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ERNST HALDIMAN

08.05.2016 (Last modified: 08.06.2016)

FACTS

On 5 September 1944, a unit of Belgian maquis attacked a German unit, killing three soldiers. Two days later the American troops arrived in the area and the Germans retreated.

On 22 December 1944, during the Ardennes offensive, the village of Bande was retaken by the Germans.

On Christmas Eve, a unit of the German SD (Sicherheitsdienst) set about arresting all men in the village. These were questioned about the events relating to the September 5 attack, and then lined up in front of the local cafe.

One by one, they were led to an open door and a SD man, positioned just inside the door, fired point blank into each of the victims' neck. All of the 34 men, aged 17 to 32, were killed in this way. Only one managed to flee. This was Léon Praile, who decided to make a run for it and escaped into the woods. He later was able to give testimony regarding the events.

On 10 January 1945, the village of Bande was liberated by British troops and the massacre was discovered.

One man, a German speaking Swiss national by the name of Ernst Haldiman, was identified as being a member of the execution squad. He had joined the SS in France in November 1942 and in 1944 his unit was integrated with other SD units, into No 8 SS Commando for Special Duties.

Haldiman was arrested in Switzerland after the war.



On April 28, 1948, he was sentenced to twenty years in prison.

He was released on parole on June 27, 1960.

Haldiman was the only member of the SS Commando unit that was ever brought to trial.

FACT SHEET

Name: Ernst Haldiman

Nationality: Switzerland

Charges: War crimes

Status: Sentenced

Judgement Place: Switzerland

Particulars: Sentenced to 20 years in prison for his participation in the Bande massacre

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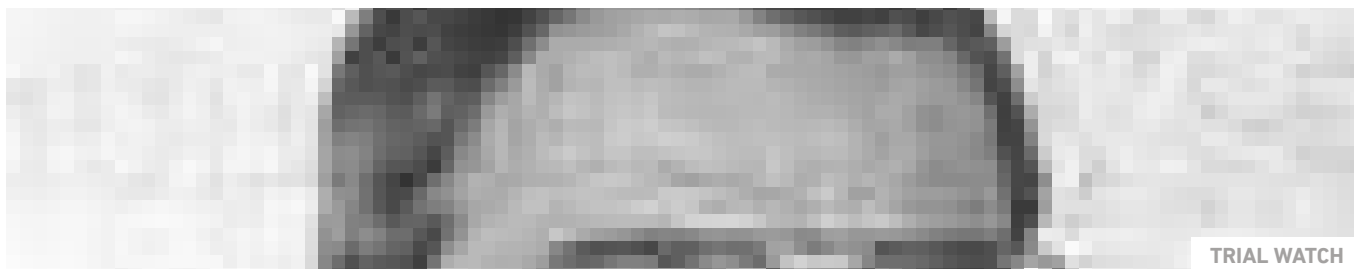
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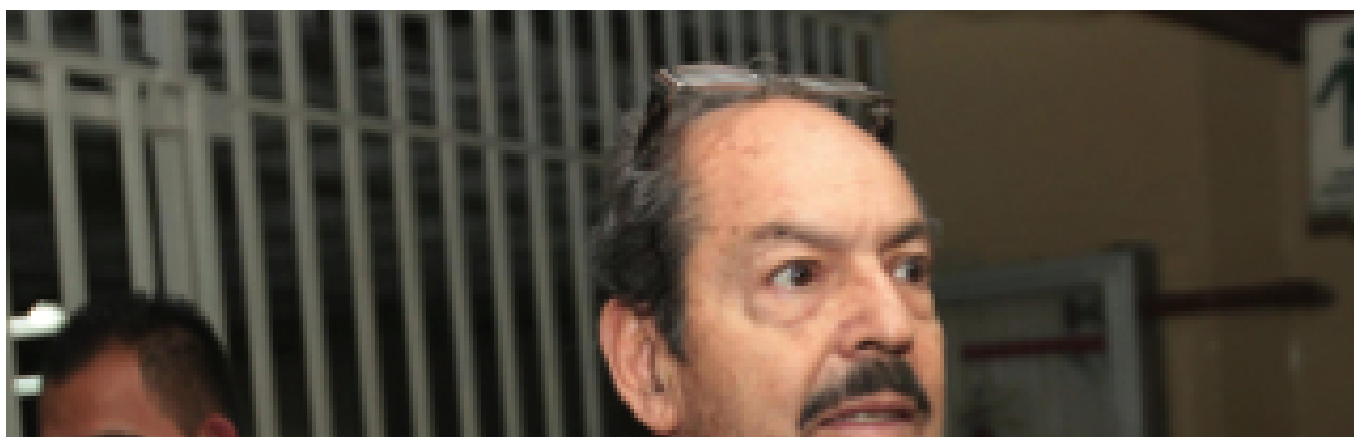
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