

Atlas, Yeheskel

(1913–1942), Doctor and Partisan commander. Born near Warsaw, Atlas studied medicine in both France and Italy. When World War II broke out in September 1939, Atlas was in Kozlovshchizna (in the Novogrudok district), which was located in Soviet-occupied eastern Poland. The Germans attacked the Soviet Union and Soviet-occupied territories in June 1941; they massacred hundreds of thousands of Jews and then set up ghettos for those who survived that first round of extermination. Atlas' parents and sister died in the ghetto in Kozlovshchizna in November 1941. Atlas stayed in the area, serving as a doctor for the nearby farmers and for the Soviet troops who had escaped the Germans and survived in the forest.

When the nearby Derechin Ghetto was liquidated in July 1942, Atlas formed a Jewish partisan company with 120 of the ghetto's survivors. The company, headed by Atlas, was put under the authority of a Soviet partisan commander named Bulat who led a battalion that was active in the Lipiczany Forest. On August 10, 1942 Atlas and his company successfully attacked German policemen in Derechin; they caught and killed 44. Despite the fact that the Soviet authorities wanted Atlas to serve as the partisans' doctor, the partisan leadership saw how talented he was as a fighter, and chose to continue using him as a combat commander instead.

Atlas continued to impress with his bold achievements: he and his men blew up a German train, burned down a bridge, and initiated an attack on Kozlovshchizna in which more than 30 Germans were killed. They also participated in a battle on October 10, 1942, in which the partisans killed 127 Germans, captured 75, and took a large amount of war materials, which they desperately needed. Atlas also provided medical help for the family camp attached to his company that took in refugees from ghettos nearby.

On December 5, 1942 Atlas was injured in a battle that took place in Wielka Wola. He gave over the command of his company to Eliyahu Lipshowitz, and then died from his wounds. (see also Family Camps in the Forests.)

