

## Policiniai Batalionai

(Lithuanian Police Battalions), paramilitary group made up of Lithuanians who collaborated with the Germans.

Germany occupied Lithuania in the summer of 1941 as part of its invasion of the Soviet Union and Soviet-held territories (like Lithuania). Various groups of Lithuanian ex-soldiers and ex-officers, police, and all sorts of nationalists (including many high school and university students) began persecuting and murdering Lithuanian Jews and joined the Germans in attacking the withdrawing Soviet army. At the end of 1941 those groups were reorganized into an official framework of battalions, renamed *Policiniai Batalionai*. By August 1942 there were 20 battalions comprised of 8,388 men: 341 were officers, 1,772 were noncommissioned officers, and the rest were privates. Most of the commanders had previously served in the Lithuanian army. The higher-ranking officers had German officers as mentor-liaisons, while the highest levels of Lithuanians reported directly to the district SS and Police Leader.

The *Policiniai Batalionai*, specifically Battalions 1 and 2, played a large role in the mass extermination of the Jews in Lithuania and in nearby parts of Poland and Belorussia. After the war, several members of the battalions were identified and put on trial. Some were found guilty of murdering both civilians and prisoners of war.