

Female SS Guards after their Arrest in Bergen-Belsen (April 15, 1945)

Abstract

Formally, the SS was a purely male organization. Women were accepted into the “clan” through marriage with SS-men, but they had no organizational rank or function. Their job was to raise children and manage the household. But that being said, as members of the SS entourage, women were also called on to work as concentration camp guards and in a range of service positions. After the war began, the number of SS female aides—initially as volunteers, later as forced recruits—rose sharply. The photo shows, among others, camp guard Irma Grese (last row, left) after her arrest by British troops. Grese had distinguished herself by her extreme brutality as a guard at Ravensbrück, Auschwitz-Birkenau II, and Bergen-Belsen. In the first Bergen-Belsen Trial, she was sentenced to death for the abuse and murder of camp inmates. She was executed on December 13, 1945, at the age of twenty-two. Also shown are concentration camp guards Magdalene Kessel (second row, left), Irene Haschke (front row, left) and Herta Bothe (front row, right). Both Haschke and Bothe were sentenced to ten-year prison terms.

Source



Source: Female SS guards after their arrest by British soldiers in Bergen-Belsen, April 15, 1945. Unknown photographer.

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