

WINTER MAGIC

'Winter 'Magic (Winterzauber)

Code name for the punitive operation of German Nazi invaders against the partisans of the [Rasony-Asvieja Partisan Zone](#) and the civilian population in the Siebiezh — Asvieja — Polack triangle (in the territory of modern Vierhniadzvinsk, Polack, and Rasony rajons of Viciebsk Voblast) on February 14 — March 20, 1943, during the Great Patriotic War.

It was conducted by the 'Combat Group Berta' which included 10 police battalions, motorised gendarmerie subunits, communications and artillery subunits, and the 2nd Special Air Group. From the north and south, the operation area was besieged by the subunits of the 201st Security and 391st Field Training divisions.

With joint attacks from the front and rear, the partisans of Viciebsk Voblast and Kalinin Oblast and Latvia inflicted heavy losses on the punitive forces and made them retreat. The special detachments of the [1st Drysa Partisan Brigade](#), [Asvieja M. V. Frunze Partisan Brigade](#), and the skiers of the M. A. Shchors Detachment of the K. K. Rokosovskij Partisan Brigade under P. M. Masheraw acted particularly boldly and effectively in the rear.

In the course of the operation, the Hitlerites killed and burned alive 3,500 local inhabitants, 2,000 were abducted for hard labour to Germany, more than a thousand children were sent to the Salaspils death camp (Latvia); the Hitlerites looted and burned 158 settlements, including together with the inhabitants of the villages of [Abraziejeva](#), [Aniskava](#), [Buly](#), [Zharnasieki](#), [Kaliuta](#), [Kanstancinava](#), [Papartnava](#), Sakalova, etc. The killers felt unsatisfied because 'there was no civilian population to remove minefields at the moment'. Punitive forces commandeered all agricultural products from the villages, stole livestock, but they did not manage to destroy the partisans and eliminate the partisan zone.

Literature

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