in the German Army?

A I was drafted into the S. S. the 1st of February 1943.

Q How long did you serve in Italy?

A I have been in Italy only since last August.

Q What military organization were you in prior to coming to Italy?

A S. S. Hohenstaufen.

Q Have you talked with any of your comrades who actually took part in the incident?

A Yes.

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Q What are their names?

A I do not know them by name, because I was not together with them on coastal defense.

Q Have you ever heard of a Major Kantuff?

A No, I do not know him.

Q Have you ever heard of a Captain Mueller?

A No, but the battalion commander's name is approximately like that.

Q Which battalion?

A Second battalion.

Q Have you ever heard of Second Lieutenant Sasse?

A He is my company commander.

Q You have previously stated that he became your company commander around the 25th of August, is that correct?

A Yes, around that date.

Q What did he do before he became company commander?

A I don't know whether he was battalion adjutant or not.

Q Have you ever heard of First Lieutenant Granssch?

A No.

Q Have you ever heard of Second Lieutenant Klinert?

A No.

Q Have you ever heard of Second Lieutenant Sommer?

A No.

Q Have you ever heard of Lieutenant Colonel Geseler?

A I cannot definitely say. The name sounds familiar.

(The witness was excused)

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