



1. Jonas Zemaitis-Vytautas (1909 – 1954) – captain of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, joined partisan fighters in 1945, commander of the district of Kėstutis (1947 – 1948), the first commander of the region Western Lithuania (1948) Elected as chairman of the Council Presidium of the Movement for the Fight for Freedom of Lithuania at the congress of all the Lithuania's partisan leaders in February 1949 and awarded the rank of partisan general. Signatory of the 16 February 1949 declaration of Council of the Movement for the Fight for Freedom of Lithuania. Arrested on 30 May 1953. Convicted and shot by the Soviets on 26 November 1954 in Moscow's Butyrka prison.
2. Third on the left, sitting: J. Zemaitis. 1947.

STATEHOOD LOST

In late thirties of the 20th century Europe lived in terror of the totalitarian regimes of Germany and the Soviet Union looking to expand their empires. In 1939 Stalin and Hitler arranged to divide and share Central Europe (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact). This agreement placed Lithuania and other Baltic countries in the zone under Soviet influence. The USSR materialized the agreement with Germany by imposing on Lithuania the Mutual Assistance Treaty. In 1940 Lithuania was presented with an ultimatum demanding to host a Soviet military contingent of indefinite size and to change the government. Although Lithuania had well-trained armed forces and could repel the Soviets with success, Lithuania's political authorities chose to comply with the ultimatum and issued an order for the Lithuanian Armed Forces not to counter. This way Lithuania was deprived of its statehood for the second time in its history. The decision not to resist developed to be suicidal. The country suffered barbaric losses, the brutal Soviet repressive system carried out massive extermination of the country's residents.

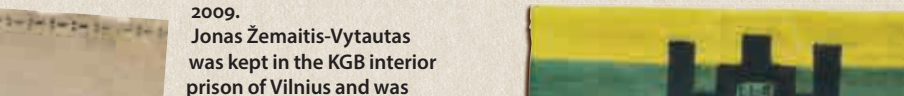
RESISTANCE FIGHT

The USSR's reoccupation of Lithuania in summer 1944 faced a fierce resistance of the population. Fighters for Lithuania's freedom opted for armed resistance and began rallying partisans and forming units. Former members of Lithuanian armed forces, or simply patriots built a force of approximately 30,000 partisans in Lithuania's forests by 1945, large platoons (200 men) were formed, 50 battles with the occupational army followed the pattern of clashes between regular armies. The Lithuanian partisans were the fighters of the sovereignty of the state of Lithuania that had been occupied. The partisans had an abundance of goals set for themselves as they fought to protect people of Lithuania and against the sovietisation processes, but their essential strategic goal that persisted throughout the time-period of resistance was an independent Lithuania.

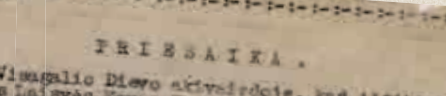
The leader of resistance fights of Lithuania Brigadier General Jonas Zemaitis-Vytautas was recognised as the fourth President of Lithuania by a resolution of the Parliament on March 11, 2009.



Jonas Zemaitis-Vytautas was kept in the KGB interior prison of Vilnius and was



subjected to interrogations in Vilnius and Moscow, and maintained allegiance to the oath of a Lithuanian officer and the partisans commander. His evidence did not provide grounds for apprehending or destroying a single person. In his final word in the trial Jonas Zemaitis said: "I do not perceive myself a citizen of the USSR. <...> I regard Lithuania as occupied by the Soviet Union at present. <...> I do not confess to have done anything of culpable nature. <...> I refuse to comment on this case. I do not intend to be of use for the agencies of the Soviet authority. The Soviet government is the enemy of my country and my person. <...> I consider all the actions of the underground I was a member of which were directed against the Soviet Union just and do not consider those actions illegitimate. I only want to emphasise that to the extent to which I lead the resistance movement of Lithuania's fighters for freedom, I was trying to ensure that it fell in line with humanist principles. I am perfectly aware of the decision this court will make. And I still consider that the fight I was leading for nine years will get its results."



Visuomeni Dievo akivaizdoje, kad ištinimai ir sąjūdinimai nepriklausomai atstovauti, nepašalinami ir savo turto, viršūninių įsakymus, įsveitinti įsiveitinti visose san patikėtose tik apie laisvę susišaukti, tuojuo sąjūtinai ir visur.



Exercise of the partisans of Eastern Lithuania. 1948.



MAJOR BATTLES

BATTLE OF KIAUNELIŠKIS

A large battle began in the forest of Labanoras on March 11, 1945, and lasted three days. Partisans of the Tigras Territorial Unit of the Lithuanian Freedom Army entrenched in 'Kaunas' and 'Margis' bunkers fought bravely against the envelopment of 2,000 occupants. When the partisans in the Kaunas bunker fell short of ammunition, they decided to detonate themselves with the remaining grenades rather than surrender to the enemy. They sat down in a close circle and said the last prayer before blowing up their last grenade in the middle. 300 Russian soldiers were killed. The partisans changed their areas of operation and operational tactics after the battle.

BATTLE OF KALNIŠKĖ

One of the largest battles in the history of Lithuania's resistance fight took place on 16-17 May 1945 in the forest of Kalniškė. Approximately 100-120 partisans were fighting encircled by several times as many NKVD soldiers. Lithuanians defended robustly and managed to break through many of the enemy's obstructions. The NKVD forces suffered significant losses of several hundreds of killed and injured.

BATTLE NEAR ŽUVINTAS-PALIAI

On 6-12 August 1945 large Soviet forces encircled Lithuanian partisans in the area near Žuvintas-Paliai with armoured vehicles and air support. The partisans entrenched themselves on the islands of swampy lakes and resisted Russian attempts to assault them in boats for a week. One of the platoons camouflaged in an isle in Žuvintas and waited secretly for the NKVD soldiers to approach. The enemy came at night as close as 30-40 meters from the

RAID ON MERKINĖ

The battle of Merkinė of 15 December 1945 is one of the largest offensives of partisan warfare in Lithuania. Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas ordered to attack. It was snowing heavily, the partisans moved in to directions – from the town cemetery and from the street of Vilnius. The partisans capture the NKVD headquarters, post office, offices of the volost and militsya. This operation had a huge impact in terms of spirits – the news spread throughout Lithuania at lightning speed that freedom fighters were swapping defence for a resolute attack. The success of the partisans of Džukija region inspired the freedom fighters of Lithuania to rev up action.

ATTRIBUTES

As Lithuanian partisans upheld the traditions of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, they wore military uniforms with insignia, followed military rank system and military discipline. Their insignia was dominated by symbols of the independent Lithuania and its armed forces – the sign of Vytytis, the sign of Gediminaičiai, the cross of Vytytis, the Tricolour flag. This insignia was placed on the flashes on the left sleeve of partisans uniforms or civilian clothing.



Inscription says: "We will stand bravely in the guard of freedom."



Partisans of Central Lithuania. Commander of one of the subdivisions sitting on the right is wearing a jacket with a sleeve patch of his district. Spring of 1949.

PARISAN BUNKERS

The postwar fighters were caused to install well-hidden covers as the occupational forces seized more and more control in the territory. That was done to the most convenience in people's homesteads as hosts used to provide partisans with food and other necessities, follow the environment and alert them in case of a threat. Sadly, the hosts suffered along with the partisans in case of disclose, their homesteads were often burnt down during or following assaults and the hosts fell victims to deportation if still alive. For such reasons partisans most often established themselves in the woods. The covers intended for long periods of hiding and wintering were spacier: had berths, ventilation, some – even stoves and wells. Life there, however, was a trying one: the ceiling would leak, it was cold and damp, and short of



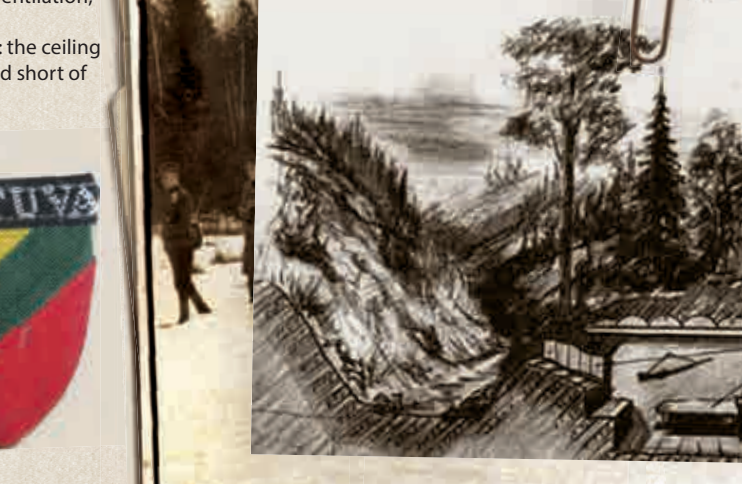
Sleeve patches of Lithuanian freedom fighters. Commander of one of the subunit of Southern Lithuania is wearing a uniform of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. There is a patch of the territorial unit of Iron Wolf on his left sleeve.



Training material – a KGB-drawn album of partisan bunkers.

CENTRALISATION OF THE RESISTANCE IN LITHUANIA

A convention of representatives of partisans districts which took place in February 1949 united fighters of anti-Soviet resistance under a joint organisation – the Movement for the Fight for Freedom of Lithuania (LLKS). The convention ratified documents to legitimise political and military leadership of the LLKS in the fight for the freedom of the nation. The declaration endorsed by the LLKS Council on 16 February 1949 declared the partisans authority the supreme legitimate authority of Lithuania, a will to re-establish an independent and democratic Republic of Lithuania was put forth as the primary goal of the fight. The document also established the military territorial organisation of the resistance movement with section as the smallest partisans unit which then formed platoons, platoons – territorial units, and territorial units – districts. There were nine partisans districts constituting three partisans territories.



Map of the partisan districts of Lithuania



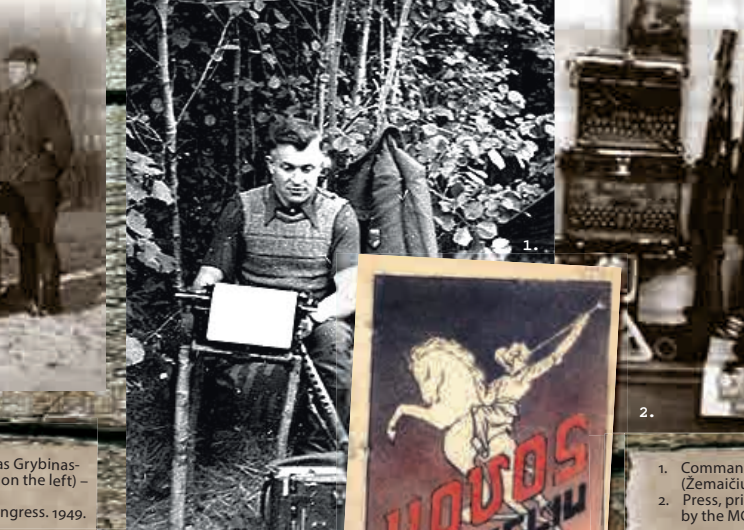
1. Representatives of the partisan region of Eastern Lithuania – Aleksandras Grybinas-Faustas (second from the left) and Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas (third on the left) – on the way to the convent of all the Lithuania's partisan leaders.
2. A meeting of Southern and Western Lithuanian partisans prior to the congress. 1949.

A BATTLE FOR HEARTS AND MINDS

Among other methods, the occupational government resorted to informational influence, namely, denigration of partisan to project onto them an image of criminals. The Lithuanian partisans were well aware of the power of propaganda which is why an underground press was developed at the very outset of the armed resistance. The period of its existence was covered by periodicals of no less than 54 names, and 18 more nonperiodicals, also proclamations, poetry and song books. Partisans invoked humour to combat the brutal terror of the occupants – caricatures circulated unveiled the events of those days from Soviet propaganda.



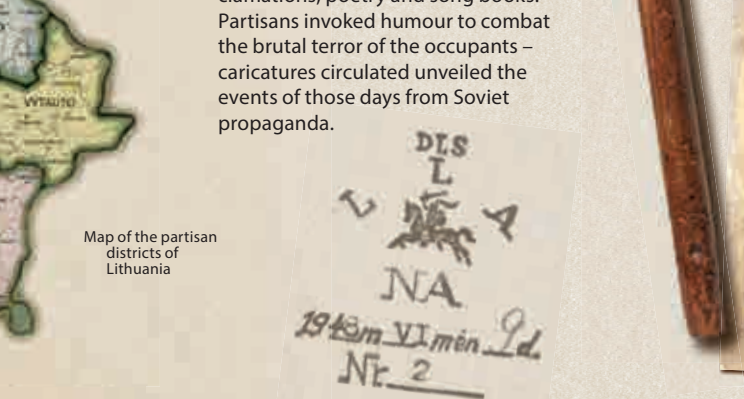
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1. Commander of one of the districts of Western Lithuania (Zemaičių-Samogitians) - Vladas Montvydas-Zemaitis.
2. Press, printing equipment and weapons of partisans found by the MGB in one of the bunkers.

AN UNEQUAL FIGHT

The struggle against anti-Soviet resistance in Lithuania was headed by the Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Lithuanian Soviet Republic (NKVD) and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the State Security (NKGB), which in the spring of 1946 were renamed ministries (MVD and MGB). One of the main spheres of activities of both departments till 1953 was to crush resistance. The Department of Fight against Gangsterism (OBB) that belonged to the Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the LSSR, which was reorganized in the Administration of Fight against Gangsterism (UBB) in 1946. In February 1947 this Administration was handed over to the Ministry of State Security of the LSSR and in its place Administration 2N of the Ministry of State Security of the LSSR was formed. Since then it has become the organizer of a struggle against the partisan movement. Repressive institutions co-ordinated their actions with Moscow, and in Lithuania – with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania. The main force to break down the armed resistance was the SSRS NKVD-MVD-MGB internal army. There might have been approximately 60-70 thousand soldiers of various levels of subordination and other armed individuals fighting against Lithuanian partisans in the second half of 1945. In the first year of postwar counter-parti-

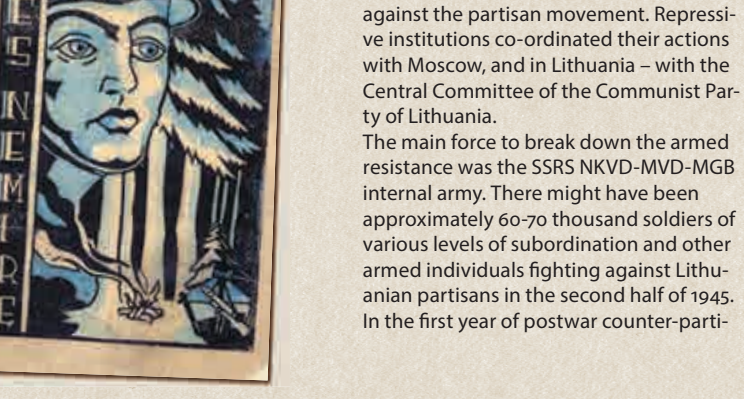


3. Inscription in Russian: Agents-stormtroopers disguised in the uniforms of Lithuanian partisans. Photo from a KGB album.
2. Partisans of Southern Lithuania at the grave of their fallen comrades.
3. Partisans of Northern Lithuania burying a fallen brother-in-arms.

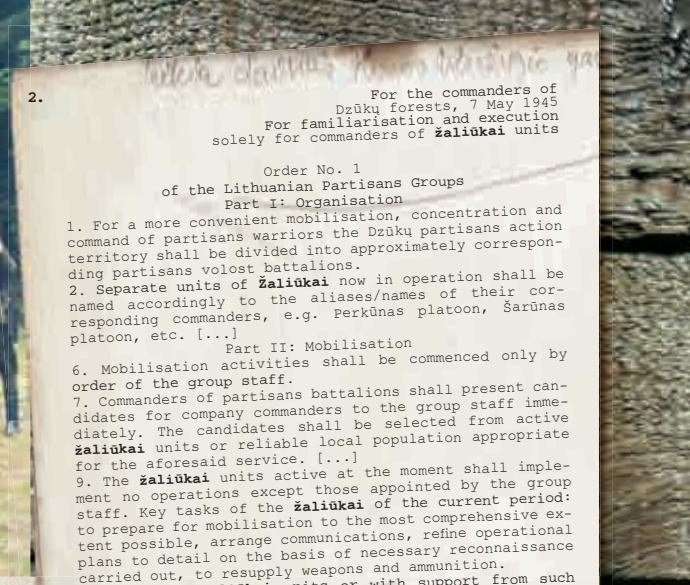


1. Commander of one of the districts of Western Lithuania (Zemaičių-Samogitians) - Vladas Montvydas-Zemaitis.
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san measures were organised as large military operations involving over 20,000 Russian soldiers and aerial reconnaissance. Subsequently the occupants changed and improved their ways turning to ambushes and persecutions of Lithuanian partisans executed by Chekist operative teams. The repressive institutions also invoked agents, informants, special provocation teams of alleged Lithuanian partisans to defeat the resistance. MGB men used to bring to village squares the remains of the members of the resistance movement killed in battles or after interrogations and keep them there for days. The campaign was called "Recognition procedure" in official parlance. MGB employed this type of psychological operation to intimidate local population.



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OVER THE IRON CURTAIN

Getting in contact with Western countries and Lithuanian organisations abroad was vital for the Lithuanian partisans in the territory of Lithuania all on their own. They hoped for arms, munitions, medicine, devices for communication; political support was also badly needed. Lithuanian partisans sought to make the world hear about the partisans war for the reestablishment of Lithuania.

The majority of partisans blindly relied on the Atlantic Charter of 14 August 1941 were Winston Churchill and Theodore Roosevelt keystoned the right of every nation subjugated by aggressors during the war to restore its independence. They were not aware of the Yalta agreements were allies approved a right for the USSR to manage the annexed territories.

The first envoys of the Lithuanian resistance to the West were Jurgis Krikščionas and Juozas Lukša in spring 1947. In Poland they succeeded in giving over a recurrence for assistance for exile organisations to a representative of national resistance abroad Jonas Deksnys and in returned to Lithuania safely.

In December 1947 Kazimieras Pyplys and Juozas Lukša took over the iron curtain abundant documentary material on the Soviet repressions in Lithuania and fights for freedom. Jurgis Krikščionas was killed in Poland prior to delivering the message about the establishment of a new organisation, LLKS, to the West which was the

- 1. Inscription on the reverse: "During the march over the Iron Curtain, 21 December 1947."
2. The commissioned representatives of the Lithuanian partisans in the West.
3. Weapons and equipment seized by Soviet security personnel that belonged to paratroopers sent to Lithuania from the West.
4. Juozas Lukša, the commissioned representative of the Lithuanian partisans for communication with the West, in Paris, 1949.

intention of his journey in spring 1949. Having made it to the West K. Pyplys and J. Lukša began arranging their return. K. Pyplys was airdropped into the territory of Lithuania only a year and a half later, and J. Lukša – only after more than two years and a half. They found severely rarefied but still determined lines of comrades awaiting hopeful news from the West...



IMPORTANCE OF ARMED RESISTANCE

The decade-long organised armed resistance demonstrated the determination of the major part of the Lithuanian nation to fight for its state and freedom in the most extreme conditions possible; with any external support absent, with detention meaning torture, then – death. The resistance period in its entirety (1944-1953) claimed lives of over 20,000 freedom fighters. This war involved more than 50,000 participants, while the whole of the resistance movement numbered approximately 100,000 of Lithuania's population as members of underground organisations and supporters.

The intensity of resistance prevented the Soviets from colonising the territory of Lithuania at ease and saved the ideal of a state of Lithuania for future generations. The ambition to be free soaked in postwar partisans' blood will be materialised in 1990 with another Lithuania's break from "the prison of nations".



FREEDOM REGAINED

When the armed resistance receded, Lithuanian resistance against the Soviet regime assumed new shapes. Although the death of Stalin in 1953 lifted the Soviet repressions to a certain extent, the oppression of the USSR that had destroyed normal living of the Lithuanian society by then basically persisted. Guided by principles inconsistent with evolution of a healthy society, corrupted and swamped by stagnation, the governing regime of the Soviet empire was destroyed from inside as it went bankrupt in both, moral and economic terms. The truth long hidden within loosened the foundations of this empire and made the peoples of its nations doubt its existence altogether. In 1988 the Reform Movement of Lithuania was born.



The singing revolution broke out; encouraged and deported in thousand people rallies the idea of Lithuania's complete freedom became flesh on the 11th of March, 1990, with the nearly unanimous announcement by the first post-Soviet occupation democratically elected Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania of the Act on the Restoration of an Independent State of Lithuania which re-established the sovereignty of Lithuania once illegitimately abolished by Soviet aggression. Lithuania's statehood had to defence again to prove its right for existence. This time there were no armed force to turn to at all, and Lithuania had to throw masses of unarmed people and scarcely armed volunteers between its freedom and one of the strongest armies worldwide. The 13th of January, 1991, saw one more battle for the freedom of Lithuania. And it was a victorious battle.

- 1. Partisans of the B Territorial Unit of the Didžioji Kova District posing by a snowman bearing considerable resemblance to Josef Stalin, the USSR dictator.
2. Personnel of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan. The snowman for the memory of Lithuania's freedom fighters.
3. LITHOSOF sign.
4. The flag of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces.

Successors of the post war resistance

The name of Žaliukai (forest brothers) for members of the Voluntary National Defence Service (Lith. SKAT) started to forming in 1995 was not chosen incidentally. It was a look-back on the War after war fighters. The word Žaliukas that came into use for referring to personnel of Special Purpose Services in about 1997 meant more that tribute to the decade-long armed resistance. It meant voluntary choice, determination, and the status of future special forces. Hard efforts and advantageous circumstances have brought the Žaliukai of today from the underground. A dynamic transformation of the Lithuanian Special Operations Force is observed when we look back at the course of events during the past 20 years: a relatively small unit has grown into the fourth service of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

The influence of the War after war on the evolution of the SOF is direct: battle order that is now indispensable in patrolling was widely used by the Lithuanian partisans. Another aspect is even more interesting: partisans used to fasten lightning-bugs on their uniforms when conducting night marches to follow their battle order mate easier. Could it be the prototype of a modern reflector?

...this company [the territorial unit is called the mysterious company. They do master partisan tactics – launching offensives and disappearing. Russians are looking for them in vain – they are gone as if ground has swallowed them. Russians know: partisans are here, but there is no way of tracing or finding them. That is the most excellent tactic: first, it frightens Russians and spies, second, they experience no damage and retain communications." (Justinas Lelesius-Grafas, territorial unit of Tauras)

So-called "flying" partisans units were particularly frequent. They were able to appear in the target location quickly and to disappear without a trace after accomplishing their task. A platoon of modern intervention follows similar principles with support from special helicopter squad. The present day Žaliukai have retained the memory of their War after war predecessors not only by bearing their name. The organisation, discipline, determination and self-sacrifice has always been and will always be the role-model and motivation for modern day Žaliukai that seek to follow the honourable traditions.



ŽALIUKAS

"Žaliukas" is the qualification patch in the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces. Žaliukas is the word for the state of alert of the unyielding part of the nation in the face of danger. At a critical moment, when official authority is no more there, Žaliukai gather for their homeland defence. Although their action is organised. The resistance of Žaliukai to the oppression of their nation is lying at the roots of the nation.

The meaning of the name of žaliukas has not been forgotten till today. A symbolic campaign was carried and a monument for the fallen forest brothers was officially unveiled at the territory Special Operations Forces in 2005. A cross of oak-wood, three and a half meters in height and nearly two meters in width, was blessed and the memory of War after war Žaliukai honoured by three rounds of gun salute. A stone is placed next to the cross bearing an inscription from a folk song speaking about the battle near Kalniškė in 1945: "Dear sister, make a wreath of green and bring it here by stealth, a black wood cross, dear brother, plant under the darkness shield (Lith. Sese, pink vainišką žalią, / Atnešik paslapčia, / Broli, juoda medžio kryžių, / Pastatyk naktiā." (And the following inscription: "For the fallen forest brothers 1944–1956.")



- 1. Modern-day Žaliukai. The successors of the traditions of Lithuanian partisans.
2. Order No. 1 of Juozas Vitkus-Kazimieraitis, commander of Džūkai team. On the Organisation of Mobilization of Partisans of 7 May 1945, is the first document to mention the name of žaliukas.

Table with distribution of document copies: For execution: 20 copies; For familiarisation: Supreme Partisans Staff 2, For the group staff 2, For the neighbouring group staff 2. In total: 26 copies.

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Armed anti-Soviet resistance in Lithuania, 1944-1953



In 1944-1945 the whole world got carried away by the idea that the German Nazism was concurred and the war that had claimed millions of lives was done with. However, Lithuania, just like other Baltic nations, that lost their independence as early as 1940 and has already experienced the pleasures of the "Soviet paradise", were dominated by slightly different moods. It was then that a nationalist war broke out in Lithuania seeking to re-establish the statehood.

