

## Einsatzgruppen Massacres (Mobile Killing Units) in Eastern Europe, June 1941-November 1942



*Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units) were German special duty squads, composed primarily of SS and police personnel, assigned to kill Jews as part of the Nazi program to murder the Jews of Europe. The *Einsatzgruppen* also killed Roma (Gypsies), Soviet political commissars, and others whom the Nazis deemed racially or politically unacceptable. *Einsatzgruppen* operated behind the front lines in German-occupied territories in Eastern Europe. During the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* followed the German army as it advanced deep into Soviet territory, and carried out massmurder operations. The German army was responsible for logistical support for the *Einsatzgruppen*, providing supplies, transportation and housing. At first the *Einsatzgruppen* shot primarily Jewish men. Soon, wherever the *Einsatzgruppen* went they shot all Jewish men, women and children, without regard for age or gender. The *Einsatzgruppen* following the German army into the Soviet Union were composed of four battalion-sized operational groups. *Einsatzgruppe A* fanned out from East Prussia across Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia toward Leningrad.

The *Einsatzgruppen* massacred Jews in Kovno, Riga and Vilna. *Einsatzgruppe B* started from Warsaw in occupied Poland, and fanned out across Belorussia toward Smolensk. It massacred Jews in Grodno, Minsk, Brest-Litovsk, Slonim, Gomel and Mogilev, among other places. *Einsatzgruppe C* began operations from the western Generalgouvernement and fanned out across the Ukraine toward Kharkov and Rostov-on-Don. It committed massacres in Lvov, Tarnopol, Zolochov, Kremenets, Kiev, Kharkov, and elsewhere. Of the four units, *Einsatzgruppe D* operated farthest south. It carried out massacres in southern Ukraine and the Crimea, especially in Nikolayev, Kherson, Simferopol, Sevastopol and Feodosiya. By the spring of 1943, the *Einsatzgruppen* had killed more than a million Jews and tens of thousands of Soviet political commissars, partisans and Roma.

**Source:** The map and text on this page are reproduced with the permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, from the **Historical Atlas of the Holocaust** (New York: Macmillan Publishing USA and Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1996); and reprinted here with the permission of the author, Sir Martin Gilbert.