



32 ZBIRKA
RAZPOZNAVANJA
RECOGNITIONES

Monika Kokalj Kočever

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Z GORENJSKE
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**MOBILIZIRANCI V
NEMŠKO VOJSKO
Z GORENJSKE
V LETIH
1943–1945**

Po začetku druge svetovne vojne v Sloveniji 6. aprila 1941 in razdelitvi ozemlja je nemški okupator po odhodu okupacijskih enot vzpostavil svojo civilno upravo na Spodnjem Štajerskem in v zasedenih območjih Koroške in Kranjske, na t. i. južnem Koroškem. To upravno enoto, ki jo je sestavljalo šest nekdanjih gorenjskih okrajev, pozneje preoblikovanih v tri okrožja in okraj Dravograd, katerega občine so bile priključene okrožjema Volšperk in Velikovec, je najprej vodil namestnik koroškega deželnega vodje Franz Kutschera, od decembra 1941 naprej pa koroški deželni vodja dr. Friedrich Rainer. Ozemlje je spadalo k XVIII. vojaškemu okrožju. Civilno upravo so prihajali nadzorovat različni visoki nemški funkcionarji, med njimi notranji minister dr. Wilhelm Frick in državni vodja SS in policije Heinrich Himmler. Že 24. maja 1941 je bila ustanovljena raznarodovalna organizacija Koroška ljudska zveza (KVB), v katero se so predvsem iz strahu pred posledicami vključevali številni Gorenjci. Zvezni vodja KVB je bil Wilhelm Schick, ki je imel svoj sedež na Bledu. Na zasedenem ozemlju Koroške in Kranjske so bila štiri okrajna vodstva, v Kranju, Radovljici in Kamniku ter Dravogradu. Okraji so bili razdeljeni na krajevne skupine, ki so se ujemale z mejami občin. Te pa so se naprej delile na bloke in celice. KVB je predstavljala povezavo in vmesni člen med slovenskim prebivalstvom in nemško nacistično stranko. V Gozdu - Martuljku je delovala tudi šola KVB, kjer so se usposabljali vodje organizacije. Znotraj KVB sta obstajali tudi ženska in mladinska organizacija. Krajevne skupine so skrbele za to, da je bilo v aktivnosti vključenega čim več prebivalstva. Nemška oblast je namreč želela pripraviti prebivalstvo, ga ponemčiti v vseh pogledih, da bi bili primerni za podelitev nemškega državljanstva. Že v prvih mesecih je vodja civilne uprave ukazal zamenjavo slovenskih napisov z nemškimi, zamenjal valuto, razpustil slovenska društva in zaplenil imovino, uvedel ukrepe zoper Rome in Jude ter pričel z izgonom Slovencev. V prvi skupini izgnanih so bili slovenski učitelji ter inteligenca, sledili so prebivalci, naseljeni na Gorenjsko po letu 1914. Izveden je bil rasni in poli-

tični pregled in na tej podlagi so Gorenjci dobili članstvo v KVB. Dokončno članstvo so dobili le nemški državljani, Gorenjci pa začasnega. Kdor ni postal član, je ostal t. i. zaščitenec. Ministrski svet za obrambo je že 14. oktobra 1941 v Berlinu z močjo zakona določil, da s 14. aprilom 1941 dobijo nemško državljanstvo nekdanji jugoslovanski državljani nemške narodnosti brez državljanstva, ki so imeli na ta dan stalno bivališče na območju Spodnje Štajerske in zasedenih območij Koroške in Kranjske. Odlok k tej odredbi je bil izdan 10. februarja 1942. Na Spodnjem Štajerskem so državljanstvo dokončno uredili spomladi 1942, na Gorenjskem pa šele jeseni. Spodnjo Štajersko in Gorenjsko so nameravali čimprej formalnopravno priključiti nemškemu rajhu. Za datum priključitve je bil najprej predviden 1. oktober 1941, vendar pa so priključitev najprej preložili za en mesec, nato pa zaradi zakonskotehničnih razlogov na poznejši čas. V dogovoru med vodjo civilne uprave in skupino SA-oddelkov nemške nacionalsocialistične stranke, ki je bila pristojna za južno Koroško (SA-Gruppe Südmark, katere vodja je bil SA-Gruppenführer Walter Nibbe), so poleti 1941 po nemškem modelu in po zgledu podobnih ureditev v zasedenih deželah s civilno upravo na Spodnjem Štajerskem in Južnem Koroškem ustanovili enote vermanšafta, ki so bile podrejene SA-skupini Südmark. Po organizacijski vzpostavitvi in imenovanju vodij je do oktobra 1941 potekalo evidentiranje gorenjskih mož v starosti od 18 do 45 let. Vodja gorenjskih vermanov je bil SA-Brigadenführer Erich Beck. Čeprav je bilo po odloku o vzpostavitvi enot SA-Wehrmannschaft iz leta 1939 služenje prostovoljno, so ga na Gorenjskem predstavljali kot dolžnost in obveznost.

Obvezniki so iskali različne možnosti, da bi se izognili služenju, kar je še posebej veljalo za delavce, zaposlene v oboroževalni industriji, gasilce in železničarje. Enote gorenjskega vermanšafta so v nasprotju z vermanšaftom na Štajerskem opravljale le polvojaško urjenje, sodelovale na različnih dogodkih in zbirale sredstva za različne formacije in skupine. Vermani tudi niso nosili orožja. Oblečeni so bili v t. i. gorske uniforme, ki so

bile predpisane za SA, vendar so jih nosili le vodje in podvodje, spomladi 1942 pa so uniforme delili le preverjenim posameznikom, ostali pa so jih morali vrniti. Uniformirani vermani so nosili narokavni trak s kljukastim križem, za tiste v civilu pa je bil predviden trak z vojaškim znakom. Ali so te trakove v resnici nosili, ni znano, saj ni ohranjenih fotografij ali pričevanj, ki bi to potrdila.

Vodje in podvodje vermanšafta so se usposabljali v šoli za vodje v Rogaški Slatini, skupaj s štajerskimi vermani. Do pomladi 1942 število vermanov na Gorenjskem ni preseгло 17.000 mož, največje omenjeno število pa je 28.000. Največ vermanov je bilo v enoti »Standarte Stein« v Kamnik. Vsaka enota je štela do 250 mož. Ustanavljali so tudi posebne sanitetne in druge enote ter glasbene vode. Vodstvo vermanšaft enot je bilo naseljeno v različnih domovih razpuščenih društev in združenj.

Vermani so bili po hierarhičnem sistemu SA v okviru enot vključeni v »Wehrmannschaftsbrigade Nordkrain«, ki je bila marca 1942 preimenovana v »Wehrmannschaftsbrigade Oberkrain«. Njen vodja je bil Obersturmbannführer Franz Kuscher. Od zgodnje pomladi so vermane vključevali v različne enote krajevnih straž, k zaščitni policiji, orožnikom in nujni tehnični pomoči, veliko jih je bilo tudi zajetih v delovno službo. Zaradi tega se je število zmanjšalo za več tisoč. Na Gorenjskem je bila 1. januarja 1942 ustanovljena nacistična stranka NSDAP. Vodstvo NSDAP na Koroškem je že junija 1942 predlagalo, da je potrebno najti med vermani može, ki bodo postali člani oddelkov NSDAP – SA, SS, NSKK ali NSFK. Bilo je že tudi predvideno, koliko enot bi ustanovili.

Poleti 1942 so enote vermanšafta zaradi sodelovanja pri kmečkih opravilih dobile dopust do 15. septembra, potem pa je vodstvo le-tega podaljšalo do 10. oktobra, ko so bili že ustanovljeni oddelki NSDAP, vermanšaft pa razpuščen. Marca 1942 so na Gorenjskem že zbirali prostovoljce za gorske enote Waffen-SS, vendar je bil tudi ob drugem pregledu novembra 1942 odziv zelo slab. 7. julija 1942 je gauleiter dr. Friedrich Rai-

ner uvedel t. i. dolžnost do služenja v državni delovni službi oz. Reichsarbeitsdienst (RAD) in vojaško dolžnost. Ukazi so bili objavljeni v uradnem listu. Na veliki manifestaciji v Kranju 27. septembra 1942 pa je z razglasom Gorenjcem podelil državljanstvo na preklic. Objavil je tudi, da bodo 10. oktobra ustanovljeni oddelki nacistične stranke. Prehajanje nekdanjih vermanov v enote SA je po razpustitvi vermanšafta potekalo zelo počasi, saj še niso bili nemški državljani in so bili lahko pri SA-enotah dokumentirani le kot vermani. Z vpoklicem nekdanjih vermanov v nemško vojsko pa se enote SA tudi niso nikoli okrepile do števila, ki ga je imel gorenjski vermanšaft, februarja 1943 je SA-Standarte Oberkrain štela le 1165 mož.

Oktobra 1944 so bile na Gorenjskem ustanovljene tudi enote »Volkssturm«. Vključeni so bili vsi moški od 16. do 60. leta starosti. Usposabljanje je potekalo pod nadzorom SA. V enotah so bili lahko le nemški državljani in tisti z nemškim državljanstvom na preklic. Enote samozaščite, t. i. Selbstschutz, naj bi bile osnova za ustanovitev enot SS. Gorenjske sicer formalnoppravno zaradi različnih razlogov niso nikoli vključili v tretji rajh, so pa za prebivalce Gorenjske s podelitvijo državljanstva začeli veljati isti zakoni kot na ozemlju matične Nemčije. Tako so tudi vojaški prijavni uradi, ki so bili vzpostavljeni decembra 1941, pozvali občinske urade, naj pripravijo evidence letnikov, ki bi bili vpoklicani v nemško vojsko. Na Gorenjskem so bili ustanovljeni trije vojaški prijavni uradi, v Kranju, Radovljici in Kamniku. Vojaško okrajno poveljstvo v Kranju, pod katerega so spadali ti uradi, je vodil polkovnik Martin Kubert. Ustanovljeni so bili naborni štabi, ki so po evidencah pregledovali nabornike. Od novembra 1942 so potekali nabori moških letnikov od 1916 do 1926, pričeli so z naborom letnikov 1923 in 1924, na koncu pa so avgusta 1943 vpoklicali v državno delovno službo RAD letnik 1926. Prvi vpoklicanci so bili možje letnikov 1923 in 1924, v taborišča RAD pa so bili poslani januarja 1943. Zadnji so odšli naborniki, rojeni leta 1926, vendar je še vse leto 1943 in tudi leta 1944 potekal vpoklic tistih, ki jim je bil vpoklic odložen zaradi

različnih razlogov, največkrat zato, ker so bili zaposleni v tovarnah oborožitvene industrije. Nemški okupator je mobiliziral enajst letnikov vojakov, potem pa je bila mobilizacija naslednjih letnikov ustavljena, vpoklicevali so le še nemške državljane. V RAD ni bilo potrebno oditi tistim, ki so že služili vojsko.

Z 31. januarjem 1945 so bili vojaško okrajno poveljstvo Kranj ter vojaška prijavnna urada v Radovljici in Kamniku razpuščeni. Moštvo je bilo predstavljeno v Kranj, tako da je bil nadzor nad Gorenjsko centralno voden iz poveljstva v Kranju, aktivnosti vojaškega okrajnega poveljstva Kranj pa je prevzelo okrajno poveljstvo Celovec.

Gorenjci so v RAD služili v okviru XVIII. vojaškega okrožja. V oddelkih RAD so bili skupaj z Avstrijci, ki so jih zaradi nepoznavanja jezika večkrat gledali prezirljivo, vendar so jim starešine to prepovedovali. Posebej je bilo poudarjeno, da so v enotah po dolžnosti in ne prostovoljno. Tisti vpoklicanci, ki so skrbeli za družine, so lahko zaprosili tudi za družinsko podporo, ki je znašala od 20 do 80 RM. Po polletnem služenju v RAD so vpoklicance pošiljali v različne rezervne vojaške enote, kjer so jih usposobili za bojevanje na fronti. Že ob naboru so dobili vojaško knjižico, ki se je hranila v enoti, t. i. Wehrpass, ob prihodu v vojaške enote pa še Soldbuch, ki ga je imel vsak vojak pri sebi. Največ gorenjskih vojakov je bilo poslanih na vzhodno fronto.

Prve partizanske enote na Gorenjskem so bile ustanovljene julija 1941. Proti njihovim aktivnostim so nemške oblasti poslale okrepljene policijske enote. Januarja 1942 je bilo za boj angažiranih okoli 5000 mož iz različnih formacij. Junija 1942 se je pričela obsežna protipartizanska ofenziva Encijan, ki je potekala vse do jeseni 1942. V odgovor na partizanske napade so okupacijske sile izganjale družine in požigale vasi. Od marca do oktobra 1942 je bilo izgnanih 1858 ljudi in ustreljenih 474 talcev. Konec decembra 1942 je bilo na Gorenjskem samo 309 partizanov. A posamezne partizanske enote so pričele mobilizirati že decembra 1942, s prihodom novincev, ki so se izognili nemški mobilizaciji, pa se je število gorenjskih partizanov na začetku

leta 1943 povečalo na 500 do 600. Gauleiter dr. Friedrich Rainer je sicer v razglasu z dne 8. januarja 1943 objavil, da bodo, če se obveznik ne odzove vpoklicu, njegovo družino zaradi nepokoščine izgnali, imetje pa zaplenili. Tako so se vpoklicanci raje odločali, da odidejo v vojsko, kot da bi izpostavili svoje družine. Da bi zavarovali družine, pa so se tisti, ki so se odločili, da gredo v partizane, dogovorili z enoto, da so odhod uprizorili kot prisilno mobilizacijo.

Skupno število prisilno mobiliziranih presega 11.000. Najvišji čin, ki so ga Gorenjci lahko dosegli, je bil čin naddesetnika. Glede na čin so bili razporejeni v 16. ali 15. plačilni razred, kar je pomenilo 30 do 36 RM mesečnega plačila. Najvišje odlikovanje, ki so ga dosegli Gorenjci, je bil železni križec prve stopnje, ki ga je vojska podeljevala za posebna pogumna dejanja nad vojaškimi dolžnostmi. Največ vojakov pa je dobilo črni ranjeniški znak, ki so ga dobili za rane v enem do dveh spopadih. Ker je gradivo, ki bi nam omogočalo vpogled v življenje na fronti, omejeno, smo lahko uporabili le manjše število ohranjenih dokumentov. Vojaki so bili s svojimi domačimi v stiku predvsem prek pisem, nekatere pa so prišli domači obiskat v RAD in v zaledne enote. Velikokrat so vojaki dobili dopust šele pred odhodom na fronto. Na bojiščih in v ujetništvu je umrlo več kot 1700 Gorenjcev, številni so bili anglo-ameriški ali sovjetski ujetniki. Dezertiralo je več kot 2000 Gorenjcev, največ med dopustom, ki so ga povečini lahko koristili le severno od Drave. Ob preiskavah pobegov so sodelovali domači orožniki, gestapo, obveščeni pa so bili tudi enota, krajevni starešina, krajevni policijski urad, matična vojašnica enote, glavno poveljstvo vojaškega okrožja, državni policijski kriminalni urad in divizijsko sodišče. Komandant SIPO in SD na Bledu je izdal tiralico za pobeglim. Največ dezerterstev je bilo jeseni 1944.

Izmed slovenskih ujetnikov, ki so bili zajeti na fronti v Normandiji, so v ujetniškem taborišču Woodhouselee na Škotskem zbrali kar 3000 Slovencev, ki so se odločili, da se vrnejo v domovino. V konvojih so jih konec decembra 1944 prepeljali v itali-

jansko Gravino, kjer se je že oblikovala 5. prekomorska brigada. Enota je odšla nato do Splita in čez Velebit. Pri Gospiču so se spopadli z ustaškimi enotami, Slovenijo pa so dosegli 17. aprila 1945. Kolpo so prečkali pri Vinici. Po prihodu v domovino je bila enota razformirana. V Kolomni v Sovjetski zvezi so slovenski, srbski in hrvaški vojni ujetniki ustanovili 1. jugoslovansko brigado. Med borci je bilo več kot 900 Slovencev. V Jugoslavijo so prišli oktobra 1944 in nato v bojih izgubili večje število borcev. Pozneje sta bili v Kolomni ustanovljeni še tankovska brigada in 2. jugoslovanska brigada.

Številni vpoklicanci so na fronti dezertirali in se priključili osvobodilnim gibanjem po Evropi. Največ se jih je v Franciji pridružil makijevcem. Več tisočim pa je uspelo dezertirati v partizanske enote v Sloveniji; povečini so bili poslani v enote XXXI. divizije, ki so jih v več kot 10 odstotkih sestavljali nekdanji nemški vojaki. Dezerterji so v partizanske enote prihajali še vse do pomladi 1945. Okoli 360 se jih je priključilo tudi Gorenjski samozaščiti. Večina teh je bila najprej krajši čas pri partizanih. Zbrani so tudi podatki o vključevanju v četniške enote.

Krajevne skupine KVB so dobivale obvestila o njihovih krajanih v vojski, in vodile stanje po mesecih. Hkrati so skrbele tudi za občasno oskrbo vojakov na fronti. Žal je ohranjenega gradiva s tega področja, ki bi bilo izredno dragoceno za prikaz številčnega stanja in razmer, zelo malo. Pozdravi vojakov domačim so bili objavljeni v časopisu *Karavanken Bote*, ki je bil glasilo KVB, pa tudi v časopisu *Heimatgruss*, ki so ga za vojake na fronti pričeli izdajati novembra 1943.

Ob koncu vojne so bili v uredbo o amnestiji z dne 3. avgusta 1945 zajeti tudi nekdanji prisilno mobilizirani vojaki nemške vojske. Po koncu vojne so se iz različnih ujetniških taborišč vračali še vse do sredine petdesetih let. Najprej so se morali zglasiti v repatriacijskem taborišču, kjer so bili zaslišani, po odpustu pa so se lahko s t. i. objavo, dokumentom, ki je izkazoval njihov status, vrnili domov in se zglasili pri krajevnih uradih. Status prisilnega mobiliziranca je bil po vojni odvisen od situacije v ožjem

domačem okolju. Veliko jih je bilo obravnavanih kot državljani drugega razreda, imeli so težave pri šolanju, zaposlitvi, pridobivanju kreditov, vsaj do sedemdesetih let so jih tudi večkrat zasliševali. Po vojni so nekdanje nemške vojake večkrat popisovali tako organi uprave za notranje zadeve kot Rdeči križ, vendar ni ohranjen niti en skupni seznam, gradiva krajevnih uradov, ki se hrani v arhivih, pa je zelo malo. Pravic prisilni mobiliziranci niso imeli, mnogo jih več let ni imelo državljske pravice. Posebno težko je bilo za številne invalide, ki niso imeli urejenega statusa vojnega invalida. Že v petdesetih letih so se ustanovljale skupine nekdanjih mobilizirancev, ki so si medsebojno pomagali in iskali možnosti za priznanje. Država Jugoslavija jim ni bila naklonjena in je tudi zavirala sodelovanje z Nemčijo in možnost, da bi slovenski vpoklicanci dobili nemško rento ali pomoč. Šele leta 1991 je bilo ustanovljenih več društev mobiliziranih Slovencev v nemško vojsko, in sicer v Celju, Kranju in Mariboru, ki jih je leta 1995 povezala Zveza mobiliziranih Slovencev v nemško vojsko 1941–1945. Istega leta so mobiliziranci tudi dosegli, da so bili vključeni v Zakon o žrtvah vojnega nasilja in jim je bil končno priznan status žrtev vojnega nasilja, s čimer jim je od leta 2010 pripadla renta. S temo prisilne mobilizacije se je sredi osemdesetih pričela ukvarjati tudi stroka. Društva so postavila tudi številna spominska obeležja in aktivno zbirala podatke o vpoklicancih. Nekdanji mobiliziranci, ki so bili na bojiščih ranjeni in so invalidi, pa še vedno nimajo urejenega statusa vojnih invalidov in z njim povezanih pravic. V nasprotju s prisilnimi mobiliziranci v Franciji, Belgiji in Luksemburgu odškodnine od države Nemčije kot naslednice tretjega rajha mobilizirancem v Sloveniji ni uspelo pridobiti.

SUMMARY

**MOBILISED INTO
WEHRMACHT
FROM UPPER
CARNIOLA
IN THE YEARS
1943-1945**

After the beginning of the Second World War in Slovenia and the division of its territory, following the departure of the occupying military units the German occupying forces set up a civilian administration.

The administrative unit, consisting of six former Gorenjska (Upper Carniola) districts, later transformed into three departments and the district of Dravograd, the municipalities of which were connected to the districts of Volšperk and Velikovec, was firstly headed by the Deputy Gauleiter of the Carinthian Gau, Franz Kutschera, and from December 1941 onwards, by Gauleiter Dr. Friedrich Rainer. The territory known as Southern Carinthia was part of the XVIIIth Military District.

The civilian administration was under the supervision of various high-ranking German officials, including Dr. Wilhelm Frick, Minister of the Interior, and State Leader of the SS and Chief of Police Heinrich Himmler. As early as May 24, 1941, the Carinthian Folk Association (hereinafter KVB) Kärtner Volksbund was founded. People from Upper Carniola joined the organisation in great number, mainly due to fear of the consequences. The federal head of the KVB was Wilhelm Schick.

The district headquarters were in Kranj, Radovljica and Kamnik, and districts were then divided into local groups that coincided territorially with the boundaries of municipalities. These were further divided into blocks and cells. The KVB was a link, an intermediary, between the Slovene population and the German Nazi party. There were also women's and youth organizations within the KVB. Local groups ensured that as many local people as possible were involved in KVB activities, because the German authorities wanted to prepare the population, to Germanize it in all respects, to be eligible for the granting of German citizenship. A KVB school was founded in the town of Gozd Martuljk, where local leaders of the organization were trained. The Nazi party, NSDAP in Gorenjska, was founded in January 1942.

Already in the first months of occupation, the head of the civilian administration ordered the replacement of Slovenian

town signs with German, changed the currency, dissolved Slovenian societies and seized their property, instituted measures against the Roma and Jews, and began the expulsion of Slovenes. The first group of exiles consisted of Slovene teachers and the intelligentsia, followed by inhabitants who had arrived in Gorenjska after 1914. A racial and political examination was carried out and the population was granted membership in the KVB on that basis. Only German citizens were granted final KVB membership, while Upper Carniolans could be temporary members. Anyone who did not become a member remained a so-called protegee. On October 14, 1941, the Ministerial Council of Defense in Berlin issued an order, with the power of law, that German citizenship should be granted to German citizens and former German citizens of German nationality who had permanent residence in the area of Lower Styria, or in the occupied regions of Carinthia and Carniola. The decree for that order was issued on February 10, 1942. In Lower Styria, citizenship was finally settled in the spring of 1942, but it was not until autumn that people in Gorenjska obtained citizenship. It was planned for the administrative units in Lower Styria and Gorenjska to join the German Reich officially as soon as possible. The date of annexation was scheduled for October 1, 1941, but was first postponed for one month and then for legal reasons to a later date.

By agreement between the head of the civilian administration, Dr. Friederich Rainer, and the SA group Südmark, responsible for Southern Carinthia, whose leader was SA Gruppenführer Walter Nibbe, *Wehrmannschaft* units subordinate to the SA were organized in the summer of 1941.

They were established in line with the German model and similar arrangements in occupied countries with the same civilian administration as in Lower Styria and Southern Carinthia. After organizational establishment and the appointment of leaders, by October 1941, the registration of men from Gorenjska of the age of 18 to 45 followed. SA Brigadeführer Erich Beck was the head of *Wehrmannschaft* units in Upper Carniola.

Although the decree establishing the SA *Wehrmannschaft* in 1939 presented the service as voluntary, it was obligatory in the Gorenjska region.

Conscripts to the *Wehrmannschaft* sought various options to avoid serving, which was possible if they were employed in the armaments industry, firefighters or railroad workers.

Unlike *Wehrmannschaft* units in Lower Styria, *Wehrmannschaft* units in Gorenjska performed only half military service, but exercised and participated in various events and fundraising campaigns for various organisations and groups.

The *Wehrmannschaft* also did not carry weapons. They were dressed in the mountain uniforms prescribed for the SA, but they were worn only by *Wehrmannschaft* leaders and assistant leaders, and in the spring of 1942, uniforms were distributed only to reliable individuals; others had to return them. Uniformed *Wehrmannschaft* men were supposed to wear an armband with a swastika, and those in civilian clothes an armband marked with the SA military insignia. It is not known whether these bands were actually worn, since there are no preserved photographs or testimonies to confirm this.

Leaders and sub-leaders of the *Wehrmannschaft* were trained in a leadership school in Rogaška Slatina health resort, together with Styrian men. By the spring of 1942, the number of *Wehrmannschaft* in Gorenjska did not exceed 17,000 men and the largest number noted was 28,000. Numerous *Wehrmannschaft* units were in the “*Wehrmannschaftsstandarte Stein*” in Kamnik. Each “*Sturm*”, or company, had up to 250 men. Special medical, musical and engineering units were also established. *Wehrmannschaft* units were housed in the various properties of Slovene societies and associations already dissolved in spring 1941.

Wehrmannschaft units were included in the “*Wehrmannschaftsbrigade Nordkrain*”, which was renamed “*Wehrmannschaftsbrigade Oberkrain*”. Its leader was SA Obersturmbannführer Franz Kuscher.

From early spring 1942, *Wehrmannschaft* men were sent to various units of local guards, provincial guards and the home defence, as well as to technical assistance units, the *Technische Nothilfe*. They were also transferred to gendarme units and helped as auxiliary policemen.

In June 1942, the NSDAP leadership in Carinthia proposed that it was necessary to find men among the *Wehrmannschaft* that would become members of the NSDAP - SA, SS, NSKK or NSFK departments. The number of units was already anticipated. In the summer of 1942, the units of the *Wehrmannschaft* were granted leave until September 15, which was extended until October 10, when NSDAP departments had already been established, and the *Wehrmannschaft* was dissolved. In March 1942, volunteers for mountain units of the Waffen SS were already being collected in Gorenjska, but the response was poor. On July 7, 1942, Gauleiter Dr. Friedrich Rainer introduced the obligation to serve in the state labour service or Reichsarbeitsdienst (RAD) and military duty. The decrees were published in his Official Gazette. Under an announcement from September 27, 1942, in connection with the Ministerial Decree of October 14, 1941, the Gorenjska population were granted citizenship on probation. Gorenjska was never otherwise formally included in the Third Reich, for a variety of reasons, but the granting of citizenship started to subject residents of Gorenjska to the same laws as those applying on the territory of Germany. Dr. Rainer also announced that departments of the Nazi party would be formed on October 10. The transfer of the former *Wehrmannschaft* into SA units progressed very slowly after the dissolution of the *Wehrmannschaft*, since the men were not yet German citizens and could only be listed in SA units as *Wehrmannschaft*. With the enlistment of the former *Wehrmannschaft* men into the German army, however, SA units never achieved the numbers of the *Wehrmannschaft*. In February 1943, the *SA Standarte Oberkrain* had only 1,165 men.

In October 1944, units of the “*Deutscher Volkssturm*” were established in Gorenjska. All remaining men capable of fighting, from 16 to 60 years of age, were conscripted. Training was conducted under SA control. Only German citizens and German citizens on probation could be conscripted into units.

Three military recruitment offices, *Wehrmeldeamt* (WMA) were established, in Kranj, Radovljica and Kamnik. The military recruitment offices, which were established in December 1941, ordered municipal offices to prepare records of age groups liable to call up into the German army – the Wehrmacht. The District Military Command, *Wehrbezirkkommando* (WBK) in Kranj, was led by Colonel Martin Kubert. Recruiting staffs were established, who examined recruits on the basis of the prepared records.

From November 1942, records of men born from 1916 to 1926 were prepared, starting with those born in 1923 and 1924, who were the first to be conscripted, and who were sent to RAD camps in January 1943, and in August 1943 those born in 1926 were sent into RAD national labor service.

Throughout 1943, and even in 1944, many of these were excused being sent to the RAD and the army, for various reasons, usually because they were employed in armaments factories. The German occupying authorities mobilized eleven year-groups of soldiers, 1916 to 1926, before the mobilization of the following years was stopped, and only German citizens were called up.

On January 31, 1945, the Kranj Military District Command (WBK) and military recruitment offices (WMA) in Radovljica and Kamnik were disbanded. The personnel were transferred to Kranj, and control over the Gorenjska region was centrally directed from the Kranj military recruitment office, and the Klagenfurt Military District Command took over the activities of the Kranj Military District Command.

Men from the Gorenjska region served within the framework of the XVIII military district. They were together with

Austrians in the RAD sections, who looked overwhelmingly down on them because of their lack of knowledge of the German language, although senior officers discouraged this. It was especially emphasized that they had joined the units to perform their duty and had not come voluntarily. Those who had families could also apply for monthly family maintenance support, which ranged from 20 to 80 RM. After half a year of service in the RAD, conscripts were sent to various reserve military units, where they were trained for fighting on the front. They had already received a military booklet at RAD, which was kept with the unit, the *Wehrpass*, and on their arrival to military units, they were issued with a military booklet, the *Soldbuch*, which every soldier kept with him. Most of the soldiers from Gorenjska were sent to the Eastern Front.

The first Partisan units in the Gorenjska region were established in July 1941. The German authorities sent reinforced police units to fight them. In January 1942, there were some 5,000 men from various formations on the territory of Gorenjska. In June 1942, an extensive German anti-Partisan offensive, *Encijan*, began, which ended in the autumn of 1942. In response to Partisan attacks, the occupying forces expelled their families and burned down their villages. From March to October 1942, 1858 people were deported and 474 hostages were shot and, at the end of December 1942, only 309 Partisans remained in the Gorenjska region. Individual Partisan units began to form in December 1942, and with the arrival of newcomers who had avoided German mobilization, the number of Gorenjska partisans rose to 500 or 600 at the beginning of 1943. Gauleiter Dr. Friedrich Rainer announced in a proclamation of January 8, 1943 that if conscripts did not respond to call up, their families would be expelled and their property confiscated. Conscripts thus preferred to go into the army, rather than to expose their families. In order to protect families, however, those who decided to join the Partisans agreed with the Partisan units that the departure should be made to look like forced mobilization.

The total number of forcibly mobilized exceeded 11,000. The highest rank that the men from Gorenjska region could achieve in the German army was that of *Obergefreiter*. Based on rank, they were allocated to pay groups 16 or 15, which meant 30 to 36 RM monthly pay. The highest decoration achieved by the men was the iron cross of the first degree, EK I, which the army gave for especially courageous actions during military duties. Many soldiers received a black wounded insignia, *Verwundetabzeichen in Schwarz*, which they obtained for injuries received during one to two clashes. Because the archival material that would allow us to visualise life at the front is limited, we can only use the small number of preserved documents. Soldiers mainly contacted their families by letter, and some came home after serving in the RAD. Soldiers were often only given leave before departure for the front.

Over 1700 of men from the Gorenjska region were killed on the battlefields, or died in hospitals or in POW camps. Many ended in Anglo-American or Russian captivity.

More than 2000 men from the Gorenjska region deserted from the army, mostly during leave, which they could usually spend north of the Drava river in Austria. Homeland officers, including the Gestapo, were involved in escape searches and the man's unit, the local elder, the local police office, the headquarters of the unit, the headquarters of the military district, the state police criminal office and the divisional court were informed. The commander of the SIPO and SD in Bled issued warrants for deserters.

Among Slovene POWs who were captured on the front line in Normandy, 3000 prisoners were held in Woodhouselee POW camp in Scotland. They were transported to the Italian town of Gravina in convoys at the end of December 1944, where the 5th Partisan Overseas Brigade had already been formed. The unit then went to Split and across the Velebit mountain range. The men encountered Ustashi units at Gospić and many of the former German soldiers died in the fighting. The unit reached

Slovenia on April 17, 1945 and crossed the Kolpa river near Vinica. After arriving in their homeland, the unit was reformed. In Kolomna, in the Soviet Union, Slovenian, Serbian and Croatian prisoners of war founded the 1st Yugoslav Brigade. There were more than 900 Slovenes among the combatants. They arrived in Yugoslavia in October 1944, and lost many of their number in fighting on the Srem front in Serbia. The Tank Brigade and the 2nd Yugoslav Brigade were later established in Kolomna.

Many also deserted at the front and joined various liberation movements across Europe. In France, they joined *maquis* units. More than two thousand succeeded in deserting to Partisan units in Slovenia and the majority were sent to units of the XXXIth division. More than 10 percent of Partisan combatants were former German soldiers. Deserters arrived at Partisan units until the spring of 1945. About 360 deserters joined units of the Gorenjska home defence, *Oberkrainer Selbstschutz*, which were led by SS officers. The majority of these men were initially briefly with the Partisans. Some deserters also joined Chetnik units.

Local KVB groups received information about their men in the German army, and prepared situation reports. At the same time, they also occasionally supplied soldiers for the front. Greetings to domestic troops were published in the newspaper *Karavanken Bote*, which was published by the KVB, as well as in the newspaper *Heimatgruss*, which was sent to each soldier at the front.

At the end of the war, the national amnesty regulation of August 3, 1945 included former forcibly mobilized soldiers in the German army. They returned from various POW camps up to the mid-1950s. They were interrogated at a repatriation camp and, on dismissal, they were given a document called an *objava*, which testified to their status, and had to be given to local offices.

The status of those forcibly mobilised into the *Wehrmacht* after the war was dependent on the situation in the local society.

Many of them were treated as second class citizens, had difficulties in education, getting jobs, obtaining credit. They had no rights, many of them for several years had not even civil rights. Some of them were repeatedly interrogated until the seventies. It was especially difficult for the many people with disabilities, who did not have any legal status. Already in the 1950s, groups of former mobilised were created, who helped each other and sought opportunities for recognition. The state of Yugoslavia did not look favourably on them, and it also obstructed cooperation with Germany and the possibility of Slovenian citizens receiving German annuities or assistance. After the war, former German soldiers were repeatedly listed in various registers, both by bodies of the police administration and the Red Cross, but not even one common list has been preserved, and there is very little archival material from the local offices stored in the archives. Only in 1991 were three societies of Slovenians mobilized into the German army 1941-1945 founded in Kranj, Celje and Maribor and, in 1995, the Association of Societies of Slovenians mobilized into the German army 1941-1945. The societies also erected a number of memorials and actively collected data on conscripts.

In the same year, 1995, they succeeded in being included in the Law on War Victims, which has enabled them to receive a monthly annuity since 2010. However, those mobilised into the German army who were wounded at the front and are disabled, still do not have the status of war invalids and related rights.

Unlike the forcibly mobilised in France, Belgium and Luxembourg, who obtained compensation from Germany as the successor of the Third Reich, those forcibly mobilised into the German army in Slovenia have not succeeded in obtaining such an agreement.