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Ex-Nazi, 92, Goes on Trial In War Death

By MELISSA EDDY

BERLIN — A 92-year-old man who served as a border guard in Adolf Hitler's elite Waffen-SS troops went on trial on Monday on charges that he shot and killed a Dutch resistance fighter in the final months of World War II. His prosecution is part of a German effort to bring aging Nazis to justice before it is too late.

The trial of the onetime guard, Siert Bruins, in the Hagen state court in western Germany, is part of a wider attempt across Europe to prosecute former Nazis who have not drawn much attention from a legal system that focused mainly on higher-level officers. Mr. Bruins is one of several men accused of serving an important but largely invisible role in Nazi atrocities to face charges in recent years.

Mr. Bruins, who was born in the Netherlands but acquired German citizenship while serving with the Nazis, is accused of killing Aldert Klaas Dijkema, a Dutch resistance fighter, on the night of Sept. 21, 1944.

According to the indictment, Mr. Bruins and another member of the border patrol took Mr. Dijkema to an abandoned factory, where he was killed with four shots, including one to the back of his head.

While it is not clear whether Mr. Bruins pulled the trigger that night, there is a legal precedent for prosecuting him anyway.

[John Demjanjuk was convicted](#) in May 2011 of being an accessory to the murder of more than 28,000 Jews after a Munich court determined that he had been a guard at the [Sobibor death camp](#) in Nazi-occupied Poland in 1943.

That conviction, the first time a German court found a suspect guilty of Nazi war crimes without evidence that he had personally committed a specific crime, prompted the [Simon Wiesenthal Center](#) to offer rewards of up to \$32,500 for information leading to prosecution and punishment in similar cases.

Ulrich Sander, a member of a group known as V.V.N., which represents Germans who were persecuted by the Nazis, welcomed the trial of Mr. Bruins as a signal to victims of the Nazis and their survivors despite the decades that have passed.

“Whoever worked in a concentration camp knew that he was part of the machinery of death,” Mr. Sander told the German news agency DPA. “No one could close their eyes on that.”

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: September 2, 2013

Earlier versions of this article misspelled the first name of Siert Bruins as Sirit and as Siet.