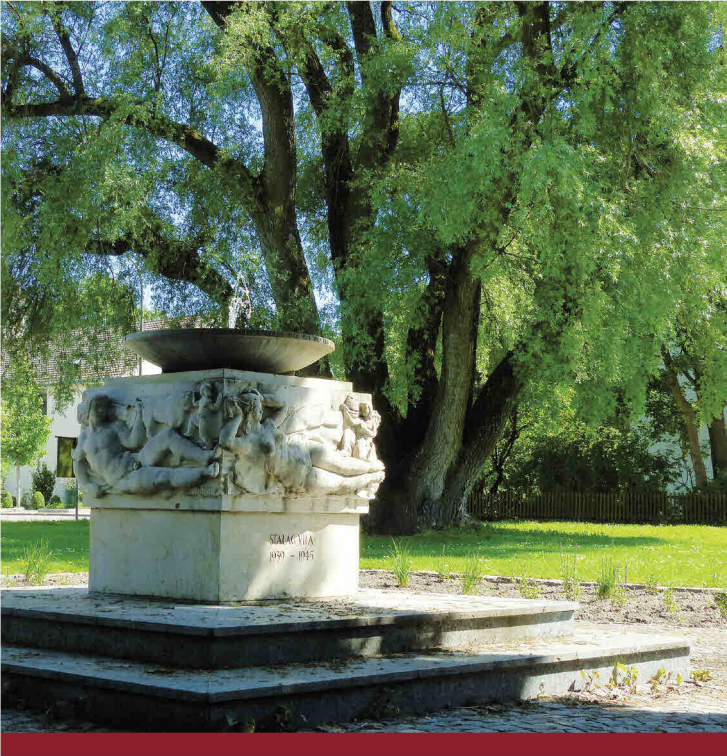


Stalag VII A Memorial

Prisoner of War Camp 1939-1945



**Stadt
Moosburg
an der Isar**

Overview

During World War II this area, which is now Moosburg Neustadt, became Stalag VII A, one of the largest Prisoner of War (POW) camps in the Third Reich.



Main street of the camp

Starting end of September 1939, just after the beginning of the war, the Wehrmacht built the “Mannschaftsstelllager A / Wehrkreis VII”, in short Stalag VII A, in the north of the town. On 19th October 1939 the first prisoners arrived from Poland. In the camp, which was originally planned for 10,000 inmates, more than 70,000 soldiers from many countries were interned. A total of 150,000 prisoners of war were registered in Stalag VII A.

Around 1000 prisoners died in this camp during the war. Most were buried in the Oberreit Prisoners of War cemetery in the south west city perimeter of Moosburg. Most were Russian soldiers, who often came to the camp in poor condition and in consequence of the German National Socialist ideology were inadequately cared for. After the war the bodies were exhumed and transferred to the main war cemeteries.

In memory of the inmates of the camp in Moosburg there are two memorials:

- ❶ Stalag-Gedenkplatz with the “French Fountain”
- ❸ Stalag-Gedenkstätte in Oberreit at the former Prisoner of War cemetery

Historical city map 1939-45

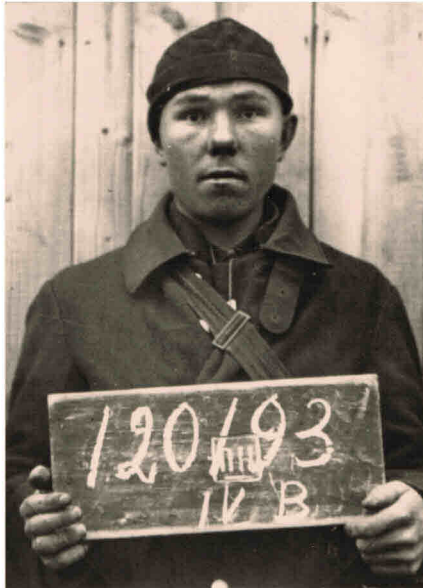
- ❶ Prisoner of War Camp
- ❷ Barracks of the guards
- ❸ Prisoner of War cemetery



The History of Stalag VII A

Erection

In September 1939 the German Army decided to erect a Prisoner of War camp in Moosburg. The land north of the town was found to be suitable regarding transport to the camp because it was situated on a railway track, yet was far enough away from the next settlement. Within a few days the military and the "Reichsarbeitsdienst" (Reich Labour Service) began building the camp. Three weeks later, on 19th October 1939, the first prisoners arrived and at first they had to live in tents. Gradually more permanent barracks were erected. The prisoners were guarded by the Land Army, old soldiers who were not considered suitable for active duty on the front. The barracks of the guards were situated 300 m south of the camp (today Schlesierstraße).



Captivity

The commanders of Stalag VII A, Colonel Hans Nepf (1939-1943) and Colonel Otto Burger (1943-1945), had the reputation for treating the prisoners generally in a humanitarian way. However, the situation for the prisoners varied considerably. The Anglo-Americans were treated almost completely according to the Geneva Convention, but for the Polish soldiers it was only partly so. The Russian prisoners had virtually no rights. As in other Prisoner of War camps, it was also so in Stalag VII A that, in 1941/42 so-called „unacceptable“ Russian prisoners, such as the sick, the intellectuals, or those who were suspected to be agitators and communist functionaries, were singled out by the Gestapo. Despite resistance from the camp leaders and the responsible officers of the German Regional Defence Command VII at least 300 of these camp prisoners were taken to KZ Dachau and were executed at

the "Schießplatz Herbertshausen". Another 190 were deported by the Gestapo to KZ Buchenwald.

The extreme overcrowding of the camp, with more than 70,000 prisoners by the end of the war, resulted in desolate accommodation, supply and sanitary conditions.

Liberation

On the 29th April 1945 the US troops liberated the camp. Camp commander Colonel Otto Burger and the leader of the Land Army, Major Rudolf Koller, had declined the order from their military leaders to transport the officers of the prisoners and gave over the camp without resistance.

Internment Camp

In the following years the American military used the camp as „Civil Internment Camp No 6“ and imprisoned officials of the Third Reich and people who were suspected of having supported the Nazi regime.

Expellees

In 1948 expellees from the former eastern territories of the German Reich found a new home in the barracks of the camp area. In the following years a new suburb arose, today known as Moosburg Neustadt. The structure of the camp is still discernible in the layout of the roads and some of the buildings.

The Camp

Organisation and Logistics

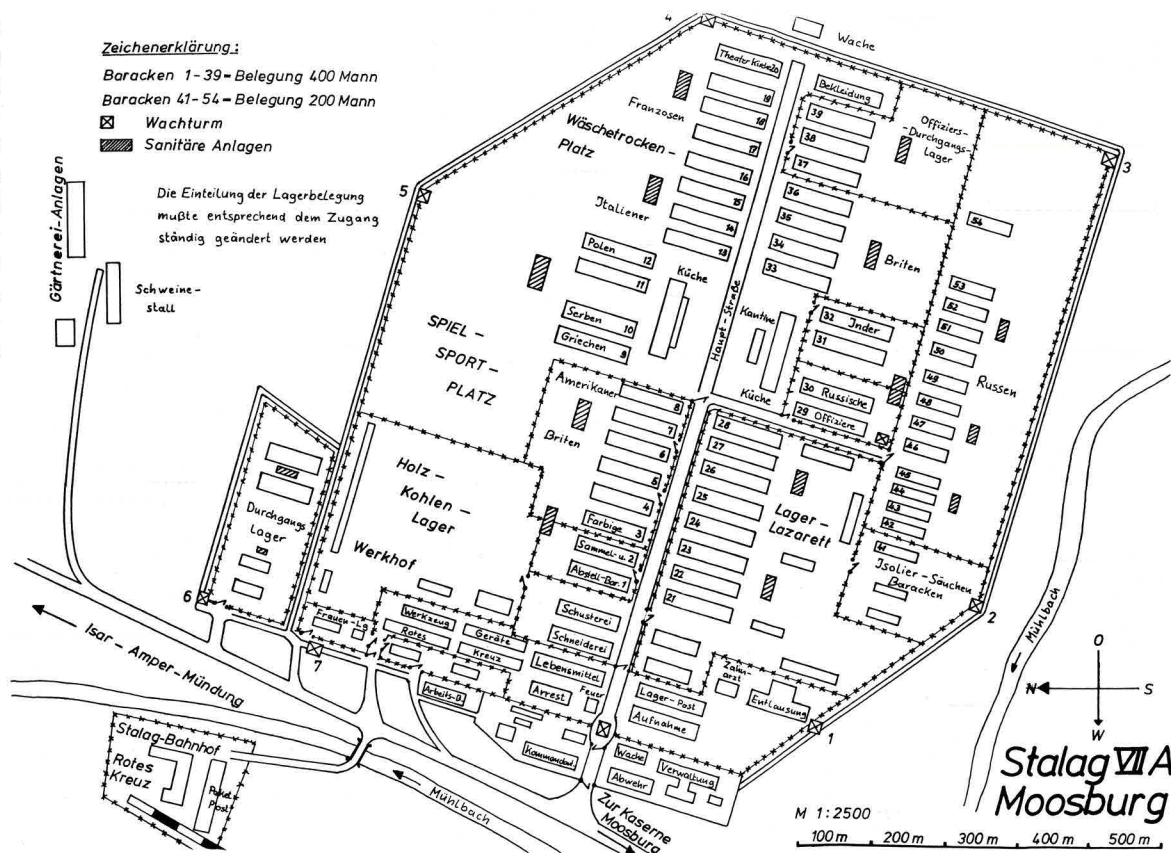
The camp location at that time, which was about one kilometre from the town, was surrounded by barbed wire fencing and had watchtowers to ensure security. It was about 350,000 square meters with only one entrance on the west side. The main street of the camp ran from the entrance for a distance of 700 m (currently Sudetenlandstraße).

The building and maintenance of the camp was a major challenge. The camp, which was originally built for 10,000 prisoners, very quickly held a lot more. By the end of the war there were over 70,000 prisoners from many countries and ethnic groups; mainly French, Russian, British, Polish, Yugoslavian, American, and Italian soldiers. The prisoners were accommodated separately by nation.

Sometimes as many as one thousand new prisoners arrived daily by train. On arrival any money and valuables were removed, as were items that may have been dangerous or useful for escape. The new arrivals were also deloused, in order to avoid an epidemic, and then they were registered and brought in to the main camp.

Accommodation, supply and waste disposal had to be set up. The camp administration had to organise up to 45 tonnes of food, mostly bread and potatoes, daily. Doctors for the sick bays, craftsmen for the workshop, and priests were selected from amongst the prisoners.

Historic plan of the camp



Off-camp forced-labour organisation

Off-premises camps

The German leadership had already, at the beginning of the war, planned the work assignments of the prisoners for the German economy. They were needed to compensate for the lack of workers in the agriculture, trade and industry areas, which the call up to the army had caused. There were individual orders for which single prisoners were assigned to agricultural or small businesses. In large factories up to several hundred prisoners were deployed.



Polish soldier prisoners

For most prisoners Stalag VII A was just a transit station. They were registered here, detailed to work, or came back when they were sick or their work had ended. The region where the prisoners from Stalag VII A worked comprised of the area of „Wehrkreis VII“ (southern half of Bavaria). In many cases the daily transport from and to the workplace was not possible due to the large distances from the Stalag. Hence the majority of the prisoners were accommodated in numerous off-premises camps. These camps were found in each location and were organised by the parent Stalag.

Working Conditions

At the Stalag forced-labour employment office the prisoners were organised according to the requests of the local companies. These had to guarantee a minimum regarding accommodation and food. The prisoners themselves received a minor payment, which they could spend in the camp. However, the working conditions for each nationality differed greatly. Contact with the local German population was forbidden, except when talking about necessary aspects of work.



British colonial soldier prisoners (Indian)

Life in the camp

Provision

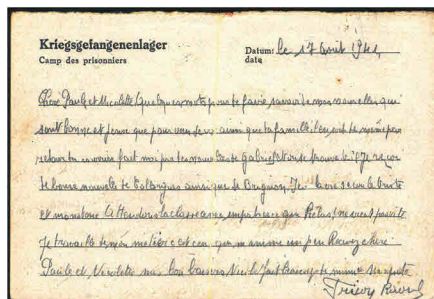
The prisoners lived in wooden barracks, each with 200-400 men. The rations were monotonous; they consisted mostly of bread and potatoes. It was enough to survive, but an important supplement was the food package from home and from the Red Cross. This was particularly important because the provisions for prisoners towards the end of the war became worse. In various workshops craftsmen in the camp organised for the needs of the camp and the prisoners. However, it was a problem organising clothing and shoes as it often was not possible to provide satisfactory replacements for worn out clothing.

Social Life

The only possibility to keep close family and relatives informed was by letters and postcards, although all documents were censored. Minor illnesses and injuries were dealt with in the sick bays, serious cases were dealt with in the camp hospital or in the Army hospital at the Freising Domberg. German military priests and priests who were prisoners took responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the prisoners and occasionally one of the barracks served as a prayer room. Additionally, for exercise some sport was offered, such as athletics or boxing.



A censored postcard form



Cultural life

The inmates organised theatre, choir and orchestra groups and, with the performances, it brought a change in the monotonous everyday life. There was also a camp newspaper produced by some of the French prisoners. For a while the French even ran a camp university.



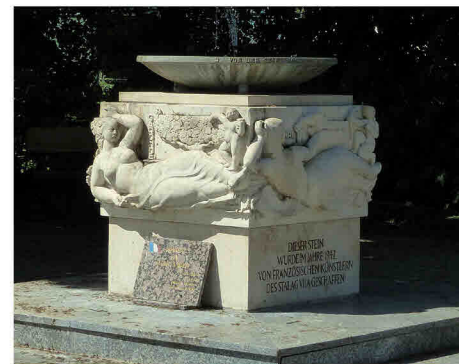
Prisoners who were artists created drawings illustrating the life in the camp, and these still exist. They also produced sculptures and even composed music.

A British orchestra with singers and actors

The French Fountain

Under the leadership of Prof. Antonucci Volti (1915-1989), an important French sculptor, a group of French prisoners created four stone reliefs. These show the four largest rivers in France (Seine, Loire, Rhône, and Garonne) in memory of their homeland.

In 1963 the town of Moosburg arranged for the four stone reliefs to be used to create a fountain, which was erected as the first memorial here in this place. It became known as the „Franzosenbrunnen“ (the French Fountain). In 2015, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the camp, the memorial was renewed.



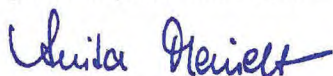
The French Fountain

The initiators

The city Moosburg an der Isar

Dear Visitors,

The history of our town is inseparably connected with the Stalag VII A Prisoner of War Camp. People from all over the world have lived and suffered here and we want to preserve their memory. Discussion of this history is a way for us to come together in peace and freedom



Anita Meinelt
1. Mayor



The Association Stalag Moosburg e. V.

In the Stalag VII A camp people from a variety of origins were held. Today, as then, intercultural understanding and living together is not only a challenge for society, but also a basis for peace. The Association Stalag Moosburg e.V. wishes this historical inheritance of the town to be understood/experienced by the present and future generations.

The Committee
Stalag Moosburg e.V.



Contact:

Stalag Moosburg e.V.: www.stalag-moosburg.de
Stadt Moosburg: www.moosburg.de
Stalag-Gedenkplatz: **Böhmerwaldstraße**
Stalag-Friedhof: **Oberreit (an der B11)**
Heimatismuseum: **Kastulusplatz, So. 16:00-17:30 Uhr**



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