

**The following information, which was not a part of this file, was provided by another US Government agency in 2003 as responsive to the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act**

**Pannwitz, Heinz**

*SS-Hauptsturmführer* (Captain) Heinz Pannwitz served in the Criminal Police in Berlin from 1936 to 1940.

In 1940 Pannwitz was transferred to the Gestapo office in Prague. Pannwitz worked under Reinhard Heydrich, who was determined to destroy all Czech resistance to Nazi rule. Gestapo officials freely used torture, deportation, and executions upon suspected Czech opponents. Following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in May 1942, Pannwitz organized and led a special detachment to investigate this murder. Since Joseph Goebbels had decreed that Jews bore the primary responsibility for the assassination, several hundred Jews were taken from the Theresienstadt camp and murdered. Pannwitz and his men also decided that there was some connection between the Czech assassins (parachuted into Bohemia-Moravia by the Royal Air Force) and inhabitants of the Czech town of Lidice, outside Prague. Based on this information, authorities in Germany decided to destroy Lidice. On June 10, 1942 an SS unit surrounded the town. Every man and all older male children were murdered on the spot. The women and remaining children were taken away, the women apparently sent to the Ravensbrück camp. The town was razed, an act which the Nazis filmed—the captured film was later used by the prosecution during the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg.

Between May 28 and September 1 an additional 3,188 Czechs—a high proportion were former officers or members of the intelligentsia—were arrested and 1,347 condemned to death by emergency courts.<sup>1</sup>

From 1943 to 1945 Pannwitz served as head of the *Sonderkommando Rote Kapelle* (Red Orchestra Special Detachment), a Gestapo unit designed to track down and liquidate the now famous Soviet intelligence network in Western Europe. Some Red Orchestra agents captured were tortured to obtain information; others were turned and used to feed false information back to Moscow. After the war American intelligence and counterintelligence agencies showed a great deal of interest in Pannwitz in connection with his work against the Red Orchestra.

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<sup>1</sup> Callum MacDonald, The Killing of SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich (New York: Free Press, 1989), 197.