



BANN NUMBERS AND GEBIET TRIANGLES

Handbook OF THE Hitler-Jugend

by Wilhelm P.B.R. Saris
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Foreword & Introduction



The Hitler-Youth organization has always been one of this author's favorite subjects, especially when still actively collecting until the early 1980s. For years it was my intention to compile lists with numbers and letter indications as found on shoulder straps for the *Hitler-Jugend* (hereafter referred to as HJ), based on the numerous requests by collectors to identify items in their collections or what they observed in period photographs. I was often able to give an affirmative answer because of the material at hand and now wish to give other interested parties access to this material.

I started working on the subject in about 1995 basically using German resources (as it was intended to be published in Germany), and have thus compiled workable listings. It was my opinion that a "historical" development of the triangles and shoulder straps as worn was also needed. Knowing a specific number did not guarantee you knew the right time frame. This could only be established when looking at the other combinations of worn insignia. Within a few months I had the text completed, but then a major loss of my files occurred. Large portions of the lists with numbers and some of the text were lost and could not be retrieved.

At that moment I lost all interest to start over again, and I proceeded with other research projects. In 2003, I reconsidered my thoughts on this reference work, but first had to finish another project related to "Aiguillettes of the Third Reich." This took priority as I did additional work on the headgear series. At the time of writing this foreword the lay-out for Volume 4 of the headgear series had been checked and the text for Volume 5 was in draft form. Now I could once again concentrate on the HJ project and start my translating process. It had been rumored for years that in Germany, as well as in the United States, some individuals were intending to do something on the *HJ-Bann* subject. I considered it a pity if a "quick and dirty" reference would appear giving only the numbers and unit locations. The author's intention had always been to show all possible and known changes, adaptations, etc., with the most accurate dates.

This reference is designed to be a guide for collectors and a handbook of identification. Therefore, it includes information about known districts (*Gebiete*) for the *Hitler-Jugend* with all known changes and renamings. The main goal was to include all known official *Banne* with their official names (*Bann*: a regiment or "ban," which was in fact a jurisdiction...this is further simply referred to as *Bann*), location or headquarters (*Dienstszitz*) between August 1933 to about mid-war. It also includes the earlier existing *Gauverbände* between 1931 and 1933 (hereafter referred to as *Gau*).

Additionally, the various *Reichsbanne* (national bans), the special formations and the special forces are included. It was also planned to include all known schools and camps. Only those which had a special designation by wearing an abbreviation on the shoulder strap(s) or special triangle have been included. By using this book the designation on the triangle, and especially the shoulder strap number which belongs to the specific triangle, are explained. Changes due to reorganization of districts are also included. After January 1942, however, the information found is vague and unclear. The name of the *Bann*, which in most cases is the name of the district, region or city, will help the reader locate the area of a specific unit.

In other chapters the history, development and introduction dates of triangles and shoulder straps for the general HJ, the special formations, and the development of the Deutsches Jungvolk (DJ) shoulder strap are examined briefly. The special triangles related to the HJ abroad are also covered. Documents and material used in compiling this reference will be found listed in the footnotes throughout this book.

A decision had to be made whether to include the numbers for the *DJ-Jungbanne* or not, as this would add considerable pages to the book. The numbers before the slash were mostly dissolved in the late 1930s and were in fact only in use with the shoulder strap for about two years. From late 1938 the *Jungbann* number was almost always the same as the *Bann* number. Thereafter, no *Jung-*

bann number existed with a slash. The so-called *Untergaue*, the sub-districts for the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM) and *Jungmädel* (JM) are not included as the girls did not wear shoulder straps. Therefore, only the triangle or eventually a cuffband can identify the proper unit, but keep in mind that in July 1938 the female leaders' dress was introduced with some breast ranking insignia carrying the *Untergau* designation. The cuffbands will be covered only briefly. Also, none of the worn arm shields, arm patches and other insignia for DJ, male and female leaders are covered as they do not identify an area and are therefore not relevant to this study. Some will be displayed, however, in period photographs.

Another question of inclusion were the *Marine-HJ* cap tallies on which lettering was positioned (since October 1938 a name with a *Gefolgschaft* and *Bann* number before and after). Keep in mind that these names are *not* the true *Bann* name, but the name of the location. Since no official list of all existing *Marine-HJ* units has been found, it was decided not to include these. This subject is quite confusing as before and especially after the fall of 1938 more than one name could be used within one *Bann*, while the location of the *Gefolgschaften* was a different one. In the coming Volume 6 of the "*Headgear of Hitler's Germany*" series all known names for tallies will be listed. This present volume will give you, the reader, some *Marine-HJ* photographs with tallies to illustrate the differently used names in contrast to *Bann* names.

While developing the concept of this handbook, it was decided to spread photographs throughout chapters 1, 2 and 3 and some with the introduction for chapter 5. Chapter 4 only gives information about an organizational plan for one *Bann*. The photo captions almost always give in-depth information about who, what and where. They also contain interesting data about regulations, changes, the introduction and abolishing of uniforms, insignia and other items, etc. The list of *Bann* numbers, therefore, will not have photographs accompanying them as they might detract from the use of the listings. After all, this book is designed to be a useable reference.

As an addition, it was decided to include all known numbers of manufacturers of cloth insignia who had a permission to produce from the *Reichszeugmeisterei*. This list starts with input from the "*Handbuch der RZM*" in 1935, and will also list those whose permission was withdrawn up through late 1944.

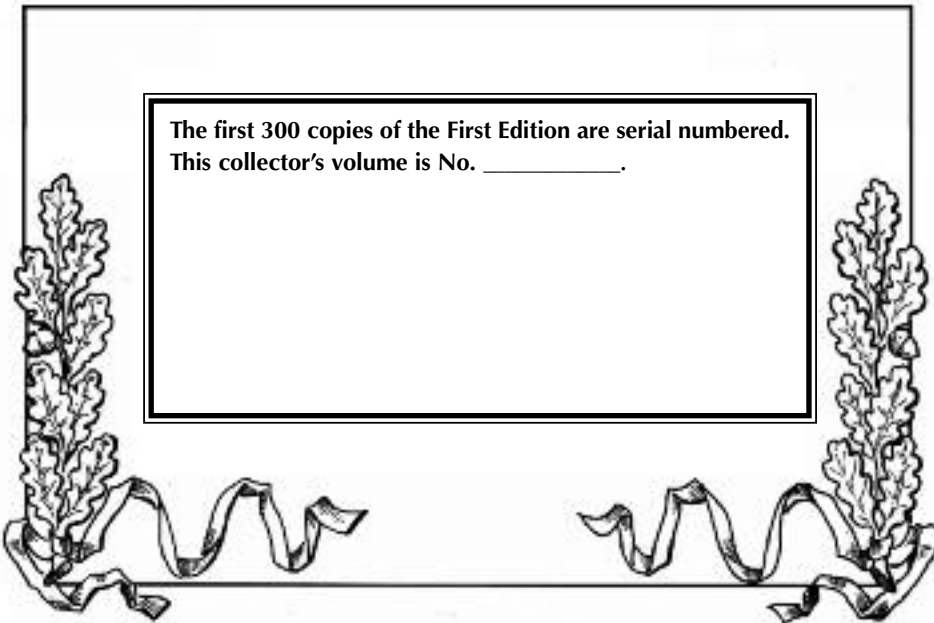
One can now immediately find a *Bann* number and check it for the appropriate triangle from the enclosed lists, but initially it was not always obvious which *Bann* numbers were used within a district. This problem was eventually resolved. Now the second part of chapter 5 includes all districts and related numbers.

Occasionally the author is told that he must have the most extensive Third Reich archive in private hands...which is greatly ex-

aggerated as I still have many gaps in my files. Actually, for about 25 years I have *always* depended on the valued assistance of two German friends who wish to remain anonymous. Their knowledge and files are many times larger than mine, but even they lack some essential material. I consider myself as only a “cog in the machine” and I learn from every document and written message I examine. My only intention is to improve the knowledge of collectors and those who are considered “really interested.” This author is often annoyed by the incorrect data and information spread by those “who know everything about the Third Reich,” especially on the various internet forums. Also annoying is the incorrect addition of insignia on a uniform only to get more money out of an item. As we in the collecting community know, the collecting world is studded with “fakers and crooks,” some of whom we know as experts. I actively started research in about 1970 and after more than 35 years feel that I still hardly grasp what the Germans (or Nazis) did during their years of existence. Working on the many projects in the past to include articles and books, I feel I might know about 20% of what I would like to know. It appears that I would need another 40 years to really study the Third Reich subject in depth, but I fear that sands in the hourglass are starting to run out.

Additional note from the author:

Readers should note that portions of the text have been condensed, especially in the Special Forces chapter. This was done to limit the size of this book and keep it from becoming a two volume set.



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