

Architect's unit cited in massacre of Jews

His outfit may have helped kill 1,522 in two days, documents say. He says charges are false.

By David Lee Preston
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

A retired Lansdowne architect, named Monday in a federal denaturalization complaint, was the second in command of a volunteer Lithuanian battalion that may have helped the Nazis murder 1,522 Jews in two days at three villages outside Kaunas in 1941, documents indicate.

The Justice Department complaint charges that Jonas Stelmokas, 75, of the 200 block of North Lansdowne Avenue, "advocated, assisted, participated or acquiesced in the murder and other persecution of Jews and

other unarmed civilians in Lithuania." The complaint does not detail the basis for the accusation of murder.

Stelmokas, a leader of Philadelphia's Lithuanian community for four decades, told a television interviewer yesterday that the charges against him were fabricated.

The accusation against him appears to stem from documents like those in the possession of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem.

According to a battalion order prepared at Kaunas in 1941 — and procured from Lithuanian archives last year by the Wiesenthal center — Stelmokas was second in command of more than 20 men from the Third Lithuanian Auxiliary Police Service Battalion sent on a "secret mission to the provinces" outside Kaunas in September 1941.

The Lithuanian-language document
See **ARCHITECT** on A18

June 17, 1992, Stelmokas

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