

Bothmann, Hans

(1911--1946), Commandant of the Chelmno extermination camp.

Bothmann joined the Hitler Youth (*Hitlerjugend*) in 1932. In 1933 he enlisted in the ss. After Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, kicking off World War II, Bothmann was transferred to the Security Police in Poznan, an area of Poland annexed to Germany.

In the spring of 1942 Bothmann was named camp commandant at Chelmno. He served at the camp for a year, during which time he oversaw the extermination of hundreds of thousands of Jews. In March 1943 the deportation of Jews to Chelmno was halted. At that point, Bothmann and 85 members of the Chelmno staff were moved to Yugoslavia, where Bothmann founded a *Sonderkommando* unit that fought the Yugoslav partisans.

In mid-1944 Bothmann and his unit were sent back to Chelmno to renew the gassing campaign there. In August Bothmann's *Sonderkommando* unit participated in the liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto. The unit then took part in *aktion 1005* at Chelmno, the Nazis' attempt to conceal any evidence of the killings that took place there.

Bothmann fled to western Germany in January 1945. He was caught by the British and imprisoned; he committed suicide in jail in April 1946.