

Evidence by Blobel on the Burning of Bodies and Obliterating the Traces of Bodies of Jews Killed by the *Einsatzgruppen*

Affidavit

I, Paul *Blobel*, swear, declare and state in evidence:

1. I was born in *Potsdam* on August 13, 1894. From June 1941 to January 1942, I was the Commander of *Sonderkommando 4 A*.
2. After I had been released from this command, I was to report in *Berlin* to SS *Obergruppenfuehrer* Heydrich and *Gruppenfuehrer* Mueller, and in June 1942 I was entrusted by *Gruppenfuehrer* Mueller with the task of obliterating the traces of executions carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* in the East. My orders were that I should report in person to the commanders of the Security Police and SD, pass on Mueller's orders verbally, and supervise their implementation. This order was top secret and *Gruppenfuehrer Mueller* had given orders that owing to the need for strictest secrecy there was to be no correspondence in connection with this task. In September 1942 I reported to Dr. *Thomas* in *Kiev* and passed the order on to him. The order could not be carried out immediately, partly because Dr. *Thomas* was disinclined to carry it out, and also because the materials required for the burning of the bodies were not available. In May and June 1943 I made additional trips to *Kiev* in this matter and then, after conversations with Dr. *Thomas* and with SS and Police Leader Hennecke, the order was carried out.
3. During my visit in August I myself observed the burning of bodies in a mass grave near *Kiev*. This grave was about 55 m. long, 3 m. wide and 2½ m. deep. After the top had been removed the bodies were covered with inflammable material and ignited. It took about two days until the grave burned down to the bottom. I myself observed that the fire had glowed down to the bottom. After that the grave was filled in and the traces were now practically obliterated.
4. Owing to the moving up of the front-line it was not possible to destroy the mass graves further south and east which had resulted from executions by the *Einsatzgruppen*. I traveled to Berlin in this connection to report, and was then

sent to Estonia by *Gruppenfuehrer Mueller*. I passed on the same orders to *Oberfuehrer Achammer-Pierader* in *Riga*, and also to *Obergruppenfuehrer Jeckeln*. I returned to Berlin in order to obtain fuel. The burning of the bodies began only in May or June 1944. I remember that incinerations took place in the area of *Riga* and *Reval*. I was present at such incinerations near *Reval*, but the graves were smaller here and contained only about 20 to 30 bodies. The graves in the area of *Reval* were about 20 or 30 kms. east of the city in a marshy district and I think that 4 or 5 such graves were opened and the bodies burned.

5. According to my orders I should have extended my duties over the entire area occupied by the *Einsatzgruppen*, but owing to the retreat from Russia I could not carry out my orders completely....

I have made this disposition of my own free will, without any kind of promise of reward, and I was not subjected to any form of compulsion or threat.

Nuremberg, June 18, 1947

signed Paul Blobel

Source: Yitzhak Arad, Yisrael Gutman, Abraham Margalio (Eds.), *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem 1981, Document no. 212, pp. 471-473.